

Thomas Petherick

Swansea 10 Jan 1842

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My Lord,

I have the honor to enclose a letter of introduction to your Lordship from his Grace the Duke of Argyll. I have delayed to do so in expectation of being able to wait upon your Lordship personally, but unavoidable circumstances have prevented it. The great interest which your Lordship is known to take in the welfare of the Colonies induces me to trouble you with this communication in the hope that it may lend in some degree to promote that important subject.

My occupation is that of a miner, in which capacity I managed for many years some of the most important copper and lead mines in Cornwall and Devon; and have subsequently been engaged in coal and iron mining and iron smelting in Gloucestershire and in the principality in respect of which I shall be happy to give your Lordship the most unexceptionable references if desired.

The depressed state of the iron trade has lately induced me to entertain the idea of emigrating to some of the British Colonies and in particular to New Zealand. In a conversation however which I had lately with a Party connected with that Settlement I found that in the sales of land, the minerals were not reserved to the Government nor to the New Zealand Company in respect of the Company's possessions; but that, in each allotment of land the purchaser is entitled to the minerals therein.

It is obvious that, to carry on mining operations with the greatest advantage, they must be conducted upon a comprehensive scale, suited to the nature of each particular deposit, independent of the surface divisions of property. Such divisions have, in numerous instances within my knowledge, greatly lessened, and in some cases destroyed the value of mining properties. This evil is perhaps irremediable in old Countries, but in the settlement of new Colonies I conceive the case to be different, and that any, but with advantage to every party interested.

I therefore take the liberty to suggest to your Lordship, that in such Colonies, the minerals and the necessary rights for working them, should be reserved to the Crown; and that the Crown should be empowered to grant mining licences subject to the payment of a full compensation to the Proprietors of the surface for the damage which may be done thereto by the mine workings, and also subject to the payment to each such Proprietor, of a certain portion of the royalty on the minerals from his allotment.

This arrangement, I think your Lordship will perceive, will leave the mining rights and operations unfettered in the hands of the Government or of those holding under it; and, at the same time, not only afford adequate protection to the surface proprietors in respect of injury to the land, but give them an interest in the prosperity of the mining undertakings, without, however, any obstructive power.

I shall be gratified if this communication should be of any service, and I shall be happy to render any assistance to your Lordship on the subject of it, which my experience may enable me to do, in respect of affording information or otherwise.

Letter of introduction from the Duke of Argyll – Iweraray Castle, 1 Dec 1841

My Lord,

The Gentleman who will present this Letter to you is Mr Thomas Petherick, with whom I became acquainted some few years since, in consequence of his taking charge of the management of a copper mine for me in this neighbourhood, but in consequence of the mine not being sufficiently productive, he left me to take charge of an Iron mine near Swansea.

Mr Petherick is a Gentleman of the highest character in his profession and I had every reason to be satisfied in all transactions that took place between us, and I should feel much pleasure in hearing that he had obtained any situation, in which he might improve his fortune.

1841 Census: Wern Cottage, Llan Giwg, Neath

Thomas Petherick, 45yrs, Iron Works manager; Elizabeth Petherick, 40yrs; Elizabeth Petherick 14yrs; Ann Petherick, 11yrs; Ellen Petherick 4yrs
