

and I do not know that anybody else does, but the general assumption is that it has increased because it has the railway-station and the railway running through it.

What would be the general tendency or result of the removal of a big station to Rangitikei Street so far as the future spread of Palmerston North is concerned?—I suppose the development of the town would naturally proceed at a greater rate in the vicinity of the railway-station at the other place.

Is it not your experience that railways pass through a great many cities in the Old World and elsewhere?—Yes, and they do in New Zealand too.

Is it not a fact that in all the large centres, in both the Old World and the New, the railways in the majority of cases are in the centre of the city?—It is very often so. My experience of New Zealand people is that they all want to go through some place where they should not go.

Under your proposal the Department could get just the same facilities that they can get elsewhere for one-third of the cost?—Yes, I suppose that is about it.

That is looking forward as far as is necessary in your opinion to look?—Yes.

You say it is necessary to take all the land that is required?—Yes, necessary to take the land first and then go on with the work afterwards.

JAMES EDWARD FULTON sworn and examined.

*Mr. Luckie.*] You are a civil engineer?—Yes, I am a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers and American Engineers. I may also say that I lived in Palmerston North from 1883 to 1888 and later saw the station shifted from the Square down to the present site.

How long have you been connected with railway work?—All my business life.

You were from 1883 to 1896 in the Manawatu Railway Company?—Yes, and I was Traffic Manager for the railway between Longburn and Wellington for seven years of that time. I saw a good deal of the station traffic in Palmerston North as well as controlling it down here in Wellington.

I think you have been to America and Great Britain since then?—Yes, I have travelled in America, in Great Britain, and on the Continent, and have taken a keen interest in railway-working and station arrangements there.

You have examined the proposals put forward by the Railway Department for the diversion of the railway-station at Palmerston North, and you have heard Mr. MacLean's evidence and seen the plans?—Yes.

Will you tell the Commissioners what your opinion is with regard to those proposals?—Well, I have heard Mr. MacLean's evidence, and understand the proposals put forward by him. I consider the two schemes, the one at the present station and the scheme for the goods-sidings away up at Terrace End, are quite out of the question.

What is your opinion as to the necessity for adopting the deviation which the Government proposes?—I think it is quite unnecessary and very much too expensive to make that tremendous alteration.

Do you know any other way by which the same work could be done without going to that expense?—Yes, at very much less expense.

What is your proposal?—My proposal is to go farther towards Longburn on the same line, by which means you would utilize a great deal of the work already constructed, instead of throwing it away and having to start *de novo*.

You prepared a plan?—Yes, to make it graphic I have prepared a sketch-plan. [Exhibit No. 10.] The idea of having plenty of land I entirely agree with. My proposal involves disturbing one gasometer close to the street.

*Mr. Myers.*] What length do you take?—A mile and a half of station land altogether. It was mentioned that we interrupted two streets, but we are also interrupting Kairanga Road.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] Do you propose putting an overhead bridge over Kairanga Road?—No, I have not proposed a bridge there.

Do you suggest a subway there?—No, I would not put anything.

You would leave it and close the street?—Yes, close the street; but you would still have the same facilities for bridging the place in future, as is now proposed to be done at road-crossings on the deviation proposal.

*Mr. Luckie.*] Are you satisfied from your knowledge and experience of railway management that you could provide with these proposals just as satisfactory accommodation, facilities, and conveniences as could be supplied at the proposed station at the end of Rangitikei Street?—Yes, because you take just as much land and just as much length as they propose to take there.

Then it comes back to the general principle of having the necessary accommodation in a suitable place?—Yes.

And you have all that is required south-west of the present station?—Yes.

I take it that you would make a diversion of the main road and join the present road again farther down?—Yes, near Kawau Stream.

From the gasworks south to Boundary Road beyond Kairanga Road there are not more than about half a dozen houses, are there?—No.

That would be the only part that would involve any compensation?—Yes.

*Mr. Myers.*] Would you put a subway at Cook Street?—Yes, I would prefer it to an overhead bridge. I have an objection to overhead bridges, because they block the view of the signalmen and block the view of the yards. [Plan referred to and explained.] I would like to produce for the information of the Commission a book which contains a lot of useful information, called "Railway-track and Track Work," by Tratman.