

Photo No. 7 shows a portion of the same place, only it goes further up the river. [Put in.] I used to live just there, and we used to cultivate right along there. You will see where it is covered up to with silt. In 1870 the Government steamer "Luna" made her first trip to Ohinemuri. She also went up the Ohinemuri in 1872. She went up there for the purpose of taking the late Sir Donald McLean to a meeting held at a place called Puketawainui to discuss the question of opening up the Ohinemuri district for gold-mining. Some of you gentlemen may possibly remember that steamer. She turned at a place called Suck-in Bay. Puketawainui is about two miles up the Ohinemuri River. Suck-in Bay is a bank of silt now. It has encroached on the river about 2 chains, and the silt on that spot is about 6 ft. or 7 ft. high—that is, from the original river-bank to the water's edge. Now, it would be an utter impossibility for a steamer of similar capacity to go up the Ohinemuri River. Here is a photo of Suck-in Bay. [Produced.]

6. *Mr. Herries.*] When were these photos taken?—In June. Another thing that I might mention to show that the river-bed is rising is this: There is a ledge of rock just below the Paeroa Traffic-bridge—a few chains from it. At one time this ledge of rock was uncovered. I used to go there and undress on it and dive into the river from it. Now there is about 6 ft. or 7 ft. of water and silt on the ledge, and it has not been seen for the last ten years.

7. *Mr. Bennet.*] Was that in about the middle of the river, or on the side?—Just on the side of the river. I produce a plan showing that rock. [Produced.]

8. *Mr. Herries.*] That is in the Ohinemuri River?—Yes. And this is the Paeroa Traffic-bridge on the right of the plan. This plan, with the information shown on it, was sent to Mr. J. A. Wilson, the Auckland District Engineer. I think he was down there reporting on this same question. He went away without this information, and Mr. Kenny, the Paeroa County Clerk, supplied him with it.

9. *The Chairman.*] What is that?—A tracing and a letter. I will read the letter, from Mr. Wilson: "I have to thank you for your memo. of the 17th instant enclosing tracing showing the level of the rock at the No. 1 cross-section. I have noted the information therein contained, and return the tracing herewith as requested." I will put that in. [Put in.] There is another matter that I wish to place before the Committee to show that the river-bed is rising. The old framework of the Paeroa Bridge was pulled down, and an iron bridge was put in its place. The men working on the bridge could not get at the lower structure of the bridge to pull out the old bolts in order that the piles and braces might be pulled up, and Mr. Bray, the late engineer of the Ohinemuri County Council, has sent us this note: "Paeroa, 19th August, 1907.—The photo attached hereto shows the old wooden bridge over the Ohinemuri River on the Paeroa—Te Aroha Road, at Paeroa. The pier-braces marked thus X were secured with bolts to the piles when the bridge was erected. These bolts could not, at the very lowest water, be unscrewed to remove the braces when the present bridge was erected and the old piles removed. At no time during the erection of the new piers for the steel bridge was the water low enough to allow the walings and braces to be put down to the depth of the old braces. I feel sure there is a rise in the bed of the river, at the site, of at least 15 in., since the old bridge was erected, which is proved by the fact that the new work could not be put down as low as the old owing to water. The season when the new bridge was erected was an exceptionally fine one, and the water generally abnormally low.—CHARLES BRAY, Engineer Ohinemuri County Council from September, 1904, to April, 1907." Attached to the letter is the photo referred to. I will put them in. [Put in.] There is also another very important thing proving that the river-bed is rising, and that is with regard to the Government Railway Wharf at Paeroa. That wharf was erected by the Government for the accommodation of steamers owing to the fact of the Public Works Department having erected a railway-bridge across the river. The steamers at one time used to go beyond where the railway-bridge now is, and they erected this wharf just below the railway-bridge. The wharf is connected by a side line with the Paeroa Railway-station, whence there is a line to Karangahake, Waihi, and other places. Vessels—some of those that I enumerated—used to go there with heavy cargo. Some of them used to come from Auckland and some from Whangarei with coal. One vessel used to run regularly from Whangarei with coal for the Waihi and Karangahake districts, discharging at this place, from which it was taken to the out districts. These vessels after a while had to give up coming there. They now come to a point about six or seven miles lower down the river—Te Puke. This is owing to the fact of the river being silted up. The wharf is there just to look at; it may be called a reminiscence of the past. We had a photo taken of it, and I produce that photo. [Photo put in.] Now the vessels cannot get there.

10. Is it only since the line was opened to Waihi that vessels have not come up to the wharf?—No, prior to the line being opened. It is about eight years ago.

11. How long has the line been opened to Waihi?—About two years—two or three years. I also produce a photo showing the river just below the wharf. [Produced.]

12. *Mr. Herries.*] That is on the Ohinemuri?—Yes. Again, in places where the river had a depth in its normal height of from 10 ft. to 15 ft. of water, people can now get across with water just up to their knees, so much has the place filled up with tailings. I may say that the river is now liable to flooding. In places where the farms were never flooded, the land is flooded regularly now after several hours' rain.

13. *Mr. Bennet.*] Is that cultivable land?—Yes, farms. I will mention one or two. There are Crosby's, Tetley's, Cooper's, and my own place.

14. *Mr. Herries.*] Are these all on the Ohinemuri River?—Yes. I will come to the Waihou directly. These places were never flooded, to my knowledge, previously, and I have been there a long time.

15. *The Chairman.*] How long have you been there?—Over forty years. I have never left there since 1865. These tailings are very injurious to the land, and when they settle thickly they destroy the vegetation.