

already a trackless tram in operation here, on the Hutt Road, and before very long we shall follow on. In the case of sparsely populated districts the trackless tram would overcome many transport difficulties. As to the question of the highways subsidy, in our area we have tram-tracks laid on nine highways. The Tramway Board lays down its tracks in concrete with bitumen top surface. We have spent £119,000 in laying down 670 chains of some of the finest road-surface in this country.

*The Chairman.*] On a concrete foundation?—Yes. The work we are doing is really an object-lesson to every local body. Every local body can get a subsidy from the Main Highways Board towards their work, and the same applies to the allocation of the petrol-tax, but the Christchurch Tramway Board, which maintains one-third of the highway, can get nothing, and on that highway we carry the bulk of the traffic.

You refer to the city area?—The highways running through our area. People use the tramway-track more than any other part of the city streets or district roads for their transport, so that we ask for an amendment of the Act which will enable the Highways Board to make a contribution out of its funds towards this kind of work. We sent in an application to the Highways Board, and the Chairman, Mr. Furkert, told us that he was in sympathy with our request, but that the Board had no power to make a contribution. We ask for legislation to enable a grant of that nature to be paid by the Board towards our cost of the construction. We are trying to get relief through an amendment of the Order in Council. The application is still in the hands of the Minister of Public Works.

*Hon. Mr. Williams.*] You do not get anything from Christchurch City?—No. In Christchurch the roadway we have to maintain is wider than the Tramways Act requires. That was the system in vogue when the centre poles existed, but they have all gone now and it is not fair to the Board that it should have to maintain the whole width. The question of the double track also comes in, and in the case of our system we should like to see some relief along the lines indicated. My Board endorses the recommendation of the Municipal Association's executive with regard to tramway matters, as we consider it is unreasonable that regulations framed under section 25 of the principal Act should control tramway undertakings. We have never been brought in on those lines before; we control our undertaking under the provisions of the Order in Council, and surely that should be sufficient. The question arises whether a local transport Board like a Tramway Board should have a monopoly, and I say with all sense of responsibility that it should be protected against the inroads of private enterprise, which is usually only too ready to compete with, and take away part of, the traffic built up over the years the trams have been running. I would like to quote to you certain extracts from an article which appears in *The Tramway and Railway World* of the 24th August last. It says, "The prime object of all transport undertakings in these days must be the public advantage, and this cannot be secured in any other way than by the elimination of unnecessary competition." Later on it states, in connection with a Conference which was to be held over the Manchester case where a number of buses were refused licenses, the Ministry of Transport upholding the refusal, "Doubtless the Conference may consider it desirable, as Bailie Dollan (of Edinburgh) does, that the Ministry shall be guided in future by the view that a local authority should be allowed a complete monopoly so long as it provides an adequate and satisfactory service. No one would dream of allowing competition in the provision of gas, electricity, or water, and competition in street transport is more dangerous and absurd." I submit those extracts with every confidence for the consideration of the Committee. Again it says, "Hopes ran high when Parliament, two years ago, conferred monopoly powers upon Greenock and Port Glasgow and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Tramways Companies." They were not public tramways, but companies with private interests. They had in England to submit to unnecessary restrictions, from which the public suffered; and recently the Glasgow Corporation, which controls the finest trams in the world, at a meeting held in August, through its Tramway Committee, recommended that the Parliamentary Bills Committee be instructed to make application to Parliament for powers to confer on Glasgow a complete monopoly of passenger traffic within the city, on tramway routes outside the city, or on routes in competition therewith. Surely, if that has become necessary in Glasgow, we at the other end of the world cannot go wrong in making the same provision. After my experience in tramway work in Christchurch during the last twenty years—and Christchurch is my native city—I can whole-heartedly support the institution of a monopoly for its public transport services. In New Zealand we have £5,000,000 sunk in tramway undertakings, and that capital is raised by loans in the usual way. The security is the net earnings of the undertakings, but if it is not sufficient we can levy a rate. The users of a public service should pay sufficient to cover its cost, and no one has a right to expect a service to be provided under cost. The Auckland Commission in its report recommended that a monopoly should be given to such a service as the tramways, and, seeing they are the peoples' own property down to the last penny, I would not allow any competition to step in at peak-load times, collaring the traffic which this transport organization seeks to control. I endorse the statement of Mr. Allum, Chairman of the Auckland Transport Board, and I submit these remarks for the consideration of the Committee. We also ask for the following additions to the Bill: To follow clause 54—

"Where a tramway has been or is hereafter constructed on any main highway or continuation thereof, or on any other road or street towards the construction or maintenance of which the Main Highways Board makes any contribution, then the local or public authority owning or operating such tramway shall be entitled to receive a share of such contribution proportionate to the area of the surface of such main highway, road, or street constructed or maintained, as the case may be, by such local or public authority."

To follow clause 57—

"(1) Section nine of the Motor-spirits Taxation Act, 1927, is hereby amended by adding to paragraph (b) of subsection one of that section the following proviso:—

"Provided that before such apportionment is made there may be paid out of such balance such amount as the Minister of Public Works may determine to the promoter of any tramway."