

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
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Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 1961

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumba) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS IN STATE SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

“(1) Is it a fact that no fire extinguishers are provided at State Schools?”

“(2) If so, in view of the grave possibility of fire occurring, particularly in secondary schools and technical colleges in chemistry and physics tests and where open flame and electrical spark are used, does he not consider that fire extinguishers should be provided in these circumstances?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZEY (Isis) replied—

“(1) Yes.”

“(2) The Department of Public Works has been requested to give consideration to the provision of fire extinguishers in chemistry and combined physics-chemistry laboratories at State secondary schools.”

REFUSAL OF T.R.E.B. TO ACCEPT PENSIONERS' SOCIAL SERVICE CHEQUES

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“(1) Is he aware that the Townsville Regional Electricity Board refuses to accept pensioners' Social Service cheques in payment of the pensioners' bi-monthly electricity accounts?”

“(2) In view of the embarrassment and inconvenience caused by this action of the Townsville Regional Electricity Board, will he ascertain if this practice is adopted by all Regional Electricity Boards or is peculiar to the Townsville Regional Electricity Board and in either case, will he investigate the possibility of removing the ban?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“(1 and 2) I was not aware of the position stated by the Honourable Member, but I have ascertained that the general procedure in cases of this nature is that ‘Not Negotiable’ cheques, including those of the nature referred to, which are not drawn directly in favour of the Authority concerned, are not accepted, particularly where the person presenting the cheque is unknown, or change is required. The practice at Townsville is generally in line with what is done elsewhere. The matter is, of course, primarily one for the Authorities concerned but I have asked the State Electricity Commissioner to do everything possible to ensure that any inconvenience caused is reduced to a minimum, commensurate with sound commercial practice.”

OBJECTIONS BY HOUSING COMMISSION TO INCREASED LAND VALUATIONS

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“In view of the steep increases in land valuations and their possible effect on rates levied on Housing Commission rental homes, which could lead to an increase in rents to tenants of these homes, and the fact that no avenue exists for tenants of these homes to lodge objection to any increase in land valuations, has the Commission given thought to lodging objection to increases in land valuations in these cases?”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

“This poses a very nice question in law. Under ‘The Valuation of Land Acts, 1944 to 1958,’ all owners except the Crown, can lodge objections. But the definition of owner is extended to include a lessee from the Crown. If the Housing Commission is held to be the Crown, and the tenants to be lessees from the Crown, then it would appear that each tenant should have an individual right of appeal. If the Housing Commission is held not to be the Crown then the Commission has the right of appeal. I have asked the Solicitor-General to examine the matter. When his advice is available, I will make a ministerial statement for the information of honourable members.”

ALUMINIUM DORY FOR FISHERIES INSPECTOR, TOWNSVILLE

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“Could the fisheries inspector, Townsville, be supplied with a fourteen-foot aluminium dory, outboard motor and trailer within the next month in order to allow him to carry out the duties required of him with the onset of the wet season?”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

“For the Honourable Member's information, the Fisheries Inspector at Townsville is at present equipped with a Land Rover, a 12-foot bondwood dinghy in good condition and a 12 h.p. outboard motor. This equipment is considered fairly satisfactory. The programme now under way to progressively equip our car patrol Fisheries Inspectors with trailer attachments to their vehicles, 14-foot runabouts with 18 h.p. outboard motors will be applied first to those areas which have never had any mobile equipment. When these gaps have been filled I will be able to consider replacing Townsville's existing unit with something better.”

HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, TOWNSVILLE

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) asked the Treasurer and Minister for Housing—

“(1) Are the thirty homes constructed or in the course of construction at Garbutt under the Commonwealth Special Loan Grant to be allocated to service personnel?”

“(2) When were tenders called for the last group of houses built by the Housing Commission in Townsville and how many houses were in the group?”

“(3) When is it intended to call tenders for another group in Townsville?”

Hon. T. A. HILEY (Chatsworth) replied—

“(1) Yes, of course they are.”

“(2) Called April 7, 1961, for 30 houses. The previous calling was on November 12, 1960, for 20 houses.”

“(3) April next.”

TREATMENT OF PATIENTS AT DENTAL HOSPITALS

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) asked the Minister for Health and Home Affairs—

“What is the present policy adopted by the dental hospitals in Queensland in relation to (a) immediate remedial relief of pain for all persons suffering from toothache, &c., and (b) what means test is operating with regard to treatment of patients in all sections of the community?”

Hon. H. W. NOBLE (Yeronga) replied—

“(a) Patients suffering with toothache and other facial pains attend daily in unpredictable numbers. As the dentist is usually fully booked and is obliged to honour his professional obligation to patients who have appointments, toothache cases become a problem—more so in a very busy clinic. However, it is the policy that no patient should be allowed to suffer toothache, if avoidable. The dentist is obliged to handle these cases as ‘Extras’ to those already booked. In large and busy clinics, a dentist learns over a period to anticipate toothache and other special cases, and arranges his appointments and working time to cope with this contingency. (b) It is not policy to disclose details of the means test. The conditions are, however, flexible so that the circumstances of each patient can be fairly assessed.”

ESTABLISHMENT OF ALUMINIUM SMELTER IN QUEENSLAND

Mr. BURROWS (Port Curtis) asked the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity—

“(1) Has he read the review of the Chairman of the Western Mining Corporation Group for the year ended March 31 last, appearing in the Financial Standard of October 11, 1961, in particular the reference to the assistance promised by

the State Electricity Commission in Victoria in the establishment of an aluminium smelter to treat alumina from West Australia at Geelong?

“(2) If so, (a) will he have efforts made to induce the establishment of similar smelters in Queensland to treat the more attractive deposits of bauxite in this State and; (b) is he satisfied that the efforts made by this State match those of Victoria in respect to the West Australian deposits?”

Hon. E. EVANS (Mirani) replied—

“(1 and 2) (a) and (b) I presume the Honourable Member refers to the following statement from the review by the Chairman of the Western Mining Corporation reported in ‘The Financial Standard’ of October 11, 1961:—‘The large power requirements for the aluminium smelter will be provided ultimately by a power station located on the Anglesea coalfield. The construction of the power plant and equipment of the coal mine will follow completion of the above construction programme. We are greatly indebted to the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, which will provide interim power on suitable terms. This will enable smelting to begin as soon as the first unit of the smelter is completed and thus enable production to begin much earlier than otherwise possible.’ This discloses that Alcoa of Australia will build its own power station and that until this is commissioned, the State Electricity Commission of Victoria will provide interim power on suitable terms. What those terms are is not disclosed. I can assure the Honourable Member that very attractive proposals for the supply of power for aluminium refining in Queensland were placed before interested companies, and I would be very surprised if they could be matched elsewhere in Australia.”

FREE TRANSPORT OF STUDENTS FROM MACHAN'S BEACH TO HIGH SCHOOL IN CAIRNS

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Education and Migration—

“Owing to the hardship experienced by parents of students travelling by bus from Machan's Beach and other beaches along the Cook Highway to high school at Cairns, will he have an officer of his Department visit the area with a view to granting free bus travel to these students?”

Hon. J. C. A. PIZZHEY (Isis) replied—

“Free transport for pupils is provided under certain conditions to the nearest State school, but in no case are children conveyed past a school where facilities are available. If parents of their own accord by-pass a school, it is not the responsibility of the Department to convey pupils to schools in Cairns. High school students travelling from Machan's Beach to Cairns may, upon application, have refunded all

fares over 5s. per week. If there are 20 or more students attending High School from that area a free secondary transport service will be instituted."

"Intermediate school children are not classified as high school children."

REDUCTION OF RAIL FREIGHTS FROM CAIRNS
TO ATHERTON TABLELAND

Mr. ADAIR (Cook) asked the Minister for Transport—

"Owing to the serious effect road transport is having on rail transport from Cairns to Mareeba and Tablelands towns, will he have the present rail freight charges reviewed with a view to reducing them as he did in the Roma and Goondiwindi districts?"

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer) replied—

"Circumstances prevailing in North Queensland are not comparable with those at Goondiwindi in that road hauliers are making payment to the Transport Department of fees prescribed under the State Transport Act. However, the competition between rail and road from Cairns to the Tableland is being closely watched."

USE OF TAPE RECORDERS IN LAW COURTS

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) asked the Minister for Justice—

"(1) On what date or dates did his departmental officers investigate the use of tape recorders in courts?"

"(2) Who were the Departmental officers making those investigations and in what States were those investigations carried out?"

"(3) Were the investigations made by 'on the spot' enquiry or from reports supplied without any actual experience of the systems?"

"(4) Does not the High Court of Australia use a tape recording system in place of shorthand writers at Darlinghurst and Melbourne?"

"(5) Is not a system of tape recording of evidence used in the Supreme Court, District Court and County Court in Victoria, in criminal, divorce and general work, as well as Coroner's Committal and and Police Court proceedings?"

"(6) Is not a system of recording evidence used in courts-martial in Australia?"

"(7) Has a system operated by Court Recording Services Pty. Ltd. and used in all Victorian courts of record and in courts-martial proceedings throughout the Commonwealth been investigated by his Department? If so, who made the investigation and when, where and under what circumstances was it made?"

"(8) Is he aware that the system referred to provides a separate microphone for the

judge, each counsel, and the witness, is completely portable, provides immediate play-back of evidence in the court room, is monitored and can be typed off by typists using a headpiece, thereby obviating the need for the reporter to dictate to the typist?"

"(9) Are not the present methods of recording proceedings open to error?"

"(10) Does he appreciate that the method of recording evidence by typewriter is not verbatim, but is merely paraphrasing of the evidence?"

"(11) Will he conduct a trial of the Court Recording Services System in at least those courts where now shortage of shorthand reporters is compelling the taking of evidence by typewriter with its consequent deficiencies and undoubted delay?"

"(12) Will he investigate the use of shorthand machines as used by American reporters and in courts in that jurisdiction?"

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong) replied—

"(1 to 12) On July 27, 1959, Cabinet decided that a report be furnished by the Justice Department on the advisability or otherwise of permitting the use of tape recording machines for the taking of evidence in the various courts. Following thereon a Cabinet Submission of September 18, 1959, sets out a report of the Solicitor General dated August 17, 1959, in which he indicated that tape recorders were not at that time suitable for the purposes of recording evidence given at hearings of legal proceedings. The Solicitor-General also advised that if tape recorders were to be introduced their use be limited to the recording of argument. The Honourable the Chief Justice indicated on September 9, 1959, that he agreed with the views expressed in the Solicitor-General's report referred to above. As a result of these reports Cabinet decided on September 21, 1959, that no action be taken at that time to provide for the use of these machines in any Court. By letter of November 20, 1959, the Queensland Law Society Incorporated commended for consideration a suggestion that action be taken to equip the lower courts with tape recorders. A senior officer of the Department of Justice subsequently made some enquiries into this matter during the course of a visit to Melbourne and reported on the operation of tape recording machines which he observed in action in the various courts there. This officer recommended that a trial be given of one particular system. The Acting Public Service Commissioner advises that on October 27, 1960, tape recording was tested in a Public Service Appeal and the tapes were played back before the Metropolitan Magistrates. The test showed that there were some satisfactory features and some undesirable features in the method of recording. The main disability appeared to be the lack of positive identification of the speaker's voice.

This, however, could possibly be overcome. The test indicated that it is probable that mechanical recording could be effective in a well ordered Court in which there were no cross conversations. The matter was further considered in October, 1961. The present position is that the Justice Department jointly with the Public Service Commissioner's staff will continue investigations with a view to ascertaining whether there is a tape recording or other mechanical system which is suitable and acceptable to all or any of the Metropolitan Courts. The use of mechanical recording systems generally is still in a developmental stage and among other things it is necessary to consider what system is most suitable to any particular requirements together with related questions of cost, adaptability and availability of trained staff."

FORM OF QUESTION

MR. SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (11.19 a.m.): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege to draw attention to the deletion of certain words from the questions of which I gave notice yesterday. For my own guidance, should I wish to ask similar questions in the future, and for the guidance of other hon. members, may I ask if you are in a position to advise why the words, "Is the Minister aware" were deleted from three of my questions? It appears from Votes and Proceedings that those words have been included in questions in the past. If henceforth they are to be ruled out of order will you give a direction to that effect and so avoid our asking questions in the wrong form? I draw the attention of the House to the form in which questions are asked in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, which presumably works on May's authority as to what is admissible in a question.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that one part of the question that I asked identified a system of recording that I had used when appearing in courts martial and stated that the system was in use at present. That part was included in order to identify the particular form of recording system. If that form of identification is inadmissible, will you indicate whether or not it is a departure from what May lays down as a principle?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Windsor has raised a question on which I have previously given a ruling in the House. If he refers to my previous ruling, he will see that I indicated that questions should seek information and not give it. I do not think it can be denied that the hon. member's question, in the form in which it was asked, gave a good deal of information.

The use of the words "Is the Minister aware" has been permitted in the past because a certain amount of latitude must

be given to hon. members to qualify their questions. But invariably the use of those words is permitted in only one sentence or only one part of the question. In the question asked by the hon. member for Windsor, it appeared no fewer than four or five times. In fact, I must reveal that in permitting the hon. member's question even in its present form, we extended what could honestly be termed a great deal of latitude.

For the information of all hon. members, as I have said previously, I am making a review of the questions submitted in the House and of the system of asking questions, and I now invite all hon. members to submit to me any suggestions they have in regard to the form that questions should take. These can then be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee, which, as hon. members know, is an all-party committee.

The hon. member for Windsor can be well assured that there is no attempt on my part, or on the part of the Clerks at the Table, to prevent hon. members from asking questions, provided they are within permissible limits.

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Report of the Co-ordinator-General of Public Works for the year 1960-1961.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Order in Council under the State Electricity Commission Acts, 1937 to 1958.

AUCTIONEERS, REAL ESTATE AGENTS, DEBT COLLECTORS AND MOTOR DEALERS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Munro, read a third time.

LANDLORD AND TENANT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

THIRD READING

Bill, on motion of Mr. Munro, read a third time.

TRUSTEES AND EXECUTORS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (11.25 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the enactments relating to trustees and executors, and for other purposes."

The Bill seeks to amend the law relating to trusts and trustees in certain particulars.

Honourable members will appreciate that the great body of this law is the creation of equity courts, more particularly of the old High Court of Chancery in England.

The first Supreme Court of the early colony of New South Wales was given the jurisdiction of the Superior Courts of England and, upon the establishment of the independent colony of Queensland in 1859, the Supreme Court here had a similar jurisdiction conferred upon it.

Queensland thus inherited a body of law on this subject and here, as elsewhere in Australia, this law has been modified and supplemented where needed by the Legislature, to an extent that was beyond the powers of the courts, constrained as they are, to abide by the course of judicial precedent.

The Bill seeks to introduce two new principles into this body of law which has been developed over the years by both courts and the Legislature.

First, it proposes to authorise, unless forbidden by the particular trust instrument, certain further investments of trust funds. Secondly, it proposes to abolish the application of the rule, known as the rule against perpetuities, to the trusts of any superannuation fund in operation at or established on or after the first day of July, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two.

As regards the first principle, the law is, generally speaking, that a trustee can only lawfully invest trust funds upon securities authorised by the settlement or (unless expressly forbidden by the settlement) in those authorised by Statute.

In Queensland the statutory powers as to investments, which are conferred on all trustees in the absence of a contrary provision in the settlement, are now contained in Section 4 of the Trustees and Executors Acts, 1897 to 1924; and in various provisions contained in a number of Queensland Statutes.

The Bill, in seeking its first object, sets out to repeal the paragraph of Section 4 of the Trustees and Executors Acts which authorises the investment of trust funds on deposit in any Government Savings Bank in Queensland and, in lieu thereof, authorises the investment, unless forbidden by the instrument (if any) creating the trust on any interest bearing term deposit in any bank or on deposit in any savings bank carrying on business in Queensland.

Honourable members will concede the worthy object of modernising this provision which has no longer any virtue, as it will be recollected that the Queensland Government Savings Bank was merged in the Commonwealth Savings Bank under the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920.

The Bill proposes also to draw the attention of those who read Section 4 of the

Trustees and Executors Acts to the fact that there are other statutory provisions relating to "authorised investments."

The second principle sought to be introduced into the existing law is, as previously stated, the abolition of the rule of law known as the Rule against Perpetuities, to the trusts of any superannuation fund in operation at or established on or after 1 July, 1962.

The rule which is today commonly called the "Rule against Perpetuities" is only one of the rules which has been adopted by the courts from early times to discourage dispositions of property which either impose restrictions on future alienations of that property, or fetter to an unreasonable extent, the future devolution or enjoyment of that property.

The purpose of the courts, in short, as a matter of public policy, has been to frustrate settlements of property which attempt to reach too far into the future and to confine them within narrow limits.

The classic statement of the Rule against Perpetuities is that of Gray in his "Rule against Perpetuities," fourth edition, which is as follows:—

"No interest is good unless it must vest, if at all, not later than twenty-one years after some life in being at the creation of the interest."

The practical effect of the Rule against Perpetuities to superannuation funds is to render void any trust which is such that it may persist longer than the lifetime of the last survivor of a definite group of persons then living and 21 years thereafter.

The judgment in the English case of *Lucas and Others versus The Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Co. Ltd.* as far back as the year 1924, brought to light the fact that pension and similar funds established under trust deeds which contained no limiting clause were void ab initio.

It appears that in Queensland one method which is adopted to comply with the Rule by limiting the duration of trusts of superannuation funds is to use the "Royal lives" clause of which the following is an example:—

"If the company shall be wound up except for the purpose of amalgamation or reconstruction the trusts constituted by these presents shall thereupon determine, otherwise the said trusts shall continue during the life of the survivor of the issue living on the commencing date of His late Majesty King V., and twenty-one years after the death of such survivor, and such further period (if any) as may be lawful."

As regards superannuation schemes, even if the Rule is met by the insertion of a clause limiting the duration of the trusts, the

effect will be to stop, at some point of time, the stream of entrants and beneficiaries, while any method of dealing with the assets of an enforced termination of the trusts will be inequitable if it takes the form of direct distribution of capital, and both inequitable and uneconomical if annuities are purchased.

If the trusts which are unlimited in duration offend the Rule they are void ab initio, with the effect, apparently, that the assets belong to the persons who provided them.

In these circumstances it might be open to any member to initiate proceedings involving the dissolution of the fund and the distribution of the assets, while such part as the assets as is applicable to contributions by the employer might at any time be claimed by him or by a liquidator or creditors in the event of his insolvency. It is important in the interests of those who are depending on such funds for maintenance in old age, that they should not remain in jeopardy.

The effect upon the interests of beneficiaries of the winding-up of a superannuation fund will commonly involve some more or less arbitrary method of distribution which cannot do justice as between individual pensioners and employees whose circumstances, particularly in relation to health, must differ.

Parliaments of England, New Zealand, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia already have given relief to superannuation schemes from the application of the Rule. It is clear that the only adequate and satisfactory course in Queensland is also to remove, by legislation, superannuation schemes generally from the disabilities resulting from the application to them of this Rule.

I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of hon. members.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 a.m.): It would be foolish to oppose the introduction of the Bill, first, because I did not hear much of what the Minister said, owing to the noise in the Chamber, and, second, because I found great difficulty in understanding what I was able to hear, because the Minister chose to read the law on the matter, and obviously, in order to form some sort of Opposition attitude, we would need to read the opinions and reasons advanced by the Minister in support of the measure. I have no doubt from what I did hear the Minister say that there are compelling reasons for the change, including the fact that other Parliaments, including many Australian Parliaments, have seen fit to provide the relief outlined by the Minister.

It seems to me that the Bill is largely a technical one, as well as being a legal measure, and I should like to examine it before committing myself. From what I was able to follow of the Minister's introduction,

it appears to be one of those machinery, administrative matters that arise from time to time in consequence of the experience of persons with access to the courts that these difficulties are causing inconvenience and sometimes embarrassment of a kind they are not entitled to experience. If those are the motivating reasons for the legislation, then the Minister has made a desirable attempt to remove anomalies, obstacles or embarrassments that have been caused by the operation of the law.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.38 a.m.): From what I could hear of the Minister's introduction, it would appear that the Bill is in line with the policy of the Government over the past four years of giving executors and trustees of various estates, funds and organisations a more or less open go to invest the money belonging to those trusts, funds and organisations wherever they think the highest return can be received.

I have not very much quarrel with that, because when all is said and done it is usual to want the best return. Very few rank-and-file members of Parliament who rely for their livelihood on their salaries have any spare money to invest. People naturally want to invest their money where they can get the best return, but there is a danger, owing to the spiralling of costs, skyrocketing of prices and various inflationary processes that are going on. We can see advertisements in the Press every day by firms that have been reputable in the past, calling on people to invest money with those firms at 8 per cent. and even 9 per cent. Whether those firms will be reputable in the future, of course, is anybody's guess, because, if they can borrow money at 9 per cent. from an investor, they must pay all the costs of administration of the company, carry bad debts, carry all their liabilities and, in addition to the 8 per cent., make a profit for their shareholders. So that if they borrow money at 9 per cent. they must at a very reasonable estimate make at least 20 to 25 per cent. from their own business or investments. Whether firms are to be allowed, or will be able to make 20 to 25 per cent. on their own businesses or investments, for very long, is a very moot point indeed.

I read the other day a very informed article with regard to the Church of England in England itself. I am not bringing this forward in any sectarian or religious sense, but those who know what goes on know that the Church of England in England is a tremendously wealthy organisation that owns hundreds of thousands of shares in various commercial organisations, owns property all over the land, and goodness knows how much money it has invested here and invested there. For many years the trustees of the Church were bound by laws, such as our existing law with regard to executors and trustees that this Bill seeks to amend or improve. Some years ago the Church of England, in England, decided to appoint a

couple of prominent business men to conduct their business affairs and the business men took the money of the Church of England out of the gilt-edged securities that were only bringing in a low rate of interest. They reassessed a great deal of the property and actually sold much of the property and investments to put the money into other investments that gave higher yields. Now, today, the Church of England, in England, is a booming financial institution, so much so that the curates and vicars and the other men of the Church of England who were struggling along on a few paltry pounds a week—and I think we can all sympathise with them as Members of this Parliament, because we know what it is to struggle along on a miserly pittance—have today received a huge increase in salaries, manses are being built and churches are being built, and in fact there has been a financial reformation of the Church of England, in England. How long that will continue I cannot say. They have to rely entirely on the acumen and business sense of the two or three men conducting the business affairs of the Church of England, in England. I know there are many trustees with some very peculiar ideas as to the worth of certain investments and I should not like a person to have a sum of money, perhaps all the money he has in the world, in the care of a trustee, and the trustee invest it in some wild-cat scheme simply because it brought in 15 per cent. or 20 per cent. for a couple of years. I was informed the other day, on very good authority, that a great deal of trustee money had been invested in vending machine companies on the assurance of 20 per cent. per annum that would continue to be paid. As we all know, the vending machine racket collapsed. Like the South Sea bubble, it burst. And the trustees and others who had invested their money in the racket were left holding the bag.

Mr. Hughes: No doubt responsible trustees and executors would make the most searching inquiries.

Mr. AIKENS: I know that is what the Minister for Justice would do if he was a trustee. He would make the most searching and responsible inquiry, but he is human; he is liable to err. When he found, for instance, that the trustees of some other fund or organisation had invested money at 9 per cent. or 10 per cent. in some of these wild-cat companies, and the people owning the money, for whom he is the trustee, came to him and said, "Well, Tommy Jones and Frank Smith and Fred Thompson are getting a better return from their trust money, administered by their trustees than we are getting from you.", it would be useless for him in his private capacity as an accountant, or even as a Minister to say, "I am looking firstly to the safety of your money. That is my first concern." In these days we cannot drum into people the need for looking to safety first and the need for taking a smaller return for their investment, in order to make certain that a return will be ensured down the years.

I do not know how the Minister for Justice will be able to get over the problem. I do not know what line of control he will place on trustees to see that they do not join in the wild-cat scramble for big interest rates that is apparently sweeping the country today. If he can devise some means for keeping trustees in reasonable check, I should be very happy to hear of it.

The Bill deals with executors, as well as trustees. I should like once again to advise every hon. member of this Parliament that he owes a duty to his constituents today—to impress upon people the need for making a will. I always tell them at my meetings, public or private, and even in conversation.

I do not know of any more tragic set of circumstances—and I suppose every member of Parliament has come face to face with this—than to have the relative of a deceased person come along and say, "My husband", or "My daughter", or "My son", or "My mother", or grandfather, or someone else, "died intestate. He died without making a will." Those who do that can have no idea of the tragedy, the inconvenience, the embarrassment and the delay that it causes. I know that many silly people think that if they make a will they are going to die almost immediately.

I have on my table at the moment the case of a man who died without making a will. The finalising of the estate has been held up for three years. Naturally the beneficiaries are concerned about that. Some of them, of course, are coming into money that they did not expect. When a person dies without having made a will, the estate is divided in accordance with the law as enacted by Parliament, and certain relatives of the deceased come into money. One woman said to me about her husband who had died intestate, "Mr. Aikens, Ted would turn over in his grave if he knew that his sister and that scallywag husband of hers were going to get money out of his estate." And they are, because when a person dies intestate a certain amount of the money goes to the widow, if there is a widow, and some goes to certain other relatives. So if you die without making a will it is more than likely that some relative that you loathe and detest and despise will get a cut out of your estate. Apart from that, it causes confusion and hardship and genuine sorrow.

I would suggest in all friendliness to every hon. member that he include in his remarks at every meeting he addresses, "For goodness sake, go and make a will. If you do not you have not the faintest idea of the tragedy and sorrow you may cause."

I could develop the argument, Mr. Taylor—as a matter of fact, I could speak on it for days—but I will not transgress on your tolerance. I am happy that you have granted me the opportunity of mentioning it once more.

If the Press were really concerned about the interests of their readers and not with the money they get from them and from their advertisers, they would publish a special article on it. I know that "The Courier-Mail" and other newspapers have some very good feature writers. I suggest to the Press that they put one of those men—Arthur Richards or one of the others—on the job of writing a feature article on the need for a person to make a will.

An Honourable Member: What about Keith Fryday?

Mr. AIKENS: He would probably be better than Arthur Richards. He is here at Parliament House. He has the most important job on the reporting staff of "The Courier-Mail". I was talking of the smaller fry of "The Courier-Mail's" journalists known as feature writers.

In all seriousness, I think that should be done.

Like the Leader of the Opposition, I will wait till I have a very good look at the Bill to find out what is actually in it.

Hon. A. W. MUNRO (Toowong—Minister for Justice) (11.48 a.m.), in reply: The Leader of the Opposition was wise in refraining from commenting at this stage because, as he pointed out, this is a technical Bill and it will be possible for hon. members to grasp its full import only after they have had an opportunity of quietly studying it.

I think I should make some brief remarks on the comments of the hon. member for Townsville South, which have been quite interesting but not directly related to the Bill. He referred to provisions that he regarded as being designed to enable trustees to gain the highest return that can be received and he instanced investments that might return 9 per cent. or 25 per cent.

Just to have the record correct, I must refer again to my opening remarks on the first principle of the Bill when I made it clear that, in seeking the first objective, the terms of the Bill are to authorise the investment, unless forbidden by the instrument, if any, creating the trust on any interest-bearing term deposit in any bank or on deposit in any savings bank carrying on business in Queensland.

Mr. Aikens: Would not that apply to hire-purchase companies that are subsidiaries of the trading banks?

Mr. MUNRO: No, it would not. I realise that it is very difficult to absorb the full import of a technical Bill of this type on hearing the first explanation of it, but, for the record, I want to make it clear that this provision only authorises as trustee investments, interest-bearing term deposits in any bank or on deposit in any savings bank carrying on business in Queensland. If one

can go to the savings bank and get 9 per cent. or 25 per cent. interest on one's money, that is certainly news to me.

The dominant principle of the law as laid down by the Trustees Acts of the various legislatures has always been—it is continued in this amendment—to endeavour to safeguard, as far as is humanly possible, the security of the capital investment. Whilst it is desirable that there should be some provision to get a reasonable income return, that requirement is always regarded as being subservient to the more important principle of safeguarding the capital.

The hon. member for Townsville South also raised a point that is indirectly related to the terms of the Trustees and Executors Act. I think he made a very good point when he took this opportunity of drawing attention to the desirability of all persons making a will.

Mr. Walsh: Particularly with the Public Curator.

Mr. MUNRO: I would not say where they should make their wills, but the broad and general point is a very good one. My experience in relation to this matter is generally on the same lines as the experience of the hon. member for Townsville South. I know that in many cases hardship and inconvenience are caused by persons dying without making a will. Following the interjection of the hon. member for Bundaberg, but without being quite so specific, I would add to the remarks of the hon. member for Townsville South that it is also very important that any person making a will should have competent advice, whether from the Public Curator, a member of the legal profession, or from someone else.

Mr. Aikens: Or one of the trustee companies.

Mr. MUNRO: Yes, or one of the trustee companies. Whilst there are very great dangers and possibilities of inconvenience arising from a person's dying without making a will, there are equal dangers and possibilities of inconvenience arising from a person's making a will that is not carefully drawn. Anybody who has had experience on this subject knows that although a will may sound quite reasonable to the ordinary person, when it is construed in accordance with legal precedents established over the centuries there may be great surprises in its actual legal effect. So I support the hon. member for Townsville South in drawing attention to the desirability of all persons making a will, but I also emphasise that it is equally necessary to have competent legal advice when making a will.

Motion (Mr. Munro) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Munro, read a first time.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
EIGHTH AND NINTH ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Taylor, Clayfield, in the chair.)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1961-1962

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

Debate resumed from 7 November (see p. 1386) on Mr. Chalk's motion—

"That £2,501,700 be granted for 'Department of Railways—General Establishment'."

