

101. We want to be quite clear that you establish your case on these points: that you are going to receive no benefit commensurate with the charge which will be put upon you, and that you are quite satisfied to do without this drainage-area altogether?—I am here representing 230 people out of 250 who say they do not want to be in this drainage-area, but want to get out of it.

102. The third point that you have made is this: that you are brought in as a contributory section of the community to confer a benefit upon the western people wherein you receive very little benefit yourselves. Is that the third point?—Yes, to some extent that is so. I will explain. We are rated for general purposes in the meantime, which include the payment of an engineer's salary, £750, and a clerk's salary, £250. An office has been erected costing £700 or £800. We have to pay for those general expenses running into something like £2,000 a year, and, so far as the bulk of the land is concerned, we do not think we shall receive any advantage from it. It is possible that people down below may receive some benefit, but we are representing people down below who have signed the petition, and they say they can cope with anything that requires to be done.

103. You will have to establish your case on broad grounds?—You could not have anything broader than that. We represent every part of this district, and there is only a very small area the owners of which are opposing us, but some of the tenants of that area are with us.

104. *The Chairman.*] With regard to the point about the silt, the fact is that if they could bank both sides there would be less silt—the scour would take it to the sea?—I should like to say this—and I think it will be generally admitted: that the erection of a bank on the East Taieri side would probably prove fatal to the West Taieri bank, because there is such an enormous quantity of water—millions of tons—stored in the East Taieri during a big flood. Mr. W. Shand will be able to explain that, and he is a petitioner asking to be cut out. He has 800 acres, and in flood-time the water goes on his land to a depth of 8 ft., and yet he believes that no good will be done him by being in this district, and he would rather be out of it.

105. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Is there a great and direct benefit to be derived by the people on the western side through this Drainage Board?—There is no doubt that it would be an advantage to a considerable portion of West Taieri to have one Board instead of four as they had before, each having only a limited area to deal with. There has been trouble between the West Taieri and the Otokia Drainage Boards on the west side. Apart from the question as to what lands in West Taieri should be included in the drainage-area, it would probably be better to have one drainage district, rather than half a dozen as they have had in the past. I think I have made it clear that their interests are distinct from ours. What will benefit them will not affect East Taieri at all unless they raise the bank.

WILLIAM DUNCAN ROSS MCCURDIE examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Surveyor and civil engineer.

2. *Mr. Reid.*] Will you explain why you are here?—I am here to represent the Corporation tenants and the Corporation who own land on the Taieri. There are about 300-odd acres occupied by small settlers.

3. *The Chairman.*] Which Corporation?—The Dunedin City Corporation. I have lived on the ground myself, and I owned one of the sections now included in the drainage district, which consisted of about 50 acres. I lived there over three years, and I have seen several floods on the Taieri.

4. Are you connected with it now?—No, and I do not live on the Taieri now. Of course, I have been there since, and I have known the Taieri Plain for a good many years—I suppose for about twenty-eight years.

5. *Mr. Reid.*] Will you state whether you consider any special advantage would accrue to the district that is to be made on the East Taieri side and to be included in the drainage-area?—The top end of the district is quite dry already—it wants irrigation, in fact, in dry summers.

6. That includes the low land that is at present in the district?—Yes.

7. Would there be any advantage at all by being in the drainage-area and having a Board?—No, they do not want any drainage at all.

8. Then, there is a part of the East Taieri that is not drained, is there not?—Yes, there is a low part down towards the Taieri River.

9. Does this sketch [produced] give a general idea of the low-lying land that is wet on the East Taieri side?—Yes. [Plan explained.] The floods on the Taieri River spread up to Owhiro.

10. Is that a large proportion of the East Taieri side?—No, a very small proportion. I do not know what the total area of that side is, but it is only a small proportion.

11. You do not know the acreage?—No.

12. But that is the part that would be materially benefited by any drainage scheme?—Yes, that is the part that would be benefited by drainage or by protection from floods.

13. In your opinion, is there any community of interest between the East Taieri side and the West Taieri side with regard to drainage?—No, except that the West Taieri side can injure those settlers on the low ground by reason of the embankments which they have already done. They dam the water back on to the East Taieri people. That is the only community of interest between them. As it has banked the water back they should protect them in some way. It would be only a matter of justice that when the West Taieri people bank the river, they should protect those people from the damage they do.

14. Notwithstanding the expression of opinion from the witnesses that there was no community of interest, you know it has all been put in one Board by the Commissioners?—Yes, against the wishes of the people.

15. The reason given for that was that there may be friction between two bodies?—Yes, I believe so.