

1909.
NEW ZEALAND.

LANDS COMMITTEE

(REPORT OF THE) ON PETITIONS Nos. 319, 563, AND 185, RELATIVE TO CERTAIN GRIEVANCES
IN CONNECTION WITH THE DRAINAGE OF TAIERI PLAINS; TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF
EVIDENCE AND APPENDICES.

(HON. MR. DUNCAN, CHAIRMAN.)

Report brought up on the 20th December, 1909, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 8TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1909.

Ordered, "That a Committee be appointed, consisting of ten members, to whom shall stand referred after the first reading all Bills affecting or in any way relating to the lands of the Crown or educational or other public reserves; the Committee to have power to make such amendments therein as they think proper, and to report generally when necessary upon the principles and provisions of the Bill; the Committee to have power to call for persons, papers, and records; three to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. Anderson, Hon. Mr. T. Duncan, Mr. Ell, Mr. Forbes, Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Hogg, Mr. Lang, Mr. Lawry, Mr. Witty, and the mover."—(Right Hon. Sir J. G. WARD.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 8TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1909.

Ordered, "That the petition of H. Palmer and others be referred to the Lands Committee."—(Mr. CRAIGIE.)

THURSDAY, THE 9TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1909.

Ordered, "That the petition of C. Findlay and others be referred direct to the Lands Committee."—(Hon. Mr. T. MACKENZIE.)

REPORT.

Nos. 319, 563, and 185.—Petitions of TIEKE KOONA and 22 Others, CHARLES FINDLAY and 232 Others, and H. PALMER and 7 Others.

PETITIONERS pray for inquiry into and redress for certain grievances in connection with the drainage of the Taieri Plain.

I am directed to report that the Committee recommends that one Board is best able to deal with the Taieri drainage scheme; that the classification and boundaries are not satisfactory on the East Taieri side; that some judicial authority or commission be appointed to deal with the latter recommendation.

The minutes of evidence are attached hereto,
20th December, 1909.

T. Y. DUNCAN, Chairman.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

WEDNESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 1909.

(No. 1.)

Hon. Mr. T. Mackenzie: Mr. Duncan and members of the Committee,—The gentlemen who are before you to-day, as you can gather from the petition which has just been read, are here to lay before you their views on the drainage scheme which was passed into law some time ago in connection with the Taieri. It is a matter in which there is keen interest in the district, and both sides will now have an opportunity of stating their case before the Committee in order that you may be able to arrive at some conclusion in connection with the matter, which has caused a very great deal of unrest and a great deal of litigation up to the present time. I will not delay you further, because they are here to give evidence, and it is upon that evidence and the reports that are to be submitted to you that you will base your decision, and not upon any remarks of mine. I therefore desire to introduce to you the various members of the Taieri Drainage Board, settlers from East and West Taieri, and the officers in connection with the Department from the South as well.

WILLIAM ALLEN examined. (No. 2.)

The Chairman: What are you?

Witness: A solicitor; but I am not appearing here in a professional capacity. I signed the petition on behalf of the Deacons' Court of the East Taieri Presbyterian Church. I am clerk to that body, and in that way I become a ratepayer, so that, although I appeared in a legal capacity for some of the petitioners in other proceedings, I am a petitioner. I was born in the district, and I have lived in it ever since, so I claim to have a personal knowledge of the matters about which I propose to speak. It may perhaps shorten the proceedings if the Committee would look at a sketch-plan of the district, and get an idea of the lie of the plain. Generally speaking, the Taieri Plain falls from the north-east to the south-west—it has a natural fall in that direction. We might speak of it as from east to west, because the lands on the eastern side of the river will be referred to as East Taieri, and those on the west or lower part of the plain as West Taieri. The Taieri River, which rises in Central Otago and is fed by a number of mountains, enters the plain at Outram, and flows across the plain, so that East Taieri, which we represent to-day, and which we ask to have cut out of the Taieri Drainage District, is on one side of the Taieri River—the upper side—and West Taieri is on the lower side. At one time there were on the West Taieri side of the river four Drainage Boards and two River Boards, and there was always trouble amongst those bodies. On the East Taieri side there was no drainage district; the people there did not seem to want one, and they got along all right without one. With regard to East Taieri there is only a small area of land, comparatively speaking, subject to flood—a small area of swamp land. By far the larger area in East Taieri is high and dry, some of the land included in the drainage district being 100 ft. above the level of the river. Therefore by far the greater portion of this land needs no drainage. Again, it is not subject to flood, so that anything the Drainage Board may do will not make its position any better than it is to-day. A Commission was appointed some time ago—Mr. Cruickshank's Commission—to inquire into matters, and they called evidence; but the evidence which they took was mainly the evidence of persons who wanted drainage, and who were interested in getting a Board of some sort. The people who occupied land higher up the plain in East Taieri did not suppose for one moment that they would be included in the drainage district, because they did not want any drainage, and they did not think it necessary to give any evidence. Notwithstanding the fact that only some fifty-odd witnesses gave evidence, most of whom probably were asking for drainage or expected to get it, the Commissioners in their report say, "From among the fifty-five witnesses whom we examined there was hardly one who did not favour the proposal to unite all the four drainage districts on the west side of the Taieri River into one district, although they were divided in opinion as to the necessity for including the two River Boards in such district. Similarly, there was little or no dissension to a proposal to create one drainage district for the east side of the river; but the great bulk of the witnesses (though not all) opposed making one United Board for both sides of the river." Later on they say, "As already mentioned, we found considerable hostility on the part of the settlers to the suggestion of combining the eastern and western districts in one Board." In spite of the fact that the evidence on which they founded their report was against the proposal, they deliberately recommended that one Board should be set up to include both sides of the river. The evidence was entirely against that. When that report went in, the settlers on the high and dry lands at once took the matter in hand, with the result that they got up a petition, which was signed by over two hundred people on the eastern side of the river, objecting to being included in the drainage district. That petition was sent to Parliament, and the then Minister of Lands, who was in the Taieri, promised the objectors that they would have an opportunity of being heard. Unfortunately, owing to the pressure of business at the end of the session the Taieri Land Drainage Act was passed, and no opportunity was given the objectors of being heard. We do not blame the Minister for that, because it is quite possible it was difficult to give us an opportunity, but I only mention the fact to prove that we did not have an opportunity of protesting against the Bill. Then, as I have said, the Taieri Land Drainage Act was passed on the lines of the report of the Commissioners, creating the Taieri Drainage

District and including in it all this land which the petitioners represent, and which they now ask to have cut out of the drainage district—that is, all the land on the eastern side of the river. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, classifiers were appointed and the lands were classified. Thereupon the settlers took a further opportunity of appealing against being classified into classes in which they would have to pay rates. They objected, and their objection was supported by four leading engineers in Dunedin—the City Engineer (Mr. W. D. R. McCurdie, who is here, Mr. R. S. Allen, Mr. L. O. Beal, and Mr. Williams. Those gentlemen all supported our view of the case, that we should not have been included in the drainage district.

Right Hon. Sir J. G. Ward: Who are “we”? Is that the eastern side?

Witness: Yes; North Taieri and East Taieri. Not only was that view supported by those engineers, but it was supported also by the evidence taken by the Commissioners. In addition to that, two of the classifiers, whose classification was upheld by the Magistrate, admitted in cross-examination that in their opinion North Taieri and Irregular Block, East Taieri, should not have been included in the drainage district. When the matter was before the Assessment Court the Magistrate was considering appeals against the classification of the land. Under the Act the land had to be classified into three or four classes, and rated according to classification. The question before the Magistrate was whether that classification was a correct classification of the lands in the district or not, and, although some alterations were made in it, the general result was that he upheld the classification. But the Magistrate did not go into the question as to whether these lands were properly included in the district or not—that was not the point before him. If I mistake not, what he did say was that because they were included in the district it must have been intended that they should bear some portion of the taxation, and therefore he included them in the classes that were liable to be rated. That really was the ground of his decision. The classification was made by Messrs. O'Neill (Crown Lands Ranger), Craig (Government Valuer), and Couston (County Engineer). The evidence before the Court was that these lands should not have been included in the district; but the Magistrate said he had nothing to do with that; they were included in the district by the Act, and that it was not for him to decide that point. Immediately after the classification, the people occupying lands in East Taieri got up another petition asking that they be cut out of the district, and that is one of the petitions that is being considered to-day. That petition was signed by 230 people in the district, who are nearly all ratepayers. There are on the ratepayers roll, in round figures, about two hundred and fifty names. That petition was presented to every ratepayer, including those opposing it here to-day, and there were only thirteen who refused to sign it. There were a few other names on the roll of people who were not available, because some of them were dead and others were out of the district. But the position is that in East Taieri 230 people out of a total of 250 have asked that they should be cut out, only thirteen refusing to sign. We are not here representing a few agitators: we are here representing a community which is practically unanimous in its desire to get out of the drainage district. After that petition was sent in Sir Joseph Ward visited the district, and was taken round it. In a speech which he made in the evening he referred to the matter, and said it was a difficult problem to deal with, but he would send somebody to inquire into it, in order to guide him as to what should be done. He kept that promise, and sent Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst to inquire into the matter and to report on it. Those gentlemen spent about five or six weeks in the district, and they investigated the matter thoroughly. I believe they visited nearly every property in East Taieri, and they also went over to West Taieri and made a careful investigation there, and the result of their investigations is that they recommend, without any hesitation, the very thing that we are asking to-day—that East Taieri should be cut out of the drainage district; and their report shows that they had a thorough grasp of the situation. Their report says, “That all lands lying east of the Taieri River now included within the district be severed from the same.” And again, “After giving the question every consideration, we decided to suggest that the Hon. the Minister of Lands be advised to recommend to His Excellency the Governor the exclusion of all lands east of the Taieri River from the drainage district, for the following reasons: (a.) By far the larger portion of the East Taieri will receive little or no benefit from the proposed or contemplated drainage-works. (b.) Many of the ratepayers whose lands are situated in the lower portions next to the river are doubtful of receiving any benefits, and have expressed themselves as desirous of having their lands excluded from the district; and even some of those whom it is thought would receive the greatest benefit from a drainage scheme have stated that if the dry lands are excluded they would like to be excluded also. (c.) The cost of the proposed work on the eastern side and other works contemplated, together with the maintenance of the same, will be more than the area of land to which drainage is necessary can reasonably afford without contributions from the owners of lands already provided with drainage; and it appears to us unfair to expect owners of the drained lands to consent to be taxed for the benefit of owners of land requiring drainage.” That is exactly what we say. The bulk of this land is drained already and is dry, and why should the owners of it be asked to drain swamp land near the river. Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst agree with us. Their report goes on to say, “(d.) We see no indication of any such drainage schemes as proposed by Messrs. Bell, Higginson, and Blair, in Report E.-6, 1880; Mr. Carruthers, D.-5b, 1871; or Mr. J. T. Thompson, I.-2b, 1877, being adopted. (e.) Until something is done to meet the wishes of the signatories to the petition for exclusion of their lands from the drainage-area, dissatisfaction and agitation for severance will continue; and it is our opinion that it is best to deal with the question at as early a date as possible, so that finality can be secured before any further loans or expenses are incurred by the Board. If the exclusion of the East Taieri lands from the district is decided upon, their share of the liabilities and expenses already incurred by the present Drainage Board can be adjusted as provided by subsection (2) of section 16 of the Taieri Drainage Act.” We are quite willing that that should be done: we agree that any expense already incurred should be borne by ratepayers on both sides of the river. Messrs. Lundius and

Buckhurst have grasped the position exactly, and have stated it concisely and clearly. When their report was sent in, a third petition was prepared and signed by East Taieri ratepayers, and is before you to-day, approving of the report, and asking that legislative effect be given to it. You have four petitions from East Taieri: one protesting against inclusion in the district right at the beginning, the other three sent in since they were included by the Act, and asking that they be cut out; and the remarkable thing about these petitions is the extraordinary unanimity of the people on the point. As I have said, there are only about a dozen who have refused to sign the petitions. That is the position in a nutshell; and we say it is a monstrous state of affairs that a whole community should be included in a drainage district against their will, and in spite of their protest to the contrary. To sum up our position, you have these four almost unanimous petitions from the eastern side of the district, signed by 230 people; you have the opinion of four engineers, one of whom is appearing before you to-day; you have the opinion of two men who were appointed under the Act to classify the land; and you have a petition also before you from the people on the west side of the Taieri River, signed by nearly a hundred people, supporting us. That is the way we are supported to-day. And what is the opposition to the petition? The opposition comes only from the few who occupy some swamp land both in the East Taieri and West Taieri, principally from the Shand Estate, which owns a very large tract of swamp country estimated at something like 10,000 acres, the bulk of which is on the western side of the river. Some of the tenants of that swamp land have signed the petition and are with us to-day, but the owner and one of the tenants are appearing against us. There is no doubt at all that that is the source of the whole trouble—the Shand Estate; and I have no hesitation in saying it. Then we have this peculiar fact also: that the Taieri Drainage Board, consisting of six elective members and three Government nominees, is opposing the petitions. East Taieri is represented on the Board by two elective members, whereas West Taieri, because it forms the greater portion of the district, has four representatives—that makes six elective members; and there are three Government nominees.

But they would be neutral?

Witness: Are they? Just one moment. The two members on the Board who represent East Taieri are with us in this matter. One of them is here to-day, but the other, unfortunately, is too ill to attend. One of the West Taieri members is also with us, and the other three elected members representing swamp land in West Taieri are against us, so that the elective members of the Board are equally divided on this matter. Now, the Commissioners on whose report the Act was passed stated that, although there were only two representatives in East Taieri while there were four in West Taieri, they would recommend that three Government officials be appointed to hold the balance evenly between the two districts, so that East Taieri would not be outvoted by West Taieri. Mr. David Shand, who is here representing the Shand Estate, when giving his evidence before the Royal Commission, said if there were three or four Government nominees the question would be who could pull the Government; and I think his side has succeeded in that, unfortunately for us, because the Drainage Board—which one would have expected to take up an independent position and say, We represent the whole district, and we cannot take either side, so you must fight out the matter between yourselves—have sent the Board's solicitor and its Engineer and a member of the Board to fight us, presumably at the expense of the ratepayers. It is a scandalous state of affairs that a Board which represents the whole district should actively oppose these petitions. It is only able to do so because there are three Government nominees on the Board. Mr. Shand was the Chairman of the Board last year, but at the election in November he was turned out of office. He only received twenty-eight votes, but that does not represent twenty-eight people, because some people have two or three votes. Mr. Findlay got the unanimous vote of the other subdivision in East Taieri. From my own knowledge of the district—and I have lived there for over forty years now—I consider that the few who are opposing the petitioners have not a leg to stand on. The whole community is with us except thirteen people, one of that number being Mr. Shand, and other five his tenants, some of whom have signed the second petition, because they realise that if they are included in the drainage-area they will have to pay the rates. I might point out on the plan that in East Taieri there are hills 100 ft. above the flood-level included in the area, but the mountains higher up are not included in it. Why they have carved out a little bit of the North Taieri which is dry it is impossible for me to say. To show that we are not representing any particular portion of East Taieri, I may tell you that our deputation includes Mr. Cullen (a member of the Board), representing the Irregular Block, East Taieri; Mr. William Shand, who has 800 acres on the river-bank; and Mr. Fowler and Mr. Anderson, representing the lower lands, who all support the petitions.

Mr. Anderson: Is that land liable to flood?

Witness: Yes. That is, in East Taieri. We have nothing to do with West Taieri. There is no doubt that they need a Board there. They had two River Boards and four Drainage Boards, but they needed the amalgamation of those Boards to deal with the whole district. We have had practically no disturbance in East Taieri until this matter cropped up. Then we have Mr. Gow, Mr. Gawne, and Mr. Fowler representing North Taieri, and Mr. McKeagg representing the middle of the plain. Then there is a strip of land between the main road and the river. The river is banked up on the west side, and yet this strip is included in the drainage district. The owners there have good reason to complain against the west people for having banked the river, thus throwing the water on to their lands, but they are included in the classes liable to higher rating, although nothing can be done to relieve them.

The Chairman: But would not the Board deal with that river supposing they were connected?

Witness: I might say that since 1870 several engineers and Commissions have inquired into this matter, and I think I am right in saying that the net result of all their inquiries is that, with a bank erected on the west side of the river—there is a bank along the entire western side of the river to protect West Taieri—they say that anything that is likely to do East Taieri any good

would be far too expensive in comparison with the area of land that would receive any benefit. There are only about two thousand acres in the swamp. To show you that what I am saying is quite correct, let me quote the report that was signed by Mr. C. Napier Bell, Mr. Higginson, and Mr. Blair. The Taieri River is a very serious problem, and it is one which has been considered by a large number of people who have not been able to recommend anything that is likely to give relief to East Taieri. The settlers near the river who are rated by the Drainage Board believe that nothing can be done; and they object to being included in the drainage district and being rated against their will when there does not seem to be any prospect of anything being done. The Drainage Board's reply is "How do you know?"

We have not decided upon a scheme. Several engineers have considered this question during the last twenty years, and the report of the three engineers I have just mentioned is as follows: "We therefore reluctantly recommend that from Outram Railway-bridge, as far as Greytown, the Silverstream area be left open, and on the other side of the river that the existing banks be maintained in their present position and at their present level." That is to say, that the West Taieri bank which protects the lower part of the plain from flooding should be maintained; and it will be maintained—it has been there for the last thirty years. But nothing can be done for the East Taieri. That is the conclusion that those three engineers came to. Some questions have been asked about the banking of the river on the East Taieri side; but the member who asked them does not know the district, or he would know that that is improbable. There is an immense volume of water flowing into the plain; the fall is great down to the point where it enters the plain, although from there on it is comparatively level. Such an immense volume of water coming down in flood-time cannot get out of the gorge quickly enough. The tide also affects its flow, so that a bank on the East Taieri side would never do. If they put a bank there the river would probably break through on the western side. We have left things as they were ever since the West Taieri bank was erected, which, I think, was thirty years ago. Now, of course, we do not know what the other side will have to say about this matter, but I can tell you one or two grounds on which they have objected. One of them, I understand, is that the river is silting up, that it may be necessary to dredge it, and that that would do good to East Taieri as well as West Taieri. Well, if any good were done to East Taieri it could only be to the land included in this very small portion near the river. But, curiously enough, in 1870 Mr. J. T. Thompson was sent to inquire into this very question of the silting-up of the river, as it had been stated that the silting-up would interfere with the railway; and his report is probably one of the best that has been written so far. He went into it very exhaustively, and came to the conclusion that the river would not silt up, but that it would always maintain about its present level. He said it might alter its course. It has altered its course undoubtedly in the past; but it would always find another course and maintain its present level, because the fall is greater down to where it enters the plain, although it is very slight from there on. I have no doubt that if the West Taieri bank is maintained it will not be possible for the river to alter its course, and that means that it will cut a channel and wash away the silt.

Mr. Witty: Not alter its course from east to west?

Witness: No. It flows down towards the bank: that is the direction in which it is going all the time. I have only mentioned that point to show that it has been considered for the last thirty or forty years, and still the river goes on in the same course and with practically the same results. The record flood was away back in the year 1868, so that the same state of affairs has existed for the last thirty or forty years. That is one objection. The other is this—and I think this is the objection that Mr. Shand takes principally: that this Silverstream is not a natural stream, but an artificial cut, and therefore the people on the higher level should be in this Board to help to clean it out and generally to keep it in order. Our reply to that is that the artificial cut was made not by the landowners originally, but by the Provincial Government. I might say that originally the plain from the river up to about Mosgiel (which is about half-way) was a large swamp, and it was impossible to go anywhere on the lower land except in a boat, as it consisted of Maori heads, rushes, and water to a considerable depth. We have representatives from the North Taieri, above Mosgiel, which was the lowest point at which the plain could be crossed. The Provincial Government constructed a road across the plain at about Mosgiel, and, as I have already said, the natural fall of the plain is towards the river, so the result of constructing that road was to dam back any water that was coming down the natural channels. After they constructed the road, therefore, the Provincial Government made a cut which is now the Silverstream. That was the first artificial cut. It has been made now, I suppose, for thirty years. The North Taieri people, who were compelled by legislation to spend £2 per acre in improving the land, spent it partly in fencing and partly in draining, and they drained into the Government cut. The Silverstream is a continuous cut down to the River. Another point made by the other side is that because the people on the higher lands are sending down water to the lower lands, they ought to be included in the drainage district to help to get rid of the water, and that is the only point that is worth considering. The net result of the cutting of that stream and the consequent drainage of the whole plain is that, instead of there being now a swamp or bog, they have cultivated fields down there, so that it is difficult to see how they have suffered any detriment. The whole plain has been improved by this direct stream which runs down to the river. The contention that because people on the higher lands drain into it therefore they should pay something towards the drainage of the lower part of the plain is in my opinion absurd. In any case, that state of affairs has existed for over thirty years, and some of the settlers now in North Taieri and East Taieri have purchased their lands for anything from £25 to £30 an acre because those lands were drained or high and dry. They have paid that special price for it on that account. Some of the people down below bought their lands knowing that the cut was there at the time. Not only is the legal position in favour of the higher people, but in equity I consider that everything is in their favour. In any case, it is a new idea that people who

occupy high and dry land should pay for the drainage of land at a lower level, and I do not think the Committee will consider that ground for one moment. Those, so far as I know, are the grounds on which the request of the petitioners is objected to, and I should say the objectors are objecting because they want to get their swamp lands drained at the expense of higher lands which Mr. McCurdie, the engineer, says require irrigation really more than drainage. That is the case.

1. *Mr. Anderson.*] You said the Taieri is not likely to silt up?—I am guided by the engineers who have reported on the matter during the last forty years, and they say not. That is also our own experience.

2. You know the lake at Kokonga has filled up?—Yes. There is a considerable volume of silt coming down, but there is also a considerable volume of water which must get out to the sea. It will cut a course for itself somewhere, and so long as the west bank is maintained it is unlikely that it will cut through the bank.

3. *Mr. Witty.*] I think you said it was something new to rate hilly country for swamp land for drainage purposes?—Yes.

4. Well, that is not new. There are a great many places where there is a watershed, and the higher lands have got to pay a certain amount towards the cost of taking the water off the low lands which is drained from the high watersheds?—Yes. I should like to say that if you take in a watershed, that is one thing, but if you take in a small portion of dry plain, that is another. The watershed of the Taieri River includes about half a dozen mountain-ranges forty or fifty miles up Central Otago. The snow from these mountains is a considerable factor in some floods, and, as a matter of fact, the bulk of the water and gravel which they complain about as coming down the Silverstream comes not from the lands which are included in the district, but from the hilly land above which is not included in the district.

5. Is it the Silverstream that drains the mountains or the Taieri?—It comes from the hills. It is not merely a stream of the plain. It is a stream which takes its rise and, curiously enough, has a greater volume of water up in the hills than on the plain. The water sinks into the gravelly country in North Taieri which is included in the district, and a small quantity flows from North Taieri. That is the case to such an extent that the Mosgiel Borough has to go beyond the Taieri district for its water-supply.

6. What I want to get at is this: Apparently from your statement there are a lot of hills beyond the Taieri Plain?—Yes; the plain has a mountain on one side and a range of hills on the other.

7. On what side are the hills?—On both sides.

8. Is any of this hilly land benefited, or does any of the water come off those hills on to the bulk of the land?—The bulk of the water that goes on this land comes from the hills.

9. I am not speaking of the west portion, but the portion included?—No, I should say not sufficient to cause a flood.

10. Has East Taieri district ever had a Board before?—No, never.

11. First of all they backed the water on to you and then gave you a Board?—Yes, that is the position. I believe what really brought that Commission out was the trouble and litigation on the west side of the river. They had four Boards and two River Boards, and they were always at loggerheads. We have no River Board on the East Taieri side of the river.

12. And you do not require one?—And we do not want one. We have protested against being included all along.

13. Why is there a Class "D," and lands under that class not rated?—There is a Class "D" which is not subject to rating, and there is a very small area of land included in that class.

14. Why was it not left out altogether? It must have been brought in for some object, or otherwise it would have been classified?—I do not know. There is undoubtedly a Class "D" which is not liable to be rated, into which some of the lands in the Taieri District have been put; but the Magistrate refused to put any lands out of other classes into Class "D."

15. Are you taxed at all on the east side for the purposes of the west?—There is provision about rating in the Act. There is a general rate for maintenance and general purposes, such as the payment of the Clerk's salary and the Engineer's salary.

16. You pay your proportion of the expenses?—Yes, of course.

17. But anything done on the east side is not paid for by the west?—No; and works done on the west side are not paid for by the east. Any works done on the west side have to be paid for by the west side, and the same remark applies to the east side. It would not be an injustice to the west side if we were not included.

18. You have no assets or liabilities?—No.

19. Are you benefited at all by the wall on the western side?—No; it is a distinct detriment, because it forces the water back on East Taieri.

20. How long has the wall been up?—I do not know the exact date when it was put up, but it has been up so long that we cannot interfere with it. I understand it was put up in 1877.

21. Has it not been improved considerably since the Act came into force?—It has been maintained.

22. Not raised?—No. I think it is since the Act came into force that we have had the record flood.

23. *Mr. Forbes.*] Does the Silverstream cut require any attention at all?—It would require some attention down near the river in the swamp land, but in North Taieri I think it is about 20 ft. below the original level of the land.

24. It is a deep cut at the top end?—Yes.

25. Who keeps that stream open at the present time? Does the Drainage Board spend money in keeping it open?—I do not think any money has been spent in keeping it open at the lower end; that is one of the troubles. It will keep itself open for part of the way, practically on all the high land, but lower down it does not do so. I believe some gravel goes down and causes trouble there.

26. If you did not have a Drainage Board at all you would have to make some arrangement for the keeping of that stream open—it runs through more than one property in the lower end?—Yes, it runs through some properties at the lower end.

27. You would have to make some arrangement to keep that clear, would you not?—Well, if the people down below want some arrangement, they should combine and ask for it.

28. Do you know if anything has been done at all?—Nothing has been done in the past at all.

29. It is keeping itself free?—Down to the low lands near the river it has kept itself open. I believe something has been done towards banking by private people. It was a stream that had such a fall in the upper portion of the drainage district that it cut its channel deeper. There was in some places a scour-out. Now willows have been grown on the bank to prevent that scour in North Taieri, within this drainage district, but some gravel comes from outside the district, as far up as Whare Flat, which is several miles away, and is causing trouble down below.

30. Then, money would need to be spent where the Silverstream enters the Taieri River to keep it open, would it not?—For a mile or so, or probably less, some work would require to be done.

31. But you think the people there should make their own arrangements?—All the people who are within that area and who want it should make their own arrangements, because it is absurd to take a large district embracing nearly the whole plain in order to clean out one stream.

32. Now, you say there are some people living on this low-lying land who are in favour of this Drainage Board, and who, I think, have not signed your petition?—Yes.

33. And you mentioned Mr. David Shand's name amongst others?—Yes.

34. Now, why do those people favour this Drainage Board if, as you have already said, the Drainage Board has put a wall on the western side, which has thrown the water on to them, and why do they still favour having that Drainage Board if they get no benefit? In fact, if their land is damaged, why do they still continue to ask to have that Drainage Board?—Well, I suppose they hope that the Drainage Board will deal with the lower part of the Silverstream—find a better outlet for it—and drain their land into the Silverstream. I presume that is their contention.

35. Those people there are of opinion that some benefit can be gained from the Drainage Board?—Yes, for themselves.

36. You would say that portion of that district must reasonably expect some benefit, or otherwise they would not be so strong in favouring it?—Yes. It is very problematical what benefit would be obtained by them. There is no doubt that the cleaning-out of the Silverstream will help them to some extent.

37. Anyhow, you say they are pretty decided about belonging to the Drainage Board, and one would imagine that they were pretty decided about getting a benefit?—I might say that some of the tenants—Mr. Shand's tenants—who occupy the swamp have signed the second petition asking to be cut out of the district, and are supporting us.

38. But there are some who think they will get a benefit?—Yes, there are some down there who think they will get a benefit from the Drainage Board. I do not know whether their views are that they should have a separate Drainage Board.

39. You said that some of the settlers in the West Taieri supported you?—Yes.

40. What is their object in supporting you?—Because they realise that they must maintain their bank to protect themselves, and that there is no community of interest between East Taieri and West Taieri.

41. And is it no benefit to them to have you included in the area?—It is a benefit to the men occupying the swamp, because they have a wider area over which to spread the rates.

42. But the fact that they have a larger area to draw from—is not that an advantage to the people in West Taieri?—Of course that is an advantage. The greater the area of the district and the wider the extent over which you can spread the rates, the greater will be the relief to the people who need drainage; but we say that is an unfair way of looking at it.

43. You say you have got the support of settlers in the West Taieri, who do it not from the fact that it is of any benefit financially, but that it is a matter of justice?—Yes, as a matter of justice they recognise there is nothing in common between them and us. In fact, the erection of the bank is an injustice to East Taieri.

44. Are the rates heavy that you have to pay?—We may be called upon to pay anything up to 4s. an acre.

45. Is there any rate at the present time?—Yes. I cannot give you the details of the rate, but a rate has been struck.

46. And according to the classification it gets less as you get into the higher ground?—Yes. The land in Class "A" bears the maximum; in Class "B" it may be a farthing less than the maximum, because no maximum is fixed for that class; and Class "C" is supposed to be less again, but it may be only a farthing less. In Class "D" there is no rating at all.

47. *Mr. Witty.*] I see they are allowed to borrow £75,000 without a poll?—Yes.

48. But they cannot increase that without going to the ratepayers?—No, they would have to obtain power.

49. Can you tell me what amount of the £75,000 has been spent?—Well, I am not sure about the figures, but I understand they have borrowed £10,000 for works principally in West Taieri.

50. Then it may not be necessary to borrow much more, or anything like the £75,000?—If they go in for a scheme to benefit East Taieri and prevent flooding, then probably they will have to spend £100,000. All the engineers who have reported on it and suggested schemes—some have suggested dams higher up the river to keep the water there—have said that it would cost, approximately, £100,000.

51. More than equivalent to what the people would receive in benefit?—It is out of proportion to the benefit we should receive in East Taieri.