Mr. INCH (Burke) (11.56 a.m.): A great deal has been said about the qualifications of Messrs Ford, Bacon and Davis, the Government's consultants for the rehabilitation of the Townsville-Mt. Isa railway, and the expected saving of many thousands of pounds each year by the department as a result of the expert advice they expect to receive from them. I trust that the Government's confidence in them is not misplaced. I hope that the Government do not suffer the financial losses that have been experienced in the past by the Federal Government when they employed an overseas firm on the construction of the munitions factory at St. Mary's where many millions of pounds were lost through over-expenditure. I also have in mind the occasion when Mount Isa Mines Ltd. employed the Utah Construction Company to build a dam across the Leichhardt River.

Mr. Chalk: You are not insinuating that Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis were connected with either of those projects, are you?

Mr. INCH: Which project is the Minister referring to?

Mr. Chalk: Either St. Mary's or the one undertaken by the Utah Construction Company.

Mr. INCH: Not in any way. I was pointing out that the Utah Construction Company was employed by Mount Isa Mines Ltd. on the construction of a dam across the Leichhardt River. Despite the advice by Australian engineers relating to local weather conditions they went ahead with the work. When the dam was half completed a flood washed the whole lot away. It cost Mount Isa Mines Ltd. many hundreds of thousands of pounds. That gives some indication of the value of expert advice that may be obtained from overseas firms. It shows the disastrous results of the outcome of such advice.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That point is not related to railways. I was waiting to see how the hon. member intended to connect his remarks with the Vote before the Committee.

Mr. INCH: I am pointing out that some overseas firms are not the expert advisers that we might think they are. I do not wish to continue any further along those lines.

I join with hon. members on this side who have protested, and continue to protest, against the closure of branch lines throughout the State. I protest particularly against the lines that have been closed in my electorate—Kajabbi to Dobbyn, and Malbon to Selwyn. In the past such lines have been an important factor in the development of the Gulf country and the far western parts of the State. They have been the means of expanding the mining and pastoral industries that have contributed so much to the wealth of the State.

They would also have played an essential part in closer settlement had they been allowed to remain open.

Why should there have been this undue haste by the Minister in tearing up the line from Kajabbi to Dobbyn in the face of the promise by the Acting Minister for Transport, Mr. Pizey, to a deputation from the Cloncurry Shire and the public statement by the Premier in Longreach that this branch line would not be pulled up? That must indicate to the people of the far-western shires that the promise was not to be fulfilled, and that it was made solely for the purpose of placating the irate councillors of Cloncurry and the district until the Acting Minister for Transport had time to leave the district before he could become involved in the stormy meetings that were held later to protest against the Government's action in closing this branch line.

The Minister and his Government should have been well aware of the increased mining activity throughout the area, stimulated by Japanese ore buyers—the Rio Tinto Mining Company—and by the impending formation of the Cloncurry Copper Co-operative, to buy the gougers' ore.

This co-operative should be in a position to make the first purchase of gougers' ore this month. That should increase the enthusiasm of the people who are doing so much to develop and settle these areas. However, the Government fail to recognise and appreciate the present revival of the mining industry throughout the far-western mining fields. They have impeded the progress and development of the fields and the surrounding districts by tearing up these vital lines where there are no decent all-weather roads to provide adequate means of transport and communication.

I understand that an approach has been made, or will be made, to the Government by the officials of this co-operative for freight concession rates on the haulage of ores to and from the buying centre at Cloncurry. In view of the fact that a prosperous mining company like Mount Isa Mines Limited continues to enjoy freight concession rates amounting to about £700,000 a year,

the gougers and the co-operative should be given a similar privilege. By doing that, the Government would, to some extent, make amends for their stupidity and tragic error in closing the branch lines which were so necessary for the future development and closer settlement of the Far West.

Mr. Chalk: You are a little behind the times; they have already been offered a concession.

Mr. INCH: I know that the Minister has reduced the freight rates to Roma from £24 17s. to £9 10s. a ton in an effort to regain business lost by the railways, to road transport. If the Minister can grant such concessions to the business people of Roma, surely the business people in far western towns like Cloncurry and Mt. Isa, could reasonably expect similar reductions in freight on the carriage of their goods.

I have been informed that the freight rates, for instance, for Weet Bix to Mt. Isa is £38 3s. 6d. a ton, for icecream approximately 25 per cent. of the gross cost, and for 68 lb. of smallgoods, £1 6s. 10d. If we took the figure for the latter commodity as the base rate, we would find that the freight on smallgoods would be approximately £44 a ton, which indicates how freight charges increase the cost of living in these far western towns above the other parts of the State.

I suggest to the Minister that he investigate the possibility of granting freight concessions to the Far West similar to those granted to Roma business people, because, although the railways are not meeting with the same competition from road operators between Townsville and Mt. Isa, heavy inroads are being made by the transportation of goods to Mt. Isa from South Australia to Alice Springs and thence by road transport. Goods are being landed at a charge below the railway freight charge between Townsville and Mt. Isa. In the interests of the department and the people of the Far West, I urge the Minister to give every consideration to the proposal to reduce freight charges to western centres.

I have only one other matter to raise, that is, the state of the railway employees' homes at Mt. Isa. The painting programme being carried out on these homes consists of painting the outside only. It is more or less a case of "gilding the lily," so to speak, while the interiors of these homes are being left in the same drab, colourless condition, and, however hard the womenfolk work to give some semblance of cleanliness to the interior of their homes, they are frustrated in their efforts by the shabbiness of the surrounding walls. Repair work on these homes in recent months has only consisted of minor patchwork jobs, and in some houses there are still bathroom and septic combinations that are nearly falling down.

The department appears to be following a penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy in the

painting and repairing of these homes, but this is only to be expected from a department that continues to show the deficits shown by this department since the Government assumed office. In one respect it is not so "pound foolish" and that is in the charges paid by employees who occupy the homes. The rental is £3 5s. 1d. a fortnight, water rates £16 15s. a year, cleansing charges £7 4s. a year, and in addition they pay for their own electricity. It would appear, having regard to these charges, that the employees are being made to pay for the painting of their homes, which have not been touched for quite some time. I ask the Minister to review the present painting and repair programme for these homes, to enable the employees to live in worthwhile comfort, even in such trying conditions.

In conclusion, in view of the mining activities going on throughout the Selwyn-Kuridala area, I ask the Minister not to have the Malbon-Selwyn line pulled up for some time to come, so as to give the mining companies a chance to prove the ore deposits in the area. That will enable the small gougers to develop their shows and so give the people of the Far West an opportunity to develop that vast portion of the State.

Mr. LONERGAN (Flinders) (12.10 p.m.): I commend the Minister on the excellent job he has done in the short time that he has held his portfolio. We all know the state of the Railway Department when he took it over, and how in the intervening period he has carried out his duties in an energetic and able manner. We have only to cast our minds back four years to recall the state of the Railway Department prior to this Government's assuming control of the Treasury benches. The people in the out-back in particular will recall that, at that time, the Railway Department was in a state of chaos. When I say that, I am in no way reflecting on any officer or any member of the department. I always believe that the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the Minister.

Mr. Walsh: He has a lot to account for, if that is the case.

Mr. LONERGAN: And so has the hon. member for Bundaberg. By the time I am through with him he will not have an effective reply. However, I do not wish to waste my time on such critics; I wish to say something worth while.

When the Minister retires, and the history of the Railway Department is written, he will go down as a man who had the courage of his convictions to do what was right in the best interests of the customers of the department, and its employees. How different was the former Minister for Transport! He will never be remembered for what he did for the railwaymen, because while he occupied the portfolio there was more industrial strife in the department than in the four years of administration of the

present Minister. I can remember the number of stoppages in Hughenden through the anomalies that occurred and the raw deal received by the railwaymen from this champion of the workers. The people in the West also received a raw deal at his hands. It is common knowledge, and it was an accepted practice in those days, that trucks loaded in Roma Street would take up to four months to arrive at their destination.

Mr. Graham interjected.

Mr. LONERGAN: Yes, they would take four months. It was a shocking state of affairs. Sometimes they were lost altogether.

When the present Minister assumed control he took steps to improve the efficiency of the Department and give the people service. It took a great deal of courage to do it because when an attempt is made to improve the efficiency of any Government department, naturally someone is offended. Perhaps the former Minister was very conscious of this, or for some reasons best known to himself, he was very reluctant to act. Naturally he took the easy way out and increased the freights and fares—and I might say savagely. For that he came in for a great deal of criticism. I was rather sorry to see those increases but we must take the commonsense view. With the increase in the basic wage and steep increases in margins there was no way round it.

The Minister gave a very interesting account of his trip overseas and I feel quite sure that the State will benefit from it and so will railway employees because of the improvements he proposes to make. Those improvements, coupled with others that will be recommended by Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, might mean a reduction in the number of railway employees, though I do not think it will, but they will protect the livelihood of thousands of railway employees. I feel sure that hon. members opposite will agree that, whether we like it or not, the railways cannot be allowed to continue as they are going. Today the Government are meeting with opposition from road hauliers, something previous Labour Governments never had to contend with.

Mr. Walsh: Whose fault is that?

Mr. LONERGAN: During the shearers' strike the people of the outback had a taste of how efficient the road transport hauliers were.

Mr. Thackeray: What has this got to do with the Railway Estimates? I was pulled up for the same sort of thing the other day.

Mr. LONERGAN: They swung over simply because the then Minister for Transport—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member for Rockhampton North that the Chair will control the conduct of the debate. If the hon. member feels aggrieved

because he was stopped at a certain stage I can assure him that any other hon. member will also be stopped if he breaches the rules of the Committee.

Mr. Thackeray: I can assure you I did not do it intentionally.

The CHAIRMAN: I should also like to remind the hon. member for Rockhampton North that he is in Parliament, not attending a street corner meeting heckling speakers.

Mr. LONERGAN: Thank you, Mr. Taylor. Today the railways are meeting with intense competition from outside, so if the Railway Department does not improve and give better service to the public the day will eventually arrive when thousands of railway employees will lose their jobs irrespective of the Government in power.

The previous speaker deplored the fact that Mount Isa Mines Ltd. enjoy freight concessions to the extent of about £700,000 a year. I regard that as a happy state of affairs. It is indeed unfortunate that Queensland has not more similar undertakings. Because of the strike at present the department is losing a great deal of revenue. But I understand that the previous Labour Government gave Mount Isa Mines Ltd. those same concessions. Where would the railways be without Mt. Isa? Where would the Northern Division of the Railways be without it? Last financial year the Northern Division made a profit of over £2,000,000 and Mt. Isa was responsible for it whether hon. members opposite like it or not. If it were not for Mount Isa Mines Ltd., there would be only two trains a week on the Townsville-Mt. Isa section. If the industrial strife continues at Mt. Isa, that is what will happen. The Railway Department was losing money when the Minister for Transport took over its administration, and we have large deficits today. For the life of me, with the railways in their present condition, I can see no relief in sight unless the seasons improve and unless our markets improve, as I think they might. With the implementation of recommendations in the report of Ford, Bacon and Davis, I think that many of the problems besetting us today will be overcome.

This Government were the first to make any worthwhile effort to regain trade for the railways by appointing goodwill officers. What did the former Government do in an attempt to regain the freight and revenue that had been lost to road transport? They did nothing. They could not have cared less. In a period when the wool market was buoyant, when there was full employment and everyone had a quid, what did we find? Record deficits. Today, with a falling wool market and a drought that is probably one of the worst in the history of the State, what do we find? Of course we have deficits.

Mr. Davies: You said "record deficits".

Mr. LONERGAN: I said there were record deficits during the time when Labour Governments were in office. That is quite true. Unfortunately, the efforts of the goodwill officers are being nullified by some of the unions. In the past we have seen instances of 24-hour stoppages, 8-hour stoppages, and 4-hour stoppages.

Mr. Thackeray: What is wrong with that?

Mr. LONERGAN: I am a firm believer in unionism, and I believe that the workers have a right to strike if they feel aggrieved and if there is no other avenue open to them. But I ask this question, Mr. Taylor: what Government worthy of the name would take any notice of these 4-hour stoppages? It would indeed be a weak Government that did. Furthermore, on how many occasions have the rank and file had any say in the holding of these stoppages? They are called by the executive and the rank-and-file members are told, "Right-o, boys, there is no work tomorrow." That is all there is to it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. LONERGAN: I know more about the trade union movement than hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Bulimba might know something about wood-butchering, and not very much even about that.

The 4-hour stoppages are doing a great disservice to the railway men and to the State. It is to be hoped that union officials appreciate what the Government are endeavouring to do for the Railway Department and get behind them in their efforts to regain some of the trade that has been lost to road hauliers. Without getting away from the Estimates under discussion, we have no great problems with road hauliers in my electorate. The Railway Department is only a common carrier, and its responsibility is to carry the freight and passengers offering. If it is to compete with other forms of transport, it will have to pull up its socks and give service to the public.

There are many factors contributing to the efficient working of the Railway Department. One that impresses me greatly is the dieselisation of the railways. With the proposed increase in diesel strength the day may not be far distant when steam locomotives are completely eliminated. To my mind they have outlived their usefulness; they are years behind the times. With diesel locomotives the time saved between Hughenden and Charters Towers on pit work alone would amount to 1½ hours. Some may say that that is not a great deal of time to save in 150 miles, but it is a big factor if you are sitting in a train.

Mr. Rae interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Gregory must not persist in heckling.

Mr. Graham: Send him out!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Mackay will be sent out if he does not behave himself.

Mr. LONERGAN: It is a most difficult portfolio with which successive Governments have had continual trouble. At times I do not think it was so much the prevailing conditions but it went back to the Minister of the day.

With the rehabilitation of the Townsville-Mt. Isa line a better service will be provided. At one stage, while the financial negotiations were proceeding, it was suggested in the Press that Mount Isa Mines Ltd. would foot the bill or contribute very largely to it. I wondered why at the time. After all, looking at it on a common-sense basis, the Railway Department is a common carrier. As such it is obliged to provide the facilities; it is the department's responsibility to maintain the line in a condition to cope with the carriage of goods to and from Mt. Isa. Mount Isa Mines Ltd. will not be the sole beneficiary from the reconstruction of the line. The department's annual report shows that last year 35,000 cattle were trucked from Julia Creek alone. Why should one section of the community be singled out to foot the bill for a project costing so much? With the building of beef roads it is logical to assume that the cattle trucking centre at Julia Creek will handle greater numbers of cattle in the future. That brings me to a matter to which I desire to draw the Minister's attention. At Julia Creek the trucking yards are within a couple of hundred yards of the town. Even hon. members opposite will realise that they create a dust and fly nuisance. Indeed, it is reaching the proportions of a serious health menace. I impress on the Minister the need to shift the yards to Gunjoola.

In view of the handsome profit made in the Northern Division I urge the Minister to give some consideration also to a reduction in freights on the whole of the lines in that Division. People living in the Northern Division, and in the west particularly, are entitled to the utmost consideration. I appreciate the problems confronting the Minister in arriving at appropriate freight rates but I ask him to give some consideration to this matter. I ask particularly for a reduction in freight on building materials, especially for home building purposes. The freight paid on these materials is a tremendous burden and in many cases prevents potential home-builders from going ahead and building their own homes. They consider that the freight charges are not only excessive but prohibitive. Consequently, there is an undesirable housing problem in the area.

I should like to draw the Minister's attention to another matter that is causing concern to railway employees. It is that the avenue of promotion from station master to district superintendent or traffic superintendent is virtually closed. Some people who

know the Railway Department might claim that it is not and that station masters can apply for vacancies in those positions. They can, but unfortunately, they have no right of appeal.

I challenge anybody with any knowledge of the Railway Department to deny that the station master is the most versatile man in the railway service. Employees in that grade know every form of railway administration.

Mr. Thackeray: You are completely wrong.

Mr. LONERGAN: When the hon. member gets out of the Central Division he is completely lost. I am not going to waste the little time remaining to me in arguing with the hon. member for Rockhampton North. I reiterate that the station master is the most versatile man in the service. They devote their lives to excellent service in the department and, because they have no right of appeal they are virtually excluded from advancement to the positions I have mentioned. That is completely unjust. I have no quarrel with clerks who have been appointed as district and traffic superintendents in the Northern Division. I have found them very able officers, but I claim that most station masters are just as able. This is a sore point in this grade and I urge the Minister to investigate it. If the Minister wants men to be happy and contented in the service something should be done about it.

Mr. Thackeray: You can book station masters off but you cannot book the crew men off.

Mr. LONERGAN: Mr. Taylor, I cannot hear myself speaking for the noise of the hon. member for Rockhampton North. I felt that the hon. member for Burke was speaking with his tongue in his cheek when he referred in particular to the living conditions of railway employees and the manner in which their houses were being maintained. They have received very good treatment in my area; in fact, much better than was ever received from any Labour Government.

Mr. Thackeray: You were not here then.

Mr. LONERGAN: On many occasions they have said to me, "This is the best Labour Government we have ever had." How true! How much industrial strife has occurred in the four years that the Government have been in office? There we have the answer.

The hon. member for Burke touched on the pulling up of the Malbon-Selwyn railway line in the Cloncurry district. I know it very well. At Cloncurry some months ago I was approached by a person who was interested in it who asked me to do something about it. I said, "It is not in my area, but I will go along with the member for the district, Mr. Inch, and will assist him in any way possible." I added, "But you people have to put up your own case. I feel sure the Minister will listen to it." Evidently no case has

been put up. I do not know. The company is a large one and it is prospecting in the district. If the Minister had been given an assurance that a large tonnage of ore would be sent over the line, I am sure it would have been left open.

Mr. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (12.36 p.m.): I join in the congratulations to the Minister by other hon. members. His portfolio is one of the most difficult in the ministry. The opinion uppermost in the minds of hon. members on both sides of the Chamber appears to be that the Railway Department is the milking cow for all departments. I say that sincerely because from this side of the Chamber the Minister receives requests for freight concessions in times of drought, and from the other side of the Chamber requests for more amenities, and so on, for employees. But when the result of the 12 months' trading of the department is known, hon. members immediately castigate the Minister and the department on the huge losses. If these concessions are going to be granted, Cabinet should consider having some of them debited to Consolidated Revenue. The railway accounts do not give a true picture of the operations of the department, owing to the demands made on it, yet the Minister and his officers are expected to produce a balanced budget, a task that would be beyond even a Solomon.

The department has played and will continue to play a very important role in the development of the State, but where costs can be reduced or savings effected, the Government, the Minister and his officers must effect them. Over a period it became evident that some lines were unproductive or unprofitable, and they had to be closed. I do not know the intention of the Government in the matter of taking up the lines.

I am concerned about several matters affecting the City of Redcliffe. I do not know of any other city in the Commonwealth without rail facilities. After the war the department incurred huge expenditure in carrying out maintenance work that had to be postponed during the difficult war period. The important role of the department is the provision of adequate facilities to meet the normal demand for rail transport—in the same way as adequate facilities must be provided to meet the demand for water and air transport. It is most important that the Minister and his officers should realise there must be an efficient service, and the people employed in the department should be prepared to give a good day's work for a good day's pay. I believe those are the two most important points if the railways are to remain in competition, whether in Queensland or in any other State, and they apply equally to every Government department.

It seems to be the belief of many people, whether they are employed in semi-Government or Government positions, that Government service is just a home for the inefficient to do as little as possible, and get paid as

much as possible. That seems to be the outlook in many departments. The employees of the Railway Department and every other Government department must be ever mindful of the services they render and must believe that the wages they are paid are a full reward for their services.

The people of Redcliffe are mainly responsible for the revenue and profit earned on the Sandgate line. This has been due mainly to the great increase in population in the Redcliffe area. A comparison of the population of the Redcliffe area, as disclosed by the recent census, and the previous census, shows that there has been an increase of 55 per cent. I am at a loss to understand why the Minister has not made provision in the Estimates for the extension of the railway electrification scheme to Redcliffe. The Redcliffe area is the third fastest developing part of the State and I cannot over-emphasise that so that we may receive more consideration. The electrification of the Brisbane city area could serve the huge population of the city of Redcliffe and I believe that the Government should include Redcliffe in the electrification scheme. A loop line could be taken from Zillmere to Redcliffe, round the hinterlands, and back into the Petrie area. We must all agree that the Strathpine area will have a very quick industrial development. It is taking place now, and when it gets into full swing the city of Redcliffe will develop further as a revenue-earning area. I suggest to the Minister that he examine very closely the possibility of an electrification scheme to include Redcliffe. It will take from five to 10 years to get such a scheme under way, and unless early planning takes place more and more difficulties will be experienced in handling the volume of traffic as Redcliffe grows.

The Minister has been abroad and has seen great transformations in transport. I do not know of any other system of transport that will shift people in such large numbers. This has been proved in many other parts of the world. I do not know if the Minister has considered the implementation of a monorail system, but everything that is put on the ground in the city proper increases density, and the congestion proportionately. That is evident in the transport system today. In the metropolitan area and in Redcliffe traffic congestion has reached alarming proportions. The demand that will be made on the railways, whether or not electrification is proceeded with, must cause a great deal of concern. I suggest that not only should the city railways go underground but also consideration should be given to various other rail methods including the monorail, which can deal with far more people.

I should like to hear from the Minister whether he has investigated hovercraft or hydrofoil services for Redcliffe or their incorporation in a co-ordinated service.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. HOUGHTON: If hon. members opposite got the men back to work at Mt. Isa the Minister would probably have £500,000 or so to experiment along those lines. After all, his department is suffering badly from the strike and next year he will be castigated by the Opposition for not being able to balance his budget. Sooner or later the Minister must investigate alternative forms of transport and I urge him to study them in conjunction with a co-ordinated service.

Through economic necessity the Northgate and Redbank workshops have been restricted in their development, and I firmly believe that consideration should be given either to transferring the equipment to Redcliffe, or to extending rail service to Redcliffe to bring in further revenue to offset losses elsewhere.

I know that we are debating the Railway Estimates but unfortunately Redcliffe has no railway yet. It is the only city in the State, and the only city I know in the Commonwealth without a railway.

Mr. Pizzey: Like Manly in Sydney.

Mr. HOUGHTON: That brings me back to the point I made earlier when I urged the Minister to engage in and persevere with experiments in the use of hovercraft or hydrofoils as a system of transport for the area so similar to Manly in Sydney. Such forms of transport might be very successful for seaside resorts as they could be employed on the water and would not clutter up areas with restricted road access. I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to them.

I draw particular attention to the serious congestion in the co-ordinated service to Redcliffe via the Hornibrook Highway. The figures that I shall give the Committee will show why the city of Redcliffe is so concerned about this problem. Traffic over the Hornibrook viaduct has increased at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum for the last seven years, and the day is fast approaching when this outlet to Brisbane will be taxed to its limit. Already over 2,000,000 trips a year have been recorded by the Hornibrook Highway Bus Service Ltd. on this toll facility. Like other operators, the company is experiencing great difficulty in meeting the huge cost of its operations.

I was pleased to see that the Minister for Transport, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane and other powers that be were making an honest endeavour to co-ordinate road and rail transport systems in the city of Brisbane. Unless this is done they will all run at very big losses. The Hornibrook Highway Bus Service Ltd. has been able to maintain an excellent service because it has other side-lines, such as a panel-beating works, but it would not show a profit on the actual fares charged. I am sure that this is one of the things that must be causing the Minister for Transport a great deal of anxiety.

To take it a step further, buses run to Sandgate in competition with the railways, but the Hornibrook Highway Bus Service is not permitted to run to Wisbane in competition with the railways. I believe that it should be given the same right as the Sandgate bus companies to run to Brisbane.

The question of better access to the city of Redcliffe has caused great concern to the aldermen of the city council. An investigation has been carried out, and I have here a report that has been submitted to the Government in relation to a further road into the city of Redcliffe. We should like the Minister to state the Government's views before we make any further investigations in regard to additional access roads.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I allowed the hon. member to proceed with his speech because I believed that he was dealing with a co-ordinated service between the Hornibrook Highway Bus Service Ltd. and the railways. Now that he is dealing with roads to Redcliffe, I am afraid he is getting beyond the scope of the Estimates.

Mr. Thackeray interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Rockhampton North is becoming disorderly in his behaviour. I shall deal with him if I have to speak to him again. The hon. member for Redcliffe.

Mr. HOUGHTON: It is the Government's responsibility to state whether the city of Redcliffe will be included in the electrification scheme before we make further investigations. We want to know whether we are to have a co-ordinated service or whether we shall have to provide new access roads. We do not know what the Minister has in mind. Access by water, road, and rail are the three things that we have in mind. The Minister is well aware that the railway line to Sandgate derives much of its revenue from passengers using the co-ordinated service to Redcliffe.

Considering all the circumstances, the Railway Department provides an excellent service, and we have to ensure that people in the country receive an adequate service. If the railways are going to open up Queensland we have to bear the losses. It is completely unfair for hon. members on either side to expect the Minister to produce a balanced budget. With droughts, strikes and continual demands on the railways for other reasons, that is impossible. It is imperative that the people in the West should receive a rail service, but it is absolutely impossible for the Minister to have a balanced budget. If further demands on the Railway Department are deemed necessary, serious consideration should be given to having them met from Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (12.56 p.m.): The reduction in the mileage of the line open to traffic may not be serious, although the

present Premier used to complain year after year that the previous Government were not increasing the mileage, thereby bringing about a state of stagnation. However, we cannot be complacent when the train mileage has been greatly reduced in all three of our train services—passenger, mixed and goods. The total passenger train mileage is down 190,368 miles on last year's figure; the number of passenger journeys fell by almost 3,500,000. Altogether 130,407 fewer miles were run by mixed trains in 1960-1961 than in the previous year. Goods trains travelled 423,699 fewer miles than last year. Goods traffic fell by 188,252 tons. It is a very serious matter. Where it is leading us, I do not know. I recognise that the introduction of diesel-electric locomotives has had a tendency to reduce the mileage run. But surely the Minister and Government members are not satisfied with the trend of events! In all 744,474 fewer miles were run by Queensland trains than in the preceding year. Closing a branch line here and there is not going to be of much value in rectifying the position. If the railways were closed completely we would still be burdened with a huge interest bill each year. Some idea of the magnitude of the interest burden is shown by the knowledge that it costs the Railway Department 4s. 9½d. for every mile its trains run. In 1959-1960 it amounted to £3,959,984 and in 1960-1961 it reached the total of £4,304,868. The interest rate per train mile increased from 3s. 9½d. in 1958-1959 to 4s. 9½d. in 1960-1961. The interest bill has grown from £3,667,814 in 1958-1959 to £4,304,868 in 1960-1961, an increase of £637,054 in the last two years. So we see that the interest cost is heavy, too heavy a burden for the railways to carry successfully. Yet, for some reason that is hard to justify, we never hear any Government members or any supporters of the Government Parties complaining about this crippling load the railways are compelled to carry. However, they are constantly complaining about the huge losses incurred by the Railway Department and the unsatisfactory service given by railway employees generally throughout Queensland. In fact, we know that the hon. member for Condamine rose in his place in this Chamber and claimed that only one in every three railway men were working, but he did not complain about those who worked not, but got such a rich return for money invested. Actual experience has shown that the railway men not only do a better job, but also a cheaper job, than the department gets for work performed outside. It is the considered opinion of railway men throughout the State that far too much work that should go to the railway workshops is going to private firms. There is also a feeling amongst the employees in the railway workshops throughout the State that, because of the increasing amount of work going to private engineering firms, their workshops are beginning to deteriorate into simple repair depots.

In our railway workshops there are many excellent engineers and tradesmen worthy of encouragement. Many who were trained there have achieved outstanding success with private firms. I had the privilege of visiting the railway workshops at Ipswich, with the Minister and His Excellency Sir Henry Abel Smith. During that visit, His Excellency expressed surprise and gratification at the work being performed in those workshops and astonishment that so much skilled labour was operating there.

The hon. member for Rockhampton North has drawn attention to the position of apprentices in railway workshops throughout the State. In this connection, I can concur with him because we have a very unsatisfactory position with apprentice carriage builders who have served their time with the railways. They have done very well academically, but at the end of their time they are offered the choice of leaving the service or being employed as labourers.

I should like to quote from the report of the principal of the Technical College, Mr. Gee, in connection with railway apprentices. He said—

“As far as the railway apprentices are concerned the improvement is due to the high standard of education held by this year's new apprentices; approximately half of them had completed Junior, many with passes in nine subjects.”

The reward these brilliant young people get for serving their time in the department is a choice between leaving the service or remaining in it as labourers. That is very poor encouragement for lads who were willing to follow in the footsteps of their parents, who in many cases, went on to brilliant engineering careers.

If employment was normal outside and had not been affected by the disastrous policy of the Federal Government it would not be so bad, because these boys could then have taken jobs in the woodworking trades as carpenters, cabinet makers, or carriage builders. I hope that what has occurred in the wood-working trade is not to be repeated in the metal trade. I have here an article from the “Telegraph” of 6 November, 1961, under the heading, “Line limits coal export”, which reads—

“Japanese orders for Central Queensland coal would have been much heavier if the present transport facilities would have handled them, Mr. L. C. Thiess said today.

“He said the Kianga-Gladstone railway could not carry more than 500,000 tons a year.

“Mr. Thiess said a new Kianga-Gladstone railway was essential.”

He is advocating that the State should go to the expense of building a railway to transport coal from these collieries for exportation to Japan. I should like to sound a word of caution. I agree that it is in the

interest of the economy of the State and its development that we should develop an export trade in coal wherever possible, but it is also necessary to examine thoroughly the future of such trade. It becomes abundantly clear that this is no solution of the problems of the coal-mining industry or of those engaged in it, for the reason that what Japan requires is hard coking coal to serve her growing steel industry. She is not very interested in any other type of coal. Our known resources of such coal are limited and a far-sighted Government policy should be aimed at conserving it for our own requirements which must grow far beyond the confines of our present monopoly-controlled steel industry.

