

OPENING ADDRESS

CLIVE PETER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CHRISTCHURCH TRANSPORT LTD.

The native student, writing a letter to the superintendent of the mission, desired to end with the words "MAY HEAVEN PRESERVE YOU".

Not being quite sure of the meaning of "preserve" he looked it up in the dictionary. When the letter reached the superintendent, it ended with the words "AND MAY HEAVEN PICKLE YOU".

Ladies and Gentlemen, when one talks of preserving the past, the words boring, dull, lifeless and irrelevant come to mind. One can therefore be forgiven for mistaking the word "pickle" for "preserve".

However, after being associated with the Tramway Society, one cannot be further away from the truth. Since the days of the old Christchurch Transport Board there has been a strong bond between the two organisations. As Chief Executive of Christchurch Transport Ltd I have watched with constant amazement the commitment and dedication of members of the Society in their efforts of preservation and restoration. I have seen men volunteer their time selflessly and willingly.

You here today are a testimony to the fact that preserving is not a pickling, but a restoration and a giving of new life as it were. A restoration to former glory.

My particular interest in transport is that of urban transport. Being a relative newcomer to Christchurch, one of my most enlightening experiences was being able to trace the history of urban transport in Christchurch. Not only through what is recorded in books, but to inspect, ride on, and experience the technology of each period unfold from the horse tram, the steam and electric trams, the cable car, the trolley bus and the modern diesel bus. All of these have been painstakingly restored and maintained in excellent working order by the Tramway Society. What a great inheritance of bequest for the next generation.

It is often said "To know where you are going, you need to know where you have come from". Through the continued efforts of people like yourselves, our children and their children will have a better understanding of where they are going by seeing and experiencing where we have come from.

Not only has the Tramway Historical Society preserved the vehicles of the past, but with them they have also preserved our social history. Many of the vehicles have interesting and sometimes key events connected with them. When inspecting these vehicles one can't help but consider what life was like when these vehicles plied our streets for trade.

Some may think it strange that people who are associated with the past, with preservation, and with museums, will theme their 1998 Conference "THE WAY AHEAD". What a great theme - to be future looking while standing firmly in the present after having secured and safeguarded the past.

I congratulate you and your conference organisers on the theme of your Conference. Everyone is interested in the future, in what lies ahead, and this is particularly true for leaders. Peering in the crystal ball to discern the future can be interesting, frustrating, tedious, and sometimes even humorous, but at all times it is an important part of leadership. You at your Conference today are reflecting your roles as leaders in considering "The Way Ahead".

Ladies and Gentlemen - Welcome to Christchurch, New Zealand - The Garden City, the City That Shines. Enjoy our hospitality and our many attractions. We certainly aim to please.

I sincerely trust that your experience at this conference will not only be a learning one, but an opportunity for renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. I hope that you have a great, enjoyable, and immensely successful Conference.

It therefore gives me great pleasure in declaring Conference 98 - The Way Ahead - open.