

38. Breeding-ewes of your own breeding?—Excepting the oldest sheep, which were bought sheep. There were very few of them.

39. With regard to this vegetable matter of which you spoke, which has been collecting at the flax-mill for some time, has not the flax-miller taken any steps to remove that collection of deposit?—Well, as I explained, I am only speaking generally. In the first place, I know this flax-miller ran the stuff in holus-bolus. Afterwards he boarded it in, and now it is just a percolation. I say that will increase the evil, because that vegetable matter is collecting there and decaying, perhaps, for a number of years.

40. He does not periodically remove that vegetable matter from the enclosure, but allows it to decompose?—I would not go into any details, but I presume he does catch it in his race, perhaps by a hook.

41. I presume there will be a vast mass of vegetable matter in this enclosure?—Yes, there is a great mass of vegetable matter, mud, water, and dead trees and shrubs which have been killed.

42. *Mr. Buick.*] I think you have stated in your evidence that those working at a certain fence had diarrhoea and other ailments?—That is so.

43. Is that purely from the smell—not through drinking the water?—No, we used to take our billy of cold tea out with us when we were working on this fence. We never touched this water: it was too strong altogether.

44. *Mr. Buxton.*] You say that although the sheep go down and look at the water, you have never seen them drink it?—That is so, I have not seen them touch it.

45. Do you think they did drink it?—That was in the very driest part of the year, when the water was pretty low in the stream, and it is quite possible that when the water was diluted by freshes or floods that they might have drunk it.

46. You stated that the mortality among the sheep in that paddock was very heavy?—Yes, that is so.

47. And yet they did not drink the water?—They did not at that particular time. I have not seen them drinking it.

48. What has been your experience for many years as regards the mortality of sheep in this particular paddock—is it heavier than in other paddocks?—I have only been there about three years.

49. That has been your experience for three years?—That is so.

50. Is it more low-lying than the other paddocks?—It is certainly low-lying.

51. Swampy land?—It ranges from low sandhills to swampy drained flax-land.

52. The mill has been in operation all the time you have been there?—During that three years, certainly.

53. *The Chairman.*] With regard to this paddock where you had the excessive mortality, was there any chance of the sheep drinking any other water than this polluted water in summer-time?—In summer-time we found that every drain on the place except this mile drain was dried up absolutely, excepting some swamp water in a small lagoon, out of which there is a drain running down to the coast; but I have never in my experience known cattle or sheep drink that swamp-water. The other water, coming down from the mill through the mile drain, was the best water on the place, and the only suitable drinking-water.

54. And it carried the mill-refuse?—Yes.

55. So that practically stock had no other water to drink except this mill-water?—That is so, except along the upper part of the property there are several small tricklets of water in various places; but the flax grows up very close, and the sheep would have great difficulty in finding their way up to these tricklets; and that was the only other good drinking-water.

56. You said something about a boarded race. Will you describe that to the Committee. What was its purpose?—I think the boarded enclosure was to prevent the larger refuse from flowing in. Of course, it did not prevent the pulp from flowing in, but it prevented fibrous matter of any length that could be hooked from flowing in. I think it was hooked first with a drag, and then being boarded round, it is just a matter of percolating through the cracks in the boards and the swamp land.

57. And the pulp still flows down with no check at all?—No, there is no check at all.

58. Working out the figures you gave us as to the loss of sheep, it means 20 per cent.?—Yes.

59. Had you plenty of grass?—Yes, any amount of grass.

60. Do you know what your losses were in the other paddocks?—In one of the other paddocks, felled bush land, we turned out 261 breeding-ewes and we got in 259.

61. What about hoggets?—We never paddock hoggets there, except perhaps a few stray ones. These would be breeding-ewes from about two-tooth to six-tooth in that particular paddock.

62. Any loss?—Only a loss of two in that paddock.

63. Was it not a mistake to have your hoggets where the conditions were not the best that you could obtain for them, and to have you ewes in the paddock where this flax trouble did not appear?—We considered that when we turned out the ewes. The ewes were worth from 16s. to 17s. each, while the hoggets were worth only about 8s., and we considered it the better policy to put the best ewes on the good lambing country, where we could attend to them properly, than to put the hoggets on the best land.

64. *Mr. Field.*] There is flax, of course, growing on your mother's property?—Yes, certainly.

65. And you derive income from the sale of the flax?—Yes, my mother does.

66. You are then to some extent dependent upon the flax industry?—Yes.

67. You do not want to do any harm to the industry?—No.

68. Have you noticed in the slime in the paddocks the little red worm you find in filthy watercourses?—No.