It is evident that the United States of America is conserving her metallurgical coking coal for her own requirements otherwise, because of her political and economic domination of Japan, she would be supplying all Japan's coal needs to the exclusion of Australia.

The increased train mileage by diesel-electric trains may not convey much to the average person in the State. The fact that the mileage of diesel-electric passenger trains increased by 35,759, and that of steam passenger trains decreased by 337,702, is much more significant than most people realise, particularly when steam mixed-train mileage dropped by 21,494 miles, and the mileage of goods trains hauled by steam engines dropped by 658,510 miles. While the diesel-electric mixed trains were down by 9,206 miles, the diesel-electric goods trains ran 234,428 more miles than they did in 1959-1960.

Many hon. members will be thinking, as the vast majority of people are thinking, that this is progress and we cannot stop progress. I do not want to stop progress in any direction, if it is in the interests of the State and its people, but I am wise enough to know that the dieselisation of our railways has greatly benefited overseas oil companies, and at the same time reduced the consumption of our own coal by 194,636 tons since 1949-1950. There has been a gradual reduction in the consumption of coal by the Railway Department since 1951-1952, and I shudder to think what will happen if we are drawn into another world war. Our transport, whether by land, sea or air will be immobilised and we will be an easy target for our enemies. Some hon. members, and perhaps some people outside, realise the magnificent work performed by the department and its employees from the Commissioner down during World War II. Hon. members should be reminded of the glowing tribute paid to the department and its employees by the American Army during World War II. So great was the job at that critical period that officers of the American Army would not be able to understand the criticism levelled at the Railway Department by people inside and outside

this Chamber. Let me remind hon. members opposite that the department paid working expenses and interest on its capital indebtedness when the present Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport, which in itself is an answer to the criticism of him and his administration of the department under a Labour Government.

Serious opposition has been expressed by locomotive drivers to the increase in the maximum length of trains from 60 units to as much as 146 units. Their objection is based on safety grounds alone. Beyond Toowoomba the loops accommodate only 60 F wagons of the standard unit. Between Brisbane and Rockhampton loops are provided to accommodate 60, 70 and 90 units. Often, with the longer train, the driver cannot see the guard and could easily leave him behind.

There are 10 speed restrictions between Caboolture and Gympie where the speed has been reduced from 45 miles to 10 miles an hour for passenger trains and from 35 miles to 10 miles an hour for goods trains. As many of the speedometers on the diesels are not in working order, hon. members will have some idea of the difficulties of the engine crew in observing the prescribed speed limit, particularly as a Hallada track recorder is attached to the train in such a position that it cannot be seen by the engine crew. It records the speed of the train during the whole of its journey. If the train crew have not observed the speed limits set down they are asked to explain why. A diesel-electric locomotive costs about £90,000 and at times draws a train costing as much as £1,000,000. Surely an efficient speedometer can be placed in the engine for the safety and convenience of the crew.

Seating accommodation on our platforms is necessary, but it is regrettable that some of the seats have been responsible for very nasty accidents. If we can have installed in Parliament House drinking fountains where hon. members and Government employees can obtain a cool drink at any time, I do not see why it is not possible for the Railway Department to put drinking fountains on railway platforms for the convenience of passengers and those who have to visit stations to meet people or pick up goods.

I must make another plea to the Minister today, this time for the Bundamba railway station. In the past I have pleaded for something to be done and I have been told that the Bundamba railway station will be attended to when quadruplication or electrification takes place. The hon. member for Sherwood quite rightly thanked the Minister and the department for the improvement in the suburban stations in his electorate. I am asking only that the eyesore at Bundamba be replaced by a modern station. It must not be forgotten that at least six or seven times a year race meetings are held at Bundamba and people go there from the southern States and from overseas. If the Minister for

Labour and Industry who is in charge of tourism knew just what the reaction of the tourists was to that station he would exercise his undoubted influence in Cabinet to see that it was brought up to date. It is a disgrace to the State of Queensland and it is beyond my comprehension how the people working there can properly perform their work. It is no use saying that we must wait for quadruplication or electrification to put the station in a respectable condition. It should be done now, and the sooner the better. I make this plea on behalf of the public and the employees.

I desire to thank the Minister for providing a pathway from Dudleigh Street and Alexandra Street to Bergin Street and for the fence and turnstiles at each end. It offers a safe way to the railway station for many people in those streets and saves them from having to go the long way round.

I should like to sound a note of warning about diesel engines, and I quote, in the first place, an article taken from an overseas newspaper and published in "Common Cause". It is as follows:—

"As Diesels take over our Railways . . .

"U.S. Experience shows Losses

"Diesels are taking over the Australian railway system, providing big profits for overseas oil monopolies but helping to deal the death-blow to the Australian coal industry, but . . .

"In America today experts are having serious 'second thoughts' about diesels which, it is declared, while having lower operating costs than the equivalent steam locomotives, have proved far more costly to buy and maintain and have a relatively short life.

"An analysis is contained in a paper 'Economic Results of Diesel Electric Motive Power on the Railways of the United States of America' by Mr. H. F. Brown, who claims that, outside shunting service, the diesel has actually added to the financial burden of the railways. The paper is quoted in 'Engineering', U.K., 30/12/60.

"It is interesting—and, no doubt, significant—to read that while the diesel electric locomotive made its first appearance in America in 1925 it was not until after the war that it became an important factor when 'the automotive industry started an active campaign to sell the diesel to the railways at a time when steam locomotives were old and generally worn out.'"

That was the position in Queensland with our rolling-stock, particularly locomotives, after the service they gave during World War II.

The "Common Cause" article goes on to say—

"It is pointed out by Mr. Brown that American manufacturers have not been able to build a single diesel unit having much more than 2,000 h.p. delivered to the rim of the driving wheels. Interstate Commission statistics for 1957 show that it

required 2.08 diesel units per average passenger train, and 2.59 diesel units per average freight train. The average for all main line trains was 2.41 units.

"The tractive force of any of these combinations at the running speed is well within the capacity of most of the modern steam power locos remaining in either passenger or freight service in 1957.

"Thus, Mr. Brown points out, more motive power units of the diesel type have been required to perform the present service than would have been required had modern steam locomotives been purchased in their stead.

"Mr. Brown calculates that 11,800 steam locomotives would be the hypothetical equivalent of the 18,958 diesel units in road service in 1957. He refutes the claim that the diesels have been responsible for faster and longer trains, and, therefore, a reduction in the number required, stating that it is due to other factors."

I do not want to miss the opportunity to pay a tribute to the retiring Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Moriarty, particularly for his sustained interest in the railway ambulance. That is one organisation that has not received all the publicity it deserves. I hope that he will continue his interest in it beyond the date of his retirement.

I want to extend to Mr. Lingard my sincere thanks for the assistance he has given me since I became a member of Parliament. My thanks also go to the staff in the Minister's office.

"The Queensland Times", the Ipswich daily newspaper, has a 25 years' column and a 50 years' column and just recently, in one of the columns, under the heading of "Losses on Railway Branch Lines," the following appeared—

"The Commissioner for Railways (Mr. J. W. Davidson), in his annual report to Parliament in October, 1936, said that only six of the 65 branch lines in the State had paid full working expenses and interest charges during the previous financial year.

"Forty-three branch lines failed to pay even working expenses.

"Despite the loss of £44,934 on the branches, Mr. Davidson did not advise the closing down of non-paying lines."

Perhaps in that respect he was wiser than the present administration. The article went on—

"The worst paying line was South Brisbane to Southport and Tweed Heads, which lost £75,096."

That has not improved at all. Whether the present Minister has any justification for closing the line from Southport to the border to the inconvenience of many travellers I am not going to say. The article included this interesting passage—

"Branch line earnings for the year decreased by £31,160 to £910,830. The

North Ipswich-Tivoli branch line was one of the few to pay working expenses and interest charges on capital."

Strangely enough, that branch line has been closed for a considerable time because not enough coal was being transported from the Tivoli coalfield. I do not think we can quarrel with that.

I should like to read a little further from the extract from "Common Cause". It goes on—

"Mr. Brown points out that the lower operational cost of the diesel must be set against the higher investment cost necessary. He also says that the diesel cannot be held responsible for the slight increase in average speed, which is due mainly to other factors (such as improved despatching and signal systems).

"The writer produces figures to show that the repair costs on diesels are far higher than in the case of steam locomotives, and maintenance increases steadily with age. The total investment was 1,800 million dollars greater for diesels and fixed charges 165.5 million dollars greater than for equivalent steam locomotive investment."

"The article comments: 'Nothing can be found in Mr. Brown's analysis to justify the claim that diesels are producing a 30 per cent. return on their investment. The increase in dividends since 1940 does coincide with the change in type of motive power. But to relate these two facts is wholly unwarranted. Earnings for this period are lower, with more traffic, than during 1925-30, when all the motive power was steam and electric.'

"Looks as if somebody might have been sold a pup . . . with the taxpayers in Australia and the mine workers the victims, while the oil interests (and of course the manufacturers of diesels) reap even bigger profits!"

The report of the Commissioner shows the very disturbing fact that last year there were 790 fewer employees than there were in the preceding year. That is a clear indication of the position in the railways. The Commissioner goes on to say—

"As I have pointed out previously, there are three items which figure largely as individual debits to working expenses. These are payroll tax, the cost of relaying work and demolished assets."

But he does not mention the staggering interest bill of £4,304,868.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (2.36 p.m.): I join with other hon. members of the Government parties in congratulating the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates. He is to be commended very highly, because all hon. members realise what a sincere and conscientious endeavour he is making to administer a very difficult portfolio.

Mr. Gaven: He is very easy to approach, too.

Mr. SULLIVAN: As the hon. member for South Coast interjects, he is very easy to approach. I should say that he has the unqualified support of his departmental officers.

Mr. Davies: Do you think that the Commissioner has done a good job?

Mr. SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Maryborough always takes his seat opposite the rostrum and interjects when Government members are speaking, but his interjections are usually pointless. As many members of the Opposition have paid me the compliment during the 12 months or so that I have been a Member of this Assembly of being present in the Chamber when I speak, because I generally speak on matters that I know something about, I suggest that the hon. member for Maryborough should allow his colleagues to hear what I have to say and cease interrupting me.

I was absent before lunch at a Parliamentary Land Committee meeting, but I understand that the hon. member for Ipswich East attacked me and endeavoured to mislead the Committee and misconstrue words that I uttered last year by claiming that I wanted to sack one-third of the railway men employed by the Railway Department. He knows that it is untrue. Hon. members opposite say that they represent the railway workers and the working class generally, but I want to put it on record that I was very disappointed to observe that there were never more than five members of the Australian Labor Party present in the Chamber while the Minister was presenting his Estimates.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That brings them in!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I trust that the hon. member will get back to the Estimates.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It is one thing to criticise and another to be criticised. There were no more than five Opposition members in the Chamber.

A great deal of criticism was hurled by the Leader of the Opposition and hon. members on his side, but late on Tuesday evening the Minister in reply to their accusations proved that many of their charges were completely frivolous, and without any foundation whatever. The Government have been criticised for engaging the consulting firm of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis. The Government are to be commended for employing them. Following on their investigations and reports changes have been made even at this early stage and that proves what a wise move it was to seek their assistance.

Mr. Graham: Tells us what they have done. The Minister has not told us.

Mr. SULLIVAN: What I had intended to say will answer the interjections of the hon.

member for Mackay. The Opposition have criticised the overseas visit by the Minister and senior departmental officers. We all know that Queensland is a very young country. The Minister made that visit to get first-hand knowledge of what was being done in places like the U.S.A. and Great Britain. Already he has taken certain action following his visit and the receipt of reports from Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis. The cut in rail freights as far west as Roma is an example. Although that move has been criticised by hon. members opposite it is hailed by the people as one of the greatest moves by the department.

The freights should have been reduced years ago. Long before I entered Parliament I maintained that railway schedules needed overhauling. The hon. member for Roma has told me that since the reduction in freights almost all goods coming into Roma are carried by rail. Hon. members opposite should be pleased that it is giving employment to railway workers. After all, it is only a common-sense approach. Instead of having trains going out empty to pick up the produce of the area is it not better to have goods carried out at £9 10s. a ton, thus giving the people out there the benefit of cheap freight? The Minister has made a beginning and my only criticism of him is that perhaps it should have been done sooner. But he is not responsible for the years when it was not done. It should have been done in the years gone by, in the time of Labour's administration.

Country Party members, representing people in these far-flung places, are very appreciative of what the Railway Department is doing now. Recently, in Longreach, it was pointed out to me that the freight on bricks from Bundaberg to Longreach was twice the actual cost of the bricks at the brickworks at Bundaberg. It is an indication of how hard hit are the people living in the West. The freight schedules are long overdue for reorganisation.

Mr. Baxter: Have you a suggestion for reorganising them?

Mr. SULLIVAN: We know what the Minister has done already, and in many instances at the suggestion of some Country Party member. I hope that answers the hon. member's question.

Much has been said of the important part the railways have played over the years in the development of Queensland, and I agree with what has been said. I go further and say that they still have a very important part to play, not only in the far-flung areas, but, with the advent of bulk handling of wheat and other grains in Queensland in the last few years, the importance of the railways is being brought home to those engaged in grain growing.

Hon. members will realise that bulk handling of grain has been introduced in

Queensland during the last three years and I commend the Railway Department for what they have done in that period, in supplying bulk trucks for grain. I understand that at present they have about 500 bulk trucks and that they are coming off the assembly line at the rate of almost one a day.

If the Wheat Board had to provide bulk handling facilities throughout the grain-growing areas of the State a heavy capital outlay would be involved. The price of wool has fallen, beef is not doing as well as it used to and more grain is being grown. The Wheat Board cannot possibly provide all of the facilities and so the railways have a very big responsibility. They can play a very big part in the movement of grain from the growing areas to the seaboard or mill, or wherever the grain goes.

They are doing a very fine job and, if they can increase the number of trucks, they will assist considerably in cutting down handling costs.

The hon. member for Roma discussed a problem with me concerning some of the growers at Wandoan where they have only just introduced bulk handling. The growers are on a quota. He explained that one man who harvests 6,000 bags of wheat has a quota on the bulk facilities that will allow him to put in only 1,100 to 1,200 bags. He has to find storage on his farm for approximately 4,500 to 5,000 bags of grain. Storage facilities are costly as those engaged in grain-growing know only too well. The Railway Department could assist the growers greatly and keep down their costs by expediting the transport of grain from the areas where bulk-handling has been instituted.

I bring to the notice of the Minister and the Commissioner an anomaly that was referred to me by a Brisbane producer of stock food. He complains of a delay in the department's taking delivery of the produce. The result is an increase in the cost to the person to whom it is consigned. He pointed out to me that his transport operator does not charge so much a ton to deliver to rail, but so much an hour for the work. He is railing approximately 50 tons a week. If the holdup in sending one ton is 4 hours, as it has been, in the acceptance of it by the Railway Department, the cost of 23s. an hour for the transport operator is added, resulting in an increase in cost to the consignee of £4 12s. I respectfully bring it to the attention of the Minister and the Commissioner in the hope that they may be able to correct the position.

I now want to deal with the department's work in providing facilities at trucking centres. In the Condamine electorate—and I am sure the same position applies elsewhere—we have trucking yards that were built many years ago. They served a very good purpose but over the years they have

deteriorated. The matter was first brought to my attention by the chairman of the Graziers' Association at Dalby, who told me that over the years he had made representations on many occasions for improvements. Over the years there has been a trend among dairymen, wool-growers, and other primary producers to go in for the breeding of vealers. In the old days the practice was to drive the mothers in, truck the vealers, and then drive the mothers home again. Much unnecessary work had to be done before the days of road transport.

When the yards were built facilities for unloading stock from transport vehicles into the railway yards were not provided. I made representations about the matter and I am very grateful for the facilities that are now available at Macalister, Warra, Brigalow and Bell. The graziers and railway employees in those areas are very grateful too because the handling of stock is expedited and work generally is made much easier. I bring that to the attention of the Chamber to give hon. members an idea of what the Railway Department is doing in those areas. We also have a problem at Jandowae and Chinchilla. I appreciate the great cost involved. In years gone by, in many towns, railway trucking yards were built at the end of the line, but over the years, with development, the towns have gradually grown around them.

Mr. Aikens: Then they want them shifted.

Mr. SULLIVAN: That is a fact. They want the yards shifted. The problem is not easy to overcome, but is not as bad as some graziers might like us to believe because in the closer settled areas the majority of cattle brought in for sale, come by road transport. However, a sale is conducted at Jandowae every Friday. The cattle are brought to the yards and sold. Those that are not sent away by road transport have to be brought back to the trucking yards on Monday morning at great inconvenience. I realise that a great deal of expense would be entailed in shifting the yards.

The hon. member for Ipswich East read from a newspaper article to emphasise the danger to the railway system in wartime if it was completely dieselised and Australia was cut off from its oil supplies. I think he really displayed a very backward outlook. I believe that dieselisation of our transport system is most desirable and we should strive for it.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: Let me exhort hon. members opposite to direct their efforts in fighting Communism.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SULLIVAN: In that way they will remove some of the dangers of war.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SULLIVAN: If they directed their efforts in that direction they would be doing a much better job for the people of Queensland. I suggest that they assist with the dieselisation of the railway system.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Townsville South is hiding behind the speaker. I ask him to please desist from his interruptions.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I should like to pay a tribute to the Commissioner, Mr. Moriarty, on the eve of his retirement. The hon. member for Roma referred to his grey hair. When I look at his eyes, I do not think they are as dim as the hon. member for Roma would have us believe. The Commissioner seems very much alive in his job. He has given a lifetime of service interrupted only by two World Wars. I have not had a long association with him as Commissioner for Railways but I know something of his war record because I served in a command adjacent to him in the Islands during World War II. He has given a lifetime of service to his country in both peace and in war and for that we owe him a debt of gratitude. I wish him many long and happy years of retirement.

Mr. WALSH (Bundaberg) (3 p.m.): It is obvious that Government members have not read the Commissioner's report. If they had, I am sure they would not conscientiously be able to stand up and congratulate the Minister as the few of them who have spoken have done.

It will be obvious to anybody who understands the activities of the Railway Department that it is a big organisation, an organisation responsible for the expenditure of about one-third of the total sum appropriated by this Parliament from Consolidated Revenue. About £37,500,000 is asked for in these Estimates from a total appropriation of £115,000,000. The department is certainly a very big factor in the economic life of the community generally in every respect. Not only the employees of the department but industry throughout the State must depend on the railways.

So when we are debating its Estimates we should have regard to the ramifications and difficulties of such a big organisation, particularly when it must be influenced very largely by political and ministerial policy. The vast number of its employees—27,895 to be exact—compared with those in any business undertaking in the State indicates the magnitude of its activities.

I want to pay a tribute to the retiring Commissioner, Mr. Moriarty, and to link with him the staff generally under his administration. I do not pay that tribute because Mr. Moriarty is in the lobby. That is not my form. I make no apologies for praising him in the Chamber. If I had any criticism of him that I thought I could honestly justify, it would be forthcoming

right here. I do not like playing to the gallery where public administration and public funds are involved.

It is something like 14 years since I had anything to do with the administration of the Railway Department and my objective at that time as Minister, in accordance with the Labour Government's policy, was to attract young and efficient men to the administration of the Railway Department. I did not know Gerry Moriarty from a bottle of sauce but from numerous inquiries made of people who could advise me of the potential of the material within the department his name was mentioned as one who could play an effective role in connection with the proposals I had in mind. After he was brought to my office and I had spoken to him, I realised firstly that he had plenty of confidence. There was very little indecision about him. If he made a decision that was it. That is very important in the administration of the Railway Department either politically or administratively. You must make up your mind what you are going to do and then go ahead. Mr. Moriarty was given a special roving commission to investigate and report on the whole of the activities of the department, and his report is on file. Eventually he became General Manager of North Queensland. I do not have to say it in this Chamber. Any northern member of Parliament who represented the area from Townsville to Mackay and north of Townsville would speak of the efficient way in which Mr. Moriarty administered the affairs of the department in Townsville. People who had any knowledge of his work bore witness all through the piece of trains running to time and of a different atmosphere as far as cleaners and engine-drivers were concerned with their dirty, greasy and oily engines. When I was out of the department, I was in Mackay on one occasion waiting to depart for the South on the Townsville mail. I asked a railway driver there what time the train was due to leave. He told me and I said, "I suppose I can put another half an hour on to that." He said, "Not on your life! You can set your watch by the arrival of the train now Moriarty is in charge."

Mr. Aikens: You can set your watch by it now. It is always a day late.

Mr. WALSH: If it is a day late, the fault goes back to the General Manager and through the Divisions. If the General Manager falls down on his job, then the Commissioner has to do something about it. I pay tribute to Mr. Moriarty as a man who has rendered very worthwhile service to the community. As have many other men, he has devoted his life to the railways. That can be said of Mr. Gerry Lingard, too. During my time as Minister, I found him to be one of the most conscientious and efficient officers in the department.

Mr. Chalk: He still is.

Mr. WALSH: I am glad to hear the Minister say that he still is. I know that he would not change. I think he has suffered a great deal of frustration because of political decisions. Going through the ranks, I am amazed at the number of unclassified clerks in the department who, if they had wanted to, could have gone out and done well for themselves in other business activities. I should like to see the Minister encouraging the young men in the department, particularly those who are around him in the lobbies, because the railways will eventually get the benefit of his action. In the booking office, all hon. members know Mercia Doran. She lives for the railways, and no-one has given greater service to the public than she has. We should remember these things when criticisms are levelled at the Railway Department.

I think the Minister will honestly admit that the picture is somewhat different now that he is looking at it from inside the department instead of outside. He said many things when he was in Opposition, and although I did not expect it, I think many other people expected that he was going to revolutionise the administration of the railways. I shall produce some figures later from the Commissioner's Report—they are not merely a guess—to show hon. members that the Minister is making a terrible mess of the Railway Department. His attitude now is somewhat different from his attitude in 1957, when he took over the portfolio. He left the impression in the minds of many hon. members then that his main objective was to score at the expense of the administration under Labour Governments. Anybody who has read this report carefully will agree that the Minister has nothing to skite about or boast about. If I can be guided by Press statements issued from time to time, I think I would be correct in saying that there appears to be too much political interference in the administration of the Railway Department since the Minister took over.

Mr. Aikens: It could not be any more than when you were Minister.

Mr. WALSH: When I was Minister I had nothing more serious than a strike over washing hands in the department's time.

Mr. Mann: You had your stooges.

Mr. WALSH: I did not have any stooges. The hon. member for Brisbane can come into this if he likes. He has his stooges in every sphere of activity.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. WALSH: Hon. members opposite will urge him on because it suits them to do so. The Railway Department should be freed completely from undue political interference. There is plenty of room for consultation between the Minister and the Commissioner, for example; but when it gets to the stage that the Minister wants to bend the Commissioner to his will and keep his hand

on him, then we can only blame the Minister for the disastrous results that are shown in the report. We have had reports galore. We do not know what was in the Hytten report although apparently the Minister has given effect to it. But the report of the Commissioner for Railways shows that there are nearly 2,000 fewer employees now than in 1956-1957. I am more interested in the general administration of the railways so the only time I shall work the parish pump on this occasion is when I make reference to that part of the interim report of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis that leaves it to the Minister to make the political decision whether the workshops in Maryborough or Bundaberg should be closed. That firm allegedly has a world-wide reputation so surely to goodness they should be able to make up their mind whether the Bundaberg or Maryborough workshops should be retained. If the economics are against the shops being retained in Bundaberg I have to be sensible enough to say that they have to be closed. I am not in a position to say whether the economics are for or against it. But the Government are paying that firm £117,000 for advice, yet the firm cannot make up its mind on those matters.

A remarkable feature of the Commissioner's report is that although the greatest railway activity in the State is on the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa line, it contains not one word about it. That project will be responsible for the expenditure of £30,000,000 but we are not likely to have an opportunity to discuss it at any stage unless the Mt. Isa agreement is brought before Parliament.

Mr. Chalk: You know it must come before the House.

Mr. WALSH: I do not know whether the Minister is going to bring it down this session. Let me prove my case from page 6 of the Commissioner's report. It is in the hands of every hon. member. I will make a comparison of loan fund expenditure in the last four years of the Labour Government and the four years of this Government. The total expenditure from loan funds in the last four years of the Labour Government was £19,050,651; the total expenditure from the same source in the four years of the present Government has been £16,487,479, a decrease of £2,563,172. Let us look at the revenue side. I cannot see the Minister answering these points because they are in the Commissioner's report. In 1956-1957 railway revenue was £35,810,855, the expenditure for the year being £36,949,761. Despite the fact that there has been a savage increase in freights throughout Queensland since the Government came to power—almost 100 per cent. on fertilizer consigned to Cairns, up to 43 per cent. on fertilizer consigned to the sugar farmers in the Bundaberg

area—the revenue for 1960-1961 was £35,610,522, with an expenditure of £37,647,205, or a decrease of £200,000 compared with the revenue received by the Labour Government in 1956-1957.

The average number of staff exclusive of the construction branch in 1956-1957, under a Labour Government, was 29,823. In 1960-1961, under the present Government there were 27,895, a decrease of 1,928 employees. The Minister had the hide to interject while an Opposition Member was speaking, to say they were paying a larger wages bill than was paid by the Labour Government. Why should they not be able to do that, having sacked 2,000 employees and saved their wages? If he has paid a larger wages bill, what is he getting for it? Let us see. The total salaries and wages, excluding the uniform gauge railway, in 1956-1957 were £28,572,000; under the present Government in 1960-1961, £30,384,165, or an increase of £1,800,000. The people want to know what they are getting for this.

As we turn the pages of this report, on page 6 we see that, in the last year under the Labour Government, 1956-1957 the amount debited to Capital Account was £86,591,025; under the present Government, 1960-1961, £103,078,504, or approximately £16,000,000 more in four years. The amount debited to Capital Account (Opened Lines), under Labour in 1956-1957, was £80,061,092; under the present Government in 1960-1961, £98,104,107—£18,000,000 more added to the Capital Account on the opened lines.

Going down the table we see total earnings under Labour in the last year, 1956-1957, £35,810,855; under the present Government, 1960-1961, £35,610,522; train miles run in the last year of Labour, 19,809,526; last year, 1960-1961, under this Government, 18,040,050, over 1,000,000 train miles less.

Passenger revenue in the last year under Labour was £3,490,722; under this Government in 1960-1961, it was £3,224,771, £266,000 less. Timber revenue, in the last year of the Labour Government, 1956-1957 was £1,396,663; under the present Government in 1960-1961, £1,167,483, £229,000 less. Agricultural Produce, in the last year of the Labour Government, £5,518,590 and under this Government in 1960-1961, £5,277,689—£241,000 less revenue from this source. Where is the hon. member for Gregory now? Wool revenue in the last year under Labour was £1,289,431; under this Government in 1960-1961, £982,993 or £306,000 less in revenue from the carriage of wool.

For Total Goods Revenue (including Livestock) in the last year under the Labour Government, the revenue return was £29,843,332; in 1960-1961 under the present Government, £29,802,507, £40,000 less. The Total Tonnage of goods—Departmental—in

the last year of Labour was 1,182,227; under the present Government in 1960-1961, 1,003,339, or 180,000 tons less.

I come now to another test. According to the Commissioner's report, in 1956-1957 the department had 845 engines, and last year 808. It had 1,163 carriages in 1956-1957, and now has 1,140, 23 less.

Mr. Windsor: Longer ones.

Mr. WALSH: In 1956-1957 it had 28,217 wagons, and last year 27,076, 1,200 less. The Minister by way of interjection said, "They are longer ones."

Mr. Chalk: I did not say that.

Mr. WALSH: The hon. member for Ithaca said they are longer ones. The Minister is probably too wise to make such an interjection. The fact is that less revenue has been received from all phases of railway activity. That is the real test of the Minister's administration.

It is useless to blame railway administration when the Government starve it for funds and proceed with the policy of sacking thousands of employees. How can we expect an organisation responsible for the expenditure of £37,500,000 to work efficiently if it is subject to a political policy that, firstly, curtails the finance available to it and, secondly, reduces its staff further and further.

It was apparent from what the Minister said by way of interjection that he was expecting in the report of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis some justification for the Government's sacking of some hundreds, if not thousands, of railway employees.

Mr. Chalk: When did I say that?

Mr. WALSH: The Minister interjected during the speech of the hon. member for Kedron. I am not so hard of hearing that I did not catch it. His interjection conveyed that he was trying to shift the blame by saying that is what the Labour Government would have done, that they wanted more sackings in the Railway Department. Apparently the Minister is giving effect to at least one phase of the Hytten report, a report that he and the Government are not prepared to make available for perusal by hon. members.

While on the subject of these reports, I am wondering what has happened to the great engineering talent we have in the State. I am not saying that within the structure of Ford, Bacon and Davis there is not advisory skill for the bigger phases of constructional work, but it is shocking to think that in a department with approximately 28,000 employees the Government have not personnel who can give advice, even under the chairmanship of an independent authority; who can advise the department on ways and means of meeting the form of competition for which the Minister is responsible.

That is another unfortunate feature of the debate. The Mt. Isa situation cannot be discussed, although we hope to be able to deal with it in due course. We should be given the opportunity to discuss the more important matter of transport policy generally and its relationship to the affairs of the Railway Department. If the Minister wanted an open go on this subject, he should convince the Premier to have a full dress debate on the whole transport policy. We are hamstrung and may not discuss the matter.

