

overcome—the counties to have a representative for each Island?—No. It just happens that there is a North Island representative and a South Island representative. There is no obligation to provide for each. The Islands have not separate representation. Each representative is a representative of all the counties of New Zealand, and if the representative of the South Island is in the North he takes the same interest in the discussions as I do when I am in the South. We regard ourselves as representatives of the whole country; but there is a good deal of horse-sense in the Counties Association, and they think it would be better to have a man from the North and one from the South.

Do the counties object to the motorists having another representative on the Board?—That phase, I am sorry to say, was not considered. The executive never had a chance to discuss that, but they came to the conclusion that the present constitution suited them and that they did not desire any change. At present, and even in the Bill, the proposal is to have two representatives from the counties in the North Island and two from those in the South, and one motor representative from each Island. In each case they have distinguished between the numerical strength of the motorists and counties, and the Bill follows that, and that numerical standard is what suits the counties, and I do not think it would be desirable to ask me to give my own personal opinion.

With regard to clause 54, which you suggest should be deleted, why do you presume it is for backblock roads?—Because I saw it stated by the Minister of Public Works that some amount should be deducted from the Highways Fund for the purpose of additional assistance to the backblocks roads.

Your association was quite unanimous in regard to deleting that altogether?—Yes.

You say it is departing from the fundamental principles of highways administration—in other words, that the highway funds should be kept for the main highways?—Yes.

Do you take up this attitude: that it is a dangerous thing for the counties, because if this is granted to backblock roads, then the cities will have a claim for a greater proportion of the petrol-tax?—No. I say that the clause as drawn provides for any street or road getting assistance. It is not a fear that it may happen—it is in the clause itself.

If this is given to backblock roads, then I understand you to say that it would be open to cities to demand a greater proportion of the petrol-tax?—I say it is very wrong for them to try and get it.

We know that there is only a certain amount of money for disposal, and if that amount is given to the backblock roads there would be so-much less for the other roads?—Yes.

Under this provision for the £150,000 to be spent the counties would have to provide £450,000?—Yes.

Therefore you object to the clause?—Yes.

With regard to limitation of loads, you agree with what has already been said?—Yes, and counties are working on that basis.

Therefore you object to the proposal to make any alteration?—I doubt whether there are one hundred miles of road in the Dominion which would stand continuously loads of over 10 tons on one vehicle.

*Mr. Harris.*] With regard to clause 51 (3), relating to representatives of the North and South Island, and that the representative of one shall have no voting-power in respect of expenditure in the other Island, you think that is impracticable?—Yes; I think it is nonsense.

Has it been your experience that the present constitution of the Board, with a personnel of six, is adequate?—Quite.

In amplification of your statement about clause 54, would an application from a county for grading or re-formation be considered maintenance?—Re-formation would be maintenance.

Would not the Counties Association agree that a local authority should be entitled to some assistance for regrading or re-forming a road in the backblocks?—Counties would much prefer to have additional secondary roads on which they could get two for one. We would prefer the extension of secondary roads to such a proposal as this.

You do recognize, however, that many of the backblock roads should be assisted, even to the extent to one to four, under the provisions of this clause?—In the case of the backblocks the difficulty is to get one-fourth of the cost, let alone three-fourths. The more backblocks roads you have, the more contribution you must give them. What is the use of saying you will give them one to three? That is no good.

Is it not better than nothing at all?—They say, give us more secondary roads on which you give us two to one.

You are giving the opinions of the counties?—I am talking from the county point of view.

*Mr. Healy:* Some of the counties.

*Witness:* The counties which know the effects. I am representing the counties executive.

*Mr. Harris.*] I understand you did not consider the functions of the Highways Board?—Yes.

With reference to heavy-traffic fees, I think you said that to-day the cities were getting far too high a proportion of the fees?—I think so. That is my report to the Counties Association.

Is it not a fact that some 68 per cent. of these are paid to the cities to-day?—I am not in a position to say. I know they are getting more than 68 per cent. of the total.

Is it not a fact that the larger proportion of the heavy-traffic fees themselves are paid by the cities?—You say “paid by the cities”: that means for use of vehicles which may be garaged in the city and going out into the country.

I was going to put it to you, is it not a fact that, while a large proportion of the heavy-traffic license fees are paid in the cities, those vehicles use the city roads almost exclusively?—No.

Consider the motor-omnibuses?—Yes, that is right.

And local loans are raised for the purpose of constructing main highways within the city?—Yes.

Heavy license fees are paid by them?—Yes, and the butcher and the baker are up and down the city streets all day.