

Are they making an economic success of it?—I know nothing about it. They have so far met their financial commitments to the Transport Board, and are living up to them. We sold the private operators the vehicles to carry on with.

You say they are living up to their commitments to the Board. Do you keep a check on their route or time-table?—Yes; we have our Inspectors.

Did you put a check on the time-table at the time your own buses went to Henderson?—Yes; the time-tables of all services, both bus and tramways, are checked. We do not pretend that they are 100 per cent. perfect, but they are as perfect as human ingenuity can make them or as they are anywhere else.

I saw one of those clock machines at Point Chevalier; I do not know how long it has been there; but why did you not have one of them at Henderson years ago as a check on the time-table?—We did not run a service to Henderson for years. We did not take it over until August, 1927; and we would not have taken it over then but for an order of the Court that compelled us. We ran it for only eighteen months.

Why did you not put in a clock straight away?—Because it did not appear necessary. There is quite enough expense in connection with a service of that kind without adding to it.

What does such a clock cost?—About £30.

Would not you have a lot of clocks taken out when you change from one system of trams to another?—No; the only places which need clocks now have them.

It was a case of an efficient service, and, as a matter of fact, they had to accept an inefficient one?—That is entirely a matter of opinion. I was asked my opinion as to the adequacy of that service for the district, and it appeared adequate for this area. Only two hundred and fifty people are settled in the area we are discussing, and the Railways Department would not touch the services.

However, it is a wonder to me how that time-table came to be so appallingly irregular. Was that not so?—I cannot admit that for a moment. It might have been said about four years ago, but a further improvement occurred under the City Corporation. I will not suggest that it was 100 per cent. perfect, but we helped them materially from the jump.

I do not want to indulge in generalities or repeat a lot of gossip, but to speak only of things I saw with my own eyes, with a view to an improvement in the future?—Well, I must admit that we took over from the private operators a lot of worthless junk.

*Mr. Sullivan.*] Can you tell the Committee what percentage of the buses that were taken over by the Auckland Transport Board from private enterprise was usable, was used, and was capable of being used when necessary?—We took over 106 buses, and we scrapped fifty-two of them. Some of them caused a great deal of amusement at the sale, and one or two were sold for £5 each. Only two of the whole lot had been designed as omnibuses; all the rest were converted lorries.

The great bulk were simply awful?—Yes. We took some up to the Supreme Court to show what they were assessing on.

*Mr. Harris.*] In reference to the proposal to include taxis running on city routes, would not that affect passengers going, say, to Ellerslie Racecourse, to where the fare is 2s.?—It is not competent for a taxi to do that. A taxi can only be hired by one person, but it may carry the whole of the number it is licensed for. The taxi cannot legally carry a number of passengers at one time and charge each passenger a fare of 2s. If it is done, then the driver is violating the city by-laws and will be prosecuted.

To your knowledge, it is done on race days on every bus that runs out?—I did not say that. I was asked the question about the taxi charges, and I think I said that the taxi cannot legally so charge. Your point is that the buses have been doing it; and if the taxis have been doing it, then they have broken the city by-laws.

Other than buses?—If they are doing it, they are not operating as taxis.

And the proposal you now make, if put into the Bill, would prevent that happening?—I think so; and there is also local provision to prevent its happening.

You remember the difficulty at North Shore, when the proposal was to adopt the electric-tramway system. Do you recollect the taxis starting to run from Devonport to Takapuna when the No. 2 Licensing District refused to license the buses to operate?—I do.

If your proposal were embodied in legislation it would prevent a similar state of things happening. In other words, if the conditions existing to-day were the same as at that time Takapuna would still have the inadequate steam-tram system operating, with no opportunity of overcoming it?—That is not my recollection of the circumstances at all.

That is the position, and it was only the fact that the taxis were put on at bus fares that prevented it?—I know the people objected to it.

*Hon. Mr. Veitch.*] As to the question of certain adjoining districts being permitted to become a part of the Transport Board area, you said the difficulty might be overcome by an Order in Council?—I said that the Act provided for the contiguous areas joining the Board's area, and the Board had no means of preventing it. The Act provides that the Governor-General, on the Minister's advice, may order those districts to be joined to the Board's area: See subsection (2) of section 3, Auckland Transport Board Act, 1928.

You also said that those people applied for a certain area to be taken in?—No; they did not apply to me, but notified their intention to apply. They took up an attitude with regard to representation, but subsequently, when a new Council came into office, they did not pursue the matter.

But you also said that the Transport Board declined to give that representation?—The Board held the request to be unreasonable, as it would have meant giving about four thousand people one representative where about one hundred and ninety thousand had only ten representatives, and also held that later on there could be a readjustment of boundaries to give them the representation they desired.