

instance in the representation of the various interests on the advisory Board. They pointed this out before the advisory Board functioned, and asked for increased representation, which was refused. Now, when an initial fundamental mistake is made, I submit that it is very difficult of correction, and in the case of the advisory Board as set up the motor-trading interests had undue representation. It was an unbalanced board.

*The Chairman :* I do not know that that is altogether the thing we want to discuss. We want to discuss the Bill.

*Witness :* I am coming to that. It was an unbalanced Board, in consequence of which, in their opinion, you have an unbalanced Bill—unbalanced in that it leans in favour of the motor-trading interests. If any section on the Board should have received special consideration and special representation, surely it should have been the local bodies. The Municipal Association of New Zealand represents half the people of the Dominion, and the Counties Association the other half, yet out of a Board of ten members these two associations of local bodies, representing the whole population of New Zealand, had only two representatives. I am here to speak on behalf of the municipalities, the boroughs, and Town Boards, many of which have transport trading interests. Taking the tramway interests alone—and this is why I mentioned the other matter, just to show the relative interests of transport connected with local bodies and the transport interests as conducted by private ownership—taking the tramway interests alone, I wish to submit to you the following information taken from the Local Authorities Handbook for 1928, prepared by the Government Statistician, which gives statistics up to the 31st March, 1927. I may say that I cannot get the later figures, otherwise I should have given them. Then, I wish to lay before you the latest statistics, which were received from the Government Statistician a few days ago, regarding the bus services and the motor-car services in New Zealand. These statistics with regard to buses and motor-cars are brought right up to date—July, 1929—so that you will have later statistics, so far as the service cars and omnibuses go, then you will in regard to tramways. From the point of view of capital invested in the tramways on the 31st March, 1927, Auckland had invested £1,681,382; Gisborne, £57,359; Napier, £112,107; New Plymouth, £72,169; Wanganui, £265,143; Wellington, £1,161,616; Christchurch, £1,270,766; Dunedin, £358,854; Invercargill, £86,612: making a total of £5,066,008.

*The Chairman.]* Invested in tramways?—Yes; and since then Auckland has raised a loan exceeding £500,000, which, with other capital expenditure by other municipalities, will make the total capital invested in tramways somewhere in the vicinity of £6,000,000. I might also state for the information of the Committee what the annual revenue was in 1927—viz., £1,640,330; the number of passengers carried was 167,599,661, and the car-miles run were 17,123,149; and I think it would be well for the Committee to compare those figures with the corresponding figures in regard to buses and service cars.

That would be hardly fair, would it?—Yes; to show the relative importance of the various ventures. Electric tramways by no means represent the whole of the local bodies' transport interests. Of recent years a great many have secured fleets of buses, which serve for the most part as feeders to the tramways, so that they are actually part and parcel of the tramway service. In matters of finance they are so regarded. In addition to this, there are also some trackless cars; and all of these services are part and parcel of the one system, and should be treated in the same way as tram-cars. I will now give the number of omnibuses privately held, with their value, as taken from the Government Statistician's figures at July, 1929: In the North Island there were 455 vehicles, and in the South Island 184, a total of 639; and the value was £429,859, being an average value per vehicle of £639. Passenger service cars in the North Island were 336, and in the South Island 196, a total of 532, and a total value of £193,139: so that the total value of omnibuses and service cars in the Dominion was £622,998, about one-tenth of the value of the tram-car services connected with or run by local bodies. These are passenger-vehicles only that I have been speaking of, and I may say that, in addition, there are some service cars that carry freight as well as passengers, and of these there are in the North Island 68, and in the South 47, making a total of 115 for the Dominion, of a value of £31,356. Adding that to the former figure, we have a total value of buses and service cars for passengers, and service cars partly for passengers and partly for freight, of £654,354, which is, roughly, between one-ninth and one-tenth of the invested capital in tramways. I would point out to the Committee that the local bodies run their services not for private profit, but entirely for the benefit of the people. They have therefore a right, my association contends, to expect from Parliament due protection on this account, seeing that they run in the people's interest and there is no profit-making out of them whatever. Three years ago the right to run their own buses on their own streets, and within the confines of their own boroughs, without having to pay something for doing so was taken away from them. Some special consideration, however, was given them by way of making them the licensing authority. That consideration is being taken away by this Bill. This Bill proposes to go further even than the last Bill. It takes away from the municipalities the right to run trackless cars unless they pay heavy-traffic fees, and the Bill will also demand heavy-traffic fees from the buses which the municipalities run; and, as I will show you, the whole of this is not returned to them. We contend that gradually the rights and powers of local bodies—which, after all, are the democratic rights of the people—are being filched away, and the Municipal Association views this matter most seriously and with the greatest apprehension. This Bill also places increased financial responsibility on the local bodies while reducing their ability to meet them. The obligation to erect signs and the obligation to test drivers at reduced fees will increase the cost to local bodies. At the present time, with regard to the testing of drivers, we get an allowance of 5s., which practically leaves us no margin. It is proposed now to divide this 5s. between the local authority and the Government authority issuing the license. Members of the Committee can see for themselves that there will be nothing saved to the local body in the way of work, because an Inspector, after