

Would it be fair to say, if anything like the same conditions as last year existed to-day, that your traffic would have been greater?—I estimate we must be prepared for a 20 per cent. increase this year.

You have told us that the volume of traffic, so far as wagons are concerned, ranges from 1,400 to 1,880?—Yes. By using every siding in the yard we can accommodate 917 wagons. This would mean that the yard would be blocked in every direction.

Can you say to what extent you think an increase in the yard accommodation is necessary—that is, the percentage of increase?—I consider we should not have less accommodation than standing-room for 2,000 wagons in our yards.

Does that mean you will require more than twice the accommodation you have at the present time?—Yes, two and a half times, at least, for our present work.

That is without looking ahead?—Yes.

What about your station accommodation?—The station accommodation is also very poor. I suppose every one knows what is termed by “scissors crossings.” Well, it is points situated in the middle of the platform which allow trains to go from one road to the other. As far as we are concerned, we can hold two trains of twelve cars and a van, but the majority of our trains are of a total of thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen. We have different trains to cross, and we have not the accommodation for them. The least I can say is that the conditions are absolutely dangerous at the present time.

Then, so far as the station and platform are concerned, are they sufficient?—I must have an increased length of three cars at each end—that is, the length of three cars. This would mean about fifty yards each way.

What about the width of the station?—The platform is also dangerous. It is not wide enough, and, to my mind, it should be double the width.

What about the goods-shed?—It requires to be four times as large, at the very least. Three parts of our goods-shed work has to be done outside of it.

Can that condition of things go on?—Absolutely, no.

Can you expect to work a staff under such conditions?—It is by extreme tact that I am able to keep the men going.

Are you in a position to speak about the engine-shed accommodation?—Yes.

Have you considered the question as to whether you will have sufficient, or anything like sufficient, room to enable the requisite increased accommodation to be provided?—I consider it is absolutely impossible without closing the Square altogether. You must have the length, and the length is not there.

You want breadth, too, if you are going to increase the width of your station?—I must have another platform, if the work is to be carried on.

When you say “another platform,” what do you mean?—Another platform so that I can bring four passenger-trains in at once. At the present time, if I bring in four trains, the people have to scramble over the cars in order to reach the platform.

You really want two platforms?—Yes.

You require an island platform, or something of that description?—If an island platform were provided it must have docks at each end. You want accommodation for those trains coming and going.

You are speaking of the present-day requirements?—Yes.

I think you know the land we have spoken of in the neighbourhood of West Street: it is suggested by some gentlemen that some of that land could be used in connection with the present yards for the purpose of providing the necessary accommodation?—It is not feasible, sir.

That is your opinion?—Yes, that is my candid opinion, and I can speak as an expert of some thirty-seven years' service; and I think I am right in saying that I have had 99 per cent. more experience than other railway men. You could not work the business on the other side satisfactorily. It would be a menace to the safety of the railway traffic from one year's end to the other.

Would you say that the land which Mr. Luckie suggested should be taken is farther away from the business centre of Palmerston North than the proposed new station-site?—I am sure you will find that is correct.

Moreover, you say that you do not think the proposal is feasible?—No, sir, it is not feasible.

Still dealing with the suggestion made by Mr. Luckie of taking land to the south of West Street, suppose such a course was adopted, what would be the effect so far as West Street is concerned?—West Street would have to be closed and made available for railway purposes.

And Cook Street would have to be closed also?—Yes.

What about Main Street?—Main Street practically becomes West Street—that is, it is the junction one with the other. Main Street ceases before it crosses the railway and becomes West Street.

*Mr. Luckie.*] Mr. Morgan, you are not an engineer, of course?—I will say this: I have had to do with the laying-out of stations during the last ten years.

You are a traffic man, are you not?—Yes.

You are aware that the proposal of the Railway Department is to take away the present station altogether and place it on a new site: what do you say about that proposal?—I consider it is the only feasible plan that can be achieved for carrying on railway business.

You say that as a result of your knowledge and experience generally, and particularly as a result of your experience in Palmerston North, and knowledge of the present-day conditions?—Yes.

It has been proposed to close Cook Street, but it has not been done: you have been working over Cook Street for a long time past, have you not?—Yes.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] Can you say, roughly, what proportion of wagons that arrive in Palmerston North are from the north and going to the east coast—that is, from the north of Terrace End, on the