

you have anticipated this measure?—Not according to my reading of the clause. I read it to mean a "common" book.

246. Will you admit that there were some unsatisfactory conditions connected with the Auckland tramway service some time ago?—There were, to some extent.

247. Do you think those unsatisfactory conditions inspired in any way the introduction of this Bill to deal with the irregularities?—I cannot say that.

248. Will you admit that the reforms you have instituted do away with the necessity for clauses that are proposed in this measure?—I am afraid I cannot couple the two things. I do not know what you are referring to as reforms.

249. I am not anxious to go into a lot of detail. I thought I would just put these two questions to you, about the inspection and the new appliances?—We have been for two and a half years willing and anxious to install the air brake.

250. Under the present circumstances in Auckland do you think there is any necessity for the provisions of this Bill?—I do not think so.

251. No necessity for any of the clauses?—I do not consider there is.

252. With regard to car 75—that is, one of the latest large cars?—It is not the latest, but one of the large cars.

253. Is that the only one fitted with the air brake?—The only one.

254. And that car had the air brake at the time of the test?—Yes.

255. That would account for the motorman's expression of satisfaction when the brake-tests took place?—Yes.

256. With regard to trouble in connection with your Orders in Council, do you recognize that under an Order in Council you are committed to the consent or refusal of the Engineer-in-Chief?—That is so.

257. Would you be in favour of some power being given to ease that position, so as to secure for you the consent of the Department to your supplying the air brake?—We have the approval of the Engineer-in-Chief for the air brake.

258. Whom do you consider now to be the obstructionist?—The time is so short that I do not consider any one has been an obstruction. It is only within the last few hours that a decision has been arrived at.

259. In the event of an Order in Council holding you up in connection with the brakes, would you be in favour of Parliament giving you a clause in the Bill to relieve you of that position?—Yes.

260. Do you think there is anything in the mind of the Minister to enable you to do that?—I take it that clause 8 was inserted with that object.

261. At the present time under your Order in Council you are at the tender mercies of the Engineer-in-Chief?—Yes, as regards that point.

262. Are you still prepared to order your air brakes immediately after you secure this approval?—I have a cable written ready to send.

263. What length of time do you consider will pass before you can fit the cars with the brakes?—I am not able to answer that now. When the question was asked before, I said I was in possession of undertakings to ship the material, but now I have to get fresh undertakings.

264. *Hon. Mr R McKenzie.*] In answer to Mr M. Myers you said you considered the air brakes at present in Auckland were perfectly sufficient?—I do not recollect it. I said, the present brakes.

265. You do not consider there is any necessity for change in the brakes used in Auckland?—I did not say that. I said I considered the present brakes in Auckland are sufficient and safe, but that we have been prepared and are prepared to install the air brake.

266. You stated that nearly two years ago you applied to the Government for permission to put on pneumatic brakes?—Yes.

267. How is approval given for anything you apply for in connection with the tramways?—Approval with regard to the cars is given by letter from the Engineer-in-Chief or the District Engineer. As regards the brakes, the correspondence has been conducted by the Under-Secretary.

268. If you want any system of brakes, does he not approve of your plans?—As regards the cars he writes the approval on the plans, but as regards other things I think he has approved them on the actual car. I think the details of the car, such as the brakes, life-guards, and so on, have been approved on the actual car without the plans. I am not absolutely prepared to say that that has been done.

269. How is the approval recorded in the office?—By letter.

270. Are you perfectly sure on that point, that the cars are approved on the plans?—In any case the final approval of the cars is the subject of a letter from the Engineer.

271. Do you submit plans for approval?—Yes.

272. And then the Engineer-in-Chief returns them to you as signed and approved?—Yes.

273. When did you supply plans for the pneumatic brakes?—After the last Commission.

274. Not two and a half years ago?—No, we supplied the actual brakes then.

275. You had the brakes in Auckland, and got the Engineer to examine them there?—Yes, on the cars.

276. Did he refuse approval?—He did not refuse, but he did not approve.

277. That is a distinction without a difference?—Hardly, because he did not refuse. He simply withheld his approval. He declined to give his assent.

278. How long ago is that?—It has been going on for nearly two years.

279. Although it may be stated in the Order in Council that the Engineer-in-Chief has the approval, the final approval is given by the Minister?—I take it from the Order in Council that it is, but I say that in this particular instance of the brakes I am waiting for the final approval of the Under-Secretary.