

52. *Mr. Reid.*] What was the state of Mr. D. T. Shand's land—that swamp land, when you first knew it and now?—Well, that is not hard to tell. It was all flax and Maori heads, and you could not go through it. In fact, you could not see any person if he was standing in it.

53. It would cover a man?—Yes.

54. What state was the swamp in?—It was a big swamp. If you stood on the tussocks you could see the ground shaking all round you.

55. Could you walk over it?—You could walk from tussock to tussock.

56. When was that?—A long time ago.

57. Would it be thirty years ago?—Over thirty years ago.

58. Will you state the condition of that land to-day compared with the condition of it when you could not walk over it?—The tussocks are all cut now, and they are cropping and farming parts of the land.

59. What proportion of swamp is there now as compared with then?—I could not say as to the swamp—the ground would be gradually getting dry.

60. Do you know how many acres of land there are now of Mr. Shand's?—I could not say exactly—there may be 1,500.

61. All on the East Taieri side of the river?—Yes. I know that Murray has 420.

62. Do you know what rent he pays for it?—I could not say.

63. I wish to know whether any of that land was let thirty years ago, when there was no cut there—whether any was let for agricultural purposes in those days?—I do not think so.

64. And to-day?—Well, it is all let now or bought.

65. And fetching in what rental?—I could not say as to that.

ROBERT CULLEN examined. (No. 9.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer.

2. And a ratepayer?—Yes.

3. *Mr. Reid.*] You are in the district on the east side?—Yes.

4. How many acres have you got there—you have some in the drainage district and some out of it?—There are 150 acres, and half is put into Class "D," but I do not know whether it is the top end or the bottom end. My land is away up on the high ground away from the river altogether, next to the hillside.

5. How does your land stand with regard to the floods?—On an average it would be 50 ft. above flood-mark. The flood does not come near me at all.

6. And is that land which is 50 ft. above put in the drainage district?—Yes.

7. And in what class?—Some in Class "C" and some in "B." There would be about 200 acres of this land.

8. *The Chairman.*] Who did that special classing to put your land into that?—Mr. Cooston, the Taieri County Engineer, and Mr. Craig, the Government Valuer, and Mr. O'Neill, the Crown Ranger.

9. *Mr. Reid.*] Would you get any benefit, as far as you can see, from any works proposed or any works that it is possible for the Board to carry out?—None whatever. I am a long way above the flood-mark.

10. Was anything said about your land by the Court as to whether it should be in?—Yes, it was admitted by the classifiers that this land should be out altogether. At the one corner—Allanton—most of that is out, and also Mr. Shand's. The portion away at the end of the junction is out, and the middle portion is left in. There is no flood-water that comes near it at all, and the Drainage Board cannot do us any good whatever.

11. And your suggested remedy would be to put you out of the district altogether?—Yes, in no class at all.

RICHARD McKEAGG examined. (No. 10.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer.

2. And a ratepayer?—Yes, and a landowner, I am sorry to say.

3. *Mr. Reid.*] Will you state your case to the Committee?—I have been in this district for the last thirty-six years. The Taieri Plain, as near as I can explain it, resembles Cook Strait where we came up. It is a flat plain walled in on each side with high mountains right down from Saddle Hill to Waiholā. The Taieri River runs right across the plain from Taieri Plain (Outram) to Allanton, making a junction. I think it will be four miles from the upper part of the plain to where the river cuts across. From that right down to Waiholā there will be perhaps fifteen or sixteen miles. I am an old traction-engine driver, and saved a few pounds which I thought I would invest in a farm, but I would sooner be back threshing than on the farm. The Silverstream runs down through the centre of East Taieri, and empties into the river, and so also does the Mill Creek. It seems to be that any one who had a bit of creek running through his ground—because that is where the classifiers took their classification from—was drawn into the drainage-area. On the lower side on the river-bank there would be perhaps 3,000 acres that is subject to flood—pretty swampy in fact—which belongs to Mr. Shand. There are two other individuals, tenants of Mr. Shand's, Messrs. Douglas Renton and Gibson Charters, who are in the flooded area, and join Mr. Shand's land. Of course I objected to classification, as I thought I should not have been in the drainage-area at all. My land cost me about £30, and with the improvements I put on it the Government valued it at £25, and it was drawn into the drainage-area. This peat swamp is only valued at £7 an acre, and the tenants who are living on it are paying 15s. an acre for it in its natural state. I do not know why the Government let that man sit there for £7 an acre while they value my land at £25. I have never paid rates, and never intend to pay them. I reckon it is a very unjust thing. As long as the East Taieri and North Taieri are left in it, there was never such