

131. When were you last up there?—I should think about two months ago.
132. How far up did you go?—I should think, about a mile and a half.
133. You noticed a very luxuriant growth of willows on both sides?—Yes.
134. In your opinion, do they check the progress of flood-waters?—Where they lean over into the river.
135. That is the same also in the upper stretches of the Ohinemuri River?—Not so much.
136. But there are willows growing there?—Yes.
137. Would not the removal of those willows tend to diminish the flood?—Is not that a matter for an expert to give an opinion upon? My own personal opinion is that undoubtedly they would check the flow of water.
138. Do those willows go back as far as Matamata?—I do not think so.
139. Do you know the character of the country through which the Waihou flows?—Yes, but I do not know very much about it.
140. What is the character of the soil?—I do not know.
141. Can you say whether the Waihou River carries down with it extremely fine sand?—As far as my experience goes it is the reverse. When I got samples of sand from Mangaiti it struck me as being too coarse to be a fair sample, and I sent for another sample, but it was the same. Mangaiti is about five miles from Te Aroha.
142. We have information that sand of an extremely fine character is found in the Waihou—fine enough to go through a 60-mesh?—I should be surprised if it was so.
143. If that is so, there is a quality of silt coming down the river that you know nothing about?—Undoubtedly.
144. The Waihou flows for a considerable distance through country of that character?—I do not know.
145. At whose instance was the River Board originated?—At the instance of the Ohinemuri County Council.
146. It is coterminous with the county boundary?—I believe so.
147. What was the idea in calling it into existence?—To keep the authority of the Thames Harbour Board to their own place, and not charge wharfage up here. They were wanting, I believe, to charge rates for the wharfage up here. They built a wharf up here, I believe.
148. That checked their move?—Then we got control of the river as far as the boundary of the county.
149. Did you hold meetings after that?—Yes.
150. What was done at those meetings?—The minutes were confirmed.
151. What did they confirm?—Simply that there was no business to do.
152. Were you Secretary of the River Board?—Yes.
153. Was it a salaried office?—Not as far as I was concerned.
154. Did they have their accounts audited?—There were none. No business was transacted.
155. *Mr. Mueller.*] There has been a lot of mention of this island at the commencement of the main Waihou River: you think it was formed by the branch of a willow catching?—When I first knew it, it consisted of nothing more than a bit of willow growing out of the river.
156. That willow would naturally collect any branches that drifted down?—Yes; that is how it formed in the first instance.
157. And ultimately it formed into an island?—Yes. I think it was after 1886 that I first noticed the willow.
158. Could you give us the date when you went to live at the Junction?—No.
159. You knew this willow-branch when first you went to live at the Junction?—Yes, as far as I can recollect.
160. Can you state whether the deposit of something on this island has increased during the last few years at a greater rate than previously?—Yes. For years after the two islands were connected you could not get on to them except at dead low water. There was no soil; only rubbish. The groin was put across there by Captain Sullivan. It is between the left bank of the river and the top island; and then another groin was put down further.
161. Formerly the island was of such a nature you could not get on to it?—It was just a mass of willows.
162. Before you gave this evidence in Wellington you say that you took tests or samples from those islands and from Mangaiti?—Not from this island, but from the Hape.
163. And also at Mangaiti?—Yes.
164. What was the result, to your mind, of your investigations then as to the composition of that island?—I think it was easily distinguishable. The real Waihou sand was taken at Mangaiti, so that there would be no question as to there being anything else in it. As I said before, if you turned the test-tube over, the Waihou sand came down again quite freely, but the other stuff would not.
165. You have noticed from your own experience a difference in the bottom of the river?—Yes, there is a difference in the composition. Formerly, when bathing, when you touched the bottom with your feet you felt that it was composed of shifting sand; latterly the bottom of the river has become stiffer.
166. *The Chairman.*] Do you know the Hikutaia bank, where the cutters come up to take sand?—No.
167. When you first knew both rivers what was the state of the willows?—There were some willows then, but not as many as now. Some were pretty big trees even then.
168. And the River Board never planted any willows?—No.