(By permission of the Chairman, Mr. MacGregor, who represented the Taieri Drainage Board, was allowed to cross-examine the witnesses.)

52. *Mr. MacGregor.*] One member of the Committee has asked you with regard to the Silverstream?—Yes.

53. You are probably aware that within the last ten or twelve months a good many chains of this Silverstream on the lower land has been filling up?—Yes, a good deal has been silting up.

54. But do you call it silting—is it not principally gravel?—Yes.

55. Are you not aware that within ten or twelve months 12 chains of the channel have been filled up?—I do not know the extent, but there has been some filling-up.

56. You do not know how much?—No.

57. You stated that you were supported by some ratepayers on the west side of the river?—Yes.

58. Have they signed the petition?—They have sent a separate petition in.

59. Is it before the Committee?—I do not know whether it is, but it should be. There is a separate petition sent in by West Taieri supporting East Taieri. [Petitions produced.] I see there is also another petition here supporting us.

60. I want to know whether there is any petition from West Taieri before the Committee?—I prepared it for them, and they got it signed by about a hundred people, and it was sent up to Wellington, but I am not able to say where it is now.

61. Then the position is this: that the Silverstream at the lower part does require attention from somebody?—Yes, there is no doubt it does. The land is pretty level there where the water is running slowly, and it is silting.

62. You know Mr. Renton's and Mr. Charter's land?—Yes.

63. And you know their land is suffering very much?—Yes, I believe they have suffered to a certain extent.

64. I do not know whether you are aware that the new Board has spent a considerable amount of money in clearing the channel?—I believe they have spent a good deal of money in clearing the swamp and draining the land for the people.

65. Have you been down there lately?—No.

66. Are you aware that the new Board has spent a good deal of money on the new channel along the Silverstream?—They called for tenders for cleaning out the Silverstream, but the new Board has abandoned that.

67. Has not a good deal of work been done?—I do not know what extent of work has been done there, but it is quite possible there has been. I do not know the exact position there.

68. With regard to the Silverstream, you referred to what two of the classifiers had said regarding the district?—Yes.

69. Do you remember the exact words that were used?—I cannot remember the exact words, but practically what they said was that North Taieri and the Irregular Block, East Taieri, should not have been included in the district. "North Taieri" means north of Mosgiel, and the "Irregular Block, East Taieri," east of the railway-line.

70. You do not wish the Committee to understand that the classifiers expressed any opinion to the effect that what is now asked for should be done—namely, the exclusion of East Taieri and North Taieri generally?—They did not express any opinion about the lands near the river.

71. It was about the particular road?—Yes, the Mosgiel—West Taieri Road; but that comprises a considerable area of land.

72. It includes the land that is referred to by Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst as the "dry lahd"?—That is so, and they reported in effect that the people occupying the lower land did not want to be included if the people occupying the higher lands are to go out.

73. Was not this the reason given: that they could not see how the lands already drained would derive any benefit from an extended new drainage scheme?—The reasons given were that those lands were high and dry and well drained, and that they cannot derive any benefit from any scheme.

74. And an endeavour was made to impress that view on the Assessment Court, was there not?—Yes.

75. But unsuccessfully, I think?—Yes. The Magistrate took the view that because those people were included in the district it was intended that they should be rated.

76. There is nobody here appearing in support of the West Taieri petition, as far as you are aware?—No. I prepared it, and they wanted it to go in.

77. Now, with regard to the silting-up of the river, are you not aware that there has been a very considerable silting-up of the river down towards Henley?—I know that large quantities of silt come down the river, but the river has been in its present state, so far as I know, for a great many years.

78. Are you suggesting to the Committee, then, that the river is now at the same depth as it was many years ago—the level at the bottom?—It is impossible to say whether it is at the same level or not.

79. Well, I wish the Committee to understand that?—Let me explain. The river sometimes silts up in one place, but cuts a deeper channel in another place where it was silted up before, but the result has been the same during the last forty years.

80. Are you not aware of this: that at one time the Government proposed to find a dredge for dredging out the river if the Boards would bear the expense of working it?—I am not aware of that, but I am aware of the fact that the Government sent Mr. J. T. Thompson to inquire into the silting, and his report is here and can be considered.

81. How late is that report?—It was considered in 1877, and the position is exactly the same now except that the bank has been erected on the west side—the floods are no greater.

82. Is not the position this: that the bottom of the river has been raised?—I am not able to say whether it has been raised or not, but I do know that the river has always run in the same course since the bank was raised, and that the floods are no higher to-day than when the bank was raised. We had a record flood the other day, but generally speaking the position is the same now as it was then.

83. *Mr. Guthrie.*] If this Drainage Board has to cope with it, does the question of silting come into consideration?—The Drainage Board has power to deal with the Taieri River and watercourses in the Taieri District, and they can practically do what they like.

84. What is the effect of the bank on the western side—is it to keep the silt within the bed of the stream, and thereby tend to silt it up. To some extent it might do that, but the river has found its course there, and if it did not find its way through the present course it would go over the West Taieri bank. So far as East Taieri is concerned, the question whether the river is silting or not has nothing to do with the matter, because it will only affect the lower plain. If they cannot keep the river from silting up they cannot maintain their bank.

85. It has struck me that the effect of that bank being raised on the western side of the river has been to keep a large amount of silt that would naturally have flowed over the western land within the bed of the river?—Well, the river is winding, and where it runs into a curve the water mounts up on the bank and throws the silt up on the opposite side. Another thing I might say in connection with East Taieri is that the flooding has the effect of taking the silt out on the land to such an extent that on some farms it has raised the land to the height of two or three fences. Two or three fences have been buried by the silt from the river.

86. On the eastern side?—Yes.

87. Has that been the effect of the bank on the western side?—It has been the effect of the flooding which has been caused to some extent by the bank on the western side. There has always been some silting-up, and the places down there have been gradually rising, in some instances I am quite sure to the height of an ordinary fence, and I believe three have been covered by silt.

88. That is 15 ft.?—Probably that, yes. I know there has been a considerable rise in the height of the land in some parts.

89. And yet you say there is no silting-up in the river?—What I say is that the river goes on maintaining very nearly its present level.

90. The point I wish to get at is this: there is a bank which has been erected on the western side of the Taieri River?—Yes.

91. The effect of that bank there when the flood came down was to keep the flood-water from getting on to the western land?—Yes.

92. If that flood-water had got on to the western land it would naturally have carried the silt on to the western land; but the effect of that bank has been to carry the flood-water back on the eastern side, and carry the silt there too?—Yes.

93. If it had a free course on the western side without the bank, as it had formerly, that water naturally would have gone over the western lands, and deposited the silt there. When the bank was erected there it was an impediment which stopped the water and the silt; and has that been carried on to the East Taieri?—There has been a lot of silt carried back on to East Taieri.

94. Have you been damaged by that bank?—I should think the people in East Taieri would say that that bank has damaged them to some extent. It is only natural to suppose that.

95. Would you also assert that that bank which has harmed the eastern people has materially benefited the western people?—Yes, no doubt. The West Taieri people must maintain that bank at the expense to some extent of East Taieri. That is the only state of affairs that can exist, because the bank will undoubtedly be maintained. It must be, because there is a very large area of West Taieri depending on it for protection.

96. If you built a bank on the east bank of the river, that might have the effect of putting the water and silt on to the other side?—Yes.

97. If it is carried out to sea it does no harm, but if it goes back to the eastern lands it does harm?—That is doubtful. Mr. Kirkland, who lives there, does not object very much. He says the silt has a beneficial effect. It seems to be of such a nature that it is making the land fertile. Mr. Kirkland is right on the river-bank, and he does not object to an occasional flood. There is no doubt, whatever the Committee may think about the matter, that it will be agreed on all hands that the West Taieri bank must be maintained, because on it depends a considerable area, and in fact it has been there so long now that they have a legal right to maintain it and will not allow it to be taken down. Whatever the East Taieri people or anybody else may think, they will insist on the bank being kept there, because it is their protection. Away back in the sixties the action of the flood was different from what it is now. It used to go up from lower West Taieri. It did not overflow where it crosses the plain, but at Henley, some miles lower down. The position has been altered to some extent so far as East Taieri is concerned. It is natural to suppose that the erection of a bank on one side of the river would have the effect of driving the water back. There is another thing I wish to add. Speaking generally, the water gets away pretty quickly from East Taieri side. There may be a big flood to-day, and to-morrow it may be down considerably. As it gets away so quickly the farmers on the river-bank do not feel it so much as the West Taieri people, who are not very much, if anything, above the sea-level.

98. I understand that the ratepayers on the eastern side wish to get out of this drainage-area because they claim, first of all, that it is not doing them any good?—That is so.

99. And, secondly, that there is a large area in their district that not only is receiving no benefit, but rather wants irrigation in place of drainage?—Yes, a considerable area of high land, which cannot receive any benefit, no matter what is done.

100. Now, you must have some reason for wishing to get out of this drainage-area, because it is an established fact that you cannot limit to a very small area the district that is going to be benefited by any drainage-works?—Yes.

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.

16. What is your opinion with regard to there being two different Boards? If there were two different Boards formed to work the two different districts, could they work independently of one another without friction?—A Board for the East and a Board for the West?

17. Yes?—Yes, I think they would get on better that way.

18. You think that would be better than putting them into one Board?—Yes; there is great antagonism between the two.

19. Then, if the people on the East Taieri side wanted a Board, there are sufficient under the Drainage Board Act to arrange for a Board voluntarily?—Yes.

20. You know what was done with regard to the classification on the East Taieri side. Will you give an expression of opinion as to the advantage of the different classifications on the East Taieri side under the A, B, C, and D ratings?—No, I cannot go into that. I can just say that my settlers object to being in the drainage-area at all, because any classification that is in existence now may be knocked on the head and another classification made. We do not want to be liable to be rated at all for drainage, as it cannot possibly do us any good.

21. What class is your land in?—In different classes. The classification on some of it was altered after the first classification and after the cases were tried; but I am not able to give the details. I got word only yesterday to come here, and I did not have time to get any data to bring with me.

22. You know the land lower down between the river and the road, about Henley and Otokia?—Yes.

23. Is the land on this East Taieri side of the river in any way benefited by anything that is done by the Drainage Board, or that is likely to be done by the Board?—I do not think so, but there is no scheme before us to go on. I do not know anything that they can do to help them much.

24. That is, the people on the East Taieri side?—Yes.

25. Do you know Christie's land and Palmer's land, on the East Taieri side?—I do not know Christie's land.

26. At all events, what do you think about the land on the East Taieri side?—I think it should better stand by itself.

27. It would not be improved by anything that could be done on the West Taieri side?—No.

28. Is the bank on the west side an advantage to it?—No, it injures it.

29. Then, the drainage scheme would be an advantage to the small area on the East Taieri side shown on the plan?—Yes, down near the river.

30. And that portion at the upper part?—It is independent of drainage altogether.

31. *The Chairman.*] What proportion of your land would be flooded in the highest flood that you know of?—From the Taieri River?

32. Yes?—I do not think the Taieri River ever backs up near any of it at all.

33. How long did you live there?—I lived near it for three years.

34. Perhaps there was not a high flood all that time?—Yes, there were some high floods, but not near the height that the flood reached eighteen months ago.

35. Did that touch it in any way?—Yes, I believe it touched one corner of the section lowest down by backing the Owhiro Creek.

36. How much did it touch?—I could not give you any particulars.

37. Supposing the other side of the bank had been sufficient to protect them, how much do you think would have come on your land then?—Supposing the other side had not built any bank at all, it would not have come near it at all.

38. I am asking you what damage you would have received if they had their side properly banked?—They would receive no damage whatever, because with those floods that come down the Taieri River, supposing they did reach it, they subside so quickly that there is no damage at all.

39. Then, you have nothing to complain of in any way at all?—No, we do not want any drainage at all.

40. You have no objection to them protecting themselves, have you?—No, I have no objection; but I only object to being included in the rating district, or to be liable to be rated.

41. *Mr. Anderson.*] Do the Dunedin City Corporation tenants have to pay rates?—They will have to pay them in the long-run. We shall lose them when the present leases run out.

42. There is already a bank along the west side, and would a bank along the east side protect you?—Yes; if there was height enough in the banks to force the water down the gorge without allowing it to spread on the plain it would be all right, but it would be so costly that it could not be done.

43. What area do you reckon is affected?—I suppose there are three or four thousand acres, but that is only a rough estimate.

44. *Mr. Guthrie.*] What amount of water on the eastern side pours into the river that has to be carried away? Is there a large catchment-area?—On the eastern side there is a catchment-area of fifty-two square miles, and the total is about 1,800; but that area of fifty-two square miles is a mere fleabite compared with the total of the Taieri River, 1,800 square miles (see tracing).

45. The amount that flows into the river cannot affect it seriously?—No, not seriously.

46. Do you know why this eastern district is included in the drainage-area?—On account of the low part down near the Taieri River. There is a low portion there that gets flooded. The water backs up from the Taieri and is met by the Silverstream water.

47. Do the settlers on the eastern side object to the inclusion of any portion of their district?—They do not want to be included in the district at all.

48. But those that it will be an advantage to?—No doubt those who would be benefited would be glad to be included in some scheme that would relieve them, but those that cannot get any benefit do not want to be included.

49. *Mr. Ell.*] Roughly, what would be the rateable value of the district that you say it might be desirable to form into a separate drainage district?—I am not able to say.

50. Can you tell me the area there that you propose to cut out of the drainage district?—No, I am not able to tell you that.

51. When the Taieri River gets in flood, does it spread over the eastern side?—Yes, rushes on and works havoc on the low part.

52. Then, in the event of the Taieri River ever spreading its banks?—It would injure that low portion near the river. The settlers themselves have made a cut through to the river and drained the low part, and now the water comes through in a great volume in that cut in flood-time.

53. In the area that you propose to cut out, has any money been spent on drainage-works?—I am not able to answer that question. I have not been on the Taieri for some time and do not know what the Drainage Board has done.

54. Do the petitioners comprise the whole of the people in the proposed area to be severed?—I am not able to say who have signed. I believe about twelve or thirteen out of about 250 are opposed to being cut out.

55. *Mr. Witty.*] Would the number of settlers in the area that would be benefited by drainage be sufficient to form a Drainage Board of their own without drawing on the outlying portions—the fifteen people or whatever number may be in the wet area?—To handle the problem themselves?

56. Yes?—I could not answer that.

57. You do not think there would be sufficient people to do so?—It is rather a small area to handle a river of the magnitude of the Taieri.

58. It is only to back the water, I take it?—Yes, to keep the water back.

59. I think it was said that two hundred petitioned against being included in this area. What is the total number of individuals on the eastern side that are affected?—I cannot give that information. Those that I speak of object entirely to be rated, because they cannot get any benefit at all.

60. Are there any other streams besides the Silverstream that go down into the Taieri?—Yes, there is the Owhiro River and the Mill Creek. The Owhiro on the south side flows direct into the river, but I do not know where the Mill Creek flows into.

61. Do they overflow the land in any way?—The one I know best is the Owhiro, and I have not known of it silting up and flooding.

62. And the only floods that you get are from the backing-up of the Taieri River?—Yes, that is where the trouble comes in.

63. Before this wall on the west side was erected did you get some floods?—Well, I can only speak from hearsay on that question. The settlers on the east side say No.

64. It would be impossible to build a wall on the east side and confine the water for fear of the water getting in behind?—It would be possible to build a wall, but it would be out of all reason on account of the expense.

65. And then there would be the probable expense of taking the wall down again?—Yes.

66. *Mr. Hogg.*] Are those two hundred objectors landowners?—No, owners and occupiers.

67. I presume the objection of the petitioners is that they are compelled to pay rates for works that, instead of benefiting them, are doing them damage?—Yes, that is the point—doing them no good whatever.

68. *Mr. Forbes.*] What sort of work is proposed in this drainage scheme—is it the embankment principle?—There would be an embankment, but there is no scheme before us.

69. You have not actually got the work done?—I believe certain work has been done, but to what extent I am unable to say. I have not examined it.

70. You really do not know much about the district?—No, I do not know what the Board has done.

71. *The Chairman.*] You were in the Government employ, were you not?—Yes.

72. Were you not sent to make a report on this?—Yes. I reported once by your instructions on the application of Mr. Douglas, who was either at the time or subsequently Chairman of the county. He wanted that big gap filled up that was made in the early days, and through which the Taieri goes now. He also wanted sluice-boxes put up and controlled so that the river could be kept back.

73. What was the nature of your report?—I was not in favour of the proposal. It is a very big problem, and any little tinkering like that is only making matters worse: it wants to be handled boldly.

74. Do you know anything about the scheme that they propose at the present time?—No, I have never seen any scheme.

75. You do not know what they are going to do?—No.

76. *Mr. Witty.*] The position is that the two hundred petitioners allowed themselves to be driven by fifteen or twenty who wanted the works done?—Yes, that is the position as it appears to me.

77. Why did they allow it to be done?—The minority ruled in that case. Mr. Allen knows how these people got up petitions and how the petitions failed, but I cannot give you the particulars.

78. *Cross-examined by Mr. MacGregor.*] You gave evidence when this matter was before the Assessment Court at Mosgiel?—Yes.

79. On the review of the classification?—Yes.

80. And some weeks were spent by the Assessment Court in hearing evidence as to whether or not what are called the dry lands in the North and East Taieri should be removed into Class "D," which is the class which is not rated. Is that not so?—I could not tell you that.

81. But you are aware that was the question that was before the Magistrate with regard to the lands you represent now—the Corporation tenants' land?—We objected to being rated at all, and I told the Magistrate that if it had been sooner I should have been there objecting in my own right. We did not want the land in any class at all, because, although it may be in Class "D" to-day, it may be in "A" or "B" to-morrow.

82. But that was the question that was before the Magistrate, was it not?—I cannot tell you.

83. Do you not know what question the Magistrate adjudicated on? Was it not a question whether or not your tenants and those on the high lands should be rated at all?—We did not want to be rated at all.

84. Was not that the question before the Magistrate?—The question before the Court was that we did not want to be included in the district.

85. And the Magistrate held that you should?—The Magistrate practically upheld the classifiers.

86. I am asking you what took place before the Court. The Magistrate upheld the classifiers upon the whole; but do you remember what the question was that was before the Court?—We were objecting to the classification—we did not want to be included at all.

87. That was the question before the Court?—Yes.

88. And the Court upheld the classifiers upon the whole?—That is your evidence.

89. Do you know what the decision of the Court was?—I know that the Court backed up the original classification generally.

DONALD REID, Jun., examined. (No. 4.)

1. *The Chairman.*] The Committee desire you to explain how the Taieri Drainage Board Bill was brought on, and what information was brought forward when it was agreed to?—Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—There has been trouble over this Taieri drainage for many years. I represented the Taieri District in Parliament for six years, beginning in 1902. In 1903 Mr. James Allen and myself called a meeting at Henley of all the Boards on the West Taieri side. This meeting was called to see whether some arrangement could be made for the different Boards to amalgamate. That was only a meeting called to deal with the West Taieri side, and not with the East Taieri side at all. We did not succeed in getting anything done, and consequently another meeting was called at Outram, at which they made some progress towards effecting an arrangement for amalgamation. Later on there was an expression of opinion that if we could get the Government to take the matter up, probably that would be the best way to arrange for the amalgamation. In consequence of that I wrote to Mr. Seddon, and put before him the difficulties in connection with the matter—that there were four Boards there fighting one another, and spending money to very little use, and that that seemed to be the regular course of things unless amalgamation was effected. I also suggested that there were means by which the Shand estate, which was the largest estate which would be benefited by any expenditure, could be taken over by the Government under the land-for-settlements scheme, and that after the land had been improved it could be let out in areas to tenants. Cabinet decided to have a Commission appointed to look into the matter, and in consequence of that a Commission was appointed which those members who were in the House at the time will remember. The Commission consisted of Mr. Barron, Crown Lands Commissioner; Mr. Cruickshank, the Magistrate; Mr. Usher, of the Public Works Department; and Mr. Short, of the Roads Department. Those gentlemen went into the matter, and during the time it was under consideration some representations were made by a small party of ratepayers and electors in the flooded area of the East Taieri. The proposal first made by those persons was that the owners would supply £500 to a fund, the County Council to supply another £500, and the Government to supplement it with another £500, and that they would then form themselves into a separate Board and look after their own drainage. The Government did not see their way to fall in with that arrangement, and it could not be carried out, but the Commission was instructed to take that into consideration as well. The Commission was then in process of being formed, and they were asked to report on the East side as well as the West Taieri side. They reported, and in the schedule to their report they gave the district that they thought ought to be included. They gave it in broad lines, and provided that the land might be classified under the Drainage Act. Class "D" under the Act is land that does not bear rates. I thought that the effect of that would be that they would classify out of the district mentioned by the Commissioners a large area of land that was not going to be benefited, and that the broad lines of demarcation, the boundaries up one road and down another, were given in general terms so as to give the public to understand what district was to be included, because to give it in sectional numbers would be a difficult thing. As soon as ever this was made known, a number of those in the North Taieri—the East and North Taieri are really one in this respect—objected to coming in, and sent a petition to me to present to the House. That petition was presented, but, owing to the Bill not then being down, there was really no Committee to present it to, and it was referred to the Lands Committee, of which our present Chairman was Chairman, and they reported it back to the House. When it was reported back to the House, Mr. McNab said, in reply to a question from myself, "The intention was to appoint a Commission to investigate, and report to the Government what legislation would be necessary. There was no intention whatever to drop the legislation in connection with this very important subject; but, as the honourable gentleman knew himself, there was a division of opinion, even in regard to the report brought down by the Commission, and, when they considered that the Bill would have to be sent to a Committee, and the objectors heard, before legislation could go on, they would see that the possibility of getting that legislation through this year vanished into thin air. That was why it was impossible to bring down the Bill." In the following year, and near the end of the session, the Government suddenly brought in the Bill. It was put through in very quick time, and no

opportunity of objecting to it at all, and they were compulsorily put into the district. It is true the district is divided into East and West Taieri, the West people paying for their own drainage and the East people paying for theirs, but every one who appeared before the Commission objected to having a united district. They desired to be separate; they wanted two separate districts and did not want to be joined with one another, but in consequence of this Act they were amalgamated whether they liked it or not. Since that time the agitation has continued on the part of the East Taieri at every opportunity. When the election took place and the Board was elected, the land was classified immediately, and all the ratepayers on the East Taieri side objected to the classification, and objected to being put into the classification to pay rates. Mr. MacGregor has referred to the fact of the Magistrate dealing with the matter when before the Assessment Court, but the Magistrate in his decision went on these grounds: that, the Commissioners having put into this district a large area of land, if he reclassified it and put it under Class "D," where it would not be paying rates, he would be acting contrary to the intention of the Commissioners; and he would not do that. There is another point with regard to what opportunity the ratepayers had of appearing to object. When this Bill was brought on suddenly, it was brought in one day, read in the House, immediately referred to the Committee and considered by that Committee next day, back to the House, got through its second and third reading, and then went on to the Legislative Council, and there was no opportunity for the ratepayers to appear. It was very near the end of the session, too. It went before the Lands Committee, and Mr. James Allen and myself, who were interested in the adjoining district, with the consent of the Chairman and Mr. McNab, altered a clause and compelled the Drainage Board to classify the land under the Drainage Act. They were not compelled to do that, but in this Act we had an alteration made compelling the Board to classify the land, and not leave it to their own volition as it is in the Drainage Act. We thought, by doing that, that land which got no benefit would be put in Class "D," being the class that bore no rates at all, and that would get over the difficulty and free those people who would not get any benefit, but who were compelled to go into it against their wish. Since that time there has been a continuous agitation, and I do not think it would be wise for Parliament to compel people against their wish to go into this district. There are only a few at the lower end of the east side who desire to remain in, and those people, of course, get some advantage. That explains the position and how it is these people are put in the district against their wish—they were put in there by Act of Parliament, and had no opportunity of objecting.

2. *Mr. Guthrie.*] How many of them have been classified as having their land in Class "D"? —I think only a very few stray pieces of land have been classified as Class "D." I cannot give evidence as to that, but some evidence will be brought before you by some people who will be able to explain that.

3. *Mr. Anderson.*] The pink line on the plan is the boundary-line of the drainage-area?—Yes.

4. Is the Borough of Mosgiel in the drainage-area?—No, it is not.

THURSDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 1909.

HENRY PALMER examined. (No. 5.)

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

2. *Mr. Reid.*] And you are also a ratepayer there?—Yes.

3. Will you make your statement to the Committee?—I have been all my lifetime on this property. During the first floods in 1868 there were no embankments on the west side of the river, and the river-banks on the east side at Otokia were rather high, and we did not suffer from floods. Since then the large embankment has been erected, and my land is covered with water during flood-times. [Witness indicated on plan the position of his land.] I had 21 in. of water in my house during the last flood, and 150 acres of my property previous to the embankment being put up were clear of floods. In the 1878 floods the embankments were only carried down as far as Momona, and I had 100 fat bullocks on the banks of the river in my paddocks, but now I have nothing there on account of the water. The whole plain was under water. The West Taieri side was under water in the 1868 flood, and later it has been quite as high. There is only my land between the hills and the river, and the embankments force the water on to my property—it really makes it the river-bed.

4. *Mr. Anderson.*] And what you want is the west bank taken out?—Yes, or else some other relief of some kind.

5. *Mr. Reid.*] That bank does not do you any good?—No, it injures me—it is on the opposite side of the river.

6. What is the effect of it?—It forces the water on to my property.

7. You are in the drainage district?—Yes, and rated for it.

8. What do you think would be the proper thing to do?—Well, take me out of the district—it does not benefit me. The rates are being spent to repair this embankment. With every flood it has been broken down as long as I remember. The water always overflows those embankments, but before it does my property is covered with water.

9. Is it possible for the Board to do you any good in your opinion?—No, not that I am aware of.

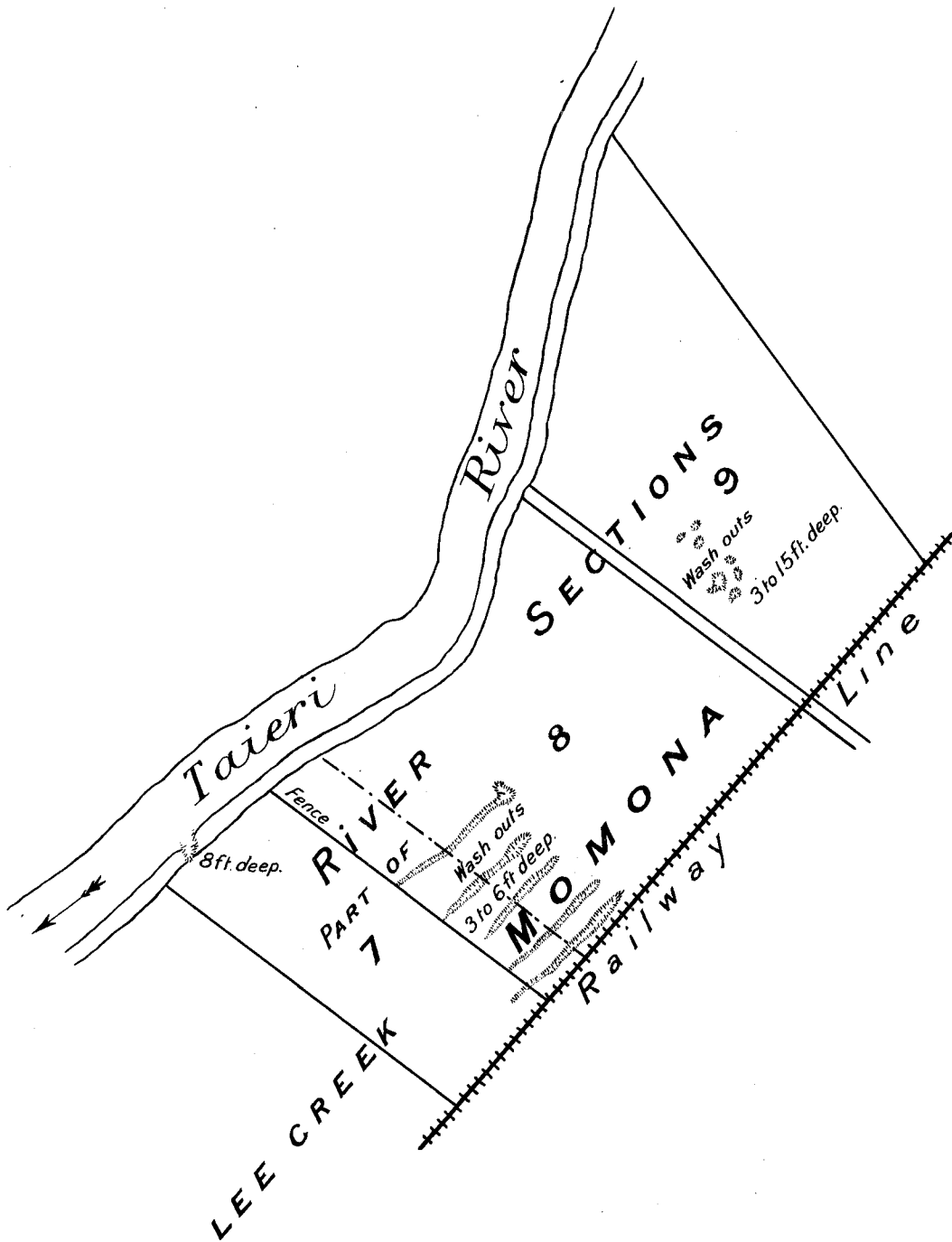
10. Not with any works they may do?—No.

11. Are your lands classified?—Yes, in Class "B."

12. That is the second highest?—Yes.

13. What rating per acre are you subjected to under that class?—I think 6d. per acre.

14. And you get rated up to 4s.?—Yes.



RIVER SECTIONS.

SECTIONS 8 AND 9, MOMONA,
AND PART OF SECTION 7, LEE CREEK,
the property of W. C. Palmer, Esq.

MATTHEW BEGG,
SURVEYOR,
DUNEDIN.

15. And what would you like to see done with regard to that?—Our land certainly taken out of this Drainage Board. It is of no benefit to us. In fact, we are paying rates to keep this embankment in repair.

