

fifteen miles an hour, after it had struck the cart proceeded for about 90 ft. before coming to a standstill." Then, another passenger, in giving evidence, said, "He agreed with Sheppard that the emergency brake did not act as effectively as it ought to have done. The car travelled 60 yards after the brake had been applied." The jury brought in a verdict that death was purely accidental. I see there that the jury, after a brief consultation, returned a verdict of accidental death and also added a rider, "That the brakes failed to act as they should have done; and recommend the tramways company to make a compulsory stopping-place for down cars on the Symonds Street side of the Captain Cook Hotel."

11. And you have had similar reports to those ever since the commencement of the Auckland tramways?—Yes. It is an unfortunate fact that there have been more accidents in Auckland by far than on any other system.

12. Do the officers of the Department both here and in Auckland, as a rule, attribute a great many of those accidents to inefficient brakes?—I think quite a number of the Auckland accidents are attributed to inefficient brakes.

13. After the Royal Commission reported on the brakes on the Auckland cars, what steps did you take as Under-Secretary of the Public Works Department to endeavour to get the Auckland Tramway Company to install more efficient brakes?—We began by forwarding the company a copy of the report, and asking them to be good enough to see that the defects pointed out by the Commissioners were remedied. We have written several times since then, and several of the letters have already been read to the Committee.

14. Was that shortly after the Commission sat?—Yes.

15. And several communications have passed between the Department and the company, and all your communications have been in the direction that they would have to use more efficient brakes?—Yes, we never departed from that attitude at all.

16. Did they ever make any application to the Department to be permitted to use any special kind of brake?—Only the two they proposed to use experimentally, and that application was acceded to.

17. So far as the Department is concerned, every application that has ever been made has been acceded to?—I think so.

18. Now, in regard to the Bill: You consider this Bill necessary in the interests of public safety?—I do, indeed.

19. And certainly in the interests of motormen?—I agree with the evidence given by Mr. Faire that, in the interests of motormen and also in the interests of the community at large, motormen should pass an examination and be certificated.

20. And you also think they ought to be certificated and examined by a competent Board of Government examiners?—Yes, I do. That is already the case with engine-drivers, and the position of a motorman is equally responsible.

21. Is there anything in this Bill which would harass the local authorities in New Zealand?—Not unreasonably embarrass them; but all Government inspection is embarrassing, of course, to a certain extent.

22. The Bill provides that the powers are only to be brought into existence when necessary?—But that power the Minister of Public Works possesses now.

23. Have we got power now to compel the Auckland Tramways Company to put efficient brakes on their trams?—Not directly. You would have to appoint an officer to inspect the tramways, and, if he reported that they were inefficient with their present appliances, then you could tell the company that unless they provided appliances to your satisfaction you would move the Governor to close the tramway. That would be an extreme step to take, and it has only been taken once in New Zealand. I think any Minister would hesitate before he would apply that remedy.

24. If we stopped the Auckland trams we should be punishing the people equally as much as the company?—Yes.

25. There is no middle course so far as the Department is concerned—it is either, provide proper brakes or a complete stop?—The Act is peculiar. Every tramway has to be very carefully inspected before a license to run is given, and the same with a tram-car; but the day after the car is passed it may be subjected to a very bad accident and the car may be practically smashed to pieces, but that car could be put into service again without any Government officers having to inspect it at all.

26. If this Bill were passed there would be a middle course?—Yes, and every tram-car would have to be licensed. Our Inspector would see every car periodically. If it was not in very good order it would not get a license for twelve months, but only for a shorter period.

27. You have had long experience in the Public Works Department?—Yes, thirty-six years.

28. Such powers as are asked for under clause 2 of this Bill are already on the statute-book?—Much stronger clauses.

29. Have you ever known a company to be used harshly or detrimentally in any such case?—No. I have no knowledge of anything of the kind.

30. For instance, the Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company would be working as a private company?—The same clauses that apply to every tramway company applied to the Manawatu Railway Company.

31. Did they ever raise any objection to the treatment they received?—Not that I know of.

32. Or any other company?—Only the company whose tramway was closed down. They protested for a time; but the case was an extreme one, and that course had to be adopted.

33. Before that clause would be finally applied it would be a Cabinet question—it would not be left to the opinion of one Minister?—That is the ordinary practice.

34. So that at least eight or nine men who are supposed to be reasonable at all events, would have to agree with it, or a majority, before it could be put into operation?—Yes; and, of course, the whole thing is contingent on some official-reporting that remedial measures were necessary.