the Longburn Freezing-works discharge into the creek and make it a long way worse. The idea seems to have got abroad, sir, that we are asking for something quite new in the Bill. I would point out to the Committee that the milling industry has been going on for twenty-five years now, and we never had any trouble of this sort until a litigious person—who suffered no loss whatever, according to the Chief Justice's decision—takes action against us and tries to cripple an industry such as the flax-milling industry. A few years ago there might have been cause for complaint, but with the passage of time the method of flax-milling has been considerably improved. I am not saying anything with regard to the commercial value of the waste product from the flax-mill; but the methods now adopted in manufacture are such that practically the whole of the solids are kept out of the river. What gets back into the river is the moisture from the flax and the gum, or what we call vegetation—small pieces about the size of your finger-nail, which it would be impossible to catch. The methods adopted in all the mills are these: There is a vegetation-wheel, with spikes on it, revolving slowly, and it catches all the fibre which goes down the drain, and deposits it on a table. The other method is to have a double grating, which necessitates a man being constantly there to catch the leaves and stack them in a heap. I might say that the commercial value of that waste now is £9 a ton. Even if it were nothing, however, the same method would be adopted to save the stuff, as it would be of very great use to the flax-millers for use as ballast in their tram-lines. It has been stated that the river-bed of the Oroua River has risen considerably owing to the flax-refuse being thrown into the river. I can produce evidence to show that the bed of this river has risen higher above the flax-mills than below the mills. That is on record in the case that was heard. If necessary I can produce that evidence. The acclimatization societies, I believe, are bringing evidence against this Bill. I can prove that whitebait—which are, I suppose, the most delicate fish—thrive—in fact, are caught most plentifully every season—below my mills. I have also seen trout of an average weight of from 4 lb. to 5 lb. caught below my mills. I can call evidence in support of what I say from a most ardent fisherman—one who has been in the district for a number of years, and has no interest whatever in the flax-milling industry. Carp also abound in the Manawatu River, and are caught after flood below the flax-mills.

6. *Mr. Buick.*] You mentioned that foul water was proved to come out of the Mangaone Stream, which is above any flax-mills?—Yes.

7. I suppose your idea was to prove that there is foul water going into the Manawatu irrespective of the flax-mills?—Yes.

8. Was it the custom at one time with the flax-mills to put the fibre or the solids into the water?—Yes. A few years ago they used to put not only the short slips into the river, but the tow too. Everything was thrown into the river a few years ago, and there was cause for complaint then.

9. Are you bringing any evidence to show that the mere liquid is not doing any practical damage to the water for drinking purposes for stock?—Yes.

10. *Mr. Buxton.*] You have noticed, I think you said, that the bed of the river has risen quite as much above the mills as below them?—In the recent case at Palmerston it was proved by Mr. Armstrong, the engineer there, that the bed of the Oroua River has risen more at Awahuri, above all the mills, than at Oroua Bridge, which is below.

11. You said that fish were caught below the mills?—Yes.

12. Would you say they were more plentiful below the mills than above?—It does not seem to affect them in any way whatever. My mills are the top mills on the Manawatu River, and fish are caught right up to them: how much further I do not know. They are caught at all the other mills.

13. *Mr. Sykes.*] You say that the waste solids in connection with every flax-mill now in operation are eliminated?—They are all being taken out now.

14. And this has been the practice for some time?—Yes, for some years now—within, I suppose, the last three or four years. Before that everything was thrown into the river.

15. I presume there are trout in the Oroua River?—I have never heard of trout in that river. In the Manawatu there are trout.

16. *The Chairman.*] You said, as to the Mangaone Creek, that analysis proved that the water was unfit for drinking purposes?—Yes.

17. Yet you tell us that despite this and further pollution—or supposed pollution—from flax-refuse lower down, whitebait and other fish flourish?—Yes, we catch them every season.

18. Does not the analysis showing the quality of the water appear to conflict with your statement as to the fish?—No, I think not, because the volume of water that comes down the Manawatu is so enormous when compared with the very small quantity that comes from the creek. The adulteration of the small creek is so infinitesimal that it would not have the slightest effect when it got to the river.

19. Did the cause of action by Pearce not arise as to the Oroua River and not the Manawatu?—Yes.

20. Were any fish caught in the Oroua?—No; I have never heard of fish caught in the Oroua. I was speaking of the Manawatu.

21. Might there not be great damage caused in the Oroua River because of the comparatively small quantity of water, and yet no damage in the Manawatu—as evidenced by the fish—with a great quantity of water?—I cannot answer whether fish have been caught in the Oroua, but I am calling a witness who mills on the Oroua, and will ask him whether he catches whitebait there.

22. You said, I think, that it was impossible to arrest the small bits of flax-gum?—Under the present methods every possible expedient is being used to keep out all the solids.

23. Do you say now that it is impossible under any method?—As far as I know the best methods are being adopted at all the flax-mills for keeping the solids out.