

ALBERT EDWARD HOPE. (No. 14.)

Launch-proprietor, residing in Blenheim. I have been running an oil-launch with mail for three years, Blenheim to Port Underwood. I have a certificate for master and engineer within restricted limits. I cross the bar about six times a week. The training-wall was built across the old bar channel, and a cut was made through the Boulderbank. For a time the bar went straight out, but the first heavy flood—the July flood—took away six piers at end of wall. The water still went out to sea through the cut. The bar shifted south towards the Bluff. In November last the flood took more of the piles away. Some of the piles went at the outside end, and also some at the inside end. The bar then went out north. Since November it has been gradually shifting north. A bank is forming on the south. Nothing but a big flood will keep the channel straight out. The shingle is travelling north. The training-wall is inside it, and a spit is forming running north. The heavy seas drive the banks up, and it is impossible to keep the gravel out. Both rivers act on the bar. A cut to White's Bay would not keep open, and it would spoil the bar for steamers. The shingle is accumulating in White's Bay and the bay is shoaling. Coming up the Opawa, there are a great number of willows near the Nelson Street Bridge and Rose's overflow, which are detrimental to the river. I know the velocity of the river in flood-time was pretty fast; it was up about 6 knots at Dillon's Point. It might go to 10 knots. The work of the bar affects the river up to about ten miles.

EDWARD STONE PARKER. (No. 15.)

Deputy Mayor of Blenheim. I have been nine years on the Council, and eight years a member of the Lower Wairau River Board. I had one term on the Harbour Board up till last month. I suggest that the river district should be extended right up to the "Blue-gums," near the Cemetery Reserve, about four miles from the Post-office. We have had an arrangement with the River Board whereby we pay half the costs. We have been compelled to bank on both sides of the Taylor River. It has cost the Borough Council altogether some hundreds of pounds during the last ten years. I suggest that the control of the Taylor River south should be vested in the River Board. The co-operative drain has to be paid for partly by us; we pay £160 per annum. I suggest that the new Board have the same power as the Drainage Board. We cannot get rid of that liability of £160 per year. The Omaka Road Board pay half the costs. We had three disastrous floods in ten years. It was mainly the Taylor in 1911. It came over the banks in the High Street Bridge and School Bridge, broke through at the Church of England, and flooded the whole town. The River Board and the Borough Council shared the cost of the Taylor banking for two miles above the town boundary. We are endeavouring to keep the water in its channel. The River Board have bought all the land inside the banks inside the town boundary where possible. The current at the bar—November flood—was so great that the "Opawa," an 8- or 9-knot boat, could not steam against it; she made three attempts to get in. The bar widened about half a chain during the day. The Tuamarina and White's Bay scheme would, I think, block the present bar up, and I think the White's Bay scheme would have the same effect on the Wairau as Rose's overflow on the Opawa. Rose's overflow is deepening, but at low tide there is only about 2 ft. of water opposite my brother's farm, Section 11. It is impossible for steamers to come up at present by Rose's overflow.

THOMAS PRICHARD. (No. 16.)

Builder, residing in Wairau West. I sold my farm about seven years ago—Section 37. I live at Marlboroughtown, and am well acquainted with the Opawa River and the banks between my property and the Opawa River. The water came over Prichard's bank in 1904 and broke it away at the lower part: it was 1 ft. lower there. The July flood did not touch the bank. The November flood came over the ground—1 ft. up the bank. The banks were 6 ft. to 8 ft. high. The 1904 flood was practically up to the floor of the Railway Bridge. The July and November were only small floods by comparison, as the Opawa was stopped by the groyne. The Rose's overflow since 1904 has been much more effective than it was prior to that date. Since 1904 there have been only small floods in the Opawa. My bank had to be raised not higher than the railway-line. I think both Wairau and Opawa should carry a fair share of the water.

JOHN HENRY SUTHERLAND. (No. 17.)

Chairman Spring Creek River Board. I have resided at Grovetown practically all my life. The July and the November floods were small in the Opawa—could have risen 4 ft. to 5 ft. before being large floods. The 1904 flood topped Prichard's bank above and below the bridge. The July and November floods came just to the foot of the banks. The floods came through Grovetown from Leslie's, Matthew's, Hall's, and another breach by the railway-line. They came in a straight line to Grovetown, and into the Wairau River again at Section 11, on the north bank of Rose's overflow. The banks below Ferry Bridge to Beatson's held, but the Wairau water flowed in over them. The breach above the Ferry Bridge was inwards. In July the settlers cut the bank at Section 11 to let the Spring Creek water away, and afterwards a culvert was put in. The water lay on the land for ten days. My section is No. 36. The bank at Rose's overflow stopped the waters from Spring Creek. Beatson's Section No. 18 was under water. In my opinion the White's Bay scheme would be the best relief if workable. That would cut off the Pukaka and conserve all the Maori land. Since 1904 there have been no floods of any size in the Opawa. Rose's overflow would take the water away quickly. The Wairau water was up to the top of the front bank of Section No. 11. I think it flowed inwards to the Pa as far as Tahua Watson's, and then it flowed outwards into the river. It topped the banks and flowed inward at Section 32.