

20. Ten years since?—It is quite that. A little above me there is a place where the Maoris used to catch whitebait. You cannot catch any there now.

21. *Mr. Mueller.*] You claim that you own the land to the middle of the river?—Yes; that is according to the Act.

22. Previous to the silting, could you use every inch of the land right down to the water's edge?—When I took it it was in its rough state. I spent a lot of money on it. When I pastured it, cocksfoot grew luxuriantly right down to the water's edge.

23. What is the position now as regards your pasture right down to the water's edge?—It is sand there as high as this ceiling. The land is very good. You will find no land in the Waikato equal to it.

24. What about your fences?—They are all destroyed since the last flood. I have had to make my fences four times—they have been destroyed every time. I have moved them back from the river. Ill health prevented me inspecting the paddocks before, but when I went over them yesterday I was astonished to see what the flood has done. Sand has gone all over the farm. In some places it is light, but in one paddock there is 12 in. of sand on it.

25. What is this stuff that is on your land that is the height of this room?—It is all silt which has come down from the mines.

26. What area of that land can you say is absolutely destroyed?—To put the land back in its former position would require more expenditure than the land is worth—that is, in respect to 40 acres of the land.

27. Forty acres of the land is practically destroyed?—Yes.

28. And the whole of that land was covered by the last flood?—Yes; in some places not up to any appreciable depth.

29. *The Chairman.*] Was your house flooded?—No; the house and garden stand high.

30. How much land is there to the house and garden?—About an acre.

31. About an acre out of 85 acres was not flooded?—Yes.

32. *Mr. Mueller.*] Can you tell us the effect of this fine deposit on the grass itself—the effect as regards the cattle?—It kills them. They browse about the decaying roots of the grass, and they cannot eat it without taking up some of the silt. I have lost young stock through it. We have opened the young stock after death, and have seen the stuff in them. I have lost full-grown cattle through their getting bogged in the silt, and I have lost young cattle through their eating the grass and taking in the sand. The contents of the stomach was like coarse hair or fine wire.

33. *The Chairman.*] Is it not a fact that cattle in other districts have a sort of material in them, and round in shape?—I believe that is so.

34. It is not peculiar to Paeroa?—No.

35. Have you ever seen such substance, and round in shape, taken out of animals in other places?—No.

36. So that you cannot compare the two?—No.

37. *Mr. Mueller.*] What is the nature of the stuff that was taken out of the cattle that died?—In eating they take in some of the fibre of the pennyroyal, and silt with it, and that kills them.

38. Can you state whether the stuff you have seen inside the cattle is actually silt?—In the round mass there is actually silt as well as the fibrous material.

39. Can you give us any actual figures of the amount of damage you have suffered from the silt?—I have been losing £30 a year. That is a very modest estimate. That is reckoning the pastoral land at £2 an acre. Mr. Nicholls leased grazing-paddocks at £2 an acre, and I base my calculations on that. I do not think the estimate is an extravagant one.

40. That is your continual loss?—Yes; that is what I have been losing for some years.

41. Have you been put to any extra expense on account of these floods?—The fencing has had to be shifted from time to time.

42. And the cattle destroyed?—Yes.

43. Can you give any amount as to the cattle destroyed?—I lost two full-grown cows and about five calves.

44. Is this trouble increasing?—Every flood seems to increase it. There is nowhere for the silt to go to. It must come up on to the land.

45. How do the floods now compare with the floods of previous years?—In previous years we never had a flood. We had freshes, but they did us more good than harm. We always knew when we were going to have a fresh, because they always came from the east, never from the south or west. This last one came from the east. In the former floods or freshes there was nothing in the water to injure the land.

46. Now, does it take much rain to cause a flood?—Twenty-four hours' rain does it.

47. *Mr. Vickerman.*] You would not get a flood in westerly weather now, would you?—No.

48. *Mr. Mueller.*] You were agent for the Northern Steamship Company?—Yes, for about fifteen years, until about two years ago.

49. What can you state as regards the navigation of the river during that period?—The navigation was all right.

50. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us the draughts of the vessels of the company that traded here when you were agent?—The "Paeroa," about 6 ft 6 in.; the "Ohinemuri," 6 ft. to 7 ft. I am speaking of the vessels loaded.

*Mr. Moresby:* That information is given in the evidence of Mr. Porritt before the Mines Committee—question 120.

51. *Mr. Mueller.*] From the commencement of your experience as regards the navigation, how far did the steamers come up?—First, they came up to the Wharf Street Wharf, about the centre of Paeroa.

52. The boats that came up there were the "Paeroa" and the "Ohinemuri"?—Yes.