

If this suggestion is adopted it will be desirable, in amending the Act, to provide that it shall be a criminal offence to destroy or injuriously interfere with the stop-banks and other river-improvement works. This will be a necessary safeguard if the land on which the works will be situated is to remain private property, as the owner, realizing that the stop-bank in law belonged to him, might consider that he had a right to do as he liked with it.

Cases were brought under our notice where drains of considerable size had been made on the landward side of the stop-bank, or stream-diversions carried through properties. In such cases the settlers affected should be provided with a suitable crossing over the drains or streams.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a.) *As to Contributions.*

As has already been shown, it is not financially possible to carry the scheme to completion on the basis of the existing scale of contributions.

If the Government can see its way to subsidize the work on a pound-for-pound basis the Commission thinks it would perhaps be practicable to allocate the local contribution, which will amount to at least £20,000 per annum, somewhat as follows (though we fear the burdens to be imposed would prove to be heavy, and we have great hesitation in recommending them, but the bearing of such burdens seems to be the only alternative to abandonment of the undertaking):—

	Per Annum. £
Counties and boroughs within river district (one-half) ..	10,000
Gold duty (estimated at)	4,000
Mine-owners (estimated at)	3,500
Revenue from scheme (estimated at).. .. .	2,500
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	£20,000
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(b.) *As to Government Subsidy.*

A pound-for-pound subsidy would mean that the Government might ultimately have to find £312,000 if the works cannot be reduced in cost; but minor savings can, we think, be effected which will bring the total expense down to £600,000, and probably below that sum, and this would limit the Government contribution to £300,000, of which amount £250,000 will have been found and expended by the 31st December next if the works are proceeded with as at present, so that only another £50,000 will be required.

It is true, no doubt, that the Government will have to find the whole £600,000 in the first instance, but local interests will be responsible for the interest and sinking fund on half the amount, so that, as already stated, it is really only the interest and sinking fund on £300,000 that the Government has to permanently concern itself with, and even that responsibility will eventually be extinguished by the operation of the sinking fund. Interest and sinking fund on £300,000 will necessitate an annual contribution to the fund of, say, £20,000 for a period of seventy-five years; but against this there would be a large amount of additional revenue to accrue from the greatly enhanced prosperity of this very fertile and prosperous district in the shape of land- and income-tax, and general Customs and stamp and railway revenue.

PROCLAMATIONS DECLARING RIVERS SLUDGE-CHANNELS.

The Commission of 1910 advised the revocation of the Proclamations declaring the Waihou and Ohinemuri Rivers sludge-channels, but that they be reissued in an amended form so as to admit of finely ground slime being still deposited. It is a pity this recommendation was not given effect to years ago; and the Commission advises that in any Bill that may be introduced to give effect to the recommendations of this Commission provision be made for the revocation of the Proclamations,