

12. You knew the Ohinemuri and Waihou Rivers before there were any willows?—No. There were a few willows at Mr. Thorp's. I believe his father in coming from Home brought them from Napoleon's tomb.

13. Except these few at Mr. Thorp's you have seen the whole of the willows grow on the Ohinemuri and Waihou Rivers?—Yes. Most of the willows down the Waihou going towards the Thames have grown from branches broken off higher up.

14. In your opinion, are the floods higher now in consequence of the existence of the willows?—I do not think the willows affect the Ohinemuri much.

15. Why?—They are not, as a rule, growing down in the water. The place most affected with willows is on the Waihou River below the Okahukura Native settlement, close to the Tirohia Railway-station.

16. Then, in your opinion, the Waihou River below Okahukura has been materially affected by the growth of willows?—Yes.

17. *Mr. Mueller.*] In what way?—In the first place they are growing so close that it is as much as the steamers can do to get through. They are weeping-willows, and all the branches hanging down in the river within 20 ft. of the bank stop a certain amount of water.

18. *The Chairman.*] Has that, in your opinion, increased the height of the floods?—I think it has tended to increase the overflow of the Waihou, which runs down to Netherton and to the Awaite Stream.

19. Do you think it has had any effect in raising the bed of the river?—Not there.

20. Anywhere else?—I think, down about Mr. Thorp's place the willows have helped to gather and stop the silt. Taking the Waihou from the Junction up to Te Aroha, there is very little difference in it. There is a place where we used to ford the Waihou River near Mangaiti. I have asked the steamer-captains and also the Maoris whether there is any alteration in the depth there, and they say it is the same as it was.

21. Do I understand from you that in a flood the waters of the Waihou have always been in the habit of joining the waters of the Awaite?—Yes. I can say that in August, 1864, I had to wade through from the Waihou River to the Awaite Stream.

22. Have you any idea as to whether it is worse now than in 1864? Is there more risk of the water breaking through now from the Waihou into the Awaite than there was thirty years ago?—I do not think there is any difference now, except that the willows may tend to put it there. But there is an additional factor. The water runs over from the Ohinemuri to the Waihou, and banks it up for a considerable distance.

23. Do you know that of your own knowledge?—Yes.

24. Since when?—A good long time now. I might mention that at the time the flax-mill was put up I had a great deal to do there getting the Natives to cede flax rights: so I took particular notice of it.

25. When was the flax-mill put up?—About seven or eight years ago. I would mention in this connection that the owner of the flax-mill had to make a road back to Awaite for the purpose of getting his flax out. The bank of the Waihou is a foot or two higher than the land at the back, which is all swamp, and by cutting through this bank directly the river rises the water begins to go through the cutting, and that contributes to the water going through to Netherton.

26. So that, as a result of this road which has been cut, the water now gets in back to the Awaite and to Netherton?—It does not get to the Awaite, but it goes back to Netherton. There is a ridge of dry ground about a mile and a half long, and that runs into the flat land that used to be covered with fern.

27. Supposing you go past Paul's settlement, what do you get?—Some miles of swamp nearly to the Kerepehi.

28. We were told there is a ridge running out from Kerepehi?—Only a short distance. There must be about four miles of swamp between this flat fern land and the high land between Kerepehi.

29. *Mr. Mueller.*] Do you know the nature of the river at the Junction?—I do. It is right alongside my place. We have land extending down to the Waihou River.

30. Does the present condition of the Junction contribute in any way to the flooding of Netherton?—Very considerably.

31. Why?—There is a shallow formed there which, I think, partly owes its origin to a groin which was put in to straighten the Waihou and make a better channel for the steamer. I believe that assisted in catching silt and forming the island.

32. Do you know whether the flooding at Netherton has been more serious and more frequent in recent years?—It has. I may state that below the Junction it is very seldom the Waihou itself overflowed its banks right down to the mouth of the river. All the water that floods Netherton is from the overflow of the Waihou between Tirohia Railway-station and the Junction.

33. You say that the floods have been more frequent and more severe during later years: would you say that the increase in the flooding was caused by the willows in the upper Waihou or by the obstruction at the Junction? What is the cause of the very frequent flooding of recent years?—Both are factors in the case.

34. Which would you say was the main factor?—It is difficult to say. The willows have contributed, no doubt, but there is no silting going on in the upper Waihou. There was a little for a time, when they were making drains at Te Aroha; but that *débris* was composed of pumice sand, which does not settle like these tailings. It is always moving.

35. *Mr. Cotter.*] You know intimately the present condition of the river from the Junction up to Paeroa and above it?—Yes.

36. I will take you to that part of the river above this traffic-bridge. You have told us that, in your opinion, the accumulation of silt or tailings there has not been very greatly contributed