

18. What Board?—The Tramway Board. And a loan of some £500,000 has been borrowed, for which those ratepayers are responsible. My Board contends that if this Bill becomes law it takes the power of management out of the hands of the Board, and places it in an officer whom the Government may appoint. We also think that if the Bill goes through it will have the tendency to centralize control, and I think I can also say that, so far as the Christchurch Board is concerned, if the Bill should go through, then none of the present members, out of common respect to themselves, could retain their position on the Board.

19. You mean, the Board is an independent Board that would not submit to control?—Yes. As regards the powers of the Bill, the Government could have officers appointed that could give instructions to put on rolling-stock and things of that kind—it means, for instance, that if the Government should have a complaint, say from a small meeting of ratepayers, they could—I do not say they would—compel us to put on cars which would run away with our surplus, and turn it into a deficit.

20. You borrowed, I think you said, £500,000?—Yes.

21. And you do as much as you can with the money you have in hand?—Yes, and use it as far as we can with satisfaction throughout our constituencies.

22. Of course, if you had to spend more money in rolling-stock you would not be able to do so?—Our traffic does not warrant it.

23. The Government might have a different opinion from the Board as to the financial position?—Yes. That is, they could compel the Board to put on, say, extra cars which we believe would not be required.

24. Do you think the Board in a better position to judge of the requirements than any Government officer?—Undoubtedly.

25. Will you continue with your general remarks. Coming to clause 2—that is, the clause which requires examination—what examination do your motormen go through?—At the present time they have twelve days' student driving under all possible traffic conditions. They are examined by the Motor Inspector on the car and on the road; examined by the Electrical Engineer; and there is also the question of physique, age, and height; also a very stiff medical examination as regards their eyesight.

26. Is there any other certificate required?—No. The Engineer to the Board issues the certificate.

27. Do you consider a motorman who is qualified to drive in Wellington would be qualified to drive in Christchurch or Dunedin?—I am certain that a motorman before being allowed to drive in Wellington or Auckland could not do so without an examination, because the local requirements are so different.

28. I understand you have a lot of emergency men trained in Christchurch?—A certain number, yes, who consist of conductors.

29. Is it necessary for the proper maintenance of the tramway business that there should be emergency men?—Yes.

30. Can you tell me what the practicability of Government inspection of a man is?—I feel sure the Board would not allow any Government-certificated motormen to drive unless they went through the Board's examination.

31. But how many motormen a month are required to be licensed—the average number?—That varies—four or five every month. The General Manager will be able to give you that information.

32. Your case is probably typical of the other chief towns?—Yes, I should take it to be so.

33. I understand you to say with regard to that clause generally that no Government certificate could dispense with your Board's being satisfied with the competence of these men?—No. I should like to point out that if this certificate comes in, the effect will be a close corporation amongst the motormen so far as this: that if any trouble occur, the Board would not be in a position to run the cars. But at present we have conductors that are qualified.

34. Is it important that you have control of the certificates of the men also?—Yes.

35. So as to grant or suspend a certificate?—Yes.

36. As to clause 3, what do you say about that? Under your Order in Council the Government have the power of inspection?—Yes, that is so: under clauses 30, 35, 37, and 39 of our Order in Council the Government already have the right of inspection.

37. As to subsection (2) of clause 3—reports to meet the reasonable requirements of the traffic?—My contention is that the local authorities are in a much better position to judge of the requirements of the traffic.

38. That is to say, the representatives of the citizens of the particular place are the best men to judge of the requirements of the citizens?—Yes.

39. I suppose local districts in your district want particular facilities?—That is so. The different suburbs want different facilities.

40. And you desire to be the judge as to whether they are wanted or not?—I think the Board must be the judge.

41. What is the cost of an extra car?—An additional car on the Christchurch line, running eighteen hours a day at twelve miles an hour, means 216 car-miles. The operating cost is 9d. an hour, which means £8 2s. per day, and it runs into £2,920 per year for one car.

42. So that if another car were ordered you would have to find?—£2,920 a year.

43. You would have to give credit to the revenue for that amount?—Yes. Outside of that there is interest and sinking funds on the loan.

44. That is apart from capital cost?—Yes. Interest and sinking fund amount to about 3d., and the depreciation to about 2d.