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (3.24 p.m.): The affairs of the Railway Department should be of interest to all hon. members, because the department's activities have such a great bearing on the welfare and future of Queensland. Over the years the railway system has got into such a position that Government members, as well as Opposition members, are very much concerned about it. The Commissioner's report is no doubt very interesting and comprehensive and covers the activities of all phases of departmental administration in the past 12 months. However, irrespective of what the Minister may say, it has to be accepted that the Commissioner's report is not very encouraging for the financial wellbeing of the Government. During the last 12 months we have seen the Railway Department, like many other departments, show a high deficit, and there does not seem to be any answer to it, or the Government have not yet found one. It may be said that the blame cannot be laid entirely at the door of the administration, that many other factors must be considered. It may be said also that the Commissioner has given excellent service to past Governments and the present Government during his term of office and that railway employees, almost without exception, have given the Commissioner and the Government very beneficial service for the welfare of this State. We realise the importance of railway employees to the whole of our industrial and social organisations and we can well understand that good railway employees, who make good citizens, are a tremendous asset to the State.

The increasing deficits presented year after year must be tackled by the Government. Each and every Government instrumentality must pay its way.

In a "Courier-Mail" published just prior to the elections last year, the Premier, in his policy speech at Maroochydoore, said that the Government will—

"Iron out the Rail v. Roads 'Headache'."

The article continues—

"Transport review is election promise.

A radical change in transport administration . . . a complete review of rail freights . . . and a vigorous programme of road construction."

I think I am entitled to ask just what has been achieved by the Government in rail-

way administration. Can it be said that after four years of control by the present Minister that the Railway Department is in a better state today than it was four years ago? I doubt that it can. I think I have every right to ask how much better off is Queensland at present, as a result of the present Minister's administration, than it was prior to the Government's taking over?

Mr. Wharton: It is a lot better off, and you know it.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member will have an opportunity to tell the Chamber in what way the Railway Department has been better managed or is giving better service to the people of Queensland than under Labour administration.

During the four years of administration the Government have found it necessary to instigate two forms of investigation. The Hytten Report has been referred to. We do not know whether it has been accepted in part or in whole by the Government because the Government have persistently refused to let us know whether it has been accepted. I do not think it has been. I think that the Government read the report and believed it would be detrimental to the welfare of the department and themselves and conveniently shelved it. At present an investigation is under way by Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, in an attempt to rectify some of the faults in the department. I am partly in agreement with the previous speaker, the hon. member for Bundaberg, who asked why men in the department could not give the Government the information they required on how to improve railway administration in Queensland.

I ask the question: what have the Government to show for the four years of the present Minister's administration with the assistance of the Hytten Report and perhaps some part of the report of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis? Despite the promise made by the Premier at Maroochydoore that he would co-ordinate the services to bring about a better transport system, the people of Queensland are still looking for that to be carried out.

It has been found necessary by the Government to increase freights and fares. There is nothing much wrong with that. Those increases are no doubt necessary to balance the budget in view of increased costs.

Mr. Sullivan: Are you in favour of reducing freights?

Mr. GRAHAM: Up to a point. I might have something to say about that later on. But I was talking about increases.

In replying on Tuesday night to speakers up to then, the Minister took unto himself a great deal of credit and kudos for what the department had done. It could rightly be said that he was basking in the glory

of someone else's administration because many of the things that have been in operation in the four years of his term of office were initiated by previous Labour Governments. Dieselisation was the brain child of the previous Minister for Transport, yet the Minister claimed credit for what it has achieved.

Under the Nicklin-Morris administration the railways have declined considerably in four years. It cannot be said that the handling of the department by the present Minister shows up in a very good light. I do not suggest that personally against him. He has done his best but he lacks experience in railway matters and he has been led by others. As the hon. member for Bundaberg said, a very strong political influence has infiltrated into his decisions. So he does not show up in a very good light on railway administration.

Despite the increased freights and fares and despite the closing of many branch lines, railway deficits are increasing. While some of the figures have already been mentioned, it may not be out of place to repeat them. In 1958-1959 the loss on running was £1,257,919 while in 1960-1961 it increased to £2,036,683. Together with interest charges the deficit for the year 1958-1959 was £4,925,733 and for 1959-1960 it was £6,587,521. We cannot ignore those figures. While the department continues to show heavy deficits, it must have an effect on other aspects of government finance and must affect the whole of the State. There are several reasons for the deficits. First of all, there has been a falling away in rail traffic because of the competition from the airlines and road transport. I do not think that the present Government can be exonerated completely of the responsibility for the inroads of road transport, because in many ways they have assisted road transport and pandered to their supporters. It has now become a real menace.

Mr. Chalk: Who gave the licences for road transport?

Mr. GRAHAM: The Minister did not introduce the system, and I did not say he did. I am not trying to lay the blame entirely at the door of the Government. I know that there is as much likelihood of getting rid of road transport as there is of getting rid of air transport, but the Government must accept some responsibility for the decrease in rail traffic because they have pandered to the road transport operators.

The airlines are probably the railways' greatest competitor for passenger traffic. What have the Government done to increase the number of passengers carried on the railways? The Commissioner says in his report—

"The earnings from passenger traffic during the financial year ended 30 June, 1961, were £3,224,771 or £207,253 higher than the 1959-1960 figure of £3,017,248."

That was due entirely to the increase in fares, because he goes on to say—

"The number of passenger journeys fell by 3,489,183 from 32,197,469 during 1959-1960 to 28,708,286."

Fewer people are travelling by rail, taking both long-distance services and suburban services into account.

He then says—

"Passenger fares were increased as from 1 October, 1960, and while the objective of securing extra revenue was achieved, it is evident that there has been a divergence of business to other forms of transport. This is particularly applicable to the suburban passenger traffic."

Despite that admission in relation to suburban passenger traffic, little or no attempt is being made to co-ordinate services in the metropolitan area to bring back passengers to suburban railway services. The report goes on—

"The number of suburban passenger journeys decreased by 2,965,542 from 27,547,547 in 1959-1960 to 24-582,005, but because of the higher fares the revenue rose from £865,215 to £962,257, representing an increase of £97,042.

"I feel I must again draw attention to the uneconomic competition which exists in the operation of passenger transport services in the Brisbane suburban area and which is reflected not only in the operating results of the railways, but in the transport department of the Brisbane City Council as well. As I mentioned in my report for the financial year ended 30 June, 1960, the only solution to the problem is the co-ordination of all forms of passenger services within the Brisbane city area."

That should be done immediately. The Government should not hesitate to do that, even if they have to over-ride the Brisbane City Council. They must put their foot down and implement a co-ordinated service. Not only is the Brisbane City Council losing a tremendous amount of money on its transport system, but the Government are also losing on long-distance passenger services. The Railway Department must make a great effort to encourage people to travel by rail. Admittedly, the introduction of air-conditioned trains on lines to the North, the South-West, the Middle West, and the North-West has given those desirous of travelling by train a better form of transport. But that in itself is not sufficient with the keen competition being offered by air services.

Mr. Ewan: Do you think we should advertise more?

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not think advertising is the answer. People know that the railway service is there. Up until very recent years people have travelled extensively by train. But now that air services offer a quicker, cleaner and perhaps more convenient mode of travel, probably with equal safety,

people are becoming more air-minded. The department can encourage people to travel on long-distance trains only by offering a better service. The journey from Townsville to Brisbane takes 34 hours. I have a full appreciation of all the factors involved in train-runings, nevertheless I suggest that the Commissioner should endeavour to reduce the running time between Townsville and Brisbane. There is too much delay. Far too often trains run late both ways. Passengers become disgruntled when trains run late. It is bad enough having to sit in a train for so long without its running late. The mail train running north is the worst. Even though it may leave Rockhampton on time it arrives late in Mackay and Townsville. It may be necessary for the Government to give consideration to the duplication of the line. Double-track railways operate from Brisbane to Sydney, and Sydney to Melbourne. I cannot see why we should not have more double tracks in Brisbane. We already have them as far as Ipswich and in some of the suburban areas. Unless we can reduce the time factor with long-distance trains more and more people will travel by air. Duplication has not been fully considered. I know that it will cost a great deal of money. The Queensland railways have been in operation for almost 90 years. That there are so few miles of duplicated track is an indication that this and previous Governments have not given sufficient consideration to the laying of a double line. If it is not possible to continue duplication right to the North it should be possible to lay down sections, say, between Brisbane and Maryborough, Maryborough and Bundaberg, Bundaberg and Rockhampton, or Rockhampton and Mackay. I know that the Commissioner has provided many more sidings to try to speed trains, but that is not the answer. Until people know that they can rely on trains running to time the Commissioner will not win back passenger traffic.

Mr. Ewan: What are the causes of late running?

Mr. GRAHAM: Delays in crossing trains, breakdowns, and other factors. With only a single track you have to wait for the other train to pass. Once one train is late it delays another train. That is a big factor in late running, but not the only factor.

I could quote cases of the northern mail arriving in Rockhampton on time and leaving Rockhampton 10, 15 and 20 minutes late because of the unloading and loading of roadside. Every article has to be handled individually. They have to reload those goods consigned from Rockhampton to the North and by the time the wagons are loaded the departure of the train is delayed. A system should be inaugurated by which these parcels could be loaded at Roma Street into containers. When the train reaches Rockhampton, the containers would be taken from the wagons and reloaded on to other units. That would save some considerable delay.

I suggest that the Minister investigate the position. I am sure he would find that what I am saying is true.

Another matter that has occasioned much criticism of the Railway Department is the service given to the travelling public in refreshment rooms. I am not saying that the managers of these rooms are not conscious of the fact that they are expected to give the travelling public the service they want.

In the past few years the Government have handed many refreshment rooms over to private enterprise to run, but in those rooms retained by the department, in my opinion, the travelling public are not being given the service they should get. I never use these rooms without hearing criticism of the food, the method of distribution, and suchlike. If the Commissioner wants the railway refreshment rooms to pay he must give the public the service to entice them in and make them spend.

I personally seldom use the refreshment rooms because the food is unpalatable, badly cooked and usually something that one does not want. The tea is weak and messy and not at all enjoyable. So, the average passenger will not use them and, if he does, he is dissatisfied.

The hon. member for Townsville South will verify that dozens of passengers carry their own foodstuffs onto trains. They do so because they do not like either the food or the service in the rooms. I think Mr. Whittaker is doing as much as he can but there is a real change needed in some of the rooms. Men trained in the art of cooking should be employed. The food in some of the rooms would kill you. The service given in the buffet cars is exceptionally good and it is well patronised. If the same service were available in the rooms there would be no ground for complaint.

Much has been said about the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line. I think it is remarkable that Government members—and the hon. member for Roma in particular—give all credit to the Government for what has been done in this regard. The hon. member overlooked the fact that it was not this Government that instituted the move for the reconditioning of this line; it was past Labour Governments that had the initiative to lay down the reconstruction of this line, despite the fact that the present Government are responsible for carrying it out.

I believe time will show that the Queensland Government have not obtained a good deal in the interest rate to be charged. The hon. member for Roma said it was all right for the Government to pay 5½ per cent. interest.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.50 p.m.): First of all I want to say that I have always considered it my duty in this Chamber

to say what I think my electors would have me say and, in view of the fact that I have as many railway men in my electorate as there are in any other electorate in Queensland, I think I can say quite truthfully that the railway men of Queensland have openly expressed their appreciation of the job the Minister is doing in order to keep the railways working to their fullest possible capacity and in order to guarantee jobs to as many railway men as possible. They are also very deeply appreciative of the many concessions that the present Minister has extended to railway men, concessions that were denied them over the years by his ministerial predecessors.

I am not going to say that railway men are completely happy with the present Government; as a matter of fact, they are not. They are very unhappy with the fact that the present Government have not extended to wages employees among the railway staff the same generous treatment that was extended by the Government to the salaried staff in the Public Service.

I think the railway men have genuine cause for complaint. We know the Government have never compelled the public servants to go to the Industrial Court or to seek the intervention of the Industrial Court for their very big rise in wages and salaries and the extra concessions granted to them by the Government. The Government were eager, in fact, over eager, to meet the public servants in conference and give them all they asked, without demur. Of course, the salary staff of the Railway Department was gathered into a group with the public servants, and they too shared all the benefits lavishly handed out by the Government. But when the rank-and-file railway men asked for a conference with the Government, the Commissioner for Railways and the Minister, and asked that the Government grant to them the same generous rise in wages as was granted in public service salaries they, that is, the rank-and-file railway men of the wages section, were told to go to the Industrial Court and take what they could get.

Mr. Bennett: Whom would you say they blame for that?

Mr. AIKENS: They blame the Government. I am telling hon. members what the railway men are thinking and what they are saying. They are appreciative of the individual job being done for them by the Minister for Transport, but they are certainly unappreciative of the job that has not been done for them by the Government, in the way of wages and better conditions comparable with those of public servants.

The hon. member for Mackay, with others, deplored, as I do, the decline in railway passenger traffic. That is something none of us can do anything about. It is no good blaming the road operator, the airlines, sea travel or anything else for the decline in passenger traffic. The only thing we can

blame is the private motor car. Even the railway man when going on holidays, because it is more economic and more convenient, loads his wife and family into the private family vehicle and goes on holidays in it. Railway men use the railway free pass for a little trip here and there, but for long trips they use private motor cars. The private motor car is responsible for the drop in railway passenger services, and unfortunately we cannot do anything about it. I regret very much indeed that that is the case, because the department has gone to considerable trouble and expense to provide trains such as the Sunlander, the Midlander, the Inlander and Westlander, for the convenience of the travelling public, but the travelling public prefer to go on holidays in the family car or use it to go from one town to another. Some northern members of Parliament use neither their free air ticket nor their free railway gold pass to come down here. They come from their northern electorates to Parliament in their private cars and go back to their northern electorates in their cars.

Mr. Houston: Why is it you cannot get a seat on the Sunlander? Why have you to wait weeks to get a seat?

Mr. AIKENS: I am having a bit of trouble with my ear.

Mr. Walsh: Why is there so much trouble in getting seats on the Sunlander?

Mr. AIKENS: Why is there so much trouble to get seats on the Sunlander? I do not know. I travel on the Sunlander very regularly, so much so, that I have never used all the free air tickets granted to me, and I have never travelled on a fully laden Sunlander, except perhaps round about the Christmas period or the Easter period. As an old railwayman who has been in Parliament, and as a fairly observant member of Parliament, I know, as many other hon. members know, that the trouble with the Railway Department, and its administration, is to be found at the top. To use an old expression, we have too many colonels and very few privates. Unfortunately, it is only the opinion of the colonels that is taken into consideration by this Government, or in fact, by previous Governments.

When the hon. member for Ipswich East dealt with the Railway Department he referred to steam locomotives and he said that during the war years the Railway Department had run its machinery into the ground, particularly its locomotives and rolling stock. That is a very popular misconception. The locomotives of the Railway Department were being run into the ground long before the last World War started. They were being run into the ground, of course, by the shiny pants theorists whose opinion was taken about locomotive loads and working conditions of locomotives against the opinions of

experienced locomotive men. I can remember when the loads on all locomotives were increased round about 1936 or 1937 by as much as 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. They were not increased because of tests that were made of locomotives under ordinary working conditions. They were increased because a maintenance engineer—not a locomotive engineer, and I can see the hon. member for Bundaberg grinning his head off because he was the ministerial head of the Railway Department at that time—named Amos, sat down with a pencil and paper and worked out in theory what a perfect locomotive could haul over a section, under perfect conditions with a perfectly compact load. Having worked it out in theory, he said, with one stroke of the pen, that that was the load for every locomotive whether it was in good condition or bad, and whether weather conditions were good or bad, or whether the road was good or bad. He said that every locomotive would haul that load over the section with the consequence that the locomotives were being bashed to pieces long before the second world war started. I have seen C.17 engines, and so have quite a lot of other men in Townsville—and I do not think you would see it in any other system in the world—with the actual frame of the locomotive split from top to bottom and the crack in the frame at the top at least one inch wide. Those frames were sent to the shops and welded. We would take them out on the road again and have to bash them to pieces at the bottom of a bank in order to negotiate the bank. This was because the maximum load was fixed by a maintenance engineer—a theoretical load—with paper and pencil. We were very lucky to survive the war years because our superheated locomotives were in a shocking state before the war started due to the policy of the previous Ministers for Transport.

Mr. Thackeray: Would you say the same thing could happen with diesel engines today?

Mr. AIKENS: I have to be honest and say that I have never driven a diesel locomotive. Although some of my old mates have asked me to come up and ride with them on diesel locomotives I have never done so.

However, it is obvious that if they are overloaded and have to race at the bottom of a bank at excessive speed, in order to negotiate the bank, it will not be long before the diesel locomotives are in exactly the same condition as the superheated class of locomotives in the Northern Division just prior to, during, and just after the last World War.

Mr. Thackeray: I would say that on some sections they are overloaded.

Mr. AIKENS: I will take the hon. member's word for it because he probably knows something about it.

It is obvious that many of the smashes on the railway lines are due first of all to the road being unable to handle the heavy diesels at the speed at which they travel, and secondly because of the length of the trains. I do not know whether any hon. members have ridden on the Sunlander between Mackay and Bowen. Because of the type of country the line drops down in a little dip and then rises and, with the sharply undulating nature of the road, no driver can avoid jolting however competent he may be. You are thrown almost out of your bunk at least 20 times every night between Bowen and Mackay and between Mackay and Bowen on the Sunlander. That is simply because of the way the road is constructed. The same trouble was experienced on the old Sunshine Express between Ingham and Tully. You could not avoid the jerks, the jolts and the jars.

Quite a lot of theorists came up. One ratbag, who was the Commissioner's inspector at the time, a man named Beck, told us that we should make a small service application of the Westinghouse brake and steam against that service application of the brake. I told him that he was mad and that I for one would not do it. He told others that to travel over the sharp dips such as we have on Corella and Cloncurry and on other parts of the northern railway line you should make a heavy service application of the brake and steam against the brake. He had some stupid, ratbag drivers doing it.

Those theorists come down here and tell the Commissioner and, because the Commissioner does not know, he takes notice of them. He tells the Minister and, because the Minister does not know, he takes notice of them. The obvious thing for either the Commissioner or the Minister to do is to go and ask some working men who have to work the trains and get their practical advice.

In the North the other day there was an argument as to whether trains should exceed a maximum length of 90 F wagons. The maximum length of a train in my day was 70 F wagons. If we could get the equivalent of 70 F wagons on a compact load it was not so bad. Running a train from Ingham with the wagons all evenly loaded with cane it was not every difficult to handle. Where you have a train with heavily-loaded 32-ton wagons at the front, a couple of petrol wagons in the middle, some empty box wagons further along and some other types of wagons, you have what is known as a concertina train right from the start and it is very difficult to handle at speed. That is the sort of thing that is causing most of the smashes. I have not been on one for 18 years but the trouble arises when the lighter type of wagon is more or less squeezed or concertinaed in between the heavier wagons. The lighter wagon lifts off the rails and brings all the other wagons off the rail behind it.

Mr. Thackeray: I don't agree with that.

Mr. AIKENS: That is so. That is what is called the concertinaing of a train. All our theorists, all our shiny pants, work out these loads and running lengths on the theory that every train is a perfect train, that is it is perfectly marshalled, that every wagon is the same size and the same weight and that all the couplings are screwed up tightly, so there should be none of this swaying, none of this surging, none of this jolting and jarring and concertina effect. And they cannot explain why trains are jumping all over the place like a mob of old crows at a pub jumping around looking for the last bottle of gin.

I know that the present Minister would not do it and I know that Mr. Duggan, the Leader of the Opposition, the former Minister, would not do it, but I suggest that until there is set up a consultative committee of practical men from all sections of the Railway Department—not a large committee but one comprising about five men—a committee of practical men who work the trains, who work in the workshops and who work in the clerical section, and until the advice of those men is sought regularly we will continue to have the hotch-potch control of the railway service that we have had for many years.

My time is limited in the debate and I should not like to let the opportunity pass without expressing my absolute astonishment, and I know the astonishment of the railway men when they read about it, and I will see that a lot of them do—if they do not read about it I will see that they hear about it—and that is the tender solicitude and concern evinced by the Leader of the Opposition in his speech the other day for the road hauliers of Queensland. I ask the Leader of the Opposition, who is also Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party in this State, whose side he is on. Is he on the side of the railway men, or is he on the side of the millionaire road hauliers, who are conducting a vicious, venomous, well-organised campaign to smash the Railway Department and to drive every little road haulier off the road? I challenged the Leader of the Opposition when he was speaking. I really should have kept quiet. It is one of the occasions when I sincerely regret having made an interjection. I should have allowed him to develop his theme that his heart was bleeding for the road hauliers, millionaires such as Bolton, Anderson, Cobb & Co., and all the rest of them, who will be hit and hit hard by the present Minister for Transport.

Mr. Houston: He did not say it.

Mr. AIKENS: He did say it, and I very tactlessly and foolishly interjected—it should be in "Hansard"; if it is not, everyone who was present in the Chamber heard my interjection—"What are you weeping for on behalf of the road hauliers?" The Leader of

the Opposition realised how far he was going, and in his typical way he began to duck and dive, and back and fill, and hedge and endeavour to square off a little bit to the railwaymen. Are hon. members opposite on the side of the railwaymen or on the side of the road hauliers—Bolton, Anderson, and others—who are living in luxury as a result of the business they have taken from the railways? There are 28,000 railwaymen in Queensland who want to know which side Duggan is on. If Duggan is on the side of the road hauliers, as he gives every indication that he is, they want to know whether the rank and file of the Parliamentary Labour Party are behind him, and if they are not, what they are going to do about it. That is a fair enough question.

Mr. Chalk: We know which side you are on.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not have to be prompted. I was invited to go from Townsville to the famous meeting at Dalby; in fact, very attractive terms were offered to me to go to the meeting. It was sponsored, organised and financed by the millionaire road hauliers of Queensland, in conjunction with the millionaire petrol companies of Queensland, and everyone in Queensland, including Blind Freddie, knew that. If the Parliamentary Labour Party had had any political nous—as propagandists they are still in the baby class—they would have prevented their Deputy Leader—I am glad that he has come into the Chamber—from going to Dalby and selling the railwaymen down the line and making a consummate ass of himself.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member who has made that statement is a liar.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Whether the hon. member was correct in his statement or not, the hon. member for Kedron is distinctly out of order in using an unparliamentary expression. I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. Lloyd: I withdraw the statement.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to apologise to the Chair for using it.

Mr. AIKENS: He is just bugging on a turn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Lloyd: I withdraw the statement. I apologise to you, Mr. Taylor, for making it. I have much more respect for you than I have for the hon. member.

Mr. AIKENS: He hopes that will appear in the Press, but it will not kid the railwaymen. I know what he said at Dalby. I have long and detailed reports of what happened at the meeting. As a matter of fact, he made two speeches. He got up and made a speech in which he said, in effect, that the railwaymen were loafing themselves out of a job, and then, when someone warned him and

told him what an ass he had made of himself, he got up and started to square off to the railwaymen.

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I do not like taking points of order at any time, but in view of the asinine statement by the hon. member I should like to make a statement.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member says that the hon. member for Townsville South—

Mr. AIKENS: Anyway—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member says that the hon. member for Townsville South is making an untrue statement.

Mr. LLOYD: I ask you to tell the hon. member that he must withdraw that statement. It is completely untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Townsville South to withdraw the statement that the hon. member for Kedron says is untrue.

Mr. AIKENS: I did not hear what was said but you heard what he said. You have asked me to withdraw my statement. I accept his explanation and what-have-you, because I have a lot of respect and high regard for you, Mr. Taylor. Therefore I will do as you request. But we can settle it here and now. I ask whether we can get your permission to play in the Assembly the wire recording of the speech made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at Dalby.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! It is not the privilege of the Chair to allow tape recordings to be played in the Chamber.

Mr. AIKENS: I am sure we were all looking at the Deputy Leader of the Opposition when you gave that ruling. We could see his eyes saying, "Thank God for that!"

Mr. LLOYD: I rise to a point of order. I would ask through you, Mr. Taylor, that the Minister play in every railway workshop in Queensland the recording he took at that meeting at Dalby. I challenge him to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. AIKENS: It is a pity that the railwaymen could not hear a tape recording of this exchange. I wish they could see a moving photographic record of the beetrooted face of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the Railway Estimates.

Mr. AIKENS: Let us examine what is wrong with the Boltons, Andersons, and all the rest of them who live in fabulous luxury. No-one can deny that. They are backed

by the Labour Party. They back only people who live in fabulous luxury. What is wrong with them? Why are they organising against the Minister for Transport? What have they got against the Transport Act? What they have against the Transport Act is that when the Labour Government were in power those millionaires—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to deal with the Railway Department, and not continue speaking about the Transport Act.

Mr. AIKENS: I was going to tie it up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not anxious to know what the hon. member was going to say. I ask him to cease talking about the Transport Act and not refer to what he was going to say.

Mr. AIKENS: We know, of course, that under the Labour Government when a man transported goods from one point to another he had to charge the railway rate. It was tied up with the railways that way. He had to refund 20 per cent. of his gross revenue to the Government. Even so those people became millionaires. Now, of course, the little fellow who has a 1-ton, 2-ton, or 3-ton truck, or even a utility, as long as he pays permit fees, can hop in—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member does not cease talking about the Transport Act I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. AIKENS: They want the Labour Party to help them crush not only the railways but also the little road haulier. Unfortunately the Labour Party is falling for it. Undoubtedly, with the Federal elections pending these wealthy road hauliers and oil companies have made substantial donations to their electioneering slush funds.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has disregarded my instruction to deal with railways. I must ask him to resume his seat.

Mr. BAXTER (Hawthorne) (4.15 p.m.): It is a little hard to speak on the Railway Estimates after they have been under discussion by hon. members for so long. The Queensland Railways are the Government's greatest asset. Attacks are coming from all sides. The Minister is being attacked because he has the audacity to support the Queensland Government Railways. When the Minister sat on this side of the Chamber he said that it was a socialistic system. They called the Queensland railways a socialistic undertaking but they have not made any changes since this great critic of the previous Minister has himself become Minister in charge of railways. I have only one fault to find with the administration of the present Minister—he has not gone far enough in the fight we are waging as a Parliament to save the

railways from bankruptcy. Many silly statements have been made by hon. members on the Government benches opposite who have been not much more than five minutes in this Chamber but who have been reaping the benefits of our railway system for years as property owners in this State. Those people are a disgrace to Queensland.

They should be joining us in our fight to save the railways. The Minister is trying, and I congratulate him on what he has done, but unfortunately there are too many people sitting on the benches behind him who are trying to undo what he is doing.

There is a place in the modern world for all forms of transport and we should be getting together to untangle the problems that prevent the different types of transport from taking their rightful places.

Mr. Rae: What do you think we are doing?

Mr. BAXTER: The hon. member who interjected does not want me to answer that question. I feel sure it was asked facetiously because he would not like me to answer it. I do not agree with some of the things the Government have done. The effects have fallen heaviest on railway men who are getting the worst deal under the present Government.

Mr. Chalk: They will tell you themselves that they have never been better off in their lives.

Mr. BAXTER: There it is—they will tell you themselves. Hon. members opposite say that the railway men tell them these things. I cannot believe it. They would not condone the dismissal of their workmates and everyone knows that this Government have dismissed 3,700 from the Railway Service. I do not take any notice of what the hon. member for Townsville South says. He is not beholden to anyone but himself. He rambles on; but hon. members on the back benches opposite are not assisting their Minister to do the job he is trying to do. If they were they would not be stabbing him in the back by calling impromptu meetings out in the back-blocks, to fight what he is doing.

Although I am politically opposed to the Minister I appreciate what he is trying to do, because there are 27,000 men whose livelihood is affected by his actions. Nearly 4,000 employees have been paid off from the Railway Department as a result of actions taken by the Minister, but I blame that on the Rasputin behind him who handles the purse strings rather than on the Minister himself. I believe the real power is wielded by the Treasurer. Hon. members opposite criticise and condemn railway men for attacking the Government, but they must expect such attacks from men whose livelihood is being taken away from them. Many of the 25 branch lines that have been closed, I feel, were closed without the Minister's fully accepting the necessity for closing them.

Mr. Sullivan: He must be accepting the necessity to close them as he has closed one in his own electorate.

Mr. BAXTER: How silly can one be! The man who holds the purse strings is pulling hard and tightening up on him. Peculiarly enough, Queensland, the only State in the Commonwealth with potential for development, is closing railway lines. The branch lines may not be profitable at present, but must they be profitable? Do they not provide a means of transportation? Is it necessary that they must be profitable in a sparsely populated State? Within a decade Queensland is not going to be as sparsely populated as at present and the Government, whichever party is in office, will have to build railways. I predict they will be rebuilding sections that are now being lifted.

Mr. Rae: I would not think so.

Mr. BAXTER: I would not expect the hon. member to know about it, because his sphere is far removed from the one I am discussing. He could probably lose me in a discussion about sheep, but I am talking about railways and transportation. I am as conversant with those subjects as the hon. member is conversant with sheep matters.

The rail section between Nerang and Coolangatta has been closed. The Deputy Premier is fighting hard to bring tourists to Queensland.

Mr. Rae: And doing a good job.

Mr. BAXTER: I am not talking about the good job he is doing. I am pointing out that he is trying to improve the tourist trade. We should look on the South Coast as a suburb of Brisbane. I know that some Country Party members would have given this idea some thought, although I doubt whether Government Liberal back-benchers would have done so.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! I ask the hon. member not to refer to hon. members in that way.

Mr. Rae: Would you advocate the re-opening of the "Southport Stinker"?

Mr. BAXTER: That shows the intelligence of the hon. member for Gregory.

