

3. In regard to the last piece of land, did any one agree to lease it?—Yes, it was leased; but the lessee (Cassrels) has given it up on account of the floods. That land is subject to floods, and the flood-water deposits silt on the land. About 3 acres is liable to flood. In the case of the Komata land, a great deal of damage has been done; all along the bank of the river is damaged. In former years the bank of the Komata Creek was about 7 ft. high. That was good land.

4. What was grown on it in previous years?—Potatoes, corn, kumeras, melons, and oats.

5. What can be grown on it now?—Nothing can be grown along the banks at the present time. Most of it has slipped into the creek. The Komata Creek at the present time is full of silt. About 6 acres is damaged of the 222 acres, and about 3 acres of the 50 acres. The water overflows the 40 acres below the railway-line. The 50 acres on the bank of the Waihou was all covered.

6. Formerly were there fish in the Komata Creek?—Yes, plenty of eels and whitebait; but since the mill has been erected at Komata the eels have all been destroyed.

7. Was the water used for drinking purposes?—Yes; and now we have to drink tank-water. In the summer-time the tanks get dry, and we have to go about a mile up the creek and carry the water down from a stream.

8. Do you remember steamers or barges coming up the Komata Creek?—Yes; they used to come about a mile up the creek. There is not enough water in the creek for steamers to come up now. Some parts of the creek are only a foot deep.

9. Were you employed to clear out drains in the vicinity?—Yes, we cleared out Mr. Hubbard's drain twice. We cleared nothing but silt out of the drain. It was about two spades deep. The drain continued silting up after every flood. There is sand and tailings in the drain now.

10. Can you tell us the nature of the banks of the Waihou opposite your land years ago compared with what they are now?—The banks in former years were very steep—in some places about 8 ft., and when the tide was out about 10 ft. Just now the banks are all full of silt, extending out for about 30 ft. from the original bank. In the 50 acres the drains leading out to the Waihou are all full of sand at the mouth. We have to be continually clearing them out. Owing to the silt, the fences have to be continually shifted out.

11. *Mr. McVeagh.*] What would you sell the land for now?—Some of it is worth £8 an acre, and the rest about £12 an acre.

12. How much of it is cultivated?—About 100 acres?—The oats were taken out in March, and two acres of potatoes in April.

13. How many tons did you get?—About 6 tons. There were about 2 tons good, and the rest were bad.

14. Do the Natives milk any cows?—Yes, and supply milk to the factory. There are twelve milking at the present time. I was milking sixteen in the summer.

15. What difference would it have made to the milking and the crops if the land had not been flooded?—The cattle would have been in better condition, and the crops would not have been damaged.

WILLIAM BETTIS examined. (No. 28A.)

1. *Mr. Myers.*] You are a master mariner, and you are master of the steamer "Waimarie"?—Yes.

2. Trading between here and Auckland?—Yes.

3. How long have you been trading between here and Auckland?—Close on twenty years; about twelve years on the "Waimarie."

4. What is the draught of the "Waimarie"?—Six feet light—3 ft. 6 in. forward, and 6 ft. aft.

5. Loaded?—We generally load her to about 7 ft.—that is the deepest.

6. Prior to being in charge of the "Waimarie," what steamer were you in charge of?—The "Ohinemuri." She was 350 tons gross. Her draught was about 6 ft. 6 in.—that is, in the after end. She only drew 2 ft. 6 in. forward.

7. How long were you in charge of that steamer?—Two years.

8. Then you were in the "Paeroa"?—Yes. Her draught was about 6 ft., and about the same forward, light. She was only 54 tons register. I was trading in here about two years. I was in charge of the "Ruby" for about seventeen months. She was 32 tons register, her draught being about 6 ft. aft and very near the same as the "Paeroa" forward. I was also in the "Patiki," 27 tons register, draught about 2 ft. 9 in.

9. Your present vessel, when loaded, draws up to 7 ft.?—Yes.

10. And you come up the river as far as what point?—Te Puke.

11. Can you give any idea of the margin that you have as a rule?—It varies with the tide, flood-water, and all sorts of things. I do not suppose I have a foot of margin, except at very high spring tides, when I am loaded—that is, in the most shallow place.

12. Is there a well-recognized channel?—Yes; the channel has been much the same for years—that is, the same course.

13. What do you say with regard to the depth?—It might be 6 in. or a little more shallower than it used to be years ago. I think it is about 6 in. shallower.

14. How many years ago?—Twelve or fourteen years ago—that is, as far as Te Puke.

15. Did you come up the river the day before yesterday?—Yes.

16. Did you have any difficulty in bringing your vessel up on that day?—We had a pretty thick fog in the mouth of the river.

17. But, leaving the fog out of the question, did you have any difficulty?—It was a rather anxious time, because the tide was ebbing when I got here, instead of flowing, as it should have been.

18. Did you stick at all coming up the river?—We touched the bottom at Te Puke ferry. We were late on the tide.