16. What would be the effect without any embankment at all?—Previously I had about 150 acres of my land dry—the floods did not come over it. In 1868 the river did not overflow on the east side. The natural embankments were very much lower on the west side, but since the embankment my farm is really the river-bed in flood-time.

17. *Mr. Hogg.*] It is only since the embankments have been made on the west side that the east side has suffered?—Yes.

18. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Is silt deposited on your land?—No, not so much now. The current is so strong that it carries it away to sea. As a matter of fact, the river-bed is scoured out after every flood, and it is much better after floods.

19. The current remains in the old bed alongside the embankment?—For a time. Of course, it goes right over the place, and we have 10 ft. of water on the place for a time, and when it gets back into its old bed again the river has been all scoured out. There is very little silt left on my place now, as the current is so strong.

20. In 1868 you say the water did not go over this place?—Well, partly. I got the flood from the hills really. I am alongside the hills to a certain extent, and there were at least 150 acres on the river-bank that were not flooded.

21. And now you say there is 10 ft. of water on that?—Yes.

22. The banks are not 10 ft. high, are they?—Yes, more than that.

23. And they bank the whole water back on to you?—Yes. When I say “10 ft. high,” there is 10 ft. of water on the lowest part of my land. There is not 10 ft. of water on the natural banks on my side, but on the centre of the farm there would be 10 ft. The railway-line is covered to an extent of 4 ft. or 5 ft.

24. It was stated yesterday that in some cases the silt had deposited to a great height—in fact, as high as three ordinary fences?—Yes, it has.

25. That is a fact?—Yes, but not on my land. There is a place lower down where it is very bad, but there is very little silt on my place, because there is too great a current. Of course, when these embankments break on the other side, that is the great danger, as we have great washouts. In the 1887 floods I had large holes cut in my property, and a barn and stable washed away. The river drops suddenly and produces a scour. Of course those embankments always break in a big flood, and the people on the other side suffer. They do not benefit much by the embankments.

26. *Mr. Lang.*] What are you petitioning for, to be cut out of the area or for compensation?—We want to be cut out of the area as well.

27. Do you in any way attribute these big floods to the silting-up of the bed of the river lower down?—No, I do not think so—no, certainly not. The river has widened since forty-five years ago to my knowledge, but I do not think it has silted up to any extent.

28. There has been a cut made through it?—That is on the East Taieri side—the Silverstream. That is not the Taieri River.

29. Do you think that the scour through there has to any appreciable extent filled up the bed of the creek, and so impeded the flow or escape of the water of the Taieri River?—It is gravel in the Silverstream River. There is no gravel in the Taieri River—it is only silt.

30. And you say that does not affect it?—It does not affect it.

31. *Mr. Witty.*] I understood you to say that in the 1868 flood you had 150 acres practically dry?—Yes.

32. Then you would imply that there was 10 ft. of water on that dry land, is that so?—Well, not on the 150 acres. There would be 6 ft. on the 150 acres.

33. How long have you been paying rates—just since the formation of the new Board?—Yes. We had never been in any Board prior to that.

34. You have never paid rates before?—No.

35. *Mr. Forbes.*] Has this Drainage Board completed its works in connection with the river?—No, I could not tell you. I do not know anything about it.

36. You do not know whether they have a programme of work to be done?—I do not think it is possible to do anything to help my property from being flooded.

37. But have they mentioned any works that they intend to do in the future?—No.

38. There are no other works that they have mentioned doing other than what is already there?—No.

39. There are none indicated that would be likely to give you any benefit at all?—No.

Mr. MacGregor: I am authorised by the President of the Board, who is present, to state that the Board has come to the conclusion that in all probability no works will be carried out by the Board that will benefit Mr. Palmer, and the Board intends at the next classification to put all the land belonging to Mr. Palmer, Mr. Christie, and somebody else—that is, the flooded land—in Class “D,” which is non-rateable.

Witness: But why should we be in Class “D”? Why should we be in the Board at all, as we should be under Class “D”?]

40. *Mr. Allen.*] Supposing you accepted that, do you know that the Board has power to re-classify at any time?—Yes, I understand so.

41. And a fresh Board may take a different view from the Chairman of the present Board, and possibly classify you higher?—Yes. I am really paying rates to injure my property.

42. *Mr. Witty.*] Whilst Class “D” is not rated at present, if it is classed at all, they have power to rate it?—No, I do not think so.

43. *Mr. MacGregor.*] What is the distance from North Taieri or Mosgiel to your place?—I suppose sixteen or eighteen miles.

44. Down the river?—To Otokia in a straight line, yes.

THOMAS CHRISTIE examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer.
2. *Mr. Reid.*] And you are a ratepayer?—Yes.
3. You did not sign the petition produced, but certain other petitions?—Yes.
4. How long have you been in the district?—I have been in the district nearly all my lifetime—for fifty-three years, and I remember the 1868 flood. My land is on the river-bank, and is something like Mr. Palmer's. In the 1868 flood there was no water on that, and our cattle went there all the time. Since the bank was built on the opposite side it throws the water on to our side and floods the whole place. I have only a narrow space between the hills and the river, and of course it makes a regular river-bed of it. In the last flood we had, about eighteen months ago, there were from 4 ft. to 6 ft. of silt left on a good part of a paddock there. I have sowed that with grass-seed three different times, and the wind keeps blowing the seed away.
5. You are in the rating district?—Yes.
6. And what would you like to see done in order to put you right?—The only thing is to put me out of the district.
7. Do you want compensation?—We have very little chance of getting it, I think.
8. But you would like it?—Yes.
9. Can you say anything with regard to the silting-up of the river?—Yes. I do not think the river is silting up opposite my place. I know of a snag or stump opposite my place that was there when the "Betsy Douglas" was running up the river. That stump stands there the same to-day as it did forty years ago. It is out of the water and in the same position, and if the river was silting up it would be covered. At low water you can see the stump, so that I do not think the river is silting up at Allanton.
10. What was the highest flood-water on your land during last flood?—It varied from 4 ft. to 6 ft. and 10 ft.
11. Do you know anything of the cut they call the "New Cut" down there?—Yes, that is up in the Silverstream.
12. What is the effect of that cut, do you know?—I could hardly tell you.
13. How are you classified?—In Class "B"—the same as Mr. Palmer.
14. And you are liable to pay up to within a fraction of 4s. per acre?—Yes.
15. Would reclassification of your lands into Class "D" be sufficient for you?—Well, no; we want to get out of it altogether, because the next Board may reclassify us again, and put us into Class "A."
16. *Mr. Witty.*] What amount of rates are you paying now?—It was 6d. an acre.
17. And previous to the new Board you were paying nothing?—We were in no Board at all.
18. *Mr. Forbes.*] In talking about the silting-up of the stream, does the Board propose to do anything in regard to deepening it in any way?—Not that I am aware of.
19. Do you think if it was deepened it would have the effect of getting the storm-water away?—I do not think it would—the tide still comes up fast. If the tide affects it it does not matter if it is 100 ft. deep.
20. The worst time is when the tide is in and meets the flood-waters?—Yes.
21. *Mr. Witty.*] You say that if you were put in Class "D" you may be reclassified again; but that would depend on the men put on the Board?—Yes.
22. You would be at the mercy of the men on the Board at any time?—Yes.
23. *Cross-examined by Mr. MacGregor.*] With regard to the last question, if you were put into Class "D," so long as you remained in that class you would not be liable for rating?—That is so.
24. Would you have any reason to fear being removed into another class so long as it remained the same—that is, so long as the Board decided to do nothing for your benefit? Have you any reason to fear that?—Well, I could hardly say.
25. You cannot state any reason why you should fear being classed again?—The next classifier coming round may take a different view of the thing.
26. That is the only thing you have to fear?—Yes.
27. Now, with regard to the depth of the river, you mentioned a stump?—Yes.
28. Do you remember the days when the schooners used to go up as far as Allanton?—Yes, I think so. I do not mean some of the big ones.
29. What distance are you from Allanton?—About a quarter of a mile.
30. You are not in the East Taieri District?—No.
31. Then Allanton is practically under the East Taieri District?—Yes, it is.
32. And you are not in any way affected by the Silverstream?—No.
33. The conditions in your part of the district are entirely different from the conditions existing in the East Taieri or North Taieri?—Yes.
34. *Mr. Reid.*] In 1862 was the time you remember the steamers coming up?—Yes.
35. Was there a clear river then?—Yes.
36. Was any mining going on up in the Taieri district then?—No.
37. The silt has been coming down from the mining operations?—Since then, yes.
38. *Mr. Allen.*] The boundary of your subdivision of this drainage district is Allanton on the one side, or is it not so near Allanton?—No, my property is the first start of the Momona Subdivision.
39. You are on the upper boundary of the Momona Subdivision?—Yes.
40. Is it not the fact that that subdivision includes a few properties on the eastern side of the river and a great many properties on the west side of the river?—Yes.
41. *Mr. Reid.*] There is a subdivision known as the Momona, is that so?—Yes.

42. Is it all on the one side of the river?—No, it goes across the river and takes in my property up to the main road, and therefore I am rated to keep this bank up to throw the water on to my land.

43. And what proportion of land is there on the near side of the river as compared with that on the west side, where the embankment is?—There is very little on the east side. There are only some six votes on our side of the river.

44. And on the other side?—About eighty votes.

45. So that you have good reason to fear?—Yes.

WILLIAM SHAND examined. (No. 7.)

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

2. And a ratepayer?—Yes, on the East Taieri side. I purchased my land on the 8th October, 1873, and I have lived there ever since. My land is situated between the natural channels of the Silverstream and Owhiro, and it is largely composed of what were old lagoons in the past before the land was reclaimed, and when the river rises the water rushes up the channels the wrong way, and floods my land. The Taieri River runs along the ridge instead of running in the hollow as most rivers do, and that ridge is only about on an average from 150 to 250 yards wide, and it slopes rapidly back. Where the tributaries come in there is only a short distance of the high bank, and then the lagoons begin, so that when the river rises it rushes very fast the wrong way.

3. Then, you are rated for keeping the river in its channel?—Yes. There are no banks on my side, and it is impossible to bank it on my side. On the other side there is a continuous bank from Outram down to Otokia. There are no tributaries emptying into the Taieri on the west side; it is a whole bank all the way down. On my side there are three breaks—the two channels of the Silverstream, one an artificial one and the other a natural one, and then there is the Owhiro also. The water gets through those out of the river when it rises.

4. Then, you wish to be left outside this rating-area for the Board?—Yes, quite so, because by no possibility could they keep the water off my land.

5. And anything they do on the west side will not help you in any way?—It makes the water still deeper.

6. *Mr. Reid.*] Are your lands classified?—I am classified for 800 acres in Class "A," and liable to be rated up to 4s. an acre.

7. Would the purple line on the plan cover the part that is most flooded?—The water overflows mission?—Yes.

8. And you were asked this question: "What boundary would you suggest for the East Taieri"?—I do not remember that question.

9. Well, you remember giving this evidence to the Commission: "My opinion is not worth much about that, as I have not much knowledge of it." Would you be in favour of an embankment being put up between you and the Owhiro?—No, the ground is much too low. To confine the waters of the Owhiro it would take an embankment perhaps 30 ft. high.

10. But could not a bank be put there to keep the waters of the Taieri back?—No, it would be quite impossible in the floods such as I have seen.

11. You put a bank there at one time yourself, did you not?—No. On the Owhiro there is soil that was taken out of the ditch that was put along there.

12. To what height?—Well, 6 ft. or 7 ft. perhaps.

13. When the Royal Commission was starting you sent in an application, I think, which you and some others signed, to Mr. Donald Reid, as follows: "We, the undersigned, learn that the Government have granted a Commission to inquire into and report on a drainage scheme for lands lying on the west side of the Taieri River Plain. We respectfully solicit your assistance to get the Commission at the same time to inquire into and report on the low-lying land on the east side of the Taieri River, which at the present time is in as bad, if not worse, state than what it is on the west side." Do you remember signing that?—I do not remember it.

14. Do you remember signing some document yourself which was also signed by Messrs. Blackie, Renton, Murray, Shand, and others?—I have no doubt I did sign it.

15. At that time you considered it necessary, apparently, that some provision should be made for improving your land by a Board. Was that your opinion then?—Well, my opinion has been that by clearing away the mouths of those tributaries it would do some good to me, but not by embanking.

16. That you would want a Board to do, I suppose?—No, we have done it ourselves.

17. Are you doing it now yourselves?—A little has been done by the present Board.

18. But what was your object in asking that the Commission should include your district?—Well, I thought something would probably require to be done, and they might point out something.

19. And were you asked this question by the Commission, whether it would be right or not that the land on the upper side of the Outram—West Taieri Road should be included in the district?—I do not think so.

JOHN FOWLER examined. (No. 8.)

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

2. With a farm at North Taieri?—On the river-side.

3. Are you a ratepayer?—Yes.

4. In the Taieri Drainage District?—Yes. I have two farms in that district.

5. *Mr. Reid.*] Will you tell the Committee now how you are affected by the embankment—what is your opinion of the Drainage Board and the works they can do for you?—I do not think they can do any good for the river at all, because if they are putting up banks there the water would overflow.

6. Is your land mostly flooded there?—They are all flooded round by Carmichael's—Mr. Murray's, Mr. Anderson's, and my own, and also part of Thompson's and D. T. Shand's. Then there is Renton's and Brown's land—they are the parties who are most affected.

7. Would the purple line on the plan cover the part that is most flooded?—The water overflows the banks all the way down. I should say there would be a good range round there, because the water goes from hillside to hillside in a big flood.

8. Where does that stand in relation to Mosgiel?—[Pointed out on plan.]

9. How far is it from there to the upper end of the plain, where we have representatives from?—About two miles further than Mosgiel.

10. And is it flooded two miles further up?—No.

11. Does the land rise all this way?—It rises all the way down from the lagoon. Right up to where it drops may be 9 ft. to the mile, and in some places 20 ft. to the mile.

12. The people who are with you to-day have their property on the banks of the river, have they not?—Yes. All the people along the river-bank are flooded.

13. The people who were asking that the Board should exist—what part do they represent?—Well, Mr. D. T. Shand, Mr. Renton, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Charters are here to-day.

14. They are all here to-day opposing this petition?—Yes.

15. Do they stand in a different position from you as regards the floods?—They are not quite so much flooded as we are, because up above the lagoon the land slopes gradually up, and then from the river-bank it goes into the lagoon, and through the lagoon is the lowest part.

16. *The Chairman.*] The part marked "swamp" on the plan—is that what you call the lowest ground?—Yes. I do not think the purple mark you have round there is correct—it should be larger and take in a wider area. It is probably all swamp up above the lagoon—peaty swamp.

17. How far does it extend up?—A good way up.

18. Would it extend to the boundary-mark?—Yes, I think it would.

19. Is there an embankment from the North Taieri end downwards?—I think there is.

20. What is it that does damage down there?—The river flooding. There is such a great volume of water coming down that it overflows.

21. And does the Silverstream not overflow sometimes?—Oh! certainly it does, but there is not the water in the Silverstream in comparison to the river.

22. You have also got land in the North Taieri?—Yes.

23. *Mr. Reid.*] Is it liable to flood?—No; I should prefer if it was flooded a little more—it is far too dry. We want irrigation at that end.

24. You bought your land at a high value?—Yes.

25. What price did you pay?—£32 10s. an acre for the dry ground that wants irrigation.

26. You have had experience of floods?—I have had too much experience of floods. I have been living there for forty-eight or fifty years, and I have known all the floods that have come down the river in that time. I bought this place because I wanted a dry place.

27. What do you think could be done for you so far as the Board is concerned?—I do not think anything could be done, because there is too big a volume of water coming down to be dealt with by any Board. With such a large volume of water coming down, one of the banks would have to go, and I think it would be impossible to confine the water within two banks.

28. Are you in the drainage district?—Yes, with both properties.

29. In what class?—Class "A" on the river side and class "C" on the North Taieri side.

30. What remedy do you suggest for the troubles you have?—To be cut out of the district altogether. We should prefer that to still being rated and still being flooded.

31. *Mr. Witty.*] You, like the rest, think you are receiving no benefit from the new Board, is that so?—Yes, I am receiving no benefit whatever, and not likely to receive any.

32. And you are paying rates for it?—Yes, I am paying rates for it.

33. *Cross-examined by Mr. MacGregor.*] You know what is called "the cut" from the lagoon into the river?—Yes.

34. If that were allowed to be closed up, would it affect you?—Yes.

35. Detrimentally?—Yes.

36. Very seriously?—Yes, it would.

37. That is, the waters of the Silverstream would damage you?—You can call it the water from the river too.

38. Both would affect you?—Yes, when the river floods.

39. That is, if the cut were allowed to be closed?—Yes.

40. Would it benefit you if a sluice-gate were put on that cut?—It might benefit us if they got it to stand.

41. Assuming that it could be put on, would it benefit you?—Yes.

42. With regard to the North Taieri property, how long have you had it?—About seven years only.

43. Do you know what the natural condition of the country was over thirty years ago?—Yes.

44. How far back does your memory go?—Since ever I went there.

45. That was when you were a boy?—Yes.

46. What was the natural condition as far back as you can remember?—I do not suppose there were any channels cut through there, and the water flowed over the ground.

47. Converted it into a swamp?—There was no swamp ground in it.

48. Had the water any channel?—It had partly a channel in some places and partly not.

49. It is now what is the Silverstream?—No.

50. Do you remember the time prior to the cutting—the state of affairs?—No.

51. You do not remember the state of your land prior to making the cut that is now the Silverstream?—I had nothing whatever to do with it.

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

an unjust provision put on the statute-book. There are 8,000 acres on the west side and 2,000 on the east side. Mr. Shand got on to the Drainage Board and got his tenants alongside him, and then the Act got on to the statute-book. We sent in a petition, but I do not know where it got to; and if there are any of those 235 petitioners who are not genuine ratepayers, I am willing to give my bit of land to the Government to do what they like with. In fact, two of Mr. Shand's tenants said the Board could not do any good for them. When Mr. Shand got on the Drainage Board and got his tenants to support him, they engaged an engineer at £800 and a clerk at £300. I do not know where the engineer came from, but I see in one of his reports that he was going away to the Nile to see how some of the sluice-boxes were decked. He has now landed us in for an expenditure of £10,000, and has done nothing for me. Most of the money has been spent in that swamp ground of Shand's, most of which was got for 2s. 6d. an acre, while I had to pay £30 an acre for mine. The plain in the early days was one sheet of water. To show what I say is correct, I will read what Sir Robert Stout said on the matter: "At once, I may say, there are millions of acres in the colony that require draining—or, if not millions of acres, at any rate hundreds of thousands of acres; and, if all the land that cannot be at once used is to be sold simply because it takes capital to fit it for proper use, I am afraid that most of the land in this country will have to be sold for equally paltry sums. I think the honourable member referred to political economy in support of the sale, but he does not give his authors. I shall refer him to works in which this very question is brought up—to Carey's works, and to the Duke of Argyll in reply to Professor Levi. They show that the most valuable lands of a State are not first taken up, but they are the last taken up. Honourable members can see for themselves. Take, for example, the district known in Otago, and, I believe, well known to honourable members, as an agricultural district, the Taieri: what was the land first taken up there? It was not the undrained swamp which boats could sail over, but it was the hilly country. The first settlers did not venture to go near the swamp, and it was only when they got more capital, and had a better market for their produce, that the swamps were taken up and drained." They got it for nothing. In regard to the lagoon where they made the cut in the river, it was Mr. Shand's father who engineered that, and now they want us to spend money in filling it up again. I will never give in to them—death before dishonour. My land is right in the centre of the Taieri—I have some in the North Taieri and some in the East Taieri. I have seen the land in flood in 1877, and I left it in disgust and went Home to the Old Country when it was one sheet of water from Waihola to Mosgiel, and when there were no banks to hold it in, and they will never hold it in. They seem to have got themselves into a corner. We sent a petition to Parliament, but we never knew where it went to—it was never looked at. There is the Mill Creek that runs through my land, and both the Mill Creek and the Silverstream flood those low swamp lands of Shand's. The Mill Creek runs right through my place, and that is the reason they brought me into the drainage-area. When it went down a certain distance Mr. Shand blocked it and would not let it go, and the Road Board properly sued him for damages. Trustees were appointed and were offered a sum of £350 to allow the water to go down through them, which was accepted, but now the water is not allowed to go down. On the east side the cut there was also made by them. The West Taieri people put in a bank from Allanton to protect themselves, and that throws all the water up on to the east side. It is very hard where a man has a great quantity of land and fifty or sixty tenants on it: he could almost get a church built if he wanted it. The ratepayers at the last election let him see how things stood, and they turned him out. I want to be cut out of the drainage-area altogether. The Board sent me a notice two or three times about the rates, but never summoned me to make me pay. There was at one time trouble in Ireland of this nature, and *Punch* stated that if they did not pay they would be made to pay, and when they did pay there would be the devil to pay, because then they turned round and shot them, and that will be the case here in the Taieri if we are not cut out.

JAMES GOW examined. (No. 11.)

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

2. And a ratepayer?—Yes, within the drainage district in the Silverstream Riding. My land is a mile and a half north of Mosgiel. I have lived there all my life, having been born in the district. I know the district intimately, and the part where I live is, I think, over 100 ft. above sea-level and quite 80 ft. above any flood-level. When this proposed drainage-area was suggested first, I signed a petition objecting to being included in it, and I have signed all the petitions and protests since.

3. Do the floods reach your property up there?—No, a flood has never been within two or three miles of my property.

4. *Mr. Forbes.*] Is your land classified?—Yes. I have 600 acres in the drainage-area—325 in Class "D" and 250 in Class "C." I appealed against the classification in Class "C," and, with the exception of a small area which was mountain land, all this land is hilly land 250 ft. above sea-level, and it was put into Class "D." I hold that if I am put into Class "D" I am still liable to have my land reclassified and put into another class if the Board changed. The Silverstream runs along the northern boundary of my property. The straight line on the plan was the artificial cut made in 1861 or 1862, then the road Mosgiel to Outram was made at right angles to the natural fall of the land, and they put the material from the sides into the centre of the road. They then made a ditch to take the water through, and the settlers in drying their ground put their water into that, and dug a ditch right up the plain to the north end of Section 2. From there up was never touched by anybody—never a spade was put in it. It was a natural course where the water goes. A point has been made out of the fact that a large amount of gravel is washed out from this cut and goes down on the land below, but the part that was cut right to the top of the artificial cut is planted with willows thickly on each side, and it was piled. For the last twenty-five years, I

am bound to say, there has not been an ounce of anything of the kind from that part of it. There is a slight amount of gravel being washed away from just above the boundary of the drainage district in Mr. Meiklejohn's ground, but nineteen-twentieths of the stuff that comes down the Silverstream is brought down from the Silver Peaks district, which is miles outside the Taieri Drainage District.

5. Is there a great quantity brought down?—I do not think there is very much brought down now. At one time there was a good lot brought down. The Mosgiel Borough has a catchment-area up there for catching the water which they convey to their reservoir, and at every fresh in the river the pipes get blocked up, and a good deal of the gravel I understand comes down from there.

6. *Mr. Reid.*] Did you attend the sittings of the Commission which inquired into the Taieri Plain?—Yes, I attended it.

7. And you objected as soon as you knew that they proposed to put you into the district?—I did.

8. What do you think is possible to be done for you by this Board?—They could not do anything for me, because my land is already too dry. That was the evidence I gave before the Commission, and that it would be quite as just to ask the people down below to help to irrigate my land as to ask me to help them to drain their land.

9. The water from the Silverstream runs towards the swamp?—Yes.

10. Does any of the water come from your land or anybody-else's?—Part of it comes from the hills surrounding my land, but I do not think any of the water flows off my land because it is of a gravelly subsoil and of a porous nature, but on the hilly land which is outside no doubt the water which falls there goes into the Silverstream.

11. You heard Mr. Allen's evidence yesterday?—Yes.

12. Do you agree generally with the evidence that he then gave?—Yes, generally I agree with everything he said yesterday as far as I can remember.

13. You know the Owhiro Stream?—I do.

14. Do you know anything about the relation of the Silverstream with the Owhiro—both streams are in the drainage-area?—Yes, they are both in the drainage-area.

15. Do you know if ever those streams have been one stream?—They have never been one stream since the Europeans came to this Dominion. I have been there all my life, and besides that my parents came here in the year 1852, and I have heard them discussing the two streams several times. Never since they came here did they ever hear any one say they saw those two streams running together, and certainly I can say that the Silverstream has never been diverted from the Owhiro into its present course. I have been told that some maps show that in the early days the Silverstream ran into the Owhiro, but if such a thing took place it is not within the knowledge or the memory of the residents of the Taieri, some of whom are too old to come here, but they could say it is not within their knowledge.

16. You remember the state of cultivation of the North Taieri. Did the cut at the top improve the land?—Yes.

17. Did it improve it at the expense of the bottom land?—No, I should say not. Before thirty years ago I was not conversant with the lower end of the plain.

18. *Cross-examined by Mr. MacGregor.*] You, I think, Mr. Gow, appealed against the Board's classification?—I did.

19. And it came before the Magistrate in the Assessment Court?—Yes.

20. And a large number of appellants were in the same position as yourself?—Yes.

21. And a large number of witnesses were called?—Yes.

22. And the Magistrate, if I remember aright, held that the classification made by the Board's classifiers was correct?—In the main he upheld the classification of the Board's classifiers. He let me out of 50 acres.

23. You remember seeing Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst when they came round?—I just saw them—that is all.

24. They were over your land?—I understand so. I did not see them on my land.

25. Do you know how they classified your land?—No.

26. Have you not heard?—No.

27. Would you be surprised to find that they had put less of your land into "D" than the Board did?—I could not say. I have inquired several times, but could not find out their classification.

28. You do not know whether their classification is more favourable to you than the Board's?—I do not know.

29. Did I understand you to say that you remember yourself making the cut down what is now the Silverstream?—I did not say so, but I can slightly remember the making of the cut. I was then five years old.

30. Can you tell us what the original width of it was?—About 10 ft., I think, but I would not be sure. When I say "10 ft." I am only going by what I have heard.

31. Nor can you tell us, perhaps, what was the state of the land—your land and the other land—prior to the making of the cut?—I can remember what it was like.

32. When you were five years old?—Yes. It was ground overgrown with rushes, Maori heads, flax, cabbage-trees, &c.

33. It is highly cultivated land now?—It is.

34. And well drained?—Very well drained.

35. It must be drained into the Silverstream?—I could not say where it is drained into. I think the bulk of it drains the other way—towards Factory Road.

36. Into the Owhiro?—No. It flows down and rises up in a spring.

37. Can you tell us what the effect on your land was by the making of that original cut?—The effect, so far as I know, was that instead of the stream running in a zigzag manner it ran straight.

38. And what was the effect on your land?—It was made for the purpose of straightening the stream and, I have no doubt, for taking away the surplus water.

39. And you say there is not a great quantity of gravel being carried down the Silverstream?—There is none whatever from the place where the Silverstream was cut.

40. Have you not had the curiosity to go down to Renton's and Charters's to see whether any large quantity was being carried down by the stream?—I have been down there and I have seen a certain amount of deposit down there.

41. When were you last there?—I have not been there for a considerable time.

42. Some years or months?—More than a year.

43. Was there much of the old channel of the Silverstream filled up in those days?—It was pretty well filled up. It was wriggling about, and willows were planted all through it.

44. Would you believe that within the last thirteen months about 10 chains of the stream on the flat has been filled up with gravel?—I could not say.

45. You would not be surprised?—Yes, I should be surprised. It may be so.

46. You could not suggest where the gravel came from?—Yes, I know where it comes from.

47. You say very little has been carried down?—From the part within the drainage-area.

48. It came from further up apparently?—Yes, right from the hill.

49. Have you seen it travelling down?—Yes, I have seen it coming down.

50. Do you know of your own knowledge where it comes from?—I cannot help knowing as to the great bulk of it.

51. Is it because you see it travelling down?—I see the stream coming down when it is very dirty, when a flood is on.

52. But the fact is that you cannot tell from your own knowledge where this gravel comes from which has filled up Renton's and Charters's?—I know it is coming from there. I can tell you that.

53. *The Chairman.*] Can it come from anywhere else—is there any other stream?—No, not that quantity.

54. *Mr. Forbes.*] You said you signed every protest?—Yes.

55. Did you protest against the Bill that Mr. Reid put through?—Yes, we signed a petition. It was almost a unanimous petition against being included in the Taieri Drainage-area. I myself posted that petition to Mr. Reid.

56. Do you know what the regulations were with regard to the taking-up of land in the early days, when the North Taieri was settled? I allude to the Otago Land Regulations. Are you aware what the regulations were when the land was taken up in that neighbourhood?—I do not know of my own knowledge.

57. You were asked as to your knowledge of how the gravel came down to the lower part. Do you know whether it went from the cut opposite your neighbourhood?—I know very well that none goes from there—none during the last twenty-five years.

58. Could it come from anywhere else than there?—Yes, just above the very top of the drainage district. During a slight scour five or six tons perhaps have gone away from there during the last five or six years.

59. Where would most of it come from if it did not come from this district?—From the Whare Flat—from the neighbourhood of the Silver Peaks.

60. That is your belief?—Yes.

61. *Mr. Witty.*] Did the Commission recommend the classification of the land on the East Taieri or recommend the areas as classified by the Board, or did the Board on their own initiative classify the lands?—I do not think the classification was recommended by the Commission. I think it was a matter that was brought up by Parliament. The classification was left to the Board entirely.

62. The Act did not come into force until after the Commission had been set up?—No. The Act was passed as the result of the report of the Commission.

63. Seeing that four-fifths of the ratepayers objected to inclusion in the Drainage Board, can you give any reason why it was passed other than what Mr. Reid has stated, that you did not have an opportunity of petitioning Parliament?—No. I understand that the Legislature did not know that four-fifths of the people objected to it. Several members of the House told me so. They said they had no idea there was any objection to it at all.

64. Has the new Board done anything towards clearing the lower end of the Silverstream?—I understand they have done something at the lower end.

65. Have they done anything else on the eastern side?—Not on the side where I am situated—nothing whatever.

WILLIAM GAWN examined. (No. 12.)

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

2. *Mr. Reid.*] You are a ratepayer?—Yes.

