

I do not see why such a Board as is proposed would be inefficient merely because the North Island representative would not be entitled to vote on proposals affecting the South Island, or *vice versa*. If the whole Board could discuss a proposition, how would it affect the efficiency if the combined intelligence of the Board were brought to bear on the subject?—It would mean this: that the representatives would gradually get the feeling that the other Island's business was no concern of theirs, and they would drop out of it. They would lose interest in it.

*The Chairman.*] The Mayor of Wellington complained of the allocation of the heavy-traffic fees, and afterwards admitted, in reply to a question of mine, that those fees were divided by mutual agreement?—Yes, and from which they took 10 or 12½ per cent. commission.

Does that not obtain generally—by mutual agreement?—Yes; but every now and again it is fixed by a Magistrate.

*Mr. Ansell.*] In view of the fact that heavy-traffic fees are not received by the Highways Board, would you consider that the heavy-traffic interests have a just claim for representation on the Board in view of the fact that none of their fees go into the fund administered by the Highways Board?—I do not think there should be any special representation.

*Witness* (recalled): I would like to say that some questions have been put at this inquiry which have had a pretty close bearing on the Highways Board administration. It is difficult for a man in my position, to give satisfactory answers on the technical side, and I think it would be distinctly advantageous to the Committee to have the evidence of a technical man like Mr. Tyndall of the Highways Board staff.

GEORGE CHARLES MUNNS, M.P., examined. (No. 17.)

*Mr. Munns:* I am speaking on behalf of the Auckland suburbs. The Auckland transport at present is governed by an Act which was brought in about two years ago. This Act is so detrimental to the suburbs, and the dissatisfaction is so intense, that we are asking the Minister of Transport to make provision in one direction only, and that is to make the Auckland Transport Board elective instead of nominative. When the Transport Board was constituted it was constituted as the result of the finding of a Commission which recommended that the Board should be a nominated Board, the Auckland City Council to have six members and the united suburbs four. The operations of that Board are exactly similar to the Board when it was governed by the Auckland City Council, and they are detrimental to the suburbs. Our transport has not progressed—in fact, it is no better than it was under the old regime—and so intense is the dissatisfaction that Auckland ratepayers themselves have just taken a Supreme Court action to remove certain members from the Board. The Chairman of the Board was the Chairman of the old Auckland Tramway Committee. He lost his seat at the last election—could not secure election out of twenty-one members. He was rejected by the Auckland ratepayers mainly because of his mishandling of the transport question. To-day the Auckland City ratepayers are faced with tremendous losses. Already £20,000 to £30,000 is foreshadowed as a loss. And we have no redress; we have no say in electing our representatives—they are foisted on us and we have to submit to whatever they choose to do.

*The Chairman.*] By whom are they nominated?—Six by the City of Auckland, and four by the combined suburbs. All we ask is that, as we pay the piper, we should have the right to elect our own representatives. However, I will leave it to Mr. Melville to address you.

Would not clause 5 alter that?—No: we are asking for an addition to that. All we ask is to make that Board elective forthwith, and if the same gentlemen get in again we will accept the wishes of the ratepayers.

*Mr. Mason.*] Do you happen to have considered whether the numerical strength of the representation on the present Board is proportionate to the populations concerned in the districts nominating?—Yes, the Auckland City Council controls an area with about two-thirds of the population, but we have an immensely larger area. When the proposal was mooted to bring in a Transport Board it was vigorously opposed by the Auckland City Council, and it was only when they realized that the City Council would still control the Transport Board that they were in favour of the Board as constituted.

Then, you wish us to understand that it is the people represented by the minority on the Board who are most dependent on the transport?—Yes.

We were told the other day by a witness that the Board had been administered very efficiently. Is that the general view of the people?—The general opinion of the people is that we are infinitely worse off. Fares have increased, and people have gone bankrupt, and we have empty houses. There is stagnation where there should be progress.

*The Chairman.*] And do you attribute all that to transport difficulties?—Yes, that is what is keeping us back.

*Mr. Harris.*] How is it that the loan which was recently submitted was carried by the Auckland ratepayers?—The new appointments were not made, and had the suburbs dreamed that the Auckland Transport Board would have been returned with the same personnel I am certain that that loan would have been rejected.

JOHN MORISON MELVILLE examined. (No. 18.)

*Witness:* I am representing the Borough of Mount Eden. I endorse the remarks of Mr. Munns on the question of the Auckland Transport Board. I personally and my borough have been interested in that for some years, as we are seriously affected in the outer part of the borough. The district covered by the Transport Board comprises Auckland City, Mount Eden, Mount Albert, Newmarket, Onehunga, One Tree Hill, Mount Roskill. The population is substantial, as stated by Mr. Munns. The Transport Board has six city members, and it has lost money since last March, and it lost money for the previous year, while a loss of £22,000 at least is predicted for the year ending March next. The