The Treasurer is fighting hard to overcome the housing shortage. The Deputy Premier is fighting hard to improve the tourist trade. Hundreds of people who live in Brisbane have week-end homes on the South Coast. At the moment Brisbane is being re-valued. The revaluations on the South Coast have caused much dissension. We have a chance of doing something that is really worthwhile, and I should like the Minister and his officers to look into it. I think it would be possible to run a fast diesel motor from the South Coast to Brisbane in an hour or, at the most, one and a quarter hours. I know, because I speak with the knowledge of a locomotive engineman.

Government Members interjected.

Mr. BAXTER: It is very interesting to listen to the stupid remarks coming from the Government benches because hon. members opposite do not fully appreciate the importance of the subject. They are not interested in the development of Queensland. They are interested only in mucking about for their own propaganda purposes.

This is a very serious matter. I am pointing out that the Government should investigate very closely the possibility of running a fast light diesel train, or a fast rail motor, from the South Coast, to reach Brisbane in an hour, or an hour and a-quarter, at the outside. If it left Southport at 7, or 7.15, it could arrive at South Brisbane by 8, or 8.15. This could be done comfortably. The speeds are all right, and the curves are all right. If that were done many people would be prepared to live on the South Coast and then there would be many vacant houses in Brisbane. Instead of one family taking up two houses they would have only one. This could be done very easily. We could make provision for the accommodation of the cars driven by people who would use such a service. They would prefer to travel in safety, reading the paper in a diesel train, or a rail motor, rather than race along the highway, with a continual battle of nerves trying to get to Brisbane on time with a continual element of risk. If we had such a service I am confident that a great deal of money would flow into the coffers of the Railway Department. With a trip taking an hour, or an hour and a-quarter, there would be ample time for people from Southport to get to their shops, offices, or places of employment when they arrive in Brisbane. We could sell them a weekly ticket giving them two trips a day, for 35s. a week. They could catch a train back to Southport at 5.30 and arrive there at 6.30 and then drive their cars to their residences. Hon. members opposite may ask, "Where will we park the cars?" There is sufficient space in the railway yards at Southport for a very large car park and we could charge 10s. a week for each car. This is a worthwhile proposition. And I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, we would have at least 150 travellers, each way, for every day of the week. I suggest to the Minister that he must examine this proposition. I am very sincere because it is an opening we cannot overlook.

Mr. Hewitt: What are they to do if they have no car?

Mr. BAXTER: They would not have a car under the present Government, but there could be co-ordinated bus transport between the rail head and where they live.

I am trying to save the railways, and keep them running. Tomorrow they will be very important to us. I say without fear of

contradiction that it would be a very profitable undertaking and I ask the Minister to have his officers examine the scheme.

We could extend the railway from Sandgate and even take in Redcliffe. Redcliffe is a coming centre. It is improving every day. We are losing revenue because we are not going out seeking and securing the patronage we are entitled to. We have the three competing forms of transport—air, road, and railway. Shipping is not relevant to this point. It is important that we chase patronage for the railways today. There is a livelihood for all sections of transport in the community. There is nothing to stop road transport operators or air transport operators from making a living, but it is the job of the railways to compete with them.

I should have liked to see more money being spent on building up the railways instead of sections being closed. I should like to see all the lines that run from the coast to the West linked longitudinally. It would be cheaper to do that now than to delay 20 years or so.

It will be only a matter of time before the bigger grazing holdings in the State will be reduced. I sincerely hope they will be reduced to the equivalent of living areas. We are on the eve of the greatest expansion of any State in Australia. Let us fight hard to improve and progress.

Members of the Country Party criticise the railways for losing money. They must lose for a while when the State is so sparsely populated. We have a greater mileage of line than any other State and we are four times as big as some. The country people are the ones who reap the greatest benefit from the railways. I have before me a statement to the effect that £200,000 has been paid in freight rebates on the carriage of fodder for starving stock. That is a definite benefit to people on the land, yet we have people on the land criticising the railways for not doing their job. In 1960-1961 the State provided £89,000, but the Country Party members seem to forget that. Would they reap the full benefit of the £200,000 rebate on fodder for starving stock if they were successful in their moves to abolish the railways and use road transport exclusively?

Mr. Rae interjected.

Mr. BAXTER: The hon. member for Gregory says no, he would not. The Government should at least fight very hard to maintain the railways for the benefit of the people of Queensland and they should do everything possible to see that industrial harmony prevails. We must do everything possible to see that there is industrial harmony between the employees and the officials in the Railway Department. I think that can be achieved very easily if the Minister for Transport and the Premier will honour their promise to form a committee of railway officials and union officials conjointly to discuss the administration of the railways. We cannot condemn

the administrative officers of the Railway Department, who do a very good job. They are bound by the regulations, and I am sure that on many occasions they would like to tear them up and throw them away. I know there were times when I should have liked to throw them away. The officers of the department do their job, and, generally speaking, the employees do a very good job, too.

I was interested in the statement by the hon. member for Condamine that we have a bottleneck causing congestion at the Roma Street goods yards. I think he said that a fertiliser agency had told him that, because of the congestion, they could add at least £4 12s. to the cost of the goods at their destination. There is a certain amount of congestion there, and it is something that will have to be dealt with very quickly and eliminated. But it is not always the fault of railway employees. I know of cases in which truck drivers have manoeuvred themselves into positions so that they could say, "We could not get to the wagon. The checker was not there." They have manoeuvred in such a way that they were two trucks away from the truck or wagon that was allotted to them, which would then be given to someone else. I know that it is not always the fault of the railway men, and I could even give the numbers of the trucks, the names of drivers, and the times when this happened at Roma Street.

The hon. member for Condamine also spoke of the trucking yards that have been built. Nobody will deny that towns have grown round the trucking yards, and the yards are just as effective today as they ever were. But he did not point out that at Chinchilla and Jandowae they are also used as saleyards for pigs and sheep, and that the sheep and pigs are taken away by road transport.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WHARTON (Burnett) (4.39 p.m.): I compliment the Minister upon his handling of a very difficult task. The railway system has wide ramifications throughout the State and difficulties arise in management. In normal business undertakings, it is usual for the management to be in close touch with the various departments, and I congratulate the Minister on his efforts to give a personal touch by associating himself with the problems of the railways throughout the state.

When we see that the capital indebtedness of the railways is £103,000,000 as at 30 June, 1961, or £3,000,000 higher than in the preceding year, we can easily appreciate what a tremendous task it is to administer the department profitably.

I pay tribute to Mr. Moriarty and wish him well in his retirement. I thank railway men for the courtesies they have extended to me. There are some very fine men in

the railway service. They have made my trips on the Townsville mail very comfortable.

Mr. Rae: Do you agree with the closure of the Mt. Perry line?

Mr. WHARTON: I will answer that later on.

In the administration of the Railway Department there are difficulties that do not apply to other businesses. The present drought is in its fifth year. Seasonal conditions seriously affect agricultural production. Approximately 27 per cent. of the total revenue of the department comes from the carriage of agricultural produce and livestock. Consequently a fall in production through drought must have a great effect upon railway revenue.

Cattle numbers are down 1½ per cent.; butter production has fallen by 8,000 tons and cheese by 10,000 tons. All these factors are reflected in the adverse balance of £2,036,683, to which we must add interest totalling £4,304,868, giving a total of £6,341,551.

At the Hamilton Cold Stores there has been a fall of £18,000,000 in the value of goods stored in the last two years.

Receipts for grain were £658,000 less, with earnings from the timber traffic being £43,000 less. In the same period there has been an increase in wages of £1,637,238. When it is realised that it is all beyond the control of the Commissioner and the Minister, we know what a tremendous problem they have to face.

Railway maintenance is an expensive item. I often see gangs of men working on the tracks in various parts of my electorate. Maintenance is a big burden but it is necessary for the safety of passengers and goods.

Naturally I am very much concerned about the railway system in my own electorate. I express appreciation for the consideration shown by the Minister. In particular, I thank him for his co-operation in building loading and unloading ramps for cattle at Gayndah, Ideraway, Byrnestown, Gin Gin, Innis Siding, and Berajondo. It shows that the Minister realises that if the railways are to carry stock proper loading facilities must be provided. I also thank him for the proposed loading facilities, apart from existing cattle-loading facilities. The loading of stock has been mentioned. There is a tendency today to use road transport for this purpose, so I congratulate the Minister on providing loading facilities at the places I have mentioned to bolster this aspect of railway service.

In the Gayndah area we were fortunate to have an extra loop built a few years ago, but we need another one. The tonnage from this area is very high. It consists of citrus fruit, produce, grain, and many cattle. When the fruit season is at its peak, from

March to September, there is still a considerable quantity of dairy produce being handled. During the loading seasons for grain and cattle much congestion occurs in handling the available tonnages. The people in the area would very much appreciate it if the Minister would look at the possibility of providing another loop. I know such undertakings are limited by available finance, but the building of such a loop would be more than warranted.

I should like also to mention the loyalty of the people of the district in sending their produce by rail. All the citrus, rock melons, grain, and virtually all the cattle and dairy produce go by rail. The Gayndah line is probably one of the most used in the whole of the State, so far as tonnage is concerned. Gayndah is a railway centre. The Chamber of Commerce fully appreciate that it is good for business to have large numbers of railway workers in the town. They are therefore very keen to support the railways and I assure the Minister that as well as sending their produce out by rail they bring their goods in in the same manner.

Of course, some matters are not just right. I have already mentioned in this Chamber that some stoppages seriously affect people who rail perishable goods such as cattle or fruit. I cited the case of a grazier who railed 95 cattle that were held up by a stoppage and he missed the market. The price he received for them was much less than it should have been. There is much wastage and loss on citrus and other crops because of stoppages, and the people resent it. After all is said and done, these producers spend much time, energy and patience in getting fruit, stock and produce to market, often only to discover that somebody calls on a stoppage and they miss the market.

Mr. Thackeray: You mean they should not have the right to strike? Answer that one?

Mr. Hughes: If it affects the public welfare and health, do you think that is a right?

Mr. WHARTON: There has been a considerable falling off of passenger traffic on country lines, for several reasons. Many railway carriages run half empty or carry very few passengers. Most country services are night services—the trains go out at night time and return at night time. It would be of great benefit to the railways and the travelling public if a sleeper car was attached to the train. At the moment passengers have to sit up during the trip. If a sleeper was attached, I am sure the department would have a carriage full of people compared with the limited number of unhappy passengers who sit up on the trip to Brisbane.

The rail service could be improved by the use of diesel locomotives on country branch lines. Loading at times is very heavy. I have known occasions when the engine has not been able to haul the load and a second

engine has had to be obtained. If diesels operated on country lines the service to market would be quicker and more efficient.

With the dieselisation of the railways I suggest that we should build some diesel locomotives locally. I notice that several were manufactured at Maryborough. The shipyard there has all the facilities. If we need further diesels, they should be manufactured locally. Employment would be provided in country towns and the district would benefit from the work. I suggest that the work be spread over country towns rather than concentrated in the city. If we are to develop the State we must strive to develop the country areas.

It would be wrong on my part not to mention the closure of railway lines, two of which were closed in my electorate. Although I realise their closure was inevitable, the residents felt the loss of this facility. They have not many of the amenities of city people. The roads are not good sealed roads such as we find in the city, and the people of the district resented very much the closure of the branch line. I realise the step was inevitable, but the Government are doing something for the people of the district. They have already spent £20,000 on a road and have allocated a further £25,000. The Minister was pleased to allocate £1,500 for the replacement of a bridge that was washed away recently when 18 inches of rain fell at Mt. Perry. The Government are endeavouring to replace the rail facility with a very good road. Very few people used the railway, but everyone will use the road. It will certainly be a great improvement.

Mr. Sherrington: But they have no railway line.

Mr. WHARTON: The road will be much better and it will be used by everybody.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. WHARTON: I should be pleased to do so. At present the Railway Department is being investigated so that it may be re-organised, if necessary. The Government are sincere and keen to do that. Of course, we cannot expect to make a profit every year, and we must accept that too. However, we must go very close to it because if we do not we will be taking money away from some other department which must suffer. We must approach this problem vigorously to ensure that we make a reasonable profit without sacrificing the service. We have already lost about £500,000 in revenue from the Mt. Isa railway line and that loss must be reflected in reduced benefits for some other part of the State. We must all understand that when we have an investigation for the purpose of re-organising or reconstructing the Railway Department we

are carrying out an important function of government so that we may provide a service to the State. We are trying to stabilise the Railway Department and give permanent employment to the men in it.

Mr. Thackeray: That is why you sacked over 700 of them.

Mr. WHARTON: We did not sack them, and the hon. member knows it.

The Government desire an efficient railway system with secure employment so as to bring security to other business ventures and thereby create the basis for a sound and stable economy for the whole of this great State.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (4.57 p.m.): As the administrative centre of the Northern Division of the Railway Department is in Townsville I may be forgiven if I say with pride that this Division again showed a profit last financial year. We have a very efficient general manager, in Mr. Harry Dinsmore: I pay tribute to him and to all under him right down through the ranks to the running staff, tradesmen, lengthsmen, and labourers.

I wish to protest on behalf of my people that the consulting firm of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis should be called in to investigate the railways. Apart from the fact that it is to cost upwards of £100,000, the fact of their being called in is a slur on the top administrative officers of the department. In my opinion, it emphasises the inferiority complex that is rife in the ranks of Government members. We have tremendously able men in the Railway Department who have risen from the ranks, men who understand the complexity of the railway system. They have a detailed knowledge of past and present local conditions in Queensland. According to the Cabinet these men are not good enough to run our railways or to make a report to the Government or Cabinet about how the railway system should be run. The Government and Cabinet Ministers seem to think that every overseas organisation exudes sparkling intellect and that the local intellect is dim by comparison. They seem to be overseas happy. I do not believe for one moment that the administrators in the Railway Department are dim in intellect compared with the overseas people. In my opinion we would have been better off if the officers of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis had been left in America to help the supposedly sharp American operators in their losing battle with the railways over there. We do not need them and I do not see why they should have been imported.

I commend the Minister on his efforts to bring business back to the railways. He is doing that by giving freight concessions. I say, "Good on him" for that because I stand foursquare for the railways first and foremost in the State, above all else and against all else. The railways, the men who

administer them, and the men who run them, are very dear to our hearts. We do not favour anyone against them.

The busy season in Townsville and district is now coming to an end. The meatworks finished some months ago. Cane will be finishing very soon and we are already having trouble with unemployment in the area. Soon our trainmen—our drivers, firemen, cleaners and guards—will not be able to get their full 40 hours in their respective callings. Following an instruction, they will be used in lower grades. If it is not happening now it will be soon. This will mean that those now employed as labourers, as temporary and permanent porters, as well as other casuals, will be in grave danger of being paid off in the months ahead and trainmen will take their places. This is not the fault of the trainmen. The trainmen hate the idea of doing it but it is the policy of the present Government and, unless the trainmen carry out the instructions issued from Brisbane, their conditions could be in danger in the months ahead.

Under those instructions drivers will drop back to firemen and perhaps to labourers. I do not know whether it will go as far as that. Nevertheless, drivers will drop to firemen; firemen will drop back to cleaners, and cleaners may be paid off or offered jobs on the lengths or given work two or three days a week. It can get as bad as that.

Mr. Hughes: Is that because of the drought or because of the strike at Mt. Isa?

Mr. TUCKER: I will let the hon. member work that out for himself. He has been interrupting throughout the debate like a cracked record and we are getting sick and tired of him. I do not want to be sidetracked. The remedy for the strike at Mt. Isa lies in the hands of the Government.

On the other side, guards will drop back to shunters; shunters will drop back to porters, and porters will be drafted to the lengths or be paid off.

There could be cries that that will not happen, but the machinery is there for it. Again, they can be made to accept two or three days' work a week. This absorption of trainmen in jobs outside their classifications will obviously result in many employees now on base jobs in the railways being displaced and thrown onto the unemployed market, yet we have had the amazing spectacle over the last few hours of Government speakers by interjection having the temerity to suggest that railwaymen have never been better off in their lives. Those interjections will be interspersed through "Hansard". Government members have been saying it all day. It is very worrying to union officials in the Townsville area. How completely untrue are the statements that the trainmen and other railway employees have never been better off in their lives! Not so many years ago the railways in the

Townsville area employed many seasonal workers whose jobs cut out from September onwards in the seasonal callings in which they were engaged. The railways gave these men almost continuous employment until they returned to their seasonal jobs the next year. That does not happen now. As a matter of fact, the present Government seem to have made the employment of labour in the Railway Department a political matter, because before even one person can be taken on permission must be obtained from Brisbane for his employment. That illustrates the deterioration that has taken place in conditions of employment in the railways in the Northern Division.

On 6 April of this year a deputation from the Combined Railways Unions, together with myself and the hon. member for Townsville South, met the State Treasurer, Mr. Hiley. We then put forward certain ideas for saving the Townsville workshops because we believed that the Government were absolutely strangling them. We told the Treasurer what was happening and what was not happening in regard to work. I want to repeat those submissions now so that they will be on record.

We told the Treasurer that we were concerned about what had apparently become the departmental policy of refusing to engage any new labour in the trade skills of woodwork, boiler-making, and fitting and turning in the Townsville railway workshops. Numerous applications for employment had been made to the Railway Department in Townsville by tradesmen in these categories for work in the Townsville railway workshops, but all applications had been refused. Round about the end of March or the beginning of April, when we spoke to the Treasurer, we pointed out that the department in Townsville stated that there would be no vacancy for a tradesman turner even though on that particular day they dismissed a tradesman turner who had just completed his apprenticeship because he was considered to be unsatisfactory as an employee because of his personal conduct. They put one man off, then told another that there was no vacancy. It is very difficult to follow, unless there is a concerted attempt to reduce the work done in the railway workshops at Townsville.

With the introduction of diesel locomotives and steel wagons of all types, a considerable change in maintenance requirements has taken place at the Townsville workshops. That has already seriously upset the balance of the work force that has been built up since the workshops were first established in Townsville. A reduction has taken place in the number of tradesmen employed in the boiler-making, fitting, turning and wagon-building sections. It is obvious that the position will be further aggravated by the continued introduction of diesels to replace steam locomotives. We have no argument against the introduction of diesels, but these are the facts and they must be stated. This has resulted in a serious decline in available

employment for all kinds of workers in Townsville in a period of chronic and serious general unemployment. That is undoubtedly the position in Townsville at the moment. Naturally, we looked to the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway as an avenue to increase availability of work for Townsville railway workers and workers in other industries.

Although we made these representations to the Treasurer and put our case very strongly, we did not succeed in channelling these jobs into the railway workshops. It was felt that much of the work that was necessary in the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa line could have been performed at the Townsville railway workshops at a competitive price. It was considered that in many cases the work could have been done at a price below that of any competitor because of the specialised knowledge of railway employees and the equipment available. It was expected that the Government at all times would have the work performed in the most economical way. Accordingly the unions were prepared to assist the Government in compiling the necessary information about the ability of the Townsville railway workshops to carry through this and other work to which I shall refer later, at a most favourable and competitive price. The amazing part about it was that much of the work went outside when it should have been channelled into the Townsville workshops.

The work associated with the Mt. Isa railway project, and the work of construction and maintenance of rolling stock could have been effectively used, and should have been so used, to restore an economic balance in the flow of work to the Townsville railway workshops. It would have provided employment for the permanent residents of Townsville and it would have made possible an immediate reversal of existing Government policy, of refusing to engage labour in many callings in the Townsville railway workshops.

The continued short supply of tarpaulins to cover valuable goods in wagons in the Northern Division makes it imperative that the tarpaulin shop be re-opened in Townsville so that proper care may be given to customers' goods. Maximum employment would then be made available. I have already asked several questions about this matter. There is always some reason why the tarpaulins are not there and I am told that they will be there "next day". This is not the first time I have asked the Minister that the tarpaulin shop be re-opened, nor is it the first time that he has not acceded to my request. I shall continue to press my request. It was a retrograde step to close the shop.

It is imperative that both steel and timber wagons should be kept in good order for a common carrier like the Railway Department. The employment of all those who are normally engaged on the construction, repair and maintenance of rolling stock is being seriously affected.

When the decision was made to scrap the present G.V.J.M. hopper body which was used for transporting concentrates from Mt. Isa it was reported that they were to be replaced with a hopper body constructed of wood similar to that of the grey V.J.M. 18,000 class, but later it was stated that the new hopper body for the G.V.J.M. would be of steel, similar to the brown V.J.M. black hopper used for transporting coal from Bowen and Collinsville. Regardless of how the new hopper is to be constructed, I consider that they or at least some of them, should have been built in the Townsville railway workshops. Extra staff and the proper facilities should have been provided for the reconditioning of such steel wagons as the F.J.S., H.J.S., C.M.I.S., and B.L.C., which had been constructed by private enterprise and later showed serious defects as rolling stock. In the case of the F.J.S. the frames which join the sole bar, taking the wheel guards over the wheels, were constructed so weakly that with the continual movement of the wagon from side to side, the frames were broken off completely in some instances from the sole bar, and in others, the frames were badly cracked. All these wagons are being reconditioned by welding angle-iron stiffeners from the frame to the wagon-floor frame. In the case of H.J.S. steel wagons, the defect is serious and it will cost the department a considerable amount of time and money to make them trafficable. The cross-bars are too weak for stem buffers which results in the buffer being driven through the cross-bar, in some cases smashing the cross-bar completely out onto the wheel.

Union officials and tradesmen tell me that to strengthen the cross-bar and headstock to take either Turtin or stem buffers will be a rather costly job, but, if it is not done, wagons so damaged will be useless for traffic. A great number of these wagons are out of traffic at Townsville and if all other reports are the same, a considerable number would be out of traffic altogether.

The C.M.I.S. steel-constructed box refrigeration wagons, also require extensive repairs to weak cross-bars and headstocks, and outside lining. The weak cross-bars and headstocks require repairs similar to those to the H.J.S. The outside lining, after a very short period of service, appears to rust out, particularly at the bottom. It would appear that this is caused by inside and outside lining being steel which dampens the insulation. It is considered that the inside lining should be of bondwood.

The B.L.C. louvre steel constructed box wagons have weak cross-bars and headstocks too weak for traffic, and in time, the department will be forced to do extensive repairs to these wagons, reconditioning them on similar lines to that mentioned with the H.J.S. wagons.

We feel also that a share of the construction of new K wagons, built as a result of

demands made by cattlemen's associations relative to their shortage, should be given to the Townsville railway workshops.

Dealing finally with the wood-working section, we feel that some thought should be given to the fact that there are periods of idleness at these workshops and the position would be greatly improved if these employees could be allowed to cut out homes—sort of prefabricated homes—for the Housing Commission or the Railway Department with added labour for expansion of the railway south yard mill to allow the milling and cutting out of homes, thus using the adequate machinery that is already installed in the mill to the best effect.

We consider that the Townsville railway workshops are very efficient and that they are not being used to the best advantage. This position would be overcome if some of the suggestions I have made this afternoon, if not all of them, could be put into practice.

We on this side understand that there may be reasons why all our suggestions cannot be acted upon, but, if some of them could, the employment position in Townsville and in the railways generally would be considerably improved.

Hon. P. J. R. HILTON (Carnarvon) (5.19 p.m.): It is, of course, appropriate that hon. members of this Assembly should pay due attention to the Railway Department because of its great importance and the vast amount of money the State has expended in the system, together with its extraordinary effect on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the State. I listened to and subsequently read the remarks of the Minister in introducing the Estimates and, although he gave quite a deal of interesting information, he could with profit have touched on other aspects of the railway system. The conclusion that emerges from our observations of the railway systems of Queensland, Australia and overseas countries is that railways are still considered to be a most vital transport facility in all countries of the world. We must face up to reality. We know the railways are costing quite a deal of money, and, unless some concerted effort is made to put the economy of the Railway Departments in Queensland and throughout Australia on a sound basis, we will always have to retard other activities usually financed from Consolidated Revenue. In that respect I want to refer to the role of the Commonwealth Government. I preface my remarks by saying that our railway system and the railway systems in the other States are vital to the defence of the country and, that being so, some consideration should be given to the extraordinary difficulties of railway administration, particularly in Queensland. What would be the attitude of the Commonwealth Government if the Queensland Government, in view of the substantial losses each and every year, amounting to over £6,000,000

with interest, said, "We can no longer maintain the railway system. We are going to close it down, scrap it and sell it."? Obviously that action would create a big weakness in the defence system.

Queensland's position is such that a moral obligation is cast on the Commonwealth Government to give assistance in the financial administration of the railway system. I am more than prompted to make that remark after reading on page 7 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways that pay-roll tax alone for the last financial year amounted to £688,435. That money went to the Commonwealth Treasury. Instead of assisting Governments to maintain their railway systems, the Commonwealth Government are taking from Railway Departments throughout Australia, by way of payroll tax, money to which they are not morally entitled. That statement applies particularly to Queensland.

Despite the comment of the hon. member for Townsville South, we all know that during the war years the railways were under extraordinary strain in coping with demands during those critical days and that the State as a consequence had to spend a vast amount of money on the rehabilitation of the railway system. No-one can gainsay that fact. The Commonwealth Government instead of assisting the Queensland Government to overcome the enormous wastage and depreciation through the war effort insisted on being paid for everything put into the Queensland railway system by them during the war years. They even insisted on hiring charges for the Garrett locomotives, which were not of great assistance to Queensland at all. In the final analysis they were more a nuisance than a benefit. When we consider standardisation in Queensland—and this goes back some time now—I think it is absurd to exclude Queensland from any financial benefit because we are not in a position to accede to the demands made by the Commonwealth on standardisation. With the upsurge in other forms of transport the obvious task facing the Railway Department was modernisation, as far as possible, of railway stock and traction power. That policy was carried out substantially under the Labour Government and is still being pursued. Any State with administrators with a grain of common sense would obviously spend money available to it on those things that are vital and necessary, rather than bother about standardisation that never, in centuries, can be carried out fully in Queensland. Because of the developmental nature of our railways in the past and at present, and their great importance in defence, the time is ripe when the whole position should be clearly put before the Commonwealth Government so that they may make the contribution which they are really due to make because of the defence value of the railways. Instead of the Commonwealth claiming enormous sums in pay-roll tax this year they should be

giving some assistance to modernise the railway systems to bring them up to the standard necessary if war broke out.

Mr. Lloyd: There may be a legal action between the Commonwealth and the States about the pay-roll tax.

Mr. HILTON: If there is, I hope the States will be successful.

A great deal has been said about transport. We know that the other forms of transport that are here will stay with us. The Commissioner has referred to the co-ordination of transport in the metropolitan area, and I am 100 per cent. behind him. I go even further and say that there must be a sensible co-ordination of all forms of transport throughout the State. The railways will never become fully efficient, or be able to plan for the future, and render the service required of them, unless there is some definite line of demarcation drawn to mark the sphere of operations of all forms of transport.

Mr. Lloyd: That is A.L.P. policy.

Mr. Hilton: It is the policy of any sensible person who has considered the problem. We know what we have been confronted with since the Privy Council decision was given on Section 92. That has created problems in the border district that I may refer to later on. I think it would be competent to obtain a committee of experienced railwaymen, and men experienced in other forms of transport, to consider the line of demarcation that should be drawn between the spheres of operation of the various forms of transport, and to lay down a policy and tell the Railway Department, "There is your field of operations". I do not think the Transport Minister's efforts are clarifying the position one iota.

The other day the hon. member for Gregory referred to the transport of wool. I believe that wool should be carried by the Railway Department in all parts of Queensland, but strangely enough, the road transport hauliers have been given an open go to compete with the Railway Department for the transport of wool from far distant parts of the State. The transport of wool is most profitable traffic for the Railway Department. I agree that if the whole transport system was co-ordinated as it should be and if it was the prerogative of the Railway Department to haul wool, particularly from far distant centres, the department could give a much better and a much cheaper service and it would pay dividends. But, instead of a proper system of co-ordination, we have chaos. I mention wool because it is vital to the railway system but the same argument applies to many other commodities.

In order to unravel the horrible tangle that exists, to end all the bitter disputation that has been engaged in, and to protect this vital asset of the State, an approach should be

made even at this late stage. Forget the tangles of the past that the Minister has unfortunately become involved in, and let him seek the advice of a competent committee to determine the spheres of operation and let us have a clear plan of rational co-ordination of transport for the future.

It is absurd to rely on overseas people for advice on what should be done in the State. I hold the view that there are competent men in Queensland, particularly in the Railway Department, who, if they were given the task of furnishing a comprehensive report and told to disregard all political considerations, would place before the Government a very clear pattern of operation.

Mr. Hanlon: They might recommend that the Minister should be Agent-General.

Mr. HILTON: That is beside the point. In all seriousness I suggest there are many competent officers in the department who know the position. They have seen the problems developing over the years. They know what should be done, but, in the final analysis, because of the horrible tangle instead of an alleged co-ordination of transport, they are unable to take action to rectify matters.

Mr. Thackeray: Do you think the next Commissioner should come from the ranks of railway officers?

Mr. HILTON: I will have something to say presently about the ranks of railway officers. I believe the next Commissioner should be a man who has proved himself in every phase of railway work. I do not believe in any glamour boy from overseas, or any man from overseas who is not conversant with the conditions obtaining in Queensland.

Mr. Lloyd: Geographically and economically it is sound that there should be some man in Queensland, even in the Railway Department, who knows something about it.

Mr. Chalk: I would consider an application from the hon. member for Kedron but I do not think he would be successful.

Mr. HILTON: I am not an applicant although naturally I am very interested in railway administration, having earned my livelihood in the department for so many years. Having seen the problems developed, having realised that the railway officers have been hamstrung and prevented from adopting an effective approach to the problems—

Mr. Chalk: By what?