3. On the East Taieri side of the Taieri River?—Yes.

4. Where is your land situated as compared with Mr. Gow's?—It is right on the other side of the Silverstream. [Pointed out on plan.] It is right on the edge of the drainage-area, and the Mill Creek flows through part of my property.

5. Is it much in the same position as regards elevation as Mr. Gow's?—Yes, I understand it is from 80 ft. to 100 ft. above flood-level.

6. Do you consider that the Board can help you, and that you will get any advantage from the operations of the Board?—Oh, no! The Board cannot do me any good in any way. The land has already been drained, and in fact we are rather dry in that corner. We do not want too much drainage.

7. How long have you owned the land there?—I have lived there for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, I suppose.

8. Is there any difference in the drainage to-day from what there was at the time you went there—has it altered in any material way?—The drainage-course or the streams?

9. The drainage that gives the outflow for any drainage off your land?—No, it has been the same since I can remember.

10. So that you are in just the same position as regards drainage as you were twenty-six years ago?—That is so.

11. You heard the evidence given by Mr. William Allan yesterday?—Yes.

12. Do you agree generally with what he stated?—Yes.

13. Was there any of it you took exception to?—No. I think he stated the case very clearly and very fully.

14. You have read Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst's report?—Yes.

15. What is your opinion of it?—I think it is a very good report of the case, and I quite agree with the part where they recommend that the whole of the lands on the east side of the river should be severed from the district.

16. Do you think that would be a solution of the difficulty?—Yes, I think so. At our end of the plain we do not need any drainage, and it appears to me that at the lower end of the plain, on the east side of the river, they need drainage, but it is impossible to get it.

17. And all you desire is to be excluded from the drainage-area?—Yes.

18. When was the last of your land acquired?—I could not say exactly—perhaps five or six years ago.

19. What price did you pay for it?—£24 10s. That was one section without any buildings on it.

20. When that land was bought you could have bought land at different places?—Yes.

21. Was the value given to that land by any special circumstances?—The land was well drained. It also had the Mill Creek flowing through it, which was certainly an advantage.

22. And you paid a high price for that land as it then stood?—Yes.

23. Was there any talk of an Act then being passed to drain the land?—Yes, I think there was at that time. It was about this time, I fancy, that this business started.

24. Well, you bought the land before that when there was no talk of any Act?—Yes. My father bought all the land he has there at high values. The first of it, I suppose, he bought twenty-eight years ago.

25. How do you consider it will be affected by the Drainage Board's operations as far as the value of the land is concerned?—Well, I consider that the reduced value of the land would exceed the rates that we are paying on it. Of course no Drainage Board can do the land any good in any way. It is already fully drained.

26. *Mr. Guthrie.*] When you bought that land did you expect to be drawn into the drainage-area?—No.

27. Did you expect that the water would do any damage to the land below you?—No.

28. Did you expect that, if any Drainage Board were formed and any area formed, you would be brought into it?—Well, at that time, although there may have been talk about it, we did not take the matter seriously, and we never thought of being taken into a drainage-area.

29. Because you did not expect any advantage from being in a drainage-area?—There is no advantage to be gained by our being in a drainage-area.

30. And you did not expect to do others any damage from your land?—Certainly not.

31. *The Chairman.*] There has been some talk about the Silverstream in flood-time. The distance that the Silverstream is from the river would lead me to suppose that the Silverstream flood would be pretty well over before the Otago Central flood could come down off the hills from the Silver Peaks—before the Dunstan flood would come?—No, I do not think that is the case. So far as my experience goes, the two floods are pretty often at the same time.

32. But when it is a general rain they both come together?—Yes.

33. One has to travel about sixty miles, and the other not more than sixteen or twenty miles?—That is so.

34. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Do you know the New Cut that has been spoken of?—No, I cannot say that I know anything about the country down there. I have seen it.

35. Is the New Cut passing through shingle?—It is passing through land of which the subsoil is shingle, but where the cut is made, it is so many years ago that the willows which were planted are holding the banks, and it is impossible for any land to get away now.

36. What is the condition of the cut now as regards the size as compared with what it was when made?—It has deepened considerably since I have known it, but it is no wider. I could not tell you the exact measurement of it. There is no flooding on the plain from that end of the Silverstream at all.

37. Wherever a scour has taken place there, they say the scour has caused the damage down below?—I do not think there has been any scour from the cut. Any deepening that takes place now does not take any gravel with it—it takes the clay; it has got beyond the gravel.

38. Is there gravel up above?—I suppose there will be. It is gravel all up through the hills.

[Sketch-plan produced and put in showing the proportion of the Silverstream catchment-area as compared with the drainage-area.]

(Close of petitioners' case.)

JOHN MACGREGOR examined. (No. 13.)

The Chairman: What are you.

Witness: A solicitor practising in Dunedin. I understand, sir, there are now three petitions before the Committee, one from Mr. Palmer and others, owners of the land below Allanton, the second by certain Maoris and others who own land down in that direction also—and I wish just to remark at this stage that those two petitions deal with an entirely different part of the district from that which is dealt with in the other petition. Those two petitions deal with a comparatively small part of the district lying below Allanton at some considerable distance lower down the river from Mosgiel, and the considerations that apply in those cases are entirely different from those that have been laid before the Committee as applicable to the case of the North Taieri and the East Taieri, and I propose to state the attitude adopted with regard to this part of the district affected by Mr. Palmer's petition and the other petition. It is this: that now that the Board has had time to consult with their Engineer as to the probability of any work being done that would be beneficial to that part of the district, the Chairman, on behalf of the Board, authorises me to state that the Board will, as soon as the land is reclassified—and that will no doubt be done before any more rating is necessary—remove all the land that is now rateable into Class "D" in that part of the district; and for this reason: that the Board, as now advised by its Engineer, is of opinion that anything that could be done in that part of the district in the shape of embankments or anything else to benefit those owners would cost more to the district than any benefit would justify, if, in point of fact, there could be any benefit at all; and that, I understand, is the decision from the Engineer's advice. I am surprised at the attitude that is now taken up on this point. I know that the Board has passed no resolution on the subject—I have not suggested that—but I am telling you now what the Chairman has asked me to state to be the policy of the Board; and to state that Mr. Cullen, who is acting on the opposite side, has not been consulted, is merely done for the purpose of puzzling the Committee. Now, sir, the other petition, which is really an important one, deals exclusively with lands in the Silverstream and the Owhiro district. That is, the Silverstream subdivision is formed by drawing a line across the plain in such a way as to take in what is referred to in the evidence and in the report of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst as the dry lands. In the Owhiro district a considerable portion of the lands consist of wet lands. In fact, the petition which has been read states so in so many words, and my friend Mr. Reid has stated also that the case for the petitioners is really set out in the report of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst—that is, that part of it that recommends the severance from the district of all lands practically on the east side of the Taieri River. Now, on the other hand, I may state that our case is practically the case stated in the report of the Royal Commissioners, and our evidence will be directed for the purpose of showing that the Committee should not make any recommendation in opposition to the conclusions arrived at by the Royal Commission. Our position then is this: that on the one hand we have the case stated by Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst, and, on the other, the case stated by the Royal Commission. Now, with regard to the Royal Commission, a great point has been made of this, and the manner in which the Bill was passed. An attempt has been made to make it appear that the ratepayers in the district had not a proper opportunity of making their views known to Parliament. I suppose I may take it for granted that the report of the Royal Commission and the evidence taken before the Commission will be treated as being in evidence before this Committee.

The Chairman: Yes.

Witness: Well, I propose to treat the report of the Royal Commission and the evidence attached to it as being part of the evidence in this case, because the Bill that was passed into what is now the Taieri Drainage Act was really based upon the report of that Royal Commission. In point of fact, as members will see on reading the report, the Bill was practically drafted by the Royal Commission. Members are, no doubt, familiar with the mode of procedure of a Royal Commission. The usual practice was adopted in this case, that witnesses were invited by public advertisement in the newspaper circulating in the district to appear and give evidence before the Commission; and it appears from the report itself that witnesses to the number of fifty-five appeared before the Commission and stated their views. I do not know whether it was intended, but I inferred that it was hinted that that was insufficient. Now, any one can see who reads the evidence that the farmers in the Taieri district, from every part of it, were fully represented by the witnesses who gave evidence before the Commission, and the Commission had ample time. I do not know how long the Commission took over the work, but it took a considerable time. It traversed the whole district, held sittings at all points—Mosgiel, Outram, and other places—to suit all persons in the district who might wish to make known their views, so that I submit to the Committee, sir, that this suggestion that this Act was passed without those interested having an opportunity of representing their views either to Parliament or to the Royal Commission is without foundation, and it is obvious that the Government and Parliament, as I suppose is usual in such cases, proceeded on the report of the Royal Commission, and considered that the Royal Commission had adopted all the measures that were necessary to give full notice. Now, it will be seen from that report of the Commission that one of the most important questions, one of the most controverted questions, that came before the Commission was precisely the question that this Committee is now dealing with—namely, whether or not there should be only one united district including the whole of the Taieri Plain—that is to say, including the North Taieri and the East Taieri as well as the West Taieri and other districts. Now, the passage in the report to which I refer disposes of the objections. At page 5 it states, "Similarly, there was little or no dissent to a proposal to create one drainage district for the east side of the river; but the great bulk of the witnesses (though not all) opposed making one united Board for both sides of the river. This opposition has its origin mainly in circumstances already explained; but in addition thereto there is a fear that such a Board would not work amicably on account of the diverse interests of

east and west, and also a fear that the rates or funds of one side would be utilised for works on the other side. The east side is also apprehensive lest the west side should outvote them on any question in which the east might have a special interest. This arises from the fact that the area of the west side is twice as large as that of the east, and the west side is therefore entitled to twice the representation of the east side on such a Board. These difficulties will be found to be met in our proposals as to the special powers required to be granted to such a Board, and they are not, therefore, discussed here." Members are probably aware of the two special provisions that are there referred to—first, the idea of having three Government nominees on the Board, and those nominees to be experts—that is to say, engineers—one the Commissioner of Crown Lands, one the Railway District Engineer, and the other the District Engineer of the Public Works Department. That was one of the provisions, and I think it must commend itself to the members of the Committee as an effective method of removing one of the grounds on which most of the witnesses objected to one united district, because, although a feeble attempt was made on the part of my friend on the other side to suggest that even the Government nominees had shown a one-sidedness inasmuch as they had sent the Chairman and myself here to represent their views on the Board, I can only say that my friend must have been very hard up for material for argument when he would make so far-fetched a suggestion. It is the duty of the Board to have its views represented and to justify the action of the Legislature in creating it, because the Board is practically a special creation of the Legislature created for the purpose of dealing with a very difficult problem. The other idea of the Commission was that of dividing the district into subdivisions or wards; and a still more important one, which members of the Committee are familiar with, is that of providing for separate accounts being kept of the expenditure on the opposite side of the river. The Royal Commission considered that by this device they fairly met the objections to the Board, and I submit the Royal Commission has justified its views, and it is not necessary for me to adduce evidence in support of that. I rely on the report itself. That is the case we rely upon; and the conclusions and reasons for that arrived at by the Royal Commission have justified the creation of one district for the whole Taieri Plain. That, then, is an outline really of our case, and I wish just to refer in a preliminary way to the report of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst. That report, as members will see from the very nature of it, from the terms in which it is expressed, was the direct outcome of an agitation that arose especially in the North Taieri District amongst the owners of what Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst refer to as the dry lands. That agitation was for having their lands classified entirely in Class "D," so as not to be subject to rating. That contention was brought before the Assessment Court, and, if I mistake not, it occupied the Assessment Court about a fortnight in hearing evidence and hearing argument from the counsel who were engaged. Several counsel were engaged on the part of the objectors, and the cases were taken in batches, and, as one witness here has already told us, evidence was given by a number of witnesses on behalf of the objectors—a greater number of witnesses than the number that have been or will be examined by this Committee. The whole thing was thoroughly threshed out before the Assessment Court, at which the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. Widdowson, presided, and the conclusion, as one witness has already admitted, was that the classification in the main was upheld. A slight part of the land was certainly transferred from Class "C" into Class "D," but upon the whole the classification was upheld, and for a very good reason, as I shall submit to the Committee. The classification, as members will no doubt be aware, can either be made by the Board itself or by classifiers appointed by the Board. In this case, being the first classification made by the Board, the Board proceeded by appointing under seal three classifiers, one of them being a civil engineer of great experience who has been all his life in the district, who knows every foot of the plain, as he is the Engineer to the Taieri County Council; another was the Crown Lands Ranger, Mr. O'Neill, who was, I think, born in the neighbourhood, and knows every inch of the plain; and the third was the Government Valuer, Mr. Craig, who told the Magistrate that he had valued every bit of property in the plain several times for public valuation purposes. Now, that was the classification which the Magistrate held to have been made on a proper principle. It was suggested yesterday that the Magistrate had simply decided that the classification had to be upheld merely because the Royal Commission had thought proper to include the lands in question within the boundaries of the district. Well, that is so absurd a suggestion that it is improbable on its face. The judgment of the Magistrate is reported in the *Daily Times* of the 14th November, 1908. I have not a full copy of it, but I think the extract I will read will be sufficient to show that the suggestion made as to the grounds on which Mr. Widdowson arrived at his conclusion is incorrectly stated. The extract is as follows: "The powers of the Drainage Board are very wide and comprehensive, and in my opinion the Act clearly contemplates that whatever scheme is adopted will be of a comprehensive character and embodying the whole plain. Then, not only is there a community of interest with the other parts of the plain, but, in view of the comprehensive scheme of its operations, these lands must be considered to derive some benefit from the latter." That is to say, the lands that were in question before the Magistrate—namely, the lands that are described by Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst as the "dry lands." That, then, expresses in a sentence the grounds on which the Magistrate arrived at his conclusion, and he delivered an elaborate written judgment justifying his conclusion. Now, it is not necessary for me to refer to the classification question any further, because, although Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst show by their report that the question of classification was the question that they went down there to deal with, the question of classification is not now before this Committee. It would be, of course, impossible for this Committee to revise the classification. I mention the subject simply to show that the question dealt with by the Magistrate last year is practically the same question that is now before this Committee. The contention then was that the lands of the petitioners—nearly all the petitioners that are now before this Committee—should have been excluded from the rateable classification; and my reason for mentioning it is this: that the Magistrate, after hearing many more

witnesses than can be called here, came to the conclusion that I have mentioned. That is the only reason to justify me in referring to the subject. I come now to the question of severance. I have handed in copies of a reply that the Board made to the report of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst, and I shall refer to that a little later on. In the opening of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst's report they say, "We have the honour, in accordance with your letter of instructions of the 19th May, to submit a new classification of all the lands included in the Taieri Drainage District (schedules of this classification, with a lithograph coloured to assist you to follow the same, are attached), together with a report touching on the present classification and the causes of discontent which appear to exist amongst a considerable number of ratepayers, and we respectfully tender some suggestions which we think may assist towards the settlement of the same. The existing classification is, in our opinion, too severe on those lands which form the fringe of the district. Some of these lands are already naturally drained; some will only receive a modicum of benefit in comparison with those situated at a lower level requiring extensive and expensive systems of drainage to permit of them being utilised to their full economic value; other portions, consisting of islands at the mouth of the Waipori River and lands on the eastern bank of the Taieri River south of Allanton Township, which cannot from their position receive much benefit from drainage-works, have been placed in the A Class. These last, in our opinion, should be placed in the D Class until such times as a possible scheme from which they would receive benefit is formulated. This severity of classification, together with the uncertainty of the extent of liability in which the cost of necessary extensive works will involve them, and the indefinite amount of taxation which under existing law may be levied on all classes except the D Class, are the primary reasons for so many ratepayers agitating for an alteration in the area and classification." Now, I would point out that what Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst went there to do was to endeavour by a reclassification to allay the discontent, especially in the north end of the district, amongst the owners of the so-called dry lands. Now, this Committee is being asked to reverse the decision of the Royal Commission on the report of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst; that is practically what this petition comes to. I have not seen the original instructions from the Department, but it is obvious, I submit, from their report that what Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst went there primarily to do was to see whether they could make a better classification of the lands, a classification which would have the effect of allaying the discontent which had been caused by the decision of the Magistrate; and I submit it is a very extraordinary thing that the report made from that point of view should be used for the purpose of attempting to reverse the decision of the Royal Commission. That is practically what this Committee is asked to do. Now, those gentlemen say, "Three ideas for improving the present unsatisfactory position have occurred to us. The first was suggesting the alteration of the boundary of the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions from its present position to a line running east and west along the road called Centre Road, so that all lands drained by the Silverstream and its tributaries should form one subdivision, and all lands drained by the Owhiro, together with the lands on the east of the Taieri River between Allanton and Henley, should form the Owhiro Subdivision. . . . The second was to recommend that the Silverstream Subdivision be excluded from the Taieri Drainage District. The third, that all lands lying east of the Taieri River now included within the district be severed from the same." I submit that it is, at any rate, a fair deduction from those clauses that those ideas that occurred to those gentlemen when they went there to reclassify the lands were not the primary objects of their mission, and that those were simply ideas that they got into their heads in the course of their peregrinations throughout the district. I submit it is obvious from the report that that was not the primary object of their mission, and I shall endeavour to show further on that those ideas of theirs are really the cause of a good deal of trouble. Now, what are the grounds on which Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst suggest that what the petitioners ask should be done—namely, the severance not merely of the Silverstream Subdivision but the whole of the East Taieri from the district? They are stated under paragraphs (a), (c), and (d) of their report: "(a.) By far the larger portion of the East Taieri will receive little or no benefit from the proposed or contemplated drainage-works." "(c.) The cost of the proposed work on the eastern side and other works contemplated, together with the maintenance of the same, will be more than the area of land to which drainage is necessary can reasonably afford without contributions from the owners of lands already provided with drainage; and it appears to us unfair to expect owners of the drained lands to consent to be taxed for the benefit of owners of land requiring drainage. (d.) We see no indication of any such drainage schemes as proposed by Messrs. Bell, Higginson, and Blair in report E.-6, 1880; Mr. Carruthers, D.-5B, 1871; or Mr. J. T. Thompson, I.-2B, 1877, being adopted." Now, if we take reason (a), what does that involve? Here are two gentlemen who, I think I am justified in saying, were not sent there for the purpose of saying whether or not the report of the Royal Commission should have been given effect to or not. This reason is the first of three reasons given by gentlemen who do not profess to have any special qualification for the work. The Royal Commission, as members are probably aware, consisted of three experts out of the four members. The Chairman, Mr. David Barron, was then Chief Commissioner of Crown Lands; and the other Commissioners were the Chief District Railway Engineer, a gentleman from the Head Office who is well known to members; and Mr. Short, who is both an engineer and solicitor, and a man who has had more experience of Royal Commissions than probably any other man in the colony; and the fourth member of the Commission was Mr. Cruickshank, Stipendiary Magistrate. Now, it is inconceivable to me that it could ever have been intended by the Department, when it sent Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst to the Taieri, that they should submit a report for the purpose of enabling the Government to say whether or not the Royal Commission was right or wrong. One would think that, if the Government had intended that, they would have sent engineers to report upon the work of engineers; but what I submit as a fair inference is that Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst were not sent for that purpose, but as classifiers, skilled perhaps

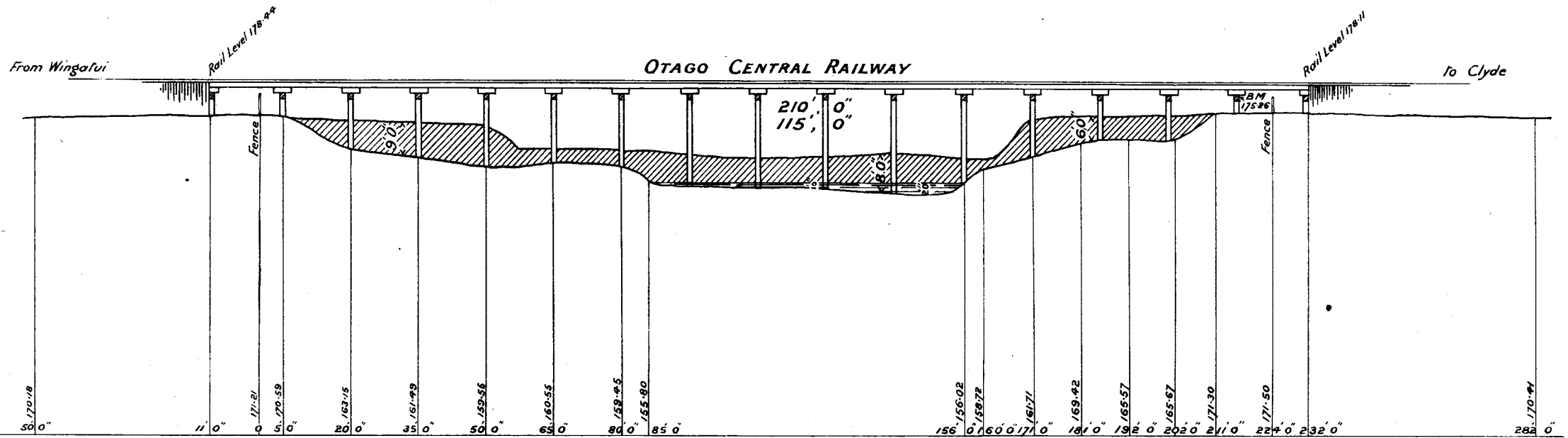
in the classification of land, to report upon the classification, and to suggest means by which the discontent in regard to this classification might be removed. It is obvious, I submit, that that is the ground of paragraph (a) of their report, the statement of which involves the necessity for expert knowledge on the part of the persons making it; I submit that, in the absence of evidence before this Commission showing that Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst had such expert knowledge, their recommendations on the subject cannot be received with so much consideration as would justify the Committee, as my friends on the other side have asked, in reversing the recommendation of the Royal Commission and the action of Parliament in giving legislative effect to that report. That, I submit, is a very pertinent consideration for the Committee, but it would not be becoming on my part to dwell further on the subject, although there is, I believe, nothing to show that Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst were possessed of the necessary knowledge. Now, paragraph (b) of their report says, "Many of the ratepayers whose lands are situated in the lower portions next to the river are doubtful of receiving any benefits, and have expressed themselves as desirous of having their lands excluded from the district; and even some of those whom it is thought would receive the greatest benefit from a drainage scheme have stated that if the dry lands are excluded they would like to be excluded also." Now, that is a very ingeniously expressed ground, and it conveys a great deal of meaning to one who, like myself, is familiar with all the ins and outs of the subject from having been connected with it all along. It will be noticed that at that time the representations made to those two gentlemen by the ratepayers who have joined in this petition, but who are owners of the wet lands, must have amounted to this: if the owners of the so-called dry lands are to be excluded from the district, then they should be excluded also. And that contention, I submit, has a considerable show of reason. It will be remembered that up to that time the fight had been almost entirely confined to the owners of the dry lands. Those of the owners of the wet lands who had given notice of appeal had really abandoned their appeals, and the whole fight before the Assessment Court was on the part of the owners of the dry lands. I say, upon the whole, that that was the case, and if I am not stating it fairly my friend will correct me. I have said that there were some objections on the part of the owners of the low-lying lands on the east side of the river, and I say now that my recollection is that, although notices had been given on the part of a good many of them, they were nearly all withdrawn, and a few were settled by arrangement with myself. Now, that is a very remarkable position, and conveys a good deal to those who know the ins and outs of the subject. In this petition we find that those owners of the wet lands have joined forces with the owners of the dry lands. How that is brought about I do not know, but this paragraph of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst's report lets in light upon the subject. It is this: that the owners of the wet lands say, "Well, the owners of the dry lands are petitioning Parliament, and they may get out of the district. If they get out we must get out also." And the reason is this: that the East Taieri would then be so limited as a district, as members of the Committee have noticed by the questions that have been put to the witnesses, that the rating-area would be such that the necessary expenditure on any works, to be of any use, would be more than the district could bear. That is, I submit, a consideration that this Committee should take into account, that the owners of the dry lands are only hypothetical petitioners, and that the owners of the wet lands are merely contingent petitioners. The contention amounts to this practically: that, if the owners of the so-called dry lands are to be taken out, then the burden will be too great for us, and we should be taken out also. That brings the Committee face to face with the question: should the owners of the dry lands be taken out or should they not? I propose to discuss that in a few sentences. As I have said, that was practically the question that had been already judicially dealt with by the Stipendiary Magistrate after spending some ten days or a fortnight in taking evidence which it is impossible for this Committee to do.

Mr. Reid: You are suggesting to the Committee that they should take the Magistrate's report, and be bound by his judgment in the matter.

Witness: I am not doing anything so foolish. I am submitting this to the Committee: that the decision of the Magistrate, after spending ten days or a fortnight on the case, hearing a host of witnesses and also hearing counsel, is entitled to some weight and consideration, because not only the Magistrate but the members of the Royal Commission found it absolutely necessary before they could understand the business to traverse the whole district; and am I not justified in saying that the judicial conclusion of the Magistrate, after visiting the district, is entitled to considerable weight? Now I will go a step further with regard to the reasons why the owners of the so-called dry lands should not be taken out of the district. I am not even suggesting that the decision of the Magistrate is conclusive, nor do I go so far as to suggest that the conclusions of the Royal Commissioners are final and binding on the Committee, but I do say that I am justified in reminding the Committee of the measures adopted by both the Magistrate and the Royal Commission to satisfy themselves before they arrived at the conclusion stated. Now, we have in black and white the reasons stated by the Royal Commission, and I am not going to detain the members of the Committee by reading them. I submit, as reasons why this Committee should not reverse the decision of the Magistrate and the Royal Commission, that the evidence even of the petitioners shows, and our evidence will show still more clearly, that the relation between the so-called dry lands and the low-lying lands is this: that the dry lands which have been described as requiring irrigation more than drainage are now in a high state of cultivation, and the evidence shows also that those lands in their natural state were practically a swamp. They were made a swamp by the waters that are now formed into what is called the Silverstream, which emerged from the hills spreading itself over what is called the dry area. Now, we know even from the evidence of the petitioners that those lands have now been converted into a fertile plain by the creation of what is now called the Silverstream, which was in its natural state a meandering stream of water. We were told that away back before 1860 the early settlers had made a cut for themselves before the interference of the Provincial Government, and here I must correct an impression which may have

been induced by Mr. Allan yesterday. I inferred from him that the Provincial Government had made the first cut; but that is not so. The evidence called by the petitioners shows that the first cut was made by the petitioners themselves; and on this point I might refer to the evidence of Mr. John Andrew given before the Royal Commission, which shows what the natural condition of the land was before this cut was made. His evidence and the evidence of the petitioners shows that this cut was originally a double cut of 6 ft. wide each. The Silverstream is now a river-bed from 15 ft. to 20 ft. probably in depth and from 3 to 5 chains wide at various points, but I shall adduce evidence from the engineer which will satisfy the Committee on the point. It will show that what was originally two cuts of 6 ft. wide each is now what I have described. Now, this is what converted the swamp lands which are described now as dry lands into cultivated fields; and the evidence will show that the gravel which has been gouged out by the waters brought down by those gentlemen to improve their lands was brought down on to the wet lands below, and it will be shown that at such a rate has this gravel been carried down that since the sitting of the Court in November—thirteen months ago—upwards of 10 chains of the bed of the Silverstream down on the flat has been filled up not merely to the level of the natural surface, but higher—because there had been artificial banks, and the gravel has been filled up to the level of the artificial banks, so that the gravel is now filled up higher than the level of the surrounding country. But that is not the full extent of the filling-up by the gravel, but a mile and a half of the bed of the Silverstream has been filled up in the same manner. Now, one can easily understand the petitioners in the higher lands asking to be taken out of this district, because they say, “We do not want drainage—we want irrigation.” To whose detriment have their lands been improved? Obviously to the detriment of the owners of the wet lands. There is one thing which is difficult to understand in paragraph (b) of Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst’s report, and that is how so many owners of the wet lands have combined with the owners of the dry lands. That is one thing which the Magistrate took into consideration, and which also influenced the Royal Commission in coming to a conclusion that the owners of the lands in the north portion should be included. Another reason is this: There are, as we know, besides the Silverstream, two other streams, one on the east side called the Owhiro and another on the west side called the Mill Creek, both of which drain the so-called dry lands—the lands of the petitioners who are asking to be taken out of the district. Now, under the Act those two streams, which are natural watercourses, are vested in the Board. They are not natural watercourses in the sense that they had well-defined courses through the swamp, but those courses have at various points been deviated both in the case of the Owhiro and in the case of the Mill Creek, partly by the early settlers, partly by the Provincial Government, and partly by the County Council. Members of the Committee must understand that, although no works have been done so far of that kind on the east side of the river by the Drainage Board, all works that have been done in the way of drainage were done by the County Council, and when no other drainage body is in existence the County Council is the proper authority. Every road requires to have along it drains necessary for the keeping of the roads clear of water, and into these roads the settlers have formed drains along their boundaries and their paddocks. Now, the creek is carried along Duke’s Road, and that is the only one case of deviation. I am justified in referring to this to show they have been deviated as natural watercourses. The control of those creeks and all drains made by the County Council is now vested in this new Drainage Board, and, as Mr. Gawn admitted to-day, the fact that the Mill Creek passes through the land is a great advantage to him. We know very well that for drainage purposes it is of the utmost importance, as the evidence before the Magistrate showed, that there should be some public body empowered and practically compelled to keep these two natural watercourses in order, and that is one of the reasons that enabled the Magistrate to come to the conclusion that the upper or dry lands should be included or retained in the district, or should not be removed into Class “D.” There we have two reasons which would probably not have occurred to people who have never seen the land, but reasons which, I submit, are entitled to a very great deal of weight when people come here who have derived in the past all the benefit from those works which have been carried out largely at the expense of other people, and ask that they should be charged with nothing of the cost. I am speaking of the drains that have been constructed by the County Council along the road-line, which have been carried out at the cost of the other people, and to a greater extent by the Provincial Government and the County Council. Those works are now vested in the Board. Now, questions have been put to the petitioners which would lead members of the Committee to infer that, because the works that have been done by this Board already—they have spent some hundreds of pounds—have done no good to the petitioners, and because the works they propose to do down on the wet lands cannot do any practical good to the petitioners, therefore they should be excluded from the district. I submit that the rational conclusion is that, inasmuch as they have derived advantage in the past to such an extent that the lands are converted into fertile plains, from the existence of those works which this Board is bound to maintain, that is a reason why these people should contribute to the cost. I submit, furthermore, that it would be iniquitous that Renton and other owners who have land on the flat, whose lands are converted absolutely into lagoons by reason of the filling-up by the gravel brought down by the Silverstream—that they should be put in the position, that they cannot hope to deal with this problem without assistance from those on the high lands. There is no question about that. That is one thing in which Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst are right. It would be hopeless for the owners on the low lands to expect to do that work themselves. Now, seeing that it is plain that the owners of the high and dry lands have benefited from this work, and not only that, but that the owners of the low lands are almost ruined—and I am not using any hyperbolic language when I say that, and Mr. Renton’s evidence will satisfy the Committee on this point—it is a fact that two or three thousand acres of land have been rendered almost worthless by the silting-up. An attempt has been made to prove that nowadays this gravel does not come down from those lands, but that it came from away up in the mountains. Evidence will be adduced to show that that is

CROSS SECTION OF SILVERSTREAM



Scale 30 ft. = 1 inch.

