

ing the gold-mining industry as much as possible. I had then, however, no reason to believe that the result of that Proclamation would be so far-reaching and disastrous.—JOHN W. THORP. Sworn before me, at Paeroa, this 31st day of August, 1907.—T. A. MORRESEY, a solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand." I will put that in. [Document put in.] I also saw a farmer on that occasion named Chamberlain. He told me that he had sent off the whole of his implements to the auction-room, and did not intend to carry on any more farming till this matter was settled. He is selling off his stock and implements. With reference to that land of Mr. James McKee's that I pointed out on the map, he informed me that prior to January last he had been offered £17 an acre by a Mr. Ward, of Gisborne, and had refused it. He said he would be very glad to see somebody come along and make him a similar offer now. I, personally, have made no further inspection down the river, but the question of the lands lower down is one of considerable importance to the Government, because most of the lands down there are under mortgage to the Government Advances to Settlers Office. With reference to the output of tailings into the river, I produce a letter from Mr. Daw, the manager of the New Zealand Crown Mine, dated the 27th July, 1907.

199. *Mr. Herries.*] Who is it addressed to?—To me. I may say that the mining companies have never refused us any information we have asked for in this matter. He states, "The total quantity of tailings sluiced into the river by the Crown Company up to the end of June this year was 307,285 tons, and the total quantity of tailings sluiced into the river by the Waihi Company up to the 31st March this year was 1,931,240 tons. A cubic foot of dry tailings weighs about 84 lb." [Letter put in.] I produce a letter from Mr. Stansfield, the attorney for the Talisman Company, dated the 29th July, and addressed to me. He says, "For the year ending the 30th June last the average amount of tailings deposited in the river per month was 3,830 tons. Am very glad to hear that the silting problem is likely to be settled." [Letter put in.] I also produce a letter from Mr. H. P. Barry, the superintendent of the Waihi Gold-mining Company, dated the 2nd August, and addressed to myself. He says, "Last year we milled 328,866 short tons of 2,000 lb., all of which, except a very few thousand tons stacked at Union Mill, went into the Ohinemuri River." [Letter put in.] Based on that information, I make out that a total of 2,785,245 tons of tailings have been put into the Ohinemuri since the Proclamation, an annual average of 391,167 tons. On last year's output the monthly average was 33,014 tons—upwards of a thousand tons a day. For the first year after the Proclamation of the river as a sludge-channel—that is, the year 1895–96—the output was 44,966 tons. The difference between the output for 1896 and for 1906 is an increase of 384,638 tons. What we are afraid of is the results of a further increase. I wish also to produce a letter from Mr. S. J. Crawford, of Mount Roskill, Auckland. I do not know the gentleman, but the letter is addressed to Mr. W. Moore, of Paeroa, and he forwarded it to me. Mr. Crawford speaks as one who has had several years' experience in this matter, and makes a statement, which is the principal reason why I put the letter in.

200. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Do you father the statement?—I will put the statement in for what it is worth. He says that the Commonwealth of Australia has "offered a £5,000 reward or subsidy to any one devising and proving a practical process of using the slimes." I put this in for the purpose of bringing that aspect of the matter before the Mines Committee. [Letter put in.] While on this point, I have a telegram which I wish to put in. I may say that I wired this morning to my partner in Waihi to let me know how the Grand Junction Company disposed of their tailings. I knew they did not put them into the river, but I wanted to know what they did with them, and I have received his reply. My telegram was, "Do the Grand Junction Company stack their tailings?" and his reply is, "Yes, for further treatment. After treatment, deposited in old creek-bed to settle behind concrete wall. Surplus water runs into river, but very little tailings go into river." [Telegram put in.] While on the question of disposal of the tailings, I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the latter portion of Mr. James Stewart's report, which has been placed before the Committee, where he suggests that a great quantity of the tailings might be got rid of by putting them into the stopes in the mines. I know that some of the mining representatives—I have spoken to them on the subject—think that that might not be practicable; but, in support of the suggestion made by Mr. Stewart, I wish to put in a quotation from the report of the Sludge Abatement Board of Victoria. It is a very lengthy thing, so I do not propose to read it all.

201. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] Refer to the chapter and verse?—This Sludge Abatement Board, in dealing with the difficulty at Bendigo and other places in Victoria, mention this as one of the effective remedies: "Send back into the stopes of the quartz-mines as much sand as possible, instead of slate." And in one of the recommendations of the Board this appears: "The Board recommends that the following action be taken: The preparation, after consultation with an expert board by an engineer of high standing, of an effective, economical project for dealing with the Bendigo Creek sludge question." I wish to put that in for the consideration of the Committee. [Report put in.] What we say, gentlemen, is that the remedy in this matter is one for high expert opinion, and that we are not competent to express an opinion as to what the remedy should be. Any suggestions that we would make would be only amateur suggestions, and as such would be liable probably to comment, and would probably evidence many instances of weakness. What we ask is that this matter should not be delayed. The petition put in by the Waihi petitioners prays for a Royal Commission to take sworn evidence. Now, we do not oppose that, if it is the only thing that can be done; but what we say is that that will occasion delay, and that this matter has become one of such urgency that delay should not take place. We ask that it be dealt with at the earliest possible moment, on account of the serious nature of the injury that is going on. Instead of our putting forward suggestions for a remedy, we would ask that a substantial bonus be offered, and that the best engineering skill in the colony should be invited to furnish a practicable scheme for utilising these tailings, or disposing of them, so as not to injure the mining industry, and at the same time to prevent all this damage that is being done.