

In view of the fact that a number of landowners along this creek wish to dispose of their lands for dredging purposes, your Commissioners are of opinion that satisfactory arrangements will be made between those interested in mining operations and the farmers affected, and therefore do not recommend a Proclamation being issued in respect to this creek.

CHARLTON CREEK.—(FIRST SCHEDULE.)

This creek takes its source in the Croydon Goldfield, and runs through freehold lands to the Mataura River. At the point where it leaves the terraces, at the road leading from Gore to the back country, there are a number of settlers on the west side claiming compensation, who have riparian rights, and who hold an area of about 1,200 acres. The owners of this land entered into an agreement with one of the dredge-owners, who has a dredge working in the Charlton Creek Valley, to allow all the muddy water to flow down the creek passing through their lands for £20 each.

Several of the landowners in the Charlton Creek Valley have either disposed of or given options over their lands for dredging. The evidence also shows that there are five dredging claims taken up in this valley, but on only one of these claims is a dredge constructed and at work.

The landowners in the valley of the creek who have not already disposed of their lands complain that, if dredging is carried on, their farms will be partially covered with silt from every flood, which will practically destroy their crops; and there is good reason to believe that this will be the case.

To prevent the silt being deposited upon the land it would be necessary to construct a storm-channel to carry off the flood-water. This should be constructed by mutual arrangement between the landowners and miners, the majority of whom seem willing to contribute towards the cost of construction of such channel. They, however, state that neither the road nor the railway-bridge is sufficiently large to take the water in heavy floods.

As a number of the landowners are likely to dispose of their land for dredging purposes, your Commissioners recommend that Charlton Creek be not proclaimed a watercourse into which tailings and waste water from mining operations may be discharged, believing that a satisfactory arrangement will be arrived at between the parties interested.

WAIMUMU CREEK.

This creek takes its rise at the base of the Hokonui Ranges, traverses part of the southern boundary of the Croydon Goldfield, and joins the Mataura River near Mataura.

From the point where it leaves the terrace land it runs through a low-lying alluvial flat, and has a very sinuous course to the Mataura River.

A storm-channel has been constructed by a local body, from the point where the creek leaves the terrace, to take a portion of the water in time of floods in a more direct line to the Mataura River; but, from the evidence tendered, the water from this channel in time of large floods overflows, and consequently covers a considerable area of farming land between the terrace and the river.

Thirteen dredging claims have been taken up in the Waimumu Valley on freehold lands above the head of the storm-water channel. Three dredges are at work, and a fourth is nearly constructed. The evidence given in regard to the auriferous nature of this valley showed that one of the dredges got 1,100 oz. of gold for fifty-three weeks' work, which is equal to 20 oz. 15 dwt. per week; while the working-expenses were from 10 oz. to 12 oz. per week. During the fifty-three weeks this dredge has been at work it has dredged 10 acres of ground. The value of the gold obtained from working this area was about £4,477 15s., being equal to £447 15s. per acre. The evidence also showed that the prospects in the other dredging claims were good.

If dredging is carried on in this valley it will be necessary to enlarge the present storm-channel to carry off the water, so as to prevent the agricultural land below the dredging claims being damaged by the deposit of silt. A number of the landowners in the upper portion of the valley, where the land is of very poor quality, have disposed of their holdings for dredging, and your Commissioners are of opinion that a satisfactory arrangement will be come to between the landowners whose lands are affected by heavy floods and those interested in mining operations to construct a new channel, or enlarge the present one, to carry off the whole of the muddy water, as each party will be greatly benefited thereby. Some of the landowners and those interested in dredging expressed their willingness to contribute towards the cost of such a channel.

The whole evidence showed that neither the road nor the railway-bridge was sufficiently large to take the water in time of heavy floods.

Taking the whole of the evidence into consideration, your Commissioners are of opinion that matters will be so arranged between the landholders and those interested in mining operations that the mining industry will not be retarded. Seeing, therefore, that it is to the mutual benefit of all parties interested to work together, your Commissioners do not recommend that the Waimumu Creek be proclaimed a watercourse into which tailings and waste water from mining operations may be discharged.

WAIKAIKAI RIVER.—(FIRST SCHEDULE.)

The Waikika River has been used as a watercourse into which tailings and waste water from mining operations have been discharged since the latter end of 1861, when gold was first discovered at Switzer's. In 1862 gold was discovered in Campbell's Creek, and subsequently at Potter's; and in different tributaries of this river mining operations have been continuously carried on ever since.

On the Argyle Creek, an important tributary of the Waikika River, there are high terraces of auriferous gravels. These terraces have been worked to a considerable extent, and are still being worked in a lesser degree, by hydraulic sluicing. The adjoining flats are also being worked on the