

flax cut in November. I am glad of your renewed assurances that there will be no pollution of the Mile Drain." And last year, on the 3rd April, 1911: "You must stop that flax-refuse nuisance at once, even if you have to cart the stuff direct from the mill to a distance. The position is too serious for me to allow it to continue. The stream is in a filthy, stinking condition all the way to the sea—i.e., from one end of my property to the other—and the water is quite unfit for stock to drink. The nuisance has already resulted in very serious loss to me. I cannot put cattle on my Kukutaaki land at all. Campion is, I believe, also complaining, but he has one clean stream to fall back on. A writ must issue if you cannot advise me by return mail that the nuisance will be put an end to immediately and permanently." Then I find a letter written on the 24th September of this year—before I had any knowledge of this Bill: "I trust that you will be able to take thoroughly effective measures to prevent water-pollution this summer. The matter you will recognize is a very serious one to me." There were numbers of other letters written on the same subject to keep this miller in check, and they had the effect of doing so. Although I suffered severely from the nuisance, I was prepared to put up with a good deal rather than take action, and I did not want to see the flax-mill close down. If, however, we are thrown back simply on an action for damages without having any right to stop the nuisance, then, as far as I can see, the result must be that those of us who supply this mill with flax—and the miller is dependent very largely on his neighbours for his flax—we must cease supplying the flax, even if we have to destroy it. The chances are that, if it paid us to do so, we should rail it to some distant miller further up the line. That, of course, we should be reluctant to do. It may seem that an action for damages is as good a thing as a right to an injunction, but I should not have put up with this nuisance if I had not felt that I could insist at any time on my water-supply being left in a pure condition. It was the knowledge that I had that power, which the law of England has allowed for centuries, that prevented my taking unpleasant action against this particular flax-miller, who is a friend of mine, and a neighbour, and I have no possible reason for doing him any harm if I can possibly help it. This stream I referred to is a small stream. I have no personal knowledge of flax pollution of rivers and large streams. Mine is a stream of which, I suppose, the Kaiwarra Stream would easily make six. In the summer-time it is merely a dribble, and it has a fall from the flax-mill to the sea, a distance of five miles, of probably 15 ft. or 20 ft. The result is that the drain or stream is choked up to a very large extent. At every excrescence and throughout the whole bed of it there is a mass of grey slime of a stinking nature. There are no fish whatever: all fish have died or disappeared. The watercress and all other water-weeds also die, and the stench is abominable. When I first experienced it I could not believe that it came from vegetable refuse, because it was so like the stench arising from rotting animals. It had a worse effect on the stream than would have been the case if there had been the decaying carcasses of animals, because of the slime. A rotting animal-carcase will rather improve the condition of the weeds growing in the water; this, however, kills them. On my farm, which is a place I take a good deal of pride in, my house is built within about 40 ft. of the stream. It is built in a bend of the stream, and in dry summers the house has been practically unfit to live in—in fact, on one occasion my farm-manager and his wife announced their intention of leaving; they could not put up with it any longer. And this is at a time when I have the power to keep the miller in check. Under this Bill I shall have no power at all; all I shall be able to do will be to sue him for damages, because, whether intentionally or not, the Bill provides that there shall be hereafter no injunction for pollution whatever: you are forced to rely entirely on an action for damages. I do not know whether that is intended, but that is the effect of the Bill as was described by Mr. Gerald FitzGerald yesterday. It seems to me that the flax-miller should show conclusively that he is doing the best that can possibly be done, even with the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, for the purpose of putting an end to this nuisance. My experience is that he is not taking anything like effective measures, and this Bill will have the effect of encouraging him to pursue slipshod methods rather than induce him to adopt scientific and up-to-date means of getting rid of his refuse. Now, speaking as a man who has had occasion to finance, I can say unhesitatingly that if I were forced to borrow up to the full limit which a lender will advance on farm property—if I were to seek to borrow on the security of my property, polluted as it has been more than once, and as it would permanently be if this Bill were passed into law, I simply could not finance upon it, and it might result in my losing the property altogether. This Bill would have the effect of reducing very largely the value of the property. I have constructed a road from my house to the sea alongside this creek. This house forms the summer home of my wife and family. The children at holiday-time go up there and spend their holiday for about a couple of months. If this nuisance were allowed to continue the house would be unfit for them to live in, and the road alongside the stream would be unfit to use as a road. You can understand, therefore, that the position is a somewhat serious one to me. With regard to the killing of fish, I think it is worth while to mention the fact that there is a considerable whitebait industry on that part of the coast. This stream of mine joins a large spring river, the two forming a large outlet to the sea, and providing a favourite whitebait-fishing ground. If water-pollution were allowed, particularly if the other stream were to be polluted—if, under this Bill, somebody were induced to put up a flax-mill—which is unlikely at present—or a dairy factory on the other stream, and so pollute that stream, then the whitebait industry in that particular place would have to cease altogether. I can say absolutely that the flax-refuse would have the effect of either killing or driving out all the matured whitebait, which, of course, furnish the supply of young fish. With respect to the damage to stock I cannot speak positively of my own personal knowledge. I am quite satisfied, however, from the stench which arises from the polluted water and from its appearance that the water is utterly unfit for stock to drink. This particular stream was originally a stream which was fit for human consumption; as it came from the hills it was almost absolutely pure. It did suffer some little pollution and discoloration by