

the Bill shows how that committee is likely to proceed, because the whole of the provisions in the Bill are in the interests of private enterprise. When we take into account the personnel of the advisory committee which recommended the provisions of this measure we can see at once that it is framed in one interest only. I appear here as the representative of the public transport interest in the City of Christchurch, and state emphatically that my Board is absolutely opposed to the measure. The advisory committee consisted of eight representatives, five of whom are the direct representatives of the motor interests pure and simple—the Motor Association, the New Zealand master carriers, the motor-omnibus proprietors, the service-car proprietors, and, lastly, the motor trade. That is five; and the three interests outside of them were representatives of the trade-unions organization, the Counties Association, and the Municipal Association. The Christchurch Tramway Board protested to the Minister at the setting-up of an advisory committee, or when it was constituted, and the reply was that the constitution of the Transport Board was only tentative, and could be reviewed in the light of experience when the Transport Bill was before Parliament this session. I will not suggest it is no use reviewing the constitution of this committee even after it has done so much, and after it has made recommendations which are being embodied in this Bill.

*Mr. Ansell.*] As to the constitution of the council, there are the motor representatives—one for the North Island, and one for the South Island?—I am coming to that. I am dealing with the committee which has been sitting here and advising the Minister.

I am speaking of that clause that covers the motor representatives?—That makes it worse. By the Bill there is an absolute disregard of the interests of the public transport authorities of the Dominion. There is a provision for the setting-up of advisory committees, but I cannot find in the measure any suggested constitution for such tribunals, and it looks as though it is capable of being applied inimically to the tramways interests, and, if so, it is a provision that the tramway authorities of this Dominion will be strongly opposed to. If the Bill is going to be seriously considered with a view to being passed, it ought to be amended in the direction of providing for representation on the advisory committee on the lines of the proposed local licensing committee, which consists, as you know, of the Resident Engineer of the Public Works Department, a representative of the motor interests, a representative of the counties, and representatives of the various public transport services, who constitute, I think, the proposed Appeal Board. In the Schedule of the Bill the Tramways Act, 1908, is to be administered by the new Transport Department, an Act which has been in force for many years—I was going to say fifty years. At any rate, during the whole of its existence the tramway undertakings have been under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department, and I might mention that our experience of working under our own special Act, which was passed in 1902 in connection with the Christchurch tramways undertaking, has been exceedingly satisfactory all through, as to the manner in which we have been treated by the Public Works Department, and we do not desire to change. They have the knowledge, the organization, and the experience, and it is a retrograde measure to create a new body to control the tramway undertakings now carried on by the present organizations. There is another provision in this Bill we do not like, and that is the constitution of the Appeal Board, which is to consist of five members—two Government representatives, one from the County Councils, one from the Borough Councils and Town Boards and all other local transport authorities, and one from the private-bus owners. There are to be five members, practically the same number as at present; but there is no provision for the representation of the cities and public transport authorities excepting that we are lumped in with the boroughs. You have already had before you the recommendation of the municipal executive as to the Bill and the Appeal Board. If there is to be an Appeal Board it should be a quasi-judicial authority somewhat of the nature of that which acts now; but we feel that with the Dominion constituted as at present there should be separate Appeal Boards for the various districts.

*Mr. Harris.*] According to the proposed highways districts?—Yes; that is what we want. And I would strongly support the suggestion, because you can get the matter dealt with promptly, and quickly. We do not want to have to wait like in the case of the Arbitration Court, but we need to have each case dealt with as it occurs in its turn.

*The Chairman.* The appeals will not be very frequent, perhaps.

*Witness.* You do not know how frequent they may be; but, in any case, some one has to wait his turn. We suggest that a Judge of the Supreme Court or the Senior Magistrate for the district, plus the representative of the private motor interests and the public transport interests, should form the Board—a tribunal of three, like the Compensation Court, which is composed of a Judge or Magistrate and two assessors. Such a Board would give more satisfaction than the present one. I am afraid that the present Appeal Board does not operate for the benefit of public transport; but its Chairman is the Judge of the Arbitration Court, and he is now to be replaced by a Government officer under the new system. I suggest that a provision is required whereby the representative of a local body should cease to be a member when he goes off the local body, if any change at all is made in the constitution of this Board. It is also proposed in this Bill, as the Chairman of the Auckland Board has stated, the whole of the powers of that Board in certain directions are to be taken away. After all their experience they are to be deliberately deprived of the powers vested in them by Parliament. What has been done in Auckland is tantamount to a statutory contract. But in the case of Christchurch it is only proposed to take away—under clause 49 of the Bill—certain powers. Now, what are those powers? We have been working without any trouble whatever in Christchurch all through the years of the bus difficulty, and we have solved that problem, excepting in one instance, and we strongly object to clause 49 repealing section 6 of the Christchurch Tramway District Amendment Act, 1927. The Christchurch tramway area covers an area of 42,478 acres, with a population of 124,280. There are in it four boroughs and the city, parts of four counties, and in one case a whole county. Compared with Auckland, our area is 42,478 acres as against 36,559 acres.