

But your scheme, if you alter the whole station and shift the whole station down, would be more costly than Mr. MacLean's, except for the bridges. I do not want you to look at Mr. MacLean's estimates for the moment?—Then how can you ask me if my scheme would be more costly if you do not tell me what his estimates are?

Mr. MacLean took all the land to Kairanga Road, as you propose?—Yes; and I say, take it farther if necessary for goods purposes.

Mr. MacLean says, "Leave the station pretty well where it is," and you say "Shift it to the neighbourhood of West Street"?—Yes.

The question I am asking you, and the only question, is that up to that point does it not necessarily follow that your scheme in that connection would be more expensive than Mr. MacLean's, inasmuch as he leaves the station arrangements pretty well where they are?—But is it not proposed to build a new station?

Yes?—And perhaps use the old building?

Apparently so: so, does not your scheme up to that point involve a greater expense than his?—I cannot tell you unless you allow me to read his estimates.

Of course, because I am trying to get something from you which seems to me to be so obvious without reference to figures?—It is not so obvious to me, because I want to see something more.

Each of you say, "Take the land to Kairanga Road"?—Yes.

So far as the taking of land is concerned, your scheme involves the same expense as Mr. MacLean's?—For goods purposes.

I do not care for what purposes: you are buying the same thing?—But you are not asking me about land, you are asking me about the total cost, are you not?

No, I am taking it by stages and first dealing with the land?—That would not make any difference in the land for the goods-station.

Precisely so. Mr. MacLean says, "Station at present site to deal with all business except locomotive-depot"?—What does that mean—goods and passengers?

"To deal with all business, and involves the use of the present station building with minor alterations"?—Minor alterations. That is a different matter.

If you leave the station where it is, does not that involve less expense as compared with your proposal of building an entirely new station near West Street?—I could not say without having it sketched out. If the Department is satisfied to leave the present station where it is, and to deal with the goods in the way I think, and not to shunt across the Square, they had better do it, but they cannot. You are going to effect all sorts of extravagances, to shunt across the Square, and to build bridges, and you cannot do it. Mr. MacLean can make you a trial sketch in a day, and let you see what he really means and what it involves.

You have told us what you mean?—I told you when I began my evidence that I am only giving you the general features, and that Mr. Fulton has a sketch trial plan which he can bring down. That will show more clearly what I mean.

But I may take it that you have not gone into the question of details—you have not gone into the matter closely nor into the question of expenses?—I have gone into all three questions. I have gone into the question of expense, as I have explained to you, and given you the total estimates.

Have you got any details to show how you have arrived at the amount you have given?—I have given enough details in the general information to show that I would remove the present passenger-station site to a place where we could have more land and more area for buildings and platforms than the minimum requires. I do not see exactly how you are going to keep the present station going and avoid shunting over the Square; but if you are prepared to shunt over the Square and keep the station buildings where they are, of course it will be cheaper.

Now, I want you to look at Mr. MacLean's estimate of that scheme, and you can cross out, if you like, the overhead bridges from the Square to Terrace End, estimated to cost £350,000. Do you see that that scheme, which certainly is no less expensive than yours, would involve an expenditure of half a million of money?—I have only arrived at the point that I see "£775,000; station-yard, buildings, &c., £150,000." I do not know what that means. Then, "engine-depot, £50,000." I have already expressed my view that £50,000 is a very excessive sum, in my opinion, for an engine-depot, and I do not know where he proposes to place it.

Have you had to consider since you left the Railway service the question of the cost of an engine-depot?—No, I have not.

It is a part of Mr. MacLean's ordinary work, is it not?—Does Mr. MacLean intend to build and equip an entirely new engine-depot and not make use of the present structure at all?

I do not know?—Well, I do not know either. Therefore you cannot expect me to answer that question. He says £50,000 for an engine-depot.

He is responsible for his estimates—I am not?—Then he says, "Double track, Longburn to Palmerston North, and separate tracks to engine-depot, £50,000." I have not included anything for that. If you want a double track, that is extra.

It is an item that has to be taken into consideration?—That is not putting the station south.

It has to be taken into consideration in considering what scheme should be adopted for improving the facilities at Palmerston North?—Yes. I do not think it is necessary.

But you are not running the railways?—No, and I have told you already that the Railway Department must be responsible for working out its own details. I merely express my opinion that £50,000 seems a very large sum for an engine-depot. I do not even know where they intend to put it. Then, the report states, "Diversion Main Street, roading, &c., and double track, Longburn to Palmerston North." I do not think that is necessary.