

such powers cannot in the course of ordinary events be exercised, and the Crown Law Office have advised that the only solution of the difficulty would be the passing of special legislation.

I think that the Department, quite apart from whether or not it would meet the case, is somewhat afraid of claims for compensation afterwards?—It certainly is afraid of claims for compensation, but that is not the question. Of course we understood that the claims for compensation would be very serious.

In a case of that sort you do not know where it is going to lead to?—That is so.

You told the Commission that in the early "nineties" the question of closing Cook Street was arranged under the existing condition of things, and, considering that you also have to look to the future, would it meet the case at the present moment if Cook Street were closed?—In my opinion it would not meet the case at all. The position is an impossible one with Cook Street. Even if we could close Cook Street I am absolutely satisfied that we could not make a workable arrangement with the Palmerston North Railway-station in its present position. I have here Plan No. 25610 showing the present station, a print of which I will put in later on. [Exhibit No. 2.]

That is a plan of the Palmerston North Station as it exists at present?—Yes. There are certain minor alterations and additions since. I also produce Plan No. 26453 [Exhibit No. 3] showing the proposals which I laid before the General Manager of a deviation of the railway from Longburn, showing the borough boundary, which is called Boundary Road. The proposal is that a deviation should be made parallel to Boundary Road, joining up with the Auckland route at some distance beyond Terrace End.

The plan shows a red line near the figures 527?—Yes, from Longburn Station to Section 527.

Then the plan shows a red line which is the proposed railway from Section 527 to Whakaronga?—Yes, that is really a continuation of this deviation.

I think it is not intended at present to construct that portion of the deviation?—The red lines show the main deviation, and the extension of the red line is for future working in connection with facilities for the Napier business. We propose for the present to join the existing railway in order to junction with the Auckland Railway near Section 527.

You do not propose at present to construct the whole of the new line from Section 527 to Whakaronga?—No, not at present.

What you propose to do is to run the line from Section 527 to the existing line, and use the existing line to Whakaronga Station for the Napier work for a time?—Yes, for a time.

I think you have another plan which shows the suggestions which have been considered for altering the existing station arrangements?—All I have is a sketch-plan showing the method of dealing as far as we can with the traffic on the present site. I put in copy of Plan No. 19724, which was prepared in 1912. It is purely a sketch-plan. [Exhibit No. 4.]

Does that provide for closing Cook Street?—Yes, absolutely.

And it would leave the present station accommodation where it is?—It was not proposed in the sketch-plan to alter the station-buildings, the width of the road, or the width of the platform.

Have you considered the feasibility of that scheme?—When we came to work out the details of that scheme we came to the conclusion that neither the accommodation that was provided nor the shunting-facilities in this design would meet the difficulty at all.

I suppose it would cost a certain amount of money?—That scheme at the present time would probably cost anything up to £150,000.

And does that include any compensation that you may have to pay in regard to Cook Street?—Not at all.

It is absolutely in the clouds, you may say?—Yes.

Would that scheme, in your opinion, relieve even your present difficulties, apart from the future?—A scheme of that kind would be bound to relieve the congestion to some extent, but it would not get over all the difficulties, and it would introduce very serious difficulties from the point of view of the Borough of Palmerston North.

Apart from that, can you say whether it would be anything more than a mere temporary expedient?—Only a temporary expedient.

Now, there is some other alternative in connection with the line, is there not?—Yes, I produce a further plan, No. 26630. [Exhibit No. 5.]

Would you explain what that indicates?—It is a more detailed plan of the alterations than the previous plan, No. 19724, and which we worked out in the beginning of 1919. In the preparation of this plan I was provided with certain figures by the Traffic Branch showing the accommodation that was considered absolutely necessary for the present traffic. In order to provide that accommodation, which it was found would take up the whole area we had, and would not allow of any increase in the station building, nor any increase in the width of the platforms, a plan was prepared accordingly.

Are both those conditions in your opinion requisite?—Absolutely. Almost a more important point is the fact that there were no facilities possible under this arrangement for shunting, and endless complications would have arisen under such a scheme as this in connection with the locomotive depot and the shunting of the traffic. In my opinion it is essential in connection with a station such as Palmerston North that the road access to the station should be of sufficient dimensions—that is, from the public point of view, which you cannot separate from the railway point of view—as to allow for proper working. I desired a width of road of something like 100 ft. in Main Street; the station building, instead of being 30 ft. wide, should be at least 50 ft. wide, and the main platform, instead of being 20 ft. wide, should be at least 30 ft. wide. Another platform, as in the previous design—that is, 19724—has to be provided, and that I consider should be at least 30 ft. wide; but the question had not been settled whether it would be necessary to provide on that platform waiting-room accommodation, ticket accommodation, sanitary conveniences, and possibly refreshment-rooms. If that accom-