Yairi Drainage Board
 Engineer's Office
 Sept 1st 1909.

utter nonsense. There we had separating us in the past what was a double 6 ft. ditch which has been converted into a channel in which the torrent runs down, and in some instances it is now 20 ft. and even 3 and 4 chains wide, and where is the gravel? It speaks for itself. It is a wonder that people can have the effrontery to come before a Parliamentary Committee and ask that they should be taken out of the district and not contribute one penny towards any works. Now a word as to what the result of cutting them out of the district will be. No one can read the special Act of Parliament without seeing that the intention of the Royal Commission, which was given effect to by a special Act, was that this Drainage Board should have very extensive powers, that it should deal with this problem of the drainage and protection of the Taieri Plain in a comprehensive manner; and what I submit is this: that if this part of the district is excluded, that idea will be at an end. We should simply have nothing more than so many Drainage Boards of the ordinary kind amalgamated into one Drainage Board, and the idea of dealing with the problem in a comprehensive manner would be entirely at an end, because, as the evidence will show, a large proportion of the expenditure by the Board must be upon works such as widening the river where it has contracted. That is work which would necessarily be beneficial to the lands in the East Taieri. Another point referred to by Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst in their report is a storage-basin in the mountains, and they say that they saw no signs of any intention on the part of the Board to even entertain that idea, but the reply of the Board to their report shows that that has not been overlooked. Obviously it would be impossible for the Board to carry out any of those schemes for dealing with the problem if the other district is to be taken out, because those works are of such a nature that they would necessarily be more beneficial to the people of the East Taieri whose lands are not banked than they would be to the people whose lands are banked. I submit the proposition is so obvious that it is almost self-evident. To take this part of the district out would be reducing to a nullity the special Act of Parliament and the conclusions of the Royal Commission.

1. *The Chairman.*] When the county was making those improvements on the east side, did they do anything on the west side, or what proportion did the west side get as against the east side?—On the west side there were River Boards and Drainage Boards, and none on the east side, and they levied their own rates and spent their own money. That accounts for the difference between the east and west. I understand that the policy of the County Council throughout has been, where there were Drainage Boards, not to interfere with the drainage at all.

2. Are there any of the petitioners here who were members of the County Council at the time?—Mr. Douglas.

3. *Mr. Allen.*] You spoke of a host of witnesses who were at the Assessment Court?—Yes.

4. All those witnesses were on our side in favour of the objectors, were they not?—Yes.

5. And you called three classifiers?—Yes.

6. Two of whom said the North Taieri should not have been in the district?—That is one point I intended to refer to, but forgot. It is not quite the usual or proper thing for the statement of a witness to be referred to without the actual statement being produced, but I remember Mr. O'Neill being asked the question as to his opinion before he was a classifier. My impression was that he thought all the lands to the north of the West Taieri Road should not have been included in the district. The impression that may have been conveyed to the Committee is that Mr. O'Neill was of opinion that none of the East Taieri should have been included; but that was not so. Mr. O'Neill was under the impression that none of the works which the Board intended to carry out would be beneficial to the owners of the dry land. The correct view is what has been put before the Committee, that the owners of the dry lands must in turn benefit by the works to be carried out.

7. *Mr. Witty.*] In regard to the Silverstream converting Mr. Renton's land into a swamp, what was the state of the land formerly?—When Mr. Renton bought it seventeen years ago it was a very fine farm, and he gave £25 an acre for it.

8. And what was it originally before the wall was put up?—I do not know.

MICHAEL ELLIOTT examined. (No. 14.)

Mr. MacGregor: What are you?

Witness: Engineer to the Taieri Drainage Board.

Mr. MacGregor: Will you make a statement to the Committee?

Witness: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—You have already gone over a good deal of the evidence that I had intended to give, but I would like as briefly as possible to call your attention to a few points in connection with the Taieri Plain. I prepared a plan before I came here which I now produce. I do not think there is any dispute between the parties as to the plan itself. The levels I have marked on are as many as we have got, and they indicate heights above low-water sea-level. I might just briefly explain the plan, which shows that the Taieri Plain is surrounded with hills on three sides, with lakes at the western end, the river flowing out of the plain through a gorge to the sea. It comes down from the Otago mountains, and then throws itself on to the plain, then through hills, and discharges into the sea. In flood-time the floods submerge the plain on the West Taieri area to the 10 ft. or 12 ft. contour above sea-level. On the West Taieri side we have streams coming down from mountains about 2,000 ft. or 3,000 ft. high. The eastern end of the plain is largely supplied with water from the Silverstream, Mill Creek, and Owhiro, and numerous other small creeks which flow through the plain and concentrate on the lower portion of the area. The discharge of the Silverstream has been described to you already as a mere fleabite, but I am not prepared to take that view of the matter. I have made some investigations as far as my time has permitted, and it is a very considerable stream in time of flood. The reason is that the hills in the catchment rise up to about 1,300 ft. The rains falling on the mountains, which are very precipitous, immediately flow off, causing heavy floods in the stream up to something like

200,000 or 300,000 cubic feet per minute. I do not know that I need trouble you with what the fall of the Silverstream is, except to say that there is a fall of 19 ft. and in some instances 30 ft. to the mile through the district, which will cause scour. During flood-time the water backs up and destroys the fall of the stream at the lower end. I have examined the Silverstream very carefully, and it flows through a gravel bed. This has been brought down from the mountains, and the plain has been gradually built up. The stream now is flowing on a gravel bed carrying the gravel downwards. We have a difficulty in doing works in the lower part of this area, and undoubtedly, unless something is done to prevent the gravel travelling down, whether it comes from the hills or not, any work that is done in the lower portion will in a short time become silted up with gravel. I wish to point out that the Taieri River as it takes its course across the plain has rather a free access. It is then forced against the hills at Allanton, and is concentrated at that point. As Mr. Palmer and others have mentioned, they are in a very awkward position, and I have no doubt they are. The river is very contracted at Allanton and Otakia, where Mr. Palmer says the water rises upon him. It will be necessary to regulate the river by widening. It will also be necessary to move back the west bank near Allanton and near Otakia, and carry it down the railway, and so make a free escape for the water at these places. We have also a proposal to deal with part of the Silverstream, which is to take the Silverstream pretty well on to its original course, and carry it out through the outlet at Mr. William Shand's, and construct an embankment at what is called the "straight-cut outlet." It would then be possible to prevent the river from flooding back through the gap and submerging the country. We propose to put in an embankment with a sluice-box, which will allow any water that gets behind the embankment to escape into the river. This will be a benefit to the district. In regard to the Owhiro district, there is high ground at the outlet at Allanton, and exactly the same thing takes place there: the water flows through this to low ground. We propose to carry the embankment up along the Owhiro till it reaches the high land, to prevent the river going back on to the low land occupied by Mr. William Shand. Mr. William Shand said this morning that it would require an embankment 30 ft. high along the Owhiro, but the difference between the flood-level at Mr. William Shand's own house and the swamp is 13 ft., so that the embankment will not be considerable to protect all that country from the water which is now submerging it from the Owhiro inlet. Then, if we lowered the flood-level of the river at Allanton Bridge by moving the river-banks we should let the flood-water go through. These works will to a considerable extent relieve this country. I do not mean to say that they will altogether do away with the floods in this district during a very severe flood in the river, but in ordinary floods it will be protected, and at the present time there are floods over that country two and three times a year. There are also drains and streams through the East Taieri District, and up to this year there has been an expenditure on cleaning these of £800-odd by the Board.

1. *The Chairman.*] Whose properties?—Various properties.

2. It might be a guide if we knew on whose property this work has been done?—They are already existing drains principally. There is Mr. Carmichael's, Mr. Anderson's, and Mr. Fowler's property.

Mr. Fowler: No drains have been cleaned on my property.

Witness: At all events, the Board has spent £800 on drains in the district.

3. What properties has that been spent on?—There is a drain which serves Mr. Carmichael and Mr. Anderson, and another drain which serves Mr. Murray. The Mill Creek has been cleaned up on the lower portion of the plain, and the Silverstream from Gladfield Road down has been cleaned. The drains along Blackie's, Kirk's, William Shand's, Smith's, B. Shand's, and Murdoch's properties, and others, up to Gordon Road, Mosgiel, have been cleaned.

4. You say there was about £800 spent on the east side?—Yes.

5. How much has been spent during that time on the other side?—About £1,200.

6. *Mr. Anderson.*] In regard to the £800, has that been spent on land outside the area that becomes flooded that you spoke of?—No, it is practically all flooded area. There are about 5,000 acres on the eastern side that are flooded.

7. *Mr. Witty.*] Have you ever tried dams in the river to find out where the shingle came from?—No.

8. Seeing there is a dispute about it, could not a dam be made to find out?—Yes, it would save a lot of disputes.

9. At the bottom of the stream the Taieri backed up on to the land: what has caused it to back up—the fact of the wall being on the western side?—No, not necessarily.

10. You stated that the water backed up out of the river into the Silverstream?—I think I said it flowed out.

11. Has the wall been the cause of the backing-up; or, if the western wall was not there, would not the water spread and the Silverstream have a clear run out?—It would to a certain extent, but not to the whole, because the natural bank on the western side is much higher than the ground on the eastern side.

12. It has sent it back to a certain extent?—Yes. The level at Mr. Kirkland's house, which is on the river-bank, is 22 ft., and the level on the swamp is 11 ft., above sea-level.

13. *The Chairman.*] Is the swamp 11 ft. lower?—Yes, and there is a natural gap that the water comes through from Taieri River.

14. *Mr. Witty.*] Mr. MacGregor said that the Silverstream had converted Renton's land into a swamp. What was the state of that land before the wall was put up?—I could not tell you.

15. *The Chairman.*] How long have you been in the district?—About six months.

16. You do not know of the original work that was done?—No, I do not know anything about the ancient history of the place.

17. *Mr. Witty.*] You have been there practically only since the formation of the Board?—Well, I think the Board was formed about twelve months ago.

18. What amount of benefit, if any, has the east side received under the Board?—The eastern side has received practically no benefit except the cleaning of drains and the cutting of a drain from Gladfield Road down.

19. It is really a prospective benefit?—Yes. It has taken us a considerable time to get the facts of the case in hand. We have taken all the levels. I think the Board was requested three or four months ago to suspend operations by the Government.

20. *Mr. Lang.*] On what grounds?—I do not know.

21. *Mr. Anderson.*] Is there a proposal in the minds of the Board to make a dam to regulate the flow of the river in flood-time?—There is a proposal of that kind under consideration, and there is a favourable site for such a dam.

22. Where would you make it?—It is a considerable distance up, near Kokonga.

23. How far up?—I do not know, but I should think about ninety miles.

24. Have you been there?—Yes.

25. Is it suitable?—It is a very suitable site, but the unfortunate fact is that part of the Central Otago Railway runs through it. It is below the old Taieri Lake, and will include that.

26. *Mr. Forbes.*] You would drown the railway if you put it there?—Yes, undoubtedly it would drown the railway, but it would save the Invercargill line.

27. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Can you tell us, when the Silverstream was cut through, if the course of the stream was changed?—That I could not tell you. I can give you this information: that the fall of the stream from Mr. Gow's land to the Wingatui Racecourse is about 20 ft. for a distance of a mile.

28. Have you no knowledge of where the original course was?—No. I have examined plans, and on the plans in the Lands Department there was no stream shown past Gow's property.

29. *The Chairman.*] Perhaps it may be a dry stream except in wet weather?—No, I have not seen it dry, and I think it very seldom gets dry.

30. *Mr. Forbes.*] Is there much water running into it in the ordinary season?—No, not much. There would be about 1,000 cubic feet per minute in the ordinary season, but in flood-time it comes down heavy.

31. You have been only six months in the district, but have you seen the district in flood?—Not in heavy flood.

32. You can hardly say from your experience what will be the value of those proposed works?—Some works have been carried out for some considerable time.

33. But you can hardly give an opinion yet upon their value in flood-time?—No.

34. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Then, the Silverstream is the main stream which carries the water from the eastern side into the Taieri?—It is the largest stream, but it is not by any means the main stream—there is the Mill Creek and others. My idea was to collect as much water as possible and carry it into the Taieri by a main channel.

35. If the silting has been carried on to that extent, do you not think some stops could be put in the bed to try and stop it?—Undoubtedly we should stop it. It has not been under control in the past.

36. Somebody must have controlled it when constructed?—As far as I can understand, the settlers cut a ditch 12 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, and nature has done the rest.

37. *Mr. Forbes.*] The money that has been spent on the eastern side has been kept in a separate account?—Yes.

38. And the expenses of the western side are kept in a separate account also?—Yes.

39. Are the rates spent according to the way they are raised—can you spend the eastern money on the western side?—No, certainly not; we are prevented by the Act.

40. The money raised on the eastern side must be spent on the eastern side?—Yes.

41. Can it be spent on the wall on the western side?—No, certainly not.

42. It can only be spent on works for the benefit of the eastern portion?—Yes.

43. And if they separated, would they need a Drainage Board to look after their streams?—I should say so.

44. And they would have to strike a rate spread over the whole district, so there would not be much gain in their being separated; and in your opinion as an engineer it would be necessary to have an engineer looking after the streams and watercourses?—Undoubtedly. The lower section is injured by the higher section.

45. *Mr. Guthrie.*] You say that an expenditure of £800 has been made on the eastern side?—Yes.

46. Is it a fact that you have only received £800 from the eastern side?—No, we have not received £800 from the eastern side: the expenditure is chiefly from capital.

47. *Mr. Allan.*] With regard to the question of money between the east and west sides, you refer, of course, to loan-money?—And rates also.

48. And those moneys are special moneys that are earmarked for special purposes. For example, you do not refer to the general rate for maintenance and general purposes?—I take it that the rate we raise on the east for maintenance is spent on the east, and the rate we raise on the west is spent on the west.

49. But all general charges, such as office charges—some £1,500 a year—are required and borne by the whole district?—Yes, proportionately. We keep a record of our time that we are engaged on either side, and put in a card, and we allocate our time each month.

50. *The Chairman.*] And do you keep separate accounts?—Yes, separate accounts for each side.

51. And you have done that for how long?—So far as I know, since the Board commenced operations.

52. *Mr. Allan.*] With regard to Mr. William Shand's land: He gave evidence here this morning, and he said it would take a wall 30 ft. high on the Owhiro Creek to keep the flood-water from his land. Can you give the depth and width of the Owhiro Creek?—At present down at Allanton it is 40 ft. or 50 ft. wide and 13 ft. deep.

53. Were you here when the record flood took place?—No.

54. Well, have you been told that Mr. William Shand's land, to the extent of 800 acres, was covered to an average depth of 8 ft.?—I do not know, but I got from Mr. William Shand the level of the flood at his house, and also from Mr. Kirkland. The level of the flood on the lowest part of Mr. William Shand's land is 13 ft.

55. Would you be surprised to hear that there was an average depth over the whole of his property of 8 ft.?—Well, I make it that there was an average depth of 12 ft.

56. That is one farm, but round about the land near the river was all covered with water?—Yes.

57. How high do you propose to put the wall on the Owhiro Creek?—I think it was 19 ft.

58. Do you think a wall on that stream 19 ft. high would keep that tremendous volume of water in the Owhiro?—Yes, undoubtedly; it must do.

59. Although there was an average depth of 12 ft. spread over a tremendous distance, you think it could be contained in that small stream with a wall 19 ft. high?—You do not understand what I mean.

60. Well, I want the Committee to understand you?—The Owhiro flows into the river through high ground, and then immediately you leave that high ground you come to low ground. What I propose to do is to take the bank at a safe level from that point and carry it along the Owhiro till high land is reached. Then the effect would be that when the river came down, instead of flowing through the Owhiro gap and flooding the low land, it would simply flow in through the gap at the outlet and be confined to the Owhiro.

61. You propose that that wall should be 19 ft. high?—Well, take it at a safe height above the flood-level—about 16 ft.

62. You propose a wall of 16 ft. as against what Mr. Shand says—that it would require a wall of 30 ft.?—Yes.

63. You have got some information about the depth of the water—you say an average depth of 12 ft.—and that is spread right over 800 acres. Do you think a wall 16 ft. high in a stream like that will contain that tremendous volume of water?—You do not want that. What is required is a better water-way at Allanton to let the water away.

64. I understood you to say that you would put a wall on the side of the stream to keep the water in the stream, to prevent it flooding Shand's land?—To keep the water from going round and flooding the low land.

65. The most serious floods are caused by the water going out of the river up the streams?—That is so.

66. You know the depth of water that extended over that area, and I understood you were going to erect a bank there?—To keep the water from going through and across the line of embankment.

67. You will admit that, notwithstanding that bank, the water will go up the Owhiro Stream?—Yes.

68. Do you think that a bank 13 ft. high on the western side of the Owhiro Creek will contain that enormous body of water in there, taking into consideration the volume of water that does go enormous body of water in there, taking into consideration the volume of water that does go through?—I think that your idea is that you are afraid that, if there is a large body of water held by the bank, the whole of that water is pressing against the bank and will sweep it away—which is not the case.

69. With regard to the cut which you referred to as the straight cut in the Silverstream, that is an artificial cut, is it not?—It is artificial, but there is a natural depression there.

70. From the lagoon into the river?—Yes.

71. Do you know by whom that cut was made?—I do not know.

72. What is the effect of that cut, taking into consideration the fact that it is facing the current of the river—what is the result when a flood comes?—The flood-water undoubtedly flows up the straight cut.

73. The river is rushing into the point against the cut?—To some extent, but not altogether—there is a slight curve.

74. And the water rushes in there and up the Silverstream?—Not up the cut particularly, but through the depression that is there.

75. And that is the place that I referred to the other day as having been silted up to Mr. Kirkland's property to a depth of two or three fences?—I do not know about that.

76. Will not that inrush of water meet the Silverstream water, and settle the gravel as well as the silt?—The water going through will undoubtedly settle the gravel in the lagoon.

77. The artificial cut which has been made by the settlers apparently caused the settlement of the gravel in the Silverstream?—At the point there is a natural depression, which admits a considerably greater volume than the artificial channel.

78. And is the proposal to take the Silverstream down to a point so that it will go with the river where it joins it?—Yes.

79. So that the current of the river will be drawing the water out rather than driving it in?—Yes. There is higher ground at the original outlet than there is at the straight cut.

80. And I suppose the result of that will be that the two streams flowing in the same direction will have a tendency to keep the Silverstream clearer?—It is the natural outlet.

81. The tendency will be to keep the Silverstream clearer than it would otherwise be?—Yes.

82. You referred to the gravel, and said that certain works would be destroyed unless something was done to prevent the gravel coming down the Silverstream?—Yes.

83. If the gravel comes from beyond the district, has the Board any power to stop it?—We have power to go outside our district to do works.

84. Do you know as a fact that the gravel is coming from above the district?—I do not know. All the information I can give you is that the fall and the quality of the ground there is sufficient to cause the gravel to travel down.

JAMES CARRAELL RENTON examined. (No. 15.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer. I produce a photograph of the Silverstream in the Owhiro Subdivision. Seventeen years and a half ago I took up my present property on the east side near the Silverstream—within $4\frac{1}{2}$ chains of the Silverstream.

2. At what distance from where it junctions with the Taieri?—About a mile and a half. When I took up my holding it was dry, and I paid £25 an acre for it. Twelve years later all my troubles began with the water overflowing its banks from the Silverstream at the point shown on the photograph.

3. *Mr. MacGregor.*] How much of the river has been filled up with gravel?—There is about a mile of gravel and about half a mile of willows. That is during my time.

4. How much has been filled up with gravel during the last twelve months?—Eight to ten chains has been filled up further up the river since the Board came into existence.

5. Within thirteen months?—Yes.

6. Do you know where it comes from?—I could not say the exact spot, but I have been told it comes from a canal that exists there.

7. But you have no knowledge of your own?—No.

8. What is the state of your land now through that?—About thirty acres of land belonging to me is practically useless. When I say “useless,” I have not been able to make any use of it for the last five years.

9. Is there anything else you wish to state to the Committee?—There has been a great deal said about Mr. Shand and his swamp land.

10. In your opinion, is it necessary to have a Board of some kind?—It will be necessary to have a Board of some kind to keep it open. A stream of that kind will always get filled up with gravel and timber.

11. And, in your opinion, is it better for that part of the district that it should remain within the present Board?—Yes.

12. Or have a separate Board of your own?—It would not be fair to make a separate Board with such a few, unless the whole district were kept in.

13. *The Chairman.*] Are there not enough, in your opinion?—There are not enough on the low land to maintain a Board. If that gravel did not come down there we should not require a Board at all. That is the only trouble.

14. But is there not gravel down further, where the water comes up on to the other people?—That is only in times of flood, and it is not gravel, but silt.

15. You are alluding to what is constantly with you?—Yes. It is lying there over a good number of acres to the extent of about 3 ft.

16. Then, is there no outlet to the lower end to dry the land by draining it?—They are draining it now, but, of course, it is in such small dimensions that it does not take the water away quick enough.

17. That is in flood-times?—No, under ordinary conditions.

18. I have seen the Silverstream when it was not very large, and an ordinary drain would take the whole lot?—It is the normal conditions under which we live that we complain about. It is not exactly the floods.

19. *Mr. Guthrie.*] Do you think the east side should be included in the rating-area?—Yes.

20. *Mr. Anderson.*] Where is your land situated?—My sections are 64, 65, 67, and 82.

21. Your land is naturally lower than the surrounding country?—It is now.

22. But has it not always been?—No, it was one of the highest portions in that district. It was one of the original sections held by Brown forty years before my time. It was one of the best sections in the district.

23. The explanation we had some time ago was that this was a lagoon?—That is so, but the lagoon is some distance from my property. During my time there have been millions of loads of gravel carted out of that stream. I have taken out a thousand loads myself, and still the gravel comes down. The stream has been cut and sent down there.

24. *Mr. Witty.*] Who looked after the Silverstream before the present Board?—Nobody.

25. I understood you to say that since this Board existed the stuff had come down worse?—At a certain point.

26. Within the last twelve months?—Yes.

27. And I understood you to say there were also a lot of willows?—Yes, that is correct. They are to be seen in the photograph.

28. Do not those willows tend to stop the shingle?—Certainly.

29. Surely the County Council ought to compel you to clear the willows?—That is what the County Council should have done before, and we should have had no willows to-day.

30. You say your troubles began twelve years after you got the land?—Yes.

31. Whom had it troubled before then?—I do not know. I am only speaking for myself.

32. Did Mr. Douglas lease the land alongside of you?—Yes.
33. Did the gravel up above come on his land?—Yes, but it did not flood over in Mr. Morrison's time on Mr. Douglas's land—he used to grow crops.
34. Did not the water trouble Mr. Douglas?—That was later than Mr. Morrison's time.
35. But before it commenced to trouble you?—Yes.
36. But the flood came along, and put the flow of water on to your land?—Yes.
37. Was that a matter that could have been foreseen? Did you not take that chance when you bought the low-lying land?—There was an open watercourse at a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ chains, and I thought that was safe enough.
38. Then, when the trouble arose with you it commenced with Douglas?—That is what drove the Morrisons out of it—when the troubles began.

JAMES THOMAS GIBSON examined. (No. 16.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer in the West Taieri District.
2. *Mr. MacGregor.*] And you are Chairman of the Taieri Drainage Board?—Yes.
3. How long have you been on the Board?—Since its constitution.
4. Will you make a statement to the Committee?—Yes. I have only been Chairman of the Board since the election in November last. Previous to that Mr. Barron, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, was Chairman, and when he retired Mr. Shand was elected Chairman, and I followed Mr. Shand. I should like to say at the beginning that when the Royal Commission took evidence in Mosgiel, Dunedin, and other places they gave ample opportunity for all and sundry to come forward and state their objections or otherwise in the matter of forming a Drainage Board to control the drainage matters throughout the Taieri. Of course, at that time the principal part of my evidence was touching the matters within the West Taieri, where I reside at the present time, although I was born on the north side. Well, the main feature of my evidence touching the questions at issue—namely, the severance of East Taieri and the question of separate Boards—was whether it was advisable to have separate Boards for the control of the east and west, or whether a combined Board should control the whole area. The evidence that I gave on that occasion was that I favoured separate Boards, and, if the conditions as placed before me at that time when my opinion was asked were the same to-day, I should still hold to that opinion. I was amongst the first to give evidence before that Commission. I was concerned with another case on drainage in Mosgiel, and during the time I was there I was asked to go up and give evidence, and that is the reason why I was amongst those who gave their evidence there. At that time the question of the control of the east and west under separate Boards had not been taken into consideration very much by the Commission, but of course when they brought it up prominently they suggested the nomination of three Government men to take seats on the Board for all time, thus holding the balance between the two districts.
5. Who suggested that?—The Commission. That was not suggested during the first day or two, and I assume that most of the witnesses had given their evidence stating that they favoured separate Boards for each side, the reason given being that there would be strife and conflict on both sides under one Board. Now, seeing that Government nominees are appointed to the Board permanently, and taking into consideration the positions they occupy, every one of them professional men occupying important positions in the Government service, as Mr. MacGregor has pointed out, the mere fact of the Board being so constituted is a safeguard against that conflict which must otherwise of necessity have arisen. That is why I altered my opinion and said that it was safer for both sides to have joint control under a Board as constituted. I might further say this in that respect: that, assuming there were not separate Boards, there would be four members on one side and two on the other, and of necessity the West Taieri would have the larger number of members, and would be in a position to overrule the East Taieri; but the fact of the Government nominees being on the Board would prevent any such unjust course taking place. It has been asked by one or two members of the Committee how the accounts are adjusted; but under the Act there is no possibility of any injustice being done in that respect, because not only the maintenance accounts, but also the loan-moneys or money likely to be expended for works on each side is put down, and the charges against each side are kept separate. The cost of the clerical and engineering work is borne *pro rata* according to the area of the different subdivisions and the time expended thereon. So I think that was a wise and very just provision that the Royal Commission suggested, and which has been given effect to. There is another matter I wish to refer to briefly, and that is the petition that is before the Committee from the owners of the land on the east side of the Taieri River below Allanton and extending to Henley—the petition of Mr. Palmer and others, which has been referred to as the Maori petition. I might say that a petition from Mr. Palmer and others came before one of the meetings of the Board some considerable time ago, asking, I think, for reclassification into Class “D.” Of course, the Board had no power to do anything else—they could not free them from the district. The matter was discussed pretty freely, and the majority of the Board, at all events, if they were not unanimous, were in favour of that being given effect to, only that it would entail a reclassification of the whole district. We could not confine our classification to this portion we were dealing with. The Act is specific on that point—we should have to reclassify the whole district; and I have no doubt that will be given effect to in the near future.
6. *The Chairman.*] But what rule did the Board proceed on with regard to classification?—We must classify our lands on the basis of the works done and the benefits received.
7. But there is land which came under the classification which is 50 ft. and 100 ft. above water-level at high flood?—Yes. The reason of that is this: that those lands are dependant on their drainage from the maintenance of streams into which they drain, which originally flooded their lands. If the Board does not control those streams, then the silting-up and blocking process begins first at the outlet end and then gradually proceeds up the stream.

8. That is the case all over the colony?—Yes. Another question which had an important bearing on this matter was the question of gravel silting up the Silverstream. It is admitted by some of the petitioners—by all, I think—that in days gone by a considerable proportion of this gravel that is causing injury to the lower lands came from the point where this cut has been made which has been spoken of.

