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Dunedin, 12th December, 1885.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed I forward a statement of the case of Edward Peters (Black Peter), and I have to ask that you will bring it under the consideration of your Council.

I trust that the humble and hitherto unrequited services of the pioneer gold-finder of New Zealand will be substantially recognised, and that the Council will vote a sum in aid towards securing the Government subsidy.

Yours very truly,

Frederick Peters  
C/O

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## The Story of Black Peter.

### AN APPEAL.

There is a man living amongst us who may fairly claim to be the Father of Gold-mining in New Zealand. His name is Edward Peters, native of Bombay, better known, perhaps as "Black Peter" by old residents. He was the first man to demonstrate, by actual discovery, the existence of payable gold-workings in Otago; but he was poor, humble, and ignorant, and did not know how to turn his discoveries to profitable account. Wherefore he has been neglected, and the value of his work has been ignored except by the few who are acquainted with the facts; and the honours and the rewards that should have been his have been awarded to others.

Writing in 1858, Mr J. T. Thomson, then chief surveyor, says in a foot-note to his Report on the Reconnaissance Survey of the South-eastern districts of Otago:—"The best sample of gold yet brought into town was found in the Tokomairiro River (south branch). *This sample indicates a workable goldfield.*" The locality referred to is now known as the Woolshed Creek, and the finder was Black Peter. For this statement I had the personal assurance of the late Mr John Hardy, C.E.

In 1860 Mr John L. Gillies, when searching for some vagrant cattle, came upon Black Peter working for gold in a bend of the Tuapeka stream at what is now called Evans' Flat. His only implements were a tin dish and a sheath-knife, *but he had found the gold.* Mr Gillies stayed with him nearly all the day, and himself washed out some pennyweights of gold with the same simple appliances. When Mr Gillies returned to Tokomairiro he took this gold with him, and subsequently communicated the circumstances to Mr Gabriel Read. Mr Read thereupon shouldered his swag and went prospecting upon the hint thus given. This was in May 1861. He followed the track of Black Peter, pursued the stream up to a shepherd's hut on the run then occupied by Messrs Davy and Bowler, crossed over the range, and discovered the auriferous deposits in Gabriel's Gully. The shepherd was Mr Munro, who still resides in the neighbourhood.

I have no desire to detract from the credit due to Mr Read, but there can be no question that Black Peter was the original discoverer both of the Woolshed and the Tuapeka gold-fields. From this start all the gold-digging and mining that has taken place in New Zealand, and all the consequent access of trade and population most undoubtedly originated.

Black Peter is now old, infirm, and crippled—a confirmed invalid in fact—and unable to earn sufficient to supply himself with scanty sustenance. His pitiful case was brought under the notice of Mr J. C. Brown and myself by a lady resident at Balclutha, where poor Edward Peters is living, or rather starving. A memorial in his behalf, setting forth his work in the past, and his wants in the present day, was presented to Parliament and duly considered by the Gold-fields Committee, with the result that a sum of £50 was placed on the Appropriation Act for his benefit, "conditionally on an equal sum being raised by private subscription."

I am now assured by the lady who generously espoused his cause that she is unable to collect the insignificant sum necessary to secure the Government subsidy. Therefore I appeal to the public, which has greatly benefited by the labours of Black Peter, to come forward and contribute to the fund now being raised in his behalf. The time is approaching when the subsidy will lapse. I hope, therefore, it will be remembered that "those give twice who give quickly."—I am, &c.,

VINCENT PYKE.

Dunedin, November 25.