

53. After that, what happened?—Of course, there was opposition. After the opposition knocked off, larger boats, the "Waimarie" and "Taniwha," were put on. The Junction became the wharf then.

54. And the Junction remained the head of the navigation for some years?—Yes.

55. They are still trading?—Yes.

56. How does the draught of the "Waimarie" and "Taniwha" compare with the "Paeroa" and "Ohinemuri"?—They could not come up under 7 ft. or 8 ft.

57. What was the reason the Northern Steamship Company ceased to run their boats to one wharf, and ran them to the Junction Wharf?—Because they could not get up.

58. What was the reason of their leaving the Junction Wharf and coming up only as far as Te Puke?—Because they could not get up to the Junction.

59. When the steamers ran to the Junction Wharf, can you give us any idea of the depth of the water at the Junction Wharf?—When they first ran there I suppose it was about 10 ft.

60. You have seen steamers stirring up the mud and silt?—Yes; they do that always when they are late on the tide.

61. Can those steamers get up to the Junction Wharf?—Not nearly.

62. What would be the result if the steamers ceased to run to the Te Puke Wharf? What effect would it have on the navigation?—I expect all the channel would be filled up. If they did not keep the channel open, in a few days they could not get up at all. That is my impression, and that is the opinion of the captains too.

63. I suppose you are rated on your land that is destroyed?—Yes.

64. *The Chairman.*] How much a year do you pay?—About £12, I think.

65. You know the land of Mr. Barrett?—Yes; his land adjoins mine.

66. He has 39½ acres?—Yes.

67. Can you say how much of that land is affected by the silt?—I should say about half of it—about 20 acres. I think the whole of the 20 acres has been rendered useless.

68. Can you state the loss he has suffered through the last flood?—I expect he suffered in about the same proportion as myself.

69. Can you state the depth of the deposit on his land?—From 12 ft. to 15 ft. near the river, and it goes back to a much lower depth.

70. What was his land used for?—Pastoral purposes. There is one small portion in crop. The land has been destroyed.

71. Is there anything else you would like to put before the Commission?—The best evidence is for the Commission to go and see the land, and you will find whether I am exaggerating or not. I intend to ask the Commission to visit the land. It is very handy. It is one of the very good examples of silt-deposit. It is close to the town.

*The Chairman:* We shall see not only the picked properties, but also those that have not been affected.

72. *Mr. Tunks.*] How long ago was there a bridge built below your place?—About thirty years ago.

73. Was it not the building of the bridge that stopped the navigation going up to your place?—No; because we have got barges up through the bridge.

74. Could steamers go up to your place after the bridge was built?—I do not think so.

75. As a matter of fact, the building of the bridge did to a large extent stop navigation up to your place?—Not at all.

76. *The Chairman.*] What did you bring up or down in the barges?—Firewood was brought up from the old mill in barges.

77. You did not take any produce down?—No.

78. *Mr. Tunks.*] Why not?—There was never any to take.

79. It was the tailings prevented you using the water above the bridge thirty years ago?—No.

80. Would not the stopping of the navigation of itself cause the river to silt up?—There was not sufficient of it to keep the river open.

81. When did you first begin to find the river silting up or building up?—Some time after the mines began to work. Before they began to work we had a clear crystal stream.

82. When did you last take a barge up as far as your place?—About four years ago. We got up at the top of the tide.

83. Four years ago it was as good as ever for that purpose?—No; we got up on the top of the tide. The rise is 4 ft.

84. The railway-bridge has been built about sixteen years, I think?—Yes, I dare say.

85. Would not that have the effect of bringing the navigation still further down the river?—No.

86. It had no effect at all on the navigation?—As far as the steamers were concerned it had. Barges used to come up.

87. Do not the steamers' propellers help to keep the river open?—Of course they do.

88. These bridges that have been built from time to time had the effect of pushing the steamers further down the river?—I do not know that they had that effect, because they can go through the bridges.

89. Was it only the silting-up of the river that caused the company to move from the Junction to Te Puke? Do you not save a considerable amount of time on the tide?—You save some distance.

90. Can you not save about an hour on the tide by coming to Te Puke instead of to the Junction?—Yes.

91. Was not that one of the reasons that influenced the company to make the change?—No, I do not think it was. If they could have come up they would have done so. They were very accommodating people.