

139. And if it is due to the backing-up, there must be some short distance between the places where they mix with one another?—Yes; in the middle of the river you will see in some places dirty water 2 or 3 chains long, and then a long clear patch in the middle of it mixing.

140. How high up have you seen that point of the mixture?—Right up as far as Mr. Nicholl's block of 277 acres.

141. *Mr. Flatman.*] How many miles would that be up?—About two miles and a half or a little more by the river.

142. *The Chairman.*] Does the mixed water go over the opposite bank to your place?—I have not been over there, but you can see the traces on the bank; but that bank does not suffer as much as my ground.

143. Is there much tailings on that bank?—The overflow is on my bank first. Here and there I suppose you could get a few tailings on the bank. The overflow rushes up the river, and then overflows to Netherton and Piako.

144. Does the Waihou River in flood bring down much stuff?—No.

145. Vegetable matter?—A little.

146. You spoke of white clay being under your soil: does that continue for some miles?—Yes, I think so.

147. If the banks erode, some of that would be washed out and would give the appearance shown in the third sample?—I do not think there is any fear of the river washing out the white clay. The white clay is very solid. It is hard to dig.

Mr. McVeagh: Might I suggest that the Commission would get a great deal more information by going up the Waihou.

The Chairman: We propose to do so. It may prolong matters, but it seems to me absolutely necessary that we should see these places whilst the evidence is fresh in our minds—that we should see the land and the places the witness has spoken of.

Mr. Hanna: It will really shorten the matter in the long-run.

The Chairman: And really shorten matters. What we want to get at is the truth.

JOHN W. THORP examined. (No. 8.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your name is John Wullanora Thorp, and you own 218 acres on the banks of the Waihou River?—Yes. I would like first to make a statement to the Commission. I found the first gold up here. It may be said that is of no consequence. It was a year after Gabriel's Gully was opened, in May. I spent over £2,000 in prospecting in the district. I wish to make this statement to show that I have helped the goldfield all I possibly could: and Thorp and party were awarded the prospectors' claim at Karangahake when this goldfield was opened by Colonel Fraser.

2. You have made a calculation of the damage which you have sustained by the flood?—Yes: it is as follows: "Loss sustained by John W. Thorp—Damage caused by silt in 1906-7-8-10: January, 1907—To loss of grass for three months at £2 per acre per annum, £38; loss of young healthy apricot and peach trees, 70 trees at £2 each, £140; one of the best apricots in orchard, £45 10s.; by 16 large apricots destroyed, at £20 each, £320; 6 smaller apricots, just bearing, at £5 each, £30; 12 large healthy apple-trees, at £12 each, £144; loss on 2 acres of a splendid crop of potatoes, at £17 per acre, £34; loss on Kouto Nos. 2, 3, and 4, depreciation, at £3 per acre, caused by silt and silting of river, £15; to 40 acres of splendid rich bottom, valued at £35 per acre, destroyed by silt, and only worth half-value now, £340; one fine cow, broke her leg in silt, £7. January, 1907—1 cow, £6, and two calves at £2 each, destroyed by silt covering grass, £10. Total, £1,263."

3. Your fruit-trees were a great source of revenue?—Yes. All the peach-trees and apricot-trees have been destroyed.

4. How long have you been in the district?—Over forty years.

5. How long have you occupied this land?—About thirty years.

6. Did you crop your land?—Yes.

7. Has it been spoilt for cropping-purposes?—Yes.

8. When did you first notice the flooding of your property?—Between six and seven years back the flooding commenced—I mean, flooding caused by the silt.

9. Has that been getting serious?—Yes, it has been getting serious every year.

10. And more frequent?—Yes.

11. Higher floods?—Yes. In the old days it took from two to three days' rain to cause a flood; now it only takes a few hours.

12. What sort of crops did you take off your land?—All sorts. I used to take off mangolds. I have had mangolds 50 lb. in weight taken off the land. It is quite useless for that now; they would rot with the flood.

13. You have outfall drains into the Waihou River?—Yes.

14. Are they liable to blocking up by the silt?—Yes.

15. Have you ever tried to clean them out?—Yes.

16. They have been blocked up again?—Yes. The members of the Commission saw one drain completely blocked up.

17. They are all affected?—Yes.

18. About the river itself: In the early days, twenty or thirty years ago, what depth of water was there?—The river was a good depth then.

19. Have you any idea of the depth?—I should think it would average fully 10 ft.

20. Are you considering that at high tide—at the highest?—No, at half-tide. The steamer "Sturt" came up with Sir George Grey in 1876. The "Sturt" drew 7 ft. 6 in., and the steamer