

CHRISTIAN NICOLAI CLAUSEN sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie.*] You are a timber-merchant and sawmiller?—Yes.

How long have you been carrying on business in Palmerston North?—Since 1894.

About twenty-seven years?—Yes.

You are against the proposal for the deviation of the railway?—Yes.

What in your opinion will be the effect upon Palmerston North and upon the block of business premises on the eastern side?—Speaking of the eastern side, I think it will have a deadly effect.

What do you say with reference to the cost of living to people who reside in that particular district?—The increased cost of carting our goods will have to be passed on: that is the only way.

So far as your business is concerned, to what extent will it increase the distance that you will have to cart goods?—We will have to cart goods to the station wherever they propose to put it—say, about a mile and a half away.

You have a railway-siding, have you not?—Yes.

Where are your premises situated?—Main Street West—opposite the railway-station.

You make that your centre for getting and carting goods—you store your firewood there?—Yes.

If you lose that siding and the railway-station is shifted you will have to go nearly a mile and a half to get your goods?—Yes.

To what percentage do you anticipate that will increase the cost of goods you handle and sell?—I should say, about 5s. per ton.

What do you charge now?—For time—do you mean the average price?

Yes?—I could not give you an average price.

I wanted to get the percentage of increased cost you would have to pass on to other people: will it nearly double the cost?—It will land out at about 5s. per ton.

The extra cost will increase by 5s. per ton, and that will have to be passed on to the purchasers and to the public generally?—Yes.

There is no other way of doing it?—Not that I can see. If the railway-station is shifted I cannot carry on.

You know something about the site of the proposed new station, do you not?—I helped to fell some of the bush.

How long ago?—I suppose, thirty-five years ago.

What is the nature of the country?—It is mostly white-pine land. You could travel half a mile and not see a bit of soil—all the soil has been washed away.

Is it subject to flood?—Yes.

Beyond Boundary Road and about north and south of Rangitikei Line?—Yes.

You know the country spoken about and you knew it thirty-five years ago: it was chiefly white-pine bush there?—Yes, chiefly white-pine. There was a bit of tawa and matai timber there.

Is it subjected to floods now?—Yes, I suppose about seven or eight times a year during the winter.

*Mr. Myers.*] You have a siding near the present railway-station, have you not?—Yes.

You have your factory and yards in Rangitikei Street, near Messrs. Holben and Kirk's premises?—Yes, almost next door.

So you have to cart quite a lot from your yard near the station to your place in Rangitikei Street?—Yes.

Do you tell the Commission that it would cost you more to cart from the proposed railway-station to your place in Rangitikei Street than it would cost you to cart from your present yard near the existing station to your place in Rangitikei Street?—Yes, it would.

Would it really?—Yes, from the proposed station.

You have a yard near the railway-station. I am only speaking of cartage and nothing else. Do you suggest that it would cost more to cart goods from the proposed station to your place in Rangitikei Street than it would cost you to cart from your present yard near the present railway-station to your place in Rangitikei Street?—Yes.

How much per ton more?—2s. 6d. per ton more. I have already said that.

You surprise me, and I will leave it at that. I think you know what Mr. Hiley's suggestions or proposals were in 1914?—Yes.

Were you satisfied with them?—Yes.

Mr. Clausen, is that true?—I am not aware that what I say is not true.

I will recall the circumstances to your mind. Is it not a fact that Mr. Hiley's suggestions of 1914 involved the loss to you of your siding?—I am not aware of that.

Is it not a fact that you were for several years a member of the Borough Council in Palmerston North?—Yes, for nine years.

Is it not a fact that you voted against the closing of Cook Street?—That may be so.

Is it not so?—That I voted against it?

For the closing of Cook Street?—I cannot remember.

Yes, you remember?—I cannot remember.

Your memory is quite good. It was of great importance to you. I ask you to think a minute and be frank with me: is it not a fact that you voted as a member of the Palmerston North Borough Council against the closing of Cook Street?—I cannot remember.

Do you not remember the question arising?—It arose very often.

Do you mean to tell me that you do not remember whether you supported the closing of Cook Street or voted against it?—The question came up so many times.