

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1963

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. D. E. Nicholson, Murrumbidgee) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO HENDRIKUS PLOMP IN COURT APPEALS.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Justice,—

What was the amount of assistance, expressed in terms of money, given by the Government to Hendrikus Plomp in connection with his appeals against his conviction for (a) rape and (b) murder?

Answer:—

“The Government has assisted in these appeals—(a) In the appeal by Plomp against his conviction for rape—as the Public Defender appeared for the defendant no counsel’s fees were paid, but the sum of £23 15s. 6d. was paid to solicitors for affidavits and postages. The cost of the Record for Appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal, viz., £59 8s. was also borne by the Crown. (b) In the appeal by Plomp against his conviction for wilful murder, the following professional fees have been approved but have not yet been paid as the Memo. of Fees has not been received from the solicitor concerned—Counsel’s fees, £70 7s.; solicitor’s fees, £45 3s. The cost of the Record and fees amounting to £134 9s. was also borne by the Crown.”

RAILWAY TIMBER PRICES.—Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

In view of increases granted to workers in industry generally in recent months, how long is it since any increase was granted to those who supply sleeper logs and other similar timber to the Railway Department and is any increase in the near future contemplated?

Answer:—

“The prices for Railway sleepers and similar timbers were increased in January, 1961. That the present price is considered remunerative is evidenced by the quantities of these timbers which are being supplied. The receipt of sleepers during the past three months has exceeded that of any three-monthly period during the past three years.”

CLAIMS ON MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE NOMINAL DEFENDANT FUND.—Mr. Duggan, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) What proportion of the outstanding claims and the claims expected on the Motor Vehicle Nominal Defendant Trust Fund, which totalled £216,666 at June 30, 1963, has been settled and for what sum?

(2) Were these amounts and the £25,918 paid during the financial year 1962-1963 the result of Court action or were they settled out of Court?

(3) Does he think that the time is opportune to re-assess the levy of 7s. 6d. imposed on motorists in view of the apparent buoyant position of the fund?

Answers:—

(1) “Of the total provision of £216,666 as at June 30, 1963, in respect of outstanding claims and claims incurred but not notified, a sum of £9,535 11s. 10d. has been expended to date. It is not possible to give corresponding figures of numbers of claims, first because all of the claims incurred but not notified as at June 30, 1963, have not yet been notified and the total number that will be involved is therefore unknown, and secondly because the monetary figures given allow for partially completed claims.”

(2) “All claims that have been paid to date in respect of accidents involving uninsured or unidentified vehicles have been settled out of Court. Only one claim involving an uninsured or unidentified vehicle has so far been the subject of a Court judgment, and this judgment was given in favour of The Nominal Defendant (Queensland). Of 30 claims received in respect of the Standard Insurance Company Limited and the Seven Seas Insurance Company Limited, 5 arose in respect of Court judgments made before the taking over of the claims by the Corporation. As regards the remaining claims the Corporation has so far proceeded to Court on only one occasion and received a judgment in its favour.”

(3) “I would refer the Honourable Member to the comments of the Corporation in its second annual report. There is a substantial carry-forward of £155,182 at June 30 last. However, for the causes stated by the Corporation I do not think the amount should be regarded as excessive. One disaster could well wipe out the whole of the surplus. I intend to keep the position under review in the light of experience each year. At this stage, my feeling is that the present charge of 7s. 6d. per annum will not require increase for some years to come. It is quite premature to hope for any early reduction.”

TOLL COLLECTORS, BRIBIE ISLAND BRIDGE.—Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) How many men are employed collecting tolls on the Bribie Island Bridge?

(2) How many applications were received for these positions?

(3) How many of the applicants were residents of Bribie Island?

(4) How many of the applicants from Bribie Island were employed?

(5) How many of the applicants were employees of the barge owners?

(6) How many of these applicants were engaged?

Answers:—

(1) "Four under a toll master. One collector is a resident of Beachmere, one of Toorbul and one of Toorbul Point."

(2) "Twenty-nine."

(3) "Seven."

(4) "None. One has been placed on a list of relieving collectors."

(5) "Three."

(6) "None. One has been placed on a list of relieving collectors."

OIL WELLS IN QUEENSLAND.—Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) How many oil prospecting companies have drilled wells this year in Queensland?

(2) How many wells have been drilled by each company?

(3) How many of these wells have been proved to produce payable quantities of oil?

(4) What Commonwealth subsidy is now paid to oil prospecting companies?

(5) What was the Commonwealth subsidy in 1958?

Answers:—

(1) "Thirteen companies."

(2) "Including wells now drilling and wells commenced in 1962, but completed in 1963, the numbers are as follows:— (a) Alliance Oil Development Australia N.L., 2 wells; (b) Amalgamated Petroleum Exploration Pty. Ltd., 3 wells; (c) Associated Australian Oilfields N.L., 23 wells; (d) Associated Freney Oilfields N.L., 3 wells; (e) Condamine Oil Limited, 1 well; (f) Delhi Australian Petroleum Ltd., Santos Limited, 1 well; (g) Farmout Drillers N.L., 1 well; (h) Mid-Wood Exploration Pty. Ltd., 1 well; (i) Phillips Petroleum Coy., Sunray DX Oil Coy., 2 wells; (j) Phillips - Sunray - Queensland-American, 4 wells; (k) Planet Exploration Company Pty. Ltd., 2 wells; (l) Standard Gas Pty. Ltd., 2 wells; (m) Union-Kern-A.O.G. (Exploration wells), 14 wells; (Development wells at Moonie), 7 wells. Total (including development wells), 66."

(3) "Of the 59 exploration wells, none has been proved to produce payable quantities of oil. Five of the seven development wells have been producers."

(4) "Commonwealth subsidies are payable—(a) For approved drilling operations, up to 60 per cent. of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cost, or on prescribed footage rates. (b) For all types of approved geophysical surveys, up to

60 per cent. of $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost. (c) For bore-hole logging, up to 60 per cent. of cost. (Note.—Development wells drilled after the discovery of oil are not in general, eligible for subsidy.)"

(5) "Up to 50 per cent. on certain drilling operations. Prior to 1957 there was no subsidy. I feel it most appropriate at this time to quote the following figures of developmental drilling which highlight the tremendous surge which has taken place in oil exploration since this Government assumed office:—

Year	Wells Drilled	Total Footage
1956	1	91½
1957	4	14,569½
1958	2	3,567
1959	3	9,334
1960	9	47,030
1961	12	74,935
1962	30	177,248

(In addition, in 1962, nine development wells totalling 60,050 feet were drilled.) Altogether fifteen wells at Moonie have proved to be producers."

X-RAY EXAMINATIONS FOR ABORIGINALS.—Mr. Wallis-Smith, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

Has provision been made to have all aboriginals within the Act attend the mobile X-ray units? If not, will he arrange to have X-ray tests made of these people?

Answer:—

"The mobile X-ray units have attended all centres in Queensland accessible to them and with adequate power supply for the operation of the machines. Centres visited included the Cherbourg and Woorabinda Aboriginal Settlements. Where possible transport was provided for mission settlement populations to attend the nearest town for examination. A compulsory survey was carried out at Thursday Island in 1962, using equipment available on the island. At Palm Island X-raying facilities are available. With regard to those remote areas at which power supply is not available, it is proposed to set up a specially designed mobile unit and it is expected that this unit will cover people who have not yet been examined."

COST OF QUALIFYING FOR DRIVING LICENSES.—Mr. Melloy, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

(1) Is he aware that due to many driving licenses being rejected because of minor technical errors by applicants some applicants are being required to meet costs of up to £25 in tuition fees and test fees?

(2) Will he have this position investigated in the interests of future applicants?

Answers:—

- (1) "No."
- (2) "Yes."

RAILWAY FREIGHT RATES TO HUGHENDEN—JULIA CREEK.—Mr. Lonergan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

Will he reconsider his decision regarding contract freight rates to Hughenden and intermediate stations to Julia Creek and thereby bring these towns into line with rates granted to Winton and stations in the Central Division?

Answer:—

"The request of the Honourable Member has been noted."

JULIA CREEK—KYNUNA ROAD.—Mr. Lonergan, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Was he correctly informed when he stated that the road from Julia Creek to Kynuna had been classified as a Beef Road? If so, on what date was this road re-classified and has the MacKinlay Shire Council been advised?

Answer:—

"No public statement was made by me to this effect. When the matter was mentioned in the House by the Honourable Member, the Commissioner of Main Roads was under the impression and indicated to me that this road formed part of the Beef Roads scheme. This is not so. The road is a secondary road."

PAPER

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Report—

Queensland Trustees Limited for the year 1962-63.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

Hon. H. RICHTER (Somerset—Minister for Local Government and Conservation): I move—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1962, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

CLEAN AIR BILL

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

(The Acting Chairman of Committees,
Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

Debate resumed from 23 October (see p. 931) on Dr. Noble's motion—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced relating to the prevention and minimising of air pollution and for purposes connected therewith."

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (11.17 a.m.): At the rising of the Committee yesterday I was mentioning that, in his introductory remarks, the Minister said that he was very keen to maintain and improve the comfort of the citizens of this State. With that, I heartily agree. He said also that the Bill is intended to deal with pollution of the air by fuel-burning equipment, but so far he has not indicated whether it goes any further than that.

I am fearful that that is where it will start and finish, and that no notice will be taken of other methods by which the air can become polluted. I have in mind the pollution of the air from either single sources of industrial waste or a combination of industrial wastes through their being put into some other substance. I have particularly in mind industries discharging their waste or effluent into a creek, whether it be a salt-water creek or a fresh-water creek.

Some waste, on its own, does not cause great trouble, but when different types of wastes are combined, particularly in salt water, they cause a lot of trouble. I previously mentioned Bulimba Creek as one of the worst examples in Brisbane of what can happen. Unfortunately, the Pine River also is now reaching the stage where it is becoming a menace.

Mr. Herbert: And there is Oxley Creek and Doboy Creek.

Mr. HOUSTON: There are other creeks. Doboy Creek, of course, is Bulimba Creek under another name. Oxley Creek is another example. I feel that we should do something about this nuisance and not differentiate between varying types of pollution. After all, it is no fun to encounter the trouble the hon. member for Sherwood mentioned the other day, namely, cement plugging up a downpipe of one's house and otherwise interfering with the comfort of the occupants, both inside and outside the house.

I agree with the hon. member that that is bad, but it is just as bad to have fumes, which cannot be seen, emanating from these creeks and turning the paintwork on houses black within days. Silver cannot be kept in many homes adjacent to these creeks because it goes black overnight. These people cannot do many things and they cannot keep many things because of the presence of sulphur and other chemical compounds in the atmosphere, and I believe that the Government

should do something about it. It cannot be said that the Government is not aware of the situation.

When I refer particularly to Bulimba Creek I do not want it to be thought that I am merely being parochial in this matter. What applies in that instance would apply also to other creeks in Brisbane, and indeed to all parts of Queensland as they become developed. The residents in that area have been putting up with this disability for many years. I did not come into it officially until after the electoral redistribution, when that area became part of my electorate. Local residents obtained over 1,000 signatures to a petition. Every one of those signatures was legitimate. The petition was signed by no-one from outside the area. It was sent to the Premier. I am glad to see that he is in the Chamber because I should not like to say anything about him in his absence when he would not have the opportunity to defend himself, if necessary. On 24 November, 1960, in replying to me on the subject of the petition, he said, among other things—

"The petitioners asked me to 'sort out this tangle and take whatever action is required'. I shall be happy to attempt to do this and for the moment I think things can be left safely in my hands."

That was in November, 1960, nearly three years ago. Today the conditions are worse than when the Premier said to leave things in his hands. Certainly at that time he passed the matter on to the Minister for Health and Home Affairs. As that Minister is handling this Bill, it is relevant to have a look at the letter he sent to me, on behalf of the people in that area, on 28 February, 1961. He said—

"I have given consideration to your statement in the House during the Estimates debate referring to the pollution of Doboy Creek."

Following the correspondence with the Premier I had mentioned the matter in the Estimates debate, and the Minister for Health and Home Affairs was replying to what I had said. Without going into all the details, at that time he pointed out that a committee had been set up, and he mentioned in his letter the representatives of various bodies.

At the conclusion of his letter he said—

"It is hoped that this committee will eventually reach some determination and thus allow action to be taken in the direction suggested by you."

He was talking about action being taken to have the pollution from these various substances brought under control. However, no effective action was taken. Out of their own pockets local residents paid to have samples taken and tested. The report that they obtained showed conclusively that there were substances that were definitely causing a nuisance by way of damage to private

and other property, and it was suggested that it could cause damage to health. The report did not say that definitely, but it made the very important point, which the Minister also made in his introduction of the Bill, that only now are the experts discovering some of the effects of smog and pollution.

If the control of air pollution from industrial waste, either directly or indirectly, is not included in the Bill, I ask that even at this late stage provisions be included to control it, otherwise we will find the Queensland landscape dotted with noxious, polluted streams that are an eyesore to the community. Unless something is done it could quickly get completely out of hand. Many people have thousands of pounds tied up in assets in these areas. Probably when they first built in the area there was no problem, but as industries have been set up these problems have arisen. We must stop this deterioration of the assets of people who went to live in these places in all good faith.

I ask the Minister to ensure that there is the necessary coverage in the legislation. If he says later that there already is that coverage, all I can say is that had he told us that in the first place it would have saved me from having to raise this matter again. It is true that the Minister may say, "If you take a particular factory the people running it will be able to prove to us that the effluent, in itself, is not causing any damage to health." I repeat that it is the combination that causes the trouble. The Crown, through the Department of Harbours and Marine, owns the streams, and if it allows various industries to discharge effluent into them and cause trouble, it should be directly responsible for cleaning them out; otherwise, it should control industrial waste matter. I do not wish to labour the point at this stage, but I do hope that the Minister will take some notice of my suggestions. Although this may be my tenth or twelfth attempt to have something done, I hope to be successful on this occasion.

The Minister said that he was concerned about the noxious gases and chemicals discharged from the exhausts of motor-cars and motor buses. My Leader said that, in some States of America, certain instruments are installed—particularly on the heavier vehicles—to safeguard the public against the effects of the fumes that are discharged. In Great Britain an apparatus called a detoxer, which fits onto the exhausts of motor vehicles, has been developed. There may be other similar apparatus, but that is the one that is advertised in many journals. It is being used in America today to prevent the discharge of fumes into the atmosphere. I think the Minister should investigate its possibilities, that is, if he has not already done so.

One of the worst problems for the ordinary person driving around town presents itself when he has a clean windscreen, drives for 10 or 20 miles, and then drives through rain.

He finds that he has a filthy windscreen, thanks to the exhaust fumes discharged by many vehicles. I should think that some of the worst offenders would be the buses, because of the way their exhausts stick out. When a bus passes a car the exhaust fumes spread all over the car. I do not think it is right for people's property to be damaged in this way, when proper precautions can be taken. Even in the early stages of this measure I think we should force large vehicles to fit some arrangement whereby unburnt fuel can be put through a purifier or an after-burner. Also, I submit that the position of the exhaust pipe on these vehicles should be controlled so that the fumes do not spread all over other vehicles.

Since notice of this measure appeared on the business paper I saw a lady dressed in white—apparently going to bowls—standing on a footpath; a bus came along and, the next thing she knew, the whole of her dress was ruined by the fumes from its exhaust. I will not say what she said, because she is still a lady. Surely there is some control over that sort of thing.

A Government Member interjected.

Mr. HOUSTON: Never mind the city council. It has many things to do and it is doing a very fine job for the people of Brisbane.

I do not believe that extra staff is needed to control this particular problem. We have a Police Force and members of the Force can stop and check motor-cars on the road for roadworthiness. They should have power also to pull up vehicles which discharge vast quantities of unburnt fuel and smoke. They should be able to say to the owner of a vehicle, "Your engine, your exhaust equipment, or your muffler, is in such poor condition that you more or less have a straight-through exhaust." There is control over exhaust pipes, because engine noise is not allowed to pass straight through.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (11.30 a.m.): If I understood the Minister correctly, he said that, before the Bill can be applied to Townsville, it will be necessary for the Townsville City Council to make an application.

Dr. Noble: No. It will be a proclaimed area.

Mr. AIKENS: I thought the Minister said the council would have to make the application to have the area proclaimed.

Dr. Noble: No. The advisory Council, which will be set up under the Bill, will proclaim the area.

Mr. AIKENS: Because of the continuous noise in the Chamber I must have misinterpreted the Minister's use of the word "council" to mean the Townsville City Council. If we waited for the Townsville City Council to have Townsville proclaimed an area, it would never be proclaimed, because the main source of smog causing

inconvenience to the people and damage to property in Townsville through soot and smoke is the Townsville Regional Electricity Board's powerhouse on Murder Island.

I do not intend to recapitulate all that I have said before on this subject, but, if anybody wants to learn of the damage that can be caused by one set of chimneys, he should go, as I frequently do and as the Minister for Mines did, to South Townsville to see the damage that has been done, and is being done, by the emission of soot from those chimneys.

The reaction of the T.R.E.B. to the visit of the Minister recently was to distribute a number of great big shallow copper trays, about 2 ft. square and cover them with honey. I think it would have been better if they had given the honey to some of the poor children in Townsville. They put these big copper trays covered with honey in parts of South Townsville, and then, about three or four weeks later, when they thought about it, they sent someone along to collect them. They forgot to collect one and fortunately we knew where it was and were able to examine it. Then they scraped all the soot and what-have-you off the honey in the trays and, according to them, they had an analysis made of the soot. They came up with the preposterous suggestion that most of the filth that they got off the trays had not come from the chimneys of the power station. They said a lot of it came from smoke emitted from the smokestacks of ships in the harbour and from passing locomotives. Unless you put that soot to a very detailed microscopic examination, I will defy the T.R.E.B. or any one else to determine the difference between soot that comes out of a locomotive chimney or ships' funnels and the soot and cinders that come out of the chimneys at the power station; at least the locomotives use exactly the same coal—Collinsville coal—as is used at the power station on Murder Island. They said also that a lot of the trouble was being caused by dust from the road.

As I said on one occasion, I got up on the roof of a house in South Townsville owned by a man named Peter de Boon and took merely from one small portion of his guttering enough of this soot to fill a large tin, so if they claim that that soot is coming from the ships in the harbour and locomotives that go past about half a dozen times a day, sometimes without emitting any smoke or soot, then, although they might be pulling their own legs, I must say they are not pulling the legs of the people of Townsville and they are not pulling the Minister's leg. I took the Minister into various homes and also into the St. John's Anglican Church in South Townsville. I took him into the South Townsville school and into various other places where there could be no suggestion that anybody was playing politics,

and he saw in those houses and in those buildings a shocking state of affairs as the result of the emission of soot from the power station on Murder Island.

Following the Minister's action on a previous occasion, something has been done. It is true that some spark arresters have been placed in the chimneys or in the flues of the power station on Murder Island; but much still needs to be done. Of course, when they are getting quite a lot of power from the Kareeya hydro-electric station, they do not use all the boilers at the power station at Townsville; but, when the shortage of power from the north is felt in Townsville, they put all six boilers on the line. I am reliably informed by men who work there that they also smother the coal with diesel oil and crude oil in order to make it burn more fiercely or ignite more quickly. Consequently, the people who live in the area get not only the soot and cinders from the power station on Murder Island but also this oleaginous, slimy soot caused by the placing of oil on the coal. If this Bill obviates, or even reduces, the inconvenience and damage caused in Townsville by that one industrial undertaking, I, and the people of Townsville, will be very happy.

The hon. member for Bulimba raised another interesting point, which I also had noted. If the Bill does not deal with this problem, I believe that it should. I refer to gases arising from industrial and other wastes. After the recent sugar fire in Townsville the burnt molasses and wastes were run into Ross Creek. Oxidation was set up and the aroma was particularly putrid. The gases penetrated homes in the locality and as far away as portion of North Ward. In many homes paint work was destroyed, silverware was turned black, and conditions were very uncomfortable indeed.

Other gases, too, cause trouble, and the Minister for Health could well look at this problem with a view to incorporating in the provisions of the Bill some means of dealing with it. When the Townsville City Council decided to finish the half-sewering of North Ward and Belgian Gardens left for them in 1949 by the outgoing council, of which I was a member, they did not provide a pipe of sufficient diameter to carry the sewage in times of wet weather. Believe it or not, in wet weather the sewerage valves for the Belgian Gardens and North Ward areas, when the extra volume cannot be handled by the electric pumps that pump the sewage to the disposal point at the mouth of Ross River, are opened and sewage is discharged into the creek and runs into the sea near Rowe's Bay. The bush children's home is near that area, and when those valves are opened and the sewage is run into the creek the stench is almost unbelievable. There are the solids of the excreta floating and smelling for all to see and smell, and the gases from this deliberate discharging by the Townsville City Council have to be smelt to be believed. The gases

percolate into homes in the area round Rowe's Bay, Kissing Point, Belgian Gardens, and North Ward, and I am reliably informed that they can be smelt in the new Housing Commission flats at Bundock Street in Belgian Gardens.

The same problem had been created by the Bohle abattoirs. Their erection took about ten years at a capital cost that will be a burden to the people of Townsville for many years to come, and in order to save a little money the effluent pipe was not run sufficiently far to enter the Bohle River, so that the effluent was discharged into a large swamp. The gases that arose caused a problem the same as that which followed the discharge of waste matter from the sugar fire into Ross Creek. Here was the same problem as that now experienced in North Ward and Belgian Gardens by the council's deliberately opening the valves and allowing sewage to run into the creek near the bush children's home. Silverware was being turned black and homes made uncomfortable, and similar distress and inconvenience was being caused by the effluent from the Bohle abattoirs.

