

122. Did you read it?—I did. Personally I believe in the Glasgow magnetic brake.

123. Did you read the report of the second Commission?—Yes, I suppose I did.

124. Do you approve of their report?—I cannot speak from memory as to what the conclusion was.

125. Do you think the report of the last, or first, Commission was justified?—Anything that will bring about the safety of the travelling public is justified.

126. Do you consider the present brakes in use on the Auckland tramway system to be perfectly satisfactory?—The biggest test is going down Constitution Hill, and I have seen a car brought up to a standstill with the slipper brake when the bell was rung. The emergency was used, and the car was brought up in the middle of Constitution Hill, and I think that was the best test I have ever seen with the slipper brake.

127. Do you consider the system of brakes in use at present satisfactory?—As far as I have seen and had experience, they are not bad, but they might be bettered.

128. Do you consider the system of brakes in use at present satisfactory?—So far I do not think any accidents have happened owing to the brakes.

129. Will you take the report of the last Royal Commission, and read paragraph (a) on page 11?—"That they are of opinion that, having regard to the grades of the Auckland tramways and the conditions under which traffic is there conducted, the brakes already adopted are not suitable, efficient, or sufficient for use on these tramways. Under estimation of the weight of the car has led to their being equipped with brakes of insufficient power and capacity. A far larger amount of physical force than was apparently anticipated is required for their application. The brake-gear is too light in scantling and too insecure in anchorage to safely and effectively transmit this larger force. That the cars are too heavy, speeds too high, and gradients too severe for hand-power to be alone relied on for actuating the brakes."

130. Do you consider that a fair finding on the part of the Royal Commission?—I take no objection to that.

131. Have you read the paragraphs expressing an opinion that the Government should have power to step in and insist on the efficiency of the brakes to be applied to the Auckland tramways?—The matter had been before the Council on several occasions. The last time Mr Walklate was before the Committee he said that the Tramway Company were prepared to put in the air brake as soon as the Minister would give his sanction.

132. Are you aware of an inquest which was held on a man who was killed on a car in Auckland on the 31st May, 1907?—I cannot say I remember it.

133. Would you be surprised to hear that the Coroner's jury found that the man was killed through the inefficiency of the brakes?—Of course a Coroner's jury has no technical knowledge of such a matter. I do not think that their opinion would amount to much. You could not depend much upon the intelligence of a Coroner's jury.

134. Do you think they would be capable of understanding the evidence placed before them?—I should want to know something about the men who constituted the jury.

135. You are familiar with the case?—No. If I knew the facts of the case, probably I might be able to give you a better answer.

136. In the case of deficient equipment or inefficiency of the brakes, do you think the Government have a right to step in and insist on proper brakes?—I understand the Government have that power now.

137. That is, to stop a car running?—Yes.

138. We should have to stop every tram-car in Auckland, in that case?—If you think they are dangerous, that is the logical sequence.

139. How often do your Corporation license cars?—Every twelve months.

140. Is the City Council satisfied that all those cars are safe with the present system of brakes? We have been waiting anxiously, and the Council has been at the general manager a number of times with regard to the brakes, and his plea is that he is waiting for the sanction of the Minister. He will tell you that himself.

141. You are not satisfied that the present system of brakes is safe?—If we were we should not be at the general manager with regard to the brakes.

142. Then, why do you not refuse to give them the license at the end of the year?—I do not think that is a fair question. I might just as well ask why the Government allow it.

143. The Government have not the power?—The Government have the power to stop every car in Auckland if they choose.

144. You stated that you did not consider the present system of brakes safe?—I do not like this badgering way of putting things. You are simply drawing me round and round in a maze.

145. You stated in your evidence that the power of inspection that the City Council has is really exercised?—Yes.

146. If the City Council, or you as Chairman of the Tramways Committee, found the present system of brakes sufficient, would it not be your duty to see that a car insufficiently braked should have its license cancelled?—That is a question I do not altogether grasp. We have been advised that the brakes are part of the Government control, and we do not interfere with the brakes at all.

147. But you license the cars?—We license the cars.

148. You have killed 38 people in eight years, seriously injured 30, and slightly injured 53—that is, 131 people have been killed or injured in Auckland during eight years under your system. You state that your system of brakes is unsatisfactory, yet you still license those cars?—I say that the Council has been advised that it is the Government's duty to look after the brakes.

149. Do you object to our taking power under this Bill for that purpose?—You have the power.