

informed the Commission that the centre has no confidence in the engineers nor in the standards of purity fixed by the Health Department and that the centre's attitude was that it was not interested in standards of purity, and the discharge of the sewage would be objectionable even if it were completely purified.

(9) In this connection it is advisable to refer at some length to the evidence of Dr. MacKenzie and the petition presented by him on behalf of the ninety-two Auckland medical practitioners. That part of the petition which has reference to the pollution reads as follows :—

We are of the opinion that further harbour disposal of sewage even following activated sludge treatment will be a menace to the health of the community especially to those engaged in boating and bathing within the Waitemata Harbour. The practice of discharging sewage into partially confined waters is out of date.

(10) It should be mentioned that the other paragraphs of the petition and a large part of the evidence of Dr. MacKenzie deal with the subject of sewage utilization which is not relevant to the matters now being considered. It should also be mentioned that Dr. MacKenzie explained that he was not giving evidence as the representative of the British Medical Association.

(11) Although the petition contains the statements that "the further harbour disposal of sewage even following sludge treatment will be a menace to the health of the community" and that "the practice of discharging sewage into partially confined waters is out of date," the only evidence adduced in support of this sweeping and (if correct) highly important proposition was that of Dr. MacKenzie. The witness made it clear, however, that the question of harbour pollution is "a matter of minor importance in comparison with the major issue of sewage utilization," although he added that "it is, however, still one of considerable importance." We are unable to reconcile these expressions with the very serious contention which the witness supported that "a serious menace to the health of the community" would arise by reason of harbour pollution. He admitted that very few of the signatories to the petition had any special knowledge of sewerage engineering. Indeed, as we understand the evidence, it is not suggested that Dr. MacKenzie or any of the signatories claim to have any special knowledge of the subject.

The witness under cross-examination agreed that if sewage receives adequate treatment he would be "perfectly happy" for it to be discharged at Brown's Island or in the Manukau Harbour. We are quite unable to reconcile this admission with the statements in the petition to which we have referred. It was also stated by the witness that he was not concerned with the standards of purity of the water near Brown's Island which have been prescribed. It was somewhat uncertain what he meant by this statement. At one stage of his evidence he stated that "these standards are laid down, but in their present form and in my experience of local-body affairs I regard those as laid down only to be disregarded." Subsequently, however, he admitted that the standards are reasonable, but he appeared to be afraid that the authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with them might be unable to accomplish this.

(12) It is surprising and, we think, significant that no medical witness or other expert attempted to show that any cases of infectious disease have arisen from infection caused by bathing on beaches of the Waitemata Harbour or the Manukau Harbour. As has been shown, it is beyond dispute that the beaches are polluted and have been so for some time. Dr. Thompson, the Medical Officer of Health at Auckland, who gave evidence on this point also informed us that he was not "aware of any evidence, or even any serious suggestion, that cases of infectious disease" have arisen from this source; and referring to the fears expressed on behalf of yachtsmen he added that he had "never heard of a single case in which it has been suggested that a yachtsman has become ill through infection acquired while sailing through these admittedly heavily contaminated waters" (that is, the waters near the present Orakei outfall).