Mr. Madsen was the Minister for Agriculture and Stock at the time. I, and other people, got in touch with him and pressure had to be applied by the Government on the Townsville Abattoir Board to have the effluent disposal pipe extended into the Bohle River. There, of course it goes on the outgoing tide. All these things have to be considered.

I mention to the Minister for Health—he probably has read it; if he has not, I commend it to him—the report issued by the American Ministry of Health on the pollution of streams in America by industrial waste. It deals not only with the obnoxious gases that arise from the discharge of industrial waste into the streams but also with the alarm being created there because of a shortage of water for drinking and for ordinary domestic, household use. So many streams have been ruined by pollution by industrial waste that fish have been killed, and vegetation on the banks has been destroyed, and there is a fear that there will be a shortage of drinking water unless something is done quickly.

Another problem that I am sure comes within the ambit of the proposed Bill arises from A.C.F. & Shirleys in Townsville bringing sulphate of ammonia in bulk by ship and then carting it out to Garbutt in bulk by motor transport. At one time it was brought up by rail in bags, taken out to Garbutt, and unloaded straight from the railway wagons into A.C.F. & Shirleys' shed. Now contracts are let to road hauliers to cart bulk sulphate of ammonia from the ship to Garbutt. The distance from the wharf to the company's shed at Garbutt would be, on my estimate, not less than 5½ or six miles. Because they are working on contract, the men doing the carting naturally load their trucks as high as they possibly can and travel

at whatever speed they think they can get away with. Already they have been involved in a number of crashes or near-crashes, but I cannot deal with that matter in the debate on this motion. Because of the way in which they load their trucks and the irresponsible way in which some of them—not all of them—drive them, sulphate of ammonia blows off in a cloud all the way from the jetty to Garbutt. They come down Palmer Street, across Victoria Bridge, along Flinders Street, which, of course, is the main street of Townsville, then along Flinders Street West, which is now named Ingham Road, right out to Garbutt. All the way along, the wind created by the speed at which the trucks are driven blows the sulphate of ammonia everywhere, and people in the area live in a cloud of sulphate of ammonia all the time the ships are discharging bulk sulphate of ammonia at Townsville.

Dr. Noble: How often do they come in?

Mr. AIKENS: I do not know how often they come in, but that could be checked quite easily. I think they would bring 3,000 or 4,000 tons at a time; I am not sure of that. It is easy to imagine what the position is like with trucks being driven through the main streets of Townsville and sulphate of ammonia being blown from them into the faces of people near the roads, into shops, and into homes.

I have been assured—perhaps one of the men in the sugar industry can confirm this; I see that the Minister for Mines and Main Roads and the hon. member for Clayfield are in the Chamber—that there is no greater rusting element than sulphate of ammonia. Men who know what they are talking about have assured me that it will rust iron and steel quicker than will salt water. The sulphate of ammonia that does not blow into adjacent homes and shops along the roads travelled by the trucks lies on the road, and I have seen it lying there in shovelfuls; in fact, I have seen almost a bucketful dumped in one spot. Cars come along and run over those heaps of sulphate of ammonia, which, naturally, is picked up by the chassis and other metal parts underneath the car, and, as I have said, I have been assured that it will cause rust quicker than even salt water will. So, not only have we the problem of pollution of the atmosphere by the sulphate of ammonia that is blown off in clouds from these trucks as they speed up the main streets of Townsville, but we have also the problem of rust. Naturally, of course, the sulphate of ammonia is blown onto the galvanised iron roofs of shops and houses along the road on the way from the jetty to Garbutt and, if it is the rusting element that I have been assured it is, serious damage will be caused to these shops and homes.

I know, of course, that there is a city council by-law which provides that any person who drives a truck along a street or highway within a local-authority area must see to it that whatever is loaded on the truck

does not fall off or blow off, but anyone who expects the present aldermen of the Townsville City Council to take punitive action against a big show like A.C.F. & Shirleys Fertilizers Ltd. is expecting a miracle in these days of 1963.

Having made those observations to the Minister, I feel certain that he will give them consideration on their merits and have provision made to deal with the problems that exist.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber. If hon. members desire to carry on conversations there is plenty of room outside. I ask them to discontinue talking and allow the hon. member to make his speech.

Mr. AIKENS: I am very glad, Mr. Gaven, that you rebuked members in that way. No-one could describe my voice as that of a whispering baritone. I can make myself heard to tremendous audiences and concourses of people but I find it difficult at times to make myself heard above the incessant chattering that goes on in this Chamber. I hope the Minister, who is sitting only about 12 feet from me, has heard all I have said. If he has not, I hope he will pay me the compliment of reading it in the "pulls" tomorrow morning. I have had to raise my voice to enable the Minister to hear. I feel certain, Mr. Gaven, that, although you are sitting only about 15 feet away, you have heard only snatches of my speech now and then.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I inform the hon. member that I have heard it all.

Mr. AIKENS: Then I would say, Mr. Gaven, that you have the keenest ears in this Chamber. I envy you.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: There is an example of the incessant simian chattering of the hon. member for Maryborough, who really ought to be in Taronga Park Zoo.

Having made those remarks and having thanked you, Mr. Gaven, for your efforts to get the remainder of the Chamber to hear not only what I am saying but also what other members were trying to say—even when the hon. member for Bulimba was speaking, his own so-called friends on the benches behind him were talking to such an extent that I could not hear what he had to say.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I should like the hon. gentleman to continue his speech on the Air Pollution Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: As I was saying, Mr. Gaven, when you very providentially interrupted my speech on my behalf, and that of other intelligent people in the Chamber, I have made these submissions to the Minister and, if the Bill does not now contain provisions to deal with the matters I have raised, I feel

certain that the Minister will, in the Committee stage, incorporate such amendments as are necessary to deal with them.

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (11.49 a.m.): I feel that I should indicate very early in my speech that I think the measure is both desirable and timely. I say this because I have perused the report of the Air Pollution Committee which was tabled in this Chamber in 1961. In view of its contents, I feel I should say that it is regrettable that the Minister did not see fit to have the report of that committee printed and made available to every member of this Parliament.

This question of air pollution is very far-reaching and, because of the information contained in this very valuable report, I feel I should say that that committee did a particularly fine job. As I say, this report should have been printed and made available to members for their study, to enable them to contribute to this debate in a manner in keeping with the importance of the Bill. After the Minister lauded the two Government members who were on that committee we had the parting shot of the hon. member for Merthyr about certain smells emanating from the Trades Hall. My only regret is that that type of person was included in the committee. The whole subject of air pollution is so serious that we should not have to listen to such childish remarks from the hon. member for Merthyr.

The report contains several significant features. It said that although there were far more sources of pollution in Sydney than in Brisbane, Brisbane had at least half the amount of the deposit of a highly industrialised city like Sydney. It is also significant that the report pointed out that Brisbane's topography is such that substances which pollute the air are not dispelled very quickly. Another significant feature of the report was that there was a greater possibility of an acute incident occurring in Brisbane than in any other capital city in Australia. In addition to the measures that can be taken to prevent an incident occurring through the pollution of the air, through prevailing winds, and so on, nature can play an important part in dispelling any pollution that may occur over a city. But the report particularly mentioned that the topography of Brisbane is not conducive to the dispersal of air pollution, so the picture is not very reassuring unless very quick action is taken to devise mechanical and other means to control it.

The report stated that some of the major causes of pollution were railways and motor vehicles, and that very few industrial processes did not discharge certain elements into the atmosphere. In view of all this, and the fact that we are living in a rapidly growing city, with new industries constantly being added, with new processes being developed, I fear that we are going to have a very serious problem in the years ahead.

I welcome the measure, but I do not think it goes far enough. As other speakers have pointed out, in his introductory remarks the Minister said that the Bill was designed to control pollution by industrial and fuel-burning equipment. I should be very happy if we could get an indication that the field is wider than that, but from the Minister's opening remarks it would appear that the Bill does not go anywhere near far enough. He pointed out that the by-products from the burning of coal are carbon dioxide, water, nitrogen and sulphur dioxide, but that it is mainly the sulphur dioxide that creates the pollution problem. The use of diesel oil, petrol, and so on, produces nitrogen oxide and certain aldehydes, and sulphur dioxide does not present a major pollution problem. The burning of different fuels contributes in varying degrees to air pollution. Then again, there is the problem of chimney gases. It falls into two categories, namely, heavy grit and lighter particles, and, in their turn, by their nature, they create other problems.

I heartily agree with the statements of the hon. member for Sherwood, who produced samples of the fall-out from the cement factory at Darra. The effect from this fall-out in the Darra area must be seen to be believed. Over the years, one of the worst problems of electrical distribution in the Darra area has been the corrosion caused to copper transmission lines—incidentally, serving the cement company as well—by this fall-out of cement. Over a period of years, in some instances the heavy-duty copper line has been completely eaten away.

Mr. Herbert: Imagine what that would do to your lungs!

Mr. SHERRINGTON: I agree with the hon. member for once.

In many cases, the corrosive action of cement dust on the copper lines resulted in the complete destruction of the line. In addition, the lines serving the area were continually breaking down because of the dust settling on the high tension insulators and, on mornings when there were heavy fogs, there were repeated flash-overs on the high-tension lines. Added to the health hazard to the lungs and the respiratory tracts, there is the huge economic loss to industry caused by the eruption into the air of this type of pollution.

I was at a loss to understand the statement in the report of the Air Pollution Committee that no gauge was placed in the vicinity of the Queensland Cement & Lime Co. at Darra. There may have been some technical reason for it, but I was at a loss to understand, with the huge amount of air pollution in the district, why that committee did not see fit to place a gauge in the vicinity of the factory. I believe there would have been great significance in the amount of fall-out collected. I make that statement because I believe that this company is desirous of establishing another cement factory in the Redland Bay area. I think the information that

could have been obtained by this committee about the factory at Darra would have been of tremendous assistance to the authorities in deciding whether or not the company should be allowed to erect a factory in what is known as the "Salad Bowl" area of Brisbane.

Progress reported.

At 12 noon, in accordance with Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— FIRST AND SECOND ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Acting Chairman of Committees, Mr. Gaven, South Coast, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1963-64

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

"That £2,677,020 be granted for 'Department of Railways—General Establishment'."

Hon. members on both sides of the Chamber will recall that it has been customary for the debate on this Vote to be confined to a discussion of the activities of the Railway Department, reference to road transport and such matters being excluded. However, on this occasion I propose to depart from that practice and to throw open for discussion all the affairs of the Department of Transport, too. History will therefore be made in that hon. members will, for the first time since a transport department was established associated with the Government of Queensland, have an opportunity to debate the Estimates of that department in the Chamber. They will also have an opportunity to compare the activities of rail and road.

In view of the transformation that has taken place, a survey at this juncture of the overall transport scene is by no means untimely. Our predecessors in office had a lot to say about the need for a balanced transport economy but took very little effective action and it was left to this Government to apply successfully the bold measures necessary to achieve this desirable end.

The problem was approached from the positive aspect of removing many of the restrictions on road transport and at the same time lifting the standard of the service provided by the Railway Department to a level that would allow it to stand on its own legs in the face of competition. It will be recalled that, as a legislative step in the direction of applying this new policy, we introduced the State Transport Act of 1960.

"Hansard" records the unreceptive reaction of hon. members opposite to this measure and

the fears of its implications expressed by them. Typical of the gloomy forecasts was that of the Leader of the Opposition, who is reported as having said—

"This Bill will deal a death blow to the Railway Department and to the road transport industry of the State and ultimately it will create financial chaos."

Mr. Houston: When did the Leader of the Opposition make that statement?

Mr. CHALK: He knows he made it. He did not interject. Events have vindicated the judgment of the Government rather than the wishful thinking of the Opposition. Not only has stability been achieved within the road transport industry, but, in addition, financial buoyancy prevails in the Railway Department.

The monopolies which developed from the restriction to a few operators of the right to carry goods over specified routes have been supplanted by the liberalised movement of goods under a permit system which makes it possible for any reputable person to enter the carrying industry. Road transport is now undertaken throughout the State on an equal basis and not confined to the south-eastern corner as was formerly the case, and, above all, the Railway Department, responding to the challenge of competition, has emerged from the contest with great credit.

As revealed in the annual report of the Commissioner for Railways, which I tabled recently, the year 1962-63 was one of record achievement on many counts. The total revenue of £36,648,339 was greater than that of any previous year. Traffic in goods and livestock attained the record proportions of 8,215,779 tons, whilst a new peak was established in respect of both traffic train miles and gross ton miles.

There was a marked rise in the earnings from wheat, sugar-cane, sugar, and Mt. Isa traffic. Commodities constituting the classification of "General Merchandise" are a source of great revenue to the Railway Department and are sought most competitively by road transport interests, and it is pleasing to record that the return from traffic under this heading increased by £378,000.

As the Commissioner has pointed out, it needed but a slightly broader smile from Dame Fortune to have sustained the earlier trend towards a surplus of revenue over operating expenses. A recurrence of flood conditions after an earlier period of extensive flooding and an industrial dispute on the Moura coalfield robbed us of the chance to balance completely our earnings and costs last year.

It was only by £86,814 in an outlay of £36,735,153 that operating costs exceeded the revenue received. I should like to make it clear that when I speak of operating costs I am referring to the costs actually incurred by the department in earning revenue.

Debits for demolished assets and the costs associated with the closing of branch lines, that is, the lifting of rails, and so on, have not been included as was previously done under the heading of working expenses, as they do not represent true operating costs. The additional charges referred to amounted to £480,500, and this brought the total expenditure, exclusive of interest, to £37,215,653.

It is gratifying to record that the latter amount was only £59,972 higher than the corresponding sum expended in 1961-62, despite the fact that there was a rise of almost £1,500,000 in revenue. We have shown by the operations of the department that we can effect economies in the interests of the department generally.

Reliance on the application of this two-fold policy of exercising prudent control over spending, and, at the same time, exploiting to the maximum the department's earning capacity, is again the underlying feature of this year's railway budgeting.

The full impact of recent judgments awarding salary and wage increases will be felt during this financial year, but the Government is doing its utmost to ensure that increased costs will not be passed on to customers of the Railway Department. The increases that have been granted will mean a rise of approximately £1,134,000 in the department's salaries and wages bill, and that money has to be found somewhere. However, we hope that, by following the policy of increasing our operations and effecting every possible economy, we can find the sum to which I have referred without increasing charges to our customers. Regardless of this increased commitment for salaries and wages, the total appropriation of £38,000,000 that is being sought for expenditure during 1963-64 is only £789,781 more than the amount expended last year.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the value of the contribution made by diesel-electric locomotives to the economy of the State and the stabilising of Railway Department finances.

Mr. Houston: Who introduced them?

Mr. CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition, and I pay him full credit for it. Now numbering 95, these locomotives have speeded the movement of passengers, livestock, and goods in almost every area of the State, and, what is more important to the department, their use has resulted in a considerable saving in costs.

Whereas in the early stages of the dieselisation programme the locomotives purchased were of the heavy main-line type with an axle load of 15 tons, the expansion of diesel-hauled services to lines of lighter construction has been made possible by the subsequent acquisition of a number of lighter locomotives with an axle load of 10 tons. Actually, 33 of the 95 units in operation

conform to the latter design, and orders for the supply of a further 10 are in course of fulfilment. A contract was also let recently for the manufacture and supply of a further 12 90-ton main-line locomotives.

The smaller locomotives to which I have referred have been utilised in the haulage of traffic on the Great Northern Railway in the Cairns district, on the Hughenden-Winton section in the central-western area beyond Emerald, and from Roma westward. As dieselisation progresses, the incidence of steam haulage will diminish, and with the receipt of the balance of the light diesel-electric locomotives now on order, steam locomotives will disappear from the sections west of Roma and west of Emerald.

To give hon. members some idea of the benefit that has been conferred by the extension of diesel services beyond the confines of the principal main lines, I would mention that the load formerly hauled by a steam locomotive from Cairns to Kuranda—the hon. member for Tablelands will be well aware of this—has been doubled—245 tons, compared with 120 tons—whilst on the journey from Kuranda to Cairns, when sufficient business is available, a load of 745 tons is being hauled, compared with the former load of 275 tons. That can well be described as progress.

The load of livestock trains on the Hughenden-Winton section has increased from 17 to 30 vehicles, and, as mentioned by the Commissioner, we saw earlier this year the movement of a record load of 40 bogie wagons of cattle from Quilpie to Murarrie. That is something that, years ago, could not possibly have been forecast. It was an increase of 15 vehicles on the load previously permissible between Quilpie and Charleville; a saving of 10 hours in running time was achieved, and, what is of greater importance, the overall duration of the journey was greatly reduced by the fact that by this faster movement we eliminated the need to spell the livestock en route.

It is true that diesel-electric locomotives were operating on the Queensland railways when this Government assumed office. I do not detract in any way from the fact that the present Leader of the Opposition was responsible for first commencing dieselisation in this State. I do make the claim, however, that credit is due to the Government for the development of the dieselisation programme, for the full exploitation of the hauling capacity of the locomotives, particularly by increasing the draw-gear strength of certain wagons, and for creating a climate which has led to an expansion of the diesel-electric locomotive manufacturing industry in Queensland. I believe that the expansion of that industry, so closely associated with the Railway Department, is a further achievement for this State.

The English Electric Co. of Australia Pty. Ltd. have been undertaking the manufacture of locomotives at their works at Rocklea,

and their efforts have now been supplemented by the entry to Queensland of Clyde Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd., which firm is operating in conjunction with Commonwealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. in the manufacture of diesels.

As an outcome, the Queensland content of the diesel-electric locomotive now being produced is greater than has previously been the case, and Queensland deserves full credit for that position. Measured by any yardstick, the operation of diesel locomotives has spelt increased productivity. Although at the close of the financial year diesel-electric locomotives numbered only 86 of a total strength of 757 locomotives, the diesel-electrics performed 56 per cent. of the work done by all locomotives. Do not let anyone run away with the idea, however, that if we got another 86 diesel-electric locomotives, we could wipe out all steam locomotives. We do not claim that at all because we know that steam still is serving a very useful purpose in many areas. There are many lines on which a locomotive is tied up for hours; it can only go one way, and back possibly the next day. However, I am openly admitting that we are exploiting dieselisation to the maximum.

Mr. Aikens: You are using about 200 or 300 steam locomotives a day purely for shunting purposes.

Mr. CHALK: I would not know the number, but it is true that many steam locomotives are being used for shunting purposes. The point I want to make is that we are moving progressively towards dieselisation, and the economies that can be effected, the benefit that can be derived by this State, and the security that can be provided for railway employees will come as this dieselisation programme proceeds.

Mr. Houston: What is the age of the newest steam locomotive you have?

Mr. CHALK: No steam locomotives have been purchased during the period that I have been in office. I cannot answer that question at present, but I could find out for the hon. member's information.

As a result of the use of this form of locomotion, trains have been increased in length from the equivalent of 60 "F" wagons to 90 "F" wagons, and the average trainload of 300 tons obtaining in the year prior to the advent of diesels has been lifted to 500 tons in the case of diesel-drawn trains. The maximum load capable of being hauled by a diesel-electric locomotive is, of course, much greater than the average of 500 tons, and over some sections is as high as 1,200 tons. Even though we are progressing with dieselisation we still have the problem of tracks to take into consideration. Where we could, and would like to, haul 1,200 tons we are restricted because of bridges and track formation.

The greatest transformation in train loads hauled will undoubtedly be that which will be featured in the working of traffic over the reconstructed Mt. Isa line. When this line comes into operation we will see something that has never been seen in Queensland before. It will represent the greatest transformation in trainload hauling that has ever taken place in Queensland.

It is not so very long ago that a C17 engine was restricted to a load of 325 tons between Townsville and Charters Towers, and even then it had to be assisted by a banking engine over the Haughton Range. The maximum load for any portion of the journey was then 550 tons, between Hughenden and Cloncurry. A load of 600 tons was attained by the use of the lighter-type diesels, and with the subsequent operation of 90-ton diesels between Townsville and Hughenden this load was lifted to 800 tons on the Pentland-Hughenden section.

The reconstruction of the track will see the operation of trains seven-tenths of a mile long; two 90-ton diesel-electric locomotives will haul loads of up to 2,000 tons between Townsville and Hughenden, and on the Hughenden-Mt. Isa section the load for one of these locomotives will be 1,700 tons. With the development of Mt. Isa the line is being so constructed that, should circumstances dictate, two locomotives can be used over this section with a consequential increase in the load of trains to 3,400 tons.

As I indicated in a recent Press announcement, it is proposed to install radio telephone equipment in the brake van and the locomotive of such trains to facilitate communication between the driver and the guard. An extension of this system will later be developed so that there can be communication between the train crew and station staff and control at the various places.

The extensive rehabilitation scheme that will make possible this vastly improved traffic working is well advanced, and it is hoped that the project will be completed by the end of 1964 as scheduled.

A very pleasing feature of the scheme to us all is the likelihood of the completed cost being appreciably less than the original estimate of £30,000,000. There have been some discussions about where the £30,000,000 was coming from, but hon. members know that £30,000,000 was the estimate. To date we have spent £18,695,000. We are committed to something like another £5,000,000. Unless something very unforeseen arises, I believe that we can safely forecast that the project will be completed for between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 under the estimate. It is a very creditable performance on the part of the consulting engineers who were responsible for the project, the engineers in charge and, I say, with all sincerity, the employees working on that line. Many of them are working under conditions that are not just what they might get here in the city area. They are doing a job of service

to the State. Not for one moment do I want to take away any credit that is due to any man engaged on that project, irrespective of his calling.

