

66. Can you tell us what portions of the river between those points are shallower?—At the mouth of the Ohinemuri, where it strikes the Waihou. There is one bank beginning to show this morning. If the weather keeps dry for a week it will be a big bank. It was showing about half a chain this morning as I came up.

67. You cannot say whether it is due to tailings or river-sand?—It is not river-sand.

68. Do you know what the bed is composed of?—I have never tested the river-bed.

69. *The Chairman.*] Have you noticed any difference in poling across for eleven years past?—It is a hard bottom at the present time.

70. *Mr. Moresby.*] Whether it is river-sand or silt, it is filling up?—Yes.

71. From the Junction down to Thorp's—do you say that the whole of that has shallowed up?—It is more towards the top.

72. *Mr. Tunks.*] Have you owned the whole of the leasehold during the whole eleven years?—No. One lease of 57 acres I have had all the time. A couple of years ago I acquired 277 acres. I took it for a short period, simply for grazing purposes. I only lease it from year to year. I bought Ngararahi five or six years ago. I have two or three other pieces of freehold right at the Junction. I acquired them about ten years ago, buying them by degrees.

73. How long ago did you sell the 110 acres?—About six years ago. That was the lowest ground I had. The price was £4 an acre.

74. When was the first time that your land was ever flooded during the eleven years?—The January flood, 1907.

75. When was the first time water came over your land by reason of the rising of the river?—About three years ago.

76. Do you say that prior to that, in the first eight years that you were there, you experienced no floods at all?—Perhaps twice.

77. Did they bring tailings down at all?—No.

78. And did no damage of any kind?—No.

79. Rather, perhaps, benefited you, did they?—Yes, perhaps.

80. When the water came over the sections, was it the Ohinemuri or the Waihou?—Heavy rain, the river, and the willows; I dare say mostly the Waihou.

81. It was not due to the tailings?—No.

82. You said the land has not recovered from the January flood of 1907?—No, and it never will. It is getting worse and worse.

83. Do you say that the January 1907 flood was due to silt?—Yes.

84. Not to heavy rain?—Heavy rain, I suppose, helped.

85. Do you know whether Hikutaia was under water at that time?—I cannot say.

86. All you know of is the floods you have had on your own place?—Yes. When a flood comes I have to look after my own place and stock. There are five paddocks that I have sown since the last flood. I am trying to get the *paspalum*-grass to grow through the tailings, but I do not know whether it will or not.

87. When you bought this freehold land, about five or six years ago, what did you give for that?—It was Maori land, and I started buying it at £4 or £5 an acre. It meant running after the Maoris, and I reckon it cost me £9 10s.

88. What do you value it at now?—I have been offered £13 an acre.

89. What would you take for it now?—I will take £10 an acre. The valuation is a little over £9. I will take £10 for it with the house off.

90. When was the county valuation made?—Three or four years ago, perhaps.

91. Whereabouts does your house stand?—On the freehold land.

92. *Mr. McVeagh.*] I want you to give some more particulars about these drains?—When I went on the property eleven years ago there were some small drains. I widened them and straightened them. I have five drains. There were drains, I suppose, 15 to 18 chains long. I deepened the drain to 5 ft. on the top, and 4 ft. 6 in. deep, and it is about 2 ft. on the bottom.

93. Where does that flow into?—Into the Waihou, below the Junction.

94. Is that your lowest drain?—Yes.

95. Take the next in order: What is the length of the next drain?—About 20 chains.

96. Does that also flow into the Waihou below the Junction?—It was a small drain, and I enlarged it. Its dimensions now are about 5 ft. on the top, 4 ft. 6 in. deep, and 2 ft. on the bottom.

97. The third one?—That is the one that silted right up.

98. What is its length?—About 10 chains. It is about 7 ft. wide at the top.

99. The fourth drain?—That is another big drain. We have got a flood-gate on that. That is a drain 10 chains long. There is about a foot of tailings lying in it now.

100. The last drain?—That is about 12 chains long. It is half-full of tailings now. It is about 4 ft. deep.

101. Have you subsidiary or small drains?—Yes; I have about 12 chains of smaller drains in one place. There is another about 20 chains long, and another about 25 chains.

102. Are these drains through the freehold?—Through the freehold and leaseholds.

103. It was very wet land when you went there?—No; but the more draining you do the better it is for you.

104. How long have these drains been in existence?—Some of the little drains I made myself, but the big drains were made before I went there. Some were made as long ago as fifteen years.

105. I suppose the effect of these drains has been to consolidate the soil?—They make the soil drier and better.

106. And reduce the level?—Yes.

107. You have done some clearing also?—Yes.