

shift from there on account of the water getting into their houses, and not in exceptional floods either.

20. The report further states, "All the out-districts have been completely cut off, and none of the coaches arrived here to-day, with the exception of a buggy carrying mails from the Thames. The conveyance was pluckily driven through by Mr. A. Crowther, who had several narrow escapes along the road. Mr. F. Dryland also essayed to drive Mr. Short's big coach through to the Thames this morning, and eventually reached Puriri. He then saw that the bridges were simply floating, and, in consequence, he turned back. He informed me that Hikutaia was in a fearful state of flood, and the horses were almost swimming in front of Mr. Scott's farm." Do you recall all that?—I do not, but still it was a very severe flood, because it came down very rapidly.

21. In substance that report does state what was the fact, that there was a very large flood about June, 1898?—Yes, an exceptionally severe one for a short time. Mr. Claude Purchase told me that the Waitekauri Creek, where his house was, rose 20 ft. in twenty minutes. Mr. Purchase was a surveyor, and resident there.

22. That accounts also, I suppose, for the Ohinemuri rising very rapidly here: you would expect that?—Yes. Mr. Purchase's idea was that there had been a cloudburst up the Waitekauri Valley.

23. *Mr. Mueller.*] You know Tarariki and Doherty's Creeks, between here and Karangahake?—Yes.

24. Are these creeks crossable in even a comparatively small flood?—I do not know about Doherty's, but I know Tarariki is often not.

25. Would the water coming over by Porritt's or Coote's, or at Buchanan's Bridge, come through the township?—Not necessarily. If it got to a certain height it would come in below from the river, but not down the road. There is high land between Porritt's and the township.

#### ASHER CASSRELS examined. (No. 32.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] You own land on the banks of the Ohinemuri River?—Yes.

2. Where is that land?—I have about 14 acres at the Junction. I have about 427 acres on the Mill Road on the Ohinemuri—Piraurahi No. 1 and No. 7; I have another piece of land higher up towards Paeroa, called Koromatua, and some others, about 67 acres in all. I have another little block of about 12 acres in all, near the railway-station.

*List compiled from Plan (Exhibit No. 20) of Land near Paeroa owned by Asher Cassrels.*—Near Junction: Ouekaharau, 8a. 19p.; Huepakari Nos. 1 and 2, 6a. Near railway-station: Opatito No. 2, 7a. 3r. 27p.; Momonatui, 3a. 2r. 26p. On Kuaotiti Stream: Te Manuka No. 2, 24a. 1r. 26p.; Koromatua Nos. 1A and 2A., 33a.; Puka-teawainui No. 1, 4a.; Ngaruawahia, 3a.; Papaturoa No. 9, 3a. On Upper Waihou: Piraurahi No. 1, 382a. 7p.; Whiunga, 45a. 2r. 12p.

3. What has to be done to bring that land into cultivation and use?—Some of it, near the Junction, has been in cultivation for a good few years. It is in grass. As to Piraurahi, formerly I could not do very much because the title was not completed, but since the title was completed a certain amount of trouble commenced, because water used to be on the road and lodged there. A few years ago I gave the County Council authority to cut a drain through into the Ohinemuri on the condition that they put in a flood-gate and put a bridge across the drain. The flood-gate was put up after a certain time. Between the time that they made the drain and built the flood-gate we had a heavy flood, and it brought in a lot of silt on the land and road. That would be within the last three or four years. After that the flood-gate was put up.

4. *The Chairman.*] What is a satisfactory flood-gate from your point of view?—I am no engineer, but, anyway, the last flood took the gate away. I was going to put in a large drain about 8 ft. at the top and 4 ft. at the bottom and as much depth as I could get—about 3 ft. 6 in. or 4 ft. But when I saw the flood-gate washed away I came to the conclusion it would be no good. The reason is this: If it was all ploughable land it would be bad enough for the silt to come on it, but you might manage to plough it in; but, as most of our land here is alluvial, if the silt once comes in to any thickness you might as well say good-bye to the land, because you cannot plough or top sow it. The silt will not take any seed: they do not like one another. I might say my land would have been all covered with silt if it had not been for the scrub growing there which arrested the silt.

5. *Mr. Mueller.*] What is the value of the land?—If there was no trouble with the silt I think as farming land it would be worth now, in the rough state, £10 per acre. I know an Auckland agent told me he could get me that price for the land until I told him of the trouble with the silt.

6. Do you know any land that was sold at that price?—I know land sold some years ago not very far from it at £10 per acre.

7. How long ago was that?—About twelve years ago.

8. Can you show us the section on the map?—Yes, it is Kaipakakohi. I may state there was no road on the map in those days.

9. In the 1907 flood you lost some special amount?—When talking about floods I have been in many floods here, big ones and small ones, but in early years the floods from the Ohinemuri only lasted twelve hours. The tide would back it up, and as soon as the tide went out you could get across. The Waihou floods lasted a little longer in a north-westerly wind. But of course these floods used to do some good, as they brought down a good alluvial deposit.

10. But coming down to the 1907 flood?—I was then an unfortunate farmer, but I did not farm the land myself—I had some one with me. I had about 7 acres of oats on my Koromatua section, which was all cut and stacked and ready to put in the loft; but the flood came and took it right over the fence.