In addition to the re-grading, re-aligning and re-laying of the track, the re-building of bridges in steel and concrete, the lengthening of crossing loops, the provision of improved marshalling facilities and signalling equipment, the erection of diesel-servicing sheds at Townsville and Cloncurry, a new station and goods shed at Mount Isa, and the extension of the administrative building at Townsville, the scheme involves the commissioning of 12 90-ton diesel-electric locomotives, 400 62-ton open-type coal and ore wagons and 50 box wagons.

The 400 wagons referred to, which are designated "WHO", are of steel construction and have a carrying capacity of 44 tons compared with the 24 tons which the largest wagons until now in use on the Mt. Isa line were capable of carrying. The new wagons will convey coal from Collinsville and coke from the Bowen State Mine to Mt. Isa and will be despatched from that centre with zinc concentrates for the Townsville jetty, and silver, lead and blister copper for Stuart.

The 50 "CO" box wagons, with a carrying capacity of 40½ tons, will be utilised for the conveyance of general goods to Mt. Isa, and they, too, will provide carriage for mine products from Mt. Isa.

The provision of adequate rolling stock for the handling of the traffic in goods and livestock entrusted to the Railway Department for movement throughout the State has been a responsibility that has attracted high priority, as the department is fully mindful of the extent of its dependence upon this source of revenue.

It is true that, in some instances, criticism has been levelled at the department because of the non-availability of trucks. We do not deny that, but we cannot govern what might be termed gluts in production. We cannot afford to have hundreds of wagons standing idle for several months of the year. On the other hand, if there is an extra production of sorghum, it sometimes clashes with the early wheat or barley crops. Those are difficulties we must overcome. I should like to be able to have so many trucks as to be able to take them off the shelf like pounds of butter, but that is financially impossible. I assure the people of Queensland that, as it is shown that business is available, we will provide the facilities required. If we are to conduct a profitable business we cannot be so foolish as to turn business away. We have come through a period when the Railway Department did not receive the good will it deserved from some of the public. We have had to battle with that problem. I believe that today there is a feeling in industry generally that the Railway Department can and will do, a

good job. If that feeling grows I assure everyone that the department will grapple with any problems that may confront it.

For the financial year ended June, 1963, goods and livestock traffic accounted for a yield of £31,003,944 from the year's total earnings of £36,648,339. I emphasise the importance of those figures to hon. members. Criticism has been hurled at the department about certain passenger facilities. At present we have a major responsibility to correct first the financial equilibrium of the department. There is growing evidence that this can be effected, particularly by the movement of goods. It is therefore most important that when we have funds to spend we should spend them on improving the locomotive strength, rail stock and wagon strength, rather than put the money into elaborate units for passenger movement. I do not decry the responsibility of the department to move passenger traffic, but I believe in first things first and it is my personal belief that we must attend first to our responsibility as common carriers of goods and livestock rather than rush immediately into passenger business.

Mr. Aikens: And the greatest threat to your ordinary passenger traffic is the private motor-car.

Mr. CHALK: I agree with the hon. member that the ordinary motor-car has taken business from the railways. One has only to stand at any bridge over the Brisbane River, or any main thoroughfare leading into the city, to see the number of cars daily bringing people to the city. I do not decry that. We have lost passenger traffic, not entirely through the facilities we offer but through the keen competition coming from the private motorist even more than from the bus proprietor.

Mr. Aikens: Railwaymen take their families away on holidays in their own private cars and you cannot blame them.

Mr. CHALK: That is their right.

It is planned to increase the number of cattle wagons by 100 during the present financial year and the intake of new goods vehicles will be continued.

In its efforts to improve the standard of service available to its patrons, the department has not concentrated merely on increasing the numerical strength of its rolling-stock resources. Wagon designs have been adapted to conform to changing trends, and the needs of specific users have been particularly studied.

As hon. members will know, the basic change in recent wagon construction has been the substitution of steel for wood. In some instances this has created an employment problem, but every fair-minded person will concede that we have passed from what might be called the age of wood to the age of steel. Today's faster speeds and heavier loads make necessary the use of steel. The initial cost of

a wooden wagon may be cheaper than that of a steel wagon but there is no comparison in maintenance costs. Only a fortnight ago I went to the Ipswich Railway Workshops and I discussed the matter with the Commissioner. We have a number of wooden wagons and we want to keep the carpentering section employed, if we can, until we get through the period of transition. However, the difference between the cost of repairing wooden wagons and that of repairing steel wagons is staggering.

Mr. Muller interjected.

Mr. CHALK: I agree with the hon. member for Fassifern. We must keep pace with the times, and as time goes on we will have to replace the wooden wagons. As I have said, in addition to providing greater durability, the building of wagons in steel has paid dividends in reduced maintenance costs.

As has been the world-wide experience in other such departures from the conventional, the employment of some members of the staff has been disturbed by the change-over from wood to steel. However, everything practicable has been done to cushion the effects of the transition.

Features of the design of a number of new wagons have been their increased carrying capacity and their equipment with bogies of a type that renders them capable of operating at passenger-train speeds. The transit of goods has, as a result, been expedited.

We are building most of our goods wagons on the basis of their haulage on fast freight trains. All hon. members, particularly those opposite who were railwaymen, will agree with me that it is essential that we change over to meet the needs of faster movement.

In pursuance of its drive for greater operating efficiency, the department has kept pace with the growing trend towards the handling of commodities in bulk, and to cater for this traffic new vehicles, specially designed, have been placed in service or existing stock has been adapted for the purpose. Commodities transported in bulk include wheat, grain sorghum, cement, petroleum, bitumen, tallow and pineapples. This benefits both industry and the department.

The latest vehicle to be added to the stock of wagons fitted to meet the demands of particular types of traffic is that which has been adapted in the Ipswich workshops for the conveyance of motor-cars. All who have travelled between the north and the south of the State will have noticed the extent of this traffic by road. In America, and even Great Britain, one sees very few instances of it. The railways in those countries have special types of wagons for the carriage of motor vehicles, and we are now following that pattern. As intimated by the Commissioner for Railways in his report, a further 49 such wagons will be placed in service.

Only a few days ago a leading man in the motor trade telephoned me and said, "I have 78 cars to go to North Queensland. What can you do about them?" On the other hand, we know that certain firms in Brisbane are landing imported cars at Townsville. Transport to Brisbane is available for those vehicles and they can be landed here by rail cheaper than if brought to the port by ship. That is the type of business that we want. If wagons can be provided to take goods north and there is available there the same type of loading for the return trip, the business can be profitable, indicating how freight rates can be reduced if wagons do not have to be hauled back empty.

A freight service which the department is keen to expand is one that has made possible the expedited transit of goods to a number of areas, including the North. We are building up the service to North Queensland. In the operation of this service, steel bogie louvred cars capable of operating at fast speeds are used. They have an added advantage in that, if need be, they can be attached to passenger trains.

An extension of the service has so far been precluded by the existing demands on the available wagons. To overcome this disability, a new wagon, the "GLC", with a carrying capacity of 26 tons 15 cwt., has been designed, and an order for the supply of 300 of them is in the course of being fulfilled. The design of the new vehicles incorporates changeable bogies which will permit, should it ever be decided to adopt such a principle, the transfer of the wagon body to broad-gauge bogies, thus eliminating the transhipment of goods at break-of-gauge stations. This principle is being developed the world over and is now partly in operation in southern States.

I should not, however, like to encourage hon. members in the belief that the early use of these wagons in the manner indicated will be resorted to, as there is a number of difficulties to be overcome before Queensland will be prepared to participate in a scheme for the interchange of vehicles with other railway systems. The Leader of the Opposition also has been fortunate enough to visit America, and he will know what happens there. It is not so much a question of changes of gauge but of passing from one railway company to another. The problem in America arises from the transfer of wagons from one railway organisation to another, following which the owner may not see them for 10 months, if they ever come back at all.

There are difficulties in the eastern States of Australia. Some working basis will have to be found to ensure that, if this State has 500 wagons and we allow them to go South, there is an interchange of wagons from southern States coming here. We would otherwise find ourselves in the position of having all our wagons in the South where, unless return loadings were available for

them, they might stay for some time, or return empty. The empty running wagons are of no benefit to any concern.

Yet another type of box wagon is to be placed in traffic. This is the "ALY" wagon, a four-wheel vehicle of steel construction, capable of carrying 14 tons. Some people have been critical of the size of wagons in Queensland. All wagons in Great Britain are four-wheeled, and the average tonnage load carried is only 4 tons. Some people might ask why? It is principally because in the early days in Great Britain, particularly in London, and the surrounding area, every little back-yard business had a railway line or siding into it. As a result, curves are so narrow that movement is restricted, and they will always have that problem over there because they cannot possibly get larger wagons into many of the backyards. However, we are building a wagon of 14 tons' capacity, and we have ordered 100 of them because we believe that there is a demand for a unit of this type.

As I said earlier, we have problems in regard to passenger traffic, but I can say that the needs of passenger traffic have not escaped attention. Ten two-car stainless-steel rail motor units are recent acquisitions that are providing improved travelling conditions in a number of areas of the State. The utilisation of rail cars of this design has made possible the introduction of a new travel feature. During the tourist season, a series of daylight rail motor tours has been arranged between Brisbane and Cairns. Extending over five days, with overnight stops at major cities, these rail motor trips have met with popular acclaim, affording, as they do, an opportunity of seeing much of the scenic beauty missed on a journey by the normal mail-train service.

Ninety-one stainless-steel cars are now operating on the Brisbane suburban train service, and, with the completion by the end of this year of the Roma St.-Corinda section of quadruplicated track, residents of the western suburbs and of centres to Ipswich will enjoy the benefit of a completely revised schedule with a greater proportion of express services. A further 21 stainless-steel suburban cars are on order.

A number of carriages withdrawn from service as a result of the receipt of the stainless-steel carriages are being progressively converted to camp wagons for occupancy by employees who are required to work in isolated areas. I inspected one of these at Ipswich only a fortnight ago, and I believe that they are a great step forward and something that will be appreciated by the employees who use them.

An aspect of passenger travel that was a target of criticism over the years was the congestion and delay associated with the making of reservations and the purchase of tickets in the City Booking Office, Adelaide Street, at busy periods of the year. Although I believed that much of the criticism was intemperate, I nevertheless became convinced

that grounds existed for trying to afford some relief. After quite a deal of research, I arranged for Mr. Lee, the present Commissioner for Railways, who at that time was the assistant secretary of the department to visit the southern States. As an outcome of his investigations, I authorised the establishment of a Central Reservations Bureau, in which diagrams for all trains, interstate and intrastate, departing from Brisbane are held. Reservations are made by officers of the Bureau in response to telephonic requests from members of the public or from the many booking offices at which applications may be made.

Under the arrangement formerly in operation, the reservation of sleeping berths and seats and the purchase of tickets for travel on interstate and long-distance intrastate trains departing from Brisbane was confined mainly to the City Booking Office. In conjunction with the establishment of the Central Reservations Bureau, however, provision has been made for bookings to be made and tickets purchased at 14 suburban stations and at Ipswich and Southport, as well as the City Booking Office in Adelaide Street. As mentioned, the main feature of the new Bureau is the provision that has been made for telephonic reservations.

Here I want to depart from the normal trend that my remarks have followed. I am sure that the Commissioner will bear me out when I say that the successful functioning of the Bureau throughout the 15 months of its existence has in no small measure been due to the zeal, efficiency and application of the person directly responsible for its control, Miss Mercia Doran. Miss Doran is well-known to many members on both sides of the Chamber, and my reference to her in this debate has been prompted by the fact that she is due to retire from the Railway Department at the end of this year. Few members of the railway staff would have served the Commissioner more loyally and conscientiously than has Miss Doran. She is an ardent and forthright defender of the railways, and above all, she possesses a kindness which all who work with her will tell you has manifested itself in innumerable ways.

No effort is too great for her in satisfying the needs of applicants for reservations, and I venture to say that there are very few members of this Assembly who are not indebted to her for the pains to which she has gone to facilitate their travel arrangements. Miss Doran has set a very high standard, and her retirement will be the department's loss.

I now come to another aspect of railway activity, one that the Leader of the Opposition has recently seen fit to criticise. He is reported to have informed a Toowoomba gathering during the week-end prior to last that maintenance had not been kept up to the extent that it should have been. I challenge the hon. gentleman to show where there have been shortcomings in the direction

claimed. Contrary to his assertion, an energetic programme of track maintenance has been followed, the re-ballasting, re-sleepering and re-laying of track and the strengthening of bridges having been undertaken quite extensively.

In the last five years, 432 miles of track have been re-laid with heavier rails at a cost of £5½ million. During the same period 37,400 feet of timber bridging, the equivalent of seven miles, have been eliminated. In addition, a large number of bridges of concrete and steel construction has been erected to replace existing timber structures.

I realise that in any utterances which the Leader of the Opposition might make on railway maintenance, no doubt he would be at a disadvantage as his thinking would naturally revert to the methods that predominated during his period of office as Minister, when the accent was on the performance of most maintenance tasks by laborious manual effort. Undoubtedly there has been a decline in the volume of that type of work, but general track standards have been considerably improved by the increasing adoption of modern mechanical methods. As indicated by the Commissioner in his report, pneumatically operated tools, mechanical sleeper-boring machines, adzes and ballast tampers are in extensive use, and special scientific equipment is utilised for the purpose of determining and recording for subsequent rectification rail and other track deficiencies.

The Hallade Track Recorder covers more than 5,000 miles of track each year, assessing and recording the actual running condition. To supplement the work being done by this equipment, a new, ultrasonic rail-flaw-detector car has been placed in service for the purpose of locating and determining the extent of rail flaws.

To cite an instance of the advantage derived from the adoption of mechanical aids, I refer to the work of re-ballasting. For many years the removal of ballast has involved much heavy shovelling. We kept many men engaged on that work. To lighten this task and expedite the work, steps were taken by the department to design and build a ballast sled. Tests carried out disclosed that the work performed by this machine was the equivalent of that undertaken by 25 men.

Another machine which is being used extracts the dog spikes from the sleepers, removes the old sleepers without disturbing the ballast, and places the new sleepers in position. Whereas by manual means an average of 12 sleepers was replaced each day, renewal of 80 sleepers a day has been achieved by the use of this machine.

In the further development of the department's mechanisation plans, arrangements were made for two engineering officers to visit New South Wales, where large-scale experiments have been undertaken with the use of machines. As an outcome, orders

were placed for the supply of three items of mechanised plant, a jack tamper which will be an improvement on existing ballast-tamping machines, a track liner for use in setting the track at its correct alignment, and a ballast regulator—a self-propelled machine which can be used to scarify, weed, regulate and shape ballast. These machines will be the basic equipment of a special gang of 12 men which will function on the Townsville-Mt. Isa line west of Hughenden. The establishment of a sleeper-renewal gang on the Mt. Isa line is also proposed. The ultimate aim of the department is to extend the principle of mechanisation to the major tasks of fettling gangs elsewhere and to track re-laying work.

Before concluding my observations on the workings of the Railway Department, I wish to make reference to another great stalwart of that service. A few moments ago I spoke about the service rendered to the department by Miss Mercia Doran. I now want to pay particular tribute to the Secretary of the department, Mr. J. L. E. Lingard, who is due to retire from the railway service on 31 December next. I am fully mindful of the calibre of the men who, over the years, have brought high distinction to the Public Service of Queensland when I say of Mr. Lingard that he will be remembered as one of the State's greatest public servants. He joined the Railway Department in January 1912, and the outstanding ability displayed by him quickly won for him recognition which culminated in his appointment as Secretary of the department before he had attained the age of 44 years. During the 22½ years in which he discharged the onerous duties of that important office he has ably and loyally served as adviser, not only to successive Commissioners, but also to those exercising Ministerial control of the Railway Department. During my term of office—and I believe also during the term of my predecessors—opportunities were available for this man to become Commissioner for Railways, but he sought rather to serve in the capacity of Secretary than to take that very high honour.

I feel sure that the two of my predecessors who are still members of this Chamber, will support my acknowledgment of the invaluable assistance rendered to the department by Mr. Lingard. He has a tremendous capacity for work, and his analytical mind has severed the threads of many a knotty problem, at the same time laying bare every possible implication. Quite unobtrusive in manner, Mr. Lingard will argue a point firmly and logically but always most respectfully. I can well recall the discussions which took place with high-ranking governmental and departmental representatives at Canberra during the negotiations on the Mt. Isa project and the very impressive part that Mr. Lingard played in those talks.

Without in any way intending to reflect on his successor, I should say that the gap that

his departure from the railway scene will leave will take a tremendous amount of bridging.

I propose now to turn to what I regard as the other side of my administration—road transport. It would be correct to say that in the years since I assumed office as Minister for Transport it has been my privilege and responsibility on several occasions to address this Assembly on what have been undoubtedly controversial subjects. We have covered many facets of transport problems in our debates; we have debated long into the night, and, as a Government, we have brought down new legislation; and we have had to withstand substantial legal challenges. But I believe it can be honestly said that recent results have proved that our theories were correct and that this State will go forward rapidly with a fair and just transport policy.

The control of transport makes itself felt in every section of the community, but two quite different attitudes to it will always exist. On the one hand, there is the section that believes in control as a part of our overall economic pattern, and on the other there is the section that believes it should be absolutely free to operate quite independently—without any control whatever.

Mr. Aikens: Dog-and-goanna rules.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member said "Dog-and-goanna rules", but the latter section believes there should be no control at all. Such people are interested in transport either as users or operators. Experience has taught me that they are the loudest in their protests that Queensland is the only State or country out of step. However, nothing could be further from the truth. We are certainly not alone in transport control. Virtually all overseas countries, and all States in Australia, have found it necessary to control their transport systems and, like ourselves, they have re-valuations constantly proceeding.

Almost once a week, the Commissioner for Transport and I, look at some change that has taken place. When we believe that, in the interests of this State generally, a change is needed in our operations, we are big enough to make the change, but for the time being there must still be some basis of control. I repeat that we are certainly not alone in this type of control. Great Britain, the U.S.A., and many European countries are framing new and practical policies every day.

It is not my intention during this debate to launch into any long statements on transport, but I direct the attention of those interested in transport problems, to events in the U.S.A., where consideration is now being given to allowing greater freedom in competition between rail and road and the relaxation of certain freight-rate controls—something that has vexed the road transport industry in the U.S.A. for many years. In Great Britain the accent has been on greater commercialisation of road

operations, plus co-ordination between rail and road. However, the changes that are taking place overseas are very much along the lines of those we are adopting here. Indeed, many of their innovations have already been in operation here for two years. The present Railway Commissioner and I, along with Mr. Goldston, noted all that we saw overseas and applied a great deal of it when making changes at home on our return.

In Australia, the systems applied for the regulation of the road transport of goods vary from State to State but each has the same objective, namely, to ensure a proper balance between road and rail transport.

As hon. members will know, we have an Australian Transport Advisory Council, which comprises Transport Ministers from all the States and the Commonwealth and is presided over by the Commonwealth, and, whilst for various reasons we are unable to obtain uniformity of control, at least we are able to discuss our problems and endeavour to arrive at conclusions as reasonable as possible.

The policies governing the road transport of goods in the various States may be divided into two broad categories. Into one would fall the systems in operation in Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, whilst those of Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia would be grouped in the other. In Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, goods are permitted to move freely on the roads, the commodities reserved for carriage by rail being kept to a minimum. In New South Wales, these restrictions obtain in respect of beer, cement, iron and steel, and wool, and goods forwarded to and from some particular areas, and they are applied rigidly.

In Queensland, the restrictions on the conveyance of goods by road cover the transport of livestock (except lambs) over 350 miles, Board grains, new motor vehicles, petroleum products over certain distances, raw sugar and sugar-cane, and minerals and timber over certain distances. In Tasmania there are very few restrictions.

However, when we come to permit fees—and there has been some criticism of our fees—Queensland is in a far better position than either New South Wales or Tasmania. In Tasmania the fee is almost prohibitive and can be as high as 8d. per ton-mile. In New South Wales the maximum tax is 3d. per ton-mile but that is on the tare weight of the vehicle plus the capacity, and the virtual maximum in the vicinity of 4½d. per ton-mile on capacity. In Queensland, while we have similar restrictions, we are giving a cheaper rate of transport tax than those two States, our maximum being 3d. per ton-mile.

Mr. Aikens: Why are you doing that?

Mr. CHALK: Because we believe that we can allow freedom of competition between these organisations, and because I believe

that we can show ultimately that the railways can stand on their own feet against such competition. We do not, therefore, want to overtax any particular section of industry.

In Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia there is a general restriction on the long distance transport of goods by road, and the haulier is very limited in his opportunities to obtain permits to move. However, when permits are issued the fee is only a nominal one, but let me emphasise the difficulty of obtaining such permits.

In all States, varying concessions are allowed for the transport of primary produce. In Queensland, all movements by primary producers carrying their own goods are exempt up to a vehicle capacity of 4 tons. In addition, the transport of livestock in the western, north-western, and Peninsula areas is exempt.

The State Transport Act of 1960 was fully debated when it was introduced over 2½ years ago, and again last year when it was necessary to validate it at a special session of Parliament. I would go so far as to say that hon. members on both sides of the Chamber are more conversant with the State Transport Act than possibly they are with the Parliamentary Salaries Act, and most other statutes.

As I have indicated, there were many people inside and outside the House who said that the Act would not work, and a few who did their utmost to prevent it from working. I think events have proved that it has added considerably to the development of the State.