9. That is, the Silverstream cut?—Yes. I would like the Committee to understand that there have been two operations, and I will confine myself to the cut made by the settlers. The other one connecting that was lower down, and that was done at considerable cost by the Provincial Government. In regard to the silting-up process of the gravel, most of the petitioners who have given evidence on that point—Mr. Gow especially, who was well entitled to speak on it—have admitted the size of that channel as originally constructed. It is agreed on by all parties that the original work consisted of two channels each 6 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, and the boundary-line of each side is between those drains. If those conditions existed to-day, the two drains 6 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, I am quite satisfied there would be no reason for the people lower down to ask the people on the high lands to contribute towards the cost of any works. Previous to those drains being cut, right from the upper reaches of the North Taieri was what is known as the Blackbridge. Previous to that cut being made that is in dispute, the Silverstream emptied its products over the North Taieri; there was no channel at all, and that was the reason for cutting those two 6 ft. drains. The position now is that where this work originally took place—I am referring to anywhere—it is now from a chain and a half to two chains in width, and, instead of having a depth of 3 ft., it is from 15 ft. to 20 ft. deep, so it is not necessary for me to say where this gravel and earth has gone or what has caused it. With this heavy stream from the gorge flowing into a channel of alluvial nature, the only effect can be to scour, and that has been the effect. It is also stated in evidence by Mr. Gow that none of that gravel comes now from that portion that was cut by those settlers in the early days. I would not go as far as to say that none comes from there, but it is still coming, and, to get over the difficulty, Mr. Gow says that he is not prepared to give it as an indisputable fact, but that the bulk of the gravel comes from four or five miles up the stream, which is about the intake of the Mosgiel waterworks. That is not so. From the Blackbridge upwards, or perhaps a few chains above Blackbridge, the whole bed of that stream, the whole distance right up to Owhiro Flat, where this road leaves the valley, according to Mr. Gow's assumption, is where the whole of this gravel comes from. There must be evidence of that being there; but, instead of having a gravel-bed, what do we find? Purely and simply a bed of large boulders throughout the length and breadth of that channel, and so much so that after every flood in the stream you see these boulders thrown up on either side. There is one corner which is called the Long Ford, where the boulders are piled up to a great extent. If, as Mr. Gow suggests, the bulk of the gravel comes from that point, it is very evident that the whole of this channel, which is composed of heavy round boulders should contain some of the gravel, which would lodge amongst the boulders, and in a very short time, instead of having a channel of boulders, we should have a shingle bed. There is another matter, touching the Board's operations lower down, in what is known as the flooded area of the Silverstream—at Renton's place. I may say that since the Board took charge of operations there they have done a considerable amount of work. They have cleaned out the channel of the stream to a length of 46 chains, extending down towards the lagoon. This was a well-defined stream of water at the time the Board began. It expended a considerable amount on it, and there is now just a partial silting of the stream; but it is an absolute fact that the whole channel itself was some three or four feet higher than the land surrounding, and at the point where we began operations the Silverstream just met this gravel bed. Since that, and during the last twelve months, as far as the Silverstream is concerned, it has been in very favourable order. There have only been two freshes, and no very heavy flood, but it has minimised to a great extent the piling-up of the gravel and other matter coming from the higher reaches; but even under those conditions we had another filling-up of nearly 12 chains. From that point, the Gladfield Bend, we had already cleaned out, and I maintain, sir, that, if this Silverstream is not to be controlled by any public body, then it is only a matter of time, and not a very long time at that, when this silting operation must of necessity proceed higher up the stream, and pile its waters up, and pour them over the land which is now described as dry land and requiring no drainage. That must be the position ultimately if nothing is done. I might mention that I was born in the North Taieri, right up by this Blackbridge. I have lived there, I suppose, nearly thirty years, and my father, who is still living, was one of the first settlers in the colony, arriving here in 1848. Not very long ago, in conversation with my father, he told me that even after this cut was made by the settlers it did not entirely relieve the North Taieri. He remembered specially one flood after that, but I do not know how long after, coming out at the Blackbridge. His house is only about a quarter of a mile on the Duke's Road below that point. My grandfather was alive in those days, and he lived on the other side just above the Blackbridge, and naturally he was anxious to go along this road to see how things were faring with him, but the current of the water was so great coming down that road that he could not force himself against it. That was the condition of things in the early days. I would just like to say, in connection with Lundius and Buckhurst's report, that they practically retained all the so-called high lands in the North Taieri in the rateable area. It does not agree with the Board's classification, but practically all the lands in the rateable area; and more particularly in Mr. Gow's case, they rate higher than the rate of classification by the Board; so it does not seem that Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst are of opinion that absolutely no benefit can be derived by these ratepayers in the north. In connection with their report, I might say the Board were asked by the Under-Secretary of Lands to make comment thereon, which they did, and I may say that the Government nominees unanimously concurred in this report. A subcommittee was appointed to draw up this report, which consisted of Mr. Shand, Mr. Kemshall, and myself.

That report drawn up by the subcommittee was submitted first to a full meeting of the Board, and a large majority approved of it; three, I think, dissented, but the Government nominees were unanimous in assenting to it. In the earlier history of this movement, I think I am right in saying that the Royal Commission was set up originally to report upon the West Taieri matters, but some of the East Taieri ratepayers wrote asking that their grievances might be looked into with a view of forming a Board for their relief. Amongst those ratepayers who wrote asking for that were Messrs. Blackie, William Shand, William Kirkland, and William Kirk.

10. *Mr. Allan.*] Did they not refer specifically to the low lands?—I believe they did. When those four gentlemen wrote asking for something to be done, they evidently did so because they were in a bad state, and Mr. William Shand said yesterday that they were in as bad if not a worse condition than the East Taieri. They must have wanted something badly, or else they would never have made that request. Furthermore, we have Mr. Blackie practically at all the Board meetings, either writing or appearing in person, showing the necessity for works to be done to give him immediate relief, and at the last or second-to-last meeting of the Board Mr. Blackie was there with others on the same errand, and he said that the position was getting so acute that if nothing was done within a month—I think he was specific in stating the time—he would have to take steps to protect himself. In other words, he threatened the Board with a claim for compensation if some redress was not given him; and that is one of the gentlemen who places his name to the petition asking for severance. It has also been stated that no reasonable opportunity was given to the people of North Taieri to state their objections and reasons why they should not be included in the drainage-area. Messrs. Gow, Kirkland, and Donald Reid are the principal landholders in the North Taieri—at least, they are amongst the largest there—and they had ample opportunity of stating their case before the Royal Commission. It has been pointed out to me that any one would have the right to say that he did not know the Royal Commission was sitting; but that could not be so, because it was advertised in all the papers, and every one knew what the purpose of that Commission was. The last point I wish to touch upon is the effect of severance. It is evident that the Royal Commission took a wide view of the whole matter. The matter of the drainage of the Taieri Plain, of course, is a matter of gigantic importance, and interests everybody concerned, and if, after we go back, this Committee should decide that it is a right and proper thing to separate the two districts and enable the East Taieri to go out of the present Board's control, it will mean of necessity the curtailment of the powers now vested in the Board for comprehensively dealing with all the problems in connection with the Taieri Plain. It is a little over twelve months since the election of the members of the Board took place, and it has been asked what works have been done by the Taieri Drainage Board since its constitution. I would just like to say in that respect that a matter dealing with such gigantic issues, and meaning perhaps a fairly large expenditure, should not be rushed without due consideration. Of course, the position necessitated the appointment of an engineer of high qualifications, and it would of necessity take that gentleman some considerable time to get over the district, get levels taken and checked, get contour-lines taken of the whole plain, and a knowledge of all matters generally, before he could come forward and place a scheme before the Board for acceptance or rejection.

11. *The Chairman.*] You mentioned that Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst had raised the classification on some of the lands higher than the Board had?—Yes. There was only one case in the East Taieri, but there were several in the West Taieri. There was one case in the West Taieri where the Board had by agreement placed most of that land in "B" classification, and a very small portion of it in "A"; but under Messrs. Lundius and Buckhurst's classification the whole of that had been placed under Class "A." That is Mr. John Sutherland's farm at West Taieri.

12. With regard to the places raised, they were principally on the east side?—No; there was only one on the east side that they put higher than the Board's classification—that was Mr. Gow's.

13. Was there anything in the report which showed what induced them to raise it?—No.

14. *Mr. Hogg.*] Is the scheme for protective works completed or nearly completed?—I might say that in connection with the Silverstream the Engineer submitted not quite a complete scheme, but a fairly complete scheme, for the control of the Silverstream; but when it came before the Board we had received a communication from the Under-Secretary for Lands asking the Board not to enter into any expensive works until this matter of the petitioners was decided. We agreed to accede to that request, and to stay our hands till the end of October. After that we considered the tenders, but we decided they were too high. From the discussion that arose, although there was no motion before the chair, it was practically decided that the Board could by buying their own plant and doing the work themselves execute the work cheaper than any contractor could. That is the position that we are in at the present moment in connection with the East Taieri. Practically this petition coming up has tied our hands in connection with the prosecution of any permanent works. Then we have cleaned out the 46 chains that I mentioned; but that is only to cost something over £200. That is only a temporary thing, because if nothing is done higher up the stream the first flood that comes down will practically fill it up again. One of the Board's operations, if they are going to control both east and west, must be to control this gravel which comes down from the higher reaches, by weir-walls or something of that kind. That has been discussed by the Government and by our Board. That is one of the first things we must undertake, because if you create open channels lower down they will not be effective permanently if you allow this scouring process to continue the work of excavation in the lower reaches.

15. Really the scheme is still in abeyance?—Quite so.

16. And you have had no opportunity of ascertaining whether the works are going to be effective?—No. I produce a copy of the statement of expenditure to date in connection with the East and West Taieri. Of course, the West shows the greater amount, but the greater portion of that was incurred in connection with the flood of July, 1908. It practically cost £5,000 coping with the flood and reinstating the embankments. The East Taieri expenditure is £1,619 6s. 5d.

17. And the West expenditure?—£6,111 13s.

18. So far as they have gone have the works realised your expectations?—We have done no works of a permanent nature. As I pointed out, a reasonable time must elapse before the Board commits itself to any scheme that will be effective. The Taieri River is a factor, and also the Mill Creek and the Owhiro Creek.

19. Do you think the scheme is of such a comprehensive character that it will benefit the whole of the properties that are contributing?—Yes, it must of necessity do that, in my opinion, but whether or not to the same extent that they are now classified is an open question; but provision is made under the Act that the Board “shall” classify, and not “may.” If we find after the scheme is completed that there are some parts deriving more benefit than others, then the contributions will be differentiated.

20. *Mr. Guthrie.*] You said it has been contended that the gravel has been washed out of the cut, and that it has come down and spoiled the other lands below it?—Yes.

21. And in your statement it struck me that you want to establish that the middle has come out of those two cuts?—No. There is another point I wish to bring before you; but, while touching upon that, the fact remains that had that cut not been made—that is, assuming that some gravel comes from the higher reaches—there was no possible way of that gravel reaching the lower channel. Immediately above that cut Mr. Gow has stated that the gravel has been protected by willows and groins, thereby obviating any fear of that portion of the gravel coming down, but the upper gravel comes down from that bend, extending up to the Blackbridge. There is about a mile and a half of the river-channel not protected, and it is not straight. At my brother's place he is a great sufferer from the floods; they not only take the gravel away, but wash the ground away too. The formation is 10 ft. or 12 ft. of alluvial deposit, and below that it is simply a gravel-bed. It strikes the wall 12 ft. high, and the gravel tumbles down. That is the way the bulk of the gravel comes down, and the Board will have to stop that; and the cut that is leading that to the lower reaches is causing the damage. If the cut had not been made it would never have reached the lower ground. The point I make is that some provision is absolutely necessary for the lower ground if you give effect to the request for severance. Those landowners will be faced with the problem of not only dealing with their own drainage difficulties, but with coping with this gravel which comes down the stream, and keeping open permanently the way for the higher people. It is an engineering point, but it will be admitted that if this silting process is not stopped, then it is only a question of time before it affects the higher lands. At present it is only reaching the low-lying lands, but, given a few years, and it must affect what are now the safe lands.

22. If that scour is cutting it out of the upper reaches, why is it not carried out?—The fall is not heavy enough. When you go to the lower reaches in flood-time, when both the Silverstream and the Taieri River are in flood, you are practically in dead water.

23. Then the water comes not only from the Taieri, but from the upper reaches as well?—Yes.

24. The scour goes on to the upper reaches?—Yes.

25. There is some portion where it is dead water apparently?—Yes.

26. Caused by the downflow of the water and the outflow from the Taieri River?—Yes.

27. Are there any means by which you could get a continuous scour from the higher reaches, or is it impossible to do so?—Well, that of course is an engineering point, but the scheme laid before the Board for its consideration was one which, if it had been given effect to, would have made it practically impossible for any portion of the Taieri to be flooded by the Silverstream.

28. You have a scheme before you?—That was the scheme.

29. Has the Board done anything to take the water away from that low swamp? The position apparently is this: The water of the high reaches follows down and reaches the depression not far from the Taieri River?—That lagoon. That is an extent of, roughly, 70 or 80 acres.

30. Is that being filled up?—Not now; it has been in the past. I will explain why. The connecting-link was this portion I have just told you about, the 46 chains that the Board has cleaned out. We cleaned it out to a width of 20 ft., and to a depth of 3 ft. of pure gravel, and emptied it into the river.

31. If you get the water into that lagoon, what means have you of taking it from the lagoon into the river?—Continue the channel into the river.

32. Is there not a back section of the Taieri water against the incoming water—the back water coming from the higher levels and forming dead water at this lagoon?—Yes, that is the action that takes place. Everywhere where this condition existed, the Taieri River is the larger body of water which carries the larger flood; then the tributary streams discharge into that, and it is a question which body of water is the higher. We have sometimes both of them in flood at the same time. Under those conditions, of course, the Taieri River, being the larger body of water, will hold back and pound the Silverstream water, but under other conditions, when there is only a Silverstream flood in existence and no Taieri River flood, that water would have a free access to the river. Under present conditions, assuming that the Taieri River was never in flood, which is an impossible assumption, the Silverstream water would not get down the Taieri River without the Taieri River being channelled and controlled.

33. When this cut was first started above, was it doing more good than it is doing at the present time to the people up above?—It is doing more good to them now than it did originally, as I told you. The original cut was not sufficiently large to free them. But continuing the water in that small channel has had the effect of converting it from a cut of 6 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep into a channel 15 ft. wide and 6 ft. deep.

34. Is that channel, as shown on the photograph, as efficient as it was in the beginning—when the photo was taken?—No, certainly not. It is practically inoperative. We have cleaned it out to the extent of 46 chains, but that is only a temporary work.

35. Is the effect of that to back the water of the Taieri Stream?—I have no doubt it would under certain conditions back the Taieri River flood. My contention is this: that, had it not been for the original works done by the people higher up, then, even assuming we did not contend that there is no back water from the operations of the Taieri River, and even assuming that the Taieri River itself backed the Silverstream water, my contention is that none of that gravel could come down there, backwash or no backwash, if the original works had not been constructed higher up. The gravel could not have come down if it had not a way of coming. It would not matter if the Taieri was backing it if no gravel was coming down—no lodgment could get there.

36. *Mr. Witty.*] You admit that the backing-up of the Taieri is a factor in keeping the shingle bank in the cut?—Yes, that is so—in the Silverstream channel.

37. How often does your Board meet?—Once a month.

38. Are the Government nominees there at each meeting?—Every meeting.

39. You have four members on the west and two on the east?—That is so.

40. Have you any connection with the Board?—I am Chairman of the Board.

41. Then it is since you became Chairman that you altered your mind about the east being joined to the west?—No.

42. But in giving evidence before the Commission, I understood you said you were against the east being joined to the west?—Yes.

43. And you have since changed your mind?—Yes, and I also said that if the conditions as they existed at the time the question was asked were the same to-day, then I should still be of that opinion.

44. But if you were born in the district you ought to have known the condition of the district?—No, that was not the point. I still say that if the two districts are separated and they decide to raise their own rates for each district, then there will be a never-ending friction and confusion. That was my reason for saying that I preferred the separate districts.

45. But at present there is friction?—Oh, yes!

46. And just as strong as it would be if there were two Boards?—That I could not tell you.

47. But there is friction?—Yes.

48. Do you not think that each side of the river would be able to look after its own work?—That is rather a difficult problem.

49. Then you think that those on the east side have not sense enough to look after their own affairs?—I do not say that; that is not my contention.

50. Do you not think that the east or the west are able to look after their own affairs without being joined?—Yes, if the Taieri River was not between them then I would say, certainly.

51. They would not want a Board at all then?—Oh, yes!

52. But there is bound to be friction in any case. Do you not think that the people of both sides could form Boards of their own and look after them? According to the evidence there has been no Drainage Board on the east side at all—the County Council simply looked after the work?—No, the County Council has practically done nothing.

53. How did they get on then?—The point is this: On the East Taieri side, under the old mode of procedure the establishment of Boards was done by a vote of the ratepayers of that district. The position would be this: that the small area of the East Taieri under those conditions would have to control the whole of the drainage-area and the whole of the drainage problem of the North and East Taieri.

54. Do you think it is fair under the present conditions to tax the whole of the east for the benefit of this small portion?—It is not altogether for that area only. There is an indirect benefit to themselves—the controlling, and maintenance, and upkeep of this channel.

55. But it has been going on for thirty years, and there has been no tax until now?—Yes. Of course, until Parliament stepped in, in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission, the people had no opportunity of doing anything.

56. But by petition they could have formed a Board at any time?—Yes, that is so, but only for a small area.

57. You spoke of a flood when your father could not get to see his father: was not that the 1868 flood, when the whole country was under water, when all the dry lands practically all over New Zealand were practically covered with water?—As a matter of fact, I do not think the 1868 flood in the Taieri River was much greater than the one we had last July.

58. Did the people on the east side of the Taieri River know that that Bill was being rushed through in 1908?—That is a matter on which I have no knowledge.

59. You did not know that the Bill was being put through yourself?—No, I did not, not until the whole matter appeared in the newspaper.

60. Are you living on the east side?—No, on the west side.

61. And you did not know that a Bill was being put through to bring in the whole of the east side?—I knew the Royal Commission was taking evidence with a view of doing that. The whole trend of their questions pointed to that—we all knew that.

62. But you did not know the Bill was going through Parliament?—No.

63. Then the people on the east side would not know either?—That is so, I suppose.

64. Then they would not have an opportunity to object?—No.

65. *Mr. Forbes.*] The drainage interest on each side of the Taieri River is completely different, is it not?—With the exception of the control of the Taieri River.

66. On the western side you have got banks formed?—Yes.

67. You do not anticipate doing anything more on the western side?—I should not say in the matter of embankments. The main problem, I would take it, is the control of our internal drainage.

68. On the western side?—Yes.

69. All the evidence that has been led during the sitting of the Committee has been in regard to the effect of the Silverstream on the low-lying lands?—Yes.

70. That is the only reason by which you can bring in the land on the higher levels?—That is so.

71. That is on account of the damage which has been done by the Silverstream to the low-lying ground?—Yes.

72. How much of the low-lying ground is affected by the gravel that is spreading over the land?—I should say, roughly, somewhere about 4,000 acres actually affected by the Silverstream—perhaps 8,000 acres.

73. The gravel itself has not left the bed of the creek?—No, the effect is this: the gravel has retained the bed, and the water has left it.

74. Are all those people in that 4,000 acres with you for the retention of the eastern side?—I would not say that. The opinion has been expressed locally that if the higher grounds are taken out they also desire to go out, but as against that we have their request to have steps taken to form a drainage-area.

75. They would sooner go out and put up with the damage done by the flood-waters than belong to a Board with the upper portion of the district cut off—is that the position?—Yes.

76. They think there would be less loss to them by the flood-waters than by the extra rates if the higher end was cut off?—That is so. Their position is this: that it would be absolutely impossible for them to do any permanent work for their own relief without some control of the higher reaches of the stream, because, on the assumption that the damage comes from the higher lands in the matter of gravel travelling down, they would naturally, of course, be confined to their own area. That is on the assumption that they formed a smaller district. Then this silting process would continue, and they would not be able to control that.

77. Without a Drainage Board would it not be possible to compel the people in the top end to make some provision?—No.

78. Under the Act can you not do that?—No; that is the weakness of the position. You cannot do anything unless you have them under the control of a public body.

79. There is a public body operating in the shape of the County Council, is there not?—Yes.

80. Would they not have the power?—No, they have not that power.

81. They have not the control of this waterway?—That is a legal question. I think the position is this: A section of the ratepayers by petition can demand the County Council to act as a Drainage Board, but that would not take in the people in the higher reaches, because such petition must carry three-fifths of the people of the district. The objectors would kill such a thing being carried.

82. The people on the eastern side seem almost unanimous in their desire to be severed from the western side, and when there are so many both on the lower ground and on the higher ground wishing to be separated, do you think it is a fair thing to compel them to stay in against their wishes, as a matter of justice?—Well, of course, I am looking at it from a different point of view. No, I would not, if that were their only reason, but they are asking, as all the witnesses have pointed out, for complete immunity from rating.

83. We have had evidence here from witnesses whose land is under the classification which has kept them free of rates, but who wish still to be outside of the classification altogether and not to be under control?—Yes.

84. So we must assume that their wish is to get clear altogether of any liability?—Yes.

85. *The Chairman.*] There were a number of witnesses who gave evidence who were affected by this silting-up, and they wished to be relieved of any connection with the West Taieri?—Yes.

86. Now, if you were residing on the east side instead of the west side, with all your interests there, would you object to this petition to get relief?—On which part of the east side?

87. Any part that is within the portion we are discussing. There are some here who have given evidence that they have no trouble with the silting?—If I were living in the lower lands I certainly should object to severance from the control of the Taieri Drainage Board.

88. But if you were on the higher lands—land which is from 20 ft. to 80 ft. above the flood-level, what would your opinion be then?—If I were living on the higher lands, I have no doubt I should take up this position: that I have all the drainage that I require, my lands will be safe from what I have done in the past; and it is human nature to a certain extent to be selfish, and I should perhaps take the same stand as they are doing.

89. *Mr. Allan.*] You have admitted that you have changed your mind on this subject of a united district?—I have, under altered conditions.

90. Not very long ago were you not the principal opponent of a united district—a matter of a couple of years ago?—No, certainly not. The only expression of opinion on that point that I ever gave was before the Royal Commission.

91. Do you remember a meeting that was held in Dunedin before the Royal Commission sat in the Taieri?—What meeting do you refer to?

92. A meeting in the Crown Lands Office at which you were present?—I remember being there at one meeting.

93. I think it dealt with the amalgamation of the West Taieri Boards as well as the others. Is this statement of Mr. Barron, the Commissioner of Crown Lands correct: "The Commission, he added, was the outcome of a meeting held in Dunedin some time ago, when a proposal was made that the whole district should be amalgamated for drainage purposes. Mr. J. T. Gibson was the principal objector to that proposal at the meeting"?—I do not think so. I think we had several meetings.

94. At all events, we will take the report of your evidence at the Commission. It states, "Mr. Gibson did not favour the amalgamation of all the Drainage Boards; he objected to taking in the East Taieri. He would confine the west side under one drainage body, and let the east side control its own affairs." That was your opinion then?—Yes.

95. And the addition of three Government nominees to the Board has caused you to change your mind on the subject since the drainage district was formed?—That is so.

96. Now, with regard to a conflict of interest between the two sides of the plain: You say that a conflict of interest existed?—It probably would.

97. I understood you to say so in reply to a member of the Committee?—The question put to me was this: Was there not a conflict of opinion between the members of the Board as at present constituted?

98. You agreed with that suggestion because it would do away with the conflict between the West and East Taieri?—I was always speaking of the possibility of conflict.

99. Of conflict which did not exist?—The possibility of it existing.

100. Do you admit that no conflict existed before this Taieri District was formed?—There was always an element of conflict existing in the controlling of it.

101. Was there any conflict between the people of the East Taieri and those of the West Taieri?—I have no knowledge of it.

102. You have no knowledge of any conflict or ill feeling between the East Taieri and the West Taieri?—Previous to the Royal Commission?

103. Yes?—That is correct. The matter never cropped up in discussion.

104. But in writing that letter to the Under-Secretary, is it a fact that you wish the Committee to believe that there was conflict and ill feeling?—No one tries to dispute that conflict exists now in connection with drainage matters.

105. But do you wish the Committee to believe that there was ill feeling existing before the Royal Commission sat?—I have no knowledge of any ill feeling existing before the Royal Commission sat.

106. That letter which was written to the Under-Secretary was drawn up by you, Mr. David Shand, and Mr. Kempshall?—That is so.

107. Why do you say in that letter, "The probabilities are that if the suggested severance were carried out there would be a repetition of the old evils of divided authority and conflicting interests, with antagonistic schemes for fighting the common enemy, the river—the very evils which the special Act was intended to prevent"?—Because we were covering this ground taken up by the Commission which established our existence.

108. You put that forward as a ground for keeping the East Taieri in, did you not?—Yes.

109. But you knew it was not true?—That ill feeling did exist at the time we wrote that report.

110. Then I take it that all the ill feeling that has arisen is since this district was formed?—Yes, I have said so. None existed, to my knowledge, previously.

111. Then, taking the object which the Royal Commission had in view, their report has brought about the very thing which they say they wished to avoid?—Evidently; yes, I admit that.

112. That was their only object in making a united district?—No, you are getting beside the question. Their object was evidently to constitute a Board with sufficient powers to deal with all problems connected with the Taieri Plain.

113. In regard to the gravel in the stream, you heard Mr. McGregor speaking eloquently about Mr. Couston's good qualities?—Yes.

114. I suppose you pin your faith on Mr. Couston, do you not?—Yes.

115. And Mr. Couston has a knowledge of the stream as County Engineer?—Yes, he has a knowledge of the plain generally.

116. Do I understand that you agreed with Mr. MacGregor when he said that the evidence given by Mr. Gow was absurd?—I have no recollection of that.

117. At all events, do you agree with this: Mr. Couston says, "The gravel brought down by the Silverstream gathered principally between Leishman's and the Mosgiel Borough intake"—I do not agree with that portion of his statement.

118. But you will admit that that agrees with Mr. Gow's evidence?—Yes.

119. You referred to your father?—Yes.

120. He is an old and respected settler in that district?—Yes.

121. And he also gave evidence before the Royal Commission?—I believe so, yes.

122. And he said then, "Gravel coming from the North Taieri settlers' lands was now a thing of the past"?—I do not agree with that, because even the land which he occupies jointly with my brother, which he must have overlooked, is washed down to a great extent by every flood nowadays.

123. At all events, we have statements by Mr. Couston and your father bearing out what Mr. Gow says?—Yes. Mr. Douglas, who was Chairman of the Taieri County Council for some time, is here, and he will establish the fact that that was a gravel bed from the Blackbridge four or five miles up the valley of the Silverstream.

124. The Silverstream is practically a straight cut right through to the river?—No, it was not cut naturally through to the river.

125. You mentioned the names of several people in connection with the amalgamation of those districts, and you said they had ample opportunity of giving evidence?—Yes.

126. As a matter of fact, did those men whose names you have mentioned not give evidence before the Royal Commission, and every one of them said he did not want a united district?—The only point I was establishing by making that statement was that they had ample opportunity of stating their objections.

127. And do you admit that over twenty witnesses expressed their views exactly as you did against a united district?—Exactly so, and probably for the same reason.

128. Including yourself and Mr. D. T. Shand, who drafted that letter to the Under-Secretary?—Yes.

129. So that the report of the Royal Commission, which Mr. MacGregor says is your case, was admittedly against the whole of the evidence, is that so?—Yes, I take it that that must be admitted. We do not dispute that. Evidently the Commissioners' views must have been that the evidence was not in accordance with fact. That must of necessity have been the view the Royal Commission took.

130. It was only a question of opinion?—Quite so.

131. The only point I wish to establish is that the fact remains that the report was against the evidence?—Yes.

132. At the classification which took place immediately afterwards, was the decision of the Magistrate against the evidence of a host of witnesses, as Mr. MacGregor admitted?—Quite so.

133. You agree that from the beginning the people have been fighting against this matter, both those on the high and those on the low lands, but their evidence has not been accepted?—Oh, no! I think you are wrong there. The evidence of the people on the low lands was not antagonistic to a Drainage Board being formed. I think the bulk of the evidence of the people on the low lands was that something was necessary to be done.

134. You refer to Mr. Blackie and his petitioners; but did they not apply to have their low lands formed into a drainage district to deal with their own affairs?—That was not to us, that was to Parliament when the Royal Commission was being constituted. That never appeared before the Taieri Drainage Board as an official document.

135. You do not say they applied to have the whole of the East Taieri included in the drainage district?—Mr. Blackie was asked what he thought should constitute and be included in the East Taieri, and he said that the area should extend right up to the North Taieri—to the Blackbridge.

136. In regard to the damage done by the gravel lower down, you know the cut is a very old one?—That is from the lagoon to the river?

137. Yes?—That is so.

138. Do you agree with Mr. Renton when he says that millions of tons of gravel have been taken out?—I know there has been a lot taken out.

139. And Mr. Renton said yesterday that he bought his property seventeen years ago, and that twelve years ago the trouble with the gravel began?—Yes.

140. So that this trouble has arisen within the last twelve years?—According to his evidence, yes.

141. Although this stream was in that state for over thirty years as it was when he bought his property?—No, that is not a fair assumption. That is a channel that I did not cover in my evidence. The whole channel was gravel right up to the lagoon. Naturally the photo shows that that channel was not silted up, and if that channel was not silted up when he bought his property, then it is a fair assumption that it was provided with proper drainage.

142. Is this a fair assumption: that Mr. Couston says it must be the gravel away from the district that is doing the damage, because he says that is where it is coming from?—There was a mile and a half of the Silverstream absolutely unprotected on the banks.

WILLIAM JOHN JENKINS CHARTERS examined. (No. 17.)

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

2. Will you make your statement to the Committee?—I was not born in the Taieri, but I was taken there when I was eighteen months old. I shall be forty-nine years of age next February, and I have lived on the plain all that time, eight years of which was at the lower end of the plain—the west. For forty years I have lived on the farm I now occupy—namely, Urie Park, which is on the east side. I may tell you that one-half of Urie Park is in the Silverstream Subdivision, and the other half in the Owhiro. I have another farm higher up also in the Silverstream Subdivision, half of which is in the drainage-area, and the other half is on the hillside and not in the district. My land is in Block VIII, East Taieri, and I occupy Sections 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. The Mosgiel land is supposed to be in the dry-land area. The division of Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions is land between Sections 3 and 4 of Block VIII. I might say that my neighbour has 15 chains off one of the lower sections, and to let you see how dry that land was in the early days, he bought that land in order to get access to the stream to get water for his stock.

3. Is it not dry sometimes now?—No, it is not. The Silverstream runs right through the farm. I know every foot of the Silverstream from the river to the Blackbridge. I have been over it and through it times without number, and I know it better than any man here in connection with this matter. I have lived on it for over forty years, and, having a farm through which it runs, I ought to know it well. The natural state of the stream running through Urie Park was a wandering, narrow, deep stream, with very little gravel at the bottom. The white gravel with water above it gave the water a silvery appearance, and therefore it derived its name Silverstream. Now at the present time it is not a stream at all, it is a sludge-channel.

4. What has made it into a sludge-channel?—The operations of the people up above making this 12 ft. cut and then the bringing-down of the gravel, and the Provincial Government also helped with that. You have heard a good deal about the West Taieri embankment causing the sludging-up of this channel, but that has nothing whatever to do with it. I say that most emphatically. The West Taieri water comes out of the cut, leaves the mouth of the cut, and spreads on land up to the same level. We have from the Gladfield-Owhiro Road down to the mouth of the cut over a mile, and in that mile there is fully 13 ft. Shortly before 1875 the Provincial Council made a road

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.

