

day a statement that a section in Paeroa Township was sold at £1,000. I cannot guarantee the truth of it.

34. Would you think that the land in Paeroa and that district had increased in value in consequence of the mines, or not?—Certainly it has. You heard from Mr. Morpeth yesterday that there is a creamery and butter-factory down there, and the Waihi people have consumed butter and milk to the extent of £12,000 in twelve months, according to the statement of the agent of the company at Waihi. I think that is a great thing for the farmers down at Paeroa.

35. As a general rule, the mines are a good market for the farmers?—Yes, in every direction round Waihi.

36. *Hon. Mr. Mills.*] You said just now, when you were speaking about some river, that the distance was fourteen miles as the crow flies: what river were you speaking about?—The Waihou.

37. Does this river wind about very much?—Yes. You will see that from the plan.

38. Have you any idea what length this fourteen miles as the crow flies would be by the river?—I cannot tell you.

39. In your experience of thirty years, have you ever seen a flood equal in height to the one you speak of in last January?—I was not down the river at the time of the flood; I was up in Waihi. But I never saw any flood equal to it in Waihi. Where I live the water was all over the ground.

40. What is your opinion about the depositing of these tailings and slimes in the river: are they doing any injury or not, do you think?—I say that we cannot deny they are doing injury to the farmers on the Ohinemuri River, but we must not forget that the Ohinemuri is a very rough, ragged river, with large boulders. The Government started a railway for the extension of the line from Paeroa to Waihi, and as far as I can make out they deposited 70,000 or 80,000 tons of *débris* into the river, in addition to the tailings, and that has helped to form a cement in the bottom of the river with the tailings. This heavy matter will not go down the river, except for a short distance.

41. Does this slime set hard on grass or anything like that?—When the water is running over it, it will consolidate.

42. It will not remain on the grass?—If there is only a slight sprinkling to cover the grass over, it will remain for a considerable time. It will not run away unless there is a fall, or water is running through it.

43. What depth of this deposit have you seen on any of these lands referred to by different witnesses?—I believe there are some hollows where there might be 2 ft. of sand. I have not seen a great deal of deposit.

44. If the discharge of these tailings and slimes into the river continues, what do you think the state of things will be like in the future: is it likely to make matters much worse?—If the tailings are run into the river for the next twenty or thirty years, no doubt it will affect the Ohinemuri River to a great extent. I do not think it will affect the Waihou, because that is such a large stream that it keeps the whole moving till it reaches the Thames foreshore, and there, I suppose, it will get scattered about along the beaches.

45. Speaking from your long experience, can you offer any suggestion to the Committee as to what might be done with those tailings in any other way, without practically compromising the whole industry?—I have been thinking over several schemes. The simplest scheme that I can make out is for the Government to appoint a Commission to see what damage has really been done to the farmers, and either recompense those farmers or purchase the land. I think that would be the best way—to purchase the land at the last Government valuation.

46. Would anything be gained by trying to straighten any portion of the river?—No. It would be a heavy undertaking.

47. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] Was that country that is liable to be flooded now—where the silt is deposited—was that country in occupation for farming purposes when the river was declared a sludge-channel?—On the Ohinemuri River I believe there were four or five farmers or settlers.

48. How many are there now?—I really could not tell you. I suppose there would be thirty or forty.

49. Then only a portion of the country was used for farming purposes before the river was declared a sludge-channel?—Yes, and those people who came there since purchased the land with their eyes open.

50. What year was it that the river was declared a sludge-channel?—In 1895.

51. In the floods that you talk of prior to 1895—the big flood of 1883 or 1884 that you spoke of just now—was there much silt left upon the land after the flood?—In some places there was a light pumice silt, but it did not amount to any depth. It just covered the grass so that the cattle could not eat it, but the first rain washed it off. In some instances it rather improved the ground.

52. *Mr. Herries.*] That silt did not come from the mines?—No; there were no mines there then.

53. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] But the floods that have occurred during this last year have deposited a very much larger amount of silt on that land?—The land on the Ohinemuri River, not on the Waihou.

54. I am speaking of the Ohinemuri. Judging by the photographs I think that is a self-evident fact, unless they have been faked?—I beg to say that a photograph is not much good unless you show a photograph of the original. Then you would be able to judge what the photograph meant.

55. You do not think it practicable, if the mines are to continue working, to devise a scheme by which the tailings could be diverted or put anywhere except in the river—I do not say possible, but practicable?—I do not think it is practicable, and I think it would be a very expensive experiment to try. My opinion is that if you were going to divert them a chute should be laid from Waihi to the Thames foreshore, taking in all the batteries as it went along. Then the batteries