

E. F. HEALY, M.P., examined. (No. 12.)

*The Chairman.*] What evidence do you wish to give, Mr. Healy?—I have some matters which I wish to place before the Committee on behalf of the Blenheim Borough Council, the Marlborough County Council, and the Awatere County Council. I will just briefly place the matters before the Committee as I have them. Generally speaking, neither the counties nor the borough take great exception to the Bill, but there are matters affecting their districts which they apparently wish to bring before the Committee. The Blenheim Borough Council does not agree with the clauses which take the licensing of drivers and heavy traffic out of the hands of the local bodies and give it to the Post Office. The Town Clerk in a letter to me says, "Local bodies are already hard put to it to find money for the upkeep of roads, and by the time the Post Office gets its commission for collecting, there will be still less available. In this borough great care is taken with this licensing, and we cannot see why it should be taken out of our hands to fatten a Department, and very likely to form another Department as time goes on." That is the only complaint from the Blenheim Borough. The Marlborough County Council has objections to make also. They are as follows: "Motor-drivers' licenses—The Marlborough County Council respectfully recommends that the collection of motor-drivers' license fees and the conduct of examination for licenses should be left in the hands of local authorities, as at the present time they can ably and efficiently carry out the work that is required. It is not only owners of motor-vehicles that require licenses, but numbers of others driving motor-vehicles. The local authority is more interested in collecting the fees, and has officials with whose other work this fits in admirably. By taking this away it would reduce the work of the Traffic Inspector and also his pay: this would mean probably an inferior type of official being secured. It is obvious that whatever body collects the fees should control the traffic. It is a case of whittling down the control by local bodies over their own territory. In the event of the Transport Board appointing some one to collect the fees, there is a great danger of the fees being apportioned to the wrong authority; also for the fees to be taken right out of the hands of the local bodies, as was done in the case of the registration fees for motor-cars." That is the Council's complaint in regard to motor-drivers' licenses, and then they go on to say: "Motor-lorry heavy-traffic license fees—The Marlborough County Council respectfully recommends that the collection of license fees and control of motor-lorry heavy traffic should be left in the hands of local authorities. They, being the controlling authorities of the roads, should be best able to look after the traffic and see that all fees are paid. The complaint has been made that local authorities do not collect the right fees. This, at any rate as far as Heavy Traffic District No. 13 is concerned, is not correct. The sum of £5,770 was collected in the group during the fourteen months ended 31st May last." They have put in a statement showing how that is distributed, which I will hand to the clerk. That is, generally speaking, the Marlborough County Council's objections to the Bill, and it seems to be general among the local bodies in my district. The Awatere County Council has also a few objections to make. This is a county that evidently gets no fees from any of the groups, although service cars and heavy traffic are running through their area. They state: "For instance, the heavy-traffic fees this county annually derives from purely local heavy traffic (*i.e.*, trading solely within the county) barely amounts to £50; and including our share of heavy-traffic fees otherwise derivable within the group (No. 15) it reaches a total of approximately £125 per annum." Heavy traffic is running over hundreds of miles of their main road, and there are four motor services both ways each day, and they get not one shilling from their owners or companies.

*The Chairman.*] They get nothing from the service cars?—No. The letter goes on: "There is the case of the trader who goes from Blenheim to Molesworth twice a week. The mileage run in Blenheim Borough is about one and a half miles, Marlborough County is just under the mile, whilst the balance of the journey of about eighty miles (Omaka Cemetery to Molesworth) is solely on Awatere County roads, yet we derive no quota of the fees." That is a case I know well, and it is only one of hundreds of similar cases.

*The Chairman.*] You have just placed two representations before us—one by one county which states it is satisfied with the present method, and the other from another county which states that it is entirely dissatisfied. That certainly indicates that there is some need for an alteration in the law in order to meet the difficulty?—This is my opinion.

*Mr. Harris.*] With reference to the issue of license fees, does each local body do the registering itself?—Yes; the County Council collect their fees, and the Borough Council collect theirs.

You think they prefer it to remain that way?—Evidently, by the way they put their case.

VINCENT MEREDITH examined. (No. 13.)

*The Chairman.*] What interests do you represent, Mr. Meredith?—I am representing the Auckland Omnibus-proprietors' Association, which includes in its membership all the fleets of private buses operating in Auckland and Hamilton. That would include also, in Auckland, the North Shore company.

*Mr. Williams.*] You are representing the North Shore Transport Co., too?—Yes; I am representing the North Shore Transport Co., the Passenger Transport Co., L. J. Keys and Co., J. Wheeler and Sons, the Suburban Bus Co., the Auckland Bus Co., and Crawford Buses Ltd., of Hamilton.

*Mr. Harris.*] What about the transport company running to Pukekohe?—That is Wheeler's.

*Mr. Williams.*] These are all passengers?—Yes; any remarks I have to make on behalf of the association are entirely restricted to passenger services. I am directed by the association to say that they approve of the principles set out in the Bill, and, though we may have some suggestions to make, they refer mainly to alterations in detail, and we offer them feeling that the fairness of our suggestions will appeal to the Committee, and in the hope that they will be helpful in completing an enactment that will work equitably and justly for everybody. There are three principles in the Bill which we approve that I would like to mention. The first is the constitution of an independent licensing authority;