

GEORGE ABERDEEN duly sworn.

Examined by Mr. Rosser: My name is George Aberdeen. I am a motorman in the employ of the Auckland Tramway Company, and have been with them over three years. I was a tramwayman before coming to the Dominion, in Glasgow, in the employment of the Glasgow Corporation Tramway Company, as motorman. We used the magnetic brake there. I used it for four years. We used the hand-brake to make service stops, similar to the one on these cars at present. We only used the magnetic brakes when coasting down grades and for emergencies. It was a good brake, and a good brake for coasting down hill with. You never could depend upon it for emergency stops; it gave no warning as to when it could be depended upon. We were required to try the brake occasionally, by testing it before entering on a grade. We tested it in the mornings when taking over the car, but we were not required to test it when we left the terminus to see whether it was acting all right. When the grades were not so steep we used the hand-brake. If you rushed too fast it would not act properly; the magnetic brake required a certain amount of time to do it justice. It was liable to get out through contacts being wrong. I have driven the air brake on the Auckland system. In comparing the two brakes I would rather use the air brake in Auckland. We have some pretty steep grades in Glasgow. There are more grades here, but some of those in Glasgow are just as steep. I had a brake-failure with the magnetic brake in Glasgow, and had to fall back on the hand-brake. There was no inquiry that I know of. The instructions to try the magnetic brake on entering grades was brought about by an accident. I find I can make as quick stops with the air brake as with the magnetic. With the latter you have to give it time. If going twenty miles an hour it would bring up the car at that speed. As motorman in both services, in Auckland and Glasgow, I would say the service is a bit faster here. I believe it has a more strenuous effect on the men. A blistered finger would prevent contact and affect the magnetic brake acting; it would affect the working of the brake. I have had to use the hand-brake to retain the car after stopping. I always did that.

By Mr. Myers: In giving my evidence I am comparing my personal experience with the air brake here with my experience with the magnetic brake in Glasgow. I think from my experience that the air brake and track brake here are better than the hand-brake and magnetic brake in Glasgow.

By the Chairman: I was in Glasgow for six years. They had meal-hours there, and we worked in two shifts; we do it in one here. Taking into consideration the winter weather, the crowded nature of the streets, &c., I think you have more to contend with in Glasgow than here. The magnetic brake was all the same type, but it had different controllers. It was a track brake, wheel-brake, and axle-brake. It actuated the blocks on the wheels. At one time when I was using the magnetic brake when coasting down a hill, I came to stop the car, but found it defective on the last notch, though it was good on all the rest. The car went away. I had no serious accidents, but it failed several times on the first stop. I never had any confidence in it. It was ordinary weather at the time. In one case the failure was due to bad contact, in another case to a bad finger, and in another case the current was not generated, as I had not the distance to travel. I have worked the slipper brake here, and found it successful, and have had no trouble with it. I always put it down on the top of the hill. It does not take long—from about half a minute.

By Mr. Rosser: The magnetic brake will act best when the car is going at moderate speed. At the very slow speed it does not act easily.

ARTHUR LESLIE BRAISBY duly sworn.

Examined by Mr. Rosser: My name is Arthur Leslie Braisby. I am a motorman in the employ of the company, and have been in their employ for three years and four months. I have worked in New York City, U.S.A., for the Metropolitan Street Railway Company and the Subway Company. On the Metropolitan Company we had the hand-brake and the air brake. Some cars had no air brake, but those that had had the hand-brake too. Some cars had the air brake alone. The air brake gave the best satisfaction to every one. On the faster lines they used the air brakes. It was on certain lines where there were crossings, and the distance in between they wanted done as quickly as possible. When working air-brake cars they had a better effect physically on the men than the others. The shift was ten hours, relieved in the middle sometimes. Occasionally there was an extra trip. The grades are not so numerous, but they have just as steep grades there as here. The cars stop at every block, and certain cross streets are fire stops, and we kept at the inner side of the street. It was because further along that street there was a fire-house, and any moment the engine might come along, and if you crossed them there would be an accident. We had greasy rails there, worse than here. There was snow, sudden thaws, then more snow on top, and that would give you a very bad rail. If you had a greasy rail you made sure the sand was working well. I have had no experience of magnetic brakes. I have been all over the United States, though I have not worked as motorman in every city. There were no magnetic brakes or track brakes in the States. I have been in New Orleans. I went right through the car system. They had the air brakes, but the first cars still had the hand-brakes. A lot of cars were equipped with the air brake, and hand-brake in addition.

By Mr. Myers: There was no track brake in New York. I know the track brake here, and find it effective on the grades to hold the car, and help you to make a stop. I have not worked the cars with the air brake here.

By the Chairman: We were using the straight air system, not the automatic. They had no brake-failures. You would have plenty of warning, and if you had sand you must stop; that is recognised. There are grades in New York City as great as any here, except the Parnell Rise; but I could not tell you how steep they were. You see the run of the grade, and you know what it is. Amsterdam Avenue was the steepest. Then the Madison Avenue and San Juan Hill: That is the steepest in the New York State.