probably no one ever thought that that danger would arise; but that is the danger which is arising. Now, I, as a perfect amateur, after speaking to several engineers, including the City Engineer here, would put forward the suggestion that some scheme of this sort might be effective for so minimizing the danger that it would be inappreciable from the farmers' point of view. The suggestion is that the effluent from the flax-mill containing the pulp and any fibre should be run into a semi-circular race, say, a chain long, of fine wire netting. That would collect a great quantity of the material. The water would percolate through that, but underneath that there should be another of these of finer mesh, and underneath that again if necessary one of still finer mesh; and then the water that remained should be conducted down in a race and passed through some form of filter-bed, and discharged into the river. That is not an expensive method; and I again say that if Parliament or the Government will ensure that some method of that sort is tried, I will undertake that this action is not heard of again. It has been suggested to me by the Chairman—and there is no doubt of it—that that would mean the employment of labour, because these wire-netting gratings would have to be kept clean to be effective. But the flax-millers aver that they do now keep one man for the particular purpose of keeping clean the four bars that they have in their small traps. Very well; if he could keep those clean, he could keep these rather long and more elaborate contrivances clean; and if that were done that would meet us. That, I think, is all I have to say on the matter.

8. You said there would be no cause of action against fibre, because it was clean?—No claim for an injunction.

9. But if fibre did what you say it does—blocks the river and causes erosion and flooding—would not that be a cause of damage?—Not for an injunction. The damage there is another result of the pollution of the water. Under clause 4 of the Bill a condition of getting an injunction is that the quality of the water is deteriorated so as to render it unfit for use by persons or animals. We could not say that with dry fibre.

10. Then there is something wrong with the Bill?—We say that too.

11. *Mr. Sykes.*] You say that the trouble arising from these flax-mills has been if anything intensified since the action for injunction?—Yes.

12. It is still going on?—Yes, and there is one additional mill.

13. That intensifies it; but I mean in connection with the mills already operating?—I will not say that the specific mills are putting in more stuff; they are putting in as much, we say. But at the one that I spoke of—Tennant's—they have always really tried to do their best.

14. *Mr. Buxton.*] You state that since the action for the injunction the condition of affairs is worse?—Yes; there is an extra mill.

15. That action was taken in July?—At the end of June or July.

16. And since then no action has been taken by the flax-millers to prevent the condition of things that obtained?—No effective action has been taken. Mr. Levien certainly put out a small wire-netting grating with iron bars at the end, which really is no improvement.

17. *Mr. Forbes.*] I suppose you have an estimate of the quantity of stuff that goes into that river?—I could quote you Mr. Broad's estimate given in the Court, and he is a very capable man on the subject. If it will be of any use to the Committee I will leave a copy of the Judge's notes of all the evidence in Mr. Pearce's case, and if I may I will leave a copy of the evidence in the police prosecutions. The police prosecuted two of these millers for blocking the Oroua River, which is a public drain, and is vested in two Drainage Boards; and they were convicted. Mr. Broad's evidence, roughly, was this: that 7 tons of vegetable matter went into the river for every ton of hemp they made, and they made from 220 to 240 tons a year. So that on his showing each mill is putting in about 4 tons a day. This is his evidence: "The fibre amounts to one-eighth of the flax. There is 7 to 1 of the flax used suspended in the water." He said, therefore, that about 1,750 tons a year—assuming 300 working-days—or 6 tons a day, of vegetation goes into the stream from each mill, and there are now five mills. That is, 30 tons a day, working one shift. If they work two shifts the amount is 60 tons a day.

18. *Mr. Sykes.*] Does it all go into the river—is not a lot of it caught and collected?—No, none of that pulp is collected

19. Are you referring only to the pulp?—Only to the pulp.

20. Not to the fibre?—No. There was an explanation made which I think it is only right to say you would also find in the evidence—that a certain amount of this vegetation remains on the incompletely stripped flax. So that you could reduce those figures by a certain proportion. But here are five mills putting that quantity of vegetation into this small stream every day, and that is with one shift working and one stripper.

21. *Mr. Forbes.*] Does this Bill make the position worse for you than the present law?—It would be quite impossible under the present Bill for any person affected by the Oroua River to get an injunction.

22. Is the present law satisfactory in that way?—The present law is the law which operates throughout—I think I may say, without exception—the whole of the countries that are under English jurisdiction, except that in England it is now criminal to discharge the refuse from any manufactory into a river.

23. In the present case you have an injunction, and it has been treated practically with contempt by the millers?—Treated absolutely with contempt by the millers.

24. Is there no further remedy?—We do not want to harass them; we want to give them a fair run. If the worst comes to the worst, we shall have to ask the Supreme Court to enforce the injunction. But we recognize that in a big industry like that men should get fair-play, and should, after the injunction, have a reasonable time to put their house in order.

25. You do not think they are tackling the thing in a serious way at all?—I am absolutely certain they are not.