

We may take it that the water that floods Fair's paddock is from the Mangaone?—Yes. I may say that the total depth of water would not be more than 12 in. I went up to have a look at it during the last flood, and the last flood was the first water I have seen in that paddock for three years.

Somebody said that it floods seven or eight times a year?—That is absolutely untrue. The late Mr. E. J. Riddiford leased that paddock for a number of years as a fattening-paddock, and he was the last man to take a fattening-paddock that was full of water. At the Commercial Hotel crossing recently I was stopped there, and in three minutes there were twenty people standing on one side, sixteen people on the other, four cars and a lorry, and three cars and three carts on the other side. I may say that that is not an unusual occurrence, and it happens not only at the crossing in question but at times at the Post Office crossing. From Terrace End to the Foxton line, a distance of 186 chains, there are eleven level crossings. The town is divided in two, and the entire population on the eastern side of the town must do their business on the other side of the railway, and they are compelled to negotiate these crossings. I cannot see how it is possible to advocate the extension of the line as suggested in the interests of the town. If this were done it would mean that there would be greater congestion than there is at the present time. If the railway-station is removed Main Street would certainly become a residential area, and it would extend towards Terrace End, and the southern portion of the town would become a good business area.

*Mr. Luckie.*] As far as the bodies you represent are concerned, how many times a year does the Agricultural and Pastoral Association hold its meetings?—Two shows a year—in all, nine days, and Ram Show, two days. Racing Club, five days racing.

Of course any alteration in the location of the railway-station is not going to vitally affect the interests of either of the bodies you represent?—As far as the Agricultural and Pastoral shows are concerned, I would like to say that the great factor is to be as near the railway as possible.

It will not affect the number of exhibits?—It will decidedly affect them. On show days people come from Masterton, Taihape, and Wellington, and the trains bring about fifteen thousand people or more.

Have you any dealings with property on the Rangitikei line?—Yes, I have.

Any recent dealings?—Not since the talk about the deviation. I have, however, advised people not to sell.

Have you had property placed under offer to clients?—No.

Not your Mr. Davis?—No, I do not think so.

It was stated that he placed land under offer to a Mr. Cook?—It was unknown to me.

You say that the land you value at £30 per foot is unsaleable?—Yes.

Why?—Because the railway-station is there.

What is the land in Main Street worth?—Mr. MacLean put a price on the land?—I do not know what Mr. MacLean values the land at. When you take the high values as against the low values you have to bear in mind how they cut it up.

For residential sites what is your rough estimate of the value of land in this locality?—In Broad Street, about £40 a foot.

You are a land-valuer, are you not?—Yes.

You mentioned that the value of the property is going to depend on how it is to be cut up?—I did not say it was valued at £30 a foot.

If witnesses who pass that place where you say there is about a quarter of an acre of flat-lying land say that about 3 acres of the land are in flood half a dozen times a year, you say they are not speaking the truth?—I say that land was dry up to the last flood in October, except for a few yards, say, about the size of this room. [Room approximately 30 ft. by 70 ft.]

Have you seen water on Fair's section?—I have not seen a foot of water on Fair's section for three years until the last flood.

I can produce witnesses who say that they have seen 3 acres of it under water and more than a foot deep?—I am talking about Milverton's paddocks.

*Mr. Myers.*] What about Fair's paddock?—I have not seen water on Fair's paddock worth speaking of until last October for years.

Roughly, what area would you say was flooded?—The greater part of the flat was flooded. There was about a foot of water on the whole ground.

*Mr. Myers:* That is all the evidence I wish to call, sir.

*Witness:* I would like to say, as far as the Levin-Greatford deviation is concerned, that all my interests are at Rongotea with my sons, who have a farm there, and it would be to my own interests to have the Levin-Greatford deviation constructed, but I am looking at this matter from the point of view of the people of Palmerston North.

The Commission adjourned until 2.30 p.m. on the 22nd March, 1921, at Wellington.

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WELLINGTON, TUESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 1921.

FRANCIS WILLIAM MACLEAN further examined.

*Mr. Luckie.*] I understand from your evidence that you have been five years as Chief Engineer in the Railway Department?—Yes.

Prior to that time I presume you had nothing to do with matters of this kind?—Yes, I had.