

man might be perfectly efficient and yet not ask for a certificate. I had a case before me, and that is why I am so positive.

215 I am talking of the certificate under the Bill. You meant, then, that nobody could be employed if the Bill were passed unless he had a certificate, however efficient he might be?—Yes.

216. *Mr McLaren.*] It is the function of your Council to look after the safety and convenience of the public?—Yes.

217 When you delegated your powers to the Tramway Company to run tramways, did you delegate that service to the Tramway Company with regard to the public safety?—No. We delegated the powers conferred upon us to run the service to the company, but in our deed we restrict the company in many ways. They are made subject to our by-laws, their cars have to be approved of by us, and they have to provide enough cars to our satisfaction.

218. You still regard it that the Council should be charged with the duty of looking after the safety and convenience of the public?—Yes; that is the big part of our committee proceedings every week.

219. Is your Council elected on a broader franchise or a narrower franchise than our members of Parliament?—In theory a narrower franchise, but in practice often broader. I have had applications from the hotel servants and the sons and daughters of people, and that is going beyond manhood suffrage. I do not think there is much difference in the franchise.

220. Every one over the age of twenty-one years has the right to vote for a member of your Council?—In practice they get it.

221 In what way is your Council interested in the matter of loans raised by the Auckland Tramway Company?—I was speaking of the loans raised by the Council itself.

222. You are in no way interested in the loans raised by the company?—Except to this extent that they cannot get new loans without our consent.

223. You are not directly concerned in the raising of those loans?—No.

224. Your concern is as to what percentage of the profits you can get out of the running of the service?—More than that: we derive money from the rates, rent, license fees, and profits.

225. I suppose the balance-sheets of the company are given to you?—We get the ordinary balance-sheets of the company, but we have two auditors—one in London and one in Auckland—to go over the accounts once a year, for our own purposes.

226. Is it an Auckland company?—It is domiciled in London, but I know there are a good many shares held in Auckland. It is quoted on the Auckland Stock Exchange.

227 Do you know how many of the shares are held outside?—No.

228. Do you know anything of what the transfer of the deed of delegation cost? Have you seen an item in the balance-sheet of £77,000 for organizing and Parliamentary expenses?—I know there is such an item, but I cannot say the amount, because that is one item that we watch very closely to see that they do not apply any of the profit to it. That is buying up the old concern, the old Auckland Tramway Company—the horse-trams. That is included in that item.

229. You admit the fact that the number of accidents in Auckland in connection with the tramway service equals the total number of the other services in the country?—The figures are in the Brakes Commission's evidence. I have no personal knowledge of the exact figures.

230. I understood you to say, in reply to the Minister, that there was a difference between the circumstances of the accidents in the Auckland system and elsewhere?—That is my personal opinion.

231 How do the accidents happen?—They are mostly caused by people getting in the way of a car and being knocked over. Some are caused by people getting on and off a car when in motion.

232 Is that the cause in other centres?—I do not know.

233 You hold the position of Town Clerk of the City of Auckland?—Yes.

234. You say that your Council looks after the public safety?—Yes.

235. Should you not, then, have an exact knowledge of these matters that strictly relate to the public safety?—We have a report, and investigate each case in Auckland. We have men to advise us who have a general knowledge of such things elsewhere, but, of course, the Town Clerk does not look after the expert part of the tramway service.

236. The Town Clerk has not a general knowledge?—He has a general knowledge, with his inspectors; more than that, reports come before him.

237 What distinguishes the accidents in Auckland from those in other centres?—In my opinion it is largely due to the difference in the width of the streets. May I illustrate for one moment? When you come to Wellington you find the people walking in two lines; if you go to Auckland, where the streets are so wide, you will see them all over the place.

238. Is it not the general opinion of those having expert knowledge that there is more danger in communities where they have narrow streets than where they have wider streets?—No. There are fewer accidents in Wellington, where you have narrow streets, than we have in our broad streets. People get more careless where the streets are broad.

239. Has the larger number of accidents been due to failure of the brakes?—No, I cannot admit that.

240. Have you a knowledge of the accidents that occurred and the causes of the accidents?—The last accident that I can recall, a man blundered in front of a tram-car and got knocked over. In many cases people cross behind a car, and in lots of these cases the best brake in the world would not pull the car up in time.

241 Have you any knowledge that accidents happen under similar circumstances in other centres?—Yes.

242. Do the tram-cars in Dunedin run through streets narrower than those in Auckland?—In Dunedin they do.