

9. Are these the samples returned by Mr. Baker after treatment, together with this report?—Yes. [Exhibit No. 31.]

10. *The Chairman.*] Will you tell us where you took the various samples from?—No. 1 was from Cryer's Swamp Road, near the river.

11. What portion of the river?—Just opposite where the barges get sand.

12. Was the drain you took it from under water?—It was fairly dry.

13. How far from the river-bank?—About half a chain. Sample No. 2 is from the same drain half a mile from the river. No. 3 is from the Wharepoa Road drain on the south side, half a mile back from the river. All are from the bottom of the drain—not the sides. I may mention this is under tidal influence. No. 4 is three samples in one from the bed of the main Thames River near Turua, at low-water mark. We took it out with a baler from a flat-bottomed punt.

14. These drains have no connection with the hills at all?—No; there are no streams running into them.

15. *Mr. Bruce.*] Up to eight years ago there was always a sandbank in the Thames River opposite Turua?—Yes.

16. Is it there yet?—Yes.

17. But at that time it was practically one at low water?—It was one at half-tide.

18. With a fairly deep channel on each side?—Yes.

19. About that time you were looking for a suitable site in the Thames River to fix a ferry?—Yes, in 1902.

20. And you hit upon this as a favourable spot?—I made a survey, and took depths and everything else. This is the plan I made [Exhibit No. 32] in connection with the report I made fixing a ferry at this spot. I have also a little map I made of the locality shortly afterwards. In January, 1903, nine months afterwards, the channel was quite closed, and a bank had grown over the place where I had previously had 1 ft. 6 in. to 2 ft. 6 in. of water. Consequently the scheme for a ferry had to be abandoned.

21. Have you thought out the cause of that eastern channel being filled up?—I took it to be owing to the immense amount of silt coming down the river; for I had known that channel to be open for thirty years before that.

22. Would this be mine-silt or battery-silt or silt from the drainage of the country?—I took these samples to prove what it was. It is very difficult to say unless you analyse it.

23. *The Chairman.*] You practically took these samples only recently, then?—Yes, for a case before the Warden's Court.

24. *Mr. Bruce.*] In 1876, when you were District Engineer for the Provincial Government, did you have the Ohinemuri snagged at any time?—Immediately after the opening of the gold-fields I got instructions, and had the river snagged from the junction with the Waihou at Paeroa to slightly above the present county traffic-bridge.

25. Shortly after that snagging did the Government steamer "Luna" go up the river with Sir Donald McLean?—Yes; I saw her at Paeroa.

26. Have you viewed that locality recently in passing through?—Yes; I was up about twelve months ago.

27. Do you think the "Luna" could get up there now?—No.

28. How far do you consider the bed of the river has been raised at that point?—I had about an hour to spare, and I went over it just for my own satisfaction, and I reckon, after raising these large trees and snagging the river we had about 7 ft. of water under ordinary conditions, and without heavy rains, below the bridge. I consider the bed of the river has risen actually 7 ft. or 8 ft. now compared with what it was.

29. *The Chairman.*] You say the bed of the river has risen, and the water-level has risen with it, 7 ft. to 8 ft. about what is called Snodgrass's Landing?—Yes.

30. In other words, there is some 7 ft. or 8 ft. less bank above water-line now than there used to be?—Yes.

31. Where there is 5 ft. now there used to be 12 ft. and 13 ft.?—Yes.

32. Therefore, at the present time a very much less flood by some 7 ft. or 8 ft. will spread over the land?—Yes. The width appeared to me to be very much the same.

33. *Mr. Clendon.*] I suppose you have read in the papers the evidence given before this Commission at Paeroa?—I read some of Mr. Metcalf's report. I missed some of the evidence.

34. Were you an official of the Thames County Council in 1895?—Yes.

35. Did your Council approve or disapprove of the proclamation of the Ohinemuri River as a sludge-channel?—I do not know that the matter was ever referred to them. I do not remember. It was never referred to me.

36. Were these three samples taken by you from above or below Hikutaia Stream?—Below.

37. Does the Maratoto Stream run into the Hikutaia?—Yes, it is a branch of the Hikutaia.

38. Have mining operations been carried on for a great number of years on Maratoto and Hikutaia Streams?—Yes; pretty extensive at Maratoto, but not at Hikutaia.

39. Have not quartz or tailings from Maratoto come down the Hikutaia Stream into the Thames River?—I cannot say, because it is out of my district.

40. Is not the Hikutaia Stream the boundary of your district?—Yes.

41. Is it not a fact that large quantities of white sand similar to tailings come down the Hikutaia Stream every year?—About thirty years ago a great fresh took away a great deal of land and a lot of whitish-brown sand.

42. You took one sample from this bank opposite Turua?—There were three samples in one taken at different places about a chain apart.

43. Can you tell the Commission of what that bank opposite Turua is composed?—I should call it a sandbank.