

crossing the bridge, submitting that the motor-vehicle was already sufficiently taxed, and that the bridge should be regarded as portion of the roading system of the Dominion, and should be constructed and maintained by the State out of the Public Works Fund. Under cross-examination, however, this witness stated that he would prefer a toll bridge to the continuation of the existing system, which is in effect a toll.

The official representatives of almost every local authority who were examined stated that their Councils were opposed to any proposal to levy rates for financing the bridge, and expressed the opinion that the necessary funds should be obtained by tolls, both for the upkeep of the bridge and as security for the raising of the requisite capital for first construction.

After careful consideration of all the evidence, and after investigations made in the districts, your Commissioners are of the opinion that the time for the erection of a bridge across the Waitemata Harbour will not arrive in less than twenty years, though it might be advisable in, say, ten years' time to have the position reviewed again.

(2) The following details concerning the bridge : (a) The most suitable site at which the bridge should cross the harbour, taking into consideration the present location of the populations on each side of the water, the probable growth thereof, the main arterial highway system of the metropolitan and adjacent areas, either now existing or likely to be adopted, and the extent to which such harbour is required for commercial or naval purposes, or for aviation, or otherwise, bearing in mind the future development of such harbour.

Five sites were considered by your Commissioners, viz.—

- (1) From Beaumont Street to Shoal Bay, thence by causeways to Bayswater, Stanley Point, and Northcote ;
- (2) From Jellicoe Street to Stokes Point, Northcote ;
- (3) From Point Erin to Birkenhead ;
- (4) From Point Chevalier to Kauri Point ; and
- (5) From Fanshawe Street Extension to Stokes Point, Northcote.

With regard to site No. 1, this site—apart from the difficulty in construction in Shoal Bay, where a vast depth of mud was found but no rock bottom—is too close to the main wharves, and a bridge at this point, unless with a very great span—so great as to be impracticable—would interfere with the berthing and unberthing of vessels.

With regard to site No. 2, the objection regarding navigation indicated above in respect to site No. 1 would apply here also, though in less degree. But, apart from that objection, there is the fact that the city end of the bridge would be at a point from which and to which traffic would be very congested, and access to the bridge would be rendered difficult. Secondly, in advocating this site, the representatives of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Association presupposed the bridging of Freeman's Bay and the free use of this bridge by the public as a thoroughfare. In this assumption they were not justified, as to carry the heavy traffic—which alone would justify a harbour bridge—across the face of all the wharves would create intolerable congestion, and in addition, until such time as Freeman's Bay is reclaimed—which might never take place—an opening span in the bridge would be necessary.

With regard to site No. 3, this is a good site, with high land at each bridgehead, and from a constructional point of view it has considerable advantages. The approaches would not be costly, the grades would be comparatively easy, and a bridge at this site would avoid the deepest water. But access to the southern bridgehead would involve the traffic passing through a number of narrow, steeply-graded streets in the Ponsonby area, and would therefore probably require eventually a great deal of expense in reconstruction of streets and alterations to properties, all of which would be a charge against the bridge. This site has one disadvantage which outweighs all its advantages—viz., it is too far to the west to be convenient or useful to the great majority of the residents of the northern suburbs. In so far as it would serve the main road to the north it would be a very suitable site.