

39. How long has your lease to run?—About a year.

40. *Mr. Mueller.*] When you took up that land, could you, after effecting your improvements, earn your livelihood on it?—Yes; when we got the land laid down well in grass we had about £500 a year clear profit out of the place—that is, with the sale of horses and the milking of the cows.

41. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] Did you milk your cows for the dairy?—No.

42. *The Chairman.*] Had you a milk-run?—Yes.

43. *Mr. Mueller.*] Had you a partner?—Yes.

44. You and your partner had £500 a year between you?—Yes.

45. Now that has all gone?—Yes; we had to sell the cows about three years ago.

46. And you have leased this other piece of land?—The place we are on is no good, and we are in the habit of having a beast or two for household purposes, and I leased this block alongside to have some place to put a cow or horse on. There is only a few acres of the place I live on that is any good. There is only about 10 acres any good for grazing purposes.

47. *Mr. Mitchelson.*] Does the £500 include wages, or is it exclusive of the wages of yourself and partner?—We used to put that away every year, and pay our expenses, wear-and-tear, &c.

48. But no wages?—No.

49. What capital had you when you took up the land?—We were in business before we got this place. We had another block not far from there, and we just changed from there to the other place. We had the stock and business when we got the land.

50. You had stock, but no capital?—We only had our cattle, horses, wagons, &c. We might have had £100 or £200, but nothing to speak about.

51. *Mr. Mueller.*] In this lease of the Piraurahi Block did you have a purchasing clause?—No.

52. Or a right of renewal?—No.

53. What is your position now compared with what it was, say, eight years ago?—I am in pretty poor circumstances now. At that time I was doing well.

54. *The Chairman.*] What rent were you paying?—Fifty pounds a year.

55. *Mr. Mueller.*] Your present financial position has been caused by what?—By the silt.

56. You had a milk-run?—Yes, Paeroa and Karangahake.

57. Were there any others, or many others, doing the same thing, or were you doing the most of that business?—We were doing the bulk of it, but there were other people selling milk as well as ourselves.

58. *Mr. Clendon.*] From this Piraurahi Block you have a big outfall drain?—Yes.

59. What is the size of the drain—10 ft. deep, say, from the river up to your place?—About 30 ft. wide and about 20 ft. deep.

60. Is not the bank very high at the river there?—Yes.

61. This outfall drain runs alongside of your property?—Yes.

62. What is the average width of the outfall drain?—A little over 20 ft.

63. There are one or two paddocks on which there is very little silt?—A little.

64. Do you mean to say that there is any silt upon the two properties lying next to the river adjoining this drain?

*The Chairman.* We have seen it ourselves, and we are satisfied there is.

65. *Mr. Clendon.*] There were flood-gates upon this drain?—There was a kind of one.

66. And so long as those flood-gates were maintained you had no trouble with the silt?—I have not seen them maintained for a long time.

67. To come right to the point, is it not a fact that this silt came up this drain and was deposited upon your land by overflow from the drain?—Yes, that is quite right.

68. Are you aware that in the year 1896 or 1897 people were rescued in a boat from this property that you now occupy: the land was submerged by flood about 1896?—No, I think you are mistaken this time. I always keep a boat there, but it has not been in use lately.

69. You carry people on your back?—Yes, because the flood comes pretty quick.

70. This land of yours, I think, is rough land overgrown with tea-tree and rushes for the most part?—Yes.

71. The bulk of it, I think, is overgrown with rushes, tea-tree, and stumps?—No, you are stretching it a bit.

72. It is the remains of a kahikatea swamp?—Yes.

73. Stumps are visible over a great portion of it?—Yes.

74. And there are rushes and stumps on it?—Yes, but a lot have been taken out, too.

75. What proportion is covered with tea-tree and rushes which these milking-cows produced so much milk upon?—I suppose there were about 100 acres.

76. When did you last take a crop off this property, and what was the area of the land you cropped?—About 20 acres, and that was about seven years ago.

77. A crop that you could carry away on your back?—No.

78. What was it?—Oats. It ran from 3 to 4 tons to the acre.

79. *The Chairman.*] What part was cropped?—Where the silt is lying.

80. Close to the house?—It ran to within 3 or 4 chains of the house.

81. Next to the road, or next to the drain, or where?—It adjoined the big drain.

82. *Mr. Flatman.*] How did you ascertain there were 4 tons to the acre: Is it an estimate?—We sold the oats: we chaffed it. We knew roughly about how many acres there were, and we estimated the crop at about 3 or 4 tons to the acre. It was a very heavy crop.

83. *The Chairman.*] Do you remember what you got for the oats?—I have the information in my books at home.

84. *Mr. Clendon.*] To whom did you sell it?—Tierney, at Waihi.

85. How much did you sell to him?—I do not know. I also sold some oats to another stable-keeper.