

circumstances attending the same, and the results thereof. The persons acting have the powers of a Coroner. This is another instance of the proclivity of the Legislature to appoint untrained and inexperienced persons to conduct legal inquiries. All such inquiries should be conducted by persons conversant with the ordinary rules of evidence and principles of fairness governing inquiries. They should be either Judges, or Magistrates, or barristers of standing. This tendency is becoming so strong that many persons seem to think that inquiries are best conducted by unqualified persons. That, in my opinion, is a mistake. I suggest that the words "fit person" should be struck out, and that there should be substituted "Stipendiary Magistrates."

*Mr. Williams* : A Coroner does not necessarily have to be a Magistrate.

*Witness* : No ; but in this case we submit that the person should be a Magistrate or other person qualified to deal with judicial matters.

*Hon. Mr. Veitch* : Presumably in most cases it would be a Magistrate, but there may be instances where expert knowledge is involved ; that is the reason why a Magistrate was not specifically mentioned.

*Witness* : Yes, but if special expert knowledge were wanted it could be given in evidence. We think that after clause 42 the following new clause should be added : "Section eight of the principal Act is hereby amended by inserting, after the word 'every' in subsection one thereof, the words 'authority to establish a motor-omnibus service and other,' " and by adding at the end of the said section 8 the following new subsection (7) : "Every authority to establish a motor-omnibus service heretofore granted shall expire on the thirty-first day of May, nineteen hundred and thirty." Clause 43 empowers the Minister to make regulations prescribing the grounds on which any authority to carry on a motor-omnibus services may be revoked. This amendment should be made to the present law, and will, therefore, do no harm under any circumstances. The local bodies would prefer, however, that these conditions should be laid down by statutory enactment, and not by regulations. There is no objection to clause 44 or clause 45. With regard to clause 46, this clause should be deleted, or, if it cannot be deleted, subclause (4) should be repealed, and in lieu thereof there should be enacted the following : "The provisions of section thirty-nine of this Act shall not apply to any specified class of motor-vehicles to which any Order in Council under this section relates." This would minimize the seriousness of the monopoly proposed to be created. The Municipal Association is of opinion that if any legislation is brought in to deal with service cars on long runs it should be separate from the control of the local traffic of large centres, which should not be interfered with. The association is of opinion that different considerations apply, and that they are not in the same category. The local bodies do not want to control those, but they do want to control the services they control at present. The repeal of subclause (4) and the substitution above given is suggested because there is no great amount of capital in these services and the question of goodwill in such cases would make it impossible for any one to get in against them. The Minister of Railways is the one probably most affected, because he would never be able to buy them out. Clauses 47 to 49, inclusive, should be struck out. These infringe rights given to the Auckland Transport Board and the Christchurch Tramway Board. These bodies represent the municipalities in the control of traffic in Auckland and Christchurch respectively, and they have certain rights, particularly Auckland. Auckland, under its Transport Board, had a Bill promoted which only came into effect on a referendum of the ratepayers, and the exclusive privileges and monopolies given to Auckland are being taken away by this Bill. In Part VI the constitution of the Main Highways Board is under consideration, and the Municipal Association and town districts feel that, while they are contributing the greater part of the revenue to the main highways in motor-spirit taxation, and heavy-traffic fees, and tire duties, they have no standing at all.

*Mr. Williams* : Heavy traffic fees do not go to the Main Highways Board.

*Witness* : That is so, but the motor-spirit and the motor-tire taxes do. They consider that in view of the fact that the greater part of this money is found by the cities, boroughs, and town districts they should have some representation on the Highways Board. They consider that in the past the Highways Board has not considered these bodies at all. They consider that so far as Municipal Corporations with a population of over six thousand are concerned the provisions in the Act authorizing the Main Highways Board to contribute to the extension of highways has practically remained a dead-letter, and they feel that the matter will not be remedied until the municipalities have the same representation on the Highways Board as the counties have ; and they suggest that a new clause should be inserted to give them the same representation as counties. The new clause would read : "(aa) Two members to be appointed with the approval of the Minister of Transport on the recommendation of the executive body of the Municipal Association to represent the inhabitants of boroughs and town districts in the North Island, and two members to be similarly appointed to represent the inhabitants of boroughs and town districts in the South Island."

*Mr. Broadfoot*.] Could that be overcome by making them all main highways, regardless of whether they are inside or outside the borough ? — No ; they have to decide what are main highways. Take a place like Dannevirke : There are eighteen main roads leading into the town, and they have the privilege of contributing to the highways running out of it, and they have received no refund. Take the case of Wellington : All the traffic coming from all parts of the North Island concentrates on the Hutt Road and Lambton Quay. We have certain advantages in connection with the Hutt Road by reason of our local legislation. Previously we got the motorists' fees, and now the Main Highways Fund contributes the interest and sinking fund in respect to the Hutt Road loans, but nothing is paid for Lambton Quay or Thorndon Quay. The point is that these bodies have been starved in the past.

*Mr. Ansell* : I think you should make some explanation as to why the Highways Board pays the interest in respect of the Hutt Road.

*Witness* : The reason is that we had the fees from the motorists, which met all the charges. These fees were taken away by statute on the passing of the legislation relating to taxation of motor-spirit, and in order that the local bodies should not be landed with payment of the whole of the sinking fund and interest and other charges they were met to a certain extent, but not to the whole extent, by the payment of interest and sinking fund out of the Highways Fund.