

That will be an item of considerable expenditure, will it not?—Yes.

Referring only to the point of level crossings, and to nothing else, in connection with the advisability or otherwise of the proposed deviation, would it not be possible to do something in the same way with the line as it at present stands between Palmerston North and Terrace End or between Longburn and Terrace End?—Yes, it is possible. The plan I produce is the Square. [Plan No. 28969: Exhibit No. 8.] In order to provide a bridge at the Square this is what has to be done: You start at Church Street, opposite Fitzherbert Street, and go with a grade of 1 in 17 over the railway and land at Broad Street. Over the line at Fitzherbert and Rangitikei Streets you have branch gradients forming a huge double cross. What effect it will have on the appearance of the Square I would not like to say. The effect of that is that if a person wants to go from the Grand Hotel to the station he must first go along Church Street and over the bridge.

Could you not do as you are doing now?—You have just asked me what steps we propose to take. Any one who wishes to go from the north-eastern corner of the block, opposite the Post Office, wishing to go to the Post Office, has got to go over the bridges.

*Mr. Myers.*] How far would he have to go instead of crossing the road as he does now?—A distance of 1,100 ft. That is the only way in which the Square can be dealt with. You cannot make a bridge on the western side of the Square across the railway without very seriously affecting the business properties fronting the Square, and you would have to buy every approach towards Main Street, whereas in the other case you would have to buy up exceedingly valuable property, including commercial houses, hotel, and various other properties. It would land you in a huge expenditure which it is practically impossible to estimate. Over the streets crossing the railway between the Square and Terrace End, what you have to do is this: you make a bridge over the centre, and you would have a series of approaches. Each of those approaches would be 18 ft. 6 in. wide, and that would leave 18 ft. 6 in. between the road and the boundary-line of the property. [Plan No. 28970: Exhibit No. 9.] Any one wishing to go in a cart from one corner to the opposite corner must first go down the side street, then over the road, and then back to the other point, a total distance of 1,800 ft., in order to cross the road. That is how we would have to carry out the same proposal which we intend to carry out in the deviation.

*Mr. Luckie.*] Then you will have to do that in each of those several deviations. I am not suggesting that is necessary in Palmerston North, or that level crossings should be abolished, but you say you are going to abolish them in the outside district roads?—Yes.

Will you have to do the same thing in each of the outlying district roads?—No.

What will you do?—We will go straight across the roads.

And you are going to have bridges across the roads?—Yes.

They will have to be long bridges, will they not?—Yes, comparatively.

Will they be 700 ft. bridges?—They will be 30 ft. bridges with approaches.

At each of the seven crossings?—Yes.

As a matter of fact you know the number of level crossings there are in the length of railway from Christchurch to Temuka?—I do not remember the number.

Is there not a large number?—Yes, a fair number.

There are no overhead bridges?—But the line does not go through the centre of the city.

Is not the city all round the station in Christchurch?—Yes.

And there you have nothing but level crossings?—Yes, and we propose to make bridges.

And the same difficulty will be involved there?—Yes.

How do you propose to avoid it?—If you will look at the plans you will see.

I have not had that opportunity?—Yes, you have, they have been published.

In the American cities they have automatic gates, and you have them in operation in various parts of New Zealand?—Yes, we have had them in operation.

Are you satisfied that they are of no use?—They are very dangerous; and have proved so in actual practice.

But they are using them in all the large cities of America where there are level crossings?—But they are not satisfactory, and nobody suggests that they are.

But they are efficient for saving life, are they not?—No. They do save life to a certain extent, but to a certain extent they are traps at the same time.

Why?—If you got caught inside one of those gates you would not stand much chance.

But the people are given warnings the same as with electric bells?—They give warnings, certainly, but people do not always obey warnings; in fact, very seldom.

The only instances we have of accidents that took place between Longburn and Terrace End were seven in eleven or twelve years?—Then it is curious that the Palmerston North Borough Council is so anxious to have these crossings bridged.

The whole of the traffic that passes through Palmerston North will be dealt with at the new station?—Yes.

The marshalling of the trains will also be dealt with there?—Yes.

And all the trains going to the north will also have to go to that station?—Yes.

And then be marshalled and sent out again?—Yes.

I think you said there were forty trains a day that came in and out of Palmerston North?—I said, forty trains apart from through trains.

Do you mean that there are forty trains that have their terminus at Palmerston North each day?—Practically, yes.

Does that mean forty coming in from north and south?—Twenty going out and twenty coming in.

And that is exclusive of through trains—expresses?—Yes.