

32. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] How far down?—Right down below the steamer-wharf at Turua.

33. There is a large area of land, is there not, both on the eastern and the western side of the Waihou practically all in occupation?—Yes; the low-lying land on the eastern side of the river would be anything from 20,000 to 30,000 acres, and on the western side from 10,000 to 15,000 acres.

34. And was the Thames County endeavouring to drain that land too?—Either into the Waihou or the tributaries of the Waihou.

35. You have resided in that district for a very considerable time?—Over thirty years.

36. So that you know that part of the river pretty well?—Very well, indeed.

37. From your thirty years' experience, can you state whether the navigation of the river has been affected during that time—has it become better or worse?—Speaking of the north portion, I could not say that the low-water level is higher than it was at that time, because banks have formed at different places, and the banks have become larger.

38. Has the carrying-capacity of the river remained the same?—The width of the river is practically the same, but the banks must reduce the carrying-capacity.

39. *The Chairman.*] Below the Ohinemuri County boundary you are of opinion that the width of the river is not changed?—I do not think so—not the actual width of the river. The shoals are extending further.

40. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] What do the shoals consist of?—Sand and slimes and various deposits.

41. Which predominates, the sand or the slime?—I could not say.

42. You know the bank where the boats take sand up to Auckland?—Yes.

43. Has that bank enlarged?—Yes.

44. Sand, silt, or both?—Very largely silt, I think.

45. *The Chairman.*] Have you landed there yourself?—No.

46. What you have said is not from personal observation, but from hearsay?—I have not landed there.

47. During what period have you noticed this deposit of what you call slimes down the river from your place?—Since the heavy flood of 1907.

48. Can you state that since that flood you have noticed deposits of a different nature to the deposits there previously?—Yes.

49. You can show us close to Turua slime-deposits?—I would not like to say it, because at low water I could not even say they are slimes, but what appear to be slimes. It is a different kind of material from what it used to be.

50. You know the river right up to Paeroa?—Yes.

51. Can you state whether the shallowing of the river has increased during the last few years?—I can state that the river has narrowed during that time.

52. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] What part of the river?—I should say from the lower Rangiora right up.

53. *Mr. Cotter.*] You are Chairman of the Thames County Council. Have you or any of your officers made an examination of the mouth of the river?—No.

54. *The Chairman.*] You are not a River Board?—No, the Thames Harbour Board are a River Board for five miles from the mouth of the river, to just a little above the Turua Wharf.

55. Have you acted as a River Board in any way?—No; between Hikutaia and Port of Thames there is really no River Board.

56. *Mr. Cotter.*] Have you considered at all the question of the alleviation of this trouble?—Yes, it has been considered.

57. In what way do you consider that the trouble might be either minimized or altogether prevented in the future?—I am not an expert in that matter.

58. Occupying the representative position that you have done here for thirty years, I was only trying to see whether we could get some information from you, having all this knowledge; but if you would rather not express an opinion I will not press you?—I would rather not, because I do not feel competent to give an opinion. Keeping the stuff out of the river would prevent it.

59. But outside of that you would not like to express an opinion?—No, I would not.

60. *Mr. Tunks.*] I think you said the water remained on your land in 1907 for about three weeks?—Yes, I think about three weeks.

61. That was clean water—ordinary flood-water?—Yes.

62. That had nothing to do with the silting-up of the Ohinemuri?—I cannot tell you why the water came, but from its inability to get out of the Ohinemuri.

63. Or the Waihou?—Yes, one of the two.

64. You do not suggest that it was due to silting-up of the Ohinemuri?—The Ohinemuri or the Waihou.

65. In that flood, so far as your land was concerned, there was no evidence of mining tailings?—Except the white deposit: whether that was mining tailings I could not say.

66. You say that you got that at the back of your place in 1907?—Yes.

67. You do get floods in the Waihou from time to time?—We have not been flooded.

68. Never before 1907?—No.

69. And not since?—No.

70. Prior to the flood of 1907 have you ever experienced any flood?—We have not experienced any flood.

71. Never before?—No.

72. Do I understand that the 1907 flood was the only time your land has ever been flooded?—By extraneous water apparently coming from the Waihou River.

73. You know something about the flood of 1907: was it not a fact that the water in the Ohinemuri itself remained there for a comparatively short time?—I do not know how long.