

and on several occasions have seen two or three sheep. We know that in flood-time there are hundreds of sheep lost there.

5. You said that you have had horses and cattle and sheep depasturing on your property: this is below the mill?—Both above and below.

6. They show no ill effects?—They have done very well indeed—in fact, Mr. Akers, who owns about twelve miles of river frontage, claims that he fattens sheep and stock better on the lower country.

7. These proposed dams for the collection of this gum would be really detrimental to the condition of the river?—I feel confident they would. We all agree that it would only putrefy the water. It would ooze through the vegetation, and anything that is stagnant must be worse than if it is sent straight out to the sea.

8. *Mr. Broad.*] You mill in both the Manawatu and Rangitikei districts?—Yes.

9. When you were milling in the Rangitikei will you tell the Committee what happened when stock were drinking the water?—I was milling on a small stream. There would be only about 200 gallons in the summer-time, and we used to run all the refuse into the stream, and then clear it out periodically. It had about three miles to go to the sea. There was a lot of stock there, and I have frequently seen them drink this water. Yet there was other clean water on the property. The manager of the station said that he had never had any ill effects whatever, and he never even asked us to stop the discharge into the stream. It went away fresh to the sea. It had no time to putrefy.

10. *Mr. Pearce.*] Is it not a fact that until just lately every owner on the Manawatu River was interested in the flax, and almost every owner is now?—No, not all the owners.

11. Practically all?—Some of them must be, because that is where the flax grows.

12. Practically all on one side of the river, and almost all on the other, are interested in flax, are they not?—On the left-hand side of the river going to Wellington there are mostly flax-areas; but on the right-hand side there is a lot of farming-land.

13. Are not those farmers producers of flax, and flax-millers?—Some of them are not producers of flax.

14. With reference to your putting the stuff at the Miranui mill into a dam and running the water through, after it leaves the settling-tank you say that it smells very badly?—My opinion is that if this were done it would be in a much worse condition than if it were run direct into the river.

15. *Mr. Bollard.*] Have you ever heard that cattle died in consequence of drinking the water from the river, or went off in condition?—No, I never heard of it on the Manawatu River.

16. You have heard of an outbreak of typhoid: do you know of your own knowledge, or have the Health Department stated, that it was traceable to drinking the water?—No, I do not think that has been proved at all. There is a septic tank above the mills on the Oroua River, and there are dead carcasses in it; and if it was said that the typhoid was attributable to the water, it would not be saying that it was attributable to the flax-refuse. It would more likely be attributable to dead carcasses in the tank.

17. *The Chairman.*] Did you hear my statement as to a mill in the Wairarapa getting rid of its rubbish by settling it in the swamp?—Yes, I heard that statement.

18. Supposing the settlers there told you that they had complained bitterly when the flax-mill commenced of damage to the water because rubbish was allowed to go straight into the creek, and that when this filtration plan was adopted the complaints ceased, what would you say?—I could only account for it in this way: that it must have been a very small stream in which the water was practically stagnant, and therefore it was not carrying the small particles of vegetation away rapidly, like a river such as the Oroua or the Manawatu would do. The vegetation must have been banked up along the banks and allowed to putrefy. They may have been putting everything in. It just depends on how much they were putting in. In our case what is put in goes in very evenly, and all the solids are taken out.

19. What would you say to a statement that horses working at a flax-mill actually preferred to go to the trough that was carrying the water away from the mill than to drink from the creek above the mill that had no flax in it? Would you think that likely?—I should not think it likely. I can hardly credit it. I should think they would not like the mill water any worse or better than the other water. But I know they can get a liking for the vegetation.

20. Can you tell the Committee from your experience that the working of a flax-mill does not do any harm to the water?—I would certainly say that on a stream of any size at all it really does not do any harm, provided the vegetation goes in fresh all the time and that the solids are kept out—I mean a stream of any size, subject to floods now and again. I can quite understand that in a small stream if the vegetation were allowed to bank up on the sides and putrefy it would affect it. In the instance that I mentioned it was a small stream, and we sent a man along every few days to clean it out; and the cattle drank, and there was no harm done.

21. Do you know anything of the flax-mills that had an injunction taken out against them?—Yes, I know the mills very well.

22. Are those mills working now?—Yes.

23. How is it that they are working with an injunction out against them?

*Mr. Broad.*: May I interrupt? The injunction has not been issued yet. It is referred to the Chief Justice.

24. *The Chairman.*] Can you answer my question, Mr. Seifert?—I really do not know why the injunction is not taken out, unless the plaintiff has not bothered to take it out. He has the right to get the injunction, I understand, at any time, but probably he is treating them kindly and is not taking it out.

25. You have stated to the Committee, have you not, that the conditions of working at the flax-mills, as far as allowing rubbish to go into the stream is concerned, have been enormously improved?—Yes, I have stated that they have been considerably improved.