

84. *Mr. Tunks.*] We shall be able to produce direct evidence on that point. (To witness) Have you ever gone into the question of what these deposits in the river are—tailings, river-silt, or what it is?—We have taken samples of the tailings, which are now in the hands of Mr. Pond, Government Analyst.

*The Chairman:* Is Mr. Pond to be called by you, Mr. Mueller?

*Mr. Mueller:* No; but we expect to get his report at any moment.

85. *Mr. Tunks* (to witness).] Where were the tailings taken from?—Some were taken from below the Junction. We have taken some off our own property, the Chinamen's gardens, and some out of the houses in the Town of Paeroa.

86. Does your analysis show that there is other matter besides the tailings on the land?—Mr. Pond has to make the analysis.

87. You really do not know whether what has come down is all tailings, or river-débris and that kind of thing?—Some of the deposits on the river-bank I think any amateur or professional would take as tailings. I do not think that anybody could mistake the fact that they are tailings. They are here for the Commissioners to look at.

88. What parts are you referring to?—The whole of the bank from Mackaytown down past Netherton, and on the adjoining land also.

89. You are speaking generally, and without any special knowledge on that point?—Except that I have seen tailings. I have seen them come from the mines, and I recognize these as being the same. There is river-sand in the Waihou, which is quite different from these tailings.

90. Have you investigated to see to what extent these banks of silt you refer to on the Waihou—what depth they are? Are they not simply a covering, a sort of blanket on the land?—No: in the Waihou, a quarter of a mile up, there is quite a bank of tailings.

91. What do you mean—does it extend right out into the river?—From the bank, slanting into the river.

92. Where was the old bank; can you give us any idea?—I should say it is encroaching about 8 ft. or 10 ft. It is a bank on the south side.

93. You mean to say that the Waihou at that point is reduced in width by 8 ft. or 10 ft.?—It is a shelving bank running into the river.

94. Has that affected the bed of the river at all?—I did not test it there.

95. Is not that probably merely a result of the willow-trees reducing the speed of the current, and allowing the stuff to settle?—I think not. The Waihou is a fast river, and if you go four miles up you will find no traces of tailings, and the willows are not taking root as they are in the Ohinemuri. If it were an ordinary stoppage caused by willows, they would take root.

96. Do you mean to say that the willows are not taking root in the Waihou?—About four miles up.

97. How long is it since you were last there?—I was up in a steamer about last October.

98. There has been a considerable change since then. Do you not think that the willows have any effect on the Waihou at all?

*The Chairman:* There is no necessity to pursue that further. The right thing for you to do is to ask the Commission to go up and see this spot for themselves. We are a Commission of inquiry to look into these matters. If this were an expert witness I would not in any way prevent you testing his knowledge, but this is not an expert witness. We are quite in a position to judge for ourselves. If you ask us to go and see this place we will go and see it.

99. *Mr. Tunks* (to witness).] You referred to the flood of nine years ago. How did that flood affect the land that you referred to as building-sites?—It left a deposit of tailings in a small low place, about 4 in. deep, covering the grass.

100. Did not that indicate that the land was unsuitable for building purposes?—The people living there seemed quite satisfied. Only an occasional flood occurred—once in nine years. As it is now, the people would not look at the property for building-sites. It was only the lowest portion of the country that was covered at that time.

101. *The Chairman.*] Has the County Council or anybody else kept a record of the floods in any way?

*Mr. Moresby:* I cannot say, except a record has been kept by the County Engineer. Then there is the evidence of Mr. Kenny and Mr. Porritt.

102. *Mr. McVeagh.*] During the last fifteen or eighteen years you have had a vast increase in the population of this district—the Paeroa-Waihi district?—Yes.

103. Can you give the Commissioners any approximate information as to the extent of the increase of population?—No.

104. Would you venture to make any approximation whatever?—I do not know the population of Waihi.

105. Call it 6,000?—And Karangahake?

106. You ought to know. You have been here eighteen years. Were there a thousand people here eighteen years ago in this settlement?—I should think there would be.

107. Much more?—Not a great deal.

108. I think there are about 10,000 in the district now?—There may be.

109. During the greater portion of that time goods have been carried up the river by steamer?

—As far as Paeroa.

110. There has been almost a daily or a tri-weekly service?—A service six days a week.

111. That has been going on for the last fifteen years?—Close on that, I should say.

112. That was not so when you first came here?—No.

113. What was the service when you first came here?—The steamers first brought the goods to the Thames, and the "Patiki" brought the goods up to Paeroa, and by launch and barge.