

35. What distance?—I suppose, about a mile.

36. Do you mean to tell the Committee that the distance these cows had to travel was the cause of this overgrowth of grass?—Yes. I do not say they could not eat the grass on the other side as well as on the Manawatu side. No doubt it is on account of their getting better water on the Manawatu side.

37. In the winter-time, when cows do not want water, is the position the same?—No; they will go backwards and forwards then.

38. And the grass is no longer in one place than in another?—No, not at present.

39. What, in your opinion, should the flax-millers do to prevent what you complain of?—They say we should prevent it ourselves—we should put artesian in and fence the river off.

W. B. V. PEARCE further examined. (No. 36.)

1. *The Chairman.*] I understand you wish to show us some photographs?—Yes, some photographs of the Oroua River, taken on Sunday last. [Photographs produced and explained.] With regard to the methods followed at the flax-mills, I desire to say that Mr. Tennant, after the flax leaves the patent catcher, does not apply the water for a distance of probably 10 ft. Then it goes into the patent washer and is washed. The pulp, gum, and stripper-slips have nearly all been shaken off on the travelling chain, only the marketable flax being washed. The refuse is run down a new drain, and the accumulation, after a month's working, would not take a man more than half a day to throw out. Mr. Tennant says it should be thrown out every Saturday after the water is let out, but the drain has been backed with flood-water. The material caught from this mill is stated to be 5 cubic yards a day, and he is the flax-miller that we did not expect to get an injunction against. He was doing better before than any of the others. The water from this mill is run through a swamp, and does not go back into the river again for three or four miles; it goes into a public drain. The drain shows no ill effects whatever. With respect to Mr. Broad's and Mr. Jarvis's mills, they have put them practically under one roof so as not to contaminate one another's water. They are putting everything into the chutes, and instead of putting the chute, as before, right out into the river, they are carrying it down the bank of the river to prevent erosion by dropping all the stuff in under the bank. The only means they have of stopping anything is three lengths of $\frac{1}{2}$ in. pipe. These are practically put together in the bottom of the fluming—which is a foot wide—and run up at an angle and spread at the top. There would be four spaces, and at the bottom the three were practically together. At the end of the chute after that one of the mills had two upright bars. That would make three spaces of 4 in. each in the bottom and 5 in. each at the top. I could put my fist through. The other mill had three bars, making four spaces, of 3 in. each. With reference to stripper-slips, any that they had caught they had put over the banks to stop erosion of the artificial bank, or on the natural bank. Quantities they would cart out in a dray and dump down, and the cattle were running over it. They were not making any commercial use of it, or only a fractional part of it. There may have been a small quantity of stripper-slips at Smith and Seifert's, but I do not think they would be picked up; they were lying in the long grass. I had never been to Jarvis's mill prior to this. One great loss to the settlers there arises from the leakage of water through the river-bed having been raised. The artificial banks there are many years old. The bed has risen so that the pressure against the artificial banks is causing an ooze all down over the paddocks, and rushes are growing where it ought to be the driest land in the paddocks.

2. *Mr. Buick.*] Who owns the land?—It has been Lockwood. The millers themselves own some of it for drying-paddocks. I might say that at this bank of Green's there is a stream of water bigger than my leg coming through and coming down over my land. I shall have to provide for it later on.

3. *The Chairman.*] Is that a new stream?—It is coming under the embankment.

4. *Mr. Sykes.*] You are of opinion that the methods now adopted by Mr. Tennant are satisfactory?—There would have been no case brought if they had been half as good. But when we brought the case there were only three or four mills. How many mills there are to be I do not know. Every time they cut the flax they take the toitoi, &c., out, and every time the crop is twice as big.

5. I will not matter how the mills multiply, provided the conditions are good, will it?—I would not like to say if there are 5,000 gallons of liquid a minute put in in the summer-time. I think the greatest cause of our trouble now is the two- or three-years old pulp that is lying buried. If that were once washed out I think it would be all right. If they only put the juice in next summer I think it will be bad, in view of the multiplication of the mills. If we get two or three big floods and wash the river out, I think it will be all right.

6. You say there are no ill effects apparent in the drain which conveys this waste water from Tennant's mill away to the river?—I was never more surprised than when I put my arm down in it and took it up. There was only a sour smell. But, of course, we have had cold weather all the time.

7. Perhaps in that time the process of fermentation had not taken place?—There was no fermentation. I believe stock would have eaten it.

8. *Mr. J. Bolland.*] You think that the flax-mills can be managed in such a way as not to be a nuisance to the owners of property?—I am positive about that. In Taranaki the dairy-farmers and flax-mills are practically side by side, and there is no trouble. They all put the flax-mills close to the sea, and put the refuse into the sea direct. The dairy factories are always above them. In this case it is cheaper to take the flax to Foxton and make it than to do it on the ground. They are contaminating one another's water. The mills are going up the river further and further to get water—in fact, Mr. Tennant had threatened them with an injunction prior to my taking action, and has done so since, because he is the lowest on the river. He told me so himself on Sunday.