

My point is this: Can you see any reason for transferring the administration of the Highways Board from the Public Works Department to the Minister of Transport?—Do you consider that the main work of the Highways Board is the construction of roads, which is an engineering job?—Yes.

Can you see any reason why the Highways Board should be transferred from the Public Works Department to the Minister of Transport?—No; I can see no advantage.

Do you agree to the suggestion, without knowing whether you are going to receive any advantage—simply on the chance that you may receive some advantage? Has the Conference discussed that phase of the matter?—The unions have been well satisfied in the past with the control of the Main Highways Board, and they would be perfectly satisfied in the future if they still had control of it. They do not, so far as I know, wish to give any one else any higher authority.

The motor associations are quite satisfied with the way the work has been carried out?—Yes.

And unless some good reason is shown for transferring the administration you would object?—Yes.

With regard to the allocation of funds, I take it you object to the Minister having control of the funds in such a manner as he considers best?—We are strongly opposed to that clause.

And the allocation at present allotted and as carried out is satisfactory to the North and South Island unions?—Absolutely.

*Mr. Harris.*] With regard to the proposed transference to the Ministry of Transport, I take it that the motor-owners do not mind—they are satisfied with the present system; they have no reason to think there would be a change of policy?—They probably have reasons to think there would be a change. It might be politically controlled to some extent in that case.

There is no proposal to that effect?—The motorists are strongly opposed to any political control.

Assuming that no other control than at present exists were made under a different Ministerial head, you would have no objection?—No.

You object to Ministerial control: have a look at subclause (4) of clause 53 and tell me what you think of that?—In that case the Minister has absolute discretion. We are opposed to that.

You think that should be deleted?—Yes.

Do I understand you to say that your South Island unions suggested that that additional motorists' representative on the Board should be made on the recommendation of the South Island body?—No, the New Zealand Motorists Conference.

I think you said "South Island"?—No; that was originally the case. We are satisfied that the motorists of New Zealand should select the representative.

*Mr. Sullivan.*] What do you say about the master carriers being given one of the representatives?—I consider that the New Zealand Conference, representing both the North Island and South Island motor unions, are the people who should make the recommendation. It must be remembered that numerically they are infinitely stronger than the carriers, and they pay to the Highways Fund a very much greater sum.

They claim otherwise?—I should say they are wrong. They certainly pay fees to the local bodies, but those fees do not go into the Highways Fund.

The heavy-traffic fees provide the main highways in the cities?—They may be granted; but we are dealing with the Highways Fund, and not with a part dealt with by the local bodies.

The master carriers claim that they pay a larger proportion of the petrol-tax than the private motorists?—I should question that very much. Further, there are the licenses and tires in addition to the petrol-tax.

*Mr. Ansell.*] I would point out that the figures given by the heavy traffic people were based on a mileage of ten thousand per vehicle per year, and those produced for private cars were based on five thousand miles.

*The Chairman.*] The heavy-traffic people claim that, while you have two representatives, they have none?—I would answer that largely on the grounds already stated. Further, they would only represent the interest solely of the heavy-traffic people, while our ramifications and interests are so wide that we would look after the interests of all motorists, the heavy-traffic people included. I say that our interests are the interests of motorists generally; but from the heavy-traffic point of view it seems to me that they would be interested only in their own section. Everything we do, on the other hand, is done in the interests of the whole body of motor-owners, including the heavy-traffic people themselves.

You heard the question put to the last witness with regard to the classification of roads. If a road is maintained at a low level it might serve your purpose and yet not the purpose of the heavy-traffic people?—Yes.

There would be a conflict there?—It is quite reasonable for us to argue that good roads is the first plank in our platform, and we are just as anxious for them as the heavy-traffic people.

Are the associations quite definitely in favour of the setting-up of a special Department to deal with all phases in connection with road transport? Do you, for instance, think that a Transport Board to control all these matters is necessary?—I think so.

In that case, do you think it would be workable to maintain the control of one part of it under the Public Works Department and the other under the Minister of Transport? Do you not think that the setting-up of that Board necessarily carries with it the responsibility of transferring it to one Minister?—I think there should be only one authority.

*Mr. Williams.*] Referring again to the question of the heavy-traffic people and the motor associations, you have never refused to allow the heavy-traffic people to join your associations?—No; we have a lot of them in our membership now, including taxi-drivers.

You are prepared to accept them all?—Yes, anybody can join our associations; we represent all classes.