

nesday, the 18th May, at 10 a.m. each day, to meet persons interested in this important inquiry, and generally to arrange for the taking of such evidence as should be voluntarily tendered.

On our assembling there on the 17th May we found that five of the principal interests concerned had arranged to be represented by counsel, as follows :—

Interests represented at Inquiry.

Mr. T. Cotter and Mr. T. A. Moresby for the Ohinemuri County Council and River Board.

Mr. R. McVeagh and Mr. E. Clendon for the Waihi Borough Council.

Mr. M. Myers and Mr. C. J. Tunks for various mining companies.

Mr. A. Hanna for the Waihi-Paeroa Gold-extraction Company (Limited).

Mr. F. H. Mueller for the Ohinemuri River-silting Association.

Mr. Hanna also appeared for the Karangahake Miners' Union.

At a later date Mr. A. Bruce, Secretary to the Thames Harbour Board, appeared for that body, and for the Thames County Council and the Thames Borough Council.

The representation by counsel of various public interests at first appeared to the Commissioners to be unnecessary, and it was pointed out by them that they did not look on the inquiry as a judicial one, in which the evidence must be subject to close sifting and cross-examination, but rather that the evidence was to be voluntarily given, and that the Commissioners would personally visit the places affected, and endeavour to form their own judgment from personal observation as well as from the evidence obtainable.

However, as the principals pressed that counsel might be permitted to appear, urging the importance of the interests concerned, and stating that they hoped to place the evidence in a clearer manner before the Commission by the assistance of counsel than they could do without, no further objection was made by the Commission.

By the general wish of those attending, and with the approval of the Commission, it was then arranged that Paeroa should be made the chief centre at which the Commission should sit for the taking of evidence, and that other places, as the Thames, could be visited as required.

Sittings, Paeroa.

The Commission then adjourned on Wednesday, having intimated that they would sit in the Courthouse at Paeroa on Monday, the 23rd May, at 10 a.m., to take evidence, and that in the meantime the Commissioners would visit the rivers and districts concerned, so as to make themselves familiar with the local conditions. Advertisements were inserted in the local papers, inviting all interested persons to attend and to give such voluntary evidence as they desired.

Visits to Thames, Waihou River, and Waihi.

The Commissioners accordingly left for the Thames by steamer on Thursday, the 19th May, inspected the Thames Harbour the same day, and proceeded by train to Paeroa that evening; next day the Commissioners spent in a launch on the Lower Waihou River, and examined its banks and the adjacent lands from the Junction down as far as Hikutaia; returning in the launch, which drew some 3 ft. of water, from the Junction up to the Ohinemuri Railway Wharf at Paeroa at high water. On Saturday, the 20th May, the Commissioners went by early train to Waihi, returning to Paeroa by the road, and examined the batteries at Waihi, Waikino, and Karangahake, and the Ohinemuri River generally between Waihi and Paeroa.

Local visits.

Many other visits were made during the time the Commission sat at Paeroa, from the 23rd May to the 3rd June, to special places referred to in the evidence,