

34. Have you many drains on your property?—Six or eight from the river to the road. When they were made they were about 5 ft. on top and from 3 ft. to 4 ft. deep.

35. *Mr. Mueller.*] Was the flood of last year nearly as big as the 1907 flood?—It was not so big, and did not do the same damage owing to coming in a different part of the season. The 1907 flood came in January, when all the crops were ready to be housed. The settlers lost the whole of their crops.

CHARLES BRUNSKILL examined. (No. 11.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your name is Charles Brunskill, you are a carrier, and you have been in this district about fifteen years?—Yes.

2. You have been daily associated with the rivers and the steamers?—Yes; during that time, owing to the nature of my business, I was associated almost daily with the river, and with the steamers plying from Auckland to this place.

3. Fifteen years ago do you remember the steamers “Ngunguru” and “Paeroa” going right up to the Paeroa Wharf, in the centre of the town?—Yes, to the Wharf Street Wharf.

4. They discharged their cargo there daily?—Yes.

5. Drawing what amount of water?—The “Paeroa” was a small boat, but her draught was as much as that of the “Taniwha” and “Waimarie.” She was the regular trader to Paeroa in those days.

6. At that time what was the depth of water at the Wharf Street Wharf?—In those days the banks were quite perpendicular. It was a beautiful running stream, and I should say that when the tide was up there was fully 10 ft. of water. The tide rose then about 5 ft. or 6 ft., and now, except at spring tide, its rise is scarcely perceptible.

7. What is the condition of the banks now?—I remember when I and others used to bathe at the old wharf. In one place I used to jump into about 10 ft. of water. Now there is a bank of silt about 20 ft. high about a chain out from where I used to bathe.

8. After the Government built the railway-bridge the steamers came to the wharf just below?—The Government erected a wharf for the accommodation of the steamship companies, and also an iron shed, but it was practically of no use after the first year or two. The boats could not get up.

9. *The Chairman.*] What year was the Railway Wharf built in?—I understand that it was erected in 1894.

10. *Mr. Mueller.*] Have you seen steamers trying to get up to the Railway Wharf and not succeeding?—They very soon found they could not get past Pereniki's Bend. They found it useless to try to get up to the Railway Wharf, and they fell back to the Junction Wharf.

11. The Northern Company then erected a shed at the Junction Wharf?—Yes, and in a few years they had to take it down again.

12. Did the vessels not run up to Paeroa even after there was little accommodation at the Junction Wharf: did they not land the passengers?—I had to meet the steamers at the Junction Wharf on the arrival of the steamers from Auckland, and I took the passengers off. The steamers then went up to the top wharf, and discharged their cargo. On leaving, the steamers had to leave an hour before. To save the long passage round, I drove the passengers down to the Junction.

13. You have seen the boats trying to get up to the Railway Wharf?—Yes.

14. Have you seen them obliged to discharge some of their stuff there?—Between the Puke and the Junction—that was a year afterwards.

15. For a number of years the Junction Wharf was used?—Yes, for four or five years.

16. *The Chairman.*] Can you give us the last year or date when the Junction Wharf was used?—It is fully ten years since I started running at the Puke Wharf. That would be when they gave up the Junction Wharf.

17. *Mr. Mueller.*] After they had been running to the Junction Wharf for a time the river began to shallow just below the Junction?—Yes; below Mr. Kenny's house they had to discharge cargo.

18. *The Chairman.*] Do you alter your previous evidence, and make it eight years instead of ten?—I was under the impression that it was fully ten years, but if you have documentary evidence to the contrary I cannot dispute it.

19. *Mr. Mueller.*] As to this place where they used to stick below the Junction: you have been there very often?—Frequently.

20. You know what is called the Island?—Yes, at the mouth of the Waihou River.

21. Was it at that Island or below the Island?—Just near the mouth of the Hape Creek.

22. You have been intimately connected with this river for sixteen years: have you noticed whether the silting-up has been quicker of recent years?—Oh, yes! That is very easily accounted for. About fifteen years ago there were plainly to be seen right along the Ohinemuri River large depressions or holes, some of them 20 ft. deep, in the river-bed and in the sides of the river. For six or seven years the silt went on filling up those holes; and the silt on the banks of the river was not very much in evidence until all the depressions were filled. It took an enormous amount of tailings to fill them. The same thing is practically happening to the Waihou River.

23. You think that would be the result as regards the Waihou?—I think that in a few years the holes in the Waihou River will be filled up, and the banks will then begin closing.

24. *The Chairman.*] That is, the Lower Waihou?—Yes, below the Junction.

25. *Mr. Tunks.*] I understand you to say that the rise of the tide at Paeroa is imperceptible?—It is very insignificant to what it was fifteen years ago.

26. Was there a charge at the Railway Wharf?—Yes, but I did not understand that that was the reason why the steamers did not go there. The carters had not to pay any charge: the Northern Company or some other company must have paid it.