

long periods for a bare subsistence, undergoing hardships and privations with the hope, which leads many on the road to success in life, that they will come on ground which will return them sufficient wealth for all their labours. The genuine miners are a hardy, honest, and independent class of men. They are too proud to appeal for aid, and prefer to endure the greatest hardships rather than surrender their self-reliance. Aged as many are, the most of the prospecting is done by them. The young men do not take kindly to the bush, and prefer other occupations where there is less hardship and privation. The diggers of to-day are not of the same migratory character which distinguished them in the early days of the goldfields. They are now taking up plots of land on occupation-license tenure, and making for themselves comfortable homes. When they cannot work their gold-mining claims, for want of water or other reasons, they find employment in cultivating the land. The number of holdings under this tenure at the present time is 593, comprising an aggregate area of 16,934 acres. The genuine gold-digger has done much in promoting settlement and developing the colony's vast resources, and he has strong claims for our best consideration and encouragement.

#### MINERAL PRODUCTION.

The mineral production for the year ending 31st December, 1892, including kauri-gum, shows an increase in value of £25,620 over that of 1891. Very little has been done in opening up the metalliferous mines, but more attention is now being given to ores containing minerals other than gold and silver. It is a difficult matter to establish any new industry on a firm footing, and its development for some time is necessarily slow. In some instances, where capital has been expended in starting a new branch of mining, expectation has been nipped in the bud by buyers in foreign markets offering a high price for the mineral, and, when the industry was commenced, reducing the price to such an extent that it would not pay. Such was the case with scheelite. A company which erected a plant at the head of Lake Wakatipu for the production of this mineral, found, after their plant had been erected, that they could not get more than about one-third of the price paid for the mineral when the mine was first opened up. At the present time there are inquiries from large firms in London and Liverpool for this mineral, a good price being offered for it. There are large quantities of scheelite in Otago, and it is probable that the day is not far distant when fresh mines will be opened to supply the demand. There are difficulties in opening up new mines of all descriptions, which are generally situated in rough, broken country, sometimes very mountainous and difficult of access, requiring roads to be constructed before either machinery can be brought on to the ground or the ore taken to a place where it can be forwarded cheaply to a port of shipment. With all these drawbacks, it requires considerable capital to commence with. The depression existing during the past year in the Australian Colonies has to some extent detrimentally affected the mining industry in New Zealand, for it has in some cases prevented money being expended in its development. Some persons connected with the Mercantile Bank in Victoria have, it is said, been compelled to withdraw their capital from some mining ventures they had in this colony, and, just when they were on the eve of getting returns, to sacrifice a property which cost them over £16,000 for less than one-fifth of that amount.

The value of the mineral productions, including kauri-gum, for the year ending the 31st December last, was: Gold, £954,744; silver, £3,996; antimony-ore, £4,900; manganese, £1,239; other minerals, £631; coal exported, £80,225; coke exported, £5,691; coal consumed in the colony, £297,202; and kauri-gum, £517,678; making a total of £1,866,306: while the value for the previous year was £1,840,686; thus showing an increase in the value of mineral products last year of £25,620. Taking the value of the whole of the gold and minerals obtained in the colony since the 1st January, 1853, up to the end of 1892, it is as follows: Gold, £48,387,861; silver, £144,144; copper-ore, £17,866; chrome-ore, £37,367; antimony-ore, £46,040; manganese-ore, £55,164; hæmatite-ore, £226; other minerals, £69,672; coal exported, £587,183; coke exported, £23,590; coal consumed in the colony (value at the mines), £3,531,202; and kauri-gum, £6,349,421: making a total of £59,249,736, the details of which will be seen in Tables Nos. 1, 3, and 4, annexed.

#### GOLD-MINING.

In referring to this branch of the mining industry, I would call the attention of honourable members to its importance, and the advantages the colony has derived from the discovery of gold. This has been the means of bringing many thousands—I may, in fact, say hundreds