

FRIDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 1912.

WILLIAM BRYANT VATER PEARCE examined. (No. 21.)

1. *The Chairman.*] You are a settler in the Manawatu district?—Yes, Oroua Bridge.
2. Would you like to make a statement?—
3. *Mr. Baldwin.*] I would suggest that I should question Mr. Pearce on a few points. You were the nominal plaintiff, Mr. Pearce, in the actions which were brought to restrain the flax-millers from polluting the Oroua River?—Yes, I was one of them.
4. The actions were brought by yourself, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Wilde, and Mr. Green: is that so?—Those are the names. Practically the actions were arranged by Mr. Green; I assisted them. The others voluntarily came in to help Mr. Green.
5. At any rate, you were the five people who brought the action?—Yes.
6. Now, as to Mr. Saunders, his property fronts on the Oroua River on the opposite side from you?—Yes, further up.
7. How many acres has he?—Nineteen hundred.
8. And what is the value of that land per acre?—I should say, from £40 to £45 an acre.
9. Immediately below him is Mr. Rankin. How many acres has Mr. Rankin?—About 600 acres.
10. What was his land recently sold for?—£34 an acre.
11. Immediately below Mr. Rankin's is Mr. Wilde's property?—Yes; Mr. Lowe is his manager.
12. How many acres?—Six hundred.
13. Is that land of the same value?—More valuable land.
14. Below him Mr. Wifnoski comes?—That is the name, I think. He has only about 50 acres, which he purchased at £50 an acre.
15. Was Mr. Wifnoski a witness for your case with regard to the pollution of the river?—Yes, he offered to stand in. He was a witness.
16. Seeing that you had Mr. Saunders, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Wilde and his manager (Mr. Lowe) interested in the case, you had Mr. Wifnoski giving evidence for the case. Now, immediately below that, who is the next?—Mr. Lucas.
17. And Mr. Lucas, what is his position with Mr. Tennant?—They were partners in some of the land.
18. About how many acres?—About 80 acres. There were three of them, I think.
19. Immediately below him again came Mr. Tennant?—Yes.
20. He was also one of the flax-millers?—Yes.
21. His area?—About 203 acres freehold.
22. And immediately below him again?—Mr. Levien.
23. Another of the defendants?—Yes.
24. How many acres?—I could not say for certain. Probably about 150 acres. It is a Native lease.
25. And then there is the town of Oroua Bridge?—Yes.
26. Below the Oroua Bridge there is Native land?—Yes, it is Native land.
27. So that right from Mr. Saunders down to Oroua Bridge every landowner joined in these proceedings either as witnesses or plaintiffs or defendants with respect to the flax-mills?—Yes, but Mr. Lucas.
28. Mr. Lucas was then a partner with one of the flax-millers?—That is so.
29. So that there was about 3,200 acres of land on your side and about 300 to 400 acres belonging to flax-millers?—Yes.
30. Now, what is the character, generally speaking, from a dairying point of view—what is the value of that land to those people?—Well, if it was not for the bad water-supply, it is the best land I know for dairying. There is a good climate. It is better than the Waimate Plains. I have farmed on the Waimate Plains, and this land is better land than the Waimate Plains.
31. And if cut up into small farms how many cows do you think the 3,200 acres would carry?—I know some of it which is carrying a cow to the acre for the greater part of the year.
32. Do you think it would carry pretty nearly a cow to the acre?—Yes, easily.
33. That disposes of the value of the land on one side of the Oroua River. Now we will take the other side of the river immediately below Smith and Seifert's mill. But, first of all, there is Jarvis's mill. That is the highest mill on the Oroua River that you know?—I have never seen it.
34. The evidence is that Jarvis is carrying on on his own freehold land?—I think that is so.
35. Very well; below him comes Smith and Seifert's mill, which is carried on on a piece of the Johnstone Estate which was recently cut up?—Yes.
36. It is a very fine flax-bearing property?—Yes, that is where almost all the flax is got.
37. Immediately below that is Mr. Green's property?—Yes.
38. How many acres?—Perhaps 1,300. He had 1,040 acres, but he has bought some since.
39. And it is worth about?—£25 an acre.
40. Then there is your own property?—Yes.
41. What is the acreage?—2,500 acres.
42. And the value, roughly?—£50,000.
43. Then Pedersen comes next, does he not?—Yes, his is a leasehold.
44. How many acres?—40 or 50 acres.
45. Next, lower down the stream, there is Mr. Morcamb's?—I have a small piece.
46. Then comes Mr. Morcamb?—Yes.
47. How many acres has Mr. Morcamb got?—About 200.
48. Worth?—It would carry a beast to the acre.
49. Worth about £40 an acre?—Yes.