

52. Are they not bigger than the "Patiki"?—Yes, much bigger.

53. *Mr. Bennet.*] What area of land do you consider is being destroyed by the flooding of the river and the bringing of the silt on to the land?—Well, the area affected by the silting-up of the river is something like 15,000 acres, I think—altogether about 20,000 acres including some Maori land.

54. Is that used both for cropping and grass?—Not the whole of it; portions of it.

55. *Hon. Mr. McGowan.*] At what time was the Ohinemuri Goldfields opened, can you tell us?—In 1875.

56. Do you remember at what time, roughly, the Waihi Company commenced operations?—It was prior to 1890, I know—about 1888, I should think.

57. Were the Crown and Talisman and the Karangahake Mines started before that or after that?—The Crown Mine was before that, I think; the Talisman some considerable time after.

58. But the Crown was before that?—The Crown and Woodstock were before that.

59. What effect do you think the construction of the railway had on the Ohinemuri River—did it improve it or did it injure it?—Well, I do not think it injured it. I think it improved it. Of course, it took away a certain amount of the traffic.

60. Do you consider that the material that was thrown into the Ohinemuri River by the railway people was finer stuff than that thrown into it by the Waihi Company or the Crown or the Talisman?—It was heavier stuff.

61. Do you not think the heavier stuff would stop in the river?—It would stop nearer Karangahake.

62. And you think that the heavier stuff has done less damage than the lighter stuff?—I do not think that it reached Paeroa. The lighter stuff came to Paeroa, but the heavier remained there.

63. At any rate your statement is that the river was rather improved than otherwise by the railway?—I did not say that.

64. You want to withdraw what you did say?—I do not say that it was improved. I say that it did not do it any harm.

65. I do not want to catch you. I want your own honest opinion as to what effect the formation of the railway had on the river?—Speaking commercially—that is, for the trade, for the steamers—I do not think it did them any good, because it took trade away from them.

66. I am talking about the river, not of the commercial aspect. I want to know whether the putting-in of thousands of tons of stuff from railway-construction—stones and earth—blocked up the river more than the tailings from these mines?—Now I understand your question. Certainly it did not improve it. The putting-in of any material whatever does not improve the river. It helps to fill it up.

67. Do you know that there are still steamers running up the Waihou River?—Yes, the "Matuku" only.

68. Where to—what is the station?—From Te Puke to Te Aroha.

69. I am talking now of the trip from Auckland to Te Puke. What is the place they stop at now?—Te Puke.

70. There is the "Paeroa," is there not? and the "Waimarie"?—The "Taniwha" and the "Waimarie."

71. Are there any others?—I think those are the two that come up.

72. From Auckland?—Yes.

73. Are there any coming from the Thames?—I do not think so.

74. Were there any in the habit of coming from the Thames?—Yes.

75. Do you know the tonnage of the "Paeroa"?—About 94 tons.

76. And the "Taniwha"?—The "Taniwha" is about 260 tons, I think.

77. Are these steamers trading there regularly at the present time?—They are trading up to Te Puke at the present time.

78. Is it a daily service?—Yes.

79. That is in 1907. Going back to 1888, were there any steamers of that size or larger trading up as far as Te Puke?—No.

80. There were no steamers of that size trading regularly up to Te Puke in 1888, or after that?—The "Paeroa" is 94 tons. She used to trade right up to Paeroa, and with deeper draught.

81. It is not necessary for her to go there now: she could if she wanted to I suppose?—No, she could not.

82. Do you think many of these steamers would go to Paeroa wharf now assuming that the water was as deep as it was in 1888 or 1875, or at any time you like to take?—Yes.

83. You think they would still go to Paeroa?—Yes, that is provided the railway wharf was not there.

84. You think that any steamers taking material or passengers for Paeroa, or beyond it, would still go to the Paeroa wharf instead of to Te Puke or the railway-station, now?—No, they could not.

85. But would they if they could?—Certainly they would.

86. Do you think they would go to where there is no station rather than where there is a station?—They would go to the Paeroa Railway Wharf. They would take their coal there—that is, the vessels from Whangarei—because at the Paeroa Railway Wharf there is connection with the Waihi line.

87. And you say that the traffic, instead of going to the Paeroa wharf, would go to the Paeroa Railway Wharf?—Exactly.

88. So that if you had 30 ft. of water there they would not go to the Paeroa wharf?—They could not go there on account of the bridge.

89. But they do not want to go there because they would be going past the railway?—That is so.