

Does that not indicate that the growth of the town must go towards the railway?—That indicated that some speculators have got in early.

If land has increased from £120 to £350 per acre, would that not be a pretty considerable increase?—Yes.

If that is justified there must be a corresponding fall somewhere else sooner or later?—In my opinion the Main Street property when the station goes away from there will, with the exception of hotel property and the small shops dependent on the catch trade, increase in value.

You had a dispute a short time ago with the Railway Department, who wanted to fence the railway-line towards Terrace End?—You have stated the position incorrectly. The point was there were two children killed up there, and we thought the matter was so serious that we asked the Railway Department to fence the line and provide cattle-stops at each of the crossings. Sir William Herries came up to see us about the matter, but in the meantime a small counter deputation was got up, and Sir William laughed and said that under the circumstances it would be better to find out exactly what we required and then perhaps he would be prepared to consider the matter.

Surely it was a matter that the Borough Council should have overridden this small deputation on?—Sir William Herries remarked to us afterwards that it was the best “get-out” he had had.

You did not press the matter?—No.

You mentioned about several accidents that had taken place?—Yes; one was at the crossing this side of Longburn and the other at Monrad Street.

That is a long way from the populated portion of the city, is it not?—That is so.

Have many accidents taken place at the Square?—There have been a good many accidents there, but they did not result fatally.

You will have that wherever you have level crossings. Then your objection to the railway remaining where it is—assuming that the congestion could be got rid of—would be the question of trains running through the city?—Yes.

You have, as a member of the Borough Council, concurred with the desire of the Railway Department to the closing of Cook Street?—In these matters we are aware of the needs of the Railway Department. As a matter of fact the railway is becoming an increasing nuisance to the town.

It was not the idea of the Borough Council to get the railway-station removed at all—it was the Department's idea?—Yes.

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HENRY LLEWELYN YOUNG sworn and examined.

*Mr. Myers.*] What is your occupation?—Managing director of Messrs. H. L. Young and Co. (Limited).

A company carrying on business in Palmerston North?—Yes.

What is the nature of your business?—Manufacturing stationers.

You are the president of the Palmerston North Chamber of Commerce, are you not?—Yes.

Has your Chamber considered the question of the railway facilities at Palmerston North?—Yes.

Has it considered the question as to whether the station should remain where it is, or whether it should be removed to the position suggested by the officers of the Railway Department?—We have discussed the matter fully.

And has your Chamber come to a considered opinion on the point?—Yes.

And what is that considered opinion?—Briefly, I would like to give you the views of the Chamber. As president of the Chamber of Commerce—and I represent the majority of the business people in this town—we are all unanimous with the Borough Council that the removal of the station to the site as approved by the Railway Department is absolutely necessary. The accommodation at the present station for traffic, such as passenger and goods traffic, is, in our opinion, inadequate. The conditions under which they are working make the removal of the station essential in the interests of the Department, the town, and the district of Palmerston North. I should like to point out that if the station is continued—or, rather, if the station is enlarged on the present site, the length would be so great that with the shunting that is necessary it will practically mean closing at intervals the whole of the public thoroughfares of Palmerston North from West Street to Princess Street, which is opposite Devine's Hotel. Then, of course, the burning question with us is having two lines running through the centre of our town, which divides it in half. It creates a nuisance so far as the Post Office, the telephone bureau, and the Public Library are concerned; and apart from that, the mere fact of having sets of lines for the Auckland, Wellington, New Plymouth, Wairarapa trains through the centre of a town the size of Palmerston North is only courting disaster, and we feel that a grave responsibility rests with us if we allow this condition of affairs to continue any longer than is necessary. We approve of the new railway-site which the Railway Department has chosen by reason of the fact that it is easily accessible and has good roads. There is ample room there for future development, and we think the undertaking will be immediately productive, and that it is necessary for the development of the Main Trunk system. We are perfectly cognizant of the fact that land values and property will probably decrease in Main Street, but it appears to us that it is a matter of principle, and the deciding factor should be the greatest good to the greatest number. The petition as presented to the Minister from five hundred business people of Palmerston North—that is how it was headed—is comprised, as far as we know, of a few firms who are interested in the vicinity of the present station, some of whom are landowners, leaseholders, and small business people adjacent to the present railway-station. I wish to present to the Commission, with their permission, a petition comprised of business people in Palmerston North, and I would like to stress this point: that some of the gentlemen who have signed this petition are interested in property within close proximity to the railway-station, whilst others have farming interests in the Levin-Greatford deviation, but