

As to subsection (4) of section 46 of the Act, are you prepared to say that there has been no attempt made by any one in Auckland to unseat any members of the present Board?—There has been no attempt by responsible persons in Auckland to unseat any members of the Board.

What do you mean by "responsible" people? How would you define them?—I say the people representing public thought.

*Mr. Harris:* Members of the City Council.

*Hon. Mr. Veitch.*] Has any attempt been made by irresponsible people?—An attempt has been made. I take the words of His Honour Sir A. Herdman, who held that the Attorney-General should have been joined as a party to the action in order to test the public interest in the matter. On that occasion he made this statement in his judgment: "If people are not regarded as responsible, the last people I should cite are those who had to defend the public interest."

*Mr. Mason.*] Is the Attorney-General the only responsible person in New Zealand?—I understood from His Honour's finding that that official should be brought in in order to ensure that the public interest was protected, if necessary; and His Honour did not seem to think that it had been protected.

*Hon. Mr. Veitch.*] Are you prepared to acknowledge that the time has arrived when we should have some comprehensive legislation to deal with all motor transport, outside what is already dealt with by the present law?—I do not wish to give any opinion about the matter of motor transport as such, but I am prepared to say that, as far as motor transport is used in the carrying of passengers in the city area, in my opinion the various centres should each have a Transport Board such as we have in Auckland, with a complete monopoly as far as the public service is concerned, and that the Public Works Department should continue to exercise that control they already have over the construction of the vehicles in order to render them safe for public use. As far as the long-distance services are concerned, I have not sufficient experience to express an opinion, other than to say that there are services in the densely populated districts that seem to need special legislation of their own.

Of course, there are three branches of commercial vehicles still to be considered?—I do not consider myself really competent enough to express an opinion on the commercial vehicle. That is beyond my sphere.

Are you quite sure that in fighting for the *status quo* you are not obstructing the whole national movement for the benefit of the whole of the people, which is really the reason for the Bill? We have nothing against the Auckland Transport Board, and if you come along here and speak to us as if we were your natural enemy, allied with your opponents, that is all nonsense, is it not?—I never said that at all.

You have assumed that in the evidence; but may I remind you that the only desire of the Government is to get the best motor transport possible for the people. There is nothing further from the mind of the Government than to allow private enterprise to come into the City of Auckland and to wreck their transport organization; and in that connection I ask you to give us credit for common-sense, whatever others think. Do you follow me?—I do not suggest that is the wish of the Government, but I do suggest that it is the possible result of the passing of this Bill; because it has been said before, when the public in Auckland voted for the Transport Board, that it was only right the people should have the control of the passenger traffic, and nothing that I can see has arisen to disturb that fact.

Have you carefully thought out the personnel of the proposed Licensing Board?—Yes. I think I pointed out in my evidence that, for example, in Auckland we had one representative of counties representing a relatively few people, as against a population in the metropolitan area of two hundred thousand directly affected, which also has one representative; and to that two hundred thousand is added the thirty thousand persons in other boroughs and town districts not directly affected at all.

With regard to the constitution of the licensing authority, the Bill provides that the Engineer on the staff of the Public Works Department who by virtue of section 8 of the Main Highways Act, 1922, is a member of the District Council of the corresponding highway district shall be a member of the licensing board. You have expressed confidence in the Public Works Department, and I am glad to hear you say it. You agree with that proposed appointment?—I think you will find later on that the Engineer may be replaced, by way of substitute, by any member of his staff.

*The Chairman:* That always applies.

*Hon. Mr. Veitch.*] The Public Works Department cannot expect their men to sit there all the time, can they, Mr. Allum?—The Government Engineer, I do not suppose, attended more than ten times in two years, at the outside, in the case of the old Appeal Board.

In every case his subordinate would follow the lines of policy laid down. The counties have a representative because the question has assumed a wide national aspect. Do you not see the advantage of such a representation?—That is where we claim the error is made.

There is an appeal of course, but there is none against the decision of your Board?—No.

There is no appeal against your Board's decision, which deals with licenses to its competitors, or prospective competitors?—We do not admit for a moment that we give licenses to our competitors. The 1926 Act required us to buy out our competitors, which we did; and the 1928 Auckland Transport Board Act gives this Board power to license other people for a period not exceeding five years to operate certain services. I submit we do not license our competitors.

*The Chairman.*] You have power to refuse a license?—We bought the competition out as the result of the 1926 Act at a great cost, and we desire to maintain the monopoly. We shall deal justly and fairly with anybody who wishes to enjoy a share of our authority for a time, and we have done that.

Do you think your system of granting licenses for five years a satisfactory one?—Quite.

You would not like to alter it for a yearly one?—I am inclined to think the yearly license, with the purchase at the end of the period, would be quite satisfactory; but the five years gives the operator a license to run coincident with the life of his vehicle.