The overall position of the Transport Department is, like that of the Railway Department, reflected in the buoyancy of the revenue collected under both Acts as we administer them. Collections under the State Transport Act, which are paid to Consolidated Revenue, have almost doubled since 1959. We were accused of attempting by this legislation to wipe out road hauliers. All that I now point out is that since 1959 the total collections have been—

	£
1958-59	919,068
1959-60	962,938
1960-61	1,181,498
1961-62	1,604,416
1962-63	1,794,366

Revenue resulting from Roads (Contributions to Maintenance) Act collections has increased similarly, the figures for the last five years being—

	£
1958-59	1,512,414
1959-60	1,722,231
1960-61	2,017,139
1961-62	2,513,427
1962-63	2,895,074

That is a clear indication that we have been able to overcome some of the problems of border-hopping that faced us previously. We

are receiving a fairer and more equitable return from hauliers and a contribution for the use of the roads of the State.

It is interesting to note the reflection in the financial figures of the increase in the issue of permits under the new transport legislation brought down by the Government in December, 1960. These figures are a clear indication of the degree to which the Government has liberalised transport policy, and the buoyancy of railway revenue further confirms the fact that under this Government the State has developed at a rate unheard of in previous years.

As an indication of the increase in road transport, I shall refer to typical revenue collections under transport legislation at various places for three comparable periods. The periods that I have selected are the months of December-January-February in 1960-61, 1961-62 and 1962-63. The comparisons are—

Place	Dec. 1960/Jan.-Feb., 1961			
	Number Operators	Fees Paid	Cash Permits	Total
Bundaberg	4	£ 197	£ 255	£ 452
Dalby	1	438	2,075	2,513
Gympie	1	21	175	196
Kingaroy	2	287	86	373
Roma	1	209	603	812
Toowoomba	5	1,076	1,088	2,164
Warwick	1	102	226	328

Place	Dec., 1961/Jan.-Feb., 1962			
	Number Operators	Fees Paid	Cash Permits	Total
Bundaberg	6	£ 425	£ 458	£ 883
Dalby	8	1,492	4,890	6,382
Gympie	7	836	302	1,138
Kingaroy	3	388	203	591
Roma	4	640	1,164	1,804
Toowoomba	9	2,926	4,725	7,651
Warwick	7	590	860	1,450

Place	Dec., 1962/Jan.-Feb., 1963			
	Number Operators	Fees Paid	Cash Permits	Total
Bundaberg	8	£ 700	£ 559	£ 1,259
Dalby	11	3,215	2,493	5,708
Gympie	8	1,091	660	1,751
Kingaroy	6	1,789	217	2,006
Roma	6	5,051	727	5,778
Toowoomba	11	14,512	9,635	24,147
Warwick	6	1,298	850	2,148

We have been accused in some places of killing road transport. On the contrary, we have liberalised it and given everyone who wants to compete an opportunity of doing so.

Mr. Aikens: And you have clipped the wings of the border-hoppers.

Mr. CHALK: The border-hoppers are almost gone. As I shall indicate later, we are now in a position to grapple with almost any system of border-hopping.

Departmental expenditure comprises almost wholly the administrative costs of running the department. I do not deny that in earlier years we built up a staff to enable us to grapple with the problem, but it has now been stabilised. The increase during the year 1962-63 was five, and in the coming year we expect an increase of a further five, comprising two additional inspectors, one clerk, one weighbridge officer, and one police officer.

Departmental expenditure is kept to a minimum, and in 1962-63 it did not exceed the Votes allotted. The increase in staff referred to earlier, as well as award increases granted to the Public Service generally as from 1 January, 1963, accounts for the anticipated increase in salary expenditure from £229,891 in 1962-63 to an estimated £243,808 in 1963-64. The contingencies Vote has also increased from £89,956 in 1962-63 to an anticipated £100,935 in 1963-64.

Additional increase in expenditure is also forecast in the expenses to be incurred by departmental police officers and inspectors. It is necessary for us to maintain fairly rigid control throughout the State, and recently High Court decisions have been very favourable to the department. Now that we have those decisions and are in a position to implement them rather than be frustrated in some directions, it is necessary for police officers attached to the department to move out into certain areas, and we expect that this financial year there will be an increase in the cost of our operations. I tell hon. members that now.

In addition, the department is faced with the purchase of costly modern filing cabinets for drivers' licence records based on the probable conversion to punch-card or data-processing in the future. The department has the responsibility for filing some 700,000 copies of drivers' licences and it is necessary to be able to produce any one of these at short notice for the information of various authorities, insurance companies and members of the public. With the introduction of the new type of cabinets it is expected that it will be possible to produce any card within the time limit of a normal phone call to the department. This service is provided by the State Transport Department for the Police Department but the cost is borne by the State Transport Department.

I would refer also to two other services which are performed, and paid for, by the Transport Department where considerable benefit is received by other departments. The first is the collection of Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act charges. This work is handled completely by the Transport Department at no cost either to the Department of Main Roads or the local authorities, who receive the total proceeds. Unfortunately, in

collecting this revenue we also collect a certain amount of odium. When it comes to the distribution of the money we do not participate; it all goes to the Department of Main Roads and the local authorities. Therefore, I say that the Transport Department is rendering a very valuable service to the State in the collection of these funds and in their distribution to the department I have referred to and the local authorities generally.

The Transport Department is also operating and staffing the two weighbridge stations, at Gales and Coomera. These stations were actually built by the Department of Main Roads, but because of the administrative set-up they are staffed by officers of the Transport Department, to which the charges in connection with their services are made. Very much of the work done is also for the Department of Main Roads to ensure that vehicles are not overloaded and thus do excessive and unnecessary damage to the roads. It is worthy of mention here that since the inception of these stations over 1,000,000 vehicles have been weighed.

It is the pride of the weighing staff that delays are kept to an absolute minimum, and their efficiency has been praised both by administrative visitors from other States and by hauliers who have had their vehicles weighed at weighing stations in other States. There are occasions during the week when large numbers of vehicles converge on the stations at the same time, but the staff is so rostered that we know of this flow, and can anticipate it and thus keep a continuous flow moving.

I should like to amplify to some extent the volume of work that has been performed by our weighbridge stations. Some people have been critical of the weighbridges. Hon. members will recollect that the Gales station was opened on 1 July, 1961, whilst the Coomera station was opened on 28 October of the same year. Since those dates the numbers of vehicles passing through them have been as follows:—

Gales	No. of Vehicles
1961-62	379,170
1962-63	407,365
1-7-63 to 13-10-63	133,226
	919,761

Mr. Thackeray: How many prosecutions have been taken against oil tankers?

Mr. CHALK: I am not in a position to answer that question, but I will find out if the hon. member so desires.

Mr. Thackeray: I should like to have that information. I should like you to find out how many oil tankers went through Gales in the first four months and how many convictions were quashed.

Mr. CHALK: I will try to find that out for the hon. member.

The number of vehicles that passed through Coomera was—

28-10-61 to 30-6-62	76,771
1962-63	113,530
1-7-63 to 13-10-63	27,754
	228,055

So that, in all, there were put through those two stations 1,147,816 vehicles.

I have previously referred to the very good work that has been done by these weigh-bridge stations. I give those figures to indicate the vast volume of heavy traffic that is moving on our roads, and the efforts of the Government to effect orderly methods of loading in order to preserve both the safety of the roads and the roads themselves, not to mention the saving on maintenance of vehicles when they are correctly loaded and are required not to carry more than they were designed to carry.

No speech by me on transport would be complete without some reference to border-hopping, and I can inform the Committee with some satisfaction that we seem at last almost to have cleared the air with regard to this type of operation, which sought the protection of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution.

I will not take up too much time with details of the history of border-hopping, but it had its real beginning after the Naracoorte case in Victoria gave some semblance of legality to the use of what might be described as a border depot by two independent carriers operating to and from such depot.

The success of the Naracoorte case was used as the green light for all sorts of subterfuges to gain the protection of Section 92, and it was necessary for the Crown to initiate a series of court actions to obtain clarity on this very contentious question.

Queensland has been recognised throughout the Commonwealth as the State that has shown its determination to fight these subterfuges, and ultimately we did get the first break-through in Australia in what was known as the "Harris" case. That was followed by success in what has become known in legal journals as the "Western Interstate" case. The circumstances in the first case were that Harris carried wool from Jandowae to Brisbane via Tweed Heads on the one vehicle. The High Court ruled that a mere crossing of the border did not secure the protection of Section 92.

In the "Western Interstate" case the facts were substantially the same as in the "Harris" case, the main difference being that the vehicle used was chartered to another company for the second leg of the journey.

The most recent case was what is now known as the "Winton Transport" case. The facts of that case were that a load of wool was carried from Winton to Brisbane via Tweed Heads. The waybills for the load

showed that the wool was consigned from Winton to Brisbane but the wool had been carried to Tweed Heads by one carrier who then allegedly had engaged another carrier to transport it from Tweed Heads to Brisbane. The first-mentioned carrier in this instance was found guilty in the court of Petty Sessions of an offence against the State Transport Act. He appealed to the High Court, which dismissed the appeal unanimously.

In another transport case, in which Western Interstate Pty. Ltd. appealed to the Full Court of Queensland, judgment was also given in favour of the Department of Transport. In this case the facts concerned a load of cement which was transported by road from Brisbane to Dalby but had travelled via Legume in New South Wales.

Mr. Aikens: A shoddy legal device.

Mr. CHALK: It has been bowled over, which is the main thing. That appeal was dismissed, and a significant feature of the judgment related to the onus of proof for an interstate journey. We are gradually getting full judgments expressing the opinions of our learned legal men. It was indicated that, in effect, any person relying on Section 92 in claiming exemption from the operation of a State law must show by evidence that the transaction in which he was engaged was, in fact, a genuine interstate transaction. Coupled with this, it was also pointed out in the judgment that some border-hoppers seem to think they have a moral right to evade by subterfuge the provisions of the State Transport Act, and that they should perhaps be reminded that to conspire to prevent or defeat the enforcement of any Statute law is a criminal conspiracy under Section 543 of the Criminal Code.

The ultimate effect of these judgments must be that the use of any type of fraud or subterfuge to give an interstate flavour to what is factually an intrastate journey must fail to get the protection of Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution. These decisions, and subsequent developments, show that the use of border depots to try to legalise what is actually an offence against the transport laws of the State is finished. Queensland has borne the brunt of these legal actions but the results have been appreciated by every other State in Australia.

Mr. Aikens: Are they subscribing to some of your legal costs?

Mr. CHALK: No. We have not asked any other State to subscribe to our legal costs. However, we have been provided with certain legal advice from time to time and, in fairness to Victoria, I must say that when we were successful in the last major case the Victorian Government wrote and complimented us on the stand we had taken, and one Commissioner in the South indicated to us how pleased he was that Queensland had been prepared to grapple with this problem.

I believe that, in all fairness, I should refer also to the present position that exists between the Cobb & Co. interests, the Transport Department and me. Nobody has hit harder from this dais at that firm, or its managing director, Mr. Bolton, than I. I have done so because I believe it has been in the interests of the State of Queensland. I have done so, too, because I believe that I have a responsibility as a Minister of the Crown to administer the portfolio that I hold. However, whatever justification there was for my actions on those occasions in the past, I want to be equally as just and fair this afternoon and tell hon. members that Mr. W. R. F. Bolton, who attempted to circumvent compliance with provisions of the Act by the introduction of charter operations, when decisively beaten at law on several occasions in his attempts to prove that the Act embodied payment of an excise, has now come forward to the department and arranged a settlement for every penny of fees owing.

Mr. Aikens: Have Western Transport done that?

Mr. CHALK: Western Transport have paid, under protest, a considerable sum in fees, but they still have several outstanding writs against the department. Therefore, I am not in a position to debate their case this afternoon.

Mr. Aikens: Would you care to place a bet on what the outcome will be?

Mr. CHALK: I am prepared to gamble at times, but I am not permitted to here. I believe that the department will ultimately prove, as it did in the case against Cobb & Co., that right will prevail and that right is inherent in the legislation of the State of Queensland.

I point out that approximately £160,000, which the department was entitled to over the whole period of litigation, has arranged to be paid. That sum is inclusive of the 203 trips that Mr. Bolton made on behalf of many western graziers with whom he entered into chartering arrangements. I mention this so that the records of Parliament will be complete and so that the public will know that the Cobb & Co. interests in this State have legitimately settled their transport differences with the Transport Department, without favour, and that they are now operating in full observance of the 1960 State Transport Act.

I want now to make a few observations on public passenger transport and will open my remarks by referring to a motion that was supported by all State Ministers at a meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council at Adelaide last June.

It reads—

"That this meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council calls upon the Commonwealth Government to declare its willingness to participate in arrangements with the States under which special grants

would be provided up to, say, one half of the cost of a project to assist in the construction of additional mass urban transport systems, operating on their own right of way, as a means of combating the transport problems created by ever-increasing city growth and rising motor vehicle usage."

I ask hon. members to note that the motion asks for assistance to those transportation systems which provide their own right-of-way. I think this aspect of the matter is becoming more important each day.

I have seen traffic problems in other parts of the world and I do not intend to over-emphasise Brisbane's traffic problems. Admittedly, the growth of the use of the private motor vehicle as a means of conveyance to and from places of employment in the city is one of today's problems and some planning is necessary to cope with it. The effect of the increase in car traffic is to congest the roads and to slow down transport generally. The approach, then, has been to embark on costly traffic schemes which in themselves attract more and more cars, so that in the end no real improvement has been achieved.

It is often asserted that mass transport built up our cities and that private transport will destroy them. That may be drawing the long bow a little, but I agree that the obvious threat to the prosperity of every town centre is traffic congestion.

I am not advocating that we should ban the private car from our roads, because there can be many advantages to it. As a result of the upsurge of industrial development in this State since 1957, many workers in industry now have their own cars and no longer have to travel to work by using two public transport services. Instead, they can travel across the city by car. Many other people have their own reasons for travelling by private car. The use of a private car increases the efficiency of business and professional men who desire to work longer than normal hours and who can return home more conveniently by private car after the peak hours.

I believe the answer to the peak-hour problem, which is our only real headache in Brisbane, lies in providing mass public-transport facilities giving clean, fast and efficient services to the public at a reasonable cost. In other words, public transport must be made attractive enough to induce people to use it rather than their cars when their use of a private car is not essential. We in Brisbane alone are grappling with a difficult transport problem that has to be faced.

Because the resolution I referred to earlier was adopted by the State Ministers, I am not suggesting that the purse-strings of the Commonwealth will be automatically opened. It will take a long, hard fight to convince the Commonwealth that its assistance in financing city transport projects is just as

important as uniform rail gauges or Commonwealth roads. All are aimed at greater development and reduction in costs of production.

The role of the railways in providing mass suburban transport in the metropolitan area is not sufficiently recognised and the Railway Department could assist still further if special grants were available for complete suburban dieselisation, provision of new cars, a cross-river link from Melbourne Street to Roma Street and a spur line from Rocklea into Inala, to mention just a few. We just have not the money to do these things but the time will come when we will be able to convince the Commonwealth Government that money should be made available specially for these projects. I know that the hon. member for Salisbury has been saying for a long time that something should be done in the Inala area.

Mr. Sherrington: It is very important.

Mr. CHALK: I know, and I am not opposed to it, but I cannot see at the moment when finance to do these things will be available. The development of Inala is very important, and I am not going to make it a political matter. The hon. member for Maryborough comes in here and says, "Shame on the Federal Government." I am trying to make a straightforward approach to what should be done. If hon. members opposite really want to make it political I can accommodate them, because those who planned Inala should have planned for a railway line there. I am not raising that matter now; I am merely saying that we have a responsibility to try to correct the situation and I am keenly behind it. It may be that the Australian Transport Advisory Council will see if funds can also be made available for the development of railway lines within States, just as finance is being made available to some States for the unification of gauges.

In support of my contention that rail transport may ultimately be the saviour of our cities, I should like to make some reference to the transport systems of two cities in America. They are Los Angeles, with a population of 6,743,000, and San Francisco, with a population of 2,783,000.

In Los Angeles the main form of transport is by private motor-car and there is very little public transport. As a result of the use of private motor-cars, Los Angeles has constructed some of the most magnificent expressways in the world. Yet the Governor of Los Angeles recently said—

"We have resumed all these properties and taken away from local authorities ratable land for these expressways, but what have we done? In the peak hour the fastest speed with all our motor-cars is 4 miles per hour on the expressways."

That is a clear indication of what might happen if we follow that particular pattern.

In San Francisco a rapid transit project has been approved. It will be one of the largest single non-defence projects ever carried out in the United States. Construction of the 75-mile rail transit network, expected to begin next year, will be carried out under a concept that will enable it to compete in attractiveness with the private car in terms of speed, comfort, convenience, and economy. Automatically-operated trains will travel at speeds of more than 70 miles an hour at peak-hour intervals of 90 seconds. A key link in the system will be a 4-mile under-water tube connecting San Francisco with Oakland, across the bay. Voters in the three bay-area counties last year approved the issuing of bonds worth 792,000,000 dollars to finance the project. The trains will travel on the surface, underground, and on elevated tracks, according to the local conditions. I mention this only to give some indication of what can and will be done later.

In recent months we have heard a lot about transport problems in Brisbane in the case of trams versus buses. The recent controversial issues were brought to Government level by various persons who considered that they had grievances. The State Transport Act does not contain any provision relating to trams and the Government consequently could not influence in any way the council's decision on where or where not to use trams.

On the question of the routes buses are to follow, where it was considered that a case had been made out the co-operation of the council was sought and the routes were amended. In other cases, it was felt that the council's decision, whilst upsetting to some, was the best one in the particular circumstances, and I give the Commissioner for Transport full credit for his handling of the matter. In this instance he was prepared to come out openly and uphold the decision.

I do not propose to deal at length with this controversial issue, because much bigger controversial issues may conceivably arise early next year if the Brisbane City Council proceeds with its announced intention of applying for the licences of various private bus services. I do not think it would be ethical for me to discuss any matters that might be considered as giving a lead in this regard, but I have introduced the subject into the debate to give hon. members who desire to raise it in the Chamber an opportunity of discussing the matter.

Another phase of border-hopping to which I will refer relates to the transport of passengers. As hon. members know, we have a number of inter-town passenger licences in Queensland, the licence fees for which are assessed at a rate of 1d. a passenger a mile. These services operate to places such as Warwick, Toowoomba, Kingaroy, the North Coast, and the Gold Coast. With the mileages to be covered, it can be seen that

the fee is a fairly substantial one, and this has attracted a good deal of border-hopping on the Gold Coast, where a few breaths of New South Wales air are assumed to be sufficient to establish a bona-fide interstate trip.

These border-hoppers are of two classes. The first is the Gold Coast mini-bus operator who caters primarily for local residents on the Gold Coast and holiday-makers anxious to save a few shillings. The other class comprises bus operators who disembark their passengers just over the border at Tweed Heads, whence they all make a bee-line back to Greenmount or Kirra beach for the day.

Policing these operators presents many difficulties, but the recent decisions of the High Court relating to Section 92 may assist us to overcome them. Reports have come to hand that some of the operators are overloading their vehicles, and plans for a safety check of these vehicles and verification of insurance cover at the weighbridge stations are under examination. They may be able to get away with some things under Section 92, but they will not get away with breaches of the regulations pertaining to safety or insurance.

This is not a vindictive threat by me; I am led to make this statement because of a report made recently of an instance of overloading by one of the border-hopping charterers. A bus was operated interstate, and extra seats were placed in the vehicle to accommodate children who were travelling on it. The trip was allegedly interstate and required no permit from the Transport Department. Our investigations showed that the additional loose seats were placed in the vehicle, fully congesting the aisle, with no known protest from the driver. When the owner of the service was challenged on the matter, did he assume responsibility? No, he did not. He blamed the teachers of the children for putting the seats in. It is conduct of this type that has to be strictly policed, and I assure hon. members that, although interstate vehicles need no permits for their movements, they are required to observe safety regulations, and it is not safe for buses to have their aisles congested by additional passengers.

The Transport Department has endeavoured to insist on a high standard of driver or owner in the taxi industry. In the administration of this industry we have applied policies which are not always acceptable to the members of the industry but which in most cases, are welcomed by the public. It has been found that the Taxi-Cab Owner Drivers' Association, the taxi companies, and the majority of licensees co-operate with us completely on most matters, and, in developing our policy, we have taken them into consultation quite readily at all times. That they do not always get what they want is because we feel that what they require is not always best for the public.

Many taxi-cab owners have come to us with a good story in support of some request. Although their story is good, they are asked, "What of the public?" They would appear in some instances not to consider the public and they think that the Transport Department should also ignore them, but our responsibility in the administration of this department is to the public rather than to the operators.

However, I believe that in Brisbane the standard of taxi-cabs has been improved. There is room for improvement in some, but I honestly think the overall standard has improved. Regular inspections of vehicles employed in the industry are carried out and a standard of dress and behaviour is enforced. Applicants for licences are screened with the assistance of the Police Department. We propose to continue to insist on our requirements on the standard of behaviour, as we feel that the taxi-driver—the owner or non-owner—is one who is entrusted with the care of passengers, many of whom are handicapped because of age, and it is our duty to ensure, as far as possible, that these people, members of the travelling public, are not put at the mercy of some person with dangerous tendencies.

I should like to clarify our policy in respect to the ownership of these licences. It may not be generally known that although in every city there are various companies operating under one particular name or colour, or combination, these companies in themselves do not hold licences for more than three of their vehicles. They are co-operative organisations made up of individual licensees who have combined to provide a better service to the public. We have pursued a policy of restricting to three the number of licences any one person may hold. We have done this in an endeavour to keep the taxi industry an individual enterprise and we have applied also a policy of requiring persons entering the taxi industry to be wholly employed in the industry. We have resisted endeavours to have, as it were, absentee landlords—mere investors owning licences but not operating cabs, and therefore out of touch with and uninterested in anything but their own profit.

