

Have you gone into the question of cost of providing the line overhead?—I have not done so in this case because I have not been asked to. In Sydney the bridges are above the streets.

The point is this: that without either raising the railway-line or putting it under the level of the street you could not carry out the scheme without closing Cook Street?—Put in a subway.

At what cost?—That is another question.

Do you know that both the town and the district are growing?—Yes.

How would you overcome the difficulty of the level crossings?—From the present station to Terrace End?

Yes?—I do not think there would be much difficulty in placing the railway-line below its present level.

Have you formed any estimate of the cost of doing that?—That would not be a very expensive matter provided the river-water did not give any difficulty. The gravel-pit at Terrace End is dry.

There are grave engineering difficulties in carrying out that scheme?—Not that I am aware of.

What about the grades?—There would be a grade ascending from the last crossing in the Square at the south end.

Would not that grade hamper the efficiency of the railway service?—I should not think so.

Have you any idea of the distance from the Square—that is, the last crossing—to Terrace End?—About two miles.

Have you any idea of the grade that would be necessary to carry out your suggested scheme?—Whatever would be the convenient grade for the Railway Department.

*Mr. Myers.*] Besides the grades there are other engineering difficulties in the way?—I am not aware of any great engineering difficulties.

What about the river-water you mentioned just now?—I said that a certain improvement could be effected provided the river-water did not give any difficulty, and judging by the condition of the gravel-pit at Terrace End that is dry enough and is also deep enough.

Otherwise you would leave the railway-crossings as they are?—Unless it was decided to viaduct the whole line.

You have not formed an idea of how many million pounds that will cost?—That would not run into millions.

In your opinion the convenience of the town would be better served by leaving the station where it is at the present time?—I take it that the present condition of the town is due to the convenience of the present railway-station site.

*Mr. Holmes*, as an engineer, is it not very difficult at the present time to put in any transit system from the present railway-station to any of the residential portions of the town?—If it would mean tramways, it is difficult.

It is difficult. From Main Street to the Square is a very congested street for tramways, is it not?—I do not think so.

With the removal of the railway-station from the centre of the town to the suggested position outside Boundary Road, it would be very easy to put in a transit system that would serve the whole of the borough?—It would serve Terrace End.

Do I understand you to say that you could not have a tramway system in Palmerston North with the railway-station running through the town as it does?—It is possible.

How are you going to do it?—The same as was done in Christchurch.

*Mr. Luckie.*] By the method you have suggested of shifting the railway to the south of the present site, could you not avoid the shunting through the Square?—Yes.

And in consequence one of the chief difficulties which has been raised in connection with Palmerston North would disappear so far as that portion was concerned?—Yes.

And you are satisfied from your knowledge of the neighbourhood that there are ample sites available to the south and west of the present railway-station to provide all the accommodation that could be reasonably required for a very considerable time to come?—Yes.

If the land at the proposed new station is subject to heavy flood-water in the winter-time considerable expense would have to be incurred by the Railway Department to prevent this?—The land would have to be kept high enough to prevent flooding.

As head of the Public Works Department it would be your duty to advise against putting the railway-station in the locality proposed by the Railway Department if you could not find satisfactory foundations?—If the position were insuperable.

Except at extraordinary expense?—Yes.

In your opinion there is no comparison between the expense that would be involved by carrying out improvements at the present railway-station and the expense that would be involved if the present Government proposals were carried out?—The present station could be improved sufficiently at a less cost than the construction of the proposed deviation.

How much less?—I am judging by the estimates given by the Railway Department with respect to the cost of construction of the deviation.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] In connection with the level crossings north of the station, instead of sinking the road as you suggest would it not be feasible to raise the road from the Square 7 ft. or 8 ft. until you got to Terrace End, and provide subways at the Square? Have you any idea what subways would cost at the present time?—I could not give an estimate.

WILLIAM THOMSON sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie.*] You are a retired farmer, are you not?—Yes.

And you reside in Palmerston North?—That is so.

How long have you lived in and about Palmerston North?—Off and on. I have known this town for many years.