

at the end of that trough was allowed to spread about in a swamp with vegetation of all sorts acting as a sieve; would not the whole of the fine granulated stuff—the gum scraped from the flax—settle to the bottom, and the water finally escape into the creek without any vegetation or fibre at all?—You would want a tremendous extent of country to carry that out, and it would be a very dangerous thing to stack stuff like that on the ground.

64. Would you believe that within the last two days I went carefully over the work of a flax-mill where this was done, saw where the fibre was caught, saw the water below, examined it carefully, and failed to find a trace of any gum or vegetable matter whatever? Could you understand that that was possible?—I do not know how it is worked, I am sure. I could not possibly do it on the Oroua River where we are.

65. How far are you from the river?—The mill is on the banks of the river.

66. Do you mean to tell us that the treatment of the refuse from the mill by the method you describe is sufficient—that is, a 6 ft. trough and a grating of that description?—I have two troughs—one 6 ft. trough, and one down below that again.

67. Very well. After the water passes through the grating, does it go straight into the river?—After it passes the two grates, yes.

68. Do you mean to tell the Committee that that is sufficient to stop the comminuted fibre that is scraped off the flax from getting into the river?—I would tell the Committee that it will keep out all the fibrous matter, but it will not keep the vegetation out. I have said that the dyed water and the vegetation go back into the river, and, in my opinion, it is impossible to keep it out.

69. Where do you get the eels?—Anywhere you like to put a basket down in the river.

70. If the acclimatization societies come to us and give evidence of eels and fish of all descriptions being killed by the effluent from these flax-mills, would you admit the possibility of that?—I deny it, because I do not think it is correct.

71. Is there any trout in the Oroua?—I have seen an occasional one; but, as I explained before, trout cannot live in the Oroua because it is a silting river.

72. *Mr. Buick.* Do whitebait come there?—I have heard of them coming up, but I have not seen them myself.

*The Chairman.* I should like to ask Mr. Seifert whether the treatment of refuse from flax described by Mr. Leven comes into the category of improved treatment of the refuse described by Mr. Seifert.

*Mr. Seifert.* Yes, I should certainly call it improved treatment, because in the old days there was nothing put in to arrest the fibrous matter at all.

73. *The Chairman* (to Mr. Leven.) Do you tell the Committee that this flax fibre and gum, if arrested, would smell and become offensive?—Yes, if it is left stagnant—that is, if it is wet.

74. Would you credit the statement if I made it that within the last two days, when I visited a flax-mill where the rubbish is arrested in the manner that I have described, there was no offensive smell whatever?—I do not know how long they had been carrying the system on.

75. They worked all last summer, and they have been two months at work now?—Could you give me the name of the mill?

76. Longbush, Wairarapa?—I have not heard of it at all. There may be special circumstances there.

77. No, it is just discharging into the swamp. No vegetation gets into the small creek?—It would be impossible for me to do the same thing, because I would have to cross the road with a drain, and I could not do it. In any case I should be very sorry to do the same thing. I think it is detrimental to health.

78. Supposing you had started your flax-mill a sufficient distance from the river to admit of treatment of this sort: could you have done it then?—No, I do not think I could possibly. You must have the river to get your water.

79. Have you not artesian water?—Artesian water is not satisfactory for milling.

80. Have you any well-water?—I do not think we would get well-water where we are.

81. *Mr. Sykes.* Mr. Pearce made the statement that he has seen the man who is in charge of the *débris* at your mill—this waste flax—throwing the stuff over into the drain which carried it into the river. You stated that a contract was let for the removal of this stuff?—Yes.

82. A contract which would incline the man to cart it away?—To save every fibre.

83. You pay him so-much per ton?—Yes.

84. *Mr. Pearce.* How long is it since that contract was signed?—We do not get any contracts signed with these men. We just make an arrangement with them that they shall get so-much a ton.

85. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.* If there is any deleterious matter for stock and fish in the water coming from the mill, where is it more likely to be contained—in the fibre, or in the vegetable matter that is taken off the fibre?—I should say, in the solid fibre. There is very little solid matter in the vegetation: it is nearly all water.

86. Would it not appear to you that the vegetable matter on the outside of the fibre contained the greater degree of acidity?—Possibly it would. I am not an expert in these matters.

87. Have you had any analysis made of the effluent from the mill?—I believe an analysis was made in that recent case.

88. You are not aware of the constituents?—No. An analysis was made, as a matter of fact, by Professor Maclaurin.

89. *The Chairman.* We have been told that the granulated matter—the vegetation—that comes from a good-sized flax-mill continuously at work would amount to a tremendous quantity in the course of a year; that it would be such a huge mound that it would be impossible to effectually dispose of it. Do you agree that the quantity would be so large?—No; I think the quantity would surprise anybody. I mean that when it was all collected for twelve months it