I know that some hon. members can, from their own knowledge, point to cases where this policy does not apply, but they will note that I said, "Persons entering the industry". We inherited the taxi-licensing system and there were many persons connected with the industry in remote ways whom we felt it would be unwise to disturb at this stage, and our policy is something that is applied to new men; and let me remind hon. members that new entrants are continually coming into the industry, not because of an increase in the number of licences but by the transfer of existing licences.

We have laid it down that no new licences will be issued except following public advertisement. In the city of Brisbane the number is specifically restricted by regulation. At the present time it stands at a figure of 1,200 for Brisbane, and for that number to be increased it would be necessary, first, for the regulation to be amended, and secondly, for applications to be invited publicly.

Substantial representations have been made recently that there is a shortage of taxi-cabs in the Wynnum-Manly area. The issue of additional licences to operate in that area only is a matter under consideration by the Commissioner. We have not restricted by regulation the number of licences in other towns, but here we have reviewed particular towns, and, in the light of local reports, in some cases we have increased the number of licences following advertisement.

I do not think my remarks would be complete unless I made some reference to the goodwill involved in the transfer of taxi licences. I am deliberately raising this taxi issue in the debate because I believe some hon. members would like the opportunity to say something about this industry.

Up to 1959 the issue of taxi licences was the responsibility of the local superintendent of traffic in each area, and the number of licences to be issued was a matter entirely within his discretion. As a result, an excessive number of licences was issued in some towns and the living obtained by each licensee was very poor. In other towns the issue of licences was restricted to a reasonable number and the quality of the service improved as a result. When the licences were taken over by the Department of Transport in 1959 licences in all towns were pegged at their then existing level, and very careful examination of the circumstances has been made since that date before any new licences were issued. To amplify this point, I would mention that the only new licences that have been issued in any major town in Queensland since 1959 have been on the ever-growing Gold Coast, where three have been added. As I mentioned earlier, the issue of some new licences at Wynnum is under consideration.

Under the previous legislation the administration did not formally approve of the transfer of a licence and the goodwill. This was done in 1959, but the full particulars of the sale of a licence can now be freely stated to the Commissioner for Transport, who deals with each one on its merits. Except in isolated instances he would not query the amount of the goodwill involved in the transfer, permitting it to increase if the market for licences had an upward trend.

As a result of this, licences generally throughout Queensland have increased in value, Brisbane clearly leading the field. In Brisbane in 1959 the goodwill value of a licence was considered to be £1,650; today it is between £3,900 and £4,000.

From time to time I have discussed this matter with the Commissioner on the basis that with such a high goodwill value more licences should be issued. However, this has not been done up to the present time for the reason that the higher goodwill price paid for a licence has necessitated a greater spread of hours by the owner, and to get a proper return from his investment he usually employs a hire-driver to assist him in getting that return. As a result the taxis are operated for double the previous spread in 24 hours, which I believe gives a better service to the public. This position is being closely watched, and, whilst prosperity within the industry is desired, the factor that is given the most consideration in deciding taxi policy is the benefit to the community generally.

It may be of some interest to the Committee if I refer to the number of licences to hire for carrying vehicles that have been issued by the Department of Transport. There is no restriction on the issue of this class of licence as long as the applicant has the necessary character background to qualify for one.

At 30 June, 1961, there were 6,208 of these licences in force. This number increased to 7,101 at 30 June, 1962, and reached 8,076 at the end of June 1963. This again is a clear and definite indication of the growth of road transport under our policy.

The enforcement of hours of driving by drivers of heavy vehicles is one matter that is currently exercising the minds of departmental officers. Some difficulties have arisen in respect of interstate operators, and conferences of the officers concerned have been held from time to time in an effort to get uniform hours of driving, log books, and so on, for all States. These investigations are nearing completion.

We are all aware of the stories that circulate about "pep" pills being taken by drivers of long-distance vehicles, and, whilst we believe that most of them are very much exaggerated, there are many instances where drivers have worked excessive hours and could be a danger on the road. I believe that the drivers of heavy transports are, in the main, very good drivers and my experience on the road is that they can be depended on. However, the mere sight of large vehicles on the road frightens some drivers and this has been the cause of accidents rather than mistakes on the part of the heavy-vehicle drivers.

We are fortunate in receiving the co-operation of the Transport Workers' Union in our efforts to ensure reasonable working hours for drivers of heavy transports, but unfortunately, we find that many owner-drivers are more interested in profits than in safety.

I venture to say here that if road transport was obliged to work on the same industrial basis as train crews, the cost of road transport would soar so high that many long-distance operations by road would be

seriously jeopardised. However, it has not yet become part of industrial thinking to endeavour to secure for road operators the conditions enjoyed by our railwaymen.

As hon. members in the Chamber know my temperament, I do not think any of them will be surprised when, in conclusion, I make reference to the personal attacks that were made on me during the last election campaign by the Country Road Hauliers' Association. No doubt many hon. members in the Chamber have read these numerous advertisements. I think I can claim that I was the only candidate in the whole election campaign to be singled out by a group for such bitter personal attacks. I take great satisfaction in the result of the election in Lockyer which, I believe, clearly indicated the approval of those in that electorate of my own personal position as their representative, and of the Government's transport policy.

All hon. members in the Chamber must be aware of the major personalities behind the attack on me by the Country Road Hauliers' Association. Whilst I could say a lot about the tactics they adopted, I do not propose to lower myself to such a level by making a privileged attack on them in this Chamber unless some hon. members prefer to make an issue of it. I merely mention that fact here to record my great pleasure that the Lockyer people whom I represent were able to judge the calibre of these attacks by their substantial vote in my favour, and I hope that at forthcoming elections the same people again decide to stand against me. That concludes my introductory remarks. In accordance with practice, specific issues raised by hon. members will be dealt with by me as the debate progresses.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to inform hon. members that on the Chief Office Vote I propose to allow a full discussion on the whole of the ramifications of a department (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account) and then to confine the discussion to each particular Vote.

For the information of hon. members, I point out that the administrative Acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in the Committee of Supply.

In view of the indication by the Minister for Transport that the Department of Transport will be open to debate in conjunction with the Department of Railways, I desire to inform hon. members that I propose to allow a full discussion of the administrative activities of both these departments under the General Establishment Vote of the Department of Railways.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (3.15 p.m.): Mr. Gaven, I seek your indulgence for about

two minutes to make a statement, which Standing Orders prevented me from making previously, regarding the actions of the Opposition in the Budget debate. The Opposition is cognisant of its responsibilities to engage in debate and is prepared, as it was this time, to debate the Budget when presented in the Chamber; but I thought it was unfair of the Treasurer, in closing the debate, to refer in contemptuous terms to, and to twist, what I said, seeking to take some advantage the nature of which is not quite clear.

The facts are that the Whip came to me on the first day of the Budget debate and informed me that there were no Government speakers. It is customary on the Budget debate, as with other debates, to prepare lists of speakers—and usually we match speaker for speaker. There is merit in it as well as disadvantages. On this occasion I informed the Treasurer that I did not think it was quite fair on a Budget debate in which few Government members participated early in the piece, that we should be put in the position of having the list of Opposition speakers exhausted and then, as was the case last year, have the remaining Government speakers take all the time and have the whole Press for a week. He said he would speak to the Premier about it, and he did. I want to say that I ask the Premier for nothing, and I ask the Treasurer for nothing—and I thank them for nothing if they are going to use my approach in this way. We are prepared to accept our responsibilities in this regard.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. DUGGAN: In my many years in this Assembly I do not know that I can recall an occasion, under either a Labour Minister or a non-Labour Minister, on which we had to listen for two hours to a carefully-prepared report, followed meticulously by senior officers of the Public Service—the Commissioner for Transport and a very responsible officer of the Minister's own staff. Apparently they were checking so that, in the event of the Minister's leaving out some word, they could send the messenger in to point out to him that he had lost his place.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister spoke for two hours so he ought to be content to give me a chance for 25 minutes.

On this matter of speaking for two hours, I am not for a moment saying that the Minister is not capable of speaking without notes. We know that he will speak without notes for an inordinately long period on the slightest provocation. All I am saying is: in view of the Government's desire to splurge all their propaganda about, why not include this material, which was typewritten and followed very carefully page by page—and I say this with great respect to Mr. Kropp, who is out in the lobby—why not include it in the report of the Commissioner

for Railways or the report of the Commissioner for Transport and be done with it? In that way we would know just what the department is proud of, what its achievements have been, and so on. The Minister's action in taking up two hours in the introduction of these Estimates—admittedly, exercising his right, as he is entitled to—and allowing one hour for him to reply gives only 17 members of the Assembly a chance to participate in this debate, which the Minister said is historic because for the first time it opens up for discussion at this time the subject of road transport, and so on.

I remember a time when the former hon. member for Clayfield, Mr. Taylor, was Chairman of Committees. I have the reference here; I turned it up while the Minister was speaking but time will not permit me to quote it. On that occasion the Minister sought to deal with road transport and I asked the Chairman of Committees on a point of order whether it was competent for him to deal with that matter. I said there—it is in "Hansard"—not that I was objecting; I wanted to know whether we could do it, and Mr. Taylor replied that we could not.

I also have here a reference where the present Minister in 1956-57 disagreed violently with the way in which I introduced the Estimates; but in 1958-59 and 1959-60—and the records are there if anyone should challenge me on this—he said, "I intend to follow the pattern laid down by my predecessor in presenting these Estimates." So what does he really mean when he says there is something historic about this occasion?

Mr. Chalk: You didn't bring transport in under the Railway Estimates.

Mr. DUGGAN: I did not interject in the whole two hours while the Minister was speaking, so he should not mind listening to me for a few minutes.

I do not want to use any more time on this point than is necessary, but I feel it is incumbent on me as Leader of the Opposition to deal with the Minister's unprecedented action in coming into the Budget debate to refer to a by-law, or at least a Cabinet decision, respecting the right of Crown employees to contest local-authority elections. The Minister does not control the persons to whom he referred. I could understand the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, or the Minister for Education saying, "This is an important matter that we want to clarify, and I wish to make an announcement on behalf of the Government." Instead, it was entrusted to the Minister for Transport, who came here and, in an irresponsible way, started talking about the 20 people who were excluded, and linked my name with the matter. I had nothing to do with it except through my Cabinet responsibility as one of a number laying down general policy. I was responsible for the rule as it affected railway employees. I thought that he may

have made an attack on me but he did not, except to link my name irrelevantly with the whole question of Crown employees.

He listed all of these people. We find that some of them are school teachers. I accepted his challenge the following day and was informed that there was no record of any railway employee during the ten years of my administration having been denied the opportunity to contest a local-authority election. I made a statement over the Australian Broadcasting Commission a week before this matter became public property. I said that it was unfair, discriminatory legislation against a section of Crown employees, and I still say so.

Hon. members on this side have spoken on the subject, one in particular making an excellent rebuttal. Some of the 20 men mentioned were personal friends of mine. They were good Labour supporters; some were Labour candidates. They were not refused permission to nominate for any political reasons but because, in the case of school teachers whose absence would prevent instruction being given to children, and others similarly placed, we felt that we had to exercise our prerogative in the interests of the public and say that they could not be given leave. But that did not apply to one railway man.

The Minister asked me to discuss the matter privately. If he or I have any allegation to make, let it be made here, not privately. I asked him to table the correspondence. Aided and abetted by the unofficial Minister for Transport, the hon. member for Townsville South, who will no doubt later launch a spirited attack on me—

Mr. Aikens interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am not worried about the hon. member for Townsville South. I can tell hon. members now what he will say later. I am not going to waste much time on him because he does not count. During the time that I was Minister for Transport I accepted the fact that, although I disliked his politics, he spoke on behalf of a large number of railwaymen in Queensland. His representations were frequently reported in the journals of the Australian Railways Union and other publications, but he has departed so far from those ideological principles that not only is he no longer reported, but he is also discredited by every decent union in those areas. I do not care what he says, and I expect him to make a splenetic attack on me. He is now grovelling on his knees to the Liberal Party, begging them not to put up a Liberal candidate against him, because as soon as that is done he will be out in Townsville South. I am not concerned with what he will say, but I know that it will be a vicious splenetic attack.

Mr. Aikens: If you are not worrying about it, why spend so much time on it?

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member is merely the gaspipe through which the Minister blows.

The Minister interjected concerning the action taken against the man named Strube. The facts are that this man was an alderman of the Townsville City Council, and the then General Manager, Mr. Moriarty, saw him one day attending during working hours to a lot of correspondence sent to him for attention. He told him that he had no right to do that, and they had a first-class brawl. The result was that Strube left the General Manager's office and made arrangements to take another job. He left without having anything at all to do with me. I knew nothing of the matter but I made it by business to find out about it.

I do not take umbrage at one single thing that the Minister said today. Let it not be thought that I am stirred up because of any of his statements. He spoke reasonably and temperately, and my criticism in the main is directed at the length of his speech and the fact that it could have been presented in some other form. I have no quarrel with the language of his speech or the nature of its presentation.

The Minister dealt at great length with road transport and legal questions associated with it. He referred to appeals to various tribunals and the need to amend legislation that had been passed in this Chamber. But when the Minister finished his speech, the Acting Chairman said that we could not discuss matters involving legislation or which might involve legislation.

Every year since he took office the Minister has said that he was going to balance the railway Budget. Every year when he was in Opposition he attacked the administration of the Labour Party, and he strongly attacked the introduction of diesel-electric locomotives. On the very day on which the first English Electric diesel locomotive went to Toowoomba, the hon. gentleman asked a question in the House in which he was critical of the use of locomotives of that type and predicted all sorts of disasters for it. I was able to inform him of the great tonnage that had been hauled up the Range by that locomotive and the success of the whole operation. Now he says, through the Commissioner, that the salvation of the railways has been the introduction of diesel-electric locomotive power.

In the 1956-57 debate the Minister said that if there was justification for the placement of orders for 140 locomotives in 1950, there was justification for a greater number being provided in 1956-57. What do we find? We do not find that orders for anything like that number have been placed. I left office in 1956-57, and in 1957-58 there were 58 diesel locomotives ordered by the then Labour Government. Today the number is either 83 or 86.

Mr. Chalk: Including orders, it is over 100.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am taking the figure that I worked out while the hon. gentleman was speaking. He gave no credit for that; but he is now claiming credit for it in the financial operations of the department. When he came to office in 1957-58, he said that a gloomy financial picture had to be drawn because of the maladministration, and so on, of the department over a period of years. To some extent he attacked not only me but the department as a whole, and he said in his speech that, no matter what the reasons were, the Minister himself must accept the final responsibility for the operations of his department.

Mr. Chalk: I did. I do not dodge it here.

Mr. DUGGAN: If the Minister is so wonderfully efficient, why is it that during the six years that the parties opposite have been in government the annual average deficit has been £6,020,000, compared with an average annual deficit of £3,500,000 under Labour?

Mr. Chalk: Because I raised the freight rates once in six years and you raised them eight times in six years.

Mr. DUGGAN: The Minister cannot take it. I did not interject once during the two hours that he was speaking. He said one or two offensive things, but I did not interject. He cannot take it. It is true that freight rates were increased.

Mr. Chalk: Eight times in six years.

Mr. DUGGAN: It does not matter whether it was 56. I am saying that they were increased, so let us accept the figure of six times. The Minister has said on many occasions that transport costs represent about 30 per cent. of our total costs. I think that is a fair estimate; I have no quarrel with it. If that is so, increased freight rates, which ultimately affect the cost of commodities to the consumer, would have been reflected in a higher cost structure over the period when the increases took place. But what happened? In the six-year period from 1951 to 1957, the consumer price index increased in Sydney from 74.5 to 112.9, or 51.5 per cent.; in Melbourne from 74.6 to 114, or 52.9 per cent.; in Brisbane from 75.1 to 112, or 42.7 per cent.; in Adelaide from 74.7 to 111.1, or 48.7 per cent.; in Perth from 74.4 to 112.9, or 51.8 per cent.; and in Hobart from 73.3 to 116.9, or 59.5 per cent. In other words, during that six-year period in which freight increases took place, the increase in the consumer price index in Queensland was less than that in any other Australian State. We all know that immediately following the last war there was inflation everywhere; but in the six-year period from 1957 till 1963 costs were stabilised throughout Australia. It applied everywhere. During the period 1957-63 the increase in Sydney was 9.1 per cent., in Melbourne 10.7 per cent., in Adelaide 9.9 per cent., in Perth 8.2 per cent., in Hobart 9.5 per cent., an average in the six

capital cities of 10·1 per cent.; but in Queensland it has been 14 per cent. in the last six years, so I say it would not all have to be put down to the Minister, and he cannot get away from the fact that his deficits during that period of six years have aggregated £36,135,330, which is a colossal sum.

We must also take into account the decrease in railway employees totalling 3,966. The number of apprentices indentured to the Railway Department in 1957 was 264. In 1962 the number was 51, and now the Government is crying about the shortage of skilled tradesmen. In that period of six years the number of apprentices indentured dropped by more than 200. Admittedly the number is up this year, but as at last year it was down by more than 200.

The Minister spoke about record tonnages being carried. During the last six years Labour was in office the tonnage carried by the railways increased by 1,288,075 tons. Talking of record tonnages in 1962-63 the figure had increased over the previous six years by only 64,350 tons, compared with over 1½ million tons while we were in office.

Dealing with total passenger journeys, in 1950-51 the number of passenger journeys totalled 33,960,811; in 1956-57 the total was 34,117,359, an increase in the last six years of the Labour Government of 156,584, while in the last six years under this Government the number of passengers decreased by 8,224,376.

We hear much talk about rolling stock and what has been done, but in spite of the fact that the figure has increased, during the last six years we were in power we spent almost twice as much on rolling stock as the present Government has spent. Yet the Minister talks today about how Labour did nothing. We carried out tremendous works at that time. Here is a booklet that was published in 1956 in which can clearly be seen many of the works for which the Minister is claiming credit today.

Mr. Knox: What is it?

Mr. DUGGAN: It is a Government publication, and in it many of the things for which the Minister now takes credit are clearly visible. For instance, it shows that in that period we had over 8,000 steel wagons. It deals also with the bridge over the river at Indooroopilly, a number of stressed concrete bridges, heavier rails, planning for re-laying tracks, mechanisation of equipment, longer lengths of rails, and different types of rail fastenings. Here it is. We had four of the "Matisa" tie tamping machines that the Minister mentioned this morning; we had a "Hallade" track recorder before he came to power. And so it goes on. We had increased production in our quarries for ballast, and so on. Generally speaking, we have nothing to be ashamed of in that regard.

Unfortunately, time is getting short. It is very difficult in 25 minutes to condense

all these facts. On the question generally, at the moment there is very much to be done but I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without joining with the Minister in paying a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Lingard. When I was Minister I was able to persuade the Cabinet to lift his classification, a move that received the approbation of employees working with him. I think he was highly respected by a great number of them, including the three gentlemen in the lobby at the present time. Of all the men with whom I was associated—I am sure they will not begrudge my saying this—I have never known of any public servant who had a more detailed knowledge and could impart it more lucidly, impartially and positively than Mr. Lingard could. He has been a very capable and a very valuable officer. The department will find great difficulty in replacing him. I wish him a very happy retirement. The new Commissioner is quite a young man and I wish him well in his new office.

Many long-range forecasts have been made about what should be done in the Brisbane area. I disagree violently that dieselisation is the answer to suburban rail development. The figures show that there has been a decline in passenger traffic. I agree with the Minister that much of that is due to greatly increased motor-car ownership, but largely the reason for the decline in the figures is that people will not get into steam-driven trains with their accompanying soot and dust. With one or two notable exceptions most countries are going in for electric traction rather than diesel electric. In places like Chicago where diesel rail motors and diesel electric locomotives are used people commute daily far greater distances than they are obliged to in Brisbane. It will be a retrograde step if we do not proceed with electrification.

The Minister said today that the Government has plans for future railway access across the river from Melbourne Street to Roma Street. When I made a similar suggestion I was criticised as it was considered to be a waste of public funds. Admittedly it was before its time, but unless you make provision—

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. DUGGAN: We paid all the moneys that fell due on our resumptions.

In the first few months after this Government came into office, because it had such an unholy alliance with the Q.L.P. it made a great song and dance about the fact that I had done nothing about stainless-steel carriages. Yet 12 months before that Mr. Lee brought this document out. There is nothing in it that in any way involves Mr. Lee on a political level. If there is I will withdraw my remark, but I do not think there is. It was approved by Cabinet a few days before the split in 1957.

Mr. Chalk: Ted Walsh threw it out.

Mr. DUGGAN: A few months after the election the Minister said that, because I was no longer a Minister of the Government. Twelve months later he admitted that I was entitled to the credit of planning for these things.

I am quite happy to see that there is an improvement in the earnings over this period. But it is merely characteristic of what is happening with every system in Australia. Even in New South Wales, where there has been an £80,000,000 turnover, the increase in operating expenses was only £40,000 more than in 1957. In South Australia the report this year shows that compared with 1957 they are lower; in Western Australia they are lower than in 1957. In Queensland the Minister is only slightly lower than he was in 1957, according to the railway report. Much of this has been achieved at the expense of the ordinary person in the community, no matter what the Minister may say. I am glad to see increased earnings and I do not want to decry that at all, but I want him to be fair about these things. In the debate in 1957-58 he said that in the first four months of the financial year there had been an improvement of £750,000 compared with the first four months in the previous financial year and the hopes for a balanced account were very promising, yet he ended up with a bigger deficit than in the previous year.

