

in the summer months is really a foul spot: it is stinking. And with regard to stock drinking at it, they will not touch it at any price at all.

11. They will not touch it at all?—No.

12. A bad smell arises from it?—Yes. I was fencing there in the beginning of 1911 for about three months, putting up a mile or so of fencing, and it was so stinking, the smell was so overpowering, that the three of us who were working there were constantly affected with diarrhoea and sickness.

13. What is the stench like? Is it like rotting animal stench?—It is just a rotting stench, a stinking stench. Of course, it is greater when the stream is low, and in the hot summer months.

14. Will you tell the Committee what effect it has on the bed of the stream?—On the bed of the stream there is a slimy yellowish deposit right round the bed, and this has been collecting and collecting for years, ever since the flax-mill was started; and it has absolutely fouled the water now. Even fresh water coming through would be fouled through running over the polluted bed.

15. Does it have the effect of killing fish or vegetation?—Yes. As a boy I used to go bobbing for eels in that stream, but now all fish seem to have absolutely disappeared. There are no signs of eels or fish of any kind.

16. No signs of eels even?—No.

17. Does it have the effect of killing vegetation also?—Yes, the watercress has disappeared. It seems to absolutely kill the vegetable life as well as the animal life.

18. Have you any knowledge that the pollution of the stream also pollutes the land in the vicinity of the stream?—Yes. The fencing we were working on ran parallel with the drain for some distance, and every time we took out a shovelful of earth the smell was so sickening that, as I have stated before, it made us sick. There were three of us, and it affected us all.

19. Is your mother's property wholly dependent on that mountain stream for fresh water?—Absolutely. If my mother subdivides, as she proposes to do for dairying purposes, it would absolutely ruin the property.

20. Have you seen the stock drinking the water?—When we were fencing there I often saw sheep come down to have a drink at the watering-places, and they would just smell the water and go away without drinking. At that time all the watercourses were dried up, and there was no other water except this stream-water, which they would not touch.

21. Has it any appreciable effect on the health of the stock?—Well, I could not say that positively, except to this extent, that the mortality of sheep in that particular paddock was very, very heavy indeed. We turned out 221, and we got in 175. That was for a period of about six months.

22. Have you read this Bill?—Yes.

23. Can you say from your opinion that the Bill will very seriously prejudice the farming industry?—I should certainly say so.

24. Do you know anything of the steps which have been taken by the mill close to your mother's property to prevent this evil?—I can only speak generally. At first the flax-miller used to run in everything holus-bolus, but latterly he has boarded in the place, and it is now only the vegetable pulp that comes out.

25. And with these precautions is the evil very much mitigated?—I think the evil will steadily grow worse, because this vegetable matter is being accumulated inside this boarded enclosure, and as it grows older and decays the evil will get worse.

26. As a farmer, have you any idea what effect this water would have on dairy cows?—Well, I have heard that turnips taint milk, and I should say if turnips taint milk this stuff would absolutely poison it.

27. You do not think they would drink the water at all?—No.

28. *The Chairman.*] Have any of the settlers concerned taken any steps to prevent the mill from polluting the stream in this manner under the old Act?—There have been no steps taken so far as I am aware.

29. There have been no steps taken to obtain an injunction to stop the pollution of the stream?—I think it has been discussed at times, but nothing has been done up to the present.

30. This has been going on for years?—Yes, I should think a few years.

31. Is there a large collection of fibre in the bottom of the stream?—It is only a small stream, and what seems to have collected chiefly is the pulp. It is formed into a yellowish brown slime running round the water-bed.

32. And there is really no great force of water in the stream even in wet weather to wash it out?—There is a very fair fall to the sea. In the mile run through our place I should think it is probably 30 ft.*

33. *Mr. Sykes.*] You say the mortality among sheep which depastured in the paddock through which this stream runs was very heavy?—Very heavy indeed.

34. Was that during the summer months?—The last mortality we noticed was from crutching-time, when we turned out the sheep, till we got them in, about the beginning of last month.

35. Of course, they might have died from other causes? The pasture may have been insufficient, for instance?—Yes, of course, it is a question for discussion to arrive at what the cause of death really was. But still the death-rate was extraordinarily heavy.

36. You are aware of the fact that during the winter sheep practically drink no water?—There is generally sufficient moisture on the ground, but, of course, this particular ground was soaked to a fair area with refuse from this drain.

37. Were the sheep hoggets or fully grown sheep?—They were mostly hoggets. They were hoggets and breeding-ewes.

* 30 ft., I stated in my evidence, but I think Mr. Campion, who said 15 ft. to 20 ft., was nearer correct.—A.F.H.