

To quote you own words, I think you said "The present position is abominable" ?—Yes, that is so.

Supposing that the proposed deviation were to cost no more than the scheme you are suggesting you would agree that the proposed deviation would be a better scheme ?—No, I should not. I prefer to remain on dry land in preference to going into a swamp.

Have you taken any levels to ascertain whether or not the land you are speaking of as swampy is swampy ?—No, I have not. The only information I have to go on is the photograph, and that shows that it is rather damp. That has impressed me very much, and I am biased by that very largely.

Do you approve of a railway running through a town like Palmerston North if it could be avoided at a reasonable cost ?—I think you are asking me to give a concrete answer to an abstract question. Do I think it reasonable to go and remove the railway from Palmerston North and put it outside ? I do not.

That is another question ?—You cannot state to me a general question on a theory of that kind that would enable me to answer it.

Do you approve of a railway running through the Town of Palmerston if it could be avoided at a reasonable expense ?—Yes, I approve of it running through Palmerston because it is of great advantage to the town that has grown up around it. You should not interfere with vested interests if you can help it.

In giving that answer you are considering the question of vested interests ?—Yes, that is one of the points.

Supposing the vested interests say they think it better in the interests of the town and of the public generally not to have the trains running through Palmerston North, would you still say that the trains must run through Palmerston North if it could be avoided at reasonable expense ?—If you have the whole population of Palmerston North giving a firm vote in the direction of getting the railway outside the town, that would have some weight, but I should not be disposed to waste money in going outside of the town for that reason.

My question presupposes the removal at a reasonable cost ?—Yes.

Do you approve of a level crossing in the neighbourhood of a station like Palmerston North ?—What do you mean by the "neighbourhood"—anywhere at the Square ?

Yes ?—I have no objection so long as you do not shunt over the Square. I have tried to explain that by saying that the forty trains per day would occupy about twenty minutes in twenty-four hours in going over the crossings, and only during that time would the traffic be interfered with, and that is nothing.

You agree, of course, that a bridge is necessary at Cook Street ?—I think it might be desirable, and I think the people would want it.

Would you as a railway man tolerate a moment longer than is necessary the existence of Cook Street as a level crossing ?—I would not have a level crossing there, but if it is absolutely essential, according to formula, and you can afford it, you must have a bridge or subway.

Now, in regard to the land you suggest taking : you propose to divert Main Street to the northward ?—From Dustin's towards Kairanga Road.

And you propose to put the station in the vicinity of where West Street is now ?—That is one proposal.

Where would you have your station then ?—The passenger-station is to be in the vicinity of West Street. I explained to you that I have no plan, but that Mr. Fulton has prepared a trial sketch-plan, and if he exhibits that to you you will be able to get a clear understanding of the position.

You propose to retain the Church Street site for goods ?—Yes.

The vicinity of the present engine-shed would be taken up by your goods-yard ?—Yes, that is according to how the Department choose to design.

So that you would have your goods-yard on the one side of the main line and the passenger-station on the other ?—Yes.

That involves all trains crossing the main line when entering or leaving ?—No, not all trains ; that is a detail of working which it is difficult to answer. It is necessary to have a detailed plan. You will have a through siding and enter the goods-station from either end.

Did you see the statements that were put in by Mr. MacLean when giving evidence yesterday showing what each of his alternative schemes meant and what they involved ?—I saw his plans, but as he described them as so impracticable, I did not think it necessary to go further.

Now, take Mr. MacLean's second alternative scheme. Do not bother about the estimates at all, but read down to the word "estimate." It reads, "Station (low level) at present site to deal with all business except locomotive-depot ; bridge over centre of Square to allow of shunting to northern (eastern) side of Square ; purchase of property south of West Street to enable all present area to be utilized, and for shunting facilities, south end ; West Street to be closed ; this purchase to extend to Kairanga Road. Main Street to be diverted to west (or north) side of railway as far as Kairanga Road ; Cook Street to be bridged, and Pitt Street subway extended ; overbridges with necessary approaches at all crossings north of Square ; double track, Longburn to Palmerston North. This scheme would only serve for a limited time. Shunting and passage of engines to and from engine-depot would be carried on over Kairanga Road level crossing" ?—I do not look upon that as resembling the scheme I am proposing, because it interferes with the Square.

But apart from that you see that the scheme is very much like yours ?—It differs very materially, because we are proposing to keep the passenger-station entirely clear of the Square so that there could be no shunting across the Square and no bridging across. There is an enormous difference.