26. Do you think it will be necessary to have special authority to look after the artificial waterways in the East Taieri?—Yes, most certainly.

27. And you think it will be necessary to have some body to look after those artificial waterways in order to keep them open?—Certainly.

28. If there was no such authority, would there be any likelihood of the land returning to a swampy state?—Undoubtedly it must.

29. If you were to sever that from the Taieri Drainage Board you think that another body would have to be formed to look after its waterways?—Yes, undoubtedly.

30. And do you think that one body would be able to do that better than two—that is, that the present body would be able to do the draining of the whole of the Taieri from, say, the Blackbridge right down to Berwick?—Certainly, they only require one staff.

31. *Mr. Witty.*] Originally, I take it, the lower portion was swampy—many years ago?—It was all a swamp—the higher portion also.

32. The lower portion was drained and became fertile, and then they drained the upper portion, which became fertile; but now by draining the upper portion it is swampy to a certain extent, is that so?—Yes.

33. Do you think that when the Taieri is in flood and backing up into the cut, this to a certain extent prevents the outflow of the shingle?—I absolutely do not.

34. Have not the willows that have been planted in the cut had a detrimental effect on the outflow of the water and the shingle?—I do not think so, because immediately below that there are 50 chains absolutely clear of willows.

35. And it is filled up with shingle?—Yes. There are no willows on that 50 chains.

36. *Mr. Forbes.*] You know it is a well-known fact that willows planted on the side of a stream tend to raise the bed of the stream?—I do not know that—my experience has been the opposite.

37. What width is this stream?—Forty feet wide at the point shown on the photo.

38. Is it deep now?—No, it has filled up.

39. And you have not seen any trouble arise from the willow-roots?—No. The willow-roots are a protection to the banks, and that is why they are planted there.

40. You say that the land that is shown in the photo is now under water permanently?—Yes.

41. How much of it is under water permanently in addition to yours?—Mr. Renton has one paddock of about 20 to 30 acres under water; Mr. Blackie, who bought some land at £25 an acre, has some 20 acres under water—that is on the east side; and on the west side there are about a couple of hundred acres under water.

42. That has been brought about in the last few years?—Yes, by the operation of the lagoon getting filled up.

43. This land which has been rendered almost useless, how many acres are there?—I should say 300 acres.

44. By the silting-up of the bed of the Silverstream?—Yes.

45. And all those people who have that land in that state are desirous that the Drainage Board should continue in the drainage-area?—Yes, all are.

46. You think it will be very much to your interests to be under the control of one body?—Undoubtedly.

47. *Mr. Allan.*] You gave evidence before the Royal Commission?—I did.

48. And you said you did not favour the amalgamation of the East and West Taieri?—Yes.

49. You gave evidence after Mr. D. T. Shand, did you not?—I do not remember whom I followed, but I know I gave evidence.

50. Was it not suggested by the Chairman to Mr. Shand, who gave evidence immediately before you, that there should be three or four Government nominees on the Board if there was a united district?—No. I never heard it suggested till Mr. Barron asked me. I said I should not be in favour of a united district, and he said, "If three Government nominees were appointed, would that suit you?" and I said, "Yes, certainly."

51. Now, with regard to the question Mr. Witty asked you, I understood you to say that the lower end of the plain was drained first, became dry and fertile land, and then the upper end of the plain was drained, and then received the injury: you do not suggest that, do you?—I do not grasp your meaning.

52. You say the plain was a swamp originally?—All the plain was a swamp.

53. Then you do not suggest that the lower part of the plain was drained and dried first, and then the upper part?—Where would you start to drain if you did not start at the lower end? You would start at the bottom, and drain up.

54. You say the lower end of the plain became dry first?—There was a wet area round that lagoon.

55. But, apart from the lagoon, do you say that the land about your property was dried before the North Taieri?—It was dry as soon as the North Taieri.

56. Do you not know, as a matter of fact, that they were cropping in the North Taieri long before they could crop down your way?—We were cropping on my place just as soon as they were cropping in the North Taieri.

57. Like myself, you have shot pukekos not long ago on Mr. Blackie's swamp?—Yes, through the action of this watercourse being filled up.

58. *Mr. Forbes.*] In reply to a question of mine you said the willows were planted 40 ft. or 50 ft. apart; but in the photo they seem to be meeting. Do you not think, if they were meeting at the top, that their roots would be coming up in the bed?—Every year in the autumn I put on a man who goes up one side and down the other, and he takes down the low branches so that there is no stoppage of water.

DAVID THOMAS SHAND examined. (No. 18.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer at Wylie's Crossing.
2. *Mr. MacGregor.*] You agree with my statement of the case?—Yes.
3. *The Chairman.*] Do you agree with the last witness's statement?—I did not hear all he said, and he spoke to many things which occurred before I was on the plain. What I did hear I do not object to, and I know of nothing he mentioned which was wrong. I practically agree with that portion which says that the Silverstream has been filled up through the actions of the people above. There was evidence before the Royal Commission which shows that they made a cut, and down that cut the gravel comes. It does not matter to us where it comes from, whether from their land or the land above, but it could not come down until they made that cut. Mr. Buckhurst admitted to me that it was filled up the gravel coming down from them, but he said, "I consider you are too late." I said, "We have equity on our side," and he said, "You are too late."
4. Did you assist Mr. MacGregor to draw up the statement he submitted to the Committee?—Yes.
5. And you would be well aware of it as your case?—Yes.
6. How much land do you own that is covered with water when a flood is on?—A large flood will cover about 200 acres. Of course, I am only speaking roughly.
7. How often do the floods occur which injure you?—Not often.
8. Not every year?—Oh, no! nothing like that; only when the river is in flood.
9. Would there be one flood every four years?—No, I do not think so. The last big flood was ten years ago.
10. Then, you would not remember more than three or four floods altogether of that dimension?—I do not remember a great many.
11. And have you not land on the west side?—Yes.
12. How many acres have you there?—Seven hundred.
13. And there is a bank on the west side that is some protection to that?—Certainly.
14. Then you wish the Drainage Board to be retained as it is?—I wish some Board to be retained, a Board sufficiently able to cope with the stream. My outlets are below where the gravel comes. The gravel flows down, and when it gets to the low ground there is a slight rise in the river. There is only about 3 ft. of fall from the low ground in the river, and when the rain comes the gravel travels down so fast that it does not get to my outlet. I am better off now than I was before—the stream is filling up and going away from my outlets.
15. Do you think that a Board on the east side would not be able to deal with that?—Most certainly, if it neglects all the means.
16. And to get rid of that difficulty there should be some line of demarcation, and the benefits should be paid for accordingly?—All I desire is that those who get the benefit from the cut that is bringing the gravel down should deal with the gravel and give us the same number of acres as before, and then I do not want them to help in the drainage. I only want them to deal with the injury they have done us.
17. *Mr. Witty.*] And if they would stop the gravel at the top, that is all you want?—If they stop the gravel from coming down on to my land, that is all I want. If that is done at their expense, I am prepared to dry my own land, but I cannot do so with the gravel. I think that within the last twelve months the river has filled up to the extent of 8 or 10 chains, but that does me no harm. The difficulty is that it is gradually coming up. Mr. Charters and others are complaining.
18. You had a heavy flood in July twelve months ago, and do you think that has caused some heavy slip in the higher reaches, which is now coming down which did not come down before?—In fact, Mr. Donald Reid, sen., said in the Court of Appeal that he crossed the Wingatui Road nearly every day, and that the gravel was travelling down there at the rate of a foot per hour, and has been doing so for years.
19. Where does the gravel come from?—My opinion is that it comes from the land—it falls in. The old settlers have told me that this stream was 14 ft. deep originally, and they made two cuts of 6 ft. wide each, and the water travelled down those, and gradually deepened and widened them. All that material has gone down below and filled up the stream, and we say that in justice they ought to help us to take that gravel out.
20. Do you think there are sufficient people on the east side to form a Board and control it?—Our finances are kept separate, and it is only a matter of the control of the Board. I think one Board would be more economical for both sides.
21. *Mr. Anderson.*] You think it is necessary to have a Board to control the East Taieri?—Yes. I want to have a Board to deal with the gravel, otherwise it will be tinkered with and not stopped.
22. Do you think that one Board would more economically control the whole drainage of the Taieri Plain from where the Silverstream diverges at the Blackbridge: do you think one Board could do that?—Yes.
23. And do it more economically than two Boards?—They would only require one lot of officials.
24. And you think it is necessary to have a Board to control the artificial waterways that have drained the land but which are now being filled up with gravel?—For my own part, I would sooner have no Board than have a small Board that could not deal with it properly, because if they do not deal with it properly I shall suffer.
25. *Mr. Witty.*] How long have you been in the Taieri on your own farm?—Twenty-five years.
26. And the cut was made at the time that you purchased, was it not?—Do you mean when my father purchased the land?
27. Yes?—I think the cut was made afterwards.

28. *Mr. Forbes.*] The position with you is that you think the Board will clean out this Silverstream—take the shingle out at you place. Is that the intention of the Board?—Yes, to deepen it and keep it clean.

29. Is not that expensive?—Yes, I think they will want a dredge to do it. The whole stream is full up for about a mile and a half.

30. That is the reason why you think the top end should be included in this Board?—No. The reason why I ask that the top should be kept in is that they are responsible for it.

31. If they do that you will be satisfied?—Yes.

32. You think that at the present time they are clearly liable for that expense?—Yes.

33. *Mr. Allan.*] There are comparatively few people on the east side of the river who are in the Silverstream watershed of the people we represent?—There are the men right up above, because, according to the evidence, the water flowed right over the ground and travelled down towards the Owhiro and the other way as well.

34. The drainage that was done there was done by about half a dozen people, was it not?—I could not say who it was done by, but I know some was done in the night-time.

35. You want to include the whole of the East Taieri because, as you admit, there would not be a sufficient number to pay the expense of it?—I want to include those people who have got the benefit out of the Silverstream.

36. Would you include that portion on the other side of the plain, the watershed of the Owhiro Creek, which has nothing to do with the Silverstream?—The Silverstream ran down there.

37. Do you know that as a fact?—An old map shows that.

38. Do you know that several of the early settlers of the North Taieri gave evidence before the Royal Commission that that was not so?—Yes, but it is on the map.

39. You admitted that you were against a United Board?—Yes.

40. Even after it was suggested that there might be Government nominees on it?—Yes.

41. And you said, "I do not favour an amalgamation of the East and West Taieri districts. Their interests are not the same. A drainage scheme that would suit the East Taieri, the West Taieri would have nothing to do with"?—Yes.

ALEXANDER DOUGLAS examined. (No. 19.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—A farmer, and manager of the freezing-works at Oamaru. I will touch a little on this Bill in regard to the Drainage Board. I may say I think it has been well considered. It is arranged first that those who derive the most benefit by the drainage will pay the largest amount, others that derive a lesser benefit will pay the second largest amount, and those that have land along the hillsides, part of which may not be drained, are put in the lower class, the proportion being 4d., 3d., and 2d. Well, I consider that very fair. Then, again, it is very fair in this respect: that those who get the most benefit have to pay as near as possible for the benefit received. Now, the Chairman of the Committee remarked about the County Council doing the drainage. In the natural course of events, had this Board not been formed, the County Council should have been compelled to take up this drainage, but things got into a normal state for about fifteen or twenty years and the thing was left to itself. Had the County Council taken it up, or should they be forced to do it now, the question would be a very serious one to those gentlemen on the other side to-day. My reason for saying that is this: that the Council does not rate upon the benefit received, but upon the value of the property in the county. Therefore my land, which is only valued at £10 per acre, would only pay one-quarter of the amount that the land valued at £44 per acre would pay, and yet I should receive the most benefit. I mention that to show that if this Board is disposed of, then the County Council must take it up. It will not be allowed to lie dormant as it has in the past. I have land that comes under Class "C" and land under Class "A," but I have not objected to either of them.

2. How much land have you in the East Taieri?—I have two places in the East Taieri and one in another part. There are 403 acres through which this stream goes. I have had a lease of it for eleven years, and I bought it about four months ago.

3. Since the shingle was there?—Yes, I bought it with a view of the drainage benefiting it, and my lease would have expired in nine years. I tried to purchase it a year ago, but was not successful. I was paying a rent of 6s. 9d., and I bought it at £10 an acre, as I thought the drainage would improve it so much. When I took up this place eleven years ago the stream ran down about 25 chains through the farm, and it began filling up with gravel. About nine years ago I put on four men, who worked during the summer cleaning out this stream, at a cost of about £140 to £150. I tried to get it to run into the river, and some small floods came and I cleaned out where it had silted up, but then one large flood came and brought down so much gravel and branches that it blocked it for about 10 or 15 chains, and I did not try again. I got no help from the neighbours, and yet they were reaping the benefit. They did not help me, and I do not want to help them now. I do not want this drainage scheme, and I do not care now much where it goes. I do not care whether it is carried on by the Board, or whether it is thrown on to the County Council, or whether it is handled at all. I am in that position that I have suffered so much that I do not care now. There are only 5 ft. of a fall from this side of the lagoon to the river, and that shows that the river-bank is 10 ft. or 15 ft. high, but from the last part of this lagoon, from what the engineers measure from, is 5 ft. At the cut there is a fall of 1 ft. from the river right up to where the North Taieri people interfered with it, and that would be about five miles. One side of the lagoon would have been quite dry, but they did very little in the river: they ran it out on this lower part to nothing, and simply made it 3 ft. deep and rated it with the rise of the land. That is not fair to me when I pay the higher rate in Class "A": because my land is low they drain it on to me.

4. *Mr. Allan.*] You know Mr. Fowler?—Yes, very well.

5. He has been living on the bank of the river near the Silverstream for about forty-eight years?—He has been there thirty-three years to my knowledge.

6. He knows as much about the Silverstream, then, as probably any one else?—I have travelled more than he has. He never left home much.

7. If he says that in the early days the Silverstream when it got down to the level lands lost itself in the swamp and in the flax bushes and rushes, would you say that is not the case?—No, of course not. There was a big lagoon there some years ago.

8. But at all events it lost itself along the flax-bushes?—Yes. There is another point I wish to mention. About 15 chains to the east side of the present cut there is a lagoon, and on the very highest land on the plain there is an old mark of the Silverstream, only the land became so dry that it ran itself out. The Silverstream shifted on to the lower place, but that was originally the Silverstream. Now the stream has shifted and is working on to the high places, and will very soon be up to the top of the plain, and then shift away somewhere else.

9. You think it is going to silt up on the lands 70 ft. higher up and flood them?—It will soon force itself up to there, and it will not be many years before it will be up to the top of the plain again.

10. You know that Mr. Gow's and Mr. Gawn's land in the district is some 70 ft. above the flooded land?—That may be so, but if that was hemmed in on both sides it would not matter.

11. *Mr. Witty.*] You were a member of the County Council for years?—Yes.

12. Could you not strike a differential rate?—Not unless a Bill was put through. I should be very loth to alter the Bill, as it is a very wise Bill.

13. *Mr. Anderson.*] You have had considerable experience in connection with local bodies?—Yes, I have.

14. Do you think it necessary that there should be a local body on the East Taieri to keep those artificial cuts open?—Well, the land is very valuable; and I certainly think there should be.

15. Do you think it necessary to have a Drainage Board to keep those artificial drains open?—Yes, certainly.

16. Do you think the County Council could do that?—They could if they would.

17. Do you think a Drainage Board would do it better under the Act?—Yes.

18. Do you think one Board for the whole Taieri would be able to keep all those drains open?—I think it would.

19. *Mr. Reid.*] You gave the Committee to understand that there was a ratio of value up to which the Board could rate?—Yes, 4d., 3d., and 2d. They can rate up to 4s., but that is the proportion of the three rates, A, B, and C. I may say that there may be some individual cases of hardship, and some people may be in Class "A" now, whereas if the matter was brought before the Magistrate the land might be shifted out of that class; but they will not wait until such time as the Magistrate can deal with it.

20. You know, of course, that there is no ratio fixed—that the highest could be 4s. and the next 3s. 11½d.?—You are sailing very close to the wind there. I believe that according to law that could be done, but it would be an unjust thing.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Department of Lands, Wellington, 11th January, 1909.

Taieri Drainage Board.

By reference to the *Otago Daily Times* of the 12th ultimo you will see that a deputation waited on the Right Hon. the Prime Minister regarding Taieri drainage, and made certain representations.

I now enclose, for your information, copy of a petition on the subject forwarded by Messrs. Webb and Allan, solicitors, of Dunedin, signed by 205 ratepayers in the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions of the Taieri Drainage District, out of a total number of 261 on the ratepayers' roll.

Will you please report, for the information of the Right Hon. the Minister of Lands, on the allegations of the petitioners, and favour me with your views and suggestions.

WM. C. KENSINGTON, Under-Secretary.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Dunedin.

In the matter of "The Taieri Land Drainage Act, 1907," and "The Land Drainage Act, 1908"; and in the matter of the Taieri Drainage District.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable William Lee, Baron Plunket, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Dominion of New Zealand and its dependencies.

THE humble petition of the undersigned ratepayers in the Taieri Drainage District humbly sheweth,—

1. Your petitioners are ratepayers in the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions of the Taieri Drainage District—a special drainage district constituted by “The Taieri Land Drainage Act, 1907,” and including almost the whole Taieri Plain.

2. The said drainage district was so constituted without the concurrence of your petitioners, and notwithstanding that a petition signed by a large number of ratepayers in the said Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions was presented to Parliament praying that the lands in the said subdivisions should not be included in the said drainage district.

3. The Taieri Plain is divided into two parts by the Taieri River, and the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions aforesaid include practically all the lands in the said drainage district on the eastern side of the said river.

4. A high embankment was erected along the western embankment of the said river by the West Taieri River Board for the protection from flooding of the lands on the western side of the said river. There is therefore no community of interest between the ratepayers on the eastern and western sides respectively of the said river. The Legislature has accordingly made provision in “The Taieri Land Drainage Act, 1907,” that the annual charges on any loan expended on works solely for the benefit of lands on the eastern side of the said river and the cost of maintenance of such works shall be paid out of rates levied on such lands, and the annual charges on any loan expended on works solely for the benefit of lands on the western side of the said river and the cost of maintenance of such works shall be paid out of rates levied on such lands. No injustice will be done to the ratepayers on the western side by excluding all lands on the eastern side from the said drainage district.

5. There never was a Drainage Board or River Board on the eastern side of the said River. The larger portions of the said subdivisions include high land which has been well drained at the expense of the past and present owners thereof, and without imposing any extra burden upon the owners of any other lands.

6. Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that Your Excellency will by Order in Council under section 3 of “The Land Drainage Act, 1908,” abolish that portion of the Taieri Drainage District included in the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions of the district.

And your petitioners will ever pray, &c.

In the matter of “The Taieri Land Drainage Act, 1907”; and in the matter of the petition of Donald Reid and others.

WE, David Sutherland, Denis O'Brien, Robert Cullen, Richard Sutcliffe Allan, Thomas John Gawn, and Francis James Wright, all of East Taieri District, farmers, do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:—

1. That the signatures to the annexed petition, opposite which our respective initials are written, were obtained by us respectively, and are in the respective proper handwriting of the persons whose signatures they purport to be.

2. That the said petition is signed by 205 ratepayers in the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions of the Taieri Drainage District out of a total number of 261 on the ratepayers roll.

3. That, of the other fifty-six ratepayers whose names appear on the roll of the said subdivisions and who have not signed the said petition, some are dead and others are out of the district, others have parted with their interest in the properties in respect of which their names were placed on the roll, and only fourteen have refused to sign the said petition.

And we make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of an Act of the General Assembly of New Zealand intituled “The Justices of the Peace Act, 1908.”

DAVID SUTHERLAND.
DENIS O'BRIEN.
ROBERT CULLEN.
R. S. ALLAN.
F. J. WRIGHT.
THOMAS J. GAWN.

Severally declared by David Sutherland, Denis O'Brien, Robert Cullen, Richard Sutcliffe Allan, Francis James Wright, and Thomas John Gawn this 24th day of December, 1908, before me—

WILLIAM ALLAN,
A Solicitor of the Supreme Court of New Zealand.

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD.

Number and Name.	Rateable Area.			Remarks.
	A.	R.	P.	
1. Reid, Donald .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
2. Gow, James	255	0	0	..
3. Sutherland, David	190	0	0	..
4. McKeagg, Richard	72	3	13	..
5. East Taieri Presbyterian Church	4	0	0	..
6. Craig, Thomas	102	0	0	..
7. Botting, Richard	102	0	0	..
8. Moffatt, William	5	2	0	..
9. Wilson, Henry .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
10. Gawn, Robert	(51	0	0)	..
11. Gawn, Thomas J.	155	0	0	..
12. Botting, A. J.	151	3	24	Not a ratepayer.
13. Cuddie, R.	6	3	10	..
14. McMillan, Hugh	3	2	0	..
15. O'Neill, Annie	7	0	0	..
16. Seguin, William .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
17. Vincent, Robert .. .. .	..	..	..	"
18. Robinson, Joseph .. .. .	..	..	..	"
19. Sinclair, P. C. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
20. Manderson, A. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
21. Bryce, Francis .. .. .	..	..	..	"
22. Miller, Alexander	4	0	0	..
23. Sounds, Margaret .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
24. Nimmo, John	51	2	0	..
25. Todd, Andrew	101	2	39	..
26. Birtles, Hannah	0	0	20·8	..
27. Christie, W. H. L. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
28. McIndoe, Isabella .. .. .	..	..	..	"
29. Dowie, Robert	18	0	0	..
30. Allan, R. S.	4	0	26	..
31. Stevenson, Andrew	17	1	30	..
32. O'Donnell, James	3	3	23	..
33. Shand, William	800	0	0	Also signed original petition to have area included in district.
34. Finnie, John	0	3	0	..
35. Ralston, Alexander .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
36. Garrett, John .. .. .	..	..	..	"
37. Gorinski, J. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
38. List, Sarah .. .. .	..	..	..	"
39. Sweetalie, John .. .. .	..	..	..	"
40. Christie, Jessie .. .. .	..	..	..	"
41. Allan, John H.	152	3	0	..
42. Todd, I. S. M.	99	1	8	..
43. Roxburgh, A. G.	0	2	0	..
44. Switalla, J., jun. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
45. Wroblensji, K. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
46. Stevenson, U.	17	0	0	..
47. Jaffray, J. H.	42	3	36	..
48. Pitfield, A.	0	1	32	..
49. Mehalske, John .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
50. O'Brien, Bridget .. .. .	..	..	..	"
51. Murdoch, Alexander .. .. .	..	..	..	"
52. Manderson, Elizabeth .. .. .	..	..	..	"
53. Christie, A. W. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
54. Hodges, Charles .. .. .	..	..	..	"
55. Stewart, Jessie .. .. .	..	..	..	"
56. Gamble, William .. .. .	..	..	..	"
57. Ings, Jane A.	5	0	23	..
58. Campbell, Robert	220	0	0	..
59. Prentice, J. R. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
60. Dixon, C. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
61. Irwin, Jane	0	0	21	..
62. Sneddon, Catherine .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
63. Millan (Milne ?), E.	102	3	0	..
64. McKay, Janet	1	2	16	..
65. Blair, James	49	2	2	..

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD—continued.

Number and Name.	Rateable Area.			Remarks.
	A.	R.	P.	
66. Pedlow, Rose	0	0	36	..
67. McHattie, William	1	0	0	..
68. Irving, Janet	0	1	0	..
69. Ralston, Jessie .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
70. Christie, Anne	0	2	0	..
71. List, J. P. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
72. List, H. G. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
73. Brocket, D. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
74. Cullen, Margaret	39	2	15	..
75. Christie, Thomas	0	3	0	..
76. Pedofski, J. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
77. Abercrombie, M. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
78. Wilkie, Peter F. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
79. Cullen, Robert	39	2	15	..
80. Strain, D.	5	2	0	..
81. Black, John .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
82. Taieri County Council .. .. .	..	..	..	"
83. Metaal, George .. .. .	..	..	..	"
84. Clark, G. B. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
85. Davidson, Ellen .. .. .	..	..	..	"
86. O'Brien, Denis	56	2	39.4	..
87. Korner, S.	15	3	5.6	..
88. Higgins, Charles	53	1	15	..
89. Ruthven, George	3	0	0	..
90. Doull, James	8	3	16	..
91. Guy, William	9	1	37	..
92. Findlay, Margaret	3	0	0	..
93. McConnochie, J.	0	0	38.4	..
94. Frew, Andrew	5	0	0	..
95. Stoddart, T.	0	1	36.8	..
96. Oliver, John	0	0	38.4	..
97. Broadley, G. D.	0	0	38.4	..
98. Bridges, S. M.	0	0	38.4	..
99. Meharry, Janet	0	0	33.6	..
100. Ellis, John	71	2	36	..
101. Thomson, George .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
102. Wylie, Robert .. .. .	..	..	..	"
103. McMillan, John	5	0	0	..
104. Scott, Jane	0	0	38.4	..
105. Smaillie, J.	4	0	0	..
106. Whitaker, D. H.	5	3	30.4	..
107. Columb, Mary	2	2	32	..
108. Jurie, Mary .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
109. Veitch, Isabella	5	3	30.4	..
110. MacLaurin, P. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
111. Kirk, Thomas .. .. .	..	..	..	"
112. Milner, Celia	20	0	0	..
113. Fraser, James	1	1	27	..
114. O'Brien, John	6	0	0	..
115. Butler, J. G.	7	1	24	..
116. Crawford, A. D.	6	0	0	..
117. Johnson, J. T.	6	3	1	..
118. Christie, T. B. .. .. .	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
119. Kovaleske, A. .. .. .	..	..	..	"
120. Imrie, John	55	1	35	..
121. O'Brien, Jane	8	3	8	..
122. Harty, Michael	15	3	32	..
123. McLelland, R.	23	1	11.2	..
124. Gall, R. F.	0	1	0	..
125. Pallan, F.	10	0	0	..
126. Callaghan, James	16	0	20	..
127. Mears, John	11	0	0	..
128. Barrat, M.	1	2	0	..
129. Gibson, Robert	90	0	0	..
130. Steele, James	0	0	38.4	..
131. Bringans, Alexander	0	0	38.4	..
132. Bridges, Lillias	0	1	0	..

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD—*continued.*

Number and Name.	Rateable Area.			Remarks.
	A.	R.	P.	
133. Wedderspoon, M.	0	0	38.4	..
134. Thompson, John	0	0	33.6	..
135. Bringans, Andrew	0	1	26.12	..
136. Edmiston, R.	0	1	36.8	..
137. Brown, Peter	5	1	13.6	..
138. Campbell, N.	6	0	0	..
139. McNab, Frederick	0	0	33.6	..
140. Irvine and S. evenson	76	0	16	..
141. Columb, F.	26	2	0	..
142. Harris, R. G.	0	1	0	..
143. Mosgiel Woollen Company	105	0	0	..
144. Gawn, W. R.	175	0	22.3	..
145. Meiklejohn, J.	14	0	0	..
146. Gibson, Hugh	111	0	0	..
147. Robertson, T.	8	2	37	..
148. Le Page, C.	9	0	0	..
149. Ruthven, G., jun.	7	2	19	..
150. Cuthill, R.	5	2	32	..
151. Wright, W. E.	6	0	0	..
152. Hart, A.	5	3	27	..
153. Ellis, R.	6	0	0	..
154. Haggen, James	26	1	0	..
155. Schriffer, John .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
156. Smolenski, Mrs. .. ..	..	..	..	"
157. Finnie, R. .. ..	..	..	..	"
158. Findlay, Charles	232	3	0	..
159. Smellie, A. Y.	144	1	21	..
160. Fawcett, M. .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
161. Murdoch, Peter	105	0	0	..
162. Cunningham, P.	101	0	0	..
163. Shand, Carolina M.	10	0	0	..
164. Martin, Henry	35	1	5	..
165. Gilmore, John	3	0	23	..
166. Leask, William	4	0	0	..
167. Fraser, E.	117	2	0	..
168. Harty, T. K.	12	0	1.4	..
169. Turnbull, Janet .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
170. Taieri Agricultural Society .. ..	..	..	..	"
171. Hughes, James	50	2	24	..
172. Sproule, Thomas	126	3	0	..
173. Brensell, C. .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
174. Todd, W. C.	7	0	32	..
175. Kirk, William	453	0	31	Also signed original petition to have area included in district.
176. Buchanan, James	117	3	37	..
177. Watson, Walter .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
178. Renton, James C., jun.	240	1	22	Owner signed original petition, and Renton has since signed petition in favour of district.
179. Grieve, W. E.	105	0	0	..
180. Stevens, J. S.	6	0	0	..
181. Findlay, James	255	1	34	..
182. Smolenski, John	1	0	7	..
183. Roxburgh, Allan .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
184. Irwin, A.	13	0	23	..
185. Fowler, John	237	1	34	..
186. Williamson, W.	101	1	32	..
187. Wright, A. E. .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
188. Stewart, Andrew	26	1	10.4	..
189. Wylie, William	3	3	0	..
190. Miller, Alexander .. ..	..	..	..	See No. 22 (signed previously).
191. Milne, Annabella	2	3	14	..
192. Brown, John	2	3	12	..
193. McMillan, E.	3	0	0	..
194. Fergus, Thomas	3	0	1.1	..
195. Smith, E. R.	46	2	38.3	..
196. Wylie, James	2	3	14	..

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD—continued.

Number and Name.	Rateable Area.			Remarks.
	A.	R.	P.	
197. Allanton Domain Board .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
198. Grant, William	251	2	16	..
199. Brensell, B. .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
200. Wright, F. J.	169	3	32	..
201. Kirkland, W.	536	3	6·4	Also signed original petition, and is now prepared to sign in favour of district.
202. McCulloch, A. .. ..	..	..	..	Not a ratepayer.
203. Campbell, Robert .. ..	..	..	..	See No. 58 (signed previously).
204. Blackie, Walter	216	1	21	Also signed original petition in favour of district.
205. Blackie, Barbara	3	2	0	..
Total	7,767	0	36·02	63 not ratepayers out of a total of 205.

Division into Classes.

