

leading from Mosgiel to Outram, and the water from the big channel flowed over the lands immediately above and across that road. The Provincial Council voted £1,100 to make a cut under that road or through that road to stop the water running over it, but they only took it down a few chains below that road. There was a small, deep, narrow stream running up there, and they only took it a few chains down below this river, and the operations of the water bringing down that shingle filled up the cut that the Provincial Council had made, and also the stream below that. In the course of two years, or a little more, another grant was made by the Council of £2,800 to carry this about 30 chains further down, where the stream was no bigger, as the course had got filled up. The settlers down below, hearing of this, formed a deputation to wait on the Provincial Council. Mr. Macandrew was then the Superintendent, and he granted to the people down below £800 out of that vote of £2,800, and that left £2,000 to be spent on the Mosgiel-Outram Road. That £800 was subsidised by the settlers down there to the extent of £1 for £1, and the sum of £1,600 was spent in a distance of a little over two miles, making the cut so that it would take this water that was sent down from up above. There was £3,100 spent in bringing this water and gravel down to Carlyle, and only £1,600 spent in taking it from there to the lagoon. Mr. Allan said yesterday that they opened it up to the river, which is not correct. I know for a fact the circumstances connected with the £800. It was put in the hands of the Road Board to see it expended, and there was one member from each riding. My father was appointed clerk to the Committee, and I did his clerical work, and that is how I know the position so well. The effect of that was to take the gravel that was making that big canal up above down to the lagoon, and it is covering an extent of 80 acres. It filled that up in the course of time, and it is backed up now, as you see in the photo which has been produced, to 90-odd chains from the lagoon. I know all the creeks in the Taieri. In fact, I have been over all the plain on the east side, and there is not the slightest doubt that all those creeks require attention, and attention cannot be given to them by private individuals. It is absolutely necessary that we should have a Drainage Board to control those creeks.

5. *Mr. MacGregor.*] Will you describe to the Committee the comparison between the present state of your land and its state before the Silverstream was cut and before the West Taieri bank was made?—Before the Silverstream was cut we had as fine a crop of oats growing on the lower part down to the fence shown on the photo as ever grew, but which is now 18 in. under water.

6. When was the photo taken?—Just after the July flood.

7. But it was before the flood had totally subsided that it was taken?—Oh, no! At the present time it is costing me £2 10s. a week on that account. I have seventy head of cattle grazing, which I ought to have no need to do, because there are 50 acres I cannot do a stroke on; and it is the same on the other side.

8. *Mr. Forbes.*] That is permanently under water?—It is now.

9. And in the summer-time too?—Yes, now it is.

10. What was its state after the construction of the West Taieri bank?—It did not affect it one bit. I gave evidence before the Commission, and in my evidence I said I was not in favour of a united Board until Mr. Barron asked me if it would not be better to have a united Board if there were three Government nominees—neutral men—appointed, and I said Certainly, and I think so still.

11. Do you find Government nominees always neutral men?—They ought to be. They are men who occupy important positions in the land. As I said, my land is much wetter than it was thirty years ago, and I cannot get drainage: all my drainage is blocked up. A good number of gentlemen giving evidence yesterday said their lands were dry.

12. *The Chairman.*] You wish the combined Board to remain as at the present time?—Most certainly.

13. And is your reason for saying that that you would get this drainage that you now require?—A single Board on the eastern side could not cope with that matter. They might have it cleaned out to-day, and in a week's time a flood comes and fills it up again.

14. But will the combined Board clean it out every week?—I am only giving that as an instance. A single Board might have it cleaned out now and the gravel come down at another time and fill it up. The two subdivisions being joined in the drainage district, you have a chance of getting something done. There is no doubt that 12 chains of that Silverstream bed will be filled up with the floods.

15. *Mr. Anderson.*] You have spent practically all your lifetime in the Taieri?—All except eighteen months.

16. The lower side of the East Taieri was a swamp, was it not?—Yes, the same as the rest.

17. Before there was any cut, did the Silverstream originally flow right through the plain into the Taieri River, or lose itself in the swamp?—It flowed into the lagoon—the big lagoon.

18. It lost itself on the swamp?—No, there is a big lagoon covering 80 acres, and it flowed through the swamp into the lagoon, and there is an outlet from the lagoon into the river.

19. And that was the natural river?—Yes.

20. Was the Silverstream a winding stream in those days?—Yes.

21. Then you said the Provincial Council cut a stream, and the County Council has practically kept it open?—No. I said the Provincial Council gave a grant of £800, and the spending of that money was put in the hands of the Road Board. The County Council would not do anything for the draining of the lands.

22. Do you think the gravel would have come down if you had left the Silverstream in its natural winding state?—No, it could not.

23. Do the settlers lead their own drains into the straight channels on each side?—They cannot on the lower reaches, because now the bed of the stream is higher than the land on the other side.

24. But originally they did lead into it?—Yes.

25. And that is how that huge swamp is reduced and made into good land?—Yes, that has the effect of carrying the water off it.