

And you at once showed the difficulties about the green and red proposals, which showed that they were totally unsuitable?—Yes.

And you are satisfied that there is no other proposal than the deviation which may be suitable?—Within the limits of expenditure which are in any way practicable.

It never occurred to you to go farther south with the station?—It did.

And did you not find that would be satisfactory?—It would not satisfy anybody.

At any rate, you are quite satisfied that on the proposals you put before the General Manager the deviation was the only one of any use?—I considered the deviation was in the best interests of every one concerned.

Is it the only efficient one?—In my opinion it is the only efficient one.

And you considered the green scheme was totally out of the question on account of the enormous expense?—It was going to cost large sums of money in the acquisition of land, and in the second place it did not provide the necessary accommodation for working the traffic and for shunting the traffic with safety to the public.

Then, as a matter of fact the whole question, I take it, is a matter firstly of the necessary accommodation for shunting, goods-sheds, engine-houses, and passenger-station?—Yes.

And a suitable site for them?—That is so.

That is the whole question which has been agitating the mind of the management for many years past in connection with Palmerston North?—It is not the whole question, because the Railway Department has to consider the safety of the public; and mixed up with this question of the passenger-station was the question of running a railway along a road from Longburn to Terrace End, and that weighed very heavily with me, at any rate, and I am sure with the Railway Department, in considering any proposals that had to be made.

*Mr. Myers.*] With level crossings?—Yes.

*Mr. Luckie.*] There are, as a matter of fact, practically level crossings all over the New Zealand railways, are there not?—There are.

I suggest to you that they are just as urgent a matter in other parts of New Zealand as they are between Longburn and Palmerston North?—Well, I cannot accept your suggestion.

Why not?—Because of the danger of running through the centre of a town.

You were talking about a line running along the road between Longburn and Palmerston North?—No, between Longburn and Terrace End.

You have had some experience of the railways in England and America in connection with these matters?—Yes.

Is it not a fact that in some of the big railway centres both in the States and in England, where the population is infinitely greater than it is in Palmerston North, the railways run with level crossings, right through the centre of some of the cities?—I know that in England such is not the case.

What do they do there?—They provide bridges.

Precisely, where the population is such that it is necessary; but they do not deviate the railways do they?—Yes.

To what extent?—To a very large extent. If you knew anything about it you would know that in Boston, America, a huge deviation was made, and huge deviations have been made in Chicago, and all over the place.

For instance, at Waterloo Station in London, and at Clapham Junction, do not the railway-stations still exist in the middle of the city?—No.

Is it not a fact that at Redfern they are trying to bring the railway-station into the middle of the city?—No.

They are trying to get it in?—Yes, but they cannot succeed.

The only thing that stops them is the cost?—The cost must be considered.

Is it not necessarily a fact that Palmerston North owes its actual existence in the size to which it has grown to its being practically the centre of the North Island railway system—it is due to the fact of the railway centre being there that the population is round it?—I think the prosperity of Palmerston North is due to other causes than the railway.

I am not talking about the prosperity of Palmerston North, but the population?—And the population.

Do you not think they have had a good deal to do with it?—I do not think so.

Why is there such an enormous population in Palmerston North as compared with Feilding?—Because there is a wider stretch of country there.

Is it better country round Palmerston North than at Feilding?—I think so. I am not much of a farmer, but taking area for area I think it is so.

There is no land like that which is around Marton and Feilding?—I think if you compared the area of the land round Palmerston with that at Feilding you would find that it is so.

Is it not a fact that the natural result of the removal of the railway would be to gradually draw the city out to Rangitikei Street?—No, I do not think so. I am satisfied from my own personal investigation and from the evidence that has been given before this Commission that the growth of Palmerston North was north-west of the Square long before there was any talk of removing the station.

I am not denying that. It had built itself around the Square when the Square was near the railway-station, and then drew out to the natural outlet, which was towards the west?—It is just the contrary.

Is it not a fact that the building of the railway-station must naturally draw the city out in that direction?—The proof is there. It is growing in another direction.