

details. At present the line from Wellington takes a sharp curve near Longburn and then enters on a very straight run to Palmerston North. This curve is to be altered into an easy sweep leading across country to the far side of Boundary Road, the result being that Longburn Station will have to be shifted in order to be alongside the new line. It is understood that the new and commodious station will occupy a large area of land between Gillespie's Line and Rangitikei Street and Milson's Line." That statement appeared in the newspaper, did it not?—Yes.

What would be the effect on business firms that required to remove goods from the new railway-station?—On making inquiries from one of the largest carrying firms the manager informed me that the carrying could not be done at less than 3s. 6d. per ton extra. At the present time it costs 5s. per ton, and in the event of a change in the location of the station it would cost 8s. 6d. per ton for cartage.

That must be passed on to the consumer by all those places of business that will be farther away than they are at the present time?—Yes.

That will affect all those business places, both wholesale and retail?—Yes.

Having lived here all your life you have seen the growth that has taken place?—Yes.

What is the reason for the main centre going out of the Square and going towards Rangitikei Street?—Of course, the main gate is in that direction. As you are aware, Palmerston is a farming centre.

By the removal of the station is it going to increase the value of land near the new railway-line?—Yes.

It is going to decrease the value of the land in the neighbourhood of the present railway-station?—Yes.

Is it not your opinion that the business sites will become reduced from business sites to residential sites?—Yes.

Business premises are bound to move towards the railway-station?—Yes.

Are you satisfied in your mind what has been the cause of the city's growth?—The railway.

And the fact that it is the centre of the North Island railway system?—Yes.

We are given to understand that it is proposed to take up this land for the new station. If they do that, what will happen to the Palmerston North gasworks?—It will either have to be moved to the new proposed railway or provide a new siding.

That would make an expensive siding?—Yes.

You know something about land-values, do you not?—Yes.

I want to ask your opinion about a statement made by Mr. MacLean in his evidence in Wellington with regard to the price of land near the present station. I have not had an opportunity of discussing it very fully, but he stated that 7,000 ft. of land to the existing streets would be rendered vacant by this proposal, and that the land was worth from £30 to £60 a foot?—

*Mr. Myers*: He did not say that. That is absurd.

*Mr. Luckie*: He said the frontage was 7,000 ft. [To witness:] At what price do you think the land could be purchased?—I should say, about 2 chains facing the Square the land would fetch about £100 a foot; then, from 2 to 4 chains away, about £30 per foot; and the rest would fetch from £3 to £8 per foot.

In your opinion would the cost of the land be more than £30,000?—I estimate it at £40,000 at the outside.

How long would the land remain on the hands of the Government before it was sold—that is, if the railway-station was taken away?—The residential portions would sell fairly well.

Apparently, from what we can learn the whole trouble is that there is a lack of accommodation?—Yes.

Together with the difficulty of closing one street?—Yes.

Do you know whether there is a sufficient area of land in the neighbourhood that is reasonable, say, at the south end of the railway-station?—Yes; and at the southern portion of the railway station the Department has about 9 or 10 acres not used.

That is the portion immediately adjoining Church Street?—Yes.

Do you know from your own knowledge whether there have been any serious accidents in and about Palmerston North?—No. To my knowledge in the past thirty years there have been four or five accidents.

In your opinion, what would be the effect in twenty or thirty years hence if the railway-station were shifted out to the proposed new site?—I think it would be as bad as it is now, or perhaps worse.

*Mr. Myers*.] You tell us that you have land near the present railway-station?—Yes, between the railway-station and the Square.

Fronting Main Street?—Yes.

Is it leasehold?—Yes.

Freehold?—No.

For how long is it leased?—Twenty-eight years.

What is the frontage?—150 ft.

What is the value of the land?—£70 or £80 a foot.

What would the lessees' interest be worth?—£30 a foot, about.

Are you aware that one of the proposals which the Railway Department had to consider, and had considered, was the extending of the present facilities by taking some land—some considerable quantity of land—in Main Street?—I was not aware of that.

How would that suit you?—I would not care what happens. If the railway-station were moved I would gain considerably by it, because I have bigger interests in the vicinity of where the railway-station is going.