

But is it not a fact to which you are shutting your eyes that the town at the present time is extending towards the site of the new station?—Yes, but the same conditions will soon obtain at the new station as they do here.

You mean that a certain number of shops and buildings will gradually grow up around the new station wherever it is?—Yes.

Your scheme assumes that the Palmerston North people would submit to the closing of Kairanga Road and West Street?—I do not think they will make any bones about Kairanga Road, and I think they would submit to the closing of West Street also. The principal street is Cook Street.

I suppose you know that the Palmerston North Borough Council, which is representative of the citizens, and also the Chamber of Commerce, prefer the diversion which is suggested by the Railway Department?—Yes, I have heard so, but I am not very much influenced by the opinions of Borough Councillors.

Or of Chambers of Commerce?—No, there are all sorts of interests involved.

May I ask whether it is the interests of the people of Palmerston North that you have mainly in mind when you suggested that the railway-station should remain somewhere near its present neighbourhood?—Yes, I think it is in the interests of the people of Palmerston North, and it is in the interests of our pockets.

What is the principal consideration that moves you—is it the consideration of the interests of the people of Palmerston North?—I think the first consideration with me is the enormous expense.

And I suppose, like Mr. Maxwell, you admit at once that the question which is the better scheme is entirely a matter of opinion?—Irrespective of the question of expense, yes.

Including the question of expense?—No, because we have got a big station already there now, and in the other scheme they have to build an entirely new one.

Do you think you are sufficiently taking into consideration the probability of the development of Palmerston North, and the probable increase in the traffic there?—Yes.

I assume you were asked to come into this matter either by Messrs. Field and Luckie or by some people at Palmerston North?—I was asked to come into the matter by Mr. Field and Sir James Wilson.

You know, of course, that Sir James Wilson is opposed to any deviation here—he desires a deviation from Levin to Greatford?—Yes. I am not taking that into consideration.

But may I take it that what Sir James Wilson asks you to do was to advise whether in your opinion some arrangements could be made or some scheme devised which would involve the retention of the present site somewhere in its present neighbourhood?—Some such remarks were made, but I took no notice of them at all.

May I ask what it was that Sir James Wilson asked you to do?—Principally he was advocating the line from Marton to Levin.

He was mainly advocating the line from Marton to Levin?—Yes.

But the Palmerston North facilities must have had some connection in his mind according to what he was instructing you to do?—I gathered that it was going to relieve the traffic in Palmerston North to some extent if the line were constructed from Marton or Greatford to Levin.

But he asked you to advise or do something in connection with Palmerston North, did he not?—I do not know that he did.

But somebody must have asked you to go into this question at Palmerston North?—Yes, Mr. Field and Mr. Luckie.

But you were first spoken to by Sir James Wilson about the Levin to Greatford deviation?—Yes, with the inference that it would relieve the traffic at Palmerston North.

*Mr. Luckie.*] We asked you, Mr. Fulton, to advise whether this was a proper scheme, in your opinion, which involved such a large expenditure of money, and whether you and Mr. Maxwell would visit the present station and give your opinion on it?—Yes.

And you formed that opinion entirely regardless of Sir James Wilson in the matter at all?—Yes. We were thinking of the proposed Palmerston deviation as alternative to the present site.

Supposing you had been asked your opinion by the Government, would it have been the same as you have given before the Commission now?—Identically.

Irrespective of the people who asked for your opinion?—Yes.

You have given your opinion as a railway expert and a man having experience in these matters that your proposal is the most suitable method for dealing with the congested traffic in Palmerston North?—Yes.

As far as the question of level crossings is concerned, you have had experience of them all over the world?—Yes, I have seen them.

Is there any more danger or difficulty arising from level crossings at Palmerston North than anywhere else in New Zealand?—In proportion to the traffic, no.

And is it your experience that where overhead bridges and subways are constructed that nine-tenths of the people do not use them?—In Dunedin they have automatic gates, and I understood they worked very well. A driver with a loaded dray will never go over an overbridge if he can go over a level. I also draw attention to the automatic gates and level road-crossing in the Auckland Station.

And that is your experience not only locally but applies to all over the world?—Everywhere.

It may be taken that level crossings are a necessary incident of all railway systems in the world, especially where there is flat country?—Except where the traffic becomes excessive, and they then raise the whole track for road traffic to pass underneath.

The Commission adjourned till 10 a.m. next day.