

Must you inevitably shunt from both ends of a station like that?—No, not from blind sidings. They have blind sidings there now.

You say you have made some sort of estimate: have you a detailed estimate?—I have a sort of detailed estimate.

When did you make it?—I made it two or three days ago—before hearing any evidence.

Will you tell me what you have allowed for the Cook Street overbridge?—I have allowed for the overbridge and the subway £25,000.

You provide both a subway and a bridge at Cook Street?—No, for an overbridge at Cook Street.

And you allow £25,000 for that?—Yes.

Do you provide for a subway at West Street?—Yes, and allow £25,000 for both.

Do you suppose for a moment that it could be done for that, or anything like it?—I would not have put it down if I had not.

Do you think it could be done for anything like it?—I do.

What is the width of the subway?—Narrow subway of 5 ft. or 6 ft.

And what length?—About 3 chains.

What is the width of the overhead bridge at Cook Street?—Not more than 20 ft. If I were anxious to save money I would make it about 18 ft. The Hutt Bridge is 18 ft. wide, you have probably seen the traffic there on race days, and that will give you an idea of what would be required for overbridge or subway at Palmerston.

What do you allow for the taking of land—taking the land as a whole?—I provide for 30 acres at a cost of £40,000.

That includes buildings and everything?—Yes.

Do you think you will get it for that?—Yes, approximately. I have added £25,000 on to this estimate.

What are the items?—The items I have allowed for are as follows: Sidings on goods site, £30,000; engine-shed and shifting goods-shed, £20,000; overbridge and subway, £25,000; passenger site (land 30 acres), £40,000; buildings, platforms, and road, &c., £30,000; sidings and signals, £30,000; total, £175,000: contingencies, £25,000: grand total, £200,000.

Have you provided for tracks?—Yes. I have provided for four miles of lines at a total of £30,000, and another four miles of goods-sidings at £30,000.

Mr. MacLean informs me that that is a long way under the price at which it can be done: What do you say?—For permanent-way I say that is about right. It may be a bit low.

We say it is a very big bit low?—Very well.

Speaking only of that particular point at present, on what experience, prices, or catalogues do you base that estimate?—On the prices of everyday work. Heavy rails and sleepers cost about £4,000 a mile, and there are other things, such as ballasting, and so forth. If you are going to criticize the estimates, I want to say that I am giving a diagram, while the Department has given us nothing.

The engine-depot you have put down at £20,000?—Yes.

You see that Mr. MacLean gives you some information, at all events, on that point, because he puts it down on a similar scheme to yours at £50,000?—I would say that, considering the position of money at the present time, we could gladly go ahead with £200,000 available in our pockets and do a great deal of permanent work there.

How long ago did you prepare that sketch-plan?—A few days ago—on the 16th March.

May we take it, then, that until you had been up to Palmerston North and looked around there you had not evolved any scheme for improving the facilities in that neighbourhood of the present station-site?—No, I had not done anything in the matter until I went up.

You had not previously been asked by any Palmerston people to advise them as to what could be done?—I do not know. Some people had been speaking to me before that.

But you had evolved no scheme?—No.

We may take it, then, that your scheme dates back only to the 16th of this month?—Yes, or a day or two before that.

How long do you think, if such a scheme were adopted, it would remain efficient and sufficient?—If you took enough land it would remain efficient and sufficient just as long as the other scheme.

You mean, if you took enough land to increase your layout and facilities as required?—Yes. I think you want to take enough land. If sufficient land is taken I would not find any fault.

Your scheme leaves the trains running through the Square, through the town, and over the level crossings?—Yes.

Do you think that is desirable?—Yes, I think with those level crossings and overbridges you almost want a policeman to make people walk over and use the bridges. People never walk over the overbridges in Christchurch or Lyttelton. To put ten or eleven overbridges in Palmerston North would be so hideous that people would go and live somewhere else.

Do you mean to suggest that if the deviation were not costing substantially more than the adoption of your scheme you would prefer your scheme, with the trains still running through the town and over the level crossings, to the deviation?—That is theoretically the position. But if you are going to make nine miles of new railway, is it not going to cost much more?

You must please accept my hypothesis?—Well, I prefer my own scheme—the present route.

Is that because it is your own scheme?—No, I will tell you why: the town, whatever you may say against it, will naturally grow out towards the new place, and they will have the same difficulties there later.

Is that your objection?—Yes.