Mr. HILTON: By political considerations.

Mr. Chalk: Over the years.

Mr. HILTON: I will agree with that, too.

Mr. Chalk: I will agree with you there.

Mr. HILTON: Logically and unquestionably, the subject of increased freights on various commodities causes political concern.

However, I want to turn to some other aspects of railway administration and reiterate some remarks I made many years ago about the qualifications of railway men. I believe there are many men in the railway service who are good railway men, who are anxious to get on and who are anxious to see the department function as it should. Unfortunately, years ago the avenue of promotion for many of them was stultified by an agreement asked for by the railway unions. I think they made a big mistake. From my years of experience in the railways and from many conversations that I have had with experienced railwaymen since that time, I realise that much of the talent in the Railway Department has been wasted because men are denied the opportunity of moving from one grade to another and reaching the top on the administration side. In the past there were no specific examinations. Night officers could sit for an examination that qualified them for appointment as station-masters, and from there it was possible for them to become general manager. Take the guards. A number of them have been in the railways for years. They are excellent running men who know a great deal about train control, but they can never be anything more than guards. A similar position occurs in other grades. There are many talented men who are anxious to get on, but they know that it is no use qualifying any further because no avenue of promotion is open to them. I say that avenues of promotion should be open to all railwaymen who are prepared to pass examinations that will qualify them for higher positions. Take control officers. Young men who have passed an examination of some sort but who have not absorbed the atmosphere of railway work outside the office are given the responsible job of acting as control officers. From what I have been told, they make serious mistakes from time to time. Of course, we all make mistakes, and I do not say that they make them every day of the week, but these young men tell guards on the trains what to do at crossings, and so on. There is much discontent amongst members of the running staff because they claim that there are incompetent men in traffic control.

Mr. Thackeray: Are you aware that train control clerks have to report to the Railway Commissioner on delays?

Mr. HILTON: Of course they have.

Mr. Thackeray interjected.

Mr. HILTON: I am not saying that they are all incompetent, but some of them are not as competent as they ought to be.

Mr. Thackeray: You will find that in all walks of life.

Mr. HILTON: I know that. The point I am making is that experienced running men who would make excellent control officers

are being denied the right to pass an examination and be appointed to that position.

Mr. Thackeray: It will never work out because there are too many grades and classifications.

Mr. HILTON: The hon. member does not understand the point I am making. I am suggesting that a man in any section in the Railway Department who is industrious and ambitious and who studies railway work should be given the right to sit for a prescribed examination that would ensure that he would be eligible for promotion to any particular grade for which he is qualified.

Mr. Lloyd: What you are proposing is that some senior positions in the Railway Department should be subject to appeal?

Mr. HILTON: No. Some of them are subject to appeal. I am putting forward the proposal that, in order make the best use of the undoubted talent that exists amongst railway men in various grades and sections, they should be given the right, by sitting for departmental examinations and qualifying, to eventually reach high administrative positions instead of their avenues of promotion being limited.

Mr. Thackeray: How could a man go from the loco section to the guards section or the station-masters section to qualify? That is impossible.

Mr. HILTON: The hon. member might know a little about loco. running, and so on, but he has not an all-round knowledge of railway work. Take the present Commissioner. He is a most versatile railwayman who worked his way up. He made it his business to study all phases of railway work. Because of his outstanding ability he reached the top. Probably there are many others who would like to do the same, but they may be relegated to some obscure position in the service. Every business undertaking should encourage its employees to qualify as much as they can, and reward them accordingly. Seniority can be determined easily by the passing of examinations and length of service. There would be no great obstacle in that direction.

The present freight schedules should be reviewed and simplified. They are completely outmoded. The Minister said that it was a problem overseas, but every problem has an answer if it is looked for. The idea of the department supplying a wagon which the consignor loads as he wishes, and the wagon is hauled from one place to another at a fixed rate, is already being given effect to in a limited way, but the practice should be enlarged. It would pay the department to develop that policy. The principle of taking into account the commercial value of the article being carried to assess freights has to be reconsidered. We know that road hauliers always have been anxious to brush aside the unprofitable goods that the railway has to

carry. We have been faced with the position of the unprofitable traffic going to the Railway Department and much profitable traffic being lost. I know something about railway freights. I presume that the schedule is much the same now as when I worked in the department. First-class goods, plus 33½ per cent., second-class goods plus 10 per cent., etc.—at the time I thought it created a lot of anomalies. It is a completely outmoded system that causes an immense amount of unnecessary work. By reviewing the schedule the department could go a long way towards simplifying its bookkeeping and winning back traffic. I should like the Minister to request the Commissioner to appoint a committee, including railway experts on freights and business men, to examine and revise the schedule. Much good would flow from it.

I know of the competition from New South Wales in the border districts. Goodwill officers from the New South Wales railways were sent into Queensland to solicit business from stores adjacent to the border. I think that is a little over the fence.

Mr. Chalk: Over the border, anyhow.

Mr. HILTON: Over the border and over the fence.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (5.44 p.m.): With so many previous speakers from both sides of the Chamber it necessarily follows that much of the material covered by the Estimates has already been covered. Consequently speakers at this stage of the debate have to restrict their remarks in order to avoid tedious repetition. With that in mind I should like very briefly to add my comments on the engagement of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis as consultants to investigate the operations of the Queensland railways. To me it is passing strange that hon. members, particularly on the Government side, have, throughout the day, referred to the wonderful attributes of the retiring Commissioner. I have no doubt that he is completely worthy of their references but it seems strange that the Government show such a complete lack of confidence in his administrative abilities as to import into the country consultants from overseas.

It has already been pointed out that the same consultants have not been able to correct losses in revenue on railways in their own country. I am afraid I have not a great deal of faith in such so-called experts. We all know the results of their efforts in the Brisbane City Council after a long and costly investigation which achieved absolutely nothing. I consider that in Queensland we have men who know the situation and who are quite capable of carrying out an investigation, free from political influence, and of arriving at a very satisfactory solution of our problems. I am a very definite believer in Australians and in the administrative ability of Queenslanders in particular.

In studying the Commissioner's report I was impressed by his reference to the greater use of diesel-electric locomotives. He says—

"The greater use of diesel-electric locomotives offers one positive way to produce an immediate reduction in operating costs and I very strongly urge that a continuous programme be adopted for the purchase of a number of new diesel locomotives each year until the eventual elimination of all steam locomotives is achieved."

No doubt the Commissioner has a reason for suggesting such a course. I cannot say that I agree wholly with it because I think that the electrification of our suburban railway system in particular, would give added impetus to our industries, in that, in using coal for the production of electricity, we would be using a local product thus providing for local employment. However, I am not going to discuss that aspect of dieselisation at length. I mentioned it only because I think it has a distinct bearing on what I am about to say.

Following on the remarks by the hon. member for Ipswich East relative to the dismissal of apprentices in the wood-working and carriage-building sections of the railway workshops on the completion of their apprenticeship period, I find that the matter does not end there. Apprentices in the electrical section are being similarly dismissed. This seems very strange to me in view of the Commissioner's recommendation of a programme for replacing steam locomotives with diesels. We are dismissing employees who will be badly needed in a few years' time. Further dieselisation will create a great demand for electricians. What better tradesman could we get for this railway section than tradesmen trained in our own railway workshops? It is to be regretted that the Government have seen fit, possibly because of economic stringency, to dispense with the services of electricians trained in railway workshops and completely familiar with the maintenance of these locomotives. In a moment I shall read a passage from a letter to one of these apprentices. He will complete his indentures early next year and, having been informed that it was unlikely that his services would be retained, he wrote to the superintendent seeking information on whether his services would be retained and whether, in view of the fact that he was in his fifth and final year of apprenticeship, he could apply for a position advertised in the Weekly Notices. The letter states—

"My memo of 29th September last stated that advice had been received from Toowoomba that it was unlikely that your services would be retained on completion of your Apprenticeship."

In reply to the question by the apprentice whether he would be permitted to apply for a position advertised in Weekly Notices, the letter states—

"Fifth year apprentices can apply for vacant positions advertised in the Weekly Notice, but it is unlikely that they would receive an appointment as they would not be qualified Tradesmen and therefore not competent."

I do not understand the reasoning. It states first that the apprentice can apply but that he has no chance of being appointed to the position. It states further that he would not be qualified.

The apprentice has been informed that his services will be terminated on 14 March, 1962, some five months hence. It is said he is not a qualified tradesman. If he is not qualified after five years of training less five months, it is not the fault of the apprentice, it is the fault of the administration in the coaching he has received.

Every effort should be made to retain the services of these young men. In 1952, owing to the lack of intake of apprentices during the war years, the maintenance sections of the Railway Department were very much understaffed. If we are going to dieselise the railway system completely, in a few years we are going to need a far greater number of tradesmen to maintain the diesels. Although it may be said technically that these young men are not qualified, nevertheless every effort should be made to retain them. They are completing their indentures and are completely skilled in the work they are doing. I think that dismissing employees while dieselising our railways is a very retrograde step. I listened to the Minister's opening remarks with considerable interest, and I listened intently to his summing up in answer to previous speakers at the conclusion of Tuesday's proceedings. He propounded a theory that in an effort to keep business for the railways it does not matter if we reduce freights providing the reduction attracts business to the railways.

Mr. Chalk: And provided you have empty trains going to the area.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I agree. To a certain extent there is some logic in that.

I am surprised that the Minister has not applied that theory to try to attract passenger traffic to the railways. All the lines that were not paying their way, that were in the main carrying passenger traffic, have been closed at the Minister's instigation. I am wondering if the Minister would put his theory into practice to attract passengers to the railways. In the Commissioner's report we find—

"Passenger fares were increased as from 1st October, 1960, and whilst the objective of securing extra revenue was achieved, it is evident that there has been a diversion

of business to other forms of transport. This is particularly applicable to the suburban passenger traffic."

The Commissioner states that the increase in fares has been of some benefit but nevertheless it has meant a turning away of passenger business from the railways. It has been lost to other forms of transport. I raise this because of a particular problem in my own electorate that is very grave. The Minister's formula that it is nearly as economic to carry a full train of goods as a half empty one could be applied to passenger trains as well. No doubt the Minister anticipates what I will say about transport affecting people living in the Inala area. The population of the suburb is just on the 12,000 mark, and although I have not the latest figures of the number of passengers who have used the co-ordinated service from Inala to Roma Street and Central Station, nevertheless in answer to a question some few months ago the Minister disclosed that some 800,000 adult passengers and 400,000 children had used that co-ordinated service. Indeed, I notice in the report that the passenger trips to Darra this year were 1,008,300.

Because of the geographical situation of the satellite township of Inala its residents are called upon to use a co-ordinated rail and bus service for which the fares are higher than for a rail journey of the same distance. The middle of Inala is something like 13 miles from Brisbane Central and a worker's weekly ticket on the co-ordinated service costs £1 0s. 6d.—while a single fare to the city is 2s. 11d. For a comparable distance by rail the weekly ticket costs only 12s. and the single fare is 1s. 1d. So, by being forced to use a co-ordinated service the people of Inala are paying 8s. 6d. more for a weekly ticket or £21 7s. 6d. a year to travel to and from work.

The problem can be tackled in two ways. Firstly, the time has come for a rail link with Inala to be built. With many branch lines closing and the rails pulled up for sale as scrap metal I feel sure some could be put to good use to build very cheaply a rail link with Inala although the Minister will probably say that the rails are not suitable. The link would, however, give the people of Inala a better and cheaper transport service. If the Minister says it is not possible he should apply to it the formula he uses for goods traffic. He said it was better to have a train load of goods at a cheaper rate than to have no goods at a dearer rate. He could well apply that to passenger service and to regaining passenger traffic for the railways.

At the present time women of Inala who desire to bring their children to the city for dental or medical treatment have to pay 11s. for the trip, and some children are denied this care because their parents cannot afford the rail fare. I suggest that the Minister investigate the possibility of reducing the

fares from Inala to Brisbane considerably, especially around mid-day. I know that many more people would use the transport if it were cheaper, and, applying his own formula, it is much better to have a train-load of people at 1s. 6d. a head than to have the train half full at 2s. 11d. a head.

The people in my area are indignant at the lack of shelter facilities at the Darra station, the rail terminal for the co-ordinated service, for people waiting for the bus. I made representations to the Minister and complained that in wet weather, when buses pulled in to the open footpath, the people who had to wait to enter the bus were drenched to the skin. The Minister replied, "Well, there are subways there. They can wait in them." It is not good enough. This co-ordinated service caters for 800,000 adults and 400,000 children a year. Are we to herd those people into subways in inclement weather? If we are to attract custom to the railways we must enable them to travel as decent citizens ought to travel. There is an obligation on the railways, as part of the co-ordinated service, to supply comfortable waiting conditions for the passengers.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I will not be side-tracked by irrelevant interjections, because I am dealing with something that concerns the welfare of my electorate. When I made representations to the Minister, I was told that they could go down into the subways. The Minister knows how many people travel between here and Inala and he knows that it is very good business for the railways. He is not prepared to relinquish one penny of the revenue by reducing fares because he knows that the people are forced to use the service whether they like it or not. This portion of the railways is paying a handsome dividend on the service given and is being used to subsidise other sections of the railways that are showing a loss. The Minister knows full well that he can afford to more or less thumb his nose at the representations of these people because they are forced to use the service.

Mr. Ewan: How many miles is it?

Mr. SHERRINGTON: Obviously the hon. member has not been listening. If he had been, he would have heard me say that it is 13 miles. It would not be of importance to him, anyway, because he is entirely divorced from the needs of the working people.

I ask the Minister to give consideration to building the rail link to Inala while materials are available and while rails are being sold as scrap metal. It is no good the Minister's saying that the Government cannot be blamed for the location of Inala. That is an admission that he is unable to meet the situation that confronts him. If finance is not available for the construction of a rail link, I suggest that he should give

consideration to a reduction in fares on the basis that he is making it cheaper for the people to travel to work, and they have to travel because there is no industry in the area. During the off-peak period, mothers would be able to go to the city to seek medical and dental attention for their children, and so on. If the Minister has a genuine desire to attract custom to the railways, let him apply his formula that it is better to have a full train at reduced fares than no passengers.

The Minister referred to the use of power cars on the Queensland railways, and in the few moments left to me I should like to refer briefly to this subject. When the latest train constructed by Commonwealth Engineering was pulled by a steam engine its appearance was affected adversely. I discussed the matter with the manager of a large engineering firm, and he was loud in his praises of the use of power cars. He said that three of those 300-350 h.p. cars could pull a train equally as well as a 900 h.p. diesel, with the added advantage that at any time the line of seven carriages and three power cars could be broken into any components. The Minister would be well advised to investigate that method of haulage, particularly for the latest streamlined trains.

Mr. RAMSDEN (Merthyr) (7.25 p.m.): For a decade the present Minister for Transport sat in Opposition watching the neglected opportunities of Labour and seeing the effects of 40 years of maladministration. After having had the opportunity to study the administration of the railways by Labour he was elected by the present joint Government parties as the Minister who could very capably carry out the very difficult portfolio of transport.

I am glad to hear the interjections from my friend from Maryborough. Even the Minister's most bitter enemy could not deny that he makes a dedicated approach to his task. He is a man who is fired with a very keen enthusiasm, a man who works long hours.

Mr. Sherrington: A man who went overseas.

Mr. RAMSDEN: Yes, a man who went overseas. Surely the hon. member for Salisbury does not think that the Minister had a holiday when he went overseas.

For four short years the Minister has battled to catch up with the neglect of the past and the irreparable damage done by the shearers' strike in 1954. His task has been made more difficult by the maladministration of the previous Government.

In the diatribe of the hon. member for Salisbury he condemned the Government because, as he says, we are putting the people at Inala to great inconvenience.

Mr. Sherrington: So you are.

Mr. RAMSDEN: He comes in again! Whose brain-child was Inala? Was it this Government's or the Labour Government's. The Labour Government put Inala away out in the bush away from public transport. They neglected even to leave a site for a school. A school had to be built later outside the area. It was not this Government that built Inala.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not anxious to hear about Inala. I am anxious to hear about the railways.

Mr. RAMSDEN: The hon. member for Salisbury had a great deal to say about Inala.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member pursues the remarks made by the hon. member for Salisbury about a rail-link with Inala I shall be quite interested to hear him.

Mr. RAMSDEN: That is exactly what I am trying to do. I am trying to say that if the previous Government, represented in this Chamber by the hon. member for Salisbury, placed Inala where it is, without a connecting rail link with the main line, why blame the Minister? It is nothing short of humbug and hypocrisy.

As I listened to the hon. member's attack on the Government for not providing shelters for these unfortunate people to wait in, I hoped that his counterparts in the Brisbane City Council would have some regard for tram travellers and bus travellers in the suburbs.

Much has been said by hon. members opposite about maladministration of the railways and, on every occasion on which we mention the existence of a drought, we are howled down as though such a thing did not exist.

Mr. O'Donnell: That is not true, either.

Mr. RAMSDEN: As a matter of fact, it is true. In another debate a few days ago when I mentioned the widespread drought in Queensland during the last four years there were howls of derision from the Opposition.

The Commissioner's report shows that 29 per cent. of the total revenue of the railways comes from the handling of agricultural products and livestock. Again, the Commissioner points out that, due to drought alone, 47,000 fewer beasts were carried than in the preceding year despite the fact that 1959-1960 was the shortest livestock season on record. In spite of that, in 1960-1961 the tonnage of livestock was down 1½ per cent. on that handled in the shortest period on record. So, amongst the troubles of the Railway Department, including financial troubles, not the least are those due to drought, the most serious effect of which was on the cartage of grain. It is interesting to note that revenue from the cartage

of wheat was down some £402,000, and for other grains as much as £250,000 compared with other years.

Mr. Haulon: The hon. member for Condamine said this morning that the Minister did not have the wagons there for one of them.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I do not know what the hon. member for Condamine said. I am not responsible for his statements. All I am responsible for is the statement I am making and I can assure the hon. member for Baroona that what I am saying is accurate and will stand up to investigation.

With the new contract for the supply of coal from the Thiess coalfield at Kianga to Japan, I believe that we can look forward to a great deal of improvement in the revenue from Gladstone. Already that for 1960-1961 is up almost £750,000 on that for 1959-1960, and all this in spite of automatic wage increases totalling £1,500,000. In spite of the denials, the estimates of the railways have been severely knocked by drought and other economic factors.

It is interesting to note that the Commissioner has strongly urged the gradual replacement of steam locomotives by diesel-electric locomotives. Apart from the economics of this, I believe such a step would do much to relieve smog in such areas as Mayne, the Normanby-Roma Street area, and in particular, at Woollongabba. With the formation of a specialist committee to make recommendations to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs for a Clean Air Bill, a continued policy of replacing steam trains with diesels would be of great benefit in that regard.

The rail man has no greater champion than the present Minister for Railways himself. The Minister has pointed out that although there are some 790 fewer persons employed in the railways than in previous years that has been achieved, not by retrenchment, but by re-organisation of staff following retirements and deaths and other normal wastage of labour.

Mr. O'Donnell: In other words, no replacements.

Mr. RAMSDEN: In other words, no replacements.

The hon. member for Kedron last Tuesday, I think, placed a great deal of emphasis on the fact that the losses of the southern division were all founded in the metropolitan area. The Minister in a very capable way in his summing up that night cut the argument of the hon. member to ribbons and established the facts. The hon. member for Kedron had made some mistakes in that he had lumped the metropolitan area with many other areas. He quoted from the Commissioner's report, but as he

read only part of the passage I shall read it in full. At page 7 the Commissioner states—

"I feel I must again draw attention to the uneconomic competition which exists in the operation of passenger transport services in the Brisbane suburban area and which is reflected not only in the operating results of the railways, but in the operations of the Transport Department of the Brisbane City Council as well. As I mentioned in my report for the financial year ended 30th June, 1960, the only solution to the problem is the co-ordination of all forms of passenger services within the Brisbane city area."

Mr. Bennett: Your Government do not agree with that.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I have some comments to make on that point. The interjection is pertinent to what I have to say, and that is why I read the extract. Both the Minister and the Commissioner agree on the need for co-ordination of the city's transport system. Having heard the case of the hon. member for Kedron for co-ordination and having heard the condemnation of the co-ordinated service at Inala by the hon. member for Salisbury, we wonder where the A.L.P. is going. The hon. member for Kedron tried to lay the blame for failure to bring about co-ordination on the Minister. He said that such a project had been in the minds of local government officials and the Commissioner for Railways for the past five years. I heard the Minister by way of interjection say, "Ten years". The hon. member for Kedron, who was speaking at the time, did not argue the point; he accepted it. The Government have been in office only since mid 1957, a little over four years. If co-ordination is the logical answer, and I am not debating that matter, why did not the former Minister for Transport, the present Leader of the Opposition, grasp this stinging nettle firmly and co-ordinate? Or is it that co-ordination is a hot political potato, with the Brisbane City Council saying, "We'll co-ordinate if you'll lower rail fares so that we can raise our tram and bus fares and thus maintain the overall status quo."

Mr. Bennett: The C.M.O. was not prepared to co-operate in those days.

Mr. RAMSDEN: That is a rather interesting statement. The status quo still exists. Hon. members can see how politically hot this matter could become. Suppose a man can travel from Point A to Point C by train for 1s., and a bus runs from Point B on the same route to Point C, the fare being 6d. Would not the City Council, keen on preserving its transport services from the inroads of the private driver, be politically sound in saying to the Commissioner, "Well, our fare structure is too low. We need to charge 8d. from Point B to Point C to run economically. Will you, Mr. Commissioner, or Mr. Minister, drop your charge for the

journey from 1s. to 4d. so that the tram or bus traveller using the co-ordinated service does not pay more than his present 1s. overall, but so that we can make an extra 2d. per person per trip." That is what is happening. It is no wonder that the Leader of the Opposition when he was the Minister for Transport did nothing about these co-ordinated services.

Mr. Hanlon: Your Government allowed everybody to ride free for years.

Mr. RAMSDEN: I understand that quite a few of the hon member's supporters are still running free.

It is useless for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to rant and rave about the need for co-ordinated services as he did on Tuesday, because the hon. member for Salisbury is not so keen on them. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is merely beating the air if he is not sincere. He knows that the high cost of transport in the city area is largely consequential on the establishment of the great socialistic tiger of the Greater Brisbane plan. That Labour socialistic plan gave the citizens of Brisbane the biggest area for a city in the world so it is claimed, but it also gave to the workers in the city and suburbs a monster that cannot be controlled and is eating up more and more of their surplus day by day.

Mr. Hughes interjected.

Mr. RAMSDEN: That is probably true.

The hon. member for Kedron then proposed a scheme to obviate railway losses. He said that first of all we should modernise the railways and secondly the Government should take over the transport services and that some special semi-governmental authority—not the railways or the Brisbane City Council—should be given the job. He obviously felt that he was not quite in line with the policy of the Queensland Central Executive because he emphasised that it was his own suggestion. He used these words, "My individual opinion." He then proceeded to tell us about feeder services to railway stations in the fringe areas of Brisbane, to bring people into the city. I should like, in the short time at my disposal, to take his three points one by one. Firstly, the modernisation of the railways. I agree that the modernisation of the railways is essential if we are to bring back customers, but after all, as I have already pointed out, we cannot modernise 40 years of neglect in four years. I remember that either late last year, or early this year, I was invited by the Minister and the Commissioner to go with a party on a short initial run of a new two-coach diesel train which, I understand, is now being used in country areas. I suggest that these very fast, modern and clean trains are the answer to the modernisation of the city railways. The next point is the setting up of a separate transport authority to take over all transport. In other words, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition wants us to create another board

to give the State yet more socialism. In effect, he says, "Never mind about losing a modicum on the railways. Let's take over the buses and the trams, and lose on the lot."

For the benefit of the hon. member for Belmont who has just interjected, I suggest that if he could see any political advantage in it he would have himself assassinated. That is how illogical he is.

Then, we come to the co-ordination of the services. This might well be done if the Brisbane City Council looked at its own routes in a new light. The railways, like the tramways, are governed by the location, length and direction of their lines. Buses, on the other hand, can move anywhere within reason where there is any sort of a road system. I suggest that the local authorities study the map of Brisbane that shows clearly the rail and tram routes into the city, from every part of Greater Brisbane, and then on that map see if it is possible to have feeder buses running in circles or arcs on a radius with the city as its centre. Such an arc or circle would cross over some two or three, or in some cases four, railway lines or tramlines running directly into the city. Frankly I think that only in that way will we get a co-ordinated service that will be acceptable but at the same time I think until the railway line crosses the river we can never have successful co-ordination. It is quite unreasonable to expect someone to get a co-ordinated bus-train service to South Brisbane, then get further transport service at additional cost to take him to his job, say, down in the Valley. This is not a task that is capable of easy solution but I believe that if anyone finds a solution it will be the present Minister, who is to be commended wholeheartedly not only by the Government but also by his critics for the very patient study he is making of a very difficult problem.

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (7.46 p.m.): First of all let me extend to the Commissioner for Railways, who, I believe, is retiring shortly, my sincere congratulations on his record of public service in the State. No-one will dispute that no man has given more loyal, faithful and energetic service to Queensland than Mr. Moriarty and I wish him well in future years. I ask him to accept the thanks of the railway men of my area for the keen interest he has always taken in railway ambulance work. It is a centre that has always taken a great interest in this type of work and the men have always appreciated his encouragement and his consideration. They are very grateful for what he has done. I am very happy to know that on Sunday next he will again show his interest in the railwaymen. Although he is about to retire he will come to the railway picnic at Torquay, a magnificently-organised function and a great credit to the railwaymen who, as the Minister realises and as the Commissioner realises too, give their time so unselfishly and so faithfully to the thousands of children throughout the

area and who make it a magnificent day of celebration. We welcome him once again and we will be very happy to have him with us. Though a new chairman will be in charge, Mr. Pat Williams, I can assure him that the organisation is as good as it ever was and I am certain he will once again enjoy a very happy day with the many thousands of people from Kingaroy, Gayndah, Monto, Gympie, Bundaberg and all the other centres round about.

To his staff generally I extend my sincere thanks for their co-operation and their assistance at all times in dealing with any problems I have put before them. Throughout the whole railway service Queensland has a magnificent organisation of men—some 28,000 of them—giving wonderful service. I am quite certain that no other organisation in any other part of the world has personnel giving such great public service.

On behalf of the hon. member for Burke I should like to reply to a few statements by the hon. member for Flinders in which he gave very wrong impressions about the activities of the hon. member for Burke and his representations on behalf of the people of his electorate. Very quickly I wish to place on record one or two communications the hon. member for Burke has received as an indication of his activity and his quick action on behalf of the people out there in forwarding their views to the Minister. I must say that on any matter I have ever placed before him the Minister has never stinted time but has always been willing to listen very carefully and give his full attention. I give him credit for that and I thank him for it. The same can be said of matters raised by the hon. member for Burke.

The hon. member for Burke wrote in the following terms:—

"I am in receipt of copy of letter forwarded to you on the 29th ultimo by the Shire Clerk of the Cloncurry Shire Council, strongly protesting against the proposed closure of the Kajabbi-Dobbyn and Malbon-Selwyn railway lines.

"I strongly support the request made by the Council to have these lines remain open and would be pleased if you could arrange to have the contents of Council's letter thoroughly investigated and advise me as to the possibility of acceding to same."

He also had communication with the shire clerk and he attached a copy of a letter forwarded to him by the Cloncurry Shire Council asking for action, which he promptly took. The letter reads—

"I am directed to place before you on behalf of my Council and on behalf of the rural areas they represent, the strongest possible protest against the closing of the railway line between Malbon and Selwyn and also on the section between Kajabbi and Dobbyn.

"In doing so, I am to point out that my Council was under the impression that inland railways of this nature were developmental and that the making of a profit therefrom was never intended, but that the railway was intended to bring some small meed of comfort and security to those who were prepared under every possible hardship to keep open the frontiers of this State.

"The Council holds the opinion that quite apart from the effect the abovementioned closures would have on the individual security of persons residing in these areas, the closure of these two sections of railway will strike a blow to those who are attempting to develop the mineral wealth of this area at this particular time.

"In the circumstances my Council appeal to you to reconsider this issue, particularly in view of the proposed Japanese interest in the mining potential of the Cloncurry field.

"However, should your Government adhere to its decision to close the Kajabbi-Dobbyn and the Malbon-Selwyn railway lines as from the 1st July, 1961, my Council request your Government at least to leave the lines, sleepers, etc., etc., in situ for a period of five years from the 1st July, 1961, in view of the possible mineral development in the near future in both areas."

The Minister gave the matter consideration and replied as follows:—

"With reference to your personal representations on behalf of the Cloncurry Shire Council which authority has protested at the closure of the Kajabbi-Dobbyn and Malbon-Selwyn sections of railway line, I wish to advise that it was only after the closest consideration had been given to all aspects of the operation of these lines that the action proposed was decided upon.

"Records reveal that the amount which it has been necessary to expend in the working of these branches is entirely disproportionate to the revenue derived therefrom.

"It was considered by the Government that the continued meeting of this heavy annual loss would represent an unreasonable financial burden upon the Railway Department, particularly in view of the state of that department's finances generally.

"I am sorry, in the circumstances, that it is not practicable to accede to the Council's request that the decision to close the lines be reviewed, and the procedures normally associated with the closure of a railway line will accordingly take their course."

I draw the attention of hon. members to the insinuation of the hon. member for Flinders that no representations had been made and that the hon. member for Burke had not been active.

