

Somewhere along near the proposed railway-line?—We would have to work somewhere in the vicinity of the railway.

Therefore your land would decrease in value and the business would be useless?—Yes.

The same thing would happen in Mr. Ireland's case?—It would affect him much more than it would affect us.

Would you estimate this movement would cost you very much money?—Nothing under £12,000, and as far as we can estimate it now it would cost about £15,000.

How long have you had the present siding?—Twelve years now.

The building of the business depends upon it?—Yes.

When this proposal first began to be mooted involving bringing you face to face with the removal of your premises, did you have any interview with anybody with a view of acquiring other land?—A proposition was put forward that we should buy land in the vicinity of the proposed railway-station.

By whom?—By Mr. Davis.

How long ago was that?—I should say, two months ago.

In anticipation of this proposal being given effect to?—Yes.

You have been all your life in Palmerston North?—Yes.

How old are you?—Thirty-two years of age.

Have you any knowledge of land-values since you have been in Palmerston North?—Yes.

In connection with those people in business who require to carry heavy stocks, which they have to import and sell or deliver elsewhere, or deliver generally, how is the removal of the railway-station going to affect them—will it materially increase the distance to the railway-station so far as they are concerned?—It is going to affect them to this extent, that their transporting-charges are to be increased.

They will then have to get closer to the railway-station?—Yes.

Otherwise they will have to pay heavier charges for transport?—Yes.

Therefore those business establishments which have to carry heavy stocks will, owing to the distance being materially increased, suffer materially in the business they are carrying out?—It is going to operate in two ways: Firstly, it will involve additional cost in getting to and from the station; and, secondly, it will be detrimental to the local business men.

You are pretty well acquainted with the proposed route to be adopted by the Railway Department?—I have seen the plan. [Plan produced: Exhibit No. 3.]

You saw the photograph [Exhibit No. 6] that was put in this afternoon, did you not?—I did.

Who took it?—I did.

You remember where that photograph was taken from, do you not?—Yes.

When was it taken?—The date is on the picture. As a matter of fact, I have four pictures of that same ground.

Where was that photograph taken from?—It was taken from where the Kawau Stream intersects Boundary Road.

Generally speaking, in what direction was the photograph taken?—North-west.

It was taken which way?—West by north.

Do you know the territory generally about there?—Yes.

What is the condition of it?—Marshy ground. As a matter of fact, I have shot ducks for many years on it.

How often do you say it is flooded?—About eight to ten times a year. That is a conservative estimate.

Does it require a heavy flood to put it under water?—It requires a small fall of rain to put it under water.

Do you know anything about the condition of it—that is, for foundation purposes?—Speaking from a layman's point of view, I know it is very spongy, marshy, and full of decayed timber, and it would be very expensive to make a satisfactory filling for either a station or station-yards.

You saw a number of names appearing on the petition put in by my learned friend Mr. Myers, did you not?—I did.

What do you know of those who have business premises in the Square—do you know anything about them in particular?—It struck me that most of them were small shopkeepers.

Were they mostly freeholders or leaseholders?—Mostly leaseholders.

Comparatively small leases to run?—Well, yes.

There are a good number of them who have big business premises and situated in Rangitikei Street?—Yes.

Has there not been a very large agitation for tramways in Palmerston North?—Yes, to my knowledge for fifteen years.

Those people who are in favour of the tramways want to see the railways away from the present site?—Yes.

Do you know of any suggestion that there is the greatest danger from the level crossings near the station?—I can only repeat what I have heard stated, and that is, there have been only four casualties. I cannot remember any more. The people are more careful in the town than they are in the country.

The railway-trains do not travel very fast within the city limits?—No; some trains are faster than others.

What is your opinion of the estimated value of the properties which it is stated will be rendered available for sale by the Government if the deviation is given effect to?—I should say that the estimate given of the value of property in the Square is accurate. The value of property in West Street is incorrect. It is not a desirable locality at the present time.