

the railway-station should be shifted. My Council is supporting the proposals of the Department because we consider that it is going to provide something which will add to the future of this town and the district generally.

*Mr. Myers.*] As far as your personal interests are concerned, and your personal financial interests are concerned, are they in any way improved by the deviation of this line, or are they better under existing conditions?—They are better under existing conditions.

That is what I understood. So that to you personally the alteration would be a detriment and not an advantage?—That is so.

You have been in business yourself as a merchant in Palmerston North off and on for some years past, have you not?—Yes.

For several years you have been in the land-agency business?—Yes.

Can you give the Commission any evidence as to the probable value of the land now occupied by the Railway Department in the vicinity of the present station which will be available for sale or lease if the station is removed?—When the tramway service is put in the statement that Mr. MacLean has made will be justified as to the value of land per foot.

Can you give that as your own personal opinion?—I say that because the land on the other side is worth anything up to £150 per foot.

What do you say about the land on the Church Street side?—That land will not be so valuable, and probably it would be worth from £8 to £10 per foot. I concur with Mr. Rodgers.

As a matter of fact, can you say whether or not it would be possible by roading to make the length of frontage available for sale very much greater than 7,000 ft.?—I cannot answer that.

Can you assist the Commission by giving your opinion as to the quality of the land and its nature in the neighbourhood of the site of the new station?—I heard a witness say to-day that you could take a stick and put it down 15 ft. anywhere. If that is so I am unable to say how it is possible to graze cattle on it.

Fair's property is the property shown in the photograph [Exhibit No. 6] put in to-day?—That is supposed to be the station-site.

Do you know whether or not that is the station-site?—I know it is not the station-site. It is close on half a mile away.

Do you know from your own local knowledge, and from your knowledge as Mayor of Palmerston North, and from your engineering reports, and so on, what water it is—I mean, from what stream does that water come?—It comes from the Mangaone and Kawau. I may say we are remedying the Kawau. The Department's proposals should help to remedy the Mangaone.

One gentleman said to-night that the water came from the Oroua River: How many miles away is that river?—About thirteen miles away.

Is the thing feasible at all?—It is not feasible.

When you say "we are remedying the Kawau" you mean the Borough Council, of course?—Yes.

*Mr. Luckie.*] Are you in a position to tell us where the station will be?—Yes. [Position pointed out on plan.]

Do you know where the goods-shed will be?—The Department has not settled that matter definitely yet, and I cannot tell you.

The Railway Department has not made up its mind where the goods-shed is to be?—I understand they have not yet. I assume that the position of the goods-shed will not be very far away from the station.

Do you know whether or not the ground floods?—I do not want to deny the fact that in flood-time the water does not lay in the position where the new railway-station will probably be.

It floods about six or seven times a year under existing conditions?—I do not agree with that statement.

Have you not frequently complained to the Railway Department with respect to its failure to protect the railway-line on the way to Terrace End—there is no protection, I notice, for preventing the public stumbling on the line?—That is not the fault of the Borough Council. We have sent down a request to the Railway Department to have it fenced, but they do not want it fenced.

Who do not?—There are a lot of small stores in the street on the road to Terrace End, and people on the other side of the line make a practise of crossing it to get their requirements. The accidents have not been there, but at the level crossings. The reply we received from the Minister was that when we had settled the matter among ourselves we were to go to him. That was a diplomatic reply.

Did not one accident take place at Terrace End where there was no level crossing?—Yes, and a man was killed at the crossing on the Longburn-Rongotea Road, and there have been other men killed in the Square. As a matter of fact, a man was killed outside the Courthouse.

It is correct, is it not, that you yourself were in favour of closing Cook Street?—Yes.

It was closed by Proclamation on three occasions, was it not?—Yes, it has been closed on three occasions.

There was a considerable area of land bought near Church Street?—Yes.

It has never been used?—It was not used on account of the war.

There is a considerable area of land that could be taken south of the railway-station. If an ex-Manager of Railways says this station could be improved by taking the railway-station farther south, would you say it is impossible?—What I say is this: If an expert man—an engineer—said that this was practicable, and the expert Engineer and General Manager of Railways said it was not, I would believe the Railway Department.

These are men who know their business?—If they were railway managers I would accept their statement.

You are not an expert in matters of this description?—No.