

*The Chairman :* The matter that I am most anxious about in the meantime is to endeavour to fix a time when the Commission will sit in Palmerston North, so that any people in Palmerston who desire to give evidence will have timely notice. I do not know how long it will take to go through the departmental statements before going there.

*Mr. Myers :* That cannot take very long. The officers of the Department have examined all the different proposals. They have come to their own conclusions as experts and as the officers who are responsible for the conduct and administration of the railways of New Zealand, and they can indicate without very much elaboration—subject to any examination the Commissioners may think it necessary to subject them to—the reasons for their faith in those proposals.

*Mr. Miles :* Yes, we want all that information : it is of the utmost importance.

*The Chairman :* I do not know whether it would suit the other Commissioners or the Department, but, if it would, I would suggest that after the Commission adjourns here we might meet in Palmerston about the middle of next week.

*Mr. Myers :* If the Commission could sit in Palmerston on Tuesday afternoon, or even on Wednesday, that would be suitable. I cannot think that the evidence in Palmerston would take longer than Wednesday afternoon and Thursday. If you could fix, say, Wednesday afternoon for the sitting in Palmerston, the Commission could then leave on Tuesday if it thought fit, and any officers they desired to show them around in Palmerston could go, possibly, on the Monday, the explanatory and necessarily preliminary evidence of the Railway officers being taken in the meantime.

*The Chairman :* I thought we might start to-morrow with evidence, and continue on Monday, and that would give us the main evidence from the departmental point of view before going north.

*Mr. Myers :* Very well, sir. I quite agree that it would be a good thing perhaps to have to-morrow sitting, but, frankly, I doubt very much whether you will find it necessary to take more than one day with the officers of the Department.

*The Chairman :* I am quite sure it will facilitate matters for the Department to give us as much information as possible before we go north.

*Mr. Myers :* Yes, and then afterwards, when the Commission returns, the officers will always be available.

*The Chairman :* I do not know whether you want to say anything in connection with the question of the Greatford deviation now ?

*Mr. Myers :* I was going to suggest that we should leave that until later on. No doubt, in the advertisement of the Commission, you will give any one the opportunity of giving evidence in Palmerston North, and later on in Wellington, in regard to the subject-matter of the extension of the extension of the Commission as well as the original Commission, and then we can give you any further information afterwards ; but we cannot say any more than we have said before—namely, that a diversion would be more impracticable, more expensive, and more unreasonable from our point of view and, as we think, from the point of view of the Dominion, than it would have been in 1916.

*Mr. Marchbanks :* The Department will, I take it, be able to produce some evidence of the study they have made in regard to enlarging the present station as well as the proposed new station at Palmerston ?

*Mr. McVilly :* Yes.

*Mr. Marchbanks :* We will have produced before us some of the difficulties the Department is “ up against ” in extending the present station, and the probable cost ?

*Mr. Myers :* I apprehend that will be so, but I have not had the opportunity of going into the matter ; but that must be, because they must have considered that matter.

*Mr. Marchbanks :* We want to have some idea of the cost.

*Mr. Myers :* Mr. McVilly informs me that he has sent for some plans, and has asked Mr. MacLean, Chief Engineer of Railways, to attend before the Commission right away. Probably it might be as well for Mr. MacLean to explain the plans so that the members of the Commission will be in a better position to think over what questions they might want to put to him to-morrow or later on.

*Mr. McVilly :* The plans I have sent for are plans of the deviation, and plans showing the present station ; also what we would have to do if the station were to remain where it is, the extent of the buildings which would have to be taken, how far we would have to go up the line, and what it would mean to the town. The plans I refer to are those we showed to the Borough Council when we explained the position to them and satisfied them.

*The Chairman :* I was wondering if you had any other reports showing the supposed or estimated value of the land which you would be possessed of if the station were moved. It occurred to me that, supposing the deviation were carried out, there would be a lot of valuable land which would not be required for railway purposes.

*Mr. McVilly :* I am not sure if we have those figures exactly, but we estimate that we will get a large annual rental for leasing the sites, or even selling them if we wanted to.

*The Chairman :* I suppose, in addition to evidence with regard to inconvenience apparently being suffered at the present station, we will get some evidence as to the volume of the traffic passing through, and the difficulties which have to be contended against ?

*Mr. Myers :* Yes, we will show the impossibility of carrying on under present conditions. There is a letter here which I would like to read to the Commission, written by Mr. McVilly to His Worship the Mayor of Palmerston North, dated 8th June, 1920. It is as follows :—

SIR,—

With reference to my interview of yesterday, at which I placed before you the Department's proposals for improving the accommodation at Palmerston North Station, which incidentally involves the deviation of the railway and removal of the station from its present site, I have the honour to forward under separate cover a plan embodying the proposed alterations.