

45 And that would be a very serious matter to consider when putting the car on?—Yes.

46 That would not distress the Government Inspector very much?—No, but it would the Christchurch ratepayers.

47 Clause 5, subclause (c), that enables the Government to make regulations prescribing the maximum number of passengers to be carried: what do you say about that?—As far as the Board is concerned, we always oppose the overcrowding of cars. Of course, there are certain hours—rush times—when it is an impossibility to keep the public off the cars.

48 During those times is it impracticable to carry only your licensed number?—Almost an impossibility

49 Is there any danger to the public in putting on the cars more than the licensed number?—No danger

50. Is there any reason excepting the inconvenience of the passengers for any objection to carrying strap-hangers?—No, the only inconvenience would be collecting the fares.

51 Subclause (e) of clause 5, providing for the use of proper appliances, &c., for the safety and convenience of passengers: in reference to that what do you say to that as a Board?—The Board must be the best judge of that.

52. Subclause (2) of clause 5—the regulations are made to prevail over an Order in Council: what have you to say about that?—I think it would be much better to work under the Board than under the Bill.

53. You borrowed money under your Order in Council?—Yes.

54. So that you could not afford to have the Order in Council overridden?—Not very well.

55. And I suppose you spent large sums of money in constructing the tramway under your Order in Council?—The whole of the loan-moneys had been spent under the Order in Council.

56. Now we come to section 6, the Appeal Board: will you tell us what your system is in dealing with your men in the matter of complaints?—At the present time the Board has a merit and demerit system, as set out in the rules produced.

57 Can you tell us in a few words what the system is?—If one of the employees commits an offence he is dealt with by the officer in charge, who inflicts the number of demerit marks. If the man is dissatisfied he appeals to the Staff Committee, which consists of four members of the Board. If still dissatisfied he appeals to the whole Board, and is allowed to have the secretary of his union to conduct his case.

58. And it is the secretary of the union who usually conducts the case for the offenders?—Yes; he has conducted three or four cases before the Board.

59 And do the men get justice?—I think so.

60. Are the appeals sometimes allowed?—Yes. I would also mention that we also give a prize to the motorman and conductor who has the fewest demerit marks, every three months—£2 to the first, and £1 to the second.

61 How would any outside control affect the discipline of the men?—It would mean that the discipline would be very lax. If this Board were set up, the men could go by their employers altogether. I should just like to give a case in point: Some time ago there was a conductor in the employ of the Board, and we had a number of complaints as to his treatment of lady passengers. You will understand that ladies especially refuse to give evidence in connection with these matters. Finally the Board decided to discharge him as unsatisfactory. To prove that they were right, in a very little while this man got mixed up in a case of immorality, and was also convicted of wilful perjury in the Supreme Court in Christchurch.

62. You discharged him for general complaints?—For being generally unsatisfactory

63 Complaints made by ladies?—Ladies chiefly

64. If a complaint is made by a lady about a conductor, and you think there is anything in it, I understand you transfer the conductor to another line?—If we are satisfied he is guilty. If the parties refuse to come and give evidence we give the conductor the benefit of the doubt and frequently change him to another line.

65 And if there are a number of complaints of the same nature?—Yes, we come to the conclusion that he is guilty of the offence he has been charged with.

66. At any rate, there is something in his conduct to give rise to the complaints?—Yes.

67 Therefore you put him on some other duty or discharge him?—Yes.

68. What would be the position of your Board if the Appeal Board reversed one of the decisions? What would your Board do?—They would resign in a body, I feel sure. I do not think they could, out of respect to themselves, keep in office.

69 As to appeals for want of promotion and disratings?—Those are dealt with under the award between the men and the Board, which I may say was by mutual agreement. In all cases the motormen are taken from the conductors.

70. At any rate, the award lays down rules dealing with this matter?—Yes.

71 Then you have an award of recent date between yourselves and your employees?—I think it has about eight or nine months to run. It was made about two years ago.

72. Clause 3, leaving certain matters to the Government instead of to the Engineer-in-Chief: What have you to say to that?—If the Government should decide to appoint an officer, I certainly think he should be an electrical engineer

73. There are certain matters, I understand, in your Order in Council which are left to the Engineer?—Yes.

74. So to appoint an officer of the Government instead of the Engineer would be altering your Order in Council?—That is so.

75. Clause 9, as to the report-book: You say, as to that, this would not be an improvement upon your system as at present in vogue?—We tried it, and found it unsatisfactory. Mr Thompson will give you particulars as to that.