Whatever test may be applied, railway-men in the lower grades today are paid less than they are entitled to; apart from basic-wage adjustments, they have received an increase of only 4s. a week since this Government came to office. Many of these so called financial results of railway operations have been at the expense of the ordinary man outside. Today, the morale of railway-men generally is lower than it has been for many years. It is all very well for the Government to talk about an institute of management, morale and esprit de corps; unless there is a happy, contented service we will not get good work from the men in it.

The Government has closed branch lines. It has been said that they were not profitable; 300 miles of branch lines have been closed down, and more are contemplated. The Government has imported experts from America to tell it how to do these things. We are told that it is an excellent report and should be implemented, but it is apparent that its implementation is to be carried out to serve political considerations. There is no consistency in the Government's transport policy on rail and road transport. Whatever has been done about it has been dictated by political pressure and not in the sound interests of the State.

Mr. PILBEAM (Rockhampton South) (3.41 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on his convincing report on the Railway Department's activities during the past year. It must be gratifying to everyone to realise that, in the past year, the operational budget

of the Department of Railways was almost balanced. The Minister said that, but for a few unfortunate happenings, it would have been balanced. It is very gratifying, too, to know that the income of the department increased by £1,500,000 during the year under review, with increased costs amounting to just over £60,000. The Minister has stated that the railways concentrated on the handling of goods, which earned higher income for the department. The results are self-evident because, in the year under review, a record tonnage of goods was handled totalling 7,534,708 tons, exceeding the tonnage handled in the previous year by 505,762 tons, and the record year by 126,748 tons. A good result was achieved in my area in the last 12 months as a result of the department's signing up virtually every large warehouse in Rockhampton by offering decreased freight rates, although in the meantime there has been a liberalised road transport policy that the Minister has rightly referred to.

I intend to make a comparison between the returns for September last year and September this year. Goods transported between Roma Street and Rockhampton in September 1962 totalled 1,827 tons 13 cwt., for a total revenue of £25,204 8s. 2d. In September 1963 those figures increased to 2,125 tons 13 cwt. for a total revenue of £28,296 14s. 6d., representing an increase of 298 tons in goods carried and of £3,092 6s. 4d. in revenue. There were similar results for Maryborough and Bundaberg. In September 1962, for Maryborough, 958 tons was carried, earning revenue amounting to £4,794 18s. 5d., whilst in September 1963, 1,072 tons 2 cwt. was carried providing revenue amounting to £6,995 9s. 3d. There was an increase in goods carried of 114 tons 2 cwt. and a revenue increase of £2,200 10s. 10d. In the case of Bundaberg, in September 1962, 1,021 tons was carried, representing a revenue of £9,692 7s. 1d. In September 1963 1,180 tons 1 cwt. was carried for a revenue of £9,870 5s. 4d., representing, in the case of Bundaberg, an increase in loading of 159 tons 1 cwt. and, in revenue, of £177 18s. 3d. I give great credit for those figures to a very close friend of mine, Mr. W. Gill, who was recently appointed commercial manager of the Railway Department. He is a very good former citizen and sportsman of Rockhampton and I take this opportunity to congratulate him warmly on his appointment.

In seeking better results in the Railway Department, the Minister has acted very wisely in choosing Rockhampton men for key executive positions. The Commissioner, of course, is a Rockhampton man, too. Mr. Goldston, who has just been appointed General Manager, Toowoomba, comes from Rockhampton. I congratulate him warmly on his appointment. One thing that concerns me about that is that, while he was in Rockhampton, Mr. Goldston was Chairman of the Central Queensland University Development Association. I cannot understand why

the Minister should transfer him to Toowoomba, and I am going to be very interested to hear his remarks, when he goes to Toowoomba, regarding which university should come first in Queensland.

I congratulate Mr. James, another Rockhampton man, on his appointment as Superintendent, Maryborough. And, of course, in Rockhampton we have another Rockhampton man in Mr. Taylor, the General Manager.

I know there are several hardy annuals in this debate and I suppose when I introduce my next subject the Minister will recoil in horror and possibly hear the rattling of a few skeletons around the Chamber because there must have been very many speeches on similar subjects. The Minister has said that the department has concentrated substantially on the carriage of goods and has used its funds to buy rolling-stock primarily for that purpose and has put the carriage of passengers second. Notwithstanding that, I think some consideration must be given to making available a streamlined air-conditioned train for service between Rockhampton and Brisbane. It is over six years since the last air-conditioned train was introduced into the railway system of Queensland. At present we have nine of them throughout the State. Rockhampton does not really mind being last—it expects it—but it would like to have some hope for the future. It would like to feel that in the course of the next few years the people of Rockhampton, Gladstone, Maryborough and Bundaberg will have the opportunity to travel in an air-conditioned mail train. The position may well be resolved by the age of the carriages that form part of the present train. In the fullness of time those carriages, already very old, will fall to pieces and consideration will have to be given to a new train, and in this modern age that could only mean an air-conditioned mail train.

Another matter calling for urgent attention is the railway station at Rockhampton. Anyone who cares to take a look at the existing old structure will agree that it is a disgrace. Perhaps in the past there has been no great contrast between it and some of the other public buildings in Rockhampton, but today it stands out as a blot on the architectural skyline of the city. In recent years practically every major building in Rockhampton needing replacement has been rebuilt. We have a modern city hall, and the theatre is being rebuilt at the present time. We have a beautiful swimming pool, and are giving proper attention to the streets. Commercial houses and hotels have all engaged in substantial rebuilding programmes. The railway station, however, complete in all its pristine galvanised iron, is just as it was when built in the 1880's.

In view of the necessity for a modern structure, and the fact that we have strong Rockhampton representation in the administration of the Railway Department, this

might be considered a propitious occasion to make a strong request for a new station. It was built in 1880.

Mr. Aikens: I am getting £250,000 spent on the Townsville railway station. What's wrong with you?

Mr. PILBEAM: Congratulations.

In 1928 an official announcement was made that a new station was to be built. Apparently the depression intervened and stopped that construction. In 1935 the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce raised the matter with the Minister. In 1938, in a statement prepared by the new Commissioner for Railways, reference was made to the laying by Mr. Larcombe of the foundation stone of a new station. Also in 1938 the Minister announced that construction of the station would have his close attention.

In 1945 the Commissioner for Railways said that a new station would have his close attention, and in 1950 tenders were called for its construction. In June 1951 fresh tenders were called. In 1952 a very optimistic editorial stated that the new station would cost about £1,000,000. In 1957 we were gratified to hear the statement by the Treasurer, Hon. T. A. Hiley, that the next railway station to be built in Queensland would definitely be at Rockhampton. In July 1958, in reply to a delegation from the Rockhampton City Council, the Minister for Transport, Hon. G. W. W. Chalk, announced that the station would not be built that year, but that he was endeavouring to provide finance for the new railway station in the next year's Budget.

In view of those facts, I think it will be realised that the people of Rockhampton have been very patient, and I say that their patience should be rewarded. As I said before, we have in Rockhampton a completely new city. There has been a vast improvement in Government buildings. The latest addition is the new police station, which is something of which we are proud, and the Commonwealth Government has come to the fore by building a magnificent air terminal. I suggest to the Minister that he give urgent consideration to at least telling us when Rockhampton's new railway station will be built.

I must congratulate the Minister on the excellent job that he has done in the difficult task of administering the transport portfolio. I believe that he deserves the highest credit for his work in that field.

Some transport matters are causing concern to the Rockhampton Harbour Board, and a delegation will shortly be waiting on the Minister seeking a new system of reduced rail freights for lines serving the port, and consideration of the tax on road transport from Port Alma to the city. I see that the Minister is smiling and I know that he is sympathetic to these matters. He will be receiving a deputation on them later in the year.

There is another matter which, although not quite so important as the others that I have mentioned, is agitating the minds of the people of Rockhampton. I was pleased to hear the Minister mention taxi-cabs in his speech. I think it is obvious to everyone that taxi-cabs should be metered in provincial cities, as they are in Brisbane, and I am glad that the Commissioner for Transport has raised the question with taxi-cab proprietors in Rockhampton and Townsville. It is desirable to have meters in taxi-cabs both from the point of view of the public and from the point of view of the owners. If members of the public are confident that they will be charged a standard fee, or a reasonable fee, they will use cabs more frequently. It is true that cab drivers in provincial cities face some difficulties that are not faced by cab drivers in Brisbane. It would be a hardship, for example, if they were allowed to charge for only part of a trip, because they do not have the opportunity that Brisbane cab drivers have of waiting on a rank and getting a return fare. Their running costs are also higher than those of Brisbane cabs. I believe that meters should be installed in cabs in Rockhampton, Townsville, and other provincial cities, and I am very pleased that the Commissioner is meeting representatives of these people in conference next Monday. I hope that, as a result, this very desirable amenity will be introduced in taxi-cabs in all provincial cities throughout the State.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.57 p.m.): The Leader of the Opposition had, as usual, some derogatory remarks to make about me. He said that at one time he thought that I spoke for the railwaymen of Queensland and that quite a lot of my remarks in the Chamber were published in "The Advocate", which is the official journal of the Australian Railways Union. Of course, that is quite true. But what the Leader of the Opposition did not say was that in 1957 the Australian Railways Union, not because of any vote of the rank and file but simply because of a decision of the governing body, reaffiliated with the A.L.P., and in 1957, after the Leader of the Opposition had left the remainder of Cabinet and gone across into the Trades Hall corner, he made a promise to Mr. Frank Nolan, the State Secretary of the Australian Railways Union, that if Labour were elected to power in 1957 and he were the Premier of the State—he made a similar promise in 1960—he would appoint Mr. Nolan to the Arbitration Court bench. Let me say this: I do not know of very many men more fitted to sit on the Arbitration Court bench than Mr. Frank Nolan. Nevertheless, there is that link-up not only between the governing body of the A.R.U. and the A.L.P. but also between Mr. Frank Nolan and the Leader of the Opposition.

It is rather peculiar that the Leader of the Opposition should have mentioned that,

because anyone who cares to go into the Library and read the files of "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" for the few weeks before the last election campaign and to get a copy of the speeches that I made over the radio station and the television station will realise that I fought my campaign on the issue of the railways. As a matter of fact, one of my speeches from television station TNQ7 arose entirely from the difference between railway administration under Mr. Duggan and railway administration under Mr. Chalk, and I dealt very fully and completely with the privileges and concessions granted to railwaymen by the present Minister, privileges that had been repeatedly refused by Mr. Duggan.

The Leader of the Opposition talked about my not having the confidence of the railwaymen. Let me assure him that, having fought that campaign almost entirely on the issue of the railways, in an electorate that is composed almost wholly of railwaymen, meat-workers, and waterside workers, I romped home, as I said earlier in the session, by 8,000 votes to 5,000. The Leader of the Opposition should be the last to talk about anybody having the confidence of anybody else, because we find him in a most unusual position for a Leader of the Opposition—detested by the railwaymen and despised by the great majority of the parliamentary members of his own party. That is the man who has the temerity and elephantine hide to point the finger of scorn at me and claim I have lost the confidence of railwaymen.

I mentioned, too, and I challenged the Leader of the Opposition in an article in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin" long before the election campaign, when I said—and this is true and can be proved to be true—that when the Leader of the Opposition went through any area where there was no aggregation of railwaymen he came out staunchly on the side of the road transport hauliers. But when he went to Toowoomba, to Rockhampton, to Cairns or to Townsville, where there are large aggregations of railwaymen, he turned one of those political somersaults for which he has become notorious and came out on the side of the railwaymen. I will take the Leader of the Opposition on anywhere. As a matter of fact, I would contest a seat with him in this Queensland Parliament in which the only people who had to vote for us were the railwaymen of Queensland, and I would wipe the floor with him.

Now, let me give an example not only of the insincerity of the Leader of the Opposition but of the insincerity of every one of the 26 members of this leaderless rabble that is pleased to call itself the Parliamentary A.L.P. Recently, a week or so ago, a man named Suggars made a most derogatory, defamatory and scurrilous statement about railwaymen at Roma Street. He suggested they were taking bribes and soliciting bribes. He suggested that you had to cross their palms by

slipping them a piece of blue paper to do their work. I deliberately waited for a week to see if the Leader of the Opposition, or any other member of the A.L.P. who, during the election campaign travelled the highways and byways claiming they were 100 per cent. on the side of railwaymen, would challenge that defamatory and scurrilous statement to protect the reputation of railwaymen. But not so; not one member in this Assembly, and particularly not the Leader of the Opposition, rose in defence of these men, and consequently it remained until yesterday when I asked a question in the House of the Minister for Transport and gave him an opportunity to make a statement in the House in defence of railwaymen. The fact of the matter is—and, Mr. Tooth, I am going to tell you something that I have already said from the public platform—that during the last State election campaign the governing body of the A.L.P. in this State received a donation of £35,000 from the road transport hauliers.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I have seen a photostat of the cheque butt, and if I am driven too far I will produce it.

Mr. Mann: I challenge you to.

Mr. AIKENS: What is the hon. member's challenge worth?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order!

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. I heard the hon. member for Townsville South say that he had a photostat copy—

Mr. AIKENS: I have seen it.

Mr. DUGGAN: You lie.

Mr. AIKENS: You lie, and you know you lie.

Mr. Davies: What a scurrilous scoundrel!

Mr. AIKENS: And you are a mongrel of the lowest type.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the Leader of the Opposition please state his point of order?

Mr. DUGGAN: The hon. member said that he had seen a photostat copy of a cheque butt showing a donation of £35,000 to the A.L.P. That is a calculated lie. Neither collectively nor individually did the A.L.P. receive a sum from the Road Hauliers Association of Queensland. I challenge the hon. member to prove, or produce, evidence, that such a sum or any lesser sum came from the road hauliers to the A.L.P. in this State. If he can do that, I give a solemn undertaking that if his charges are proved I will resign my position as Leader of the Opposition and as member for Toowoomba West.

Mr. AIKENS: We can settle this much more promptly than by my producing proof. If the Leader of the Opposition is so emphatic that no such donation was received, let him produce to my accountants the books of the Q.C.E.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order! The Leader of the Opposition has made a certain statement. Does the hon. member for Townsville South accept that statement?

Mr. AIKENS: What statement am I asked to accept? He rambled all over the place.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has said that the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville South is incorrect.

Mr. AIKENS: I will accept that from the Leader of the Opposition, because I know just what he is likely to say in this Chamber.

Mr. Duggan: Don't be a skunk.

Mr. AIKENS: If I were the type you are I would have the decency to cut my throat.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The expression "skunk" is unparliamentary, and I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw it.

Mr. Duggan: I withdraw it. If I were not Leader of the Opposition I would not withdraw from this matter, and would accept suspension as the penalty. But seeing that I am the Leader, I withdraw the remark.

Mr. AIKENS: There is a Federal election in the offing. Of course, the A.L.P. is short of money. It has just had a State election. With a Federal election coming on and the municipal elections in the New Year, the A.L.P. is scraping the bottom of the barrel for funds—not only the Q.C.E. of the A.L.P., but every branch. They will take funds from anywhere.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the matter under discussion.

Mr. AIKENS: Did you notice, Mr. Tooth, that the Leader of the Opposition, having come into the Chamber to put on that beautiful histrionic display—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the Estimates under discussion. Will he please proceed to the matter under discussion?

Mr. AIKENS: We had that statement by the Leader of the Opposition, and no doubt he will rush in again in a moment to make another when I say this. With regard to Alderman Strube of the Townsville City Council, he said that Mr. Moriarty, when General Manager of the Northern Division,

saw Alderman Strube come into the office with a bundle of council papers, that Moriarty and Strube had a big argument and, in effect, Strube resigned in a huff. I am prepared to bet a fairly substantial sum that Strube was not forced to resign when Moriarty was General Manager. I am prepared to wager a substantial sum that Moriarty was Commissioner—that he went to Townsville under the instructions of the Minister for Transport and ordered Strube to resign, not as the General Manager, but as the Commissioner. That gives some idea of the worth of any statement made in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Davies: He resigned.

Mr. AIKENS: Of course he did. He was given the opportunity by Moriarty, as the Commissioner, either to resign as a railwayman or to resign as an alderman. He was given those alternatives. I repeat that he was given them under the orders of the then Minister for Transport, the present Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Mann: It is not true, and you know it.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. member would not know. He has not been to Townsville since the 1960 elections, when he went up there to speak on behalf of Bill Edmonds and, incidentally, got me a couple of thousand extra votes.

Let us deal with this position of railwaymen being aldermen. I agree wholeheartedly with what was said the other day by the hon. member for Cairns. These railwaymen have given noble, and, indeed, illustrious service to the local authorities of this State, but it cannot be denied that there is a peculiar position with regard to some railwaymen. In 1936 I was elected as an alderman of the Townsville City Council. I was a running man, as was Alderman Illich. Other men elected were working the ordinary day shift. They had no difficulty whatever in attending council meetings because the meetings were held at night. No leave had to be arranged for them. They could go along in their own time. But Illich and I had to have special workings arranged for us.

In fairness, I must say that the loco group of the A.R.U. in Townsville and the Townsville sub-branch of the A.F.U.L.E. agreed not only that we should be exempted from western transfer service but also that we should be allowed leave to attend council meetings. But that did not signify that the rank and file of the loco running men were satisfied. I will give an example. In order to make it easy for me to attend council meetings in Townsville, because I held a stationary steam ticket I asked the roster clerk to book me as a shedman's assistant. That work, of course, is harder and entails shift work.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: I am dealing with railwaymen and local-authority matters.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Tooth): Order! The Chair cannot tolerate a discussion on the conduct of the debate. The matter that the hon. member is discussing has been dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition, and I think that, in the circumstances, the hon. member for Townsville South is entitled to comment on it.

Mr. AIKENS: I know that it is very painful to hon. members opposite.

To make it easy for me to fit my council meetings in I took that job as shedman's assistant, in which there was no overtime, no Sunday time and no away-from-home allowance. If I remember rightly, my fortnightly pay was £9 2s., for which I worked day shift, afternoon shift, and night shift.

Mr. MANN: I rise to a point of order. You rule, Mr. Tooth, as Temporary Chairman, that we may discuss anything at all in the Railway Estimates, or do you rule that we must stick to the administration of the Railway Department?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The Acting Chairman of Committees has ruled that he will allow a full discussion of the administrative activities of both departments.

Mr. AIKENS: I know it is painful to them.

Mr. Mann: That has nothing to do with this at all.

Mr. Bromley: There is nothing in the Estimates about this.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I rule that the hon. member for Townsville South is entitled to discuss this matter.

Mr. AIKENS: I worked those three shifts at my own expense, and at my own inconvenience, but after I had been working them for about 18 months a complaint was made to the General Manager, Mr. Hudson, that I was not working Saturday afternoons and nights, because a night-shift shedman in those days worked on Saturday from 12 to 4 a.m., the day-shift shedman from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. and the afternoon-shift shedman from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. I worked with my shedman and I made this personal and financial sacrifice so that it would be easy for me to attend council meetings, but certain rank-and-file members of the running section in Townsville complained to the General Manager.

Mr. MANN: I rise to a point of order. Will you please tell me, Mr. Tooth, what this has to do with administration?

Mr. AIKENS: Send him out.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I have already ruled that the hon. member for Townsville South is entitled, in view of the earlier discussion, to discuss this matter.

Mr. AIKENS: These men went to the General Manager and insisted that I be put back on the road as a fireman, and he had to do it. The hon. member for Cairns will admit, if he is frank, that there has always been considerable dissension among loco running men, traffic running men, and others whose work has to be specially arranged, over railwaymen who have been elected to councils.

I now wish to deal with something that was referred to, I think, by the Leader of the Opposition. If he referred to it, and if I heard him correctly, I find myself in accord with his remarks. I tell the Minister, the Premier, the Treasurer, and the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, who have all come in and paid me the compliment of listening to me, that industrial trouble is brewing, and will erupt at any time, because of the fantastically unjust wages and salaries structure that has been built up for all sections of Crown employees. We find today that public servants' salaries—and I am not saying they are overpaid, as a matter of fact, I think they are entitled to every penny they are getting—are drawing egregiously away from those of the salaried services in the Railway Department to such an extent that men in the Public Service who would be rated as perhaps sixth-class clerks or unclassified clerks in the Railway Department are getting more money than railway district superintendents of transport. Men doing jobs in the Public Service that would be rated as unclassified clerical jobs in the Railway Department are getting a higher salary than first-class clerks in the Railway Service. And just as the Public Service has drawn away from the salaried section of the Railway Department, so has the salaried section of the Railway Department drawn away egregiously, fantastically, and unjustly, from the wages section of the Railway Department. I will give one example and I think it will suffice. We have a man in Townsville who was a fireman. He had three attempts to pass his driver's examination and he failed in all three. He sought a transfer to the clerical section and it was granted. Now, as an unclassified clerk he draws more money than he would have drawn had he passed his examination and become a first-class driver. That is the position under the fantastically unjust wage-and-salary structure that has been built up under this Government. How it is ever going to solve the problem I do not know. It amounts to something of a Gordian knot and the Minister will have to take an administrative sword and cut right through it. It is a monstrously unjust situation.

I do not say that those in the Public Service are overpaid; but, if those in the Public Service are being paid according to the work they do for the State, then not only the salaried section of the Railway Department but also the manual section—the black-shirt workers—of the Railway Department are being monstrously underpaid, and that cannot be denied.

