

out of residential and industrial areas to the best advantage. It is proposed in clause 12 that the Governor-General may on the recommendation of the Minister and either with or without the consent of the local authority, by Proclamation, declare that any district, together with or without adjacent land as is defined by the Proclamation, shall be subject to the provisions of the Act, and thereupon the district and such adjacent land shall be subject to those provisions accordingly:

Provided that the Councils of the cities of Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin may by resolution passed at an ordinary meeting of the Council apply to have such city or such city and the adjacent land be proclaimed as a town planning area. It will be seen by the wording of this clause that an active Minister, with a keen Town Planning Commission, stimulated by public opinion in any district, can secure for that district the advantages of the Act even if the existing local authority is not awake to them. However, the Minister in framing his Bill has been particularly careful to avoid setting up an authority in opposition to the local bodies. To use his own phrase, he will not interfere with their sovereign powers. This will be regarded by many Town Planners as a weak spot in the measure, though we have regarded it as sound policy to avoid antagonising existing local bodies.

**The  
Weak  
Spot.**

Much as we admire the Minister's enterprise in preparing the Town Planning Bill we must strongly criticise his evident desire to avoid taking valuable aid from those who have become expert town planners. The whole measure centres upon the central administrative body, the Town Planning Commission. This body must be composed of men keenly alive to the advantages of the reform, well versed in its machinery, and equipped with sufficient knowledge to give the Board a paramount and undisputed authority, this being all the more needful for the reason that the Board will have no direct power. Its function is to be advisory, and nothing can be done without the approval of the Minister and the "responsible authority," a local authority having charge of any particular scheme. This is how the Minister proposes to constitute his Town Planning Commission: The Surveyor-General, the Engineer-in-Chief Public Works Department, the Government Architect, the Valuer-General, the Chief Health Officer, the Under-Secretary Internal Affairs Department (or his appointee). Three persons appointed by the Governor-General, who shall hold office during the pleasure of the Governor-General, including one person appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Municipal Association, and one person appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, who shall each hold office for the term of three years from the date of his appointment.

At least six members of the Board will be busy departmental heads who have quite enough to do to attend to their present work. Some of them are already loaded with "extras," and they will scarcely relish any additional burdens. We may ex-

pect to get a very valuable member from the Institute of Architects, but as he will have to look after his professional work first, his initiative and vigor as a national Town Planner will be greatly curbed. The Minister has provided for a third Government nominee. In this, a few Town Planning enthusiasts who saw the draft Bill before printing (the editor of "Progress" being among the number) saw hope of bringing in a capable Town Planner with international experience, but the Minister showed no inclination to accept that advice. The Bill, in fact, contains no financial provision which would enable such an expert to take part in its administration. Consequently, while we are pleased at seeing a Town Planning Bill come forward in charge of a vigorous and experienced Minister, we realise that it will require substantial amendment to give it vital force.

**State  
Interference.**

One of the important political developments forced on by the war is the growth of the principle of State interference. Conservative England has been obliged to adopt the doctrine extensively, but New Zealand's administrators, less troubled with imminent danger, have been loth to depart from familiar paths. Parliament itself is more advanced on this subject than the National Government, for a Select Committee comprising a well-balanced assortment of the members from both parties considered the cost of living problem and made a number of extremely radical proposals for State trading. They suggested that the whole of our coastal, inter-colonial and overseas transport should be done by steamers owned on co-operative lines, the State, the primary producers and the importers having shares. This is the form of modified State ownership which has worked well with the Bank of New Zealand, though we confess that the influence of the State upon that institution has not made it any more liberal than its nominal competitors in dealing with its customers. New Zealand business men tolerate a series of charges for exchange and book-keeping which are iniquitous, and without precedent. As for transport, there is no doubt that State control would remove many of the difficulties now troubling the business world, and secure for the producer a better return for his output in the world's markets, because our exports would be carried by sea on the same terms as they are carried on land—at a rate only a trifle above the actual cost of the operation. It may yet be found inevitable that the liquor problem will find its only permanent solution in State control. The liquor trade is so badly run by private enterprise that in some respects it constitutes a danger to the community. This is a statement fully borne out by the National Efficiency Board's report. The Prime Minister has promised that next session Parliament will be asked to legislate on the lines of the Efficiency Board's report, so as to give the people an opportunity of deciding by a bare majority the important issues: Continuance, or National No-license with compensation. It would be a great advantage to add a third issue, that of State ownership and control of the liquor traffic. It is one of the businesses in which the principle we are discussing would make for national efficiency.