

You have rural land there, have you not?—It is really my father's property—about 100 acres. Is it not a fact that the value of land in Rangitikei Street has been increasing for years?—Yes, near the Square.

And gradually for some distance farther on?—As a matter of fact I know of a property in Rangitikei Street, and it would not have brought the price it did only for this scheme coming out.

Do you know Holben and Kirk's premises?—Yes.

What is land worth about there?—I should say, about £80 to £100 per foot.

How far past Holben and Kirk's on the other side was it that a piece of land brought £60 a foot recently?—About 200 to 250 yards.

Is it not a fact that for years past the bulk of the building of business premises in Palmerston North has taken place in Rangitikei Street?—That is quite so.

Is it not a fact that that has been going on for ten or fifteen years?—Yes, about that.

How far would you say Holben and Kirk's place is from the present railway-station?—About three-quarters of a mile.

Is it not more?—I should not think so.

You know the site of the proposed railway-station?—Yes.

How far would it be from the proposed railway-station?—About a mile.

As much as that?—Just about that distance.

So that Holben and Kirk's premises are pretty well half-way between the present station and the proposed station?—Yes.

So that business premises in the neighbourhood of Messrs. Holben and Kirk's would get their carting done from the proposed station at about the same cost?—It would not make any difference.

Now, look here: when you gave your evidence about carting it was some conversation you had with a carter?—A manager of a firm.

You tell us that Messrs. Holben and Kirk's premises are, for practical purposes, about half-way from the station?—Yes, from the station.

So that the cartage on goods near Holben and Kirk's would be about the same?—If the goods-shed is put near the station.

That is part of the scheme?—No, it is stated that the goods-shed would be about two miles and a half away.

Do you suggest that it would cost 5s. extra per ton to carry goods between Holben and Kirk's premises and a place half-way round the Square?—I did not suggest anything of the kind.

That is what your evidence suggests?—A leading business man told me that.

Who told you that?—Mr. Aitchison.

If that evidence is considered of any value I will call him. Do you know Fair's paddock?—Yes.

We know that was flooded some time ago?—Yes.

That flood was caused by the overflow from the Mangaone?—Yes.

You are not an engineer, of course?—No.

You cannot tell me whether or not the flooding of the Mangaone could be overcome?—Yes, it could be overcome.

That would overcome the difficulty of overflowing that you and some of your leaders have been talking about?—It was not so much the flood we were talking about but the soft nature of the ground.

You can see as a layman that the flooding difficulty by a little expense can be overcome?—Yes.

Mr. Luckie.] The increase in the value of land in Rangitikei Street would be due to the fact that it was the main centre—it is converting Rangitikei Street into the main avenue?—Yes.

In connection with the flooding of the Mangaone: I understand that Drainage Boards have made efforts to stop it flooding?—Yes.

But they have not been successful?—No.

The Commission adjourned at 6 p.m.

The Commission resumed its sitting at 7.30 p.m. in the Magistrate's Court at Palmerston North.

WILLIAM WALLACE COOK sworn and examined.

Mr. Luckie.] You are a representative of the firm of Messrs. Cook and Sons?—Yes.

And have been carrying on business for some forty or forty-five years?—Yes.

You have your premises near Terrace End?—Yes.

You have a siding, have you not?—Yes.

You have some returns which show the amount of tonnage put through by the siding-holders in Palmerston North as compared with the tonnage put through by the rest of the importers and exporters in this city?—I have.

Can you tell the Commission how this worked out for the year just ended?—The figures show that 20,000 tons were handled by persons who are in favour of the deviation, whereas we handled 84,000 tons. It will be seen, therefore, that we handled four times the amount of goods the other people did.

That is to say, the non-siding-holders, who constitute that 20,000 tons, are the people who are in favour of the proposed deviation?—That is so.

Now, in connection with land-values—is that going to affect your own business?—As far as we are concerned it is impossible to handle goods of a heavy nature and employ traction other than railways.

Would you simply have to scrap your plant and sell your land for what you could get and acquire new land and plant?—Yes.