

DAVID THOMAS SHAND examined. (No. 18.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer at Wylie's Crossing.
2. *Mr. MacGregor.*] You agree with my statement of the case?—Yes.
3. *The Chairman.*] Do you agree with the last witness's statement?—I did not hear all he said, and he spoke to many things which occurred before I was on the plain. What I did hear I do not object to, and I know of nothing he mentioned which was wrong. I practically agree with that portion which says that the Silverstream has been filled up through the actions of the people above. There was evidence before the Royal Commission which shows that they made a cut, and down that cut the gravel comes. It does not matter to us where it comes from, whether from their land or the land above, but it could not come down until they made that cut. Mr. Buckhurst admitted to me that it was filled up the gravel coming down from them, but he said, "I consider you are too late." I said, "We have equity on our side," and he said, "You are too late."
4. Did you assist Mr. MacGregor to draw up the statement he submitted to the Committee?—Yes.
5. And you would be well aware of it as your case?—Yes.
6. How much land do you own that is covered with water when a flood is on?—A large flood will cover about 200 acres. Of course, I am only speaking roughly.
7. How often do the floods occur which injure you?—Not often.
8. Not every year?—Oh, no! nothing like that; only when the river is in flood.
9. Would there be one flood every four years?—No, I do not think so. The last big flood was ten years ago.
10. Then, you would not remember more than three or four floods altogether of that dimension?—I do not remember a great many.
11. And have you not land on the west side?—Yes.
12. How many acres have you there?—Seven hundred.
13. And there is a bank on the west side that is some protection to that?—Certainly.
14. Then you wish the Drainage Board to be retained as it is?—I wish some Board to be retained, a Board sufficiently able to cope with the stream. My outlets are below where the gravel comes. The gravel flows down, and when it gets to the low ground there is a slight rise in the river. There is only about 3 ft. of fall from the low ground in the river, and when the rain comes the gravel travels down so fast that it does not get to my outlet. I am better off now than I was before—the stream is filling up and going away from my outlets.
15. Do you think that a Board on the east side would not be able to deal with that?—Most certainly, if it neglects all the means.
16. And to get rid of that difficulty there should be some line of demarcation, and the benefits should be paid for accordingly?—All I desire is that those who get the benefit from the cut that is bringing the gravel down should deal with the gravel and give us the same number of acres as before, and then I do not want them to help in the drainage. I only want them to deal with the injury they have done us.
17. *Mr. Witty.*] And if they would stop the gravel at the top, that is all you want?—If they stop the gravel from coming down on to my land, that is all I want. If that is done at their expense, I am prepared to dry my own land, but I cannot do so with the gravel. I think that within the last twelve months the river has filled up to the extent of 8 or 10 chains, but that does me no harm. The difficulty is that it is gradually coming up. Mr. Charters and others are complaining.
18. You had a heavy flood in July twelve months ago, and do you think that has caused some heavy slip in the higher reaches, which is now coming down which did not come down before?—In fact, Mr. Donald Reid, sen., said in the Court of Appeal that he crossed the Wingatui Road nearly every day, and that the gravel was travelling down there at the rate of a foot per hour, and has been doing so for years.
19. Where does the gravel come from?—My opinion is that it comes from the land—it falls in. The old settlers have told me that this stream was 14 ft. deep originally, and they made two cuts of 6 ft. wide each, and the water travelled down those, and gradually deepened and widened them. All that material has gone down below and filled up the stream, and we say that in justice they ought to help us to take that gravel out.
20. Do you think there are sufficient people on the east side to form a Board and control it?—Our finances are kept separate, and it is only a matter of the control of the Board. I think one Board would be more economical for both sides.
21. *Mr. Anderson.*] You think it is necessary to have a Board to control the East Taieri?—Yes. I want to have a Board to deal with the gravel, otherwise it will be tinkered with and not stopped.
22. Do you think that one Board would more economically control the whole drainage of the Taieri Plain from where the Silverstream diverges at the Blackbridge: do you think one Board could do that?—Yes.
23. And do it more economically than two Boards?—They would only require one lot of officials.
24. And you think it is necessary to have a Board to control the artificial waterways that have drained the land but which are now being filled up with gravel?—For my own part, I would sooner have no Board than have a small Board that could not deal with it properly, because if they do not deal with it properly I shall suffer.
25. *Mr. Witty.*] How long have you been in the Taieri on your own farm?—Twenty-five years.
26. And the cut was made at the time that you purchased, was it not?—Do you mean when my father purchased the land?
27. Yes?—I think the cut was made afterwards.