

Nos. 277, 287, 278, 552, and 681.—Petitions of TERUATIHANGA and Others, S. J. LAUGHLIN and Others, W. SCOTT and Others, R. W. BIGNALL and Others, and T. R. HEWITSON and Others.

PETITIONERS pray that steps may be taken to put a stop to the silting of the Ohinemuri and the Waihou Rivers now taking place through the inflow of tailings and other mining *débris* from the claims of certain mining companies.

The Goldfields and Mines Committee have the honour to report on the above-mentioned petitions that, in their judgment, any expenditure on any scheme that may be devised for arresting the silting of the Ohinemuri and the Waihou Rivers should be on a contributory basis, the local bodies whose districts are affected by such silting providing their quota towards the cost. Subject to this proviso the Committee recommends that the petitions be referred to the Government for favourable consideration.

12th November, 1907.

Nos. 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, and 386.—Petitions of E. BIFFEN and Others, C. BROWN and Others, C. BUTLER and Others, D. DONALDSON and Others, T. DUNN and Others, E. ETTRINGHAM and Others, J. HIND and Others, J. MCCOMBIE and Others, G. ROTHWELL and Others, W. STEER and Others, C. SYMES and Others, N. J. TRUSCOTT and Others, A. P. WYLDE and Others, and E. POTTER and Others.

PETITIONERS represent that they are vitally interested in the gold-mining industry; that previous to the establishment of the gold-mining industry in the Waihou and surrounding districts the country around was totally unoccupied, being from its barrenness unfitted for agricultural or pastoral purposes; that in the year 1895 the Waihou and the Ohinemuri Rivers were proclaimed watercourses into which tailings and sludge might be discharged; that in January, 1907, owing to an unprecedented fall of rain, large tracts throughout the colony were flooded; that the Thames Valley was also flooded, farms fronting the left bank of the river being under water; that it is now sought to be proved that the deposition of tailings in said river was the cause of these farms being flooded, whereas, as the past history of the district proves, the natural conditions are such that the said lands must have been flooded in any case; that should the Proclamation be revoked it would prove a very serious blow to the mining industry. Petitioners pray that no steps be taken to prevent the mining companies from exercising their rights to deposit tailings and *débris* in the rivers Waihou and Ohinemuri.

The Goldfields and Mines Committee, having already dealt with the matters involved in the above-mentioned petitions, have the honour to report that they have no recommendation to make.

20th November, 1907.

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