

will see millions of these worms there. In fact, I pointed them out to you yourself one day when going along.

15. Did you say you had used this water for domestic purposes when you went there?—Yes.

16. And that it is quite unfit for such purposes when polluted?—Absolutely no use at all of any description.

17. At one time you used it for cooking?—Yes, and for drinking also.

18. Can you tell the Committee that undoubtedly the pollution of this stream would have the effect of depreciating the value of that property?—Yes, I am sure it would. You know very well that if you have a polluted stream or a pure fresh-water stream it must add to the value of the property or depreciate it, as the case may be.

19. As manager of this place, supposing the Bill passes, and this pollution continues, would you advise that flax should be supplied to the mill from the property? Would you be willing to sell the flax to the mill?—No, I would certainly not. I would advise them to grub it out, or sell it elsewhere. I would not support the mill polluting that property.

20. If the water is kept pure it is very much to the interest of the farmers in that district to support the mill?—Most decidedly so.

21. *The Chairman.*] You did not notice any deaths among the stock from the drinking of this water?—No, I did not. I did not because in this particular paddock there was a supply of fresh water at the lake, into which this stream flows at its lower end. The highest portion of the lake is fresh.

22. Have you remonstrated with the flax-miller?—Yes, we have.

23. Has he done anything?—No. I understand he put in some kind of protective works—what it was I do not know. I understand he did do something. Certainly it has been kept cleaner since; but still, it can be better even than it is now.

24. Can you suggest anything to the Committee by which this nuisance could be done away with, and still allow the flax-mill to go on producing wealth from the flax?—I cannot suggest anything. It is a matter I have never taken any interest in. I could not suggest anything at all.

25. *Mr. Sykes.*] Does your property supply flax to the mill?—It does.

26. And the flax-mill is dependent for the supply of flax from you and your neighbours?—It gets the flax from various places.

27. Then the remedy is in your own hands?—No. He takes flax from Paekakariki, twelve or fourteen miles away.

GERALD TOLHURST, Farmer, examined. (No. 32.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your present address, Mr. Tolhurst?—I am at present residing at Otaki.

2. Would you prefer to make a statement?—I think so. I have not read this Pollution of Water Bill, but I understand it has been brought on because Mr. Pearce won his case against the flax-millers some months ago, in which Mr. Pearce by his action apparently has raised an alarm. I was on the Oroua River with Mr. Pearce for many years, and I was one of the members of the Drainage Board there, and we were continually contending against the flax-millers for putting their waste products into the river, mainly on account of the tow raising the bed of the river. Well, on one occasion we brought an action against the flax-millers, but our chief expert witnesses did not give the evidence that we expected, because they saw the river only in flood-time, and they said that they could not see that the bed of the river was raised. The evidence was true so far as it went; but if they had gone on ordinary days when the river was low, they would have seen that the tow collected on the bed in the river, and quickly raised the bed of the river. That is one of the points I wish to mention, the tow from the mills raising the bed of the river. Another point that I know of is that waste water from a flax-mill that used to empty into the main drain, which was one under our control, always killed the watercress and other green stuff. There is generally watercress, grass, and green stuff growing in a drain, but in this case we never had to clean it for vegetation: we only had to attend to the slips of soil which came down into the main drain. This proved to us that this waste water from the mill was of a poisonous nature, as it affected vegetation in this way. This Pollution of Water Bill, for all I know, may affect us in many other ways. It may be the means of giving further permission to people who now are polluting our streams. It may give them further facilities to pollute the streams than they now have. Now, we have dairy factories in our district that are polluting the water, and men who are discharging waste water from their households into the stream; then there is the refuse from the sawmills: it all goes into the river. All of that could be prevented by a little expense. It is preventable. I understand that the waste products from the mills could be prevented from polluting the streams in a cheap way through filtration. The mills should not be given further concessions, but steps should be taken to see what can be done in the way of filtration. There should be some simple means of allowing them to filtrate their water instead of allowing them to dump it wholly into the river, and if you pass this Bill you will give them further facilities to do so. The mills have been doing this work for years, and in the old days there was a great deal more flax tow put into the rivers than there is to-day. There is possibly not so much of it now, so that the question of raising the bed of the river may not be so important as it was in the days I am speaking of. But the green vegetation is still being poured in. Of course, as I am not an engineer, I do not know the exact cost of filtration-beds; but simple filtration-beds would I think greatly solve the difficulty. It can be done I am sure, and cheaply.

3. *Mr. Sykes.*] Is that in reference to flax-mill refuse?—Yes, flax-refuse in particular.

4. *The Chairman.*] You have suggested filtration. Can you give the Committee any details as to what sort of filtration-beds you would suggest?—Well, in an ordinary cow-yard we filtrate through stones. Of course, there is a very large discharge from these mills, and the material would have to be more systematically dealt with in large quantities. The flax-mills are now an