

*Mr. Mason.*] You thought there should be one law for the Dominion, and that you would be well satisfied with the Auckland Transport Act applied to the whole country; but I do not understand what provision in Auckland is lacking in the case of Christchurch. Will you tell the Committee what you have in view?—The Auckland Board is the licensing authority for that district: we are not; we are under the control of the City Council, which changes from time to time, and frequently.

That is the essential point in the Auckland Act you say you would like in Christchurch?—Yes; they have a monopoly there.

There is this difficulty in Auckland—I do not know whether it arises in Christchurch—regarding the transport services that run freely within and without the transport area, and the people who live beyond the area want to come in. Is not there a difficulty in the Transport Board having control?—I do not think so, because we have now from Hornby, at the Riccarton end, a private-bus service going right on beyond Templeton, outside our area, and it works in with our service.

Who licenses them? Of course, the present licensing authority. But if it were done by the Board it would be done by an authority over which some of the people concerned would have no control?—From the point of view of an elective constituency that is quite true.

Is there not a likelihood of objections from those people being placed under the domination of men who are elected by their neighbours and not by themselves?—I do not think so; we are working in that manner now. This bus service simply acts as a feeder to the trams, and there is no objection to it. It is a mutual arrangement.

By whom is it licensed?—By the local body—in this case the Christchurch City Council; and it goes into an outside district.

And there are no complaints?—No.

And the City Council does not run a rival system?—No; it is merely the licensing authority.

You have no trackless trams running yet?—No. We are calling tenders now, and have been driven to it because we cannot renew the worn-out tram-tracks.

Will they run on the existing tram-tracks to a certain extent?—They will.

*Mr. Williams.*] As to the highways subsidy, am I correct in assuming that Christchurch is the only city where the trams are not controlled by the municipal authorities?—Yes. Our Board is elected every three years.

Although the trams clearly belong to the people, there is a Tramways Board working alongside the City Council which is looking after the streets?—Yes; that is so, absolutely. We maintain our tracks for a good distance on each side of the rails.

Your case is the opposite to that of a body which controls both trams and streets, and that is really your main trouble?—I think we are put to a heavier expenditure than they are in Auckland.

Have you ever tried to negotiate with the City Council and offered them a share in the track and maintenance?—We have approached them, and, naturally, they are not willing to take a share.

*Mr. Ansell.*] You thought the Advisory Transport Council did not understand the wants of the public in some respects?—I think not.

You make that statement after considering the constitution of the Advisory Board?—I certainly do, and the whole tenor of it.

You consider the Bill is in favour of private interests, and those of the public will suffer in consequence?—Yes.

*Mr. O'Shea*, of Wellington, said that the policy of the City Council with regard to the passenger traffic was to carry it at the lowest possible cost. What is your policy?—The policy enunciated there is exactly our own, and we are out to provide transport at the lowest possible cost, and not to make sixpence after meeting our ordinary liabilities. As long as we make ends meet we want no more. We are not like Glasgow, which used to make hundreds of thousands of pounds and apply the money to the general good. We only want to pay our way.

You endorse that policy?—I think the Dominion is justified in laying down that principle, seeing it and the local bodies have undertaken this responsibility, and have also been ready to grant modified right to private enterprise.

You consider the public interest should be protected against private encroachment?—I do. It is far better to keep the money in this country than to send it to America to make millionaires there.

You stated you are quite satisfied with the administration of the Public Works Department?—Yes.

And have no complaints at all?—No; we have got along well with the Department, and consider it is unnecessary to set up a new one with a large staff and offices.

Have you studied the proposed amendment with regard to the constitution of the Highways Board?—I have, and I think there should be a separate Board for each Island.

I understand the Prime Minister promised a separate Board for the South Island, and there has been a compromise, and they have appointed a motor representative for the North Island on the Board and one for the South Island. The South Island motorists expected that their representative would be a nominee of the South Island Motor Union, and I presume that under the Act the Minister will call for nominations. The indication is that he will be not a nominee of the South Island Motor Union, but of the heavy traffic or motor interests. What have you to say on that point?—I have very strong views regarding it. There should be a separate Board for each Island, and the representatives should come from the people who find the money in the shape of the fees—as you suggest, a representation of the motorists.

*Mr. Harris.*] Why did you say that this Bill solely favours one interest only?—You have only got to look at the framing of it and what has been recommended to the Minister. Why do you want to put under the control of another authority the tramway bodies?

Can it be said it favours private interests, when special authority is taken to give special preference to local interests?—That preference clause I speak of is very hard to interpret, as I think you will find when it is applied in practice.