So I protest on behalf of the hon. member for Burke. The hon. member is giving splendid representation to his electorate and making a realistic approach to its problems. The electors realise that they have a man of ability, determination and courage placing before the Government the requirements of his electorate. I congratulate him on what he is doing, and I am sure that the various Ministers are aware that he is fully cognisant of the requirements of his electorate. I think the hon. member for Flinders said that he had made an approach to the hon. member for Burke—I do not want to misquote him—and that he was waiting for the hon. member for Burke to approach him. The hon. member for Burke assures me that no approach has been made to him. Let the hon. member for Flinders get in touch with him. I make that protest on behalf of the hon. member for Burke.

Listening to the parochial outlook of Government members, one wonders whether there is any part of the State of Queensland north of Brisbane. Fortunately, members of the Opposition have a broader approach to the problems of the State. However, I should like to place on record a few facts in relation to the railways in Maryborough.

Dr. Delamothé: Are you being parochial now?

Mr. DAVIES: Parochial to the extent that it relates to a particular area, but of State-wide interest because I am placing it on record in the hope of maintaining decentralised industry and encouraging further decentralisation. That thought is quite foreign to the parochial mind of the hon. member for Bowen, of course.

There are 240 men employed in the workshops and in the running sheds at Maryborough. This total includes tradesmen, foremen, leading hands, trades assistants, labourers, and so on, and it emphasises the importance of the workshop. There are 57 drivers, 52 firemen and 28 cleaners employed—a total of 137 enginemen. Therefore, in all, 377 men are employed in both sections. There are 28 engines partly overhauled each year and, in addition, an average of between 50 and 60 engines undergo extensive running repairs each year in the workshop. Each of these jobs is of five days' duration or more. There are 51 locomotives on the establishment, and a very important part of the workshop is the modifying of 400 steel wagons a year. They also service 500 to 600 steel wagons a month and 500 to 600 wooden wagons a month. There are 180 carriages and 400 vans repaired each year, and diesel rail motors are being serviced all the time. The best month in 1961 was September, when 16 were serviced. This servicing is carried out on the same units all the time. In the paint shop approximately 25 carriages and vans are painted each year. The paint shop and other departments in the workshops

rank among the most efficient sections in the Railway Department. The paint shop also paints maintenance tricycles and gear, etc. Signwriting is also done.

The district is proud of the fact that it showed an operating profit of over £12,000. From a decentralisation point of view it is the logical centre for a very rich area. I shall mention some of the places that will be familiar to many hon. members—the Kingaroy and Proston areas, Murgon, Wondai, Goomeri, Kilkivan, Allies Creek right through to Mundubbera with all that magnificent virgin country awaiting development. Recently I was on the dairy farm near Allies Creek belonging to a man named Anderson. He has 98 cows on Rhodes grass country. He has done a magnificent job. What has been done shows the great potential of that country. Also in the area is the wonderful Binjour Plateau that is almost undeveloped. With water from the Burnett River stored in reservoirs and by weirs eventually there will be great development in that area. Then we have the Coulston Lakes district, Gayndah, Biggenden, Aramara, Broowena, Childers, Mungar, Theebine. In the Maryborough area we have tremendous quantities of timber, sugar, coal, and fish carried by rail. For fish, it surpasses your area, Mr. Gaven. The huge number of animals transported makes it one of the best revenue producing centres of the State. Here are the figures for the Kingaroy line—

Cattle	..	..	..	16,380
Calves	..	..	..	7,770
Sheep	..	..	..	2,729
Pigs	..	..	..	35,129
Total	..	..	..	62,008

Again for the Gayndah line—

Cattle	..	..	..	52,565
Calves	..	..	..	24,595
Sheep	..	..	..	229
Pigs	..	..	..	53,688
Total	..	..	..	131,077

A leading article in "The Chronicle" points out that we have approximately 800 people in employment at that railway centre with a wage distribution of about £24,000 every fortnight.

It emphasises the importance of this decentralised industry. I am quite confident that when considering the future of the Maryborough railway workshops the Minister will scrutinise very carefully any report that may come in, keeping in mind the importance of this long-established area and the excellent quality of the work produced at that centre.

I am not permitted to use the word "lie" so I shall say that I will give the denial to the statements by the irresponsible member for Flinders and the still more irresponsible member for Roma. The hon. member for Flinders talked about the chaos

that existed when the previous Minister handed over the reins of office. Not even the present Minister in his wildest dreams would make such a statement. I am sure he would have sufficient respect for the energy, competence and general administrative ability of the previous Minister to recognise that the railways were not left in a state of chaos, whatever faults he may have found in the system handed over to him. One can understand that there could be differences of opinion but not such irresponsible statements as those made by the hon. member. A number of ministers, prior to taking office, spoke of accepting responsibility. One said that if he could not run the railways at a profit he would get out. The hon. member for Merthyr said that anybody who thinks the railways should pay is living in the horse-and- buggy days.

The Minister because he was also one of the very strenuous critics of the deficits that we had on occasions. I remember that the hon. member for Roma said that it was not good business and that a horror task had been handed to the present Minister because of earlier years of maladministration. The loss in the last four years under this Government was £8,427,608. For the four years prior to that under the Labour administration it was only £2,959,927. Including the interest bill under the present Government the total deficit has been £24,000,000; prior to that it was £14,000,000. How can hon. members opposite talk as they do? The hon. member for Roma in his usual bombastic irresponsible way stands up in this Chamber and makes such statements. Is it any wonder he is not elevated to Cabinet, although he nearly lost his good health in trying to get in. If he hopes to attain Cabinet rank during the brief time that the Government remain in office he should be more responsible in his statements.

In 1957, just before the Labour Government handed over, the total debt of the railways was approximately £77,000,000. It was for ever being used to condemn the Labour Government. It has now risen to £103,078,504. Can any member of this Chamber tell me where the interest goes and to whom we are really indebted? Perhaps the Minister may be able to say to whom we owe this money and where the interest goes. It is a matter of considerable concern to hon. members on this side.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member for Roma, who is interjecting again, said in 1952, "Not one more mile of railway has been built." Now they are pulling them up. At that time he wanted a line from Quilpie to Eromanga.

The Minister said that the air-conditioned trains in Queensland are in keeping with the best trains in other States. He recognises our good work. He does not stoop to the level of some of the back benchers opposite.

That leads me to give a quick summary of a few of the improvements made in the railways mainly by a Labour Minister. Eight air-conditioned trains were built under a Labour Government. I ask the Minister to tell us if the ninth train has yet been completed. It was under construction when we left office. In 1951 there were 20 diesel-electric locomotives and 12 more were built in 1952. The first air-conditioned luxurious steel train was put into service in 1953, four years before this Government came to office. These improvements will demonstrate the magnificent record of the previous Government. Between 1947 and 1956 we had 8,821 wagons built. We have a smaller number now. There were built during that decade 30 new suburban cars, 12 new cars for the Sunshine type trains, three composite sleeping and dining cars, 66 brake vans, one new dining car, 44 second-class brake vans, two new rail-motor trains, six four-car diesel motor trains, 100 cattle wagons, 200 boggy louvered cars for fast freight trains, 50 steel refrigeration cars, the Redbank workshops, a £21,000 amenity block at Maryborough, 100 miles of the new welded type of rails costing £2,250,000, new wagon repair shops at Wacol and Toowoomba and approximately £1,000,000 spent on new machinery and workshop modernisation. That is part of the magnificent story of 10 years of the best administration of the Railway Department in the history of this State.

The hon. member for Roma once again endeavoured to prove that we of the Australian Labour Party had no hand in the development of Mt. Isa, that we did nothing to assist development. He is proud of the fact that the Federal Government, the Government that gave £8,000,000 to Victoria to build a railway line, are not prepared to give anything to Queensland. He is proud of the fact that the Commonwealth Government are loaning the Queensland Government the money at 5½ per cent. interest. They are loaning our own money back to us, yet the hon. member talks with pride of the fact that his Government approached the World Bank to get a loan. He praised them because they did not take a loan with interest at 6 per cent. They could not get the loan.

The predecessors of hon. members opposite opposed the building of the Duchess-Mt. Isa railway line. They said it was too far away from markets and referred to it as a "little mine". A Tory member of the day said, "I intend to oppose the passage of the Bill because it proposes to build the railway to serve one particular mine." The A.L.P. Attorney-General with great foresight and knowledge of the potential wealth of the area, and not being dominated by greedy interests in Brisbane and south of the capital city, said, "To serve a field, not a mine". Mr. Nott, a Tory member, wanted a line built from Yarraman to Nanango. He said it should be built before the Government thought of building a line for proprietary

concerns in distant parts of the State. He also said, "The Government is prepared to build a railway for these proprietary concerns, and I do not think it is right." Mr. Edwards, the Country Party member for Nanango, said, "One cannot help wondering why the Government should come along with the Bill". He added, "The whole thing is wrong". Mr. Maxwell, the Tory member for Toowong, said, "The hon. member for Stanley and the hon. member for Nanango were justified in what they said". Mr. Logan, the Tory member for Lockyer, strongly opposed it, and advocated the building of lines in the southern part of the State. The Deputy Premier of today would have also opposed it, as he has a preference for the building of industrial estates in the southern part of the State. The Treasurer would have done likewise if we can go for his statement about crops grown in distant irrigation areas being too far from populated centres and markets. Mr. Moore, the Tory member for Aubigny and later Country Party Premier said, "Considering the present cost of the line, I object to it." Their views were in distinct contrast to those of Mr. Larcombe, the A.L.P. Minister, that the building of the line would make for increased wealth, increased settlement and increased population. Mr. Moore said, "It must be remembered that Mt. Isa is a long way from the seaboard and is in an area where the climatic conditions will seriously affect industrial conditions and where the rates of pay must necessarily be high". We have been attacking the Government on that very point. They are trying to reduce the wages of the Mt. Isa employees. The Labour Government guaranteed a loan of £500,000 to Mount Isa Mines Ltd. during the early years of its development, and that amount would be worth approximately £2,000,000 today. It was a magnificent gesture. In addition to that the Labour Government gave the company generous rail freight concessions. In view of the tremendous financial resources of the company today, many people wonder whether the actions of the Government in giving freight concessions today justified. Yet we find that Government members are prepared to rise in their places and say that the A.L.P. Government did nothing to help Mt. Isa. Labour Governments of the past by helping a company that was operating not in Queen Street but in the distant North-west part of the State showed that they were prepared to grapple with problems in planning this great project.

One of the blackest marks against Tory members is that they placed on record the fact that they viciously and bitterly opposed the construction of the line. Hon. members opposite should be ashamed of the record of their predecessors. I can hardly believe that one of them should rise again to day and make such statements. Mr. Frank Cooper who was a member of the A.L.P. Government and later Premier of the State, said,

"It is just as well that the Government are not actuated by the narrow vision which is usually exhibited by these people".

"There are other interests in the State. There are large industrial interests that ought to be looked after."

So he went on to praise the proposal and gave it full support. I feel confident that the Committee will now appreciate the great assistance and encouragement given to this industrial development in the far north-west. They are on record in "Hansard." He said later on—

"This line is one of the finest proposals in the matter of developmental work that this State has had before it. The country through which it will pass is undoubtedly rich in metals which the world is demanding."

Yet the Tory hon. member rose and said, "This little mine." But, the Labour man said, "This field." The little-minded politician said, "This mine."

(Time expired.)

Dr. DELAMOTHE (Bowen) (8.11 p.m.): Firstly I should like to pay my tribute to the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Moriarty. I am probably better acquainted with him than most hon. members because in New Guinea during the war I had an opportunity of learning of his very fine qualities, particularly in caring for his men. It has been the accepted thing that he takes care of the men in the railway service. I think that if any Commissioner has retired with the good wishes of the railway men it will be Mr. Moriarty. It is interesting to know that he once told me that he joined the Railway Department at 14 years of age because he hoped to get a steady job. As it turned out he is retiring on the 54th anniversary of the day he joined the service. That is a matter for great congratulations and I convey mine to him.

For the last 25 minutes we listened to a very vexed tirade. I do not know why the last speaker, when trying to describe a little place—I just forget its name; I think it was Maryborough—gave us a long dissertation about Maryborough that had nothing to do with the Railway Estimates.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member said that my remarks about Maryborough were not relevant to the Vote before the Committee. I want him to withdraw his remark. Everything I had to say was associated with the Estimates.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! The hon. member for Bowen.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: So far as I can gather the rest of his speech was devoted to apologising for the inefficiency of 40 years of Labour administration. The matter of importance, in his long list of things that they were supposed to have done was that they had

built 42 second-grade brake vans. There may have been others, and if I am doing him an injustice, I am sorry.

When one looks at the Commissioner's report the first, and most important item that strikes one, is the total loan indebtedness of the railways—amounting to over £103,000,000. That capital investment inherited by the present Minister was to a great extent represented by obsolescent and worn-out material.

Mr. Graham: That is not true.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: I will admit that there were some show pieces like the paint used to cover up the old house. There were a few diesel engines and a couple of air-conditioned trains but the rest was obsolescent and worn out and the present Minister inherited what might be described as a white elephant. He is to be highly commended for the tremendous amount of work he has got out of that obsolescent material.

I have listened over a long period to members of the Opposition and I have never heard such a collection of Jeremiahs. They never have a good word to say for the administrators on this side. One would have thought that at least the two previous Ministers—

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member for Bowen has said that no speakers on this side had a word of praise for the administrators on his side.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! There is no point of order.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: One would have thought that the two former Ministers for Transport now on the Opposition benches, who no doubt very rightly and truthfully knew the state of the railways when they were handed over, would at least have informed their members.

I should be failing in my duty to the people of North Queensland if I did not have something to say about the Townsville-Mt. Isa railway project. I certainly wish to give some credit to the predecessors of this Government—I should be very churlish not to do so—but in the hands of this Government, fortunately, is the carrying out of that project, including the securing of the necessary finance. Before the end of this financial year approximately £7,000,000 will have been spent on it. By the time it is completed about £5,000,000 will have been spent on new rolling stock and buildings and £25,000,000 on the actual line, bridges, and so on. Many good things have already been done, and I refer particularly to the progress on the new bridge at Macrossan over the Burdekin River and the recently completed Burra cut which has enabled trains of double the tonnage to travel between Charters Towers and Hughenden. It is a tremendous project and one that we as Queenslanders should be

extremely proud of and should never stop boasting about. I hope that in future, instead of anybody in this Chamber knocking anything in Queensland, we will all get together and speak well of our own country. We should not have to listen to half the members in this Chamber knocking the exploits of Queenslanders.

Previous speakers on this side have mentioned the effect of seasonal conditions. I know that all North Queensland members on both sides of the Chamber are very much aware of the drought-stricken conditions in North Queensland, which have persisted and become intensified over the past three to four years. They have had a tremendous effect on the cartage of live-stock in North Queensland. In spite of that, the Commissioner's report shows that the earnings of the Northern Division increased by £423,160 in the past financial year. As a North Queensland, I deplore the fact that most of that has been spent in subsidising the fares of suburban passengers in Brisbane. I think it could well have been spent in improving conditions for passengers and people travelling stock in North Queensland.

Mr. Davies: That is criticism of the Minister, is it?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: Criticism of the whole set-up of city travel established by 40 years of Labour Government. That is one of the things we have inherited.

Speaking of the carriage of stock, at this stage I should like to congratulate the Minister upon his decision to provide more cattle wagons for the North. I understand that about 100 new wagons will be in use very shortly, and they will be of great advantage in the transport of stock to coastal meatworks.

In referring to the white elephant that the Government inherited, I should like to mention the great protection society in the railways that the Minister also inherited. I say this deliberately, because anybody who has an acquaintance with railway men in general knows that the protection society exists.

Mr. Davies: Just what do you mean?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: I mean this, and I say it deliberately: that every man in the railways protects the man above him and the man below him.

Mr. Davies: From what?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: Those hon. members who move about and talk to railway men will find that the railway men admit it.

Mr. Donald: Go on and say what you mean.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: I have told the hon. member what I mean—the great protection society.

Mr. DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member says that there is corruption in the railways on behalf of the 28,000 men in this service I express strong resentment and ask for a withdrawal.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! The hon. member made no mention of corruption in the railways.

Mr. Davies: He implied it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order!

Mr. Donald: Let him say what he means.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order!

Dr. DELAMOTHE: You know that railway men—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: When trouble strikes in the railways, every man protects the man above him and the man below him.

Mr. Davies: I am prepared to come out into the open. You are implying it.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: I am not implying anything. I am making a straight-out statement that the hon. member can check by asking railway men.

Opposition Members interjected.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: One of the things that North Queensland commends the Minister for is the institution of a fast and frequent fruit train service. A very important area of North Queensland sends much of its produce to Brisbane and Sydney. With the fast fruit train service that is now operating, tomatoes that leave Bowen on Monday afternoon are in Sydney for sale on Thursday morning. In the time of the A.L.P. Government is used to take all that time to get them to Brisbane.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! I ask hon. members to refrain from carrying on conversations from one side of the Chamber to the other. I cannot hear the hon. member.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: Another inheritance of the Minister, only a small matter, but an important one to the people concerned, was the fact that in Home Hill certain people who had shops on railway land for years had been trying to get a title to the land. Owing to the activity of the present Minister they are very close to their goal. The land is being subdivided so that very shortly they will own the land and their shops on it.

As one travels throughout the State here and there along the railway line, he sees well painted cottages. For the benefit of hon. members who leave the city only once in a

lifetime, should they ever get out into the country and see those cottages, I explain that they are fettlers' cottages built by the present Government. Between Bowen and Ayr and Bowen and Collinsville they will see several examples of the care the Government take of their hardest worked employees.

Interspersed between those cottages there are what are known locally as "Duggan's country cottages." They consist of a small galvanised iron kitchen, with a galvanised iron chimney—little war-time three-ply huts. Nearby you will see a tiny building such as we see illustrated in the "Saturday Evening Post". Elmer sits inside with the door open and one seat is visible. It is ever to the shame of the previous Labour administration that they allowed their employees to suffer the tropical climate in such primitive hovels. I congratulate the Minister on his foresight and generosity in providing better houses for the fettlers. I hope that funds will permit him to continue to replace the previous shameful structures until not one remains. Perhaps we should keep one as a museum piece.

The service and food provided in the buffet cars on the trains travelling to the North is extremely good. Many passengers who sit in the trains all day are averse to heavy meals, the only ones available in the buffet car. I suggest to the Minister that he investigate the possibility of something in the nature of a light buffet meal, perhaps sandwiches wrapped in cellophane, fruit, milk, soft drinks, and that sort of thing, rather than force people who need something to eat to take a heavy meal that is not conducive to comfort when one is travelling for almost two days.

The service in the refreshment rooms on railway platforms is very much the same today as it has always been with its mad blackguard rush. There again, instead of forcing people to line up for a cup of tea and a sandwich, if foodstuffs could be wrapped in cellophane so that one could go in and get a bag of sandwiches and take it back to the train, the service would be much more attractive.

Mr. Gilmore: A buffet style fare?

Dr. DELAMOTHE: Yes, buffet style. Travellers have often discussed this matter with me and I recommend it to the Minister for consideration.

Finally, I should like to refer to something that is topical. There has been some criticism of the treatment of aboriginals in Queensland over the last week. I take the opportunity of answering it. In doing so, I throw another matter into the ring by pointing out that there is no such thing as segregation in travelling on trains in Queensland.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): I ask the hon. member to tie his remarks up with the Railway Estimates.

Dr. DELAMOTHE: There is no segregation in travel on the Queensland railways.

Mr. BYRNE (Mourilyan) (8.33 p.m.): I desire to make a contribution to the debate on this most important Vote for the Queensland railways. The Commissioner's report is not a very extensive one. It deals with the usual drought, seasonal conditions, loss of revenue and other matters that have been dealt with previously, and no doubt, will be dealt with again. I think the Commissioner might have gone into greater detail in this report. There is a tremendous amount of statistical reference in it which perhaps makes up for what one might term a terse statement. Total earnings have increased by £754,921 due mainly to an increase in freights and fares. Despite that there has been a record loss of revenue on wheat and grain alone of £658,554.

While admitting that the Minister is applying himself to his job to the best of his ability, when in opposition he was a prominent critic of the way in which the Railway Department was being run under a Labour Government. He was always finding fault with the department. He never lost an opportunity of airing such views and he led everyone to believe that, under new management—no doubt he expected that he would be the Minister—everything in the garden would be lovely and the railways would be successful. Now that he has been on the job for about four years, I think he realises that the portfolio of Transport is a more difficult one than he thought, and he realises that he now has to stand up to the criticism he dealt out to the Labour Minister in earlier years. The comparison is even worse when we consider that the department has better equipment, that steam locomotives have been replaced by diesel locomotives and so on. It has been suggested that the Minister, finding the job a bit too difficult for him, is endeavouring to secure appointment as Agent-General in London. I am not saying the report is correct, but it has been referred to on several occasions in the Chamber and I think the suggestion appeared on one occasion in the Press. If the Minister does succeed to that position, I hope he has more success in it than he has had as Minister for Transport. Under his administration railway losses have reached record proportions, and they will increase if the Government continue their present policy. I will have more to say about it at a later date.

I want to refer now to the Innisfail and Mourilyan tramways. I have heard reports throughout the North, particularly in my area that the Government intend to close these two tramways. I would appreciate it very much if the Minister when speaking in reply would make a definite statement on the matter. As the tramways are making a very fine profit, I cannot for the life of me understand why anybody would suggest their closure. The Commissioner's report shows that they are highly

profitable. For 1960-1961 the total earnings were £112,947, working expenses £62,961, leaving net earnings of £49,986. That is a wonderful state of affairs when we take into consideration the financial results of other railways. The capital involved is £260,138. The Commissioner's report discloses that the percentage of earnings to capital is 19.215 per cent., and working expenses to gross earnings, 55.74 per cent. Compared with percentage earnings in other districts, these figures show that the Innisfail and Mourilyan tramlines are the only bright stars in the report. In my opinion there would be absolutely no justification in closing them. I hope the Minister in his reply will say that there is no intention of closing the tramlines, and I hope that no pressure for their closure will be tolerated. The tramlines should be kept open, because they are a profitable undertaking for the Government. A considerable amount of capital has been expended at Boogan for bulk handling of sugar to Mourilyan Harbour. The Railway Department has lost the Tully sugar that previously went to Mourilyan Harbour—by rail to Boogan and then by truck to the Harbour. Only Babinda remains, and according to reports applications are to be made by the Babinda people to have their sugar transported to Mourilyan Harbour by road. If it is lost, what about the capital expenditure at Boogan? When that takes place, and it is evident that it will take place, there will be no need for the capital works at Boogan because no sugar will go from Boogan. I think Babinda sugar is the only sugar that goes from Boogan to Mourilyan Harbour. There will be no use for that equipment at all. If I read the report correctly, it appeared that capital costs have increased in two years by £64,339. Previously they were £195,799 and they increased to £260,138. Why should the Railway Department lose the sugar freight? It has been a great money-spinner for the department over the years. One cannot understand why the Railway Department cannot compete with outside operators. If freight is taken away, and this is first-class, good money-spinning freight, where will the railways finish? In the year ended June, 1961, the Commissioner said that demolished assets standing at a figure of £188,870 were one of the main debit items of working expenses. If any further lines are thrown out of action and demolished, then the total figure for demolished assets must increase. That is the way I interpret it. It is not a happy picture to contemplate that we have such a large amount of money put into the items of expenditure representing demolished assets.

A great deal has been said about railway workers not giving the department a fair deal. I was very sorry to hear the hon. member for Bowen cast a slur on the men in the department. I have come into contact with many of these men. I

am perfectly satisfied that every man in the Railway Department is trying to give of his best. They are eager to see that the department gets every penny it is entitled to, whether for freight or passenger fares. I pay a compliment to the railway workmen that I have come into contact with in my district. I am perfectly certain that my remarks apply to all railway workmen in Queensland and I repeat that I was very sorry indeed to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen. I was indeed sorry to hear him making such inferences. We have much to be thankful for in the great co-operation from the Railway Department from the Commissioner down to the lowest worker. I know a great many of the men and I know they are of fine calibre.

We have heard much about the possible closure of the railway workshops in Cairns. If that is to take place then I protest against it. It will result in terrible losses to Cairns and the hinterland, and it would not be justified. The workshops create a great deal of employment, and their closure would bring unemployment with its attendant misery. I protest vehemently against any such action. I ask the Minister to look at the map attached to the Commissioner's report. I wish to draw particular attention to what will happen if we close railway lines because they do not pay. I ask him to look from the Gulf of Carpentaria to Townsville and see the huge territory in that area, representing approximately one-fifth of Queensland. If the lines from Mareeba to Chillagoe, and Etheridge to Forsyth, are closed because they are not paying, one-fifth of the area of Queensland will be without any rail communication. That is not justified under any policy of closing lines that do not pay. The lines serve a great purpose in time of war. I remember World War I. and World War II. and the great part the railways played in transporting men, materials and the metals to make the necessary munitions of war. I hope the lines will never be closed, in justice to the people who have lived in the district so long and in the interests of the development of North Queensland, particularly the populating of the area for defence purposes. Perhaps I may be wrong in suggesting that the Minister has any ideas of closing them. However, I make the plea that they should never be closed even though they lose.

The Cairns hinterland is entitled to something better than it is getting at present. There is a great deal of unemployment in the area and population is being lost to it every day. Perhaps it is the most important part of the State, yet nothing is being done to provide employment for the people who remain there.

We are not justified in closing any of the lines of Queensland because they were not built merely for profit-making. If war again

comes to the country, where are we to get oil to carry on transport services by truck or otherwise?

I said earlier that the Minister is no doubt doing his very best. He is not making a very good job of it but we cannot all be experts. I pay him the compliment of saying that I believe he is keen and energetic in his job. I know he was always critical when Labour was in power but I suppose that was his job. He must realise that he is not making the great success of the job that he thought he would.

I can assure hon. members that I am very anxious to see the North developed, but it will not be developed if the lines are closed. I hope they will not be closed and I make the plea that the Innisfail tramway and the Mourilyan tramway will never be closed.

Mr. SMITH (Windsor) (8.48 p.m.): In contradistinction to the previous speaker, I am quite happy to compliment the Minister on the way in which he has discharged his duties since we last discussed his Estimates in the Chamber.

Mr. Bennett: Do you think he should be Agent-General for the State?

Mr. SMITH: No, but if the hon. member wants to know what I think he ought to be I will tell him at the end of my time in the debate.

Along with many other speakers, I think the Minister is entitled to the highest commendation for the way in which he has applied himself and directed his energies to solving many of the persistent problems that have manifested themselves throughout the whole of his department.

Earlier tonight we had from Opposition members a digression into the past. It seems that we are to be forever plagued with this idea of living in the past.

Mr. Donald: You people are always living in the past.

Mr. SMITH: I do not think so. Hon. members opposite continually remind us of the doings of the Moore Government and that was many years ago.

Mr. Davies: What about the cattle stations and the butcher shops of 1915?

Mr. SMITH: Only half an hour ago the hon. member for Maryborough read out various statements made in this Chamber 30 years ago.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order!

Mr. SMITH: I did not think Mr. Gaven that you would want to be burdened with a reminder of what the hon. member had said. In any event, the department has had more than its fair share of difficulties. But let us get away from the past and think about the railways of today and of the future. They

are the only things that concern us now. What has been done has gone; we cannot undo it. The railways are clearly approaching a new era, and we, as rail travellers, can look forward to a new era of travel comfort. In the new trains that are being placed upon the lines—one could say almost daily, because there has been an excellent record of delivery in the past 12 months—one finds a new conception of travel comfort being introduced to Queensland.

Just to show that our opponents are living in the past, let me remind them that when the State was new much of the passenger traffic was by boat on the Brisbane river. There is no suggestion from hon. members opposite that we should go back to the boating days. Perhaps it is a pity we do not.

Mr. Donald: They are bringing coal down from Ipswich by boat now.

Mr. SMITH: They have been doing that ever since the Ipswich coalfields were established.

Mr. Donald: No.

Mr. SMITH: When sugar was grown in the area, they used to bring sugar down by boat. We must accept progress, and if progress dictates that we pull up a branch line because there are other and more expedient methods for those short hauls, we must bow to progress and pull it up. I do not know why people who profess to be so wise cannot see that.

I am also surprised that we have so many proficient railway men in the Chamber. All of them know all about the railways, and all of them know about driving trains. With so many of them in the Chamber, it is no wonder that we have trouble on the permanent way. All the good drivers are in the Chamber. One hon. member aired his knowledge of events that took place 18 years ago and spoke of accidents of which there is no record.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: As we are now approaching the stage where the superheated steam train, which was referred to earlier—

Mr. Baxter: Don't get into difficulties. You do not know what you are talking about.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out to hon. members on my left that I want to hear the speaker. I cannot hear him over the interjections.

Mr. SMITH: It is a wonder that the most recent interjector did not have a bell and a red flag. I could understand his having a red flag.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address his remarks to the Estimates under discussion.

Mr. SMITH: I was going to suggest that, as the railways have progressed, it is an appropriate time to consider providing a more up-to-date uniform for the men who serve in the railways.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to be facetious.

Mr. SMITH: I must take exception to your remark, Mr. Taylor. I was not being facetious. I was suggesting in a bona-fide way that the railwaymen of Queensland are entitled to a more up-to-date uniform. One has been designed for the police, and even in Parliament House the "Hansard" reporters and other officials have been allowed to work with their coats off and railwaymen should be allowed to remove their vests.

Opposition Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SMITH: My suggestion aroused hon. members opposite to mirth. It apparently appealed to their sense of humour, and I was rather amused by their outburst of mirth. But I do not think my suggestion should be taken as being facetious.

