

17. Could you previous to that take your launch loaded at low water up the river without touching bottom?—She might merely touch at times.

18. What has been the cause of this difference in the depth of the river, in your opinion?—The *débris* from the reduction-works.

19. You see steamers going past every day?—Yes.

20. Can the steamers get through at half-tide?—No; it must be well past half-tide when they pass my place, to enable them to pass.

21. Could they pass your place at half-tide in previous years?—Yes, before the Ohinemuri was declared a sludge-channel.

22. Do you know at what state of the tide the “Luna” steamer came up?—Between three-quarters and high tide.

23. You have known the steamers coming up to Paeroa to get stuck in the river?—Yes, I have been on steamers when they stuck in the river. They stuck in the reach below the Netherton creamery.

24. You have noticed there is a change where the deepest water is?—Yes.

25. Can you state whether that deep place has been contracting during the last few years?—There is no doubt about that. At my wharf six years ago she had 3 ft. 6 in. at low water, and now she takes the ground every time she comes alongside.

26. What is doing this?—The silt in the river. I have some samples here. They were taken from the sides and bottom of the river. No. 1, wet, and No. 1, dry, were taken from my place close to the wharf. I lifted it from the bottom of the wharf at low water. I shook it up at first. I expected to find some sediment on the bottom, but it all ran out. I put it in that bottle, and dried the other half in the sun. No. 2 was taken from the bed of the river. I gathered it in a four-gallon benzine tin. No. 2 was taken from the deepest channel.

27. *The Chairman.*] Was this taken immediately after a fresh?—Yes, after the big fresh—after the railway was burst. No. 3 was taken as close to the water as you could possibly get. No. 4 represents a deposit from four gallons of water. I took the water from the middle of the river. There was a little fresh on at the time. I let the stuff settle forty-eight hours, and that is the result. [Exhibit 11.]

28. Can your son Malcolm corroborate you in your statement regarding the navigation of this river?—I think so.

29. You are speaking of the river as you found it during the last eight or nine years?—Yes.

30. These samples you have shown us—have you had them tested or examined in any way?—No one has seen them except myself.

31. Have you only one sample from the bed of the river?—Yes; but I can get you any amount of it.

32. *Mr. Clendon.*] What is the distance from your place to the creamery where you deliver your milk?—About two miles and a half.

33. What is the average width of the river between your place and the Netherton creamery?—I cannot say.

34. Is the water salt at your place at high tide?—No, not for five miles below it.

35. Have you ever taken systematic soundings between your place and the creamery?—Yes, lots of times.

36. For what purpose?—I sometimes do some fishing, and I took my soundings when fishing.

37. When did you take the last soundings?—About a month ago. I took the soundings with a pole. I can remember the depths.

38. The whole of the soundings you took were confined to the water immediately opposite the wharf?—Yes.

39. At what state of the tide did you take the soundings?—Low water.

40. Are you aware that the captains of the “Taniwha” and “Waimarie” can turn their steamers round in the river at half-tide?—No, they cannot.

41. If they say they can, what would you say?—I would say they were making misstatements.

42. You say that these boats could come down at half-tide before the Proclamation and at three-quarter tide once?—There were none of these boats running at that time; there were only the “Ruby” and “Pearl”—small boats.

43. What boat was running at the time of the proclamation of the sludge-channel in 1895?—The “Paeroa.”

44. How much did she draw?—I do not know.

45. *The Chairman.*] What is the rise and fall of the tide at your place?—It depends on the state of the river above.

46. What is the greatest rise?—I took the measurement on the 14th May, and there was 10 ft. of a rise. The tide this morning was exactly 10 ft. An ordinary tide would be about 7 ft. The whole thing depends on the state of the river above.

47. What would it be there in springs if there was no fresh?—Seven feet.

48. What would it be at the lowest neap tide.—I suppose 5 ft. or 5½ ft.

49. *Mr. Clendon.*] Is there not less fresh water in the months of February and March than during any other months in the year?—Yes, as a rule.

50. *Mr. Mueller.*] Can you state from your personal observation whether the bottom of the river has changed at all in its nature?—Yes: when I was on the river for over thirty years I could take a pole and shove it straight down, but now I have to bump the pole down to get through the crust. There are soft and hard layers alternating in the river.

51. *The Chairman.*] How much higher do the tides come up now than they used to come up at high springs?—Nine or ten inches.

52. For how many years?—In the last two or three years only.