

26. What distance up the Waihou can you find mining tailings?—At the mouth of the Waihou, almost at the Junction, there is a large island of tailings: and for a distance of two miles up the river tailings are to be found on either side.

27. *The Chairman.*] What extent of tailings?—There are greater quantities nearer the Junction, and in a lesser degree for about two miles up.

28. *Mr. Mueller.*] How do you account for those tailings being found two miles up the Waihou River?—When the Ohinemuri is in flood it rises quicker than the Waihou, and when the water cannot get away past the Junction quick enough it has to back up the Waihou.

29. *The Chairman.*] You think it goes up, and takes the tailings with it?—It backs up the Waihou. The Ohinemuri water comes down much quicker than the Waihou.

30. *Mr. Mueller.*] You know the Waihou right up to Te Aroha?—For about eight miles past the Junction.

31. Above two miles from the Junction, what is the state of the Waihou compared with fifteen or eighteen years ago?—Practically the same as it was fifteen or eighteen years ago. There is an island a good way up that has a bank of river-sand behind it.

32. How far is that from the Junction?—I should say about seven or eight miles up. It may be a little less.

33. Do you know the Waimarie Bend?—Yes.

34. Whereabouts is that?—The point of the river below the Raugiora Road, pretty well opposite Robinson's place.

35. What can you state about the Waimarie Bend?—There is a point of tailings running out there, about 30 ft. or 40 ft., I should say.

36. Generally, what effect have these tailings on the river?—Narrowing the banks to a great extent on the main Waihou, and in the Ohinemuri filling up the river-bed, and also encroaching on the banks to a very great extent.

37. *The Chairman.*] Why do you think the river-bed is being filled up from below?—The Waihou is pinching or narrowing, except the larger banks at the Junction. I am speaking of the main Waihou River. The banks are encroaching in the main Waihou from the Junction down.

38. You do not think the bed is rising?—No.

39. Have you any reason for saying that?—We went down in a boat, and we could not find any appreciable extent of bed rising, but we could see evidence of the sides encroaching.

40. Do you think the bottom is of the same character as it was before?—Yes, very much the same.

41. As far as the nature of the bottom is concerned?—Yes.

42. Is that all the way down from the Junction?—No; there are banks beyond the Junction—more particularly just below the junction of the two rivers.

43. You think that below Te Puke what you say is right?—Yes; the banks are encroaching greatly below Te Puke. There are spits running out here and there. Just below Netherton there is an island—just about a mile down—an island with a willow-tree at the top end of it.

44. *Mr. Mueller.*] As regards the Ohinemuri, can you say whether the bottom has filled up?—Yes; in some places near the top you could hardly touch the bottom with an oar once, and you can almost walk across it now.

45. Is that in one or two places or in many places?—In many places.

46. What is the effect of that on the drainage of the country?—Naturally the water cannot get away quick enough, and the capacity of the river has been so much decreased that it must go over the banks.

47. It flows over the banks?—Yes.

48. Coming down to your own land—the Huruhuru Block that you mentioned: can you state what area has been damaged?—About 40 acres altogether of that land. It is only that land that the river and tailings have been over.

49. *Mr. Vickerman.*] That is not destroyed, it is damaged?—There is about 5 acres of river-bank that used to grow very good feed. It is completely damaged; it is useless. There is about 12 acres of Chinamen's garden. The adjoining paddocks are practically useless owing to the depths of the tailings-deposit on them.

50. *The Chairman.*] Useless for what?—Practically useless for gardening purposes or for grass.

51. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] Is there any grass on that land?—Yes, in some places.

52. *The Chairman.*] You say that 5 acres has been completely destroyed?—It will not carry anything like what it should carry. It will carry very little indeed; in fact, it is impossible to plough it in. There are patches that will grow a little grass. The silt is too deep.

53. It is reduced in value, you say, considerably. How much did you value it at originally?—It is let at about £4 an acre to the Chinamen for gardens. I will read to you the following statement of the damage:—Property of executors of M. R. S. Buchanan, Huruhuru Block; area injured, about 40 acres: 1½ acres used for accommodation, tenanted by Ah Foy and Ah Hing; annual rent, £4; capital value, £80. 13½ acres used for gardens, tenanted by Ah Foy and Ah Hing; annual rent, £50; capital value, £1,000. 12½ acres used for grazing, tenanted by William Marsh; annual rent, £24; capital value, £480. 5 acres used for grazing, tenanted by Mrs. J. Capill; annual rent, £10; capital value, £200. 4 acres used for grazing, tenanted by Buchanan and Vincent; annual rent, £8; capital value, £180. 2 acres used for grazing, tenanted by R. Rusden; annual rent, £5; capital value, £100. 7½ acres used for grazing, occupied by self; annual rent, £3; capital value, £60. Total annual rent, £104; total capital value, £2,100. Reckoning interest at 5 per cent. on the capital value, it would be worth £2,110.

54. What is the Government valuation of that land?—About £1,800.