

Palmerston North depends on the easy accessibility to the main centre of the town, and if people are landed about two miles away there will be a great loss of time going to and from the town. A good deal has been said about the floods, and I ask you to imagine what will happen to the Auckland express arriving at flood-time. Mr. Nash denies that is the site for the proposed railway-station [pointed out on plan]. We would like to know where the site is. In the Palmerston North *Standard* it is stated that the land was somewhere between Gillespie's Line and Rangitikei Line. If this proposal were given effect to it would mean a total cost direct and indirect to the State of £1,000,000 or more; and I ask, who is going to foot the bill? It is all very well for the officers of the Railway Department to make recommendations for a new station, but we are the shareholders. We submit that the recommendations made by Mr. Hiley some years ago should be carried out in their entirety. I am not an engineer, but I believe Mr. Hiley was a competent one.

*Mr. Myers*: He was not an engineer.

*Mr. Chrystall*: If Terrace End could be diverted by having station-yards there it would save the traffic coming through Palmerston North, and I believe that it is possible to have a goods-station at Terrace End and leave the passenger-station in its present position. If the Levin-Greatford Railway were constructed it would be a distance of thirty-eight miles, and the saving in time would be approximately one hour. It would also save in mileage sixteen miles, and the cost would be approximately £12,000 per mile, making a total cost with bridging of £600,000. This proposal would also avoid the necessity of duplication when that time arrives. A penny saved is a penny earned, and every penny saved from this unwarranted expenditure of the proposed deviation could be transmitted to the construction of the Levin-Greatford line, and the members of this Commission would save £600,000 and make a gift to the travelling public of New Zealand.

*Mr. Myers*.] You are one of the members belonging to the same league as Mr. Thomson?—No. What is your league?—The Levin-Greatford League.

What you are here to advocate is the Levin-Greatford line—you want the Levin-Greatford Railway?—Absolutely.

The sooner you get it the better you will like it?—I would not recommend it at the present time.

The sooner you can get it the sooner you will like it—that is the position?—Yes.

Supposing the Railway Department are definite in their opinion that a deviation is required at Palmerston North, and supposing you can get the Levin-Greatford Railway, is that the end of your objection to the Palmerston North deviation?—It is not; and I say that even if I were a resident of the North Cape or the Bluff, and equally cognizant of the contemplated waste of money, I would oppose it as strenuously as I do now.

The fact is you are a Foxton resident and Mayor of Foxton, and also a member of the Levin-Greatford League?—Yes.

You have criticized the wisdom of the Palmerston North Borough Council in coming to the conclusion that this deviation is necessary—you say it is going to cost a lot of money?—The Mayor says so.

Do you think it is altogether right for the Mayor of Foxton to come here and inform the Mayor and Borough Councillors of Palmerston North how they are to conduct their business and what is the best way to conduct their business?—In political matters. This is a matter affecting the people generally.

The only reason for coming here is to show that the matter has to do not only with Palmerston North but with the public generally?—That is so.

But for that you would not attempt to teach the Borough Council of Palmerston North their affairs?—That is so.

*Mr. Luckie*.] You say the Manawatu Railway Company coped with the difficulty by banking the Makerua Swamp?—Yes, fifteen miles of it.

They did it in the way this could be done?—Yes, with bankings.

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THOMAS JOHN RODGERS sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie*.] What is your occupation?—I am a land agent.

You have property in Main Street, have you not?—Yes.

You are satisfied your property will be affected if any change takes place in the railway-station?—That is so.

You have been in Palmerston North for a number of years?—All my life.

You have watched its growth?—Yes.

Do you say that its growth is to a large extent due to the railway position?—Undoubtedly.

In your opinion, what is going to be the general effect on certain railway land if they put the railway-station in the vicinity of the Rangitikei Line?—It will make a great difference to this end of the town.

A great number of the men who signed the petition that was produced have business premises on the Rangitikei Line, have they not?—Yes.

Their business premises will not suffer?—Not to such an extent.

Do you know the price to which land has gone up where the railway is proposed?—Some of the land has changed hands at fairly high prices.

At what price?—One portion has changed hands at £60 a foot.

Do you know the land where the photograph was taken?—Yes, it was Fair's property.

The following is a report as to the official announcement of the Department's intention in connection with the new routes: "Through the courtesy of the Borough Engineer (Mr. J. R. Hughes) a reporter was shown the Railway Department's plan this morning and supplied with some interesting