

The miners, in their evidence, were not in accord as to the time they have been at work, but all of them were agreed as to the amount of gold they had obtained. Mr. L—— F—— produced a book which showed that the total value of gold, obtained from 14th November, 1899, to 13th November, 1900, was £23 14s. 8d. He also stated that, in addition to this, there might be from the washing-up then taking place about 1½ oz. of gold, which had a value of £3 17s. 6d. per ounce. This would make the total value of gold produced up to 13th December last, £29 10s. 11d.

From consideration of the evidence tendered, and an examination of the ground, your Commissioners are of opinion that in the mining operations so far carried on the ground has not been of a payable character, and therefore do not recommend that the Fruidburn be at present proclaimed a channel into which tailings, *debris*, and waste water from mining claims may be discharged.

KAKANUI RIVER.—(SECOND SCHEDULE.)

No miners are working at present on the Kakanui River or its tributaries. It appears that some of the landowners prospected the flats alongside the river with a view to dredging, but did not find gold in sufficient quantities to warrant the proposed expenditure. The river has a rock bottom from near its source to the lower end of Balruddery Station—about fourteen miles from its mouth—where the bed widens out in places from 15 to 20 chains, and is covered with gorse and broom. These places could easily be dredged if gold were found in sufficient quantities to pay for working, without injuring any adjacent land. There have been some gold-workings on the ocean beach, at the mouth of the river, as the remains of “paddocking” can be seen, and this ground could also be worked without injury to any adjacent landed properties.

Your Commissioners are of opinion that sufficient prospecting has not been done along the river to prove whether gold in payable quantities exists or not, and therefore do not recommend that in the meantime this river be proclaimed a watercourse into which tailings, *débris*, and waste water from mining claims may be discharged.

AWAMOKO STREAM.

The Awamoko Creek takes its rise in the range to the westward of the Livingstone Township, and runs through a mining reserve for a distance of about four miles, and thence through the Tokorahi Estate, the Maruwhenua Estate, a Native reserve, and freehold land to its confluence with the Waitaki River. From the point where the creek leaves the mining reserve it runs for a distance of about three miles through a rocky gorge, from which its course for a distance of about six miles and a half is through a narrow valley, having an average width of about 10 chains; thence through another rocky gorge for a distance of three miles, approximately; thence for a distance of three miles through a valley having an average width of, from 15 to 20 chains; thence through another rocky gorge to the Waitaki Valley, which it traverses for a distance of about two miles.

In the early days of the goldfield, tailings and waste water from mining operations were discharged into this creek. At that time the Tokorahi and Maruwhenua Estates were freehold lands, owned by Messrs. Borton and McMasters, who, together with other holders of freehold sections abutting on the creek, took steps to prevent the miners using it as a receptacle of tailings and waste water. The creek has therefore not been so used for the last ten years by the mining community.

Recently the Government, under “The Land for Settlements Act, 1894,” purchased the Tokorahi and Maruwhenua Estates, which form a considerable portion of the land through which the Awamoko Creek flows, and set apart a chain reserve on each side of the creek, which reserve is now held by the different Government leaseholders on a yearly tenancy. Evidence tendered your Commissioners by settlers on the Tokorahi Estate showed that a number of them are partially dependent on the Awamoko Creek for the supply of water for their stock and domestic purposes, and that in the event of the creek being declared a watercourse under the Mining Act, tailings carried down by the stream would raise the bed and in course of time be deposited on the low-lying portions of their holdings.

The miners in the vicinity of Livingstone state that there is a large area of auriferous ground that could be worked on the mining reserve through which the creek flows. Owing to the action of the freeholders above referred to, mining of late years has been confined to the ground in the watershed of the Maruwhenua River, which is divided from that of the Awamoko by a narrow ridge. It was asserted in evidence that unless facilities were given to open up this reserve many of the miners on the Livingstone Goldfield would have to leave the district, as the locality at present being worked remuneratively would shortly be exhausted.

At the present time thirty-four men are employed on hydraulic-slucing claims on the Livingstone Goldfield. They are supplied with water from four water-races, which have a maximum carrying capacity of twenty sluice-heads, but which, at certain seasons of the year, are reduced to a minimum of about three heads. Three of these water-races could be diverted so as to command the ground of the mining reserve in the watershed of the Awamoko.

A dredge is approaching completion for the purpose of working the ground in the bed of the Awamoko Creek, directly opposite the township of Livingstone, near the lower end of the mining reserve, but very little prospecting has been done to ascertain whether or not the ground contains a sufficient quantity of gold to pay for working by this method.

Your Commissioners endeavoured to obtain information as to the area and rateable value of land liable to be affected if the Awamoko Creek were declared a watercourse under the provisions of section 108 of “The Mining Act, 1898,” but the information supplied was not sufficient for your Commissioners to definitely arrive at the amount of compensation that would be required to be paid. It may be given as an opinion, however, that the maximum amount should not exceed £2,000.