

10. It had less facilities for discharge than formerly?—Yes.
11. Do you think the water at Scrogg's Creek affects the water at Silver Stream?—Yes.
12. How?—By damming it up.
13. Has it ever been brought under your notice that a scheme was proposed by Mr. J. T. Thomson with regard to that river?—Yes.
14. Do you think if that plan were carried out it might to a large extent prevent so much damage being done?—It would prevent damage being done to some properties, and would itself damage others. Some properties would be benefited, while others would be utterly ruined.
15. Have you ever given the matter any serious consideration, with a view to a more general plan for dealing with that river?—I think there might be a modification of Mr. Thomson's plan which might do a great deal of good generally; but it would do some damage at the Waipori end.
16. Has there been any subsidy paid to these Conservators?—The subsidy is payable by law.
17. Do you know whether anything has been paid to them since the flood in February?—I cannot say; but the information could easily be obtained from the Treasury.

Mr. J. T. THOMSON, Surveyor-General, examined.

18. *The Chairman.*] You are Surveyor-General?—Yes.
19. You have read the petition with reference to the flooding of the Taieri?—Yes.
20. Are you acquainted with the locality?—Yes, very well indeed.
21. In fact, I understand, you furnished a report on the subject?—Yes; this is a copy (produced).
22. Will you state to the Committee as briefly as you can the position of the question?—The position of the question is this: Once in every seven or eight years an enormous flood comes down the Taieri River, otherwise it is a river of small dimensions. These flood the whole of this large Taieri Plain. The Taieri River, in debouching to the sea, unfortunately goes through a very narrow gorge. These waters are backed up, the lakes increase, and this low land is flooded. Of course, the people settling upon this land have suffered very considerably during these floods. Each individual commenced to try to better himself. The first party who endeavoured to do so was Mr. Stevenson, who commenced with a small embankment on the east side of the river, near Outram. Then, after that, the settlers on the west side commenced to embank from Outram down towards a place called Scrogg's Creek, about three miles distant. My report shows that during floods the principal part of the flood waters crosses to the westward. [The witness read paragraph 16 of annexed report.]
23. What date is that?—The report is dated the 5th April, 1870. I saw the river in full flood.
24. The Committee understand there are some three or four miles of embankment on the west side of Outram?—I have seen the embankment for two miles, but I think it goes down to here, past the gate-post opposite Milne's.
25. From your knowledge of the country, what effect would that embankment have? Do you think it damages the people on the east bank?—Most undoubtedly. It throws the whole of the water on this point, between Milne's and Greytown. It is astonishing that the people themselves have not been swept away.
26. What would be the remedy?—It is difficult to say. The Taieri presents one of the most difficult problems in engineering, owing to the difficulty of outlet and its enormous capacity for floods. It is enormously greater than we have in England even. [Witness read paragraph 7 of his report, annexed.]
27. Where do you gauge it?—At the bridge.
28. In fact, the water comes down quicker than it can be received at the gorge?—Yes; and that stems back the current.
29. How far does that gorge dam the waters?—About ten miles.
30. That would not affect these petitioners?—It would not affect them at all. It is the outcome from the mountains upon the plains that affects them.
31. In consequence of the tortuous nature of the river it does not deliver quick enough?—Yes; and owing to this embankment as well.
32. Do you think it is possible by forming an embankment on the east side of the river to remedy this?—If they attempted to embank there the river would probably burst out in this direction and that. The fall is too great. In three miles the fall is no less than twenty feet. Now, with a river as large as the Molyneux, which is the largest in New Zealand, nothing could stand it.
33. As far as you can judge, there is no practical remedy?—There is one alleviatory remedy—namely, by making a new channel from the west side of the river through the West Taieri. In saying this, I must also remark that there are certain physical causes going on at present that affect the Taieri which it was not subject to before. In the first place, the country having been put under pastoral licenses the herbage has all been eaten down. When I first went over the country, in 1856, the herbage was two or three feet high. The clay and earth has all been beaten down, so that when floods come down they come immediately—much more quickly. Before I built this Taieri Bridge (about 1864 I think) there was a clay bank with all the flood-marks upon it: they must have been there for one hundred years. The highest flood-mark I took as my gauge. I placed my bridge six feet above that. When the flood came down it went six feet higher than before, and not only did it do that, but it cut out the whole of the low lands, widened the bed from 200 feet up to 700, and what was beautiful verdure before in these bottoms was turned into gravel. Mining also has had an effect upon it. The bed of the river has been raised by silt and shingle, and this will be a continuous process. The silt and sediment will settle where it first finds still water. The river now cannot force its way so quickly as it used to do through here, below Outram.
34. Is that all alluvial land?—Yes.
35. Is there nothing to assist it?—No. So that there are several operations going on to make it a difficult problem and extremely expensive.
36. *Mr Dignan.*] You state that on the east side of the river there is a small embankment?—Yes; erected by Mr. Stevenson.
37. At his own cost?—Yes.