

137. Apart from that altogether, is there any person representing the City Council who inspects?—The City Engineer inspects the track.

138. But the method of running your cars?—The City Engineer inspects those with a view of licensing them, and the City Traffic Inspector also inspects them periodically.

139. We may take it that you really carry on your business under the supervision of the local body?—That is so.

140. And under their supervision?—That is so. Every car and every man is licensed by the City Council.

141. You have had a great deal of experience in tramway management and systems?—Yes.

142. Out of New Zealand?—Yes. In the potteries in Staffordshire I was in charge for a number of years, and in south Staffordshire, and Birmingham, and Brisbane; and I have constructed tramways in a number of places.

143. From the large experience that you have had, can you say with regard to the safety of the public that your tramway system in Auckland is worked with as great care as any of the other systems that you have been connected with?—I think so, undoubtedly.

144. So far as the care of life and limb and the safety of the public is concerned, you think this system is worked as well, at any rate, as any of the other systems?—I think there is no doubt about it. With regard to the number of accidents that have been mentioned, you have a different number of accidents in different places where there are different conditions. For instance, I think a number of our accidents are probably due to people who are not used to tramways, who come in from outside places and meet with accidents through getting on or off the cars; but I have no data as to the basis upon which those figures are compiled, and it is very difficult for me to give any information.

145. But apart from those figures?—But it is peculiar that the class of accidents differ. Of course, the fatal accidents in Auckland are, I think, almost invariably to adults. In the system of which I was manager for seven years in the potteries, which is about the same size as the Auckland system, we had an average of four fatal accidents every year, and they were nearly all, without exception, to little children.

146. Is it not the case that you take every precaution to safeguard the interests of the public?—Yes.

147. Can you think of anything else that you could do which would safeguard the interests of the public better?—No, I am afraid I cannot.

148. *Mr. Brown.*] You said that you do all you can to safeguard the interests of the public, and then you say you are in favour, and always have been, of the pneumatic air brake?—I am speaking simply of the suggestion to equip the Auckland cars.

149. You said you believed in the air brake?—Yes.

150. And have for a considerable time?—I said I would prefer the air brake to the magnetic brake.

151. The letter you read to the Committee from the Public Works Department was on the 4th February, and when did you reply to that?—On the 9th February.

152. You say you had a conversation with the Government Engineer about three months ago?—Yes.

153. And from the conversation you inferred that he was averse to your using the air brake?—I want to be very careful about that. I have already stated that from the conversation with the Engineer I concluded that it was not worth while our getting out any more air brakes.

154. And yet you never referred him to the letter from the Department telling you to hurry on?—The two sets were installed, and have been tested by the Department on several occasions.

155. And found satisfactory?—That is something I cannot answer. I have never had an answer from the Department.

156. Are they satisfactory so far as you are concerned?—Yes, so far as we are concerned.

157. And have you asked the Department to inspect them?—The Department has inspected them.

158. It seems the Commission sat and a report was sent in sixteen months ago, and you promised to get the Freund brakes, and you are only getting seven sets out?—Yes, we were under the impression they would have to test them first.

159. It seems to me that this Bill is really brought about through your company not hurrying on and doing its best to satisfy the Government. They have asked you to do certain things, and you do not seem to have hurried in any way?—We have taken steps from time to time as we saw daylight, and we have gone forward. When we get permission to install the air brakes we will install them.

160. You have certain communications with the Government, and then you are waiting for them to tell you whether they were perfectly satisfied with this system if you went on any further. If you had accidents happening, and this Commission's report was of such a nature as to say that the brakes were defective, should you not have written to the Government and said you were anxious to do something, as you want to protect life and limb?—I do not connect the brakes with the accidents.

161. Did not the Commission bring in some report that the brakes were defective?—Not exactly that.

162. You admit the air brake is better than the one you have at present?—No; I simply compared the air brake with the magnetic brake.

163. You think the air brake could be more effective, and entail less work on the motormen?—Yes.

164. And perhaps more effective?—Perhaps, slightly.