

*Mr. A. Rosser*, Secretary of the Auckland Tramways Employees' Union, said,—I should be quite content to leave the case on behalf of the air brake in the hands of the Commission. My friend Mr. O'Shea has addressed the Commission for upwards of an hour upon the advantages of the magnetic brake and certain matters connected with future legislation. If it had been an uninformed jury that my friend had been addressing I could have understood it, but with the two experts who, added to their previous knowledge, have now a comprehensive knowledge of the four systems of the Dominion, I should be content to leave the case of the air brake to the cold pitiless logic of facts, and let it rest with the Commission. But Mr. O'Shea has rightly, I suppose, from his standpoint, attempted to make good so far as Wellington is concerned with regard to the magnetic brake. But there are one or two points that, affecting the employees, should not go unchallenged. First, "The evidence of the Auckland motormen with regard to the brake is strongly tinged with sentiment." Now, I deny that. We had evidence with regard to the air brake from nine men who had driven in Glasgow and used the brakes, and there was no sentiment there. The bulk of them were Scotchmen, and you do not expect much sentiment from a hard-headed Scotchman. It was the wrong place to get it, and it was not obtained. They spoke of their actual experiences. Their evidence was not tinged by sentiment even, because we were careful to bring such men as had actual experience with the two experimental cars installed with the air brake on the Auckland system, and their evidence was actual experience; and when I remind the Commission that the tests made were made on a car that was proved to be overweight, one must consider that the Auckland car came out of the matter very well indeed. And this matter of overweight, I think, affects the results of the last Commission, because in the first Commission—the first, in which Mr. Holmes was Chairman—the weights of the cars were taken for granted; but in this Commission there has been nothing taken for granted. The actual weight of the car has been taken, and it has been found to be 16½ tons, with sixty-six passengers weighing 4½ tons: total weight, 20¾ tons. I am very gratified indeed that the Commissioners took steps to have the exact weight of the cars taken in all the different centres. There has been no rule of thumb in this case. And that leads me to ask this question: Whether the tests referred to in the first Commission were made with properly weighed cars?

*Mr. O'Shea*.—Our cars were weighed when they were landed. There was a very great disparity between the Harbour Board weight and the weight given by the manufacturers.

*Mr. Rosser*.—Then Mr. O'Shea mentions Mr. Goodman's evidence. I think that has been fully covered by Mr. Myers in his summing-up in Wellington. It was comprehensive and conclusive, and it seems strange to me that Mr. O'Shea should question Mr. Goodman's evidence, and imply that he is an adversary of the magnetic brake. Mr. Goodman declares that he has been called "the magnetic-brake man." Further than that, if he (Mr. Goodman) were called upon to reinstall the Dunedin or Adelaide tramways he would still install the magnetic brake. That clearly shows that Mr. Goodman is not opposed to the magnetic brake, which therefore makes his evidence in favour of the air brake for Auckland all the more valuable. The magnetic brake, he says, under certain conditions is the most perfect in the world, but these conditions do not obtain in Auckland. This Commission has to decide what is the best brake for the Auckland system, and not for the others. Mr. O'Shea says the air brake is very difficult to apply and act in cases of emergency. We have not had any difficulty in Auckland in the nine or ten months the cars have been running. This is evidently a creation of Mr. O'Shea's own.

Then he says the Commission should hesitate before it hands over to the Minister control of the tramways of the Dominion. The Minister has already that power. Before the special Committee mentioned by Mr. O'Shea, Mr. Blow, in answer to a question, said that power the Minister of Public Works possesses now.

*Mr. O'Shea*.—He had to deny it.

*Mr. Rosser*.—But there is no middle course. If there is anything wrong in the equipment that the company refuses to remedy, the only penalty is to stop the cars running—a very severe penalty indeed; and any legislation is in the direction of giving a medium course, to provide for minor penalties. He has the power now to stop them if in the opinion of his Chief Engineer such a course is necessary.

With reference to Mr. Fitzgibbon, and the statement put in, I do not think there is any answer necessary, because I would remind Mr. O'Shea that that statement was shown to him and all of us.

*Mr. O'Shea*.—It was not shown to me.

*Mr. Rosser*.—I distinctly remember it being shown round, but Mr. O'Shea may have been too preoccupied to notice it.

The reason I did not ask the question in Dunedin as to whether motormen were injured by the use of the hand-brake is that it was not such an important question in Dunedin as in the other centres, because Dunedin is the only place where there is unrestricted use of the magnetic brake for all purposes. Wellington has a regulation that provides for its use, but it is nullified by instructions to use it as little as possible. But I think it is a credit to Dunedin that they give it to the motormen for unlimited use. In Adelaide there is a restricted use, yet they are practically on the same lines. There are very few gradients in either of these places. But we fear that if the magnetic brake is brought into Auckland, by reason of the overheating of the motors, there will be a restriction of the use of the brakes, as laid down by evidence from Glasgow and from Adelaide by Mr. Goodman. And we ask for a brake that the men can use any part of the time or all the time, and we consider that that may be met by the installation of the air brake.

We have heard a good deal with regard to complete or partial failures, but I think that matter can be safely left in the hands of the Commissioners. There is only this to say: It matters not to the motorman who has a collision whether it is proved partial or complete. He has to judge whether it fails on the first, second, third, fourth, or even the fifth notch, and by