

That substantiates my contention regarding the effect on land-values. What I do know is that this decline is the result of transport troubles. I have used these figures to show that there was not a general drop in values. It may have slowed up a little, but not to the extent that it has done in New Lynn. I am certain the decline in New Lynn would not have been as great as in the other parts of Auckland if transport had not been interfered with. That decrease in land-values and in population will be a serious matter to a number of people in the district who have invested all they have in their homes. A good many of them will have to walk out penniless. I could give instances where that has happened already. Downing, a man working for my firm, bought a section and paid about 75 per cent. off it. He went to the Department, and was treated as I have suggested, with the result that he lost all he put into this section. The following is a statement supplied to me by the Henderson Town Board :—

“ Since the advent of motor-omnibuses as a means of transit between the outer suburbs and the city, and the consequent competition with the older and slower orders of transport facilities as represented by trams and suburban railways, the trend of motor-bus regulations, and latterly legislation, has been in the direction of penalizing motor transport with a view to forcing the travelling public to use the older types of facilities already provided, presumably in order that these may return some measure of revenue and therefore justify their continuance. This is quite a reversal of the general policy of twelve years ago, when politicians and the apostles of health urged people to live out in the suburbs—in the open spaces—and so avoid congestion in the city. Under this urge a large percentage of the population erected homes in the outer suburbs, and particularly after the inauguration of motor-bus transport; but during the past three to four years this influx to the suburbs has not only ceased, but the tide has turned in the direction of a drift to the city, people being compelled to live in or near the city owing to inadequate and unsuitable means of transport, and the precarious situation in this connection. This decline in outer suburban development dates from the restrictions placed on motor-bus transit, and more definitely so from the time the bus transport fell to the control of the City Council and the Auckland Transport Board, and is fully evidenced at present by the large number of empty dwellings in these districts. Owing to the latter body failing to make a success of the service to the western suburbs, and the subsequent granting of a license to a private firm to run the service, residents of these areas have had revived hopes that the great progress previously made under privately-owned services will again visit these districts. However, the drastic legislation proposed under the Transport Law Amendment Bill will, if made operative, undoubtedly sound the death-knell to outer suburban development, and my Board has considered the provisions with grave concern. Already building activity is practically at a standstill, and land-values have materially depreciated, while the population statistics as indicating additional settlement show almost a negligible result. The total building permits for the year ending 31st March, 1925, was forty-nine (including eighteen new dwellings), of a total value of £14,460. In 1927 the figures were—Permits, forty-two (twelve new dwellings); total value, £9,903. In 1929, thirty-six permits (eight new dwellings); total value, £5,328. The decline in building activity is ascribed to the precarious position respecting transport facilities. The ratepayers of the district sanctioned the loan for the concrete paving of the main highway primarily for the purpose of achieving a quicker and more suitable means of transit. Motor-omnibus legislation has already curtailed a large measure of the benefits that would naturally have accrued to the district from this public work, and the new Bill proposes to create a situation which may deprive the people of practically the whole of the beneficial results expected. My Board feels that it is desirable to repeal all particular restrictions appertaining to motor-omnibus services, and resort to the policy of the ‘ open road ’ with respect to such services, fully believing that the people themselves are the best judges of the means of transport most suitable to them.”

That indicates, at any rate, that the Henderson Town Board is of the same opinion as myself—that the decline in the districts is due to the lack of transport. We have not lost sight of the fact that there is something in the nature of a depression, but we do not think that the people living in New Lynn would regard it as a reason for moving into the city. I would also like to read the following statement prepared by the Chairman of the Glen Eden Town Board :—

“ With the introduction of motor-bus services by private enterprise an era of prosperity and building activity resulted in Glen Eden. This was most marked during the period 1924–27, when 157 new houses were erected in the district. This, of course, meant a large increase in population, which rose from 530, when the town district was formed in 1921, to 1,065 as shown by the census of 1926, and it is estimated that it has further increased to approximately 1,300 at the end of 1927. With the acquisition of the bus service by the Auckland City Council, and the consequent institution of an unsatisfactory feeder service, the population rapidly decreased. People who had purchased properties with the intention of making their permanent homes in the district, and who were then being served by an adequate bus service, suddenly found that feeder services were totally inadequate and unsuitable to their needs, and had perforce to leave and live in or near town, and in many cases lost all they had put into the purchase of their homes. The buildings figures in Glen Eden show as follows :—

			Increase.						Increase.		
1921–23	..	145	..	..	..	1926–27	..	323	..	53	..
1923–24	..	166	20	..	..	1927–28	..	353	..	30	..
1924–25	..	200	34	..	..	1928–29	..	359	..	6	..
1925–26	..	270	70	..	..						