

Mr. Sullivan.] Do the South Island motor organizations approve of one Main Highways Board?—Yes; and the speaker after me will read a resolution which was passed by the South Island Motor Union recently which will make that position quite clear.

Is not that a change of front on the part of the South Island?—I think they have previously asked for a separate Board for the South Island?—What was previously asked for was for two representatives, one for the North Island and one for the South. When the South Island found, after many applications, that they could not get that, they then pressed for a South Island Board, hoping that they would get some result. There was a kind of half-promise that we should have two representatives, but it was never carried out, unfortunately, and we hope now that it will be carried out.

And after having persuaded their parliamentary representatives that two Boards were necessary they now desert them and say one will do?—If you will put that question to Mr. Harley he will give you some information on that point.

With reference to the master carriers, they are asking that one of the motor representatives shall be representative of them. What would be the view of your organization in regard to that?—We do not think it would be fair. We feel that with the large number of private ordinary motorists, not heavy-traffic people, there is such a preponderance, with our present representation on the Board, that they must, anyhow, look after the heavy-traffic interests just as much as the interests of the private-car owners. On the other hand, if you have heavy-traffic men purely on the Board they will look after the roads more round the cities, where the heavy traffic occurs, than in the country.

Mr. Williams.] Has your association considered this point: is it worth while taking the control of the Main Highways Board away from the Public Works Department and putting it under this new Department?—We have considered that matter to some extent. As it is proposed to be constituted, we looked upon it as a non-political Board, and from the motorists' standpoint, it is to be brought under the Transport Department, with the Transport Advisory Council machinery as at present, we think it would work all right.

It would probably work just as well if it were left as it is?—It might do so.

The Chairman.] With reference to the classification of roads, do you think it reasonable that a main highways should be classed as No. 5?—I think Mr. Wynyard could answer that question better than I could.

But you must have an opinion on the matter. No. 5 is the lowest possible class of road. Do you think it reasonable that a main highways should be classed as No. 5?—That is a very big question.

It is a very clear one?—Naturally, in time, we hope that all the main highways will come to a higher standard than that, but until the money is available we shall have to wait.

Mr. Sullivan.] With reference to the testing by local bodies generally, do you find that the testing by small local bodies is unsatisfactory?—In many cases, yes; but by the larger bodies such as Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin, it has been satisfactory.

Mr. Mason.] Do you find that harm is done in actual practice as a result of slackness in testing?—In many cases, yes.

HARRY CLEMENT HARLEY examined. (No. 23.)

Witness: I am speaking as a representative of the New Zealand Motor Conference, being the South Island representative on that body. Mr. Jones, who has preceded me, has given you our views generally in regard to the proposed Bill, and it is quite unnecessary for me to report at length on it; but I would like to speak particularly with regard to clause 51, and to say that the resolution passed by the South Island Motor Union with regard to the establishment of one Board, with another motorists' representative on it, to be nominated by the South Island Motor Union, had an addendum to the effect that the granting of the request would be taken as a full compliance with any political promise made to give a separate Board to the South Island. I would like you to understand that the Conference is quite unanimous that the present Highways Board, with an additional member in the motorists' interest, would cover the ground quite satisfactorily. We admit the right, and we quite expect the Government will also nominate another representative, so as to have control of the Board. That would be quite natural, and we are quite in accord with it. With regard to clause 54—provision for payment of subsidies to local bodies in respect of maintenance of roads and streets that are not main highways, with a limit, I think, in any one year of £150,000—we are opposed to this clause. We consider that the funds of the Main Highways Board should be used for main highways only, and therefore we are strongly opposed to this clause, and we have asked Mr. Wynyard to speak further in regard to this matter. He has certain facts and figures which he will place before you.

Mr. Williams.] Do you think that clause 53 will work satisfactorily?—No; we think the Main Highways Board should fix the proportions. We are very strong on that.

Not the Minister?—We consider that this Highways Board is a non-political body, and we are very strongly opposed to political influence dominating it in any shape or form.

You would not be in favour of clause 53, with its present subclauses, as it stands at present?—Subject to the statements I have just made. I should like to say that we discussed that this morning. If we get one Board, as suggested by us, probably this clause would have no effect.

Mr. Ansell.] Why do you say "probably"?—Well, I take it that this would be largely done away with in that clause.

The Chairman: The proportion would have to be allocated by some one.

Mr. Williams.] It is done by the Main Highways Board under the present Act?—Yes.

Very satisfactorily?—Yes.

Mr. Ansell.] With regard to the construction and maintenance of highways, I suppose you agree that that is purely an engineering job?—Yes. In regard to that matter, I have always understood that engineers considered it absolutely necessary to provide a much more expensive construction for heavy traffic than would be necessary for lighter traffic.