

established industry, and surely there should be some means by which the flax-miller can take his waste and filtrate it, and carry the solid refuse out into the paddock.

5. You have no details that you could give us?—No, I have no details as to filtration-beds that I could suggest offhand. But one of us could make filtration-beds that would prevent refuse from becoming a nuisance to our neighbours. As to these streams and rivers, we have all sorts of things going on. We have all sorts of articles being discharged into the stream, such as dairy-factory waste, slaughtering waste, household waste, and nightsoil; and here you will have an Act of Parliament permitting it. That is how I feel. This Act of permission may give us greater difficulties in protecting our waters against pollution, because we cannot take action for injunction against people who are doing this, because by Act of Parliament they are to be permitted to do so.

6. *Mr. Buxton.*] Your opinion is, then, that things are bad now, and if the Bill goes through they will be worse?—That is so. From what I understand of the Bill it facilitates this sort of thing.

7. Gives greater facilities for polluting the water?—Yes.

8. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us anything from your own observations as to stock drinking this polluted water?—I have only observed, in the old days, when this water was from the main drain, the stock did not care about the water. But that is only in a general sort of way. I cannot give any particular instance, such as taking my horse up and trying it.

9. Do you know whether it kills fish?—No, I cannot say as to that either. I have never been a fisherman, and I have never observed anything of the kind.

10. Can you tell us anything about the dairy factories?—I can tell you that the dairy factories in our district are so strong in the summer-time that you cannot pass them without holding your nose.

11. Are they on the bank of a stream?—They are on the banks of a little stream.

12. Do you think that that nuisance could be stopped?—I do not know about it being entirely stopped, but I should think a great deal could be done by more sanitary methods. I do not know what the cost would be, but there must be a means of dealing with the filth.

13. *Mr. Field.*] From your knowledge of the methods of flax-millers now, has any serious attempt been made to filtrate the water and refuse that flows from the mill, or in any other way to abate this nuisance?—No. My experience goes back four or five years ago. In those days they made no attempt at all to properly deal with the refuse. They had the most primitive methods in those days. They had just an arrangement of two sticks to keep the solid matter back. I do not know whether they have improved their methods since.

14. You have read the Bill?—I have read some of it.

15. It has the effect of substituting damages for an injunction?—Yes.

16. Do you think that would suit the farmers?—Of course it would not. We cannot afford to take Supreme Court cases, which would then possibly go on to the higher Courts and to the Privy Council.

17. Have you had any experience of actions for damages where a number of experts have been called in to give evidence?—Luckily not.

18. At any rate, it is quite certain that the farmer wants pure water: he does not want damages?—That is so.

19. *Mr. Pearce.*] You made a statement that the flax-millers were not now putting so much of their tow into the river as formerly. Do you know that of your own knowledge?—No. I only gather that that is so because the tow is now of some value.

20. Take the mills above your old place, for instance, and considering they would have to convey the stuff by tram for a considerable distance, and then cart it round the paddocks; and considering the expense they would be put to in treating and drying the stuff, and for paddock-room, &c., do you not think it would not be profitable for them in that case to make use of it, and that it would pay them better to throw it into the river?—I would not be surprised, considering the distance they would have to cart the tow. I never realized that the tow was not worth the carting.

21. You state that the primitive attempts made to deal with this refuse was to put in two bars?—Two sticks.

22. Would you be surprised to know that at the present time the largest mill has only two bars of iron, with a spout 12 in. wide at the bottom and 16 in. at the top, to deal with this refuse, and that there are three spaces you could put your hand through?—No, I would not be surprised.

Mr. J. ROBERTSON, M.P., examined. (No. 33.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Would you like to make a statement to the Committee, Mr. Robertson?—Yes, sir. I wish particularly to refer to the flax-mills on the Manawatu and the Oroua Rivers, which are the two districts principally under discussion. I do not know whether you have had any evidence in regard to the exact quantities of waste which goes into those rivers; but I may say at any rate there are thirty strippers at work on the banks of the Manawatu River, and you may allow for each stripper about 20 cwt. to 25 cwt. of finished fibre per day. At a low estimate there is 8 tons of green leaf to 1 ton of fibre, which gives about 280 tons altogether of green leaf being milled. Now, seven-eighths of that is waste in some form or other, or by-product. It would be a safe estimate to say that one-half of the 8 tons goes away in the form of green waste vegetation, and that the balance is accounted for by manufactured fibre and tow and by evaporation. So into the Manawatu River I should say at present there is about 120 tons of green vegetable waste going every day, and into the Oroua River from 24 to 30 tons a day. With regard to tow, I heard what Mr. Pearce had to say. I think in regard to tow that the pollution that comes from that at the present time is very much minimized. Tow does pay for itself, I