As well as making what I consider is a worthwhile suggestion about new uniforms, I should also like to agree with one suggestion made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, but I want to make it clear that there is only one with which I agreed. His suggestion was that all transport should be brought under one control. It is done in Sydney with a good deal of success. Were it to be brought under State control I imagine we would see what the Brisbane City Council appears to be unwilling to provide, a system of ring buses acting as feeders to the railway stations. If we had, as we no doubt will by the introduction of these smart diesel coaches, a fast passenger service over the suburban lines, the Railway Department, with advantage to itself and its customers, could have a system of feeder buses running not into the city but around the perimeter. The buses could well serve a very useful purpose. If that service were instituted we would have in Brisbane what now works particularly well in Melbourne where buses running around the perimeter serve people who want to go from one suburb to another.

Mr. Baxter: That is not new.

Mr. SMITH: I am not suggesting it is new. But I am suggesting that if the railways had control we could do something that apparently the Council is unwilling to do.

In addition to the suggestions I have already made, it occurs to me that the marshalling yards for the State railways have now found themselves surrounded by residential areas. That applies particularly at Mayne. Of course, at Roma Street the markets were always opposite. They are

to be shifted to Rocklea where, no doubt, the necessary provision will be made for the rail traffic that now comes to Roma Street. If we accept the fact that Mayne, which was originally an outward area, is now almost entirely surrounded by residential areas, the need for Banyo and Redbank yards becomes more urgent. By their establishment we could remove from the city proper much of the present rail traffic; it could by-pass the city. We have heard much about the removal of the Woolloogabba yards because of the smog nuisance. We know that because of its topography Brisbane is more prone to the effects of smog than perhaps any other Australian capital.

Mr. Baxter: The people in Woolloongabba will love you! You know that they have already taken up a petition to stop it. You know that as well as I do.

Mr. SMITH: The removal of the Woolloongabba yards would make available much valuable land, apart from lessening the smog nuisance. That nuisance is being minimised by the use of diesels, but it seems that for some time we shall have to endure steam locomotives. The Minister is to be commended on the way he is supplying diesel electric locos with great rapidity. All right-thinking hon. members will commend him, his Commissioner, and those railway men who have assisted in the difficult task the Government have been set over the last 12 months.

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (9 p.m.): I have listened attentively throughout the whole day to 17 hon. members who have had an opportunity to deal with the wide ramifications of the Railway Department. When the Railway Estimates are presented to the Committee the opportunity is provided for hon. members on either side not only to give full expression to their views on the administration but also to make constructive criticism and offer ideas as to how they consider some of the current problems might be solved. It is true, as has been stated today, that whilst in Opposition for 10 years I was, on many occasions, critical of the railways and their administration. I make no apology for that. I do not believe that any member of the Opposition should make any apology for any criticism that he feels can be directed at the department or at those who at present administer it.

But, after having listened since 12 noon today, I feel that there has been very little advanced by the Opposition that can assist the Railway Department or those who are charged with the responsibility of administering it, to bring about improvements that we all believe are desirable, even essential, if we are to ensure that the department will produce economic stability which, as I said on Tuesday, is necessary for the financial equilibrium of this State.

Whether we like it or not, if the Railway Department is to continue to show a deficit each year, there will be so much less money available to the Government, whatever its political outlook, for other services that are so essential to the State. The development of this State depends on the effective utilisation of the finance that the Government have and all that I and the Government are trying to do is endeavour to bring about a state of affairs in which the railways will be able at least to make the revenue equate working expenses.

I am recorded in "Hansard" as saying, and I repeat now, that I do not believe that the railways should ever be expected to meet the interest bill on their capital outlay. I know the Treasurer would like it; I know that every Government would like it, but the railways do provide services for the development of Queensland, and the interest charges for that development, I think, would at least establish a status quo.

Let me firstly examine some of the remarks that have been made by hon. members who have spoken. Most of those remarks have been put forward quite sincerely, but at the same time, as I said, I do not consider that anything very helpful has been contributed.

The hon. member for Burke opened the discussion this morning. He has not been long in this Chamber, but, as soon as he rose to his feet, he was critical of the Government for engaging the services of Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis for what we term our "study survey." He is naturally entitled to his criticism, but he made reference to what had happened with the Commonwealth Government in relation to a particular project at St. Mary's Munition Works in Sydney. He also referred to the Utah Construction Company at Mt. Isa.

I do not think those matters are in any way helpful in this debate. They may possibly provide something for the hon. member to say but they do not really indicate any reason why this firm of consultants should not have been engaged.

He then made a plea in regard to the lines that have been closed in his electorate. I said on Tuesday night that I was not happy about the closure of branch lines. Someone has to start somewhere to bring about financial equilibrium. My predecessor, the Leader of the Opposition, closed down quite a length of railway line, as I said in my opening remarks. When considering the various lines and what we termed the chief offenders in the matter of percentages, we took into consideration the potential of the areas. The hon. member said of the Malbon-Selwyn area that it has potential. That is true. It has had potential for very many years. Representations were made to me by certain mining interests and I said, "Give us something certain. Provide me with some clear-cut information of what you can do in the area and the matter will be considered." No-one could come up with any particular

information other than, "We hope at some time this development will take place." Reference was made to the Japanese interest in the Cloncurry co-operative. I have had correspondence and many telephone calls from people associated with this project. We have given them the freight concessions they asked for and have offered to make available the land they sought for sidings. Having done all those things, what have we got? Nothing more than a piece of paper that says, "We hope that now we will be able to do something." I hope their hopes come true, but the Government cannot carry on with hopes alone.

Mr. Walsh: You said the South Coast line lost £800,000.

Mr. CHALK: I will deal later with the hon. member's remarks. I am aware of the losses, and the hon. member is well aware of the action we have taken to overcome them.

Mr. Walsh: I am not.

Mr. CHALK: Because he is rarely around the place.

Mr. Walsh: I am here much more than you are.

Mr. CHALK: I will examine his remarks when I come to them.

Let me deal now with the painting of houses. The hon. member for Burke said houses in Mt. Isa were being painted only on the outside. I do not deny his statement, but I ask him to consider the record of his Government when they were in power. On my first visit to Mt. Isa I was staggered at the condition of the buildings. I ask the hon. member in all sincerity to check on what occurred in that area during the term of Labour Government. I have not the finance and the Government have not the finance at the moment to do all the painting we should like to do, but at least we are trying to brighten up the places. The hon. member knows we will provide a new railway station and goods shed at Mt. Isa, something that has been sought over many years. Within the next couple of weeks tenders for that project will be called.

Let us examine his reference to rents. I give him the benefit of the doubt or take into consideration the fact that he is a relatively new member. One of the first things put to me by the combined railway unions when I assumed office as Minister for Transport was the ridiculous charges of Labour Governments over many years for railway employees who occupy departmental houses or, in many instances, departmental shacks. I read the "Railway Advocate." I have cuttings from the copy of 15 November, 1958, in which they expressed appreciation of the action of the Government in tackling the rental problem. If the hon. member inquires of any railway employee occupying a railway

rental home today, I am sure he will be told by him that he is getting a better and fairer deal on rentals from the present Government than he got from the previous Government.

Mr. Hewitt: And more than rentals too.

Mr. CHALK: I am dealing with rentals at the moment. I have the cutting here. Letters have passed between the unions and me. They have said, "Thank you for what has been done." I should like the hon. member to brief himself a little better when he wants to criticise because we are trying to do a great deal for the railwaymen. It leaves a little distaste sometimes to hear these things when I know that something has been done about them.

The hon. member for Flinders referred to our goodwill officers. I am very pleased with their work throughout Queensland. We have only four at present but they have given a great service and have been responsible for winning considerable business back to the department. We are spending money on the Mt. Isa project. Naturally that is for the development of Mt. Isa, but along that line we hope to gather in a considerable quantity of stock. All hon. members know about the grant made by the Commonwealth Government for beef roads. I believe that we can further capitalise on that grant by having those roads as feeders for the rail-head. By rehabilitating the Mt. Isa line it will be of benefit to the graziers and in turn of benefit to the city of Townsville. An increase in the business from western areas to the port of Townsville must benefit the whole of the North generally.

The hon. member also referred to the trucking yards at Julia Creek. I know they cause him concern. During his speech someone interjected and rightly so, that the trucking yards were built by the Railway Department first and the township developed around the yards. I have told shire councils that I believe they must do something to contribute to the removal of those yards if they want to shift them from their existing position. I believe that applied during the term of the previous Government. I know that was the policy they adopted, and I agree with it. There are cattle yards in almost every country area, and in most cases they were there before the township really grew. I am prepared to look into the position but I am not prepared to hold out hope that the Railway Department will ever be in such a good financial position that it will be able to accept full responsibility for shifting them.

The hon. member asked about the cartage of building materials to the western areas. Apparently he is not aware that concessional rates apply for the haulage of building material to the West. The formula is worked on the basis that freights between points east of Hughenden and Hughenden are basic freights. In other words, the freight between

Townsville and Cloncurry is on a concessional rating as long as that concessional rating is no less than the freight between Townsville and Hughenden.

Mr. Hilton: That policy has been operating for ages.

Mr. CHALK: Yes, I know. It is not something new. I am merely pointing out to the hon. member that this Government, and previous Governments, have tried to do something to encourage home building in the Far Western parts.

The hon. member also raised the point of the promotion of station-masters to high-ranking positions. I know that this has been the subject of several representations by the Station Masters' Association. The door has not been closed, at the same time, I should point out that there are problems associated with it.

The hon. member for Redcliffe said what I have often said and that is that, when concessions are wanted, whether from this Government or from any other Government, and whether to assist primary industry or secondary industry, the railways are usually the first instrument to be approached to grant them so that the industry can market its product either for export or for local consumption. Only today I had a request to do certain things to enable a commodity to be exported. I believe the Government should do something for it and I think the Railway Department will give a concession. It is equally true that, at the end of the year, when the balance sheet of the department is read, no credit will be given for any such concessions. The Railway Department is the only one that really has to present what might be termed a profit and loss account of its activities month by month and annually. Concessions are given with the idea of helping the country to develop but they are not read when the department's balance sheet comes before the people.

The hon. member for Redcliffe also spoke of the possible extension of a railway to Redcliffe. A plan has been in the department for many years showing how a railway line could be built there. All I can say is, as I will say later about Inala, that I cannot see how this Government or any previous Government or any Government in the future could make available the finance to enable work on a railway line to Redcliffe to proceed. Therefore we must make the best use of the bus services that are available as part of the co-ordinated service. By and large the facilities to Redcliffe are reasonable, although possibly they are not all that the people of the area would like.

The hon. member prompted me to say something about hovercraft. I believe it can be said in this debate because that is an alternative service. Hon. members opposite have spoken to me about it, too. It was my privilege to inspect the very latest

developments that are taking place in Great Britain with hovercraft. A tremendous sum running into millions of pounds has been made available by the British Government and is being spent on hovercraft research. What we saw impressed us. It showed that great development has taken place in the last two years. At the same time, in my opinion it will be a very long while before hovercraft will be available for the transport of passengers. The present design lends itself to use on water and perhaps the unit would be an ideal one for use on Sydney Harbour but for commercial use for the large-scale movement of passengers the hovercraft still requires tremendous development. Possibly neither the hon. member for Redcliffe nor I will see hovercraft in use on the scale he envisages between Redcliffe and Brisbane.

The hon. member for Ipswich East spoke of the falling off in passenger and goods traffic. That is not denied. I accept it as criticism based on information taken from the Commissioner's report, and criticism that can be directed at the Government. On the other hand, both the Government and the department have an answer to that criticism. It is true that, since the increase in passenger fares in October of last year, as the Commissioner has pointed out, there has been a falling off in the number of passengers. It is equally true that since the Brisbane City Council increased its bus fares a few weeks ago, the Railway Department has been somewhat staggered by the number of passengers who have returned to the department's services. A person becomes used to paying a particular sum for a weekly ticket. If the Brisbane City Council increases its bus fares or the Railway Department increases its fares and people think that the same service can be obtained from the other at a cheaper rate, they use that service. The Brisbane City Council has said that it has received more revenue in the past couple of weeks, but, although I do not deny that, I think a census would show, just as the Railway Department's figures showed at the end of 1960, that there has been a transfer of patronage from one type of transport to the other.

The hon. member for Ipswich East knows that Ipswich is a railway town, but I have been concerned for a long time about the amount of business, if we may call it that, coming from the Ipswich people to the railways. I was tempted recently to reply to a leading article published in "The Queensland Times" under the heading "On or off the rails". It made a plea to the Government and to the Railway Department to endeavour to balance the affairs of the railways and pointed out how important the railways are to the city of Ipswich. I quite agree with that.

But let us have a look at what the Railway Department has received in return from the citizens and the merchants and business houses in Ipswich in the past 12 months.

The principal points of dispatch in the Brisbane area are Roma Street, Brunswick Street, Newstead, Albion, Pinkenba, Northgate, Woolloongabba, South Brisbane, Mayne, and Whinstanes, and the amount of revenue derived from goods consigned within the Brisbane area to Ipswich was £4,612.

Mr. Sullivan: For what period?

Mr. CHALK: Twelve months. The tonnage was 3,104, and of that figure 1,200 tons was beer at concessional rates. So I say to the hon. member that in his advocacy for the continuance of the railways, in his advocacy for greater employment within the railway workshops at Ipswich, he should do all he possibly can to bring to the attention of the people of Ipswich what they are contributing to the Railway Department. I know that Ipswich is only 25 miles from Brisbane by road and that it is very convenient to use motor transport. However, at the same time I think there is some obligation on the people of Ipswich to support the railways, which are so important to them.

The hon. member also referred to the supply of coal to Japan. He indicated that the tonnage of coal that would be exported would undoubtedly cause the department to provide greater facilities. That is true, but I believe that the department should do all it can to encourage overseas orders. If it does that, as long as coal is being exported it will not harm the coal-mining industry in his particular area.

Mr. Donald: Ipswich coal is good coal. We have very little of it, and we should conserve it for our own use.

Mr. CHALK: I differ with the hon. member for Ipswich East on that point. We want to do all we can to attract industry to and provide work in Queensland.

Mr. Donald: That is not bringing industry to Queensland.

Mr. CHALK: At least it is providing employment for railway men. I have felt that we should assist in the export of that coal.

The hon. member made reference to the development of dieselisation. I am quite prepared to pay tribute to my predecessor for commencing dieselisation. We have continued with it. As we all know, the trend throughout the world today is towards dieselisation. I do not say that as time goes on there will not be other changes and other means of transport. We will have to accept them and move with the times. If dieselisation is coming we have to be with it, irrespective of what effect it might have on working conditions in the coal mines.

The only other point the hon. member raised concerned the Bundamba railway station. I know its condition. I have told him on several occasions that we hope ultimately to be able to do something there.

But again it is a case of getting support for the department; if we can get that we should have more finances.

Mr. Donald: It is the best paying station between here and Ipswich.

Mr. CHALK: Possibly it is, because of the number of people who use that particular service, and because it is the centre of racing activity.

In reply to the hon. member for Condamine I say that we are aware that the cost of the waiting time for carriers at Roma Street adds to the cost of certain commodities for country people. We are continuing to do all we can to overcome the problem. There is a plan for the decentralisation of activities at present carried on at Roma Street. All I hope is that ultimately we will be able to get to the new marshalling site at Zillmere. If we can, many of the problems at Roma Street will be overcome. The present problems are not the making of this Government. They are problems that have been there for years; they have been grappled with from both lines of political thought.

In his usual manner the hon. member for Bundaberg indicated that he was going to deal completely with the Commissioner's report.

Mr. Walsh: I did too.

Mr. CHALK: I am not denying it. He told us nothing that we did not know. All the facts have been placed before the Committee. I agree that the magnitude of the department is such that the amount of revenue is roughly the equivalent of one-third of the State's appropriation. Therefore it is very important that the revenue be retained. Whatever criticism might be hurled at the present administration or the Government, without fear of contradiction I say that everything possible is being done to retain as much business as we can for the Railway Department.

Mr. Walsh: You underspent by nearly £350,000 the money that Parliament appropriated last year.

Mr. CHALK: I realise that we underspent. If we look back to the time of my predecessor, and the hon. member's time, much of the money that was appropriated was underspent. Why?

Mr. Walsh: We had surpluses.

Mr. CHALK: There may have been surpluses, but why was it underspent? I will tell the Committee why we underspent the money for the last 12 months. We have contracts standing with firms for the supply of equipment. A crushing plant required for work in a quarry at Harlaxton was ordered during the time of my predecessor. That plant has been coming for nearly four years. We have done all we can to try to set aside

enough money so that if deliveries of outstanding equipment are effected we are solvent and able to pay for it. We had a certain amount of money during the last 12 months to pay for certain goods from Commonwealth Engineering Co. Ltd. Because of a strike there the men were out of employment for 12 weeks and the organisation of the firm was disrupted. They were not in a position to deliver the goods before the end of the financial year.

Mr. Evans: They finally supplied the goods within the time and lost £50,000 in doing so.

Mr. CHALK: It is true, as the Minister for Development, Mines, Main Roads and Electricity interjects—that the same organisation, because of the strike, although they finally delivered the goods within the time of the contract, lost in the vicinity of £50,000 on the contract.

Mr. Walsh: Why didn't you give it to Napiers? You would have got it then.

Mr. CHALK: I know the hon. member only wants to bait me in. We gave it to the cheapest tenderer and we got first-class work.

The hon. member said that because of political interference we have to drum the Commissioner down. I do not quite know what he means by "drum the Commissioner down" but I do know that he was a Minister of the Crown and if he did any drumming during his term of office, that is his responsibility. So far as this Government and myself are concerned we have never attempted to drum the Commissioner for Railways. What I have at all times endeavoured to do is discuss with the Commissioner what we believe to be policy. After all, that is an entitlement of the Government. Do not blame me if, during the hon. member's period as Minister either for Railways or other departments he did a little bit of drumming.

Mr. Walsh: I co-operated.

Mr. CHALK: Any one who knows politics in this State knows very well that the hon. member drummed so much that he was responsible for splitting the Labour Party. He did the drumming all right and he had a lot of others behind him.

Mr. Walsh: You flatter me.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member likes a little bit of flattery.

He talks also about the savage increase in freights levied by this Government. During his own time as a member of the Labour Government, in a period of two years he increased freights in the country on five occasions. This Government have been in office for 4½ years and only once have we increased rail freights. Is that not a clear indication that we weighed freights very carefully and we retained the old freight rates as long as we possibly could?

As I said the other night, the increase in the payroll of the Railway Department today, compared with Labour Governments, is approximately £6,000,000 per annum.

Mr. Walsh: With nearly 2,000 fewer employees.

Mr. CHALK: I am not denying that there are 2,000 fewer employees but the tonnage per man handled by those employees today is only one point different from what it was previously. That is a clear indication that, as business has fallen off, the department has endeavoured to keep stability so far as employees and the work available are concerned.

There is no sacking of employees. When an employee retired or left us, admittedly he has not always been replaced. Would any sound business organisation, when it knows its business is falling off, and an employee leaves, immediately employ someone else for the pleasure of employing him? Every one wants to see full employment, naturally, but employees cannot be carried when there is no work to do.

Now, let us look a little further at what was said by the hon. member for Mackay. He had much to say about railway refreshment rooms. I am surprised that he attacked the railway refreshment rooms. I know that in many cases they do not give absolutely A.1. service but, employees of the railway-operated rooms are employees of the department and in those cases, I accept his remarks as a condemnation of railway employees. In other cases the refreshment rooms are run by private enterprise, and the service is comparable with the return for the work.

The hon. member had much to say on the subject. I even heard it repeated on the air tonight. I take his remarks as condemnation of railway employees.

He also referred to containers for small parcels. That was one of the few practical suggestions advanced in the debate. While I was overseas I saw several types of small wire containers on roller wheels. They are used at all the principal stations in America and Great Britain for the handling of roadside goods and small parcels. We are considering them. I understand that during the previous Government's term of office containers were used. I asked the Commissioner for his views, and he said that when the consignments were small they took up a considerable amount of space. That may be the position, but I think they are worth considering.

The hon. member for Townsville South gave his usual forthright expression of views. I do not always agree with him, but today he spoke of a few Townsville matters that have given me some concern. We are trying to bring about full-time employment for men in the workshops. Under the Mt. Isa rehabilitation scheme several changes will be effected in the yards at Townsville and Stuart. When the line is ultimately finished there will be quite a few changes in the Townsville yard.

We have completed several buildings there. Some of them were started during the period of office of my predecessor but were not roofed. The present administration has provided the money for that work. By and large, although Townsville has perhaps not received everything it has asked for, it has received many improvements.

The hon. member for Hawthorne referred to homes on the South Coast and the fact that we should institute a diesel service to the area. We have been considering that matter, but at the moment have not sufficient diesel rail motors to provide them at all places that we have in mind. A timetable has already been worked out. Some difficulty in connection with it has been found, but ultimately I think we will be able to work it out. The hon. members for South Coast and Albert have made representations to me for some considerable time about the matter.

The hon. member for Burnett referred to the need for a further loop at Gayndah. I have discussed the matter with him and have indicated that the department will provide the loop as soon as possible. One has been provided, but another is needed. Again it is a matter of finance and time.

He also asked that diesels be used in the area. We have called tenders for 10 small diesels, diesels that can be used on country lines and in the western parts of the State. Immediately they come to hand some relief will be possible in a number of areas.

The hon. member for Townsville North paid a tribute to the present General Manager, Mr. Harry Dinsmore. I agree that Mr. Dinsmore is doing a very good job in North Queensland. With the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa line Townsville is experiencing difficulties not common to the rest of the State. Mr. Dinsmore was sent up there because of his ability to carry out the duties required at Townsville, and from all reports I understand that he is doing the job expected of him.

He then went on to say that he wanted to register a protest on behalf of the people of his area about the engagement of overseas consultants. The hon. member said that we should cease their employment because of seasonal conditions. I have already explained the Government's attitude about the consultants. We believe we have a team of men that can provide information which will be helpful to the Government, the department and the State.

The hon. member spent a great deal of time on the reduction of employees from drivers to firemen, and firemen to cleaners. In the last couple of years it has been the policy to try to ensure that employees are given full time employment. Approaches have been made to me on many occasions during busy seasonal times about the transfer of employees, or the provision of extra staff. If we put additional men on when there is a great deal of work, what does that mean?

It means that once seasonal conditions are over and the meatworks and sugar mills have closed, the Railway Department is faced with huge dismissals. In seasonal industries, such as the sugar mills and meatworks, the policy is to pay men off when the season finishes and that is an accepted practice. However, what would happen if the Railway Department put on extra staff while there was a heavy demand and gave men employment? The men would naturally feel entitled to be kept on in the off season. We have therefore tried our utmost to find them full employment, and when in some cases, it is necessary to employ men other than on their normal duties, it is provided in the Award that a man so temporarily employed in a lower classification be paid his classification rates. When we do that, are we not trying our utmost to keep them fully occupied, so that they will be there when we need them? And we will need them in the coming season.

The hon. member also said that the work on the Mt. Isa line should be channelled through the Townsville workshops. We have done all we can to channel normal work into the workshops. When I came to office I know that a great deal of work was channelled to outside firms. As a member of the Government believing in private enterprise I tell the hon. member that I was criticised for returning that repair work to the railway workshops. I was criticised just recently about certain work of that nature. I have always believed that the workshops are the place for the undertaking of repair work on railway equipment, but at the same time I also believe that we must try to assist ordinary private industry, particularly in our State, and therefore new work has been on a tender basis. Every scrap of work of a major nature for the Mt. Isa project has been put out on public tender. Those tenders, admittedly, have come from many parts of the world, but most of the labour engaged has come from Queensland. In fact, that is one of the conditions of tender. They are expected to use Queensland labour to the utmost. I therefore believe that Townsville is getting a boost from the Mt. Isa project and the contracts that have been let. There are many firms engaged in work of a private nature that is going towards the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa line.

The hon. member then asked for the re-establishment of the tarpaulin shop in Townsville. I have pointed out to him on numerous occasions that we have examined the economics of it and that all the work in connection with tarpaulins is done in the one shop in Ipswich. I have no intention of going back on that decision.

The hon. member for Carnarvon referred to the economics of the department and said that they must be on a sound basis but that at the same time we must not allow all the economics we bring in to retard the operation of the department generally. I agree with him.

I agree, too, with some of his remarks about what has been done by the Commonwealth to assist railways in the South. I will not develop the discussion on what the Commonwealth have contributed or otherwise to the Mt. Isa rail project. A Bill in connection with that scheme will come into the Chamber and hon. members will have an opportunity to debate it.

Mr. Hanlon: In this session?

Mr. CHALK: I hope so. The matter is in the hands of the Premier. I have seen the draft Bill but I understand that a few matters have yet to be attended to. The Bill will be the Premier's responsibility, not mine.

A fortnight ago I raised in the South the matter of the Commonwealth Government's contribution of over £1,000,000 to the South Australian railways for the provision of diesel locomotives. There was no question of standardisation but the Commonwealth Government's argument was, "We have given you money for roads. We gave money to somebody else for another purpose." I am not prepared to develop that, but what the hon. member for Carnarvon said is true. The Commonwealth have not made any major contribution towards railways in this State but they do expect us to pay £678,000 in payroll tax. I have argued on several occasions that we should have a look at it, but no doubt the retort would be that if it does not come out of one pocket it will come out of the other.

The hon. member raised one of the vital points brought out this evening when he spoke of the carriage of wool. I do not want to depart from the Estimates before the Committee but I believe everything possible should be done to ensure that the cartage of wool goes back to the railways and I believe the Government have done that, but we have been confronted with the problem of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. I throw it back into Labour's lap. Because of the 1956 wool strike much wool went over to road transport and, try as we might to win that wool back to the railways, we have not been able to do so. It is very easy for a truck to come from North or Central Queensland to Brisbane and then go for the little departure down to Tweed Heads and back, it has not been possible for the Government to find a way to attract that wool back to the railways.

Mr. Hilton: What about the recent court decision?

Mr. CHALK: I cannot develop that. The recent court decision is very helpful but it is not completely closing the gate yet and there is a possibility of an appeal. Though the judgment was a unanimous one there is still talk of an appeal to the Privy Council on it. When we found that we could not get the wool back we tried to do the next

best thing. We put a lower rate of road tax on it in the hope that we could get at least some revenue for the State instead of losing it.

The hon. member also referred to the need for simplifying freight schedules. I agree, and I believe that possibly my predecessor would agree, that if there is a system by which the freight schedules within the Railway Department can be simplified, the quicker it is found the better it will be for everyone.

Mr. Hilton: I shall be happy to give you a hand at any time.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member offers his assistance. We will accept it. If he can simplify the system without affecting the general economy of the State. I shall be happy to learn from him, because this is something that concerns Railway Departments throughout the world as well as the Railway Department in Queensland.

The hon. member for Salisbury dealt first with the question of the employment of Ford, Bacon and Davis, and I think every other hon. member who had criticism to offer also referred to their employment. I hope that our judgment is correct, and if hon. members opposite are sincere, I believe that they also must hope that the Government's judgment is correct in relation to the employment of Ford, Bacon and Davis. Our aim is to achieve financial stability through the efforts of these people. That is all we hope for and all we ask for.

The hon. member also referred to the dismissal of apprentices. The word "dismissal" is possibly used incorrectly. It is true that we have not been able to offer employment to some of the apprentices who have been coming out of the wood section, but we have at least offered them other employment for the time being. I know it is a disappointment to them; it would be a disappointment to me in similar circumstances; but we must accept the changes that are taking place. We all know that wagons constructed of wood are almost a thing of the past.

Mr. Sherrington: I spoke of electrical apprentices.

Mr. CHALK: I shall come to them. Consequently, there has been quite a large reduction in employment in the wood section. However, these men will at least have a trade, and if they can find employment elsewhere, I hope they will take it. Until they do, we are doing our utmost to offer them employment in some section of the department.

The hon. member also raised the subject of electrical apprentices. It is a matter I am looking at very carefully. I agree that if there are good boys we should not lose them. There is an electronics field in the department. I referred the other day to the data processing units. All these things are

coming. I assure the hon. member that I am doing everything possible to retain boys in the electrical trade.

He also referred to another matter that has caused me a great deal of concern—the movement of the public from Inala. Those responsible for the early planning of Inala should accept some blame for what has happened there. The whole area was designed but without any consideration being given to transport to and from it.

Mr. Hilton: At that time the electrification scheme was under way.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. gentleman may have been associated with it and accordingly know something about it. But all I can say is that within the records of the department I can find nothing about Inala. There was a scheme for a railway extension to Inala, but no steps were taken initially to bring it about. Consequently, what the hon. member suggested would cost a tremendous amount of money. Only yesterday I examined a proposal with which the hon. member is associated dealing with a bus movement. It might be necessary to transport some people via Blunder Road to Oxley Station. The hon. member will hear something in a few days.

The hon. member for Merthyr referred to matters associated with the Southern Division and offered some constructive criticism.

The hon. member for Maryborough dealt principally with the remarks of the hon. member for Burke. He also dealt with Maryborough workshops. As yet, no decision has been made about Maryborough. In fact, the report is not yet to hand from the consultants on what they believe should be the future of either Maryborough or Bundaberg.

The hon. member for Mourilyan made reference to freight charges on sugar. All I can say is that the railways are doing all they possibly can to retain the business.

The hon. member for Windsor referred to new uniforms. There is some point in his statement. His suggestion will be considered. Over the years the vest seems to have become part of the railway uniform, but, knowing how much it is accepted normally, we can consider the suggestion.

In regard to marshalling yards, we are following the programme laid down for new yards at Zillmere.

I appreciate the contributions of hon. members, although I think the criticism directed at the department has not been of any great account.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 25 October, I shall now proceed to put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for the Department of Railways.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to:—

Department of Railways—

	£
General Establishment ..	2,501,700
Balance of Department, Consolidated Revenue and Loan Fund Account	39,198,300

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.