

173. *Mr. Luke.*] Following up what Mr. Myers put to you, if you put the current on the track brake you get the contact on the four wheels, and they would skid on the rails, would they not?—The track brake does not act on the wheels in Auckland—it goes down and acts on the rail. The magnetic shoe here is held down on the track and forces the brake shoes on the wheels, whereas the track brake in Auckland lifts the car and wheels from the rails. It is different in its action from the magnetic brake.

174. *Mr. Poole.*] Have you had any men damaged here by the handling of brakes apart from collisions?—Yes, we have had one or two minor accidents caused through men releasing the hand wheel brake and letting it fly round, striking their arms.

175. Have you had any cases of rupture amongst the men?—We have had some cases of rupture amongst the men, but not from that cause. We have had some men slightly hurt. I think two men had their arms rather knocked about, and they were off duty for about a week. They got a smack from the handle of the brake as it turned round.

176. Did you hear that a man in Auckland had to have a testicle taken out the other day owing to a blow from a brake-handle?—No, I never heard that.

177. *Hon. Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you know whether the motormen on the Auckland cars are separate from the passengers, or are they liable to be interfered with by the passengers?—The motormen on the Auckland cars are not kept as separate from the passengers as they are here.

178. That is, you think they are liable to be occasionally interrupted by the passengers in attending to their business?—I think it is possible they might be.

179. A powerful brake is just as necessary on a flat road as on a grade in case there was anything on the line?—Yes, there should be a powerful quick-acting emergency brake in any case.

WILLIAM HOBARD MORTON examined. (No. 3.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—City Engineer, Wellington.

2. Do you wish to make a statement in regard to this Bill, or would you prefer to answer questions?—I did not come prepared with any statement, but I will answer any questions that may be put.

3. *Mr. Herdman.*] Have you had any experience of the management of electric tramway systems?—Not in the management, but in the construction of the permanent-way. My duties are limited to the construction and maintenance of the permanent-way.

4. But in a general way, I suppose, without being intimately acquainted with the tramway system here, you have noticed how it is managed?—Yes.

5. Under the control of the Corporation do you think it is satisfactorily managed?—Yes. I cannot discern any reason for this Bill at all.

6. That is as far as Wellington is concerned?—I am speaking as regards Wellington.

7. As far as the safety of the public is concerned, you are quite satisfied that the tramway system is satisfactory?—I am quite satisfied, apart from not having any practical experience of the management, that the City Council recognises its duties and the necessity of looking after the public safety, and that no Government interference will make their supervision any more stringent than what it is at the present time. In fact, I am rather inclined to think it might weaken that, because there would be divided responsibility.

8. Do you mean that in a way there would be two bosses?—Exactly.

9. The Corporation and the Government?—The Government officers might think that something would be sufficient and the Corporation officers might think otherwise. It would be far better that those persons who are responsible should have control.

10. Your view, then, is that if the Government were given the powers they seek under this Bill there is the probability of constant conflict between the Corporation and the Government?—That is my opinion.

11. *Mr. Lang.*] What is the percentage of accidents to the number of passengers carried?—I do not know.

12. *Mr. Poole.*] How old is the magnetic brake?—Well, that is a question you should put to the Electrical Engineer. Being an electrical appliance it is not under my charge.

13. I suppose you cannot tell me if the hand-brake is preferable to the electric brake?—I think you should have the opinion of the Electrical Engineer upon that. I have my own opinion.

14. *Mr. G. M. Thomson.*] What provision is made by the Wellington City Corporation for the upkeep of the track? For instance, I have noticed frequently in Dunedin that a bit of track is sunk?—If there is any defect or anything wrong in connection with the permanent-way we do not wait for any instructions; there is no delay through reporting to the Council, because immediate steps are taken.

15. You are keeping a constant supervision?—Yes, a constant supervision. We have a Permanent-way Inspector, whose duty is to go over the whole track in connection with the system in two days.

16. Once your track is finished and handed over, does the Government exercise any supervision over the track afterwards?—Not that I am aware of. If they do, they do so unknown to us. They never acquaint us with any supervision. There has never been any communication between the Government and the Corporation about any difficulties or defects in the permanent-way.

17. *Mr. Luke.*] You are the City Engineer, and I think you specialise more particularly from the point of view of the City Engineer?—That is so.

18. As an engineer of considerable experience in Melbourne and Wellington, what is your experience of the Wellington City Tramway system from the point of view of management?—I do not see how you can improve upon the system and the supervision that exists. Every officer that is necessary to fill any duties in connection with the continual inspection I think I can truthfully say is provided for the purpose, and I believe those duties are conscientiously carried out.