

to take out more than two licenses, one at each terminal point ; but that proviso seems to us to allow the ordinary taxi to invade a county beyond the five-mile limit already allowed by a town license, and practically does away with the prospect of a county issuing a ply-for-hire license at all. This provision exempts a taxi, no matter what distance it may have to run into a county, from taking out a county license at all, and we suggest that there is really no need for that subclause in districts such as ours, and that the next subclause really safeguards the through service car. Reference has already been made to the erection of signs. The Minister has power to do the work at the expense of the local body if the notice to erect the signs has not been complied with within fourteen days. We suggest that a longer period should be allowed. Most country bodies meet only once a month, and in those circumstances the fourteen days is not a reasonable time. Another important point is clause 29, providing that all the present highway districts are constituted motor-omnibus districts. We are not one, but we will be one under this Bill. We have no motor-omnibus as at present described, but we have service cars running on definite routes. Under Part IV of the Bill the provisions of the Motor-omnibus Traffic Act can be brought into operation by an Order in Council. We suggest that before any Order in Council is issued under that provision the local bodies concerned should first be given an opportunity of moving in the matter if they wished. As I said, we have only a few of these service cars, and the powers of the Motor-omnibus Traffic Act are very far-reaching, and we are not quite sure how these Orders in Council might affect us if they are passed without the local bodies in the highways district being consulted.

BERTIE LAURANCE HAMMOND examined. (No. 10.)

*The Chairman.*] Whom do you represent, Mr. Hammond ?—I represent the commercial-vehicle owners, inclusive of the master carriers and motor-omnibus proprietors throughout New Zealand ; also merchants running commercial vehicles. Generally speaking, the Bill meets with our approval. In the ordinary course no one welcomes legislation that restricts one's activities, but we accept this Bill as being the logical and inevitable result of a growing industry, an indispensable industry which must be controlled in the interests of economic transport and safety. We are accepting it because we regard it as inevitable. There are two matters in the Bill which I wish to refer to briefly. One concerns clause 46, which gives the Government or the Minister the right to extend the provisions of the Motor-omnibus Traffic Act to goods services plying over regular routes. At the present time these services are not affected by the Act : it is restricted in its operation to passenger services, and passenger and goods services combined. We have asked the Minister to give us an assurance that before that Order in Council is put through the parties interested—not merely ourselves—shall be advised of what is proposed. The Minister has given that assurance, and therefore we are satisfied on that point. The other question is that of representation on the Highways Board. We are not satisfied with the present provision, partly because we do not exactly know what the effect of it will be. The vehicle-owners are given representation on the Highways Board, and the term "vehicle-owners" comprises commercial-vehicle owners and motorists. We feel this : that although we have no grievance against the motorists at all, and they should have none against us, if the representation of the vehicle-owners is to be restricted to one North Island representative and one South Island representative friction will be inevitable. One of the motorists' representatives has already expressed his dissatisfaction, through the press, at the motorists being given only one representative for the North Island and one for the South Island. That official is assuming that the Government has provided for the motorists being represented on the Highways Board. Actually the Bill does not provide anything of the kind. It may be that a motorist would be appointed to the Board to represent the vehicle-owners. If that were done the commercial-vehicle owners would be dissatisfied. If, on the other hand, a carrier were appointed the motorists would be dissatisfied, and, judging from the experience of the Transport Advisory Board, if a North Island motorist were appointed the South Island would probably be disappointed or aggrieved, and *vice versa*. What we ask is that the commercial-vehicle owners, as the payers of practically half the motor-taxation, should be given direct and special representation on the Highways Board. The motorists outnumber us, but in actual aggregate contribution to the revenue of the country they contribute something like £900,000 a year, and we contribute £700,000 ; that is independent of vehicle duty, and under that contribution we have the heavy-traffic fees, tire-tax, and a multitude of annual taxes. We say that, whilst numerically the motorists outnumber us, the individual interest of the master carrier greatly exceeds that of the motorist, inasmuch as probably eleven thousand to thirteen thousand commercial-vehicle owners are paying £700,000, while probably one hundred thousand motorists are paying £900,000, so that the individual interest is somewhere about four or five times greater in the case of the commercial owner than in the case of the motorist. This factor has also to be borne in mind : that commercial transport is indispensable to the economic progress of the country ; whilst that cannot be said with great emphasis or conviction in respect to motor-cars, even although an argument is to be found that motor-cars are indispensable. If, however, the Committee is to give consideration to the payers of dues then both sections are entitled to representation, and the commercial-vehicle owners will be very dissatisfied if they do not get equal representation with the motorist. That is our position concerning the Bill, put in a nutshell. Generally speaking, the proposals in the Bill are approved. I would like to refer to the evidence given before this Committee by representatives of the Municipal Association. First of all, I would like to refer to Mr. Wright's evidence. He stated this morning what was a fact, but a fact that he was not prepared to recognize a few years ago. This morning he said that no man could be a judge in his own case. Four years ago, when the Motor-bus Regulations were brought down, I got up and made that statement before a conference in this building, presided over by the Prime Minister (Mr. Coates), and objected to the City Council being made a licensing authority. Mr. Wright then got up and opposed my views. Perhaps he has been converted in the meantime. But what he has stated to-day is correct. No local