

G. STUART RICHARDSON examined. (No. 2.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Electrical Engineer for the City Corporation Tramways.
2. And you have read the Bill which is now before this Committee?—I have.
3. You have received instructions from your Council to appear here and give evidence?—Yes.
4. And you know the views of the Council on the subject?—Well, I cannot say that I have ever heard them expressed.
5. But you know what they wish?—Yes, I think so.
6. I presume the Council wish you to give evidence in connection with the electrical part of your system so far as the trams are concerned?—Yes, and any other part that you may desire.
7. Do you wish to make a statement as to your view of the position, or would you prefer to answer questions?—I should prefer to answer questions, I think.
8. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] What is the steepest grade in your tram system?—One in twelve; but I am not sure whether there is not a small piece a little bit stiffer than that on the Brooklyn grade.
9. Are your cars under complete brake control in all weather-conditions on that grade?—Yes.
10. You have had no runaways reported to you from the men in charge of the cars anywhere?—We have had one runaway on the Brooklyn section.
11. I am not referring to the Brooklyn accident; but under the worst weather-conditions, when you have a greasy rail, when the brakes are down what length would your cars travel?—Running at the regulation speed?
12. I mean, after the brakes are down what length would they go with the momentum?—Running down-hill at the regulation speed, after the brakes are down they can be pulled up in two car-lengths.
13. That would be about 25 yards?—The cars are 36 ft. long.
14. And you have never had any case reported where they ran considerably over that distance with the brakes down?—I could not tell you from memory, but there is no occasion that I can remember.
15. Have you ever had anything that you would call unreasonable or unnecessary obstruction from the officers of the Public Works Department in connection with your trams? Have they ever objected unreasonably or unnecessarily to anything you proposed to do?—No, I think we have always worked very well together. They have always been pleased at any time to help us or give us advice in any way.
16. You have no fault to find with the way they administer the power they have under the Public Works Act?—No. The only point perhaps is that we asked to be allowed to run cars up the Brooklyn hill with people standing on the cars.
17. The officers are not responsible for that—you can put that blame on to me. That is the only instance?—Yes, absolutely.
18. Is there anything in this Bill that you think will hamper you in administering the tramway system?—There might be.
19. But under the existing conditions as to the running of your trams, is there anything in this Bill that will hamper or harass you in any way?—It depends on the Minister.
20. It does not depend on the Minister, because the Minister does not do the inspection himself. Of course, you know that the Engineer-in-Chief always does the inspection in Wellington, and in Christchurch and Dunedin the Resident Engineer does it?—Yes, but we may not always have the same Engineer-in-Chief.
21. And the conditions may not be the same in twenty or fifty years' time that they are now?—But are we not providing for better conditions?
22. Well, I am trying to provide for them in this Bill. Taking into consideration the existing conditions, is there any power taken by this Bill which will hamper or harass you unnecessarily in running the trams under your system?—There is that clause to which His Worship the Mayor has referred. You do not know how far-reaching that may be.
23. But if I agree to strike that out will the Bill be satisfactory to you then?—I have pointed out to you, sir, as His Worship the Mayor has done, that clause 3 provides, "The Governor may from time to time, by Order in Council gazetted, make regulations; and subclause (f) provides, "Providing for such other matters as he thinks fit in order to secure the safe and convenient working of the tramway." That might apply to anything.
24. Is that all?—Well, with regard to the other matters I think you should question the City Solicitor.
25. *Mr. Herdman.*] How long have you been in charge of the tramways in Wellington?—Since 1905.
26. And have you had experience elsewhere?—No, not elsewhere.
27. Nowhere else in connection with tramways?—No.
28. You have carefully and closely watched the working of the tramway system here since 1905?—Yes.
29. Can you suggest any better system of supervision than that which obtains at the present time under your management or under the management of the Corporation?—No. I might say that with regard to the upkeep of the system all moneys that are required are allowed by the Committee. In fact, they give me a perfectly free hand to spend whatever money is necessary for the upkeep of the system, and in no case whatever has the Committee raised any objection to any money so spent.
30. From the point of view of public interest and public safety, do you think that everything is done to conserve the interests of the public and to protect them?—Yes.
31. Can you suggest anything to the Committee that could be done which would better safeguard the interests of the public?—No, I cannot.