

would not be nearly so much as one would anticipate when he saw it coming from the mill. It dries up to such an extent that there is very little left.

ALEXANDER JAMES TOOGOOD examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a flax-miller at Longbush, Gladstone, and a business man in the Wairarapa?—Yes.

2. *Mr. Forbes.*] Will you describe briefly the process you adopt at your mill, to which the Chairman has referred?—At the present time we simply run our water out into the swamp. We have been working on that system for about a month. Possibly the water will find its way into the drains later on; it is not doing so at the present time.

3. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] What stream will it go into?—The Wangaehu. As I say, the water has not had time to reach the drains, and when it does we know from experience that it will probably have a stronger smell than it has at the present time. We tried the method before, and when the water did get back to the drains it was very bad.

4. *The Chairman.*] I went to the mill, and have described to the Committee what I saw. Then I went to one of the settlers—Mr. Blundell—and what Mr. Blundell stated was that when you commenced at first a lot of the fibre found its way into the creek—I mean the comminuted stuff—and that the water got very black down below, and that complaints were made; but that since then he had heard no complaints and made no complaint himself, because you had altered the treatment and adopted the system, I presume, that I saw when I was there a couple of days ago?—We had a different method of washing altogether then; we had the old hand wash. Now we use a machine, and it is necessary to deal with the water that comes away from the machine. We are running it into the flax, but we know that it must get into the drains ultimately, and I am afraid it will be in a very bad state. Another thing: You said you were there the other day, and that there was no smell from the accumulation. During the last two seasons you were there in the very best month of the year. If you go there perhaps in three or four months' time you will be met with a different odour altogether. There is a house just where the water is running out, and my manager told me the other day that the chances are we shall have to vacate that cottage on account of the smell. With respect to the influence this refuse has on fish, I may say that we also have a mill at Kahautara. Below the mill is recognized to be the best fishing-ground in the Ruamahanga, seeing that His Excellency the Governor has been there twice. Just below and just about the mill the trout are there in millions.

5. You have described to us what you have been doing: will you tell the Committee what you propose in the way of alteration?—I cannot, because we shall have to see what time brings along. It will bring some fresh thoughts, perhaps.

6. You have no plan other than the one you have followed?—No; we are just giving it a trial.

7. Did the settlers down below complain when you commenced?—Yes.

8. Have they been complaining since?—No. They sent a complaint to the acclimatization society—or some one did—and their officer came up and found that the matter was exaggerated, and nothing was done. That is six months ago—probably longer.

9. *Mr. Pearce.*] Does the water, when it is spread over the land below this mill in hot summer weather, kill the finer English grasses?—I could not tell you. We have only tried the method about a month.

10. *The Chairman.*] Would not any water-logged grass be killed by water, without its having any flax in it?—Yes.

11. *Mr. Buick.*] We had a statement that the effluent from a flax-mill killed the grass and weeds in a stream. Have you had any experience of that?—I think possibly it would.

12. Have you had any experience of it yourself?—Indirectly we have. I think probably it would have that effect.

13. *Mr. Sykes.*] Do you know if the trout are in as large numbers now as they were prior to the installation of your flax-mill?—I cannot say.

14. You have not heard the settlers remark on the fact at all?—No. Do you refer to the Gladstone or the Kahautara mill?

15. I am thinking of the Longbush one?—I cannot say whether there was a greater number before or after.

16. *The Chairman.*] With such a quantity of water—right at the lake—could you do any possible damage if you tried?—No. It is a curious fact that the fish do congregate round there. It is known to fishermen.

17. *Hon. Mr. Buddo.*] That is where the water finds its way into the river?—Yes, where the water is the darkest it is recognized to be the best fishing-ground.

WEDNESDAY, 9TH OCTOBER, 1912.

MICHAEL FRANCIS BOURKE examined. (No. 7.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—I am a flax-miller.

2. *Mr. Broad.*] Where do you mill now?—At Wairoa, and at Waikaka, on the Hauraki Plains.

3. Were you present at the meeting of this Committee yesterday?—Yes.

4. Did you hear what the Chairman said with reference to draining into a swamp?—Yes.

5. Have you ever tried that yourself?—Yes.