

You have had an opportunity of considering the proposals of the Railway Department, and I want to ask you what would be the effect on the city if the proposed deviation were carried out?—I think that the effect on the Town of Palmerston North would be very detrimental. Of course it would be an advantage to those people who are in the vicinity of the proposed railway station, but it would inflict an exceedingly grave wrong on the people who are in business on the main line at Palmerston North.

Do you know the effect it is having, or will have, on the land in the neighbourhood of the proposed station?—I am not speaking personally, but I have heard that values in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station have gone up from £120 to £300—that is, of course, roughly speaking.

Do you know the site of the proposed railway-station?—Very well.

Have you any knowledge of its condition in the winter-time?—Yes.

What is its condition?—I have seen portions of the land flooded. I think in the year 1892 or 1893 there was one big flood and it flooded a portion of the land [pointed out on plan].

Have you seen it flooded subsequently?—Yes, last flood.

How deep?—I cannot say.

Here is a photograph [Exhibit No. 6] of the land as it was in October last year?—That is quite correct.

*Mr. Myers*: That is nothing of the kind.

*Mr. Luckie*.] *Mr. Myers* has stated that the general trend of the business at Palmerston North, independent of the railway, is down Rangitikei Line. I will show that the town is developing along the Rangitikei Line. There is no doubt about that. [To witness:] Is it a fact that the great bulk of the business premises which have to hold heavy stocks will remain where they are, near the railway-station, instead of going down near the proposed site?—I fancy the business places will follow the railway-station.

There is a considerable area of land adjoining the present station where land could be obtained for railway purposes, is there not?—Down West Street and Church Street there is a large paddock on the left-hand side as you go along Boundary Road.

*Mr. Marchbanks*.] I am given to understand there are something like 150 acres there?—Yes, I understand so.

*Mr. Myers*: I may tell my learned friend *Mr. Luckie* that the proposal to take land west and east of the railway-station was rejected by the Railway Department ten years ago.

*Mr. Luckie* (to witness).] Do you know that plans were prepared in the year 1914 or 1915, and were understood to be *Mr. Hiley's* plans, for improvements to the present station?—Yes.

Were those proposals put forward by the Railway Department?—Yes.

*Mr. Myers*: I protest, sir, against this class of evidence. *Mr. Luckie* asks this gentleman something about *Mr. Hiley's* scheme, but he does not say how he knows.

*Witness*: Well, I can tell you it was stated in a most definite way in Palmerston North.

*Mr. Myers*: We are simply wasting time.

*Mr. Miles*: I think the Commissioners will be able to place the proper weight on hearsay evidence which it should receive.

*Mr. Luckie* (to witness).] From your own knowledge you know the locality about the present station?—Yes.

Do you know whether or not the level crossings in Palmerston North are a source of danger?—No, they are not a source of danger. I may say that for the last twenty years there were only about four accidents.

*Mr. Myers*.] *Mr. Thomson*, are you giving evidence before this Commission in a representative capacity, or as *Mr. William Thomson*, of Palmerston North, retired farmer?—I am giving evidence as a representative of a committee.

Of what representative capacity?—It is representative of a large number of business men in this city—for instance, *Mr. Clausen*.

Exactly. You are one of the so-called "Vigilance Committee." There are some business men amongst them?—Yes.

Have you any direct interest?—None whatever.

How did you come to be mixed up with the "Vigilance Committee"?—Because any one who has any interest in the town should belong to it.

How many business men are there connected with this "Vigilance Committee"?—Quite a number. *Mr. Clausen* and *Mr. Rodgers* are two I have in my mind for the moment. *Mr. Rodgers*, land agent, carries on business near the railway-station.

What other business men are there on your committee?—*Mr. Ireland*.

His premises are near the railway-station, are they not?—Yes.

He has a private siding off the present line, has he not?—Yes.

What other business men are there connected with the committee you speak of?—I do not know them all personally. There are a great many who are down Main Street.

*Mr. Rodgers*, I am told, owns some shops near the railway-station?—You had better ask him that question. I do not know what property he has got.

You know the people in your league—it is a committee and not a league?—Yes.

What other business men are there?—I do not know. I cannot tell you.

*Mr. Thomson*, would it surprise you to know that I have here in my hand a petition which has been handed to me by *Mr. Young*, president of the Palmerston North Chamber of Commerce, containing the names of 230 persons, every one of whom represents a business house, wholesale or retail?—Yes.