

Now take the engine-sheds and shifting-goods shed?—Mr. Fulton allows £20,000. Included in my estimates are not only the engine-sheds but coaling appliances and the complete depot, which means a very large yard. We have to make very large provision for the storage of coal, and the lowest estimate that could be put down for the engine-depot, which means not only the engine-shed but the extension, because we want more than double the accommodation, would be £40,000. I put it down in my other scheme at £50,000. That would add £20,000 to Mr. Fulton's estimate.

Now take the overbridge and subway shown in Mr. Fulton's scheme: I think he allows £25,000 for the two?—Yes. Any scheme of bridging must be subject to the approval of the Borough Council, and I am quite satisfied that the Borough Council would not consent to any structure in the way of bridging such as that designed by Mr. Fulton. I have put down £70,000 for it.

Then you would require approaches?—Yes, in both directions, from Church Street and from Main Street, at a grade of not less than 1 in 20. In addition they would certainly require a tarred metal surface, the cost of which at the present time is something like 15s. per square yard, and that is certainly not included in this estimate. I am quite satisfied you could not put a bridge which the Borough Council would agree to at that place under £70,000. That is taking concrete at something like £4 a cubic yard, which is quite a reasonable sum for such work at present prices.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] Is that for a concrete or a steel bridge?—A steel bridge with concrete walls.

Not on pillars?—If you put a bridge on pillars the cost would be greater. At the present time the cost of filling I have estimated at something like 5s. to 6s. a cubic yard, which is very reasonable.

*Mr. Myers.*] Now take the land?—Of course I may say that we are dealing only with the Cook Street overbridge. I have referred to the almost practical certainty that we would have to provide bridges at West Street and Kairanga Road. As to the subway, I do not know on what basis Mr. Fulton has estimated his subway. So far as I can make out he does not separate the two. Putting it down at about £10 a foot it would run into £5,000 or £6,000. Our pre-war cost for subways was £6 per foot, but at the present time we cannot put them in at £15 a foot.

Then, I think you have some observations to make in regard to the item of land which Mr. Fulton provides for. I think he provides for 30 acres?—Yes, apart from the area of 30 acres which he proposes to take south of Cook Street he proposes to take an area fronting Church Street, near the Square.

Not contiguous to the Square but near the Square?—Yes. Taking that frontage, there are houses and stores on it, and putting it down at £15 per foot, including the buildings, which is a ridiculously low value, that would amount to £12,000. From Thomas Street Mr. Fulton has provided for taking over a mile of frontage, which includes 300 ft. of the business property of the Tiratu Timber Company.

*Mr. Luckie.*] It was never intended to take that land at all?—Including the 300 ft. of the Tiratu Timber Company's property, there would be 660 ft. of the borough's gasworks property to a depth of 2 or 3 chains.

*Mr. Myers.*] Mr. Fulton said that was to be taken?—That is so. The Corporation has gone to immense trouble in connection with this property. It has sent complete plans of the property Home to the makers of the gas plant, and those makers have sketched out a complete scheme for the gasworks involving the use of the whole of the land. It is inevitable that if a depth of from 2 to 3 chains on a frontage of 660 ft. of that property is taken the compensation will be very heavy indeed.

Mr. Fulton's scheme involves keeping the borough's gasworks where they are, whereas the Corporation is quite prepared in the general interests of the city to shift the gasworks up to the site of the new station?—That is so.

But if the Corporation is bound to keep the gasworks where they are by reason of the station remaining where it is, then the Department will have to face a very heavy claim for compensation?—The Corporation is bound to keep the gasworks where they are if the station is to remain there, because siding-accommodation is necessary for the gasworks. Then, along from the gasworks to about half a mile from Kairanga Road is a frontage of valuable property to be taken. I cannot believe that for £40,000 the necessary provision could be made. The property of the Tiratu Timber Company that has to be bought is near the Square, and the Corporation's gasworks property is very valuable. I cannot believe that anything like £40,000 is going to be sufficient for that. I am certain it would have to be more than double, and I would put down £50,000 at the least in addition to Mr. Fulton's £40,000.

*Mr. Marchbanks.*] That is £90,000 altogether?—Yes. I am satisfied it will run into nearer £100,000 than £90,000. That does not include everything between West Street and Botanical Road on the opposite side, for which I allowed £50,000.

*Mr. Myers.*] I suppose we may take it that as a Government officer holding a responsible position you recognize that it is part of your duty to give the best service at the least possible cost?—That is so. There are other items that have also to be considered. Mr. Fulton provides £20,000 for buildings. As I said before, the sketch he has prepared is on the basis of the American system of working. He states that there will be no platforms, but to make a comparison with the estimates of the deviation he provides £30,000 for buildings, platforms, road, &c. Well, in the deviation scheme we put down £50,000, and if you are going to make a comparison at all, then you must add £20,000 to Mr. Fulton's estimate in that respect, because it is the same accommodation. Then there is another item. Mr. Fulton includes roading in the item of £30,000, but what amount he provides for roading itself I do not know. Mr. Fulton in his scheme has to form a main-road deviation from Short Street to Cook Street to half a mile beyond Kairanga Road. In the case of low land which requires filling, and which would require to have a top surface to make it as good as the present road, part of that road Mr. Fulton proposes to make 132 ft. wide. I have no hesitation in saying in regard to the cost of that road, and the cost of the necessary roading inside the yard to give access to the local sidings, &c., that if he could do it for less than £40,000 at the present time he would be very lucky indeed. I put down £40,000.

What does Mr. Fulton provide for it?—Nothing. He says, "for buildings, platforms, road, &c., £30,000." I assume that in that part of the estimate roading was left out. Omitting roading altogether,