

RALPH STOCK examined. (No. 20.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your name is Ralph Stock, and you are a dairy-farmer residing at Nether-ton!—Yes, on Komata North. I have 200 acres of land.
2. What frontage have you got to the river?—Thirty chains.
3. During the last three years has your land been subject to floods?—Very much so.
4. Previous to that?—Previous to three years ago I never saw a flood. Just in the bend, at spring tides, and with a fresh in the river, the water may have covered my place to the extent of an acre and a half, but no further. As soon as the tide went out the water went away. It was very rare.
5. During the last three years what area of your land has been flooded?—In that flood three years ago every bit of the land was flooded. I do not think there was half a chain but what was flooded. I had the flood in my house. It left a big deposit of silt. I have raised my house 2 ft.
6. How long have you been in the district?—In the immediate district between ten and eleven years; but I have been on the river twenty-eight years.
7. Do you remember a flood in September last?—Yes.
8. Did that flood your land?—Yes. About 20 acres were not flooded. That flood was not so high as the 1907 flood.
9. Did those floods leave layers of fine slimes over the land?—The 1907 flood completely killed all vegetation, and there was a big loss of cattle and pigs. After the September flood I had to resow a part of the land at the back of my place.
10. After the 1907 flood did you practically have to resow the whole of your land?—At that time it was not drained so well as it is at the present time, and I was dependent on the back land for feed for the winter stock. After that I had to sow it.
11. After the 1907 flood you did sow your land?—Yes, the greater part of it.
12. After the 1909 flood you had to resow part of it?—About 50 acres.
13. *The Chairman.*] Was that surface-sowing?—Yes.
14. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your means of livelihood is the dairying?—Yes.
15. What difference did that 1907 flood make to your livelihood?—It practically crippled me for the time. I had practically no milk after it.
16. And after the 1909 flood was your milk affected?—The milk was on the increase then, and it did not increase as it should have done. It did not affect the milk-return as much as the previous flood.
17. Have you lost cattle or pigs by drowning?—In the flood in March I had twenty pigs drowned. I had no idea of a fresh when I went to bed that night. We had practically no rain to warrant a fresh.
18. Did that last March flood destroy your winter feed for the coming winter?—It ruined all my grass, and I had crops of swedes which I had to use. I put the cows on what I was relying on for the winter. I have been feeding them with hay for more than a month now.
19. *The Chairman.*] Was that hay that you have grown yourself?—Yes.
20. *Mr. Mueller.*] Previous to three years ago was your land flooded?—I have never seen a flood since I have been there, nearly eleven years.
21. Is there any of the land that has been practically rendered useless on account of the deposit of tailings?—Yes, I imagine from 8 to 10 acres.
22. You can do nothing with it?—No; because if I clear it and plough it and try to get it into grass, a fresh comes along in the meantime and ruins everything.
23. Do you own a launch on the river?—Yes.
24. Do you carry milk in your launch?—Yes.
25. To the Nether-ton creamery?—Yes.
26. You are very often on the river?—Yes, every day.
27. And at all stages of the tide?—Yes.
28. Can you say from your experience with your launch on the river at all stages of the tide whether the river is shallowing between your place and the Nether-ton creamery?—Most decidedly. When I got the launch four years ago I could go down at any state of the tide to the creamery and not touch at spring low tide. Now in three miles you must touch for a mile and a half.
29. Four years ago were you able to go full speed at low water?—Yes.
30. *The Chairman.*] What draught is your launch?—2 ft. to 2 ft. 6 in.
31. Do you remember the "Chelmsford" being stuck between your place and the creamery last month?—Yes; she stuck opposite Thomas's place, practically in the channel. Yesterday morning the "Waimarie" stuck practically in the same place.
32. *Mr. Michelson.*] What state of the tide was that?—The tide was running out. She just managed to crawl over the spot.
33. *The Chairman.*] I suppose you could fix the spot to half a chain?—It was almost opposite Thomas's Wharf. Where there was 4 ft. opposite my landing ten years ago there is none now.
34. How far is it from the creamery to your property?—About three miles. The "Waimarie" stuck about half a mile below my place.
35. *Mr. Mueller.*] Have you taken any samples?—Yes, from my wharf. It was from 2 in. to 3 in. deep on my wharf. [Sample produced.] That is a sample of a deposit left by the last flood.
36. Is that wharf near the channel?—Yes. The channel is being forced over to my side of the river. The river took the land at Robinson's, came right across mine, and went into the river again further down.
37. *Mr. Tunks.*] How long have you had this property?—Between ten and eleven years.
38. And the 1907 flood was the first flood you noticed?—Yes.