

now and faced to the fullest extent?—I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, quite irrespective of anything else, Palmerston North must be faced, and the scheme that has been proposed is the only satisfactory way I can see of meeting the position.

Mr. Marchbanks.] This statement [Appendix A] does not give the local traffic to Palmerston North?—Yes, it gives it all. Item No. 5 shows all the traffic that originates between the two stations.

Does that give all the local traffic to Palmerston North?—Yes.

Could we get the total traffic to Palmerston North?—You could get that from a return.

I should like to get the traffic north-bound to Palmerston North and beyond Palmerston North to the west coast and to the east coast?—That is all given in the statement that I have put in [Appendix A].

The Commission adjourned till 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 9th March, 1921, at Palmerston North.

PALMERSTON NORTH, WEDNESDAY, 9TH MARCH, 1921.

The Commission sat in the Magistrate's Court at Palmerston North on Wednesday, 9th March, 1921.

OPENING.

Mr. Myers : Sir, we have already given some evidence in Wellington, and I understand that the main object in coming here is to enable the people who are opposing the scheme of the Railway Department to indicate by evidence the reasons for their opposition. After they have done so, sir, I will be able to say whether I find it necessary to call any evidence here, and, if so, I could call it right away.

Mr. Luckie : Sir, I understood that the Commission adjourned to Palmerston North for the purpose of taking evidence generally and in accordance with the usual procedure. I submit that it is really for my learned friend to adduce his evidence so as we may have an opportunity of replying to him. My friend knows that that is the usual custom in cases of this description. It is for him to bring forward the evidence that is available here.

Mr. Myers : I disagree with the view taken by my friend Mr. Luckie, and obviously the course he suggests is wrong. I decline to allow the Railway Department in this matter to be placed in the position of a litigant coming before this Commission by adopting the course that my learned friend suggests. I have called the expert testimony which I considered necessary to show the reasons for the proposals adopted by the Railway Department. I have no expert testimony to call here, and I decline to adopt the suggestion submitted by Mr. Luckie. The course suggested by me is the proper one, and I think Mr. Luckie will remember that at the last Commission similar to the present one—you will remember, sir, because you were one of the Commissioners—the very course my learned friend advocates now was the course he objected to in that case. The evidence of the Railway Department was not called then until the rest of the evidence was heard. I may say that the Railway Department has come to the conclusion after very careful consideration that a certain course is the right and proper one, and I suggest that it is the duty of those gentlemen represented by Mr. Luckie to show that that course is wrong.

Mr. Luckie : In reply to my friend's distinction between this case and the case of the Levin-Marton deviation Commission, I should like to point out to you, gentlemen, that that Commission was got up at the instigation of certain persons who desired to show that the Levin deviation should be given effect to, and consequently it was natural for them to open their case, because they were proposing something. I submit, sir, that it is for my learned friend to support his position. To my mind the position is very clear from the order of reference, which says: "(1) Whether the facilities now existing at Palmerston North for the conduct of the business of the Government Railways Department are sufficient and suitable for that purpose. (2.) If such facilities are not sufficient or are not suitable for such purpose, what alterations therein (whether in respect of situation or otherwise howsoever) are necessary, and desirable, and best adapted to enable the business of the said Department to be carried on with the greatest degree of safety, efficiency, economy, and convenience." Obviously my learned friend must realize it is the Government that desires an alteration in the railway-station facilities at Palmerston North, and therefore I suggest it is for the Government to bring forward its evidence in support of the proposals, so as to enable me to reply to the evidence submitted. My friend's distinction between this Commission and the Commission which was set up several years ago is obviously accounted for by the fact that we were the moving parties. At that time we had to support our case before the Commission, and I am asking him to do the same thing now. The mere fact that he is appearing for a Government Department in a matter which is affecting the whole of the Dominion and involves an expenditure of something like £700,000 or £800,000 which has to be justified does not alter the position. Up to the present time we have only heard the official evidence—that is, the evidence of Mr. McVilly, General Manager of the New Zealand Government Railways, and the evidence of Mr. MacLean, Chief Engineer of the Railway Department—and I submit we should hear the whole of the evidence of the Department before I am asked to proceed with my case. I should like to say that I am not putting the Department in the position of a litigant.

Mr. Myers : Mr. Luckie may take it, sir, from me, and the Commission may take it, that I do not intend to call any further evidence at this moment. I have obtained the evidence of the experts of the Railway Department, upon whom the Government must necessarily rely. I do not see the necessity, sir, at this stage to call any evidence which is of a non-expert character. If my learned