

forty years since I was instrumental in pointing out to the Government that they must not allow private people to secure rights of entry on to railway-lines and railway land by means of sidings without having a proper agreement and restrictions. The sidings are the property of the Railway Department. The Railway Department only is entitled to run its trucks and goods across the street from private sidings. As far as I remember, the man who applies for a siding takes it at his own risk. The Government has the right to alter its railway-station for the convenience of the traffic or the public service and put it wherever it likes.

*Mr. Myers.*] Subject to three months' notice?—Very well. I was instrumental in getting that done. Before I joined the Public Works Department they were going wildly with respect to this matter; if they had allowed private persons to establish private rights on railway land the Government would not be able to deal with the public traffic. I do not think this Commission can take into account the question of private sidings; and if they took the railway away altogether and put it down in the swamp, all the sidings would be wiped out.

*Mr. Luckie.*] It would be possible under your proposals to have a uniform width from Short Street down to Boundary Road of about 14 chains?—I have given the extreme width of 14 chains for the things mentioned by Mr. MacLean—namely, station-building accommodation, wide platforms, and sidings clear of the running-lines for passengers; but that is a point the Railway Department would go into if they decide to take up this scheme.

As a matter of fact, the land south of the educational reserve and right down to Kairangi Road is almost entirely vacant on that side?—Yes, there is very little on it.

And right down to Boundary Road the same thing applies?—I think so, but I did not go down that far.

*Mr. Myers.*] I think, Mr. Maxwell, that you left the New Zealand Government Railways in 1894, or thereabouts?—Yes.

And since then you have not been actively connected with the New Zealand Railways?—No, of course not, except that on one or two occasions I have had the opportunity of going over them officially and examining them.

For the purpose, speaking generally, of some inquiry?—Sitting on a Commission, in one case, with one of the gentlemen sitting on the present Commission. We went over a great portion of the railways.

That was for the purpose of inquiring into some specific question?—Yes.

The only reason why I ask you the question as to when you left and how long ago it was is this: Am I not right in thinking that in your time as General Manager and Commissioner you had to consider the question of the railway facilities of Palmerston North?—Just about the time the Commissioners were appointed there was something done. I remember once meeting the Mayor of Palmerston North and listening to the complaints about the railway-station in the Square, but the Commissioners had no loan funds for expenditure. They were entirely in the hands of the Government and the Public Works Department, and consequently when it came to work of that kind it was a matter of negotiation and persuading the Minister of Public Works to do what we wanted. Then the process was that the Chief Engineer of Railways, who was then Mr. Lowe, and the Public Works Department fixed up things between them in the best way they could for the carrying-out of the work. That is how it was done.

I am not referring to the old station in the Square, but to the existing station. Was not the existing station and were not the facilities at that station the subject of some consideration and concern even in your time?—Yes, but I think the station has been altered since then.

That may be so?—The present position of the station was fixed during the time of the Commissioners by arrangement with the Public Works Department.

I take it that you prepared the report or notes some days ago upon which you have given your evidence to-day?—Yes, two or three days ago.

My point is that you prepared them before hearing Mr. MacLean's evidence yesterday?—Yes, and I still adhere to my notes.

I suppose on questions of estimate and cost you would take what Mr. MacLean says as being approximately correct?—Mr. MacLean probably has much greater facilities for giving the areas and estimates that he has done than I have. I understood him to say that he has made a shot at it because at present it is in embryo. It is only a diagram that he has produced, and he cannot be expected to give you minute estimates. I can only take a bird's-eye view of the matter and guess. I understand Mr. MacLean has done the same, because he has not enough data to give an accurate estimate; but as he is in work I should say he is better able to do that than I am. I am only giving you my opinion. If I was on Mr. MacLean's side I should go and consult him about matters. You need not make any mistake about that.

There are several leagues interested in this matter. Would you mind telling me by what league, or by whom, you are asked to come into this matter?—I was not asked by any league. I was asked, I think, by Messrs. Field and Luckie. I am not conscious of there being any league connected with it. I reckon that the Railway Department is one league because they want to divert the line, and I am not of that league.

You have said that if the new proposed site is adopted it would be necessary to erect the station only a foot above the highest reputed flood?—I should say you ought to do that at least.

Did you not hear Mr. MacLean in giving his evidence say that he has provided for that in his proposals?—Yes, I heard that; I wish to corroborate by my views that it should be so, and that it would cost a very large sum to do it, which I put down at £80,000.

You have told the Commission that you agree it is urgently necessary that something should be done to improve the facilities at Palmerston North?—Yes, I think so.