

ALFRED KENYON ALEXANDER examined. (No. 30.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] You are a farmer, residing at Netherton?—Yes.
2. You are chairman of the Netherton branch of the New Zealand Farmers' Union?—Yes.
3. You own land at Netherton?—Yes, a little bit below Netherton: 323 acres, Te Iringa-o-Porori Block.
4. You supply milk to the Netherton creamery?—Yes.
5. Has your land been affected by flooding and by silt?—Not by the silt; it has been affected by floods.
6. Have you a frontage to the river?—Yes. I have a wharf there which I erected about three years and a half ago.
7. What was the state of the banks at that time?—They were all soft mud. I had to wear gum boots to put the piles in.
8. What is the state of the bank now at the place where you wore gum boots?—It is firm.
9. Can cattle walk on it?—Yes.
10. Could they have walked on the bank at the time you erected the wharf?—Not without getting bogged.
11. Your wharf is below Netherton?—About two miles below the Netherton Wharf.
12. Roughly, how far are you below Te Puke Wharf?—I should say from nine to ten miles.
13. Years ago was there a bank below your wharf that was used for any special purpose?—Yes, there was a bank of sand. I have seen settlers taking sand away for concreting purposes. It was called Deputation Snag or Bank.
14. How far below your wharf would that be, roughly?—I suppose 6 or 7 chains. It continues for about 20 chains.
15. Do they use that now?—No.
16. Why not?—Because the tailings in it makes it absolutely useless for that purpose.
17. *The Chairman.*] Do they take it for any other purpose?—No.
18. *Mr. Mueller.*] When you went there, what was the nature of that bank?—It was all pure river-sand. If you stood on it you could work into it to a certain extent, but you cannot do that now. Now it is firm.
19. Do you own a launch?—Yes.
20. You use it yourself?—Yes, practically every day of the week, and at all stages of the tide. I take my milk to the creamery in it. The launch draws 2 ft. empty, and about 2 ft. 10 in. when loaded.
21. About how long have you been using your launch on the river?—About two years and eight months.
22. Previous to that, did you have anything to do with a boat on the river?—Yes, I took my milk up in a flat-bottomed boat for about fourteen months.
23. From your experience of the river, what is the position with regard to the navigation?—It is getting more difficult every day at low tides.
24. Do you keep your launch at the wharf?—Yes.
25. What depth of water have you there?—About 4 ft. There was a little more before I had the launch, and up to the last twelve months there would be about 4 ft. 6 in.; but now there is about 18 in. to 2 ft. of fresh water in the river when it rises.
26. From that point do you find it easy to get into the channel?—No.
27. The end of your wharf is not in the river?—No. I have about 25 ft. from the wharf: I have to go towards the western bank in very low tides.
28. Since when have you noticed that shallowing?—Since the September flood in 1909—practically within the last six months.
29. Was any of your land flooded during the last flood?—Yes; the river broke right across the bank at the Waimarie Bend.
30. How long was your land flooded?—It was ten days before it all got away, and what did not run away soaked through.
31. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] How long was the Waihou River bank-high? You say it was on your property for ten days?—The property is lower at the bank, and it takes some considerable time to get away.
32. Are there no drains through it?—Yes; but the drains were full up.
33. *Mr. Mueller.*] What effect did the last September floods have on your cattle?—The floods destroyed the pasture for months, and it meant that I had to either sell the cattle or keep them to starve. I sold some of them.
34. Other people were doing the same at the same time?—Yes.
35. Can you estimate the damage you suffered in the matter of cash?—It would be a hard matter for me to estimate my loss. I lost the grass, and I did not resow because I had not the money, and I had to take the chance whether it would grow again. The loss in growing-capacity of the land is such that I cannot estimate it at the present time.
36. Have you noticed the bottom of the river, in your navigation up and down, by poling?—Yes, I am constantly poling to find the deepest water.
37. What can you state about the bottom of the river?—It is practically hard. It is very firm in places, and in other places it is not quite so firm.
38. Do you remember producing the report of Mr. Aston, chemist of the Department of Agriculture, when a previous case was before the Warden?—Yes. [Department of Agriculture: Annual Report, 1909: Chemistry Division. B. C. Aston, Chief Chemist to the Department. Pages 459 to 464.]
39. *Mr. Tunks.*] You have told us that this deposit of tailings is now useless. Since when have the settlers ceased to use it?—Within the last two years.