

123. If I stated that that would represent a net profit the company made of £40,000, should I be far wrong?—That would not be far wrong.

124. *Hon. Mr R McKenzie.*] Mr Mackay was chairman of your Tramways Committee?—Yes, for twelve months.

125. Was he a member of the Appeal Board as well?—Each committee has its Appeal Board in each department. We have no tramwaymen in our employ, so that the only matter that would come before the committee would be the licensing

126. The Mayor is an *ex officio* member of each committee?—Yes.

127. Just before I came into this room I believe you stated that you had been associated with Mr Mackay in writing the document which he put in as evidence?—Yes.

128. Did you write it?—I did the actual writing, but Mr Mackay suggested a good deal of the matter

129. Are you aware that that would be manufactured evidence?—No; our intention was simply to save the time of this Committee by putting our statements before it in a clear and concise manner

130. But it was not your evidence?—It was the evidence of the Auckland City Council, inasmuch as when my report on the Bill was drafted it was submitted to the Council, which adopted it, and delegated Mr Mackay and myself to put these opinions before the Committee.

131. Do you know that Mr Mackay put it in here as his own evidence?—I was outside at the time.

132. You will admit that it was concocted evidence between you?—No; we are delegates here representing the opinions of a local body, therefore it cannot be said that it is concocted evidence.

133. Have you any objection to the tramway drivers' certificate proposed to be issued under clause 2 of the Bill?—The objection we have is that we fear it will lead to the certificate being accepted as a license, and that takes from the local body the power to supervise the actions of the men which we possess at the present time.

134. I think your statement was that you would lose control of the men if they went on strike?—That is a matter between the men and the company

135. I think you made the statement that if you continued on with the present system there would be sufficient men to work the tramways in such a case without the certificates?—I said there would be sufficient men who had been in the service who would be available in the case of strike.

136. How do you know?—It is common-sense. It has occurred before.

137. That is purely an assumption?—Purely an assumption, of course.

138. You also stated that if the Bill passed it would affect the credit of local bodies?—As far as the Auckland City Council is concerned, I look upon it most strongly in that way. I have been conversant with loans that have been put on the market, and the timidity of the lenders. When I have sent papers Home I have had to be particular to the dotting of an "i" and the putting-in of a comma. If we place a loan on the London market, and it gets about that our deeds are not worth the paper they are written on, where is our credit?

139. Do you think the Auckland City Council are more careful than the Government are in that regard?—I should not like to express an opinion as to the actions of the Government.

140. Do you think the Town Clerk or City Council of Auckland are more careful of the credit of the Dominion than the Government are?—On that point we have been in conflict with the Government ourselves in connection with the sinking funds in trying to preserve our credit.

141. Do you think it would be an advantage to the Auckland City Council if any loans you wanted to float were guaranteed by the Government?—No, we have floated loans on better terms than some of the Government loans.

142. Have you floated loans on worse terms?—Yes.

143. When have you floated loans on better terms?—I cannot tell you the exact year, but quite recently, at the time the Government were getting money at 95 we got 98.

144. Do you know whether the Auckland City Council ever applied to the Government to get a loan for it?—Not in my time.

145. Do you know if other local bodies did?—I know they did.

146. Do you know that they are just as sound in their financial judgment as the Auckland City Council is?—I do not want to go into a criticism of other local bodies, but I know one other local body after approaching the Government shied clear of it.

147. Your City Council looks after the whole of the business of the City of Auckland municipally?—Yes.

148. Are there any other of the City Council's functions in which the Government have restricted control?—There is one in particular which we have been fighting ever since it came into existence, and that is the right to say whether a local street should be widened or not.

149. Are a large number of the City Councillors of Auckland property-holders?—I think on the whole they are. Five of them, I think, live in the suburbs.

150. And hold property in the city?—Mostly, I think.

151. Can you tell me why they should make lanes and slums in Auckland?—We are not doing so. We have spent thousands in widening the streets in the City of Auckland. The other day we refused to take over a road from the Harbour Board.

152. But when the Government refuses to allow you to build within 30 ft. of the fencing, do you think it is in the public interest that you should be allowed to do so?—In one part of the City of Auckland the area is overstreeted according to the best plans of town-planning, so that there is plenty of space.

153. Do you think the Health Department have a right to interfere with your sanitary arrangements?—They have a certain amount of supervision.