

80. What increased efficiency would that give compared with the examination they have to go through with the local authority? I think you will agree that each city has a competent engineer and staff to conduct the trams?—While I think that is so, I hardly think it is a fair question to put to me.

81. Would a Government official examining motormen be more competent than a man examining on the Christchurch Board?—I do not know who has to examine them there. I do not know whether he is competent or not, but if the Government undertook it the official would certainly be competent.

82. Do you think the driver of a powerful motor-car ought not to be more competent than the driver of a tram-car?—The driver of a tram-car has more lives at stake.

83. Who ought to be the more competent, the man who has a pair of metals to run on or a motor-car driver?—The driver of a tram-car certainly, because, although he is tied to his road, he can smash everything in the road, because he has the more powerful vehicle.

84. Do you think it is right to allow children to drive motor-cars?—I think motor-cars and their drivers ought to be licensed.

85. *Mr. Myers.*] Is it your view that, under section 2 of this Bill, if there was a prosecution under subsection (3) the Court could review the decision of the Minister as to whether or not he had prescribed a reasonable time?—That is entirely a question of law.

86. I should like your departmental view, if you do not mind giving it to me?—I should think the Court could not review the decision of the Minister.

87. Then the question of time is an arbitrary question, to be decided by the Minister alone in that case?—I think so.

88. And if that view is right—and I entirely concur with it from a legal point of view—the tramway-owner would have absolutely no appeal?—No, I do not think he has got any appeal.

89. Is there a specially qualified tramway engineer in the Public Works service?—There is no Engineer in the Public Works service who has been manager of a tramway system.

90. Or had special experience of electric tramways?—Yes, the Government Engineers have had practical experience of the whole of the tramways in New Zealand.

91. But, apart from the construction of tramways in New Zealand, is there any Engineer in the Government service specially qualified in the matter of electrical tramways?—The Government engineering staff has had to do with the whole of the electric tramways from their initiation, and naturally has obtained an accumulated store of knowledge.

92. But, apart from that, is there any specially qualified Electrical Tramways Engineer in the service?—Not apart from that.

93. Do you think, then, that section 2 of the Bill is reasonable, when it leaves a very important question of the kind I have indicated entirely to the Minister, without any right of appeal to any legal or other tribunal?—I think it is reasonable. I think it is quite of the nature of enactments that are customarily passed dealing with matters of this kind.

94. Now, in connection with this Bill, can you tell me whether any consideration whatever has been given to the rights or liabilities of a delegate under its deed of delegation from a local authority to whom the authorising order has been granted?—I do not think the position of a delegate has been considered apart from the authority who delegated. The delegate has to take the position of the authority that delegated.

95. But do you not know that, as a matter of practice, a person in the position of a delegate has to enter into all sorts of covenants and liabilities outside the Order in Council, which may be affected by this Bill?—I have no official knowledge of that whatever.

96. Do you think it is fair that a Bill should be presented without reference to the rights and liabilities of a delegate which has spent three-quarters of a million of money, and which is liable under all sorts of agreements and covenants with a local authority that may be affected by this Bill?—The tramway Order was given originally to the local authority of the district, and the local authority has delegated it to some company or corporation, and the terms of that delegation the Crown knows nothing of, and I do not think the Crown is concerned with them.

97. You miss the point. When I tell you that the delegate is bound to do all sorts of things at the request of the local authority or upon the demand of the local authority, do you not think, seeing that this Bill interferes with those conditions and that the delegate might become liable to both the Government and the local authority, that its position under the deed of delegation should be considered when the fact of the delegation is known to your Department?—I think if the delegate has anything to complain of he ought to be given an opportunity, such as this Committee affords, of stating his case, and I am sure he would receive every consideration.

98. But do you think that reasonable time has been given the company to submit its case fully to this tribunal?—Yes, I think so. The manager for the delegates is here, and he is thoroughly versed in all the details of the case.

99. When I tell you that up to the time when the manager gave evidence I had only had an opportunity of seeing him for twenty minutes after his arrival from Auckland, do you think, seeing the magnitude of the issues involved, that that is fair to this company?—But the managing director of the company was here before, and was in conference with you.

100. That is not the point: I am speaking about this Bill?—The managing director was here, and was in conference with you in regard to this Bill.

101. In regard to the question of brakes that may be, but not in regard to the Bill?—Yes.

102. Do you suggest that of your own knowledge he was in conference with me in regard to this Bill?—I do not know anything of the matters that he was in conference with you about, but I know he was here and in conference with you. Mr. Hansen I am referring to.

103. He is merely the local director in Auckland?—Then I have made a mistake. I mean Mr. Hansen.