Number and Name.	"A" Class.			"B" Class.			"C" Class.			"D" Class (not rateable).		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
1. Reid, D.	0	1	0
2. Gow, J.	255	0	0	365	1	28·4
3. Sutherland, D.	190	0	0	..	..	..
4. McKeagg, R.	72	3	13	..	..	..
5. E. T. Presbyterian Church	4	0	0	4	0	0
6. Craig, T.	102	0	0	..	..	..
7. Botting, R.	102	0	0	..	..	..
8. Moffatt, W.	5	2	0	..	..	..
9. Wilson, H.	0	1	0
10. Gawn, R.	51	0	0	..	..	..	155	0	0	50	0	4
11. Gawn, T. J.	151	3	24	..	..	..
12. Botting, A. J. (nil)
13. Cuddie, R.	6	3	10	6	3	10·8
14. McMillan, Hugh	3	2	0	3	2	0
15. O'Neill, Annie	7	0	0	..	..	..
16. Seguin, W.	0	0	32
17. Vincent, R.	0	0	32
18. Robinson, J.	0	0	28·6
19. Sinclair, P. C.	1	0	0
20. Manderson, A.	0	3	8
21. Bryce, F.	0	0	32·8
22. Miller, A.	4	0	0	..	..	..
23. Sounds, M. (nil)
24. Nimmo, J.	51	2	0	51	2	0
25. Todd, A.	101	2	39	..	..	..
26. Birtles, H.	0	0	20·8	..	..	..
27. Christie, W. H. L.	0	0	32
28. McIndoe, I.	0	1	7·6
29. Dowie, R.	18	0	0	18	0	0
30. Allen, R. S.	4	0	26	4	0	26
31. Stevenson, A.	17	1	30	17	1	30
32. O'Donnell, J.	1	1	27	..	..	..	2	1	36	5	2	35
33. Shand, W.	800	0	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	230	1	11
34. Finnie, J.	0	3	0	0	3	0
35. Ralston, A.	3	3	0
36. Garrett, J.	0	2	8
37. Gorinski, J.	0	2	0
38. List, S.	0	1	0
39. Sweetalie, J.	1	0	0
40. Christie, J.	0	1	0
41. Allan, J. H.	152	0	0	52	2	0
42. Todd, I. S. M.	50	0	0	..	..	..	49	1	8	..	..	..
43. Roxburgh, A. G.	0	2	0	..	..	..
44. Switali, J., jun.	0	1	0
45. Wroblenski, K.	0	2	0
46. Stevenson, U.	17	0	0	17	0	0

Division into Classes—continued.

Number and Name.	“A” Class.			“B” Class.			“C” Class.			“D” Class (not rateable).		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
47. Jaffray, J. H.							42	3	36	42	3	36
48. Pittfield, A.							0	1	32	1	0	0
49. Mehalske, J. (nil)												
50. O'Brien, B.										0	0	32
51. Murdoch, A.										0	0	32
52. Manderson, E.										1	0	31
53. Christie, A. W.										0	1	30
54. Hodges, C.										0	2	34-1
55. Stewart, J.										0	2	0
56. Gamble, W. (nil)												
57. Ings, J. A.							5	0	23	5	0	23
58. Campbell, R.	65	0	0				155	0	0			
59. Prentice, J. R. (nil)												
60. Dixon, C.										0	0	32
61. Irwin, J.							0	0	21			
62. Sneddon, C.										0	3	16-8
63. Milne, E.	50	0	0				52	3	0			
64. McKay, Janet							1	2	16			
65. Blair, J.	49	2	2									
66. Pedlow, R.							0	0	36			
67. McHattie, W.							1	0	0			
68. Irving, J.							0	1	0	0	1	0
69. Ralston, J.										0	2	6
70. Christie, Anne							0	2	0	0	2	0
71. List, J. P.										0	2	0
72. List, H. H.										0	2	0
73. Bocket, D.										6	1	0
74. Cullen, M.							39	2	15	39	2	15
75. Christie, T.				0	1	0	0	2	0	3	0	0
76. Pedofski, J.										0	2	0
77. Abercrombie, M.										0	2	0
78. Wilkie, P. F.										3	3	13
79. Cullen, R. F.							39	2	15	39	2	15
80. Strain, D.							5	2	0	5	2	0
81. Black, J.										0	1	24
82. Taieri County Council										0	3	0
83. Metaal, G.										0	2	0
84. Clark, G. B. (nil)												
85. Davidson, E. (nil)												
86. O'Brien, D.							56	2	39-4	11	0	0
87. Korner, S.							15	3	5-6			
88. Higgins, C.							53	1	15			
89. Ruthven, G.							3	0	0			
90. Doull, J.							8	3	16			
91. Guy, W.							9	1	37			
92. Findlay, M.							3	0	0			
93. McConnochie, J.							0	0	38-4			
94. Frew, A.							5	0	0			
95. Stoddart, T.							0	1	36-8			
96. Oliver, J.							0	0	38-4			
97. Broadley, G. D.							0	0	38-4			
98. Bridges, S. M.							0	0	38-4			
99. Meharry, J.							0	0	33-6			
100. Ellis, J.							71	2	36			
101. Thomson, G. (nil)												
102. Wylie, R. (nil)												
103. McMillan, J.				5	0	0						
104. Scott, J.							0	0	38-4			
105. Smaillie, J.							4	0	0			
106. Whitaker, D. H.							5	3	30-4			
107. Columb, M.							2	2	32			
108. Jurie, M. (nil)												
109. Veitch, I.							5	3	30-4			
110. Maclaurin, P. (nil)												
111. Kirk, T.										158	2	3
112. Milner, C.							20	0	0	47	2	0

Division into Classes—continued.

Number and Name.	"A" Class.			"B" Class.			"C" Class.			"D" Class (not rateable).		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
113. Fraser, J.							1	1	27			
114. O'Brien, J.							6	0	0			
115. Butler, J. G.							7	1	24			
116. Crawford, A. D.							6	0	0			
117. Johnson, J. T.							6	3	1			
118. Christie, T. B.										0	2	0
119. Kovalske, A.										0	1	0
120. Imrie, J.							55	1	35			
121. O'Brien, Jane							8	3	8			
122. Harty, M.							15	3	32	21	1	32
123. McLelland, R.							23	1	11.2			
124. Gall, R. F.							0	1	0			
125. Pullan, F.							10	0	0			
126. Callaghan, J.							16	0	20			
127. Mears, J.							11	0	0			
128. Gibson, R.							90	0	0	28	1	20.4
129. Barratt, M.							1	2	0			
130. Steele, J.							0	0	38.4			
131. Bringans, A.							0	0	38.4			
132. Bridges, L.							0	1	0			
133. Wedderspoon, M.							0	0	38.4			
134. Thompson, J.							0	0	33.6			
135. Bringans, A.							0	1	26.12			
136. Edmiston, R.							0	1	36.8			
137. Brown, P.							5	1	13.6			
138. Campbell, N.							6	0	0			
139. McNab, F.							0	0	33.6			
140. Irvine and Stevenson							76	0	16			
141. Columb, F.							26	2	0			
142. Harris, R. G.							0	1	0			
143. Mosgiel Woollen Company							105	0	0			
144. Gawn, W. R.							175	0	22.3			
145. Meiklejohn, J.							14	0	0	53	0	0
146. Gibson, H.							111	0	0			
147. Robertson, T.							8	2	37			
148. Le Page, C.							9	0	0			
149. Ruthven, G., jun.							7	2	19			
150. Cuthill, R.							5	2	32			
151. Wright, W. E.							6	0	0			
152. Hart, A.							5	3	27			
153. Ellis, R.							6	0	0			
154. Hagen, J.							26	1	0			
155. Schriffer, J.										0	2	0
156. Smolenski, Mrs.										0	3	11
157. Finnie, R. (nil)												
158. Findlay, C.							232	3	0			
159. Smellie, A. Y.							144	1	21			
160. Murdock, P.							105	0	0			
161. Fawcett, M. (nil)												
162. Cunningham, P.	101	0	0									
163. Shand, C. M.				3	0	0	7	0	0			
164. Martin, H.				35	1	5						
165. Gilmore, J.	3	0	23									
166. Leask, W.							4	0	0			
167. Fraser, E.							117	2	0			
168. Harty, T. K.				12	0	1.4						
169. Turnbull, J.										0	1	0
170. Taieri Agricultural Society										4	2	0
171. Hughes, J.	50	2	24									
172. Sproule, T.	126	3	0									
173. Brenseli, C.										49	1	28
174. Todd, W. C.							7	0	32			
175. Kirk, W.	177	2	31	52	2	0	223	0	0	50	2	22
176. Buchanan, J.	20	0	0				97	3	37			
177. Watson, W. (nil)												
178. Renton, J. C.	188	0	0	52	1	22						

Division into Classes—continued.

Number and Name.			“A” Class.			“B” Class.			“C” Class.			“D” Class (not rateable).		
			A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
179.	Grieve, W. E.	.. ..	..			..			105	0	0	..		
180.	Stevens, J. S.	.. ..	..			..			6	0	0	..		
181.	Findlay, J.	.. ..	..			..			255	1	34	..		
182.	Smolenski, J.	.. ..	..			..			1	0	7	0	2	0
183.	Roxburgh, A.	.. ..	..			..			..			3	3	0
184.	Irwin, A. ..	.. ..	..			..			13	0	23	13	0	23
185.	Fowler, J.	.. ..	79	3	34	..			157	2	0	..		
186.	Williamson, W.	.. ..	..			..			101	1	32	..		
187.	Wright, A. E. (nil)	.. ..	..			..			..			..
188.	Stewart, A.	.. ..	26	1	10-4	..			..			..
189.	Wylie, W.	.. ..	..			..			3	3	0	..		
190.	Miller, A. (see 22)	.. ..	..			..			..			..
191.	Milne, A. ..	.. ..	2	3	14	..			..			..
192.	Brown, J. ..	.. ..	..			..			2	3	12	..		
193.	McMillan, E.	.. ..	..			..			3	0	0	..		
194.	Fergus, T.	.. ..	..			3	0	1-1	..			..
195.	Smith, E. R.	.. ..	12	0	0	34	2	38-3	..			..
196.	Wylie, J. ..	.. ..	2	3	14	..			..			..
197.	Allanton Domain Board	.. ..	..			..			..			7	0	33
198.	Grant, W.	.. ..	..			..			251	2	16	..		
199.	Brensell, B. (nil)	.. ..	..			..			..			..
200.	Wright, F. J.	.. ..	..			..			169	3	32	..		
201.	Kirkland, W.	.. ..	484	1	6-4	..			52	2	0	..		
202.	McCulloch, A.	.. ..	..			..			..			0	0	32
203.	Campbell, R. (see 58)	.. ..	..			..			..			..
204.	Blackie, W.	.. ..	68	2	21	..			147	3	0	..		
205.	Blackie, W.	.. ..	..			..			3	2	0	..		
			2,411	0	6-8	198	0	27-8	5,158	0	1-42	1,445	1	22-6

Ratepayers who have not signed Petition.

Number and Name.		Area.		Number and Name.		Area.	
		A.	R. P.			A.	R. P.
1.	Bridges, A. J. ..	0	0 33-6	28.	Wedderspoon, J. ..	1	0 32
2.	Bringans, Alexander ..	5	0 38-4	29.	Wright, Susan ..	103	1 5
3.	Cameron, D. ..	104	3 4	30.	Anderson, Maria ..	179	0 24
4.	Campbell, D. ..	0	0 38-4	31.	Carmichael, J. ..	250	0 0
5.	Carncross, W. ..	2	2 36-6	32.	Davidson, Robert ..	52	2 0
6.	Charters, W. ..	456	3 27	33.	Douglas, A. P. ..	234	3 26
7.	Ellis, E. ..	36	0 0	34.	Gamble, Hugh ..	155	2 37
8.	Fraser, James ..	7	0 22	35.	Inglis, R. G. ..	109	2 0
9.	Gamble, J. ..	174	3 4	36.	Johnston, F. ..	0	1 0
10.	Gibson, E. H. ..	0	1 26-12	37.	Marshall, M. B. ..	0	2 31-8
11.	Smith, A. G. ..	46	0 5-6	38.	Morton, Andrew ..	13	1 0
12.	Hamilton, A. ..	3	1 9	39.	Murray, Alexander ..	420	0 0
13.	Henderson, J. ..	4	0 36-8	40.	Newman, Charles ..	0	3 13
14.	Taylor, W. G. ..	25	2 10-6	41.	Steadman, James ..	0	1 0
15.	Imrie, Marion ..	0	2 31	42.	Stevens, F. J. ..	1	3 0
16.	Kirk, Janet ..	0	1 38-8	43.	Stuart, Alexander ..	0	1 0
17.	Kirkwood, Mary A. ..	0	1 36-8	44.	Sutherland, Nancy ..	0	2 0
18.	Mosgiel Borough Council ..	2	1 9	45.	Velenski, Anton ..	1	1 0
19.	Otago Education Board ..	14	0 0	46.	Wilson, James ..	20	0 32
20.	Shand, D. B. ..	586	1 30	47.	Shand, D. B. ..	70	0 0
21.	Smith, G. ..	0	1 27-2				
22.	Sonntag, T. R. ..	17	1 17			3,278	1 8-52
23.	Sounness, Margaret ..	0	0 29				
24.	Stevenson, Alexander ..	0	2 34				
25.	Sutherland, Janet ..	20	0 0				
26.	T. and P. Milk Company ..	7	1 36-8				
27.	Tweed, M. ..	144	2 26				

Areas (classified) held by Non-petitioners.

Number and Name.	"A" Class.			"B" Class.			"C" Class.			"D" Class.		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
1. Bridges, A. J.	0	0	33.6	..	..	..
2. Bringans, A.	5	0	38.4	..	..	..	..	..
3. Cameron, D.	104	3	4	..	..	..	..	..	..
4. Campbell, D.	0	0	38.4	..	..	..
5. Carncross, W.	2	2	36.6	..	..	..
6. Charters, W.	352	0	27	..	104	3	0	..	..
7. Ellis, E.	36	0	0	..	..	..
8. Fraser, J.	7	0	22	..	..	..
9. Gamble, J.	174	3	4	..	..	..	..	..	..
10. Gibson, E. H.	0	1	26.12	..	..	..
11. Smith, A. G.	46	0	5.6	..	..	..	..	..	..
12. Hamilton, A.	3	1	9	..	..	..	..	..	..
13. Henderson, J.	4	0	36.8	..	..	..
14. Taylor, W. G.	25	2	10.6	..	..	..
15. Imrie, M.	0	2	31	..	..	..
16. Kirk, J.	0	1	38.8	..	..	..
17. Kirkwood, M. A.	0	1	36.8	..	..	..
18. Mosgiel Borough Council	2	1	9	..	..	..	..	..	..
19. Otago Education Board	4	0	0	10	0	0	..	..
20. Shand, D. T.	483	2	20	102	3	10	..	..	..
21. Smith, G.	0	1	27.2	..	..	..
22. Sonntag, T. R.	17	1	17	..	..	..	..	..	..
23. Sounness, M.	0	0	29	..	..	..
24. Stevenson, A.	0	2	34	..	..	..
25. Sutherland, J.	20	0	0	..	..	..
26. T. and P. Milk Company	7	1	36.8	..	..	..
27. Tweed, M.	70	0	0	39	2	26	35	0	0
28. Wedderspoon, J.	1	0	32	..	..	..
29. Wright, S.	60	0	0	43	1	5	..	..
30. Anderson, M.	179	0	24	..	..	..	..	..	..
31. Carmichael, J.	250	0	0	..	..	..	7	3	38
32. Davidson, R.	52	2	0	..	..	..
33. Douglas, A. P.	234	3	26	..	..	..	..	..	..
34. Gamble, H.	55	2	37	..	100	0	0	..	..
35. Inglis, R. G.	109	2	0	..	..	..	..	..	..
36. Johnston, F.	0	1	0	1	3	0
37. Marshall, M. B.	0	2	31.8	..	..	..
38. Morton, A.	13	1	0	13	0	0
39. Murray, A.	420	0	0	..	..	..	..	..	..
40. Newman, C.	0	2	0	0	1	13	0	1
41. Steadman, J.	0	1	0	..	..	2	0	0
42. Stevens, F. J.	1	3	0	1	0	0
43. Stuart, A.	0	1	0	..	..	0	1	0
44. Sutherland, N.	0	2	0	..	..	..
45. Velenski, A.	1	1	0	2	2	0
46. Wilson, J. H.	20	0	32	20	0	32
47. Shand, D. T.	70	0	0	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	2,573	2	22.6	212	2	34.4	491	3	31.52
										48	3	32

Summary of Classification of Rateable Land.

"A" Class.—Land receiving or supposed to receive immediate and direct benefit.

"B" Class.—Land receiving or supposed to receive less direct benefit.

"C" Class.—Land receiving only an indirect benefit.

—	"A" Class.			"B" Class.			"C" Class.			Total.		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
Silverstream	719	2	32.4	304	3	0.2	4,316	3	4.14			
Owhiro	4,264	3	37	106	0	22	1,333	0	28.8			
	4,984	2	29.4	410	3	22.2	5,649	3	32.94	11,045	2	4.54
Area of rateable land held by petitioners	2,411	0	6.8	198	0	27.8	5,158	0	1.42	7,767	0	36.02
Area of rateable land held by non-petitioners	2,573	2	22.6	212	2	34.4	491	3	31.52	3,278	1	8.52
										11,045	2	4.54

Area of rateable land held by those ratepayers who signed the petition which resulted in the Silverstream and Owhiro Subdivisions being included in the drainage district, and who have also signed the petition to have the district severed.

Name.	"A" Class.			"B" Class.			"C" Class.			Total.		
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
Shand, W.	800	0	0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kirk, W.	177	2	31	52	2	0	223	0	0	..	..	..
Renton, J. C.	188	0	0	52	1	22	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kirkland, W.	484	1	6.4	..	..	..	52	2	0	..	..	..
Blackie, W.	68	2	21	..	..	..	147	3	0	..	..	..
	1,718	2	18.4	104	3	22	423	1	0	2,246	3	0.4

If this area be deducted from the petitioners and added to the non-petitioners, the position will be as follows. (This is a fair deduction, as the land referred to is in as bad if not a worse state than at date of petition.)

	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
Petitioners	7,767	0	36.02	..	..	..
Less above	2,246	3	0.4	..	..	..
				5,520	1	35.62
Non-petitioners	3,278	1	8.52	..	..	..
	2,246	3	0.4	..	..	..
				5,525	0	8.92
				11,045	2	4.54

I.e., a balance in favour of non-petitioners.

APPENDIX B.

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD.—STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 6TH DECEMBER, 1909.

Loan Account.								£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
East Balance, 31st March, 1909 .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	176	18	8	..	..	..
Expenditure to date .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,442	7	9	1,619	6	5
West Balance, 31st March, 1909 .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,895	13	11	..	..	..
Expenditure .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,215	19	2	6,111	13	1
Balance in National Bank .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,280	10	0
											10,011	9	6
General Account.								£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
East Balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	123	0	7	..	..	..
Expenditure .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	181	13	8	..	..	..
								304	14	3	..	..	..
Rates collected .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	208	16	7	..	..	..
Debit balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	95	17	8	..	..	..
West Balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	101	4	11	..	..	..
Expenditure .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,055	8	11	..	..	..
								1,156	13	10	..	..	..
Less rates collected .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	£428	0	6	..	..	..
„ rents collected .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	0	429	4	6
Debit balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	727	9	4	..	..	..
Interest Account.								£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
East Balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	81	5	1	..	..	..
Rates collected .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	106	5	0	..	..	..
West Balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	266	7	4	..	..	..
Rates collected .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	295	7	2	..	..	..
								749	4	7	..	..	..
Interest to 30th June, 1909 (to be adjusted) .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	250	0	0	..	..	..
Credit balance .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	499	4	7	..	..	..

OTOKIA DRAINAGE BOARD DISTRICT.

<i>General Account.</i>				<i>Interest Account.</i>			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	193	13 8	Balance ..	..	27	19 1
Rates collected ..	..	305	6 8	Rates collected ..	..	23	7 1
		499	0 4			51	8 2
Disbursements ..	..	474	13 9	Interest to 31st July, 1909..	..	21	5 0
Credit balance ..	..	24	6 7	Credit balance ..	..	30	3 2

BERWICK DRAINAGE BOARD DISTRICT.

<i>General Account.</i>							
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	7	12 10				
Expenditure ..	..	1	10 0				
Credit balance ..	..	6	2 10				

<i>No. 1 Interest Account.</i>				<i>No. 2 Interest Account.</i>			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	40	17 1	Balance ..	..	11	16 6
Rates collected ..	..	15	14 9	Rates ..	..	8	19 11
		56	11 10			20	16 5
Interest ..	..	9	18 1	Interest ..	..	5	6 8
Credit balance ..	..	46	13 9	Credit balance ..	..	15	9 9

WEST TAIERI RIVER BOARD DISTRICT.

<i>General Account.</i>				<i>Interest Account.</i>			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	27	12 5	Balance ..	..	14	11 0
Expenditure ..	..	1	10 0	Interest ..	..	22	12 3
Credit balance ..	..	26	2 5			37	3 3
				Rates collected ..	..	32	4 4
				Debit balance ..	..	4	18 11

HENLEY RIVER BOARD DISTRICT.

<i>General Account.</i>							
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	35	16 0				
Expenditure ..	..	2	10 0				
		38	6 0				
Rates ..	..	27	1 6				
Debit balance ..	..	11	4 6				

<i>Interest Account.</i>				<i>Trust Account.</i>			
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	121	12 5	Balance ..	..	153	0 8
Rates ..	..	52	12 11	Interest ..	..	59	2 6
		174	5 4	Rates refunded ..	..	0	8 7
Interest ..	£55	18 0				212	11 9
Rates refunded ..	0	3 0		Rates collected ..	..	163	16 9
		56	1 0	Debit balance ..	..	48	15 0
Credit balance ..	..	118	4 4				

WEST TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD DISTRICT.

<i>General Account.</i>							
		£	s. d.			£	s. d.
Balance ..	..	13	9 10				
Rates ..	..	32	15 3				
		46	5 1				
Expenditure ..	..	8	2 8				
Credit balance ..	..	38	2 5				

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD.

Expenditure Loan Account.

						East.			West.		
						£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Balances, 31st March, 1909	..	..	..	..	..	176	18	8	4,895	13	11
Printing, advertising and stationery	..	..	..	..	..	9	11	10	16	16	1
Classification expenses	..	..	..	..	..	114	3	2	95	15	2
Flood damages	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	31	3	9
Engineer, salary	..	..	..	..	..	140	12	6	171	17	6
" " staff	..	..	..	..	..	99	17	4	109	9	8
Travelling-expenses, hire, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	6	9	9	31	19	10
Henley contract	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	333	6	8
Wages, cleaning drains, stream, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	453	9	3	..	..	..
Tools	..	..	..	..	..	36	11	4	..	..	..
Surveying (Couston and Hall)	..	..	..	..	..	102	4	6	..	..	..
Advertising contracts	..	..	..	..	..	62	0	9	..	..	..
Silverstream contract (Stephen's)	..	..	..	..	..	203	18	1	..	..	..
Law-costs	..	..	..	..	..	1	15	2	3	10	4
Offices, on account	..	..	..	..	..	207	4	4	414	8	8
Sundries	..	..	..	..	..	4	9	9	7	11	6
						<hr/>			<hr/>		
						1,619	6	5	6,111	13	1
West	..	..	..	..	..	6,111	13	1			
Balance	..	..	..	..	..	2,280	10	0			
						<hr/>			<hr/>		
						£10,011	9	6			

General Account.

Accident insurance	..	..	..	..	..	9	16	8	19	13	3
Sundries	..	..	..	..	..	31	3	4	62	6	8
Election expenses	..	..	..	..	..	12	12	8	25	5	0
Law	..	..	..	..	..	5	2	6	10	4	10
Repairs and maintenance	..	..	..	..	..	1	7	6	519	12	6
Pumping (coal, oil, wages, and carting)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	203	9	1
Office furniture	..	..	..	..	..	13	8	9	26	17	6
Printing, advertising, and stationery	..	..	..	..	..	23	4	9	51	13	7
Salaries	..	..	..	..	..	50	0	0	100	0	0
Expenses, Premier's visit	..	..	..	..	..	19	2	0	..	..	..
Erection of pump at Otokia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	10	6
Members' fees	..	..	..	..	..	15	8	0	30	16	0
Sundries	..	..	..	..	..	0	7	6	..	..	..
Balances, 31st March, 1909	..	..	..	..	..	123	0	7	101	4	11
						<hr/>			<hr/>		
Rates collected (rent, West, £1 4s.)	..	..	..	..	..	304	14	3	1,156	13	10
	..	..	..	..	..	208	16	7	429	4	6
Debit balances at date	..	..	..	..	..	95	17	8	727	9	4

7th December, 1909.

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD.

Memo. of Rates and Amounts collected to 7th December, 1909.

					Year ending	Rate.	Amount.	Collected.
							£ s. d.	£ s. d.
<i>Taieri Drainage District.</i>								
Silverstream	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	104 2 2	68 16 10
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	104 2 2	79 6 7
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	52 6 2	3 16 4
Owhiro	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	167 0 0	118 13 3
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	167 0 0	148 9 10
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	83 14 2	24 5 5
West Taieri	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	160 12 11	153 12 9
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	160 12 11	156 11 9
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	81 11 1	35 0 8
Momona	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	187 6 10	176 14 9
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	187 6 10	183 6 2
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	93 13 11	35 1 1
Lee Creek	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	198 5 3	156 14 6
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	198 5 3	184 6 0
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	97 10 5	6 11 4
Lakes	..	..	..	..	1909	Special	190 3 7	72 16 2
"	..	..	..	..	1909	General	190 3 7	88 16 7
"	..	..	..	..	1910	"	95 3 6	8 11 1
<i>West Taieri River Board District.</i>								
Special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	46 17 9	45 11 3
"	..	..	..	..	1910	..	47 4 10	20 7 7
<i>Otokia Drainage Board District.</i>								
General	..	..	..	..	1909	..	449 16 2	422 6 1
Special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	42 19 9	40 5 0
General	..	..	..	..	1910	..	224 19 6	42 8 2
Special	..	..	..	..	1910	..	42 16 8	7 8 0
<i>Henley River Board District.</i>								
General	..	..	..	..	1909	..	43 7 10	35 19 1
Special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	130 4 0	102 13 0
Trust loan	..	..	..	..	1909	..	372 13 1	307 6 5
Special	..	..	..	..	1910	..	124 7 6	13 1 1
Trust loan	..	..	..	..	1910	..	355 10 0	37 6 4
<i>Berwick Drainage Board District.</i>								
No. 1 special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	28 10 9	28 19 5
No. 2	..	..	..	..	1909	..	16 6 1	16 11 1
No. 1	..	..	..	..	1910	..	28 10 11	2 9 6
No. 2	..	..	..	..	1910	..	16 6 3	1 8 5
<i>West Taieri Drainage Board District.</i>								
General	..	..	..	..	1909	..	59 6 2	57 2 1
No. 1 special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	40 3 6	38 5 11
No. 2	..	..	..	..	1909	..	5 1 7	5 0 5
No. 3	..	..	..	..	1909	..	7 19 8	7 12 2
No. 4	..	..	..	..	1909	..	16 19 2	16 15 3
No. 1	..	..	..	..	1910	..	40 3 6	14 18 0
No. 2	..	..	..	..	1910	..	5 1 7	3 7 1
No. 3	..	..	..	..	1910	..	8 0 8	2 19 8
No. 4	..	..	..	..	1910	..	16 19 2	11 3 11
<i>Maungatua Drainage Board District.</i>								
General	..	..	..	..	1909	..	103 18 2	106 18 6
Special	..	..	..	..	1909	..	53 8 7	53 2 6
Debenture	..	..	..	..	1909	..	62 6 9	62 9 8
General	..	..	..	..	1910	..	102 17 6	31 17 9
Special	..	..	..	..	1910	..	53 10 0	16 18 9
Debenture	..	..	..	..	1910	..	61 14 4	19 2 7

NOTE.—All amounts collected for 1909 include payments for 10 per cent. penalty.

TAIERI DRAINAGE BOARD.
Loans owing by Dissolved Boards.

	£	s.	d.				Rated over	Interest, per Cent.
Henley River Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	1,000	0	0	..	..	..	Whole district ..	3½
No. 2 „	1,020	18	10	..	..	..	„ ..	3½
No. 3 „	668	12	0	..	..	..	„ ..	3½
No. 4 „	504	18	7	..	..	..	„ ..	3½
Special loan (£200 payable annually) ..	2,320	0	0	..	..	..	„ ..	5½
West Taieri River Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	501	18	4	..	..	..	Whole district ..	4½
No. 2 „	503	0	3	..	..	..	„ ..	4½
Otokia Drainage Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	509	5	1	..	..	..	Whole district ..	4½
No. 2 „	203	0	0	..	..	..	„ ..	3½
No. 3 „	356	16	6	..	..	..	„ ..	3½
West Taieri Drainage Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	812	6	8	..	..	..	Whole district ..	3½
No. 2 „	103	8	5	..	..	..	West Subdivision	4
No. 3 „	150	0	0	..	..	..	Whole district ..	4
No. 4 „	302	6	0	..	..	..	West Subdivision	4
Berwick Drainage Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	566	7	9	..	..	..	Whole district ..	3½
No. 2 „	304	15	1	..	..	..	Whole district ..	3½
Maungatua Drainage Board,—								
No. 1 Government loan of	817	10	3	..	..	..	Whole district ..	3½
No. 2 „	515	14	6	..	..	..	East Subdivision	4
No. 3 „	103	13	8	..	..	..	„	4
Debenture loan (£50 pay- able annually) ..	300	0	0	..	..	..	„	3
<hr/>								
	£11,564	11	11					

MEMO.—Henley River Board Special Loan : £200 has been paid off for year 1908.
Maungatua Debenture Loan : £100 has been paid off, and £50 for year 1908 is now payable.
Taieri Drainage Board, £20,000 (£10,000 issued).

Approximate cost of paper.—Preparation, not given ; printing (1,400 copies), £41 17s. 6d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1909.

Price 1s. 3d.]

