

202. Do you know about the damage that it did down here?—I never heard of it doing damage down here. It was evidently a cloud-burst on the other side.

203. Then the fall was to the other side?—The water came this way, too, but it did not reach as far as here with any damaging effect.

204. Do you mean that half the fall came this way and half the other way, so that it might have been very severe at Waihi, but only half of it came this side?—There was about the heaviest flood at the Tauranga Bridge that I have seen at Waihi.

205. *The Chairman.*] We had it that the 1910 flood was over a house up there: was this one over a house too?—No; I did not see the 1910 flood. This was the heaviest I have seen.

206. *Mr. Cotter.*] Did you see the effect of it so far as the railway tunnel was concerned?—It had no effect there, so far as I heard.

207. *Mr. Vickerman.*] Was not that caused by the tailings below being banked up?—No; there is practically no deposit of tailings at the Tauranga Bridge.

208. But lower down?—It might have had that effect.

209. *Mr. Cotter.*] How many days was it after that flood—what you call the biggest flood—that you came down to this neighbourhood?—I did not come down; I came up.

210. You speak of it having no effect at Paeroa: do you speak of your own knowledge or from report in the newspapers?—It was common knowledge that it did not come down here. It is remarkable that it has not been mentioned in this inquiry.

211. Can you give the Commission any idea of the first year when what I may call the silt question commenced to be talked about as likely to injure either the river or the settlers on the bank?—No, I do not know that I could give the date.

212. Anwhere near?—I know there was a very heavy flood here in 1898.

213. There was no talk then about silt either doing damage or being likely to do damage?—No.

214. You gave evidence in 1907 before the Committee of the House?—Yes.

215. Can you not cast your memory back, and say how far before that it became acute?—Speaking very roughly, I should think it was four years before that.

216. Do I understand that it was about a year after the formation of the borough before it first began to be talked about?—I should think it was more.

217. Is it not a fact that it was only a couple of years before 1907 that the damaging effects of the silt were appreciated or talked about?—Really I should not like to say to two or three years.

218. Have you any correspondence with the Council or any resolutions passed by the Council with regard to this silt question?—I cannot remember resolutions. I think it is probable there were resolutions, inasmuch as we presented a petition and proceeded to Wellington to attend the Mines Committee.

219. Can you give us any idea of the first year when the matter was brought up in the Council?—I think it was in 1907.

220. Did the then Council take up the attitude that you have told the Commission the present Council takes up with regard to this silting trouble? Has the Council at the present time passed such a resolution?—No.

221. Is there a formal declaration now?—No.

222. You have told the Commission of the attitude that the present Borough Council has taken up. I am asking now with regard to the attitude of the Council in 1907?—Yes, certainly.

223. The attitude they then took up was that they were in no way responsible, but that the Government were wholly responsible for it?—No, I said that my opinion was that the Government was responsible.

224. I am asking you as Town Clerk of Waihi?—I take it the Town Clerk can only express the opinion of the Council when it is expressed by resolution. I have given the opinion of the Council, but it was not expressed by resolution.

225. Does that answer apply to the year 1907?—Yes.

226. Do I understand that when you, and the then Mayor (Mr. Gilmour), and Councillor Donaldson gave evidence before the Mines Committee, you and they knew that was the feeling of the majority of the Council?—I knew, any way. I do not know what evidence they gave. I was not present.

227. Do you mean to say that you were so little interested in this matter as Town Clerk that you have not since that time seen this report?—Yes, I do.

228. Not even up to the present moment?—I saw it the other day. That was the first thing I heard of it. I may say that I had a family trouble at the time. I gave my evidence and left.

229. May I take it that there has never been but one opinion held by the majority of the Waihi Borough Council, and that was that they should hold on to their gold duty, allow no part of it to go to remedy those evils, and that the whole and sole responsibility lay with the Government?—Yes.

230. You have the balance-sheets of the Borough Council. Take the one ending 31st March, 1909. Take the general rate: is that correct, putting it down as 6d.?—Yes.

231. I have here the document "Statistical Tables of Local Government." Under the heading "Rates, including special," there is put down a sum of £829 16s. 9d. Is that correct according to your balance-sheet?—Yes. Under my heading of "Rates" I do not include the Government subsidy. £829 16s. 9d. is the actual amount of rates collected.

232. Take the next item, "Licenses, rents, and other sources, £7,407 16s. 7d.": what are the items included in that?—Auctioneers' licenses, £40 10s.; publicans', £162; wholesale liquor, £20; vehicles, £14; other sources, £545; water-supply, £1,480; sanitary services, £1,064; abattoirs, £783; gas, £3,542. That comes up to £7,400.

233. In the expenditure column there is £1,882 16s. 2d.: can you tell us whether that includes any charges relating to the production of gas, or whether it is practically what is called office-management?—I think those are general charges.