

78. *Mr. Flatman.*] I think you state in the early part of your evidence that the silt kills the grass in the early part of the year: does it kill it in any other part of the season?—I do not think so; it kills the clover.

79. How much per acre do you estimate your land has been damaged through being silted?—I do not know; I never made it up.

80. *Mr. Vickerman.*] Before the railway-line was made you would not have been able to settle there, would you?—I think so. The railway-bank dammed back the river on the top side of the property.

81. *The Chairman.*] Are you carrying any less stock now than you were before the last flood?—I should think I am carrying a hundred head less. I have about 183 head of cattle on the farm now, and about 150 sheep. I have been selling sheep lately.

82. What were you carrying in January this year?—I should say at least a hundred head of cattle more.

83. Why did you get rid of the hundred head of cattle?—Shortage of feed, and some were fat and wanted selling.

84. By how many head of cattle has your farm been depreciated, if any?—I can hardly tell you.

85. That means, none at all?—The farm is now damp and sour, and grows more rushes.

86. How long have you had the rushes growing?—For a few years after I lived there. There has always been a few there.

ALFRED JOSEPH THORP examined. (No. 5.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] What is your name?—Alfred Joseph Thorp. I am a farmer, residing on the bank of the Ohinemuri River, between one and two miles above Paeroa.

2. How much land have you got there?—About 1,300 acres—Tawa, 49 acres; Pareroiroi, 44 acres; Manuka, 63 acres; Otamaurunganui, 1,170 acres.

3. How long have you been in the district?—About sixty-seven years; thirty years on that land.

4. As regards that land, can you state how many acres of that is affected by the silt?—The last flood covered about 200 acres. The only place out of water was the house and cowshed.

5. When did you first notice this land flooding?—I never saw it flooded before.

6. How long has that flooding occurred?—About eight years, I think.

7. Did you grow crops right down to the water's edge?—The banks of the river are about 20 ft. above the river. I used to plant potatoes there, and they were never flooded.

8. Can you do that now?—I should be liable to lose the whole of the crop through flooding.

9. Can you give us an idea of the damage you suffered through the last flood?—Forty calves were washed away, worth about £1 10s. each—£60. About 60 chains of fencing was broken off and washed away.

10. What do you estimate that damage at?—The fencing, 60 chains, was worth about 10s. per chain—£30. I also lost a lot of sows and young pigs, to the value of about £20, and about 15 pounds' worth of sheep.

11. Can you give an estimate at all of the loss in land through depreciation, or earning-power of the land?—I can hardly go into that just now. The damage is not so apparent at present, but it will be if things go on. There is a certain amount of silt in the grass and a considerable amount inside the bank of the river.

12. Can you tell us anything about the navigation of the river?—We used to get heavy loads of machinery up the Ohinemuri in cutters, and I have brought potatoes down in cutters drawing 6 ft. or 7 ft. of water, and at the present time you could not think of getting anything like that up there.

13. Do you know the junction of the two rivers—Waihou and Ohinemuri?—Yes.

14. What is the state of the junction now?—You would not know there is a river at all there now at low water. In 1875 the Government steamer "Luna" went as far up as the Maori settlement.

15. Do you remember the flood in 1907: did that go on your land?—Yes, but not so deep as the last flood.

16. Did that 1907 flood do damage to you?—Not much; it did not stop on the ground long enough.

17. Do you know of any drains that go into the river, and what effect they have on the river?—There are plenty down the river. The silt has filled up miles of drains and altered the fall of water.

18. What do you consider the cause of the flood?—The mining tailings.

19. Opposite your place, what is the average width of the river?—About a chain.

20. Can you walk across it?—Not easily. It used to be about 15 ft. deep at one time.

21. *Mr. McVeagh.*] When did you acquire these properties?—In 1871; the Manuka Block in 1878.

22. I want to know the time when you took this produce up or down the river?—About 1876 or 1878.

23. I do not think that portion of the river has been used for navigation since then?—Only by small boats.

24. Since when has that upper portion of the river been in use for settlers?—Since we got a good metal road there is no need for it.

25. At the time you speak of, you had not a good metal road?—No. I do not think there was a bridge even at that time.

26. This last flood was a phenomenal one, I think?—Yes.