

sites, and license fees: that comprises goldfields revenue. In this district there is a considerable amount received per annum as goldfields revenue. That revenue is distributed to local bodies. Then there are the Natives. I might explain that in the mining district there is some Native land, and when Native land is taken up for a claim, or for any purpose connected with mining, a £1 miner's right has to be taken out. The ordinary miner's right is 5s. That £1 goes to the Native owners of the block. That is not distributed to the local bodies at all. It is only the five-shilling miner's right that is distributed to the local bodies, and the rents and license fees. So that when you hear gold duty spoken of, you want to remember that that is only a part of the goldfields revenue distributed to local bodies, although, of course, the gold duty, as it turns out, comprises a very large portion of the revenue. That is a very rough outline of the evidence we will place before the Commission. It is impossible to go into the details at present. These details can only be evolved from the evidence which will be submitted. We all hope that the result will be one that will be looked back upon as a matter of history, and will be satisfactory to all parties in the welfare of this rather important portion of the Dominion.

GEORGE BUCHANAN examined. (No. 1.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your name is George Buchanan?—Yes.
2. You are chairman of the Silting Association?—Yes. I live on the Thames Road, Paeroa. I do not live near the bank of the river, but I am trustee of a property on the bank of the river. I am a trustee of the Huruhuru Estate, situated about half a mile above the Ohinemuri Traffic-bridge—the Chinamen's gardens.
3. How long have you been here?—About eighteen years.
4. What was the condition of the river when first you knew it?—It was a clear deep river; you could see to the bottom of it in most places, except where there was extra depth.
5. As regards its drinkable qualities?—It was drinkable by man or beast.
6. What is, roughly, the condition of the river now in that respect?—It is not fit to drink, and it is very shallow in many places. The sides are greatly contracted by deposits of mining tailings.
7. What effect has that in time of flood?—The whole of the adjoining lands are covered with water. After the floods subside there are great deposits of mining tailings: the coarse tailings are near the outer banks of the river, and the finer tailings are inland, further from the river.
8. Do you remember the steamers coming up to Paeroa?—When we came here first I saw the p.s. "Patiki" and the p.s. "Te Aroha" about 100 yards below the Criterion Hotel—the first traffic-bridge; it was at Snodgrass's Wharf.
9. *The Chairman.*] Have you any idea of the tonnage of the vessels?—I could not say. I think evidence will be called as to that.
10. *Mr. Mueller.*] What is the condition of the site of the wharf at the present time?—The site of the wharf is completely covered by tailings to a depth of 4 ft. or 5 ft. You cannot see any of the old wharf now.
11. Do you remember steamers coming to the Wharf Street Wharf?—Yes, the "Ohinemuri" and "Paeroa." Several large steamers used to come to that wharf.
12. That wharf is in the river about the centre of the township?—Yes. Where the "Patiki" used to lie there is a bank now about an acre and a half in extent, I should think, filling up more than half the bed of the river. There is now a bank of tailings where Snodgrass's Wharf was.
13. What is the state of the wharf where the Wharf Street Wharf was?—What is left of it—there is a heavy deposit of tailings there, and large banks on either side.
14. What vessels can get up to those wharves now?—It is all that small yatching-launches can do to get up as far as that now; at low tide it is practically impossible.
15. *The Chairman.*] I would like to have it cleared up about this bank of about an acre and a half. What was the length of Snodgrass's Wharf?—It was a small wharf. It was about 8 ft. long—just long enough to allow steamers to go alongside.
16. How far out did it go from the bank?—About 6 ft. or 8 ft. It was deep water right alongside.
17. Now, you say there is about an acre and a half of bank there?—Yes, at low tide.
18. What length is it?—I should think it would be about 9 chains long from end to end at low water.
19. Can you mention any other portions of the river that are very bad?—Pereniki's Bend. It is almost impossible to get a boat across there. It would be almost impossible to get a boat of any draught more than that of an ordinary launch up the river beyond that place—that is, at low tide. There are many banks of tailings on the northern side of the river beyond that point. Here are photographs of Pereniki's Bend and the river at the Railway Wharf, taken on the 21st April. [Exhibits 2 and 3.]
20. *Mr. Mueller.*] You know the junction of the two rivers, the Ohinemuri and Waihou?—Yes.
21. Is there a large bank there?—There is a very large bank just below the junction of the two rivers, on the Paeroa side of the Waihou, in the main river.
22. What has happened to that bank within the last few years?—It has been greatly increased in size. Steamers used to come up on that side of the river; large steamers came up—the "Paeroa," "Ohinemuri," "Taniwha," and the "Waimarie."
23. And they used to berth at the wharf above?—Yes, at the Junction Wharf.
24. What is the state of navigation there now?—It would be impossible for them to get past it unless at very high tide or when the rivers are in flood.
25. You have been up the Waihou River?—Yes.