

129. *Mr. Flatman.*] How many tons of hay do you estimate you could grow to the acre?—A couple of tons, or a little more, to the acre.

130. *The Chairman.*] About this drain: when you went there eleven years ago what width was it?—We used to jump over it. It would probably be about 6 ft. wide, and it was about 2 ft. wide at the bottom.

131. What depth was it: is it deeper now than it was then?—Oh, yes!

132. Were there flood-gates then?—There was a sluice-gate then.

133. How did it come to be deepened and widened?—By Mr. Cooper.

134. With your permission?—No, I was against it.

135. Was it deepened all in one operation, or in more than one operation?—On different occasions.

136. When it was deepened they put in the sluice-gates?—Yes.

137. Who paid for the sluice-gates?—I think there were some three persons in it.

138. Did you contribute?—No, I was against it. There was another block at the back that had to be drained into that big drain belonging to John L. Scott, schoolmaster, of Parnell.

139. If they had left the drain alone as it was when you took it, your property would not have been flooded or silted?—I should have been all right.

140. Did any floods come before the drain was deepened?—There came a fresh, but nothing serious. The water went away and the grass came again.

141. There are no flood-gates there now?—No; they washed away just like a paper bag.

142. How many flood-gates have been there since the first one?—I could not say.

143. Have there been three?—More than three.

144. The water inside the drain washed them out?—No: it is the pressure from the river that breaks the gate away.

JAMES MCKEE examined. (No. 7.)

1. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your name is James McKee, and you own land—Waihou West No. 3?—Yes; it is above the Junction. The area is 277 acres. I own or lease 440 acres altogether. I own and lease the land from this Waihou Block, on the west side, right down to Thorp's Bend. It is agricultural land.

2. Is that land subject to floods?—Now it is.

3. Where does the overflow come from?—From the Ohinemuri, backing up the Waihou, causing it to overflow its banks and go into the Hauraki Plains.

4. How long have you held this land?—About ten or twelve years.

5. Was it subject to flooding when you took it up?—No.

6. Would you have taken up the land if it had been subject to flooding?—No.

7. Are floods more frequent now than they used to be?—Yes, they are getting worse and worse.

8. *The Chairman.*] Are they getting worse in height or merely in number?—In height.

9. And in number?—Yes, they come oftener. Pretty well every month you look for a flood now. I had two last March.

10. *Mr. Mueller.*] What is the cause of the flooding becoming more frequent and becoming higher?—The silting-up of the river.

11. Have you got any outfall drains on to the Waihou?—Yes, five.

12. Are they being blocked up by the deposit?—Yes: there are two I have got flood-gates on, and there is one completely blocked up.

13. What size one is that?—Seven feet at the top, close on 6 ft. deep, and 2 ft. at the bottom. It is filled with tailings and silt—mixed with mining *débris*.

14. Is there any of this silt deposited on your land?—Yes.

15. On what area is the silt deposited?—Nearly all over, from 1 in. to 6 in., and to 18 in., and in some places 2 ft. Some places got a worse doing than others.

16. Your land is pretty well level?—Yes; the bank is a little higher. It has been built up lately by the tailings.

17. There is silt over the 400 acres?—Yes.

18. *The Chairman.*] You do not mean to say that there is over 6 in. of silt over the whole of your 440 acres?—No.

19. There is silt over the whole of it to some extent?—Yes.

20. Over what area does it exceed 6 in.?—I suppose about 40 or 50 acres, close to the Junction.

21. *Mr. Mueller.*] What effect has that upon the vegetation?—It spoils it for cropping or for growing grass. It will only grow a little grass. You cannot expect ground to grow much grass with silt 6 in. deep.

22. With respect to the drains: If you cleaned them out, would that get over the difficulty?—We should have to clean the drains out after every flood.

23. You remember the January flood, 1907?—Yes.

24. What do you consider you lost during that flood in the way of cash?—I lost all my crops—some potatoes, 2 acres of mangolds, two paddocks of hay—about 10 acres.

25. *The Chairman.*] This is close to the Junction?—Yes.

26. *Mr. Mueller.*] Was there a loss of pigs?—Yes, I lost thirty-two pigs. I had to sell the pigs for whatever I could get—at 17s. apiece. They were no good to me. I sold them at a loss because I had no food to give them.

27. At that time you were milking fifteen cows?—Yes.

28. And did the cows stop milking?—Yes, the place was ruined.

29. You had to get rid of some of your stock at a loss, and others died through want of feed?—Yes.