

Thames Harbour District.

The Thames Harbour Board have control of, and charge dues upon, vessels using, and on goods landed in, that portion of the Lower Waihou known locally as the "Thames River," lying within its jurisdiction, which jurisdiction extends up the river for a distance of about five miles and a half, or to a point about three-quarters of a mile above Turua (Bagnall's Wharf); but, so far as is known, the Harbour Board have not taken any steps to either protect the adjacent lands from flooding or to improve the navigable channel by dredging.

Stop-banks in Thames Harbour District.

The Matatoki Branch of the New Zealand Farmers' Union, as representing the settlers on the east bank of the river, sought that the Commission should consider the flooding of their lands from the river, and from two creeks and drains discharging into it. The Commissioners were unable to personally visit this land, but are of opinion that the stop-banks ought to be made as far down as the mouth of the river, where the flood-levels show that they are required, and that they should be constructed at the same time as the other banks, and be under the supervision of the River Board proposed hereunder, notwithstanding that the portion of the river adjacent thereto is under the supervision of the Thames Harbour Board, and notwithstanding the restriction in section 73 (2) of the River Boards Act, 1908.

Thames County District.

From the southern boundary of the Thames Harbour there is a portion of the river, some five miles and a half long, up to a point about one mile below the mouth of the Hikutaia Creek, which lies in the district of the Thames County Council. That body does not appear to have brought into operation the provisions of the River Boards Act, and this stretch of the river seems at present not to be under the special jurisdiction of any local body.

Ohinemuri River Board.—Dissolution of existing River Board.

From this point, near the mouth of the Hikutaia Stream, the rivers lie within the boundaries of the Ohinemuri County Council as far up as the southern boundary of the county, about one mile north of Te Aroha. In August, 1887 (*vide Gazette* No. 49, 28th July, 1887, page 1006), the Ohinemuri County Council became a River Board, with boundaries coterminous with the county. It has been stated that the River Board was formed solely for the purpose of preventing any extension of the jurisdiction of the Thames Harbour Board into their county. That object having been attained, the county, as a River Board, have apparently been most lax in carrying out their duties, have not struck any rate, have not called upon the occupiers to clear out the willows as they had powers to do under section 77 (1) of the River Boards Act, and in fact have been a River Board only in name—so much so that the Commissioners are unable to recommend that the carrying-out or upkeep of the new works proposed should be intrusted to this body as at present constituted, and therefore recommend that the present River Board should be dissolved:

Piako County Council.

The Upper Waihou, from the southern boundary of the Ohinemuri County to its source above Lichfield, is within the district of the Piako County Council, who have not, so far as is known, formed themselves into a River Board, or taken any serious steps as a Council to prevent the eroded matter from the artificial drains from blocking up the river-bed.

Execution of works by Public Works Department.

The Commissioners are satisfied that there is at present no capable body existing in the district to whom could be safely intrusted the duty of carrying out promptly, and in a proper and intelligent manner, the works of dredging, of forming river-diversions, of erecting stop-banks with their culverts and flood-gates, of cutting down and removing of willows, and generally of enforcing their recommendations. The Commissioners therefore recommend that the works should be carried out as speedily as possible by the Public Works Department.