

TAKAKA RIVER.

The lower portion of the Takaka River, from its confluence with the Anatoki, together with the Anatoki and Bubu Streams, having already been proclaimed watercourses under the provisions of the Mining Act, your Commissioners endeavoured to obtain evidence as to the expediency or otherwise of proclaiming the upper portion of the river, so as to allow of mining operations being carried on. The evidence tendered showed that gold had been obtained in the bed of the river about fifteen miles up from its mouth, and that the upper reaches of the river passed through an auriferous country, but that there were only two miners at present at work in the locality.

As the river flows through a very considerable extent of low-lying freehold land, and is cutting away its banks and changing its course, there is no doubt if notice were given to proclaim the upper portion, a large number of claims for compensation would be made, and to a considerable amount.

Several dredging claims have been applied for on the upper portion of the river, but none of those interested appeared in response to the notice to give evidence as to the auriferous value of the ground.

In view of the large extent of low-lying land in the valley, and that no representations were made as to the desirableness of issuing a proclamation, your Commissioners recommend that the upper portion of this river be not proclaimed at the present time a watercourse into which tailings and waste water produced by or resulting from mining operations may be discharged.

OROWAITI RIVER.

The Orowaiti River takes its rise in the Mount Rochfort Range, and enters the ocean a little to the north of the Town of Westport. Its upper portion down to its confluence with the overflow from the Buller River is locally known as Giles' Creek.

In the early days of the goldfields the low terraces adjacent to this creek were found to contain rich auriferous washdrifts, and a considerable quantity of gold was obtained therefrom. Mining has been carried on in these terraces for the last thirty-four years. A considerable quantity of gravel from the erosion of the banks and from mullock-tips from tunnels has been from time to time carried down during floods, and deposited in the bed of the river lower down where there is little fall.

The tide-water comes up the river for a distance of about three miles at high springs, and this has the effect of depositing sand and gravel in the bed at the place where the waters meet. The overflow channel from the Buller River comes into the Orowaiti River about four miles up from its mouth, and above this for a distance of one mile and a half the river-bed is filled with shingle to a level with the low-lying land in sections held by Messrs. Wilson and Mears. A large portion of the land of these claimants is now covered with water in every flood, which deposits a certain quantity of silt, and, it may be added, this injury will continue whether the river be proclaimed or not. Even were no mining carried on, the gradual erosion of the banks up the stream will in a few years raise the bed to such a degree as to force the water into fresh channels through the holdings.

In regard to the auriferous character of the ground in the terraces adjacent to the river and tributaries, there are still a few miners working in the vicinity of Ballarat Creek—one of the tributaries—and in Giles' Creek. Several dredging claims have been taken up in the bed of the river, and a little prospecting has been done, which indicates that there is a probability of the ground being payable for working the dredges.

Seeing that there is a fair prospect of dredges being used for carrying on mining operations, your Commissioners recommend that the Orowaiti River, with its tributaries, be proclaimed watercourses into which tailings and waste water produced by or resulting from mining operations may be discharged.

Your Commissioners have made a careful examination of the land for which various land-holders have made claims for prospective damage, and have recommended the amounts which, in the opinion of your Commissioners, would fully compensate them for any injury their land would be likely to sustain if the river and tributaries were so proclaimed.

TOTARA RIVER.

The Totara River and tributaries flow through a considerable extent of land which is more or less auriferous. There is a flat terrace at Croninville between the main river and one of its branches on which there are several hydraulic-slucicing claims. The tailings from these claims have up to the present been discharged into the main river, but the distance is now becoming too great to permit of sufficient fall for tail-races into that watercourse. The holders of these claims stated in their evidence that in order to make their workings remunerative in the future the tailings would have to be discharged into the branch referred to.

About one mile below the point where the tailings from the Croninville claims would be discharged into the branch, a party of miners, who have claims on what is known as Shetland Beach, hold a water-race with the right to six sluice-heads of water from this branch under "The Goldfields Act, 1866," and they made objection to the branch being proclaimed, on the ground that if tailings are discharged into this branch the bed of the stream will be raised, and they will, as a result, be debarred from leading the water into their race.

As mining is the principal industry carried on in the locality, your Commissioners recommend that the Totara River, with its tributaries, be proclaimed watercourses into which tailings and waste water produced by or resulting from mining operations may be discharged.

Your Commissioners have examined the land for which claims for compensation have been made, and are of opinion that the amounts already recommended by Mr. David Dick, Valuer to the