38. *Mr. Buick.*] I suppose you know also that a patent was taken out and a company floated to make it into a cattle-food?—No, I did not know that; but cattle would eat it when it was fresh. I have seen another process in which the whole of the leaf is dissolved, except the fibre. It absolutely disappears, and the fibre stands out as a sheet of white felt.

39. That was a German process, was it not?—No; it was invented by a New-Zealander who is in England now with the object of patenting it.

40. *Mr. Sykes.*] That process would be an expensive one, I presume?—He said it was very cheap: it would bring the flax into successful competition with cotton. I did not know enough about it to be able to test that, and he refused to accept the conditions I proposed to him in order to have it tested here.

41. When you were engaged in the flax-milling industry, did you adopt any means whereby this refuse could be collected?—No. We could not sell our tow, so we threw it into the river; and we could not make any use of the pulp, so we threw that in too.

42. With the knowledge that you were polluting the stream?—Yes; we were not prevented. There was no other mill working on the stream. It was a large stream, the Ruamahanga. There is such a very large volume of water there that you could not say there was any result within an appreciable distance, but close to the mill there was a little backwater in which there was a result. I have seen pumpkins growing on this refuse in the most satisfactory fashion. It satisfied me that it must be full of nitrogenous matter which only wants a suitable compound to make it valuable for plant-life.

43. You do not know of any experiments that have been made in that direction?—No, not as to manures.

44. *Mr. Field.*] Could you give the Committee any idea of what the expense would be to a flax-miller of taking the precautions you suggest for the purpose of purifying the stuff that comes from the mill—that is, stopping the solids—the wax and the green vegetation—and purifying the water to such an extent that it would not do very much harm to the farmer down below?—At first sight I would suppose that it would be only a little more than the carting away of the accumulations of pulp. This pulp will settle wherever you drop it.

45. But the question is the purifying of the liquid charged with the solid matters?—The liquid has not got any solid matter. If you were to deposit a stream of the stuff on the floor of this room, probably very little of the pulp would get out of that door. It would settle here and remain on the floor, but the fluid would run away.

46. It is mainly the cost of settling?—Yes.

47. That cost would not be very severe, would it?—I have seen this stuff deposited on the bank of a river. It did not even run into the river. It remained there.

48. You do not think it would be a serious tax on the flax-miller if he were asked to take what you regard as ordinary precautions?—I do not think it would, and I think he ought to be obliged to do it.

49. *The Chairman.*] You speak of carting. If the flax-mill is on level ground, a difficulty might be encountered in getting the water charged with the pulp on to any particular settling-spot. Would there be any practical difficulty in raising, by an ordinary pump, the pulp-water up to a tank, say, 6 ft. above ground-level, and then taking your flume straight away to successive settling-spots, thus doing away with the expense of cartage entirely, the water being the conveyor?—That would be quite practicable. It would involve a little capital expenditure, perhaps. Probably an easier way would be to commence the whole of your washing-operations at a higher level. That would mean pumping up your washing-water to a higher level, from which it would all be done by gravitation then. It would mean a little capital expenditure. The present practice is to liberate the water on the floor of the mill at a low level.

50. I witnessed the operations of a sugar-beet mill in America where 300 tons per day were carried away from the sheds in which the beet was stored, and delivered by machinery up to the top story of the sugar-mill, and the beets cleaned and washed, and the only manual labour engaged in the transport was two men, who were sitting quietly tumbling the beets into the stream?—That could be done.

51. Would you consider, then, that under similar circumstances the flax-refuse could be as easily handled?—I have no doubt about that.

52. You mentioned a point of great importance—namely, the Commissioners at Home. Would you explain to the Committee their exact status, seeing that, as we understand it in England, the Court is the final resort?—I think the Commissioners are appointed by statute, and they relieve the Government of the whole of the obligation to deal with such matters as these.

53. *Mr. Buick.*] They decide what is pollution and what is not pollution?—They decide the degree of pollution that the river is capable of carrying.

54. *The Chairman.*] There appears to me to be a conflict between what you said in the opening of your evidence—namely, that an injunction could be got in England if there was any alteration of the water-supply by pollution and what you now state that the Commissioners fix the permissible degree of pollution?—I do not know the full extent of their powers.

55. Can you indicate any source from which the Committee could get this?—No. My information is derived from the reports of those Commissioners appearing in the engineering journals from time to time.

56. In evidence given by the petitioners they express themselves as perfectly willing to accept the dictum of the Health Department as to what the flax-miller is to do to prevent the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. Could we here institute some body, such as you describe the Commissioners to be, that would be able at any time to give evidence to the Court as to what is possible under the particular circumstances of each case?—I should think that the officers of the Health Department would be quite capable of doing the work, and they could do it in safety if