

and will be a dangerous business. That system could not be worked with our general methods. Now, with regard to the goods-yard, Mr. Fulton's sketch proposes that we should purchase a considerable area of land towards the Square which does not now belong to us, and on this he proposes to put a number of blind sidings. Now, blind sidings have their uses if they are easy of access, but the access to these sidings would be from the middle of his yard, and therefore would be exceedingly difficult to work. The sorting-grids which he sketches have only a very limited amount of headroom for shunting. [Sketch-plan referred to.] Assuming that the property facing the Square is not to be purchased, then there will be very little headroom for shunting, and only for shunting in one direction. For shunting at Palmerston North it is essential that it should be carried on at both ends in any arrangement of sidings. Again, we come to where he places his goods-sheds, and the sidings connected with the goods-shed. He then proposes to stop at West Street, which will mean very little headway for shunting. For that reason I am satisfied that in order to make in any way a feasible proposition it would be necessary to purchase the block of land included between West Street, Main Street, Botanical Road, and Church Street, which Mr. Maxwell suggests, but it would increase the cost by at least £50,000, which I have not included in the comparative estimate. In my scheme I have included that.

But you have not included that in the extra amount which you have said that the carrying-out of Mr. Fulton's proposal would involve?—No, I have not included that, but I am satisfied that would have to be purchased. If we are to be compelled to stay at the present site I think it would be inevitable that we would have to purchase those two blocks. Now, in Mr. Fulton's design he also provides for an area of land to the south of West Street for carriage and wagon sidings. The shape of that land is such that it would be very difficult to provide a series of grids, such as sorting and standing grids, with the result that we would have to put in a series of long sidings and short sidings which would be very detrimental to proper working. Those are the main features of what I consider the difficulties of his design. It would be exceedingly costly to provide for signals and interlock a station such as this, and there are roads farther along than Kairanga Road towards Longburn over which a certain amount of shunting would have to be carried out.

Are those the principal objections you have to the arrangements in connection with the station and yard?—Yes, the main features. Perhaps I should say that Mr. Maxwell's and Mr. Fulton's scheme involves the removal of the station to a point about three-quarters of a mile from the centre of the Square, and at least a mile from what is recognized by all to be the centre of the present business, which is growing all the time towards the north-west.

You have already said that the figures you have given for the cost of Mr. Fulton's scheme above his estimate do not include an additional track from Palmerston to Longburn?—Yes.

Is that necessary if you keep your present site at Palmerston North?—The necessity for that at the present time is so acute that it has been included in the deviation scheme, and naturally if we are going to work here it will be still more acute, or, at any rate, more necessary than it would be in the deviation scheme.

And you have actually allowed £50,000 for that in your estimate of the deviation scheme?—Yes.

So that in order to compare your scheme with Mr. Fulton's you commence either by adding £50,000 to your own increased estimate of Mr. Fulton's scheme, or by taking £50,000 off your estimate of your own deviation?—That is so.

Then may we take it from what you have already said that in your opinion the adoption of Mr. Fulton's scheme would not be satisfactory for the purpose of the efficient running of the railway?—I think that scheme is quite unworkable.

And it still leaves, of course, the level crossings between Longburn and Terrace End other than those at Cook Street, West Street, and Kairanga Road?—Well, that is assuming that Mr. Fulton does not provide for any bridges in West Street or Kairanga Road. He stated quite definitely that his proposal meant the closing of Kairanga Road, and he proposed to make a subway for foot-passengers at West Street to get access to the station and Main Street.

It still leaves the other level crossings?—Yes, all the level crossings to the south and north.

Mr. Fulton's scheme does not include any bridges over the other level crossings?—No.

You have already told us that you object to level crossings in a borough like Palmerston North, but, after all, is that your main consideration, or is it a minor consideration?—I think it is a point to be taken into consideration—a point affecting the whole position, but it is not anything like the main consideration in our proposals.

You have included, I think, in your estimate of the deviation something like £50,000 for overhead bridges?—That is so.

So that in order to bring your scheme into comparison with Mr. Fulton's, could you or could you not reduce that item of £50,000 that you have got for overhead bridges?—Accepting the principle laid down by Mr. Maxwell that bridges should be provided wherever there was shunting, then that would limit the bridging to two crossings—namely, what is known as Gillespie's line, which is an extension of Kairanga Road, and the Rangitikei line. There are two other bridges which would be in a cutting and therefore would be bridged in any case. By providing bridges at those places and omitting bridges at the other road-crossings we could easily reduce our cost by £30,000.

Now I will take some other items. If you have to save money you could save it on your own deviation scheme. Mr. Maxwell said that you might require to spend up to 4s. per yard on about 500,000 cubic yards of earthwork?—Yes, he estimated 400,000 yards.

The estimate you gave this Commission when you gave evidence previously included how many yards of earthwork?—It included 500,000 yards at 4s.

You have already stated that you have put in outside estimates, but as a matter of fact what is your view as to the possible saving there?—Mr. Maxwell stated that he could not obtain the