It is true that there is industrial unrest seething underneath the surface of the Railway Department. I do not know how long it will be before the railwaymen, particularly the black-shirt section, throw down the gage of battle to the Government on the ground that they are not receiving the wage justice to which they are entitled.

I want the Government to know that, if they issue that challenge, I will not hesitate to take my place; I will not run for cover or look for any funk-hole, as many members of the A.L.P. did in 1948 and at other times. I will march up Flinders Street with the railwaymen again—let there be no mistake about—because I am always on their side.

Mr. Mann: You are a scab and a renegade!

Mr. AIKENS: If I am a scab, the hon. member for Brisbane must be the lowest type of scab who ever came into this Parliament. He even scabbed on his own leader. He scabbed on himself, and no man could do worse than that. Let him go to Townsville and tell the railwaymen there that I am a scab. I marched with them before and I will march with them again. I marched with them when these fellows were running for every funk-hole that they could find, and when they were supporting Duggan and his vicious and venomous anti-picketing Act, when they supported a Government that supplied batons to the police to baton down the workers! I was on the side of the railwaymen then and I will be on the side of the railwaymen again; let there be no doubt about that!

I warn the Government, quietly and with all the sincerity at my command, that the wage-and-salary structure of the railways is in a particularly rotten state.

Mr. Chalk: They have a case before the Court.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not think that will solve the problem because the gap is becoming too great. It is not only the gap between the black-shirt workers and the white-shirt workers in the railways—which is bad enough—but it is the gap between the white-shirt workers in the railways and those holding comparable positions in the Public Service. Certain men in the Public Service occupying minor positions are drawing higher salaries than a district superintendent of transportation in the railways and higher salaries than a chief clerk in the Railway Department, and that is monstrously and egregiously unjust.

I came down from Townsville a few weeks ago in the Sunlander, as usual, and at Rockhampton we picked up several members of the Liberal Party who were returning from a Liberal Party conference in that city. I was very pleased that they were on that particular Sunlander because we ran about 10 or fifteen minutes late into Caboolture, with the result that we were 15 or 20 minutes

late into the suburban area of Brisbane. I was pleased that they were on the train to see what happens when the Sunlander is running a few minutes late, because it took about 40 minutes to go from Mayne Junction to Roma Street. Once you get into the suburban area of Brisbane on the Sunlander and you are running a few minutes late, the Sunlander has to give precedence to every suburban passenger train on the line. The Railway Department gives precedence to the Freddie's and the Flossies coming to work in the suburban trains. Apparently the attitude of the department towards the Sunlander is, "Oh, well, those people in the Sunlander have been there for 30 hours so another hour or two will not hurt them; but we have to get the Freddie's and the Flossies in to work on time, otherwise we will have a ring from the Chamber of Commerce or from Mr. Coneybeer or Mr. James, or someone else." So I was particularly pleased at having members of the Liberal Party on that train with me so that they could actually see what happens when the Sunlander is running a few minutes late from Caboolture. After several delays, we pulled up at Mayne Junction and waited there for an interminable time. Then we proceeded a little further, and when we reached the fork-line cabin at Roma Street we waited again for an interminable period while suburban trains shuttled backward and forward into the suburban station. I was pleased that those hon. members were on the train to see what happened.

I now want to say something on the subject of taxis in Brisbane. Last year I had an argument with a taxi-driver at Roma Street. I asked a series of questions in the House, and, as a result, Mr. Morris, Secretary of the Taxi Cab Owner Drivers' Association, wrote a smart-Alec article in the taxi drivers' journal. I replied to him, and he was surprised to know that I was not making a second-hand complaint in the House. He was surprised to know that I was the person who had lodged the complaint.

I shall tell hon. members what actually happened. My wife and I left the Sunlander and went to where a taxi-driver was standing touting for custom. I actually put my ports in the boot and said, "Will you take us to Marr's Guest House?" He said, "No, I am not going to take you to Marr's Guest House—not for me." After that he said, "I am waiting here. I have been engaged," when he was not in fact waiting for anybody. I went away to find another taxi, and this driver then said to my wife, "He is only a dirty big mug, anyway."

Mr. Mann: Hear, hear!

Mr. Aikens: If he had said it of the hon. member for Brisbane, it would have been perfectly true. Luckily for him, my wife did not tell me what he had said till a couple of hours later.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (4.22 p.m.): In relation to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, I remind him that I, in common with other members of the Australian Labour Party, was opposed by a candidate from the Government side at the last election.

Mr. Aikens: You were not opposed by a Communist.

Mr. DONALD: The hon. member would not be opposed by a Communist.

I notice that workshops expenditure in the Railway Department has been reduced from £3,391,152 in 1962-63 to an estimated expenditure of £3,349,600 in 1963-64, showing a reduction of £41,552. There is also a reduction in the amount allocated to railway refreshment rooms. The expenditure last year was £463,188, which is the exact amount appropriated. That was wonderful budgeting, right down to the last sandwich, for which I extend my congratulations to the Minister. This year the estimate is £458,860, or £4,328 less than last year. That is to be found in the report of the Commissioner for Railways at page 13.

This reduction in workshops allocation means that more new and repair work is to be given to outside firms at the expense of the department's own workshops. There will also be a reduction in the number of Government employees in refreshment rooms. The Government's own supporters have publicly expressed alarm at the amount of railway work being done by private firms during the last 12 months.

The Minister himself has admitted publicly that repair work was the right of railway workshops and should be restricted to them rather than let to private enterprise. Railwaymen agree, but also feel they should get new work, too. Experience over the years has shown that both new and repair work done by the staffs of the various railway workshops in the State is beyond doubt superior to, and cheaper than, the same work done by private enterprise.

The feeling of security that was characteristic of railway employees in the past, irrespective of their callings or classifications, is now completely gone. Unfortunately, with the defeat of the Labour Government, this feeling has been replaced by considerable anxiety for the future. During the past few years we have seen the closing of branch lines, rails being removed, and station buildings and equipment sold at far below value.

A glance at the Commissioner's report shows the limited amount of work going to departmental workshops. An ever-increasing amount of new work is being done outside. That is confirmed on page 9 of the Commissioner's report, where this appears—

"The strength of the Department's Diesel-Electric Locomotive resources was advanced to a total of 86 units by the acquisition,

during the year, of an additional 13 locomotives. Twelve 925 h.p. Diesel-Electric Locomotives of the 1600 Class were received from the English Electric Company of Australia Pty. Ltd. in fulfilment of a contract let to that Company in January, 1962. The thirteenth locomotive received represented the initial delivery against an order for twelve 950-875 h.p. locomotives (1700 Class) placed with Clyde Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd.

"The entrusting of the construction of these locomotives to Clyde Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. signalled the entry of another Queensland based firm into the field of diesel-electric locomotive manufacture."

There the Commissioner for Railways is telling us that, because of the work that the Queensland Railway Department is giving to outside firms, another firm has been able to set up business in Queensland. I want to know why the Railway Department could not do the work itself. During the term of office of the Leader of the Opposition as Minister for Transport, the Railway Department acquired land at Redbank for the specific purpose of building and maintaining diesel-electric locomotives. At the same time, it built other railway workshops at Banyo. Unfortunately, the construction of those workshops has not been proceeded with. If the Railway Department can provide sufficient work for an outside firm to enable it to establish workshops in Queensland, why could it not complete the construction of the workshops that were started when the Labour Party was in office and build the engines itself?

The report continues—

"The construction of the 1600 Class locomotives is being undertaken at the Rocklea Works of English Electric Company of Australia Pty. Ltd., whilst the 1700 Class locomotives are being built by Clyde Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. at Rocklea, in conjunction with Commonwealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd."

Further down the page it says—

"Two Main Line diesel-electric locomotives for use in the haulage of traffic on the Mt. Isa Line were supplied by English Electric Company of Australia Ltd. in July, 1963.

"A diesel-mechanical locomotive constructed by Commonwealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. and placed in service on the Innisfail Tramway during 1962-63, completed the locomotive purchases for that year. This section of line is now fully dieselised."

Then, dealing with carriages, the report says—

"Twenty-eight stainless steel suburban cars, representing the balance of the order for 91 such vehicles placed with Common-

wealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd., were received during the year. Negotiations were concluded with the Company for the extension of this contract to provide for the supply of a further 21 stainless steel cars, and the delivery of this additional number is scheduled to be completed in January, 1964."

Under the heading "Wagons", the report reads—

"The intake of new wagons in 1962-63 totalled 205. Two hundred of these were of the 'WHO' type and represented part fulfilment of a contract let to Commonwealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. for the manufacture of 400 wagons. Of a gross weight of 62 tons and featuring a carrying capacity of 44 tons, these new wagons are intended for use on the reconstructed Mt. Isa Line in the conveyance of coal and coke to Mt. Isa and zinc concentrates, silver lead and blister copper from that station.

"To meet the requirements of general traffic on the Townsville-Mt. Isa Section, an order was placed in August, 1962, with Scotts of Ipswich for the building of 50 'CO' type box wagons of a gross weight of 62 tons and carrying capacity of 40½ tons. The prototype of this wagon was delivered in July, 1963, and the contract is scheduled to be completed in January, 1964.

"A feature of the Department's activities in the sphere of goods transport has been the operation of a fast freight service to northern and other centres with the use of bogie louvered vans capable of being hauled at passenger train speeds.

"These wagons are being utilised to the maximum of their availability, and to provide for the very desirable expansion of this fast freight service, steps were taken to design a new wagon—the 'GLC'. This wagon has a gross weight of 45 tons and is capable of carrying 26½ tons. A contract for the manufacture and supply of 300 'GLC' wagons has been awarded to Commonwealth Engineering (Queensland) Pty. Ltd.

"This firm will also undertake the construction of 100 'ALY' wagons. Conforming to a new design, these are four-wheeled steel box wagons, 18 feet in length. Their gross weight is 22 tons and tare 8 tons.

"To meet the demands of specialised traffic, 72 wagons were adapted in Ipswich Railway Workshops to cater for the carriage of bulk pineapples in bins from Yeppoon, the near North Coast and Mary Valley Line, and another wagon was converted in the development of a prototype for the conveyance of motor vehicles. Following the successful testing of this wagon, the work of converting a further 49 wagons in similar manner will be put in hand. Six hundred and eighteen wagons were written off the books during 1962-63.

"With a view to overcoming the limitations of existing cranes, the Department purchased during the year four breakdown cranes, manufactured by Cowans Sheldon, England, one of which has been allotted to each of the four Divisions."

That is work given to private enterprise that could and should have been undertaken by the Railway Department. It is no use saying we have not the brains and ability in the Railway Department to do it. All that is required to be done, according to the Commissioner's own report, has been done by outside firms. Yet, by comparison, the Ipswich Railway Workshops were given 72 wagons—not 72 new wagons, but 72 wagons—for adaptation to certain classes of work to be undertaken in the railways. So we can say that contracts in abundance are given to outside firms for over 500 wagons as well as locomotives, car and rail motor units.

The Government policy in having such a large proportion of railway work done by private firms justifies the thought that is prevailing in the minds of railwaymen, namely, that the Government is deliberately reducing the importance of railway workshops throughout the State. Some few years ago the Government, acting on behalf of the Railway Department, sent representatives overseas in an endeavour to induce tradesmen to migrate to Queensland. Today they are dismissing apprentices on completion of their apprenticeships, or offering them employment as unskilled labourers.

We have the paradoxical position of our national Government giving precedence to skilled migrants while the Queensland State Government refuses to employ the boys it has trained. There is no justification for the Government's refusal to employ apprentices on the completion of their training, or its action in demoting tradesmen. The isolation of railway transport from other forms of transport is unsound and is also opposed to the general welfare of the public.

Railwaymen are realistic enough to know that the needs of the community and industry must be served, and the public generally are prepared to admit and thank railwaymen for the service they have rendered to the community over the years, and for the part the Queensland railways have played in the development of our State. I do not care who is critical of the railways; that is something that cannot be taken away from railwaymen or truthfully denied. Their most persistent critics are those whom the railways serve best. There is no need for me to point out just who they are because that is patently true.

The running of the railways as a commercial enterprise would be a negative policy, and, if put into operation, could result in the closure of all lines that were not paying, and could have a very serious effect on the economy of the State. The policy being pursued by the present Government has resulted in almost 4,000 fewer employees being

engaged by the Railway Department. So it is no wonder that those who remain fear for their future. That fear is very genuine and would be apparent to members of the Government if they mixed with railway employees and their families.

It is true that, with the mechanisation of transport and with industrial and population changes, conditions may be created whereby the railways could not meet transport needs satisfactorily. If and where such conditions exist, there is no valid reason why the railways should not provide the alternative transport service. Instead of this Government legislating to assist transport systems that are running in competition with the railways, it should be providing the railways with alternative transport.

The value of our railways should not be judged on whether, after paying annually a staggering interest bill, they can make a profit on the year's operations. Rather should they be judged on the service they render to the community and the contribution they render to the economy and development of our State.

I honestly believe that hon. members will agree that the railways have given excellent service to the people of Queensland, and have played a major role in the progress and development of our State, particularly in times of a crisis. We all can recall, without any difficulty at all, the praise and gratitude expressed by leading officers of the American Army for the efficiency of the Queensland railways during the war. However, it should not be a question of whether or not the railways pay; the problem goes much deeper than that. I admit quite freely that transport can, and does, have an important effect on the economy of our State. Queensland is the most decentralised State in the Commonwealth, largely due to our railway system. Throughout the State we have many prosperous towns which are often referred to as railway towns. Should some other form of transport be introduced and the railways go, then so will most of those towns go. Unfortunately we have seen too many towns in Queensland become ghost towns when the industry that gave them birth and kept them alive has disappeared. This very important factor should be given very serious consideration when the future of our railways is being examined.

It should be obvious to all that the railways are indispensable to almost every industry in our State. Almost every industry depends very largely on the railways, and, conversely, the railways depend equally on other industries. The railways are, without doubt, the great arteries of the State's trade, industry and commerce. Since the end of World War II, we have witnessed in Queensland, in common with the other States of the Commonwealth, a revolution in the field of transport. Although the railways cannot expect to have, nor do they seek, a monopoly, it would be unwise to allow unrestricted and

uncontrolled transport, which would inevitably result in national waste. However, the establishment of road transport to provide feeder sources to the railways would be welcomed by the public generally as well as by railway employees.

The trend to have railway work done outside the railway workshops should be discontinued. Wherever practicable, all material required for the successful operation of the railways should be manufactured by employees in the railway workshops, not purchased from outside firms. In spite of the fact that, again and again, railway employees have proved beyond doubt that they turn out better and cheaper work than private, outside firms, many people seize every opportunity, with or without justification, to discredit them.

The following should demonstrate the value of the railway employees to this State, and why the workshops should be given every encouragement and their activities increased rather than limited. The crankcase on one of the diesel-electric locomotives was cracked. May I add that it was not through the fault of any railway employee. Those in authority got in touch with the firm that built and supplied that diesel-electric locomotive to the Railway Department. They asked the firm just what it would cost to repair the damage, and the answer they received was that it would cost between 8,000 and 9,000 dollars. The Chief Mechanical Engineer and Workshops Superintendent felt that this was just a little too high and said, "I will consult my men." He consulted those under him, and they decided they would give it a go themselves. The men at the Ipswich Railway Workshops repaired the damage to that diesel-electric locomotive themselves, and it cost only a little over £300. That example alone shows the value of the railway workshops to the people of the State, and the skill and ability of the railway workers employed therein. That locomotive is still running. That the work was well done has been proved by the fact that that diesel-electric locomotive has covered many hundreds, maybe thousands, of train miles since the repairs were effected over two years ago. I emphasise that the repairs were carried out for a little over £300, when the outside firm would have charged between 8,000 and 9,000 dollars. That in itself should temper the desire of the Government to serve private enterprise at the expense of the people of Queensland, and particularly at the expense of those who have given a lifetime of service to the Railway Department.

The shortage of railway wagons has brought forth some adverse comments on the running of the railways. This shortage should not exist while the department is dismissing tradesmen. In spite of anything that may be said to the contrary, railwaymen are being dismissed. If no tradesmen have been actually dismissed, the Government must accept responsibility for the boys who have

served their apprenticeship and become tradesmen; good tradesmen have been dismissed from the department, or asked to accept jobs as unskilled labourers.

Five tractors were received in the railway goods yards on Thursday 10 October and did not leave until Monday, 14 October. Two were to go to Mackay, one to Emerald, one to Babinda, and one to Cairns. On 9 October, 1963, two 500-gallon tanks for the Shell Oil Co. at Cloncurry, a quantity of steel for Bowen, and a 26-ft. steel joist for the Pleystowe mill, Mackay, were lying on the ground waiting for wagons and remained there until Monday, 14 October. I mention this because of a news item that appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 16 October, 1963. The hon. member for Townsville South is not the only one who has seen this sort of thing, nor is he the only one who has protested about it. However, I prefer to mention the matter in this debate than to use the privilege of asking the Minister a question about it.

I ask hon. members to note the contents of this article—

"A Chamber of Manufactures member had complained of 'pointed requests' from a Roma Street goods yard railwayman for bribes to get his consignments away on time, the Chamber's general manager (Mr. L. A. Suggars) said.

"Mr. Suggars said he had been told that 'palm greasing' could be very effective at Roma Street although he had no personal knowledge."

One gets a very poor impression of a man who makes a charge like that to the newspapers and then says he has no personal knowledge of it.

The article continues—

"A member had complained to him that he had been told by a railway man that delays could cost him £20 a week.

"Mr. L. J. Jones, said his firm was a big user of the railways, and had found that the department just did not have enough rolling stock at present to handle all business."

I do not know why Liberal supporters should frequently accuse railway employees of pilfering. I mentioned this matter in my Address-in-Reply speech and I raise it again today. This is how a prominent member of the Liberal Party was reported in his views of Ipswich Railway Workshops.

"He claimed the workshops had a reputation for pilfering. The removal of pieces of Government property from the premises, he said, 'rivalled the achievement of escaping to West Berlin from East Berlin.'"

I shall conclude my remarks by saying that there is a general lack of amenities at Roma Street, a shortage of lockers in the dining room, and unsatisfactory toilet facilities. In any big establishment it is essential to have

decent, clean lavatory facilities, but these lavatories are uncomfortable and cause dissatisfaction and inconvenience. Again, the railway employees at Mayne are working under adverse conditions that have resulted in many complaints. They have received many promises, but nothing has been done to improve their working conditions. The condition of shunting yards throughout the State leaves much to be desired. Some are overgrown with weeds, while others are badly drained and are not kept in a good clean condition. There has been much talk about improvements in the railways, but we still have guard's vans that are referred to in the railway service as blackout vans because they contain no interior lighting whatever. The guard has to do his work by the light of the lantern he carries in his hand.

I join with the Leader of the Opposition in paying a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Lingard for the wonderful service he has given Queensland and for the courtesy he has always shown towards me and other members of Parliament. The same remarks apply also to Miss Doran.

A little while ago the State was threatened with a railway stoppage. In fact, a short stoppage did occur. That was because no accommodation was available for men who had been transferred and who in some cases had to leave their families behind them in their home town. Another complaint is about the long delay in bringing men back to the home station after being notified of their transfer home.

The short-sightedness of the department in not engaging cleaners has led to a shortage of skilled engine crews, which has resulted in delays and inconvenience.

There has been a record tonnage hauled this year, with less staff, and it is claimed that that is due to dieselisation; but surely some credit must go to the employees, particularly the maintenance staff, the men whose work has been made harder by the increase in the loads hauled. Unfortunately they have not been able to get recognition of this, as was stressed by the previous speaker.

From 1960 to 1963 there has been a reduction in the number of railway employees by 1,985—121 salaried employees and 1,864 wages employees. Three hundred and thirty miles of railway have been closed.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HERBERT (Sherwood) (4.47 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister and his officers on the standard of the new railway stations from Chelmer through to Corinda. They are certainly a vast improvement on the previous wooden structures. But I am afraid that I am unable to congratulate him on the service the area gets in off-peak periods. It is almost non-existent. I am perfectly aware of the economic reasons for the curtailment

of services. I have travelled on trains in and out of that area when there have been only one, two or three passengers on them. The taxpayers of the State cannot be expected to finance a rail service that is not used by the citizens. But I suggest that a system of rail-motor coaches could be used in the off-peak period to provide a more frequent service than at present. Trains of six and seven carriages are not required between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., but we have waits of up to one and a-half hours on week days and much longer at week-ends. Bear in mind that the area from Chelmer out relies entirely on the railway for public transport—it has no trams or buses—so that, when no trains are running, people who want to get in to town or out in a hurry have to use taxis, and that is expensive for those who live so far out.

However, we have the benefit of vastly-improved station facilities and, if we can get those rail-motor services, we should be able to attract more people to the railways. Very shortly the department will be faced with competition from Council buses. With the bridge across Oxley Creek under construction, it can be assumed that the Council bus service will quickly move into the Graceville area.

Corinda, which is the end of the quadruplication service, has a valid complaint against the railways over the marshalling yards. Corinda is a dress-circle suburb. The rates are high, and in recent years the people living there have had thrust upon them a railway marshalling yard. I realise that this decision was made before the present Minister assumed office, but I protest most vigorously against any extension of the yards. The nuisance at night is particularly objectionable. The Minister has issued instructions concerning the loud-hailer system, but in the hours of darkness there is nevertheless a great disability suffered by people living nearby. I am very much afraid that it will be aggravated when the new fruit and vegetable markets are opened.

