

G. ALLPORT, Secretary for Marine, examined. (No. 29.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Would you like to make a statement, Mr. Allport?—The only statement I have to make is with regard to the effect that the deposits from these mills into the rivers has upon the fish, and the silting-up through this cause of the mouths of the rivers which are harbours. The main objection which we have taken to the deposits is the tow going down the rivers and stopping when it comes into the still water where the waters of the river meet the tide, and there forming banks caused by the sand and silt drifting upon this material. This forms a solid bank, which impedes the navigation of the river. Then there is the effect it has upon the fishermen, because this material gets in their nets and clogs them, and prevents the fishermen carrying on their industry in a proper way. We took steps to prevent this by requiring the mills to put in gratings to catch the tow as it went out from the mill into the river. This was done in a good many cases with very good effect; but we find that still some of the material goes out into the river and flows down and forms these banks. Then we find that the green material from the flax has a bad effect upon the fish. I am not able to say that the fish die from it, but our experience is that they forsake that part of the river in which this stuff accumulates, and consequently are not caught there to any extent. These are the only grounds upon which the Department has raised an objection to the deposit of this material in the rivers. We have not looked at it from the point of view of its effect upon stock, or anything of that sort.

2. *Mr. Buick.*] What river were you alluding to when you stated the tow affects navigation by raising up banks of silt in the river?—That applies to all tidal rivers.

3. Does that refer to the Manawatu?—The Manawatu and other similar rivers. The Manawatu is the principal one.

4. That was some years ago?—Yes, some years ago. It has not been so bad since we have done our best to keep these gratings I have mentioned maintained in order to catch the tow going down.

5. What reason have you to think that it is deleterious to fish?—The fish leave that part of the river: that is our reason for thinking that it is deleterious to them: they do not stop in it. The river becomes almost bare of fish where they were formerly found in large numbers.

6. Would you be surprised if we told you that we have had evidence to the effect that fish really crowd to these places?—Yes, I should be. That is not my experience.

7. *Mr. Sykes.*] Are there a number of fishermen dependent upon their trade in the particular rivers you mention?—Yes, that is so in most of the rivers. In the Manawatu there are a good many dependent for their living upon their fishing at the mouth of the river.

8. You speak of fish in general terms?—I am speaking mostly of sea-fish when I speak of these fishermen near the mouths of the rivers.

9. *Mr. Buxton.*] It is sea-fish that you specially refer to? We have had trout mentioned as being affected by it, and all kinds of fish?—Yes, the green matter is more damaging, I think, to the trout than to the sea-fish, because the material that acts upon them is dissipated pretty well by the time it gets down.

10. With regard to the banking-up that you speak of, is that caused by the tow or the other sediment?—It is caused a good deal by the tow. It is caused chiefly by the tow.

11. They are taking that out now?—So long as it is kept out it is all right. The other matter would not be serious. I do not think the other matter would affect the navigation.

12. *The Chairman.*] Would it be correct to say that the channel-buoys put there for navigation purposes are interfered with in time of flood by masses of tow, which gets entangled upon them, and the force of the water in flood-time pressing against them?—Yes, to a certain extent, but we have never found it has had any serious effect upon the buoys.

13. Can you give us any definite particulars as to interference with navigation caused by the silting process you have described? Were the steamers stuck?—Steamers have stuck upon such banks that were formed.

14. From this cause?—Yes, from that cause.

15. *Mr. Field.*] I have heard that in the Manawatu the boats have had their propellers at times stopped by the tow going down?—Yes, that has happened, but not very often; not to my knowledge, at any rate.

16. *Mr. Buick.*] Not of recent years?—No, I have not heard of it of recent years.

ALEXANDER CAMPION, Farmer, examined. (No. 30.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Your address, Mr. Campion?—Waikanae.

2. *Mr. Field.*] You are a farmer at Waikanae?—Yes.

3. You are the next-door neighbour of Mr. Hadfield, who gave evidence just now?—Yes.

4. With regard to this stream which is polluted by the flax-refuse, does that stream intersect your property?—It runs through it.

5. Are you a grower of flax on your property?—Yes.

6. Have you a flax swamp?—Yes.

7. Do you sell your flax to this mill?—Yes.

8. You are therefore interested in the industry, and it would be a serious matter to you if that mill were to close down?—Yes.

9. A considerable portion of your living is derived from the sale of flax?—Yes.

10. You do not want to do any harm to the flax industry?—Not at all.

11. Coming to this stream, was it originally a pure stream, as it comes from the hills?—Yes.

12. Is the mill close to the stream?—I should say it is about 100 yards from the stream.

13. What are the conditions of the mill with respect to the prevention of the flax-refuse from getting into the stream?—I think the flax-miller has done something towards it. He has put an