

26. I mean in detail?—I am not in a position to make a full and complete defence for the company because I have not had that time to go into the matter which, in my opinion, a matter of such importance demands, and no other counsel who might have come upon the scene at the stage when I came upon it would have had time or could have done proper justice to the case.

27. You recognise, according to some evidence that you heard this afternoon, that the cars were out of repair at the time the Commission sat?—I heard that said.

28. Do you believe that?—Well, I know Mr. Richardson well enough to know that he would not consciously say that which was incorrect, but I have no personal knowledge of the matter.

29. You do not think that the Commissioners would make the recommendation if they discovered that things were in complete order?—Well, from what I have heard of the matter I think the Commission was in a very curious position. At that time the company had difficulties with its men, and so on, which I think have since been overcome, and I cannot help thinking that various statements were made and things happened which probably would not have been said and would not have happened if the Commission had been set up a month or a few months afterwards.

30. The men are quite loyal now?—I believe that is so.

31. Do you believe that all the imported cars were new when they arrived eight years ago?—I cannot tell you that.

32. The question is—dealing with the braking appliances of eight years ago?—I cannot say as to that.

33. I am not going to say anything about the runaways, but would you be surprised to know that the men were anxious to have the installation of the air brakes?—No, I would not be surprised, because the position is this: that the air brake is not more efficient—it is really the same action—but it is put into operation with less labour.

34. And it is more quickly applied?—Perhaps so.

35. Will you believe me if I tell you it is?—Yes, that is the reason; I do not dispute it. We all like to get our work done with as little labour as possible.

36. *Mr. G. M. Thomson.*] I should like to know whether the City Council has any power of inspection?—Yes. The Order in Council provides that, after the construction of the tramway, the Council shall at all times keep and maintain the whole tramway and undertaking in good repair and condition to the satisfaction of the Engineer. Now, that Order is delegated, and the company covenants to do all things which the Council had to do under the Order; consequently the company covenants to keep and maintain the whole tramway and undertaking in good repair and condition to the satisfaction of the Engineer of the Council.

37. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Have you ever heard of any charge of manslaughter being made against an Auckland motorman?—I do not recollect having heard of any. I do not recall it to mind, but I seem to have a hazy recollection of some prosecution a little while ago in which Mr. Justice Edwards made some remarks about those who conducted or ran tramways; but it is pure hearsay, or what I saw in the papers.

JOSEPH JOHN WALKLATE examined. (No. 6.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—General manager and engineer of the Auckland Tramway Company.

2. And you have read and considered the Bill which is before the Committee?—Yes.

3. Are you prepared to make a statement with regard to it as it applies to your firm?—Well, of course, Mr. Myers has covered a good deal of the ground, and I am going to be as concise as I can, and therefore I think I had better take the reason that I gather from the Press as being given for the introduction of the Bill—namely, the Auckland brakes. Upon the finding of the Commission the company ordered two sets of air brakes for trial on the cars in Auckland, and they duly came forward and were tried by the Government engineers. The company were sending out from Home a number of sets of these air brakes to equip a further number of cars, but from a conversation that I had with the engineers of the Department I gathered that they did not consider it necessary or advisable to go on with the tests of the air brake, and I also gathered that they were not prepared to approve of it, so I consequently stopped the shipment of any further air brakes from Home. I might say, as has been said by Mr. Myers, that the company are prepared, and were all along prepared, to install the air brakes—that is, on the understanding that they would be satisfactory to the Department and would be a final solution of the question. Inquiries have been made in London by the company's representative there as to other suitable brakes, and just now a number of sets of what is known as the Freund brake are being manufactured for sending out to try on the cars here. As regards the magnetic brake, it would not be practicable to fit it upon the Auckland cars. It would need an entirely new under-gear on the cars, which, of course, would be out of the question. Again, the magnetic brake is not a reliable brake: a number of serious accidents have happened and are continually happening to cars fitted with the magnetic brake, and the company do not think the magnetic brake would be an efficient and suitable brake for the Auckland system. I do not know that there is anything else on the question of brakes that I want to say. As regards the Bill, seeing that the company, without any persuasion of the Bill, are prepared, as soon as they can satisfy themselves and the Public Works Department as to the best brake, to go on fitting them to the cars, it does not seem, as far as Auckland is concerned, that the Bill is required. In regard to clause 2 of the Bill, the Government did inspect the tramways and the cars before they were opened for use or for traffic, but, excepting on special occasions such as the Brakes Commission, there is apparently no further inspection. I have not got a copy of the deed of delegation with me, but I think there is provision in that deed of delegation for the City Council to inspect and to approve the cars from time to time. At any rate, so far as the