On behalf of those who work for Carricks and other industries in that area, I thank the Minister for his decision to establish a new railway station on the Corinda link-line, which passes the new markets site. We hope to see that station in operation in the near future. We have no name for it yet, but there are plenty of suggestions from the local people of names of pioneers of the district.

The people beyond Corinda are rightly somewhat jealous of the areas closer to town when they see the beautiful railway stations provided from Corinda in to the city. The people of Oxley, in particular, feel that they have been overlooked in the general improvements. They still have the same station as they have had for many years, and Oxley will become a major traffic area in the future. There is already a considerable amount of traffic coming by car from Inala, and when Centenary Estate is opened

the number will be considerably increased. I believe that Oxley should be high on the list of stations for platform rebuilding.

This matter brings me to something that I think should be considered in the overall railway planning for Brisbane as a whole. The development of motor transport has meant that more and more people now drive to railway stations, park nearby, and travel to the city by train. At Oxley, shopkeepers complain that they have day-long parkers blocking the streets and preventing customers from getting to shops. That is a complaint that is multiplied all over Brisbane, and unless some means is found of providing parking facilities for people who commute in this manner, we will have the problem, which is already severe in Sydney and Melbourne, of streets near railway stations being blocked by all-day parkers. Finally the stage is reached where all-day parking near railway stations is banned and the Railway Department loses revenue.

I suggest that the Railway Department should acquire in the metropolitan area vacant land near railway stations to provide off-street parking for rail travellers. There are a number of places where this could be done satisfactorily. Many are vanishing as the city develops, and if we do not move now we will not be able to move at all.

A classic example is provided at Chelmer. The Chelmer dump is no longer used by the council as a refuse tip. It has settled down, and the council has announced its intention to convert the land into a sports oval. I believe that the area could be made into a combined sports oval and parking area. In other words, a large area of it could be used for parking during the week for people who commute to town. Local residents who presently use the streets close to stations nearby could easily use Oxley Road to travel to the parking area at Chelmer, and then take the train to town. This would be done if it were advertised that parking was available in this area.

There are other stations in the metropolitan area at which the same facilities could be provided easily at the moment. I discussed the matter with the hon. member for Mt. Gravatt. There are in his area a number of stations in the Sunnybank section with vacant land close by that could be reserved by the Railway Department for parking purposes. If this service is provided, it will be found that motorists will use it. If it is not provided, one by one shopping centres will apply for parking restrictions on all-day parkers, and customers of the Department of Railways will be driven away.

This system has been adopted with considerable success in other parts of the world. I saw one parking area with 2,000 cars in it adjacent to a railway station in the United States, and each person who had left his car there was a financial supporter of the railway system. If we do not provide parking facilities, we will lose all the

customers. They will either go direct to their place of employment by car and prevail upon their employer to provide parking space or find a parking space closer to their place of employment, or use other forms of transport. If the department moved now, it could, at virtually no cost to itself, convert railway reserves into parking areas that will enable people who wish to use the railways to leave their cars at stations. I have mentioned Chelmer already, but I am sure that at other stations sufficient land would be available for the provision of all-day parking facilities. This would also assist shopkeepers in the vicinity, who rely on passing traffic to some extent to keep up their business.

In dealing with land, I wish to make another suggestion that I have been considering for some time. In Ann Street, outside Central Station, there is a grassed area of land, almost in the heart of the city, surrounded by an iron picket fence. It is part of the Central Railway Station property and is immediately opposite Anzac Square and the new Government buildings in Ann Street. At the moment it is not being used. I believe that if the department provides a row of shops on that land, or allows a development company to do so, it will improve the overall appearance of Central Station. I am sure that shops in that area would produce a good deal of revenue, and an awning over the footpath in Ann Street would afford protection to railway passengers trying to get to Central Station in wet weather. I can see no way in which the land could be used for any future railway development. There is a cafe on one section of the Ann Street frontage, but another half a dozen shops of a similar size could be built there without difficulty. They would be in the heart of the city and would give a much more attractive appearance to our main suburban traffic railway station.

I should like now to discuss a matter relating to the Wacol railway station. In recent years Wacol has become a centre of much activity, partly as a result of the development of industrial land and partly as a result of Government activity in the area. The establishment of the Wacol Gaol and certain buildings for the Department of Agriculture and Stock have attracted much more traffic to the railway crossing in Station Road, Wacol, where there is now a very unsatisfactory gate crossing. Unfortunately, there is a railway weighbridge at Wacol and trains park across the level crossing for long periods. Station Road is the only road that can be used to get through to the Wacol Gaol, and it is the main avenue of entry to the Brisbane Special Hospital at Goodna. With the commencement of the additional work that the Minister for Health has planned for the Goodna area, particularly the sub-normal children's scheme, much more traffic will have to cross the railway line in Station Road, Wacol. The last reply that the local progress association received from the Minister, through me, was to the effect that

the expense involved in shifting the weighbridge is not yet warranted. I hope that we can find some way of avoiding the expense of removing the weighbridge and at the same time providing easy access for through traffic. I have sat at the gates for 20 minutes while coal trains have stood on the crossing and shown no sign of moving. A main road of that nature should not be blocked the way it is—very often for extremely long periods.

Wacol residents have also made other complaints concerning the railways. At Wilruna Street, the Brisbane City Council claims that, with the delays occasioned by the Railway Department in resuming land, it can do nothing to the street until the negotiations are completed. That has been going on for many years. It does not satisfy the people in the street who handed over their land many years ago but find there is still no sign of action. Wacol has enough disabilities without having to put up with the added disadvantage of getting no council service for a road that the Railway Department has intimated it intends to resume at some time in the future for railway purposes.

This sounds like a somewhat long list of complaints, but at least we have been getting a better deal from the Railway Department since we have had a Minister who is as approachable as Mr. Chalk is in these matters. The fact that he has been able to produce a balance sheet that goes very close to balancing has at least meant that we have not had to draw on other special services for the railways, as we did during the regime of the previous Government.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (5.2 p.m.): I have listened with great interest to the Minister in speaking to his Estimates, particularly his remarks about economies that have been effected in the railways. That is what I want to deal with this afternoon and I shall give certain examples of just how those economies have decimated the railways in the North.

I think very sincerely that many of the economies in the railways—and the Minister seemed quite delighted at the fact that he almost balanced the budget on this occasion—have been effected at the expense of the staff. I intend this afternoon to quote some examples of how the Government has been dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying over appointments to the railways, resulting in shortages of labour and the transfer of staff. I am going to do it by examples so that the Minister will be unable later on to say, "That is part of Tucker's propaganda. I sweep it aside and won't talk about it, because that is all it is—propaganda." I will give examples and let the Minister knock them over—if he can.

There is a shortage of labour in the railways and the Government should have acted long ago to correct it. But it has waited and marked time on a number of occasions. The examples I shall give show how they

have done that. Whilst Government members have been marking time and shilly-shallying, on this occasion they have got themselves into the position of being caught with a very heavy season in cattle and sugar.

I am not now criticising the staff, because I understand that the staff, from the Commissioner down, have to carry out the will of the Government. That is something we all understand, so any criticism I level is levelled against the Government and its policy. I want it especially understood that I realise these people have to carry out the policy of the Government, and I say that the policy of the Government with the railways at the present time is to wait and see what is going to happen. It has done that for months and months and now that this heavy season has come upon us it has been caught. The people who suffer are not the Government or the Cabinet but the men who do the work, namely, the running staff. They eventually have to carry the work that has been thrust upon them by the heavy season.

I suppose it could be said that the Government is acting on the poor advice it received from the foreign consultants, Ford, Bacon and Davis. On every occasion that anything has been done in accordance with the advice given by these people, the railwaymen, although they did not want it, have paid for it. I know that the staff cannot say anything about it. Their policy is to say, "As far as the Minister is concerned, he has done the right thing." They certainly cannot stick their heads out to have them chopped off. They have to say that the Ford, Bacon and Davis consultants were pretty good. I do not blame them for that. I understand their attitude. But we also understand that in most instances the costly advice the Government received from that firm of consultants has brought about situations similar to those that I want to talk about today.

All of a sudden we were faced with a very busy season in the North. We have a big sugar harvest and a large number of cattle to be hauled. The result has been that men have had to work from 100 to 120 hours a fortnight. That is pretty solid when we think about the 40-hour week. I am not being irresponsible in my statements; that one can be checked very easily. The running staff has been forced to double up. Those men have about eight hours off and then they are back again to try to cope with the influx in this busy season. The running staff are entitled to ten hours off in their home depot and eight hours off in a foreign depot, but on many occasions they have to double up with only eight hours off. With the Government's economy drive and its attitude of not putting men on in an effort to break down the labour force, the men in the North quite often are forced to work 14 shifts a fortnight. Not so very long ago the Industrial Court ordered that there should be a 10-shift fortnight but at the present time these men are working a 14-shift fortnight. I warn the Minister that I

do not believe they will continue forever to take this battering. With the Government's present attitude they know that these conditions will continue to apply except in the off-season. As soon as the influx comes they will be required to work these long hours.

Mr. Chalk: Are you advocating that they work only 10 shifts a fortnight?

Mr. TUCKER: The Minister will be able to reply afterwards. He was out of the Chamber before but he is in here now. I am giving him some examples. In a decent and sincere manner I am putting forward an argument that was given to me, to which I hope he will reply later. It is all very well for the Minister to sit over there and grin in his usual fashion. He is not going to put me off. I intend to speak on behalf of these men who have given me these details.

Mr. Chalk: You usually put up "Com." arguments.

Mr. TUCKER: That is his usual attitude. Whenever we put something decent forward he immediately tries to cloud the issue by calling it a "Com." submission. That is the attitude of the Minister on all occasions. The moment he is beaten on an argument he comes in with the old story that it is a "Com." submission. I throw his words back into his teeth. His interjections remind me that it was not so very long ago that I spoke about the level crossing at Garbutt. The same thing happened on that occasion. He said, "The Coms. are on you". Even though one of my best friends had been involved in a crash at that crossing his idea and attitude, and the way he spoke to me on that occasion, was that it was a "Com." argument. I had hoped that the Minister would adopt a responsible attitude towards these matters but every time I have put anything forward in a decent manner that has been his reply.

To come back to the reduction of the labour force we find that suddenly the department had a problem with staffing. I have mentioned the 10-shift fortnights that were granted by the court, but the men have to work extra shifts and longer hours. Although the Government may save a few pounds initially with its pinch-penny policy, it will be very costly in the long run, and I emphasise that it is breeding discontent amongst the staff.

Allied with this short-sighted policy of systematically, scientifically and subtly reducing the labour force is the question of advertising vacancies for appointment in the North. The Government has again adopted a policy of sitting back, and not making appointments if they can be avoided. We find that men have been appointed six months after the vacancies have been announced, but they have not occupied those positions. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to say that that is not correct, but I intend

to back up what I am saying with facts. I will produce them this afternoon so that the Minister may answer them. All this trouble hinges on the very short-sighted policy of the Government. Cloncurry provides a very good example. Possibly two weeks ago, the men at Cloncurry took the bit in their teeth. They were terribly dissatisfied and finally went on strike.

Mr. Chalk: It did not last long.

Mr. TUCKER: I admit that. It was short-lived because Mr. O'Brien, the northern district secretary of the A.R.U. was able to obtain some assurance from the northern division general manager. As I have said, I am not here to rubbish these people because I know that they must carry out the Government's policy. They are wrestling with these acute problems in the North to the very best of their ability, but the men believed they had a case and eventually called a lightning strike.

Many of the men in the Cloncurry district have a definite grievance. Some of them have been there for more than three years although they went there on the assurance that they would not be there for anything like that time. I said I would give some examples and I will now do so.

Mr. Chalk: Who made the promise? I am asking the hon. member a sensible question.

Mr. TUCKER: If the Minister is trying to trap me, he can find out for himself. He is the Minister; let him find out.

On 4 April, 1963, in Weekly Notice 14/63, the department called for drivers for Cloncurry. On that occasion the number of vacancies was not specified. Hon. members who have seen these advertisements recently will know that the department called for drivers, and had an asterisk at the side to say that the number could be increased. That is the way the department covers itself. It calls for drivers on occasions, but does not specify how many. On this occasion, applications were called on 4 April, 1963, for drivers at Cloncurry. Five months later, on 12 September, 1963, six drivers were appointed to Cloncurry, all of whom were appointed from the southern division, or from the South, but at the time I got my information in Townsville not one had arrived in Cloncurry. Although the vacancies were advertised in April and the appointments were made in September, the appointees have not yet arrived in Cloncurry. I should like to know why. It is apparent that the managers in the various divisions are faced with a shortage of labour, and none of them wants to let employees go. Each manager is hanging on to his staff as long as he can because he knows that when he lets staff go it is not replaced quickly.

It is becoming farcical for railwaymen when a job is advertised early in the year and months and months roll by with nothing

done. It might be all right if the man is on the coast but it must irritate those in the less privileged areas, especially when they are away from their families. If a railwayman expects to leave a place about April and by Christmas he still has not gone home, what effect must that have on his morale? What effect would it have on you, or on me? We felt the same way in the Public Service. If we were appointed to a job and there were no appeals against us, we resented being kept hanging about. It was Labour policy to fill these positions as soon as possible after advertising them and I cannot see any reason why it should not be done now, except for what I have said about the labour shortage. There is altogether too much dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying. The Minister and his Government are at fault because they want to make these economies in the railways.

There are some other instances and there have been deputations to the Commissioner but, as he has to carry out Government policy, they have been without result.

Take the position of fireman Carty at Cloncurry. He was appointed to Innisfail from Cloncurry on 4 April, 1963, as shown in Weekly Notice 14/63. His people and his family are at Innisfail. Later he obtained a compassionate transfer to Innisfail but subsequently he was shot back to Cloncurry again, goodness knows why. While all the monkeying about was going on, there were two men at Innisfail supposedly relieving at £8 10s. a week, but Fireman Carty was appointed, and transferred, to Innisfail and was then shot back to Cloncurry. Whether he eventually made it back to Innisfail I do not know. I know that his job was filled when 11 firemen were appointed, as shown in Weekly Notice 40/63 on 3 October. In other words, although he was appointed to Innisfail in April, his job at Cloncurry was not filled until 3 October.

Obviously these men have good reason for their discontent. The 11 firemen appointed as shown in Weekly Notice 40/63 came from such places as Oakey, Ipswich, and Woolloomgabby. Goodness knows when they will go to Cloncurry. I do not think the General Manager of the Northern Division knows either.

Another case that comes to my mind is that of Driver Coventon. He is at Richmond. His position was advertised in Weekly Notice 16/63 on 18 April, 1963. On that occasion one driver was called for, with the proviso that the number could be increased without further notice. That is something this Government seems to have introduced. Three drivers were appointed on 12 September, 1963, as shown in Weekly Notice 37/63, and it seems that Driver Coventon will be lucky if he gets home to Townsville by Christmas.

This is a beauty, and is perhaps the best case of the lot. It concerns Driver Bolger at Torrens Creek. In Weekly Notice 38/62

of 20 September, 1962—note that it is 1962, not 1963—the position of Driver, Townsville, was advertised. There again is that asterisk, meaning that there may be an increase if necessary. With others, Driver Bolger was appointed on 4 April, 1963, as is shown in Weekly Notice 14/63. Note that the job was advertised in September, 1962, and that he was appointed on 4 April, 1963. Believe it or not, he got back to Townsville this month—October 1963.

I give these examples because I believe that the men at Cloncurry and in other parts of the West do have a grievance and it should be aired. I know that they have met and spoken about it up there. The Minister says, "Well, we are running the railways in a very efficient manner." I want to say that they are not being run in an efficient manner from the point of view of the ordinary men working in the department, who are the people for whom I speak today. They are away from their families, they are worried, and they must be spoken for here. Is it any wonder that they are discontented and finally resort to strike action?

I shall give one more example. Driver Morrish of Cloncurry was one of those who applied for the position of Driver, Mayne Junction, advertised on 25 April in Weekly Notice 17/63. Eight drivers were appointed on 5 September, 1963, four being from Cloncurry, one from Duchess, and one from Richmond, and they are still in those places and cannot get away to come to Mayne. Some of them are married; they have homes in the South and have been hoping to return here.

The subject of annual leave also arises. Men in these areas like to dovetail their leave with the school holidays. One can well imagine that, as they do not want to jeopardise the education of their children. In many cases, because of shortage of staff, they cannot get their holidays in those periods. They are told, "We cannot allow you off and we cannot tell you when you can go." They want holidays at the seaside and they want to be able to say to an agent, "I will take a house for these three weeks." They cannot do that because they do not know when they can get away, and if they pay a deposit on a seaside house they are liable to lose it at the last minute.

These are the grievances of those men and they show the way in which they have been pushed around. I do not think that that is fair treatment for men who go out and work as they do. I bring up their case today and hope that something can be done about it swiftly. When they are appointed to positions that are advertised, they should be able to move and take them up.

I wish now to refer to the taxi-cab situation in Townsville. There are approximately 100 cabs in Townsville, and a circular has been sent out recently by the Minister for Transport to the effect that approval has

been given by the Commissioner for Transport for the installation of meters in taxi-cabs operating in Townsville. To make a long story short, drivers have been asked if they are in favour of installing them, and, if so, to return the circular with advice to that effect. We have a wonderful taxi service in Townsville, and I should hate to see it other than as it is now. The drivers have been told what fares they are to charge. I spoke to the Commissioner on this matter, and was received very courteously, and I have also spoken with the taxi-cab drivers. White Cabs Standard, which, with 82 taxis, is the largest taxi-cab company in Townsville, have said, "We are prepared to give it a go." If the Commissioner has not already received this information in the next few days he will have advice that they are prepared to give the scheme a trial in Townsville over a period. I want to put it on record that, even if they started today, it seems likely that there would be a lag of seven weeks before the meters were available in Townsville. It is obvious that the majority of taxi-cab drivers in Townsville will be in favour of the scheme and will co-operate with the Commissioner; so, in view of the probable delay in getting the meters, I ask the Commissioner, through the Minister, to consider introducing them in Townsville on 1 January, 1964. There will be a delay of only a few weeks one way or the other, and I suggest that they should be introduced for everyone, White Cabs Standard and Yellow Cabs, on that date.

Mr. Chalk: Have they all agreed, or only one company?

Mr. TUCKER: There is another company with 12 cabs. I believe it is prepared to agree, but I cannot speak on its behalf.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.26 p.m.): I listened with interest to the Minister's opening remarks and the subsequent statements of the hon. member for Townsville North. It flashed across my mind that here was another example showing what a great lot of boasters members of the Government are. For two hours the Minister tried to build up a case showing that the Government has done a wonderful job for the people of Queensland.

A Government Member: He made a good case, too.

Mr. HOUSTON: I will shoot his case down in a moment. He used this year's results and last year's results to show that the Railway Department had gone ahead by leaps and bounds under his administration. What he did not say was that in the previous four or five years, when things were a little bit tough, he could not handle the situation and the results deteriorated.

Let us take the Auditor-General's Report for 1957-58, where we find listed a detailed comparison of earnings in the previous three

years. In the Auditor-General's report for this year there is a similar table, so I suggest that we compare the two and see whether the Government has made the great strides that it claims to have made.

First, let me deal with goods traffic. In 1956-57, which was the last year in office of an Australian Labour Party Government, the earnings were £25,481,509, and in the next year they dropped to £23,765,456. I am not going to claim that because goods earnings dropped by over £1,500,000 in one year the Government slipped up. Certainly conditions at that time were responsible for that, and I do not want to create the impression that I am using figures without looking for the explanation behind them. If we come then to 1961-62, we find that goods earnings were £25,181,888, and last year they were £26,876,035. Comparing the figures, we find that in 1961-62 the income from goods traffic was less than it was in the last year of an Australian Labour Party Government. In view of that, how can the Minister contend that there has been a spectacular improvement in the carriage of goods over a period of years?

Mr. Chalk: You would not understand.

Mr. HOUSTON: Maybe I would not.

Mr. Chalk: Your Government gave all that business away to road transport and we got it back again.

Mr. HOUSTON: I exposed the Minister in 1956-57, and he should not forget that the Government came to office in August, 1957. I hope the people of Queensland will remember it as time goes on.

Mr. Chalk: They have taken a long time to wake up to you.

Mr. HOUSTON: My majority has increased every year.

Revenue has increased and the Minister claims great credit for it, but the position was that there has been a great increase in the wheat harvest and in the Mt. Isa Line traffic in that period, so naturally we would expect an increase in revenue. My aim is to show the Government and the people that any variations from year to year in goods traffic have not been brought about by any great difference in administration.

Let us look now at livestock. In 1956-57 the income from livestock was £4,361,823 and the next year it was £4,208,689. The Minister boasts of the fact that livestock traffic has increased. Last year the earnings from livestock were £4,284,850, while this year, the year in which the Minister claims he has done so much for the railways by bringing business back—he said a minute ago "I brought it back"—the earnings from livestock were £4,127,909, a drop of £233,914 compared with 1957. With all his boasting, his earnings from the carriage of livestock on the railways are less than they were in the last year under Labour.

Let us then go on to passenger income. In 1957, revenue from this source was £3,490,722; the next year it was £3,322,316, and, coming to the last two years under this Government, the figures were respectively £3,190,553, and £3,143,503. In other words, compared with 1957, the figure dropped last year, which the Minister claims was a good year, by £347,219.

I could go through the other figures. The same pattern is there for parcels traffic and in the railway refreshment rooms, which are tied in with the passenger traffic and for which there was a drop this year of £99,676.

So much for the Government's claim, that due to its wonderful administration, due to its going out and selling the railways to the people, the railways are booming. It has certainly got rid of a fair bