

26. Do you think it will be necessary to have special authority to look after the artificial waterways in the East Taieri?—Yes, most certainly.

27. And you think it will be necessary to have some body to look after those artificial waterways in order to keep them open?—Certainly.

28. If there was no such authority, would there be any likelihood of the land returning to a swampy state?—Undoubtedly it must.

29. If you were to sever that from the Taieri Drainage Board you think that another body would have to be formed to look after its waterways?—Yes, undoubtedly.

30. And do you think that one body would be able to do that better than two—that is, that the present body would be able to do the draining of the whole of the Taieri from, say, the Blackbridge right down to Berwick?—Certainly, they only require one staff.

31. *Mr. Witty.*] Originally, I take it, the lower portion was swampy—many years ago?—It was all a swamp—the higher portion also.

32. The lower portion was drained and became fertile, and then they drained the upper portion, which became fertile; but now by draining the upper portion it is swampy to a certain extent, is that so?—Yes.

33. Do you think that when the Taieri is in flood and backing up into the cut, this to a certain extent prevents the outflow of the shingle?—I absolutely do not.

34. Have not the willows that have been planted in the cut had a detrimental effect on the outflow of the water and the shingle?—I do not think so, because immediately below that there are 50 chains absolutely clear of willows.

35. And it is filled up with shingle?—Yes. There are no willows on that 50 chains.

36. *Mr. Forbes.*] You know it is a well-known fact that willows planted on the side of a stream tend to raise the bed of the stream?—I do not know that—my experience has been the opposite.

37. What width is this stream?—Forty feet wide at the point shown on the photo.

38. Is it deep now?—No, it has filled up.

39. And you have not seen any trouble arise from the willow-roots?—No. The willow-roots are a protection to the banks, and that is why they are planted there.

40. You say that the land that is shown in the photo is now under water permanently?—Yes.

41. How much of it is under water permanently in addition to yours?—Mr. Renton has one paddock of about 20 to 30 acres under water; Mr. Blackie, who bought some land at £25 an acre, has some 20 acres under water—that is on the east side; and on the west side there are about a couple of hundred acres under water.

42. That has been brought about in the last few years?—Yes, by the operation of the lagoon getting filled up.

43. This land which has been rendered almost useless, how many acres are there?—I should say 300 acres.

44. By the silting-up of the bed of the Silverstream?—Yes.

45. And all those people who have that land in that state are desirous that the Drainage Board should continue in the drainage-area?—Yes, all are.

46. You think it will be very much to your interests to be under the control of one body?—Undoubtedly.

47. *Mr. Allan.*] You gave evidence before the Royal Commission?—I did.

48. And you said you did not favour the amalgamation of the East and West Taieri?—Yes.

49. You gave evidence after Mr. D. T. Shand, did you not?—I do not remember whom I followed, but I know I gave evidence.

50. Was it not suggested by the Chairman to Mr. Shand, who gave evidence immediately before you, that there should be three or four Government nominees on the Board if there was a united district?—No. I never heard it suggested till Mr. Barron asked me. I said I should not be in favour of a united district, and he said, "If three Government nominees were appointed, would that suit you?" and I said, "Yes, certainly."

51. Now, with regard to the question Mr. Witty asked you, I understood you to say that the lower end of the plain was drained first, became dry and fertile land, and then the upper end of the plain was drained, and then received the injury: you do not suggest that, do you?—I do not grasp your meaning.

52. You say the plain was a swamp originally?—All the plain was a swamp.

53. Then you do not suggest that the lower part of the plain was drained and dried first, and then the upper part?—Where would you start to drain if you did not start at the lower end? You would start at the bottom, and drain up.

54. You say the lower end of the plain became dry first?—There was a wet area round that lagoon.

55. But, apart from the lagoon, do you say that the land about your property was dried before the North Taieri?—It was dry as soon as the North Taieri.

56. Do you not know, as a matter of fact, that they were cropping in the North Taieri long before they could crop down your way?—We were cropping on my place just as soon as they were cropping in the North Taieri.

57. Like myself, you have shot pukekos not long ago on Mr. Blackie's swamp?—Yes, through the action of this watercourse being filled up.

58. *Mr. Forbes.*] In reply to a question of mine you said the willows were planted 40 ft. or 50 ft. apart; but in the photo they seem to be meeting. Do you not think, if they were meeting at the top, that their roots would be coming up in the bed?—Every year in the autumn I put on a man who goes up one side and down the other, and he takes down the low branches so that there is no stoppage of water.