

its present site : do you still consider that because some of you business people near Terrace End may have to lose your siding rights the station is not to be removed ?—Certainly I would not say that.

If that absolute necessity arose, you said something about making other arrangements ?—We would probably move to a port, where we could get our goods in without any trouble.

For instance, Foxton ?—We would go to Wellington.

It is possible for your firm without great expense and loss to obtain land near the new line and have your siding, is it not ?—Yes, it will be possible.

You do not suggest for a moment, as Mr. Luckie has suggested, that it would be a loss of £20,000 ?—Our present building would be useless, and it would cost us at least £20,000 to set up.

Could you not use some of your present equipment ?—Yes. The cost would be very heavy—very close on £20,000. I am given to understand that the Waimate Mill is costing £20,000.

Is that mill larger than yours ?—Slightly larger. Waimate Mill is to be fifteen-sacks capacity ; ours is twelve and a half to fourteen sacks. Our business in Palmerston North has been the means of supplying flour to Napier, Wanganui, and Wellington, and the position would have been very serious at the time of the epidemic had there not been a flour-mill about.

ALBERT LONSDALE COOK sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie.*] You are a member of Messrs. Cook and Sons ?—Yes.

Carrying on business in Palmerston North ?—Yes.

You have heard the evidence given by your brother as to the effect on your business if the station-site were removed ?—Yes.

Is that evidence correct ?—Yes.

You know something about the site of the proposed new railway-station ?—Yes. The people who sold land told me they got £350 per acre for 22 acres.

What is the value of the land for farming purposes ?—If they received £50 to £100 per acre for dairying purposes it would be a good price.

Is the land near the railway-site liable to flood ?—It has flooded every year since I have been in Palmerston North. Sometimes it floods seven or eight times a year.

It is low-lying land, generally speaking, is it not ?—White-pine swamp.

The whole of that neighbourhood is white-pine swamp ?—Yes.

What do you mean by that ?—It is very soft underneath—very soft understrata—and is soft for about 20 ft. down.

That statement is of considerable importance, and I want you to be careful. You would have to go down a considerable distance to get a satisfactory foundation, would you not ?—Yes.

*Mr. Myers.*] Can any man who has had no experience in matters of this description be called to give evidence on what is really an expert matter ?—[No answer.]

*Mr. Luckie.* : We will show you it has the characteristics of white-pine swamp land. The witness says that it would be necessary to go down about 20 ft. before you get any foundation. I am not going to carry the argument any further.

*Mr. Myers* (to witness).] You have spoken about a sale of some 20 acres of land : to whom did that land belong ?—Milverton and Sons.

Who was the purchaser ?—I think Messrs. Vautier and Wilton.

And they paid £350 per acre for 22 acres ?—Yes.

When was the purchase made ?—Within two days of the scheme being presented to the Borough Council.

What scheme ?—This deviation scheme.

Can you tell me about what time it was ?—I do not know.

Who told you it was two days after the scheme was presented to the Borough Council ?—The people who sold the land.

Where is this 22 acres of land you speak about ?—It is on the corner of Rangitikei Street and Boundary Road.

You have spoken of some hole in it ?—Yes.

It is suggested to me that that hole is in the corner of the property : is that correct ?—It is near the bottom portion, yes.

It is suggested to me that the whole is about a quarter of an acre. Now, I want you to be careful, because we can see it for ourselves. First of all, have you looked at the property lately ?—Not recently, no.

What extent do you say this hole comprises ?—I have seen it covered for about two or three acres for years.

How much is the duck-shooting portion worth ?—£50 per acre.

And the other portion ?—About £100 per acre.

*Mr. Luckie.*] What effect will the removal of the station have on the residential area in that portion of Palmerston North lying east of the railway-line—is that going to be a considerable item in the matter of expenditure ?—The removal of the station will put them more in the way of a rural settlement.

When it comes to the question of getting goods it is going to increase the cost of same considerably ?—Yes, it will add to the cost of living so far as they are concerned.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] What depth of water goes over the Rangitikei Street ?—I have seen it a couple of feet coming down the Mangaone Stream. I have seen it for a few years. The floods have been heavier on what is known as Fair's Swamp.

Is that the most you have ever seen it ?—Yes, that is the most I have ever seen.