

It is quite impossible to go on much longer under existing conditions ?—They cannot carry on like that—no railway could.

May we take it, or may the Commission take it, that the greater bulk of the goods going from the railway-station goes into the Square and Rangitikei Street ?—In connection with the Rangitikei Street merchants, there are three at least who have sidings running off the railway close to the station. Lately the Gas Company put in a siding.

I am speaking of the goods which you carry ?—These men pack goods in there and cart them at their leisure.

Is it correct to say that the bulk of the goods from the railway-station goes to Rangitikei Street and the Square ?—Certainly.

Messrs. Holben and Kirk, I suppose, have a good deal of commodities arriving ?—Not to the extent they used to.

They get a large quantity of goods from the station ?—Yes.

Do you carry it ?—We have not carried it lately. They have had their own carts for a long time.

Their premises are about half-way between the present and the proposed station ?—Oh, no.

Pretty nearly. Honestly, do you think that the carriage of goods from the proposed station to Holben and Kirk's place would be much greater in point of charge than the carriage of goods now from the present station to Holben and Kirk's premises ?—Yes, I do.

How much ?—The carriage from the new site to Messrs. Holben and Kirk's premises would perhaps be 1s. per ton greater than from the old site. We base our charges from the Square.

Do you know that it is worth a little to merchants and to the public to get goods promptly and to avoid inconvenience and delay ?—Decidedly.

Can you tell me the distance from the Bank of New Zealand corner to Boundary Road ?—I have not measured the distance, but I should say it would be close on a mile and a half.

It is not a mile. I just wanted to test you in your evidence. Seeing that a large quantity—a very large quantity—of goods from the railway-station goes to the business premises in Rangitikei Street, and that it is half a mile or more to most of those premises from the present railway-station and less than a mile from the proposed railway-station, or the goods-shed, to the Bank of New Zealand corner, how do you justify your statement that the carriage would be 3s. 6d. per ton more than it is at the present time ? If it costs 5s. to bring a cart now from the goods-shed to the Square, what will it cost to bring it another half-mile ? According to you, 6d. per ton ?—No.

That is the point—I knew I would get you.

*Mr. Luckie.* As a matter of fact you do business for a lot of small people ?—Yes.

On the outside of the Square ?—Yes.

And the bulk of the big business men do their own carting to Rangitikei Street ?—Yes.

What would be the increase in distance you would have to do if the station were shifted ?—Just about half a mile more.

You would have to do that one way empty ?—Yes.

You are still satisfied that the increase of your charges will be for the bulk of your deliveries ?—I said, about 3s. per ton.

Have you been interested for some time in the improvements of handling railway traffic at the station ?—Yes.

Do you know whether there is land available at the present site ?—Yes.

Do you know anything about Mr. Hiley's scheme ?—No.

Nor the proposal to close Cook Street ?—No.

The Railway Department bought some land belonging to your company ?—Yes.

When was that ?—About the year 1912.

Have they used any of it since ?—Not that I am aware of. I think the Postal Department are using it for some purpose or other.

What was the land bought for ?—I suppose, for railway improvements.

You got £6,000 for it under the Public Works Act ?—The Government did not give us what we wanted for the land.

I suppose you will be one of the people who will be very glad to sell to the Railway Department before the station is removed ?—We could have sold the land for more. We were offered about £6 a foot and got about £5 a foot for it.

That is in Church Street ?—Yes.

What do you think of getting £30 a foot for land when the railway goes away ?—I do not think so.

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JOHN IRELAND sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie.* What is your position ?—I am a flour-miller.

And carrying on business in Palmerston North ?—Yes.

How long have you been in Palmerston North and connected with your firm ?—About two years.

You have a private siding, have you not ?—Yes, we have held a siding for about forty years.

Where is the siding situated ?—This side of Terrace End—that is, the post-office side.

Is Cook's siding this side of Terrace End ?—Yes, about a chain.

How far is the siding away from Terrace End Station ?—About 400 yards.

That is on part of the line that will be taken up when the deviation is completed ?—Yes, I suppose it will be.

You anticipate losing your siding if the deviation goes through ?—Yes.