

*Mr. Luckie.*] As you would place the station would it be closer to the Square than that proposed by the Department?—It would be about 25 chains closer to Longburn than it is at present.

What do you estimate, roughly speaking, would be the probable cost of the work involved in your proposal?—I estimate about £200,000, similar to Mr. Maxwell; but I was not taking so much land as he was proposing to take. You could spend only as much money at first as you had available on useful works that could be put into service at once.

Does the configuration of the land present any difficulty?—Taking the land does not, and I do not see that the land I propose to take would be so much dearer than the proposed station land in Rangitikei Street.

You would not need to acquire, according to your proposal, any business blocks?—Only the gasworks portion.

You have watched the manner in which railway-management is conducted in the large centres of America and England?—Yes.

What is your experience of the general tendency in big commercial centres with reference to railway facilities—have they not terminal stations in connection with collecting and distributing centres like Palmerston North?—The tendency is that stations are being brought nearer the towns. At present they are proposing to take the Redfern Station right into Sydney, close to the Botanical Gardens. In fact, they were surveying it in 1916 when I was there. Then, Spencer Street, Melbourne, is right in the middle of the city, and so is Flinders Street Station. Goods-yards are not brought so closely in.

I suppose that is chiefly due to the fact of the difficulty of getting the necessary area?—Yes.

Here you have not that difficulty?—No. In connection with the big stations in England, they never think of shifting the passenger traffic from the city, and it is the same with practically all stations in London and elsewhere.

And if it is necessary to handle goods elsewhere, they go where they can get land?—Yes, but I say we can get land here close to the passenger-station.

And under your proposal you could provide all the necessary conveniences and accommodation for handling passengers and goods that may be required?—Yes.

Do you consider in making your estimate you have taken everything that is reasonable into consideration?—What is in favour of my estimate is that you have the station there now, and in addition you have the other materials and the signal arrangements which can be used there, whereas new ones would have to be provided at the proposed new site.

It is estimated that it would take four or five years to carry out the deviation and build the new station?—I do not agree with that. I do not believe that it would even be commenced in five years.

You think it will take longer?—Yes; and after they start the deviation they will not be able to use any part of it until the whole is completed. Under my proposal they could commence to-morrow making improvements and soon relieve the traffic. In reference to the deviation, my opinion is that they would not only not finish it in four or five years, but they would not start it in that time.

*The Chairman.*] Why?—Because they have not started the Wellington Station yet.

*Mr. Luckie.*] Then in the meantime you agree with all the other witnesses who have given evidence that it is absolutely essential some improved conditions must be provided now even if they adopt the deviation?—Yes.

And those improvements would have to be scrapped afterwards?—Yes.

Could you bring in temporary improvements that could be brought into line and used in connection with the present station under your scheme?—Yes.

Could you make them as efficient and far-reaching, looking ahead, as they could on the site at Rangitikei Street?—Generally, if you have the land of the same size you could make the station equally efficient.

*Mr. Myers.*] I think you designed the Wellington-Manawatu Railway, did you not?—I was one of the Engineers.

And I suppose you designed the Thorndon Station as it existed up to the time the Government took over the railway?—I think Mr. Marchbanks principally designed it.

What is the largest station-yard you have yourself designed?—I suppose the Thorndon Station, belonging to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company.

I want to show that in this particular matter your experience is not comparable with that of existing railway men. Apparently in the plan you have produced you show a number of blind sidings?—Those are neither here nor there.

What do you mean?—They are blind sidings for standing trucks. I have only taken about a day over the preparation of this question. The sketch only suggests filling with sidings the land that is at present unoccupied there.

Apparently towards the Square you show blind sidings?—Yes, they are only suggestions.

Are they workable?—They would be workable.

Could you work a station properly with blind sidings?—You could have a blind siding anywhere required.

You say it is quite feasible to have blind sidings there?—Yes, blind sidings, or any sidings found necessary. You would pull that sketch about as required when designing the station. No sidings at all are shown in Rangitikei Street station.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] Those are standing roads for local traffic, are they not?—Yes.

*Mr. Myers.*] They are not intended for shunting?—You could not shunt from each end of a blind siding.