

"Luna" drew about 8 ft. 6 in. I saw the "Luna" go up at half-tide. Captain Fairchild had to heave the steamer's nose right round at my bend, because the turn is sharp there.

21. Other steamers used to trade past your place?—Yes.

22. Had they the difficulty that steamers have now?—No.

23. What size boats can get up now?—Some flat-bottomed scows go up there. One got stuck at the Junction. She was loaded with bricks, and could not get past that place. That was only three or four weeks ago.

24. You have known boats to stick about the Junction within the last six years?—Yes.

25. Can you state whether, about your place, the river has been shallowing?—Yes.

26. Much or little?—A good deal. The river is narrowing.

27. Could you give us an idea of how far the banks of tailings extend out—I mean from the old original banks?—It extends out considerably in several places.

28. Have you seen a fine deposit of this stuff on the grass?—Yes.

29. What effect has that?—It is very bad for the grass. It did not wash off this last time for three weeks, even after rain.

30. Do you know whether the stock eat that stuff?—They would not eat it unless they were really starving.

31. How much of your 82 acres is affected with this silt?—The whole of it was affected in the 1907 big flood. There were 3 in. over the whole of it.

32. *The Chairman.*] Not over the whole of it. How many acres of low land?—There was about 3 acres of high land that was not touched by the water, 1 acre of which is an orchard.

33. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your best land was down on the river-point where the main orchard is?—Yes. That is where the silt ran over. In that summer flood of 1907 the river never went down for three weeks. That is what killed these trees.

34. Have you known any big floods in the past?—Yes, higher than any we have had, and they have never done any damage except to bring a big deposit of loam on the grass, and it enriched the ground, really.

35. If it had not been for this silt you would have had a very good orchard and home there?—Yes.

36. You have been practically ruined through it?—Yes.

37. Your financial position has been made bad?—Very bad, and through no fault of my own.

38. You have spent your time, and money, and labour on the property?—Yes, over twenty-five years getting the orchard; and there it is destroyed.

39. *Mr. Cotter.*] You have been residing in this place over thirty years. Do you remember the "Lalla Rookh" steamer?—Yes.

40. I think you actually took her down from Paeroa to Bagnall's mill?—Yes, at dead-low water.

41. Can you give us about the year?—It was previous to the opening of the goldfields.

42. About what was she drawing?—About 6 ft. 6 in., and she never touched bottom at all.

43. Where did you start from?—From Te Puke Wharf. I was residing there at that time.

44. You have stated that the river has been, in your opinion, shallowing during the whole of this time?—Yes, during the time the silt has been coming down.

45. Did you notice any shallowing during your residence there prior to the silt getting down?—No, I did not.

46. Is it your opinion that the whole difficulty now in navigating the river up from Te Puke at any rate to Paeroa is caused by the silt?—Certainly; not the least doubt about it. Any fool can see that.

47. Now, we have got the foolishness out of it, let us try and get a little about the wisdom. Have you thought of any way of getting over this difficulty?—Yes.

48. Do you think that this trouble, if something is not done, will go on below Te Puke?—Yes, it will block the whole river.

49. Being an old resident here, can you tell us whether, in your opinion, it is very advisable that the navigation of the river should be still preserved?—Certainly; not the least doubt about that.

50. Leaving out the colonial part of the question, is it, in your opinion, very advisable for the benefit of the district that the navigation should be free?—Certainly.

51. Will you tell us what, in your opinion, should now be done to preserve the navigation from Te Puke at any rate downwards?—You would have to start at the fountain-head. I wrote to Mr. Poland about three years ago while he was down at the House, and I told him that my scheme was this: My idea was to lift all the tailings when discharged from the batteries, 1,500 tons daily, at Waikino, and bring them back in the empty trucks and shoot them down alongside the railway-line. That would injure nobody.

52. That would not remove the whole difficulty even then. What about all the tailings in the river?—Clear them away—sweep them down the river somewhere.

53. Do you think that would improve the navigation from Te Puke downward?—No; it would not for a time. The main thing is to stop the damage at the fountain-head. If that is done there is nobody wronged.

54. Have you considered the question at all in this respect: Still preserving the river as a sludge-channel, as to what should be done?—It would be a useless job. You would never overcome it.

55. *The Chairman.*] Would you revoke the Proclamation?—No; but you could get the companies to assist in lifting this stuff.

56. *Mr. Cotter.*] Have you considered the question at all in relation to this fact: As to the difference in treatment at the mines so as to produce not these coarse tailings we see on the banks, but this fine sludge?—That is just as bad as the other.