

On the return journey I left Taumarunui by the "Waireka" at 7.45 a.m. on Thursday, 23rd. There were twenty-two through passengers, ten wayside passengers, and cargo. Put in to land wayside passengers and cargo at Te Maire, Okupae, and Kokakoanui, arriving at the Houseboat 12.15 p.m. Remained at Houseboat that night, and resumed the journey to Pipiriki the following morning at 7.45 and arrived at Pipiriki 4.45 p.m., and the following day reached Wanganui at 11.50 a.m. On the return journey the water was slightly lower, showing 42 in. below Hatrick's mark at the Pipiriki gauge.

In conclusion, I may say I was exceedingly satisfied with the conditions of the river-channel, taking into consideration the fact that the water was lower than it had been previously recorded, or that it was anticipated it was ever likely to fall to.

As I have previously mentioned, large boulders in the fairway are the cause of most of the difficulties in the present low river, and strenuous efforts are being made to have as many of these removed as possible before the river rises. It is also satisfactory to note that the steamer service has been uninterrupted so far as the carriage of passengers is concerned, although only settlers' immediate requirements in the way of cargo are being carried. I noticed at several places at the different landings stacks of bales of wool awaiting shipment.

The steamer-proprietors, Messrs. Hatrick and Co., are deserving of much credit and are to be commended for the strenuous efforts they are making to continue the service under trying conditions.

It was satisfactory to observe that the stone walls all over the river have stood splendidly—indeed, I did not notice in a single instance damage or weakness in any of them. Almost the same may be said of the shingle and wire-net walls above Pipiriki, which, although not so stable as those constructed entirely of stone, are very much tighter, and are doing excellent work.

T. D. CUMMINS, Chairman.

Wanganui, 25th February, 1911.

NOTE.—I found that soundings taken on the journey were most unreliable for showing the correct depth, as the boats frequently struck or grazed over places where soundings were taken from either side of the boat showing 4 in. to 5 in. more than the boat's draught—this, no doubt, caused by the unevenness of the river-bed. I discontinued the sounding after reaching Pipiriki.—T. D. C.

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