

280 But when you have an Order in Council, that shows, does it not, that the duty lies on the approving officer, whoever that is?—I take it that is by the Public Works Department.

281 You stated in reply to Mr Poole that you understood the Engineer had now approved? Yes.

282. Suppose he makes a qualified approval—that he makes a condition that the air brake is not a suitable brake to the Auckland system, what will you do then?—It will depend on the wording of that qualification.

283. Then it is a qualified approval?—Yes. I do not know in what form the approval is coming forward. Whether it is a qualification that will enable us to accept it or not I cannot say.

284. I have to consider the public. The question arises, then, whether the Government should allow a brake on the Auckland tramways that is only partially approved?—That is, of course, for you to say.

285. You have considered clause 8 of this Bill?—Under the circumstances, if the approval is qualified in such a way that the powers sought cannot be made use of, it is necessary

286. In the Order in Council, with regard to the approving authority, it is impossible to give you approval without his consent?—Yes, that is so.

287 Now take clause 2 of the Bill: do you mind telling the Committee what are your principal objections to this?—Well, I have already stated my objections to it.

288. You notice there that no one can apply to the Board for a certificate unless he produces satisfactory evidence that he has for at least one year acted as a motorman?—I take that to apply to men who are driving at the time the Bill comes into operation.

289. That is how it reads now, but it is a mistake in the drafting, but if it were amended to state that the man had to have one year's experience as a motorman before he could obtain a license, would that remove your objection?—I have no objection to the certificate as a certificate, and that would make it more valuable to the man. We have in Auckland a number of conductors who are acting as conductors from day to day, but who are, in a case of sickness among the motormen, licensed to drive as motormen.

290. Say the clause was amended so as to adopt the system you have in Auckland and Dunedin, where the men are trained up as motormen, and that a man had to show that he had had a satisfactory training before he could apply for a certificate, would that be satisfactory to you?—Yes.

291 There is nothing in this Bill to compel you to employ any person unless he suited you?—I do not read anything in it to show that there is any compulsion, but if there is I should object to it.

292. Apparently there are some fees to be paid by the men for their license at present?—Yes, to the Auckland City Council.

293. Do they pay those license fees once a year?—Yes.

294. If a man wants to get the Government license, do you think he should be charged after his examination, once he gets his license—should not that be sufficient?—I think so. That would be falling in with the practice in connection with engine-drivers. I see no reason why the man should go up every year for his license.

295. The fact of having obtained a license for a year does not prove that they are better qualified?—But the license and the examining certificate are two different things. The certificate is one of proficiency, and the license shows that he is licensed to drive. The license is just like that of a cab-driver, or like the motor-car license in the United Kingdom—you have to renew it from year to year.

296. You were asked if you thought the men would be prepared to pay this fee after they had got the certificate, and your answer was that you thought they would, that was the reason why I asked you whether you thought it necessary?—Yes, that is so.

297 *Mr Fraser* ] What is the amount of the license fee?—Five shillings a year, I think.

298. *Hon. Mr R. McKenzie.* ] In clause 3 you distinguished between the Government supervision and the reasonable requirements of the traffic. Your objection to that, I think, was that the Government might ask you to increase your rolling-stock?—They might, sir.

299. Do you think the Government would be likely to do so?—Well, I am not able to prophesy as to that.

300. Have you ever been asked to do anything with your rolling-stock except in connection with your brakes?—Yes, we have.

301 What was it?—There was the question of life-guards, and bells, and suchlike.

302. That was on your cars?—Yes, after they were finished. The most recent instance was to change the electric bells, and substitute a certain mechanical bell.

303. Was that immediately after an accident?—No.

304. Has the Government now the power to order you to do anything unless it is after an accident?—Well, I do not wish to put the matter to the test as to whether the Government has power or not. I find it advisable to comply with Government requirements.

305. If the District Engineer or Engineer-in-Chief went to Auckland, he might say that your system of bells might be improved on, and you acted on his suggestion?—No, it went further than that. It was, in fact, an order in the case of the bells, that we should alter our system, and it was also to the effect that on the last five cars that were approved those bells were to be fitted.

306. Was that before the cars were licensed by the Government?—That was before the cars were passed by the Government.

307. Did you find those alterations an improvement or a disadvantage?—A disadvantage.

308. Did you raise any objection to them?—I did.

309. To whom?—To the Engineer-in-Chief.

310. And he insisted on them being put on, did he?—Up to quite recently that was the position.