

of mining, and it would not be right to spend it on a purely agricultural district; it should be directly for the benefit of mining.

199. Supposing an agricultural district surrounding Waihi, do you not think it necessary to have good roads?—Yes; that benefits mining indirectly. The Ohinemuri County has also a purely agricultural district that has nothing to do with mining, and it would not be right to spend gold duty on those roads.

200. Do you think the gold duty is a fair duty?—I think it is the fairest duty there is.

201. Is the Waihi Mine responsible for the filling-up of the Ohinemuri River?—I can only speak from hearsay.

202. Will it overflow its banks if not kept clear?—I certainly think so. The bed of the river is rising, and the water must have somewhere to go.

203. *Mr. Herries.*] Has the river been declared a sludge-channel?—I think so; I am sure it has.

204. And all the mines have a legal right to discharge tailings into it?—Yes.

205. No one can claim compensation if it is declared a sludge-channel?—I do not know the law sufficiently to answer that.

206. Is it not a fact that the river is at the present taken up by dredging claims?—I believe so.

207. So that the River Board could not interfere with that portion let for dredging purposes?—I could not answer that, it is a legal question; but the county was opposed to the granting of these claims at the time.

208. Is it not your opinion that it is necessary the borough should have works such as drainage, waterworks, and lighting?—Undoubtedly.

209. It is more necessary in a borough than in a country district?—I would not say that.

210. I mean to say that in a borough these things are not luxuries, but absolute necessities?—Provided they are not extravagant. I cannot agree with the Mayor that there is a very poor water-supply now. Waihi has been fairly supplied, but with the increase of population it is not now sufficient. Having been in the engineering way myself I cannot say the twenty-five-thousand-pound scheme is necessary; but it is necessary to have water.

211. And the abattoir?—The abattoir, water, and drainage are not luxuries.

212. And certain main-street formation must be done?—Certainly.

213. And lighting must be done?—Yes.

214. *Mr. Kidd.*] Is Waikino as large as Waihi?—It is not nearly such a large place. It is provided for out of county revenue, but it is really a continuation of Waihi.

215. *Mr. Herries.*] This silting-up of the river has been going on for some time?—Ever since the Waihi Company have had their large works there.

216. Is the River Board the same as the County Council?—It is the County Council.

217. Before the borough was formed did you take any steps with regard to the silting-up of the river?—No; I do not think we had the money then. All the money was spent in providing for increasing heavy traffic. Waihi sprang up very quickly with the output of gold.

218. *Mr. Kidd.*] You spent all the revenue to make the main road?—A large portion of it.

219. *Mr. Herries.*] Have you any idea how much gold revenue you received up to the formation of the borough?—I could not speak from memory.

220. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Is the Borough of Waihi within the River Board district?—No; only up to the head of navigation, I believe.

221. Why do you not extend your boundaries?—If that were done we should have to rate the whole agricultural district for clearing away the accumulations by the mines. It would be unfair to spend the revenue of the goldfields upon an agricultural district, and it would be unfair to rate the agricultural district on account of the tailings put into the river by the mines. You would include also the rateable area below, and the rateable value down the river is far in excess of that above. I do not think the matter has been before the Council.

222. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] You are an engineer as well as the Clerk of the County Council?—Yes.

223. The County Council has already provided a water-supply for Paeroa?—Yes.

224. And are doing the same for Waikino?—Yes.

225. You have made a special rate for water-supply at Paeroa?—Yes.

226. Did you rate Waihi with regard to water-supply?—No; we could not raise a loan on the security.

227. And whatever expenditure you went to there was from your ordinary revenue derivable from rates and gold duty?—Yes.

228. You know the country between the Thames and Paeroa?—I do.

229. The river is navigable from Thames to Paeroa?—Yes.

230. What is the character of the land on each side of the river?—From the junction downwards it is very good land.

231. You have some dairy factories there?—Yes.

232. Do you know how many?—I believe there are three. There is one on either side of the river below, and one at Paeroa.

233. Do you think, if such a Bill as this was passed, the Government would be justified in subsidising the rates for drainage that the Board might make to help in clearing the river?—I could not say.

234. What is the rate in the county?—Five-eighths of a penny.

235. Have you any special rate?—We have a special rate for charitable aid, but it has not been in force for some years.

236. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you collect any special rate for the loan?—We collected a special rate for the loan for the first year, but when it paid for the interest we dropped collecting it. The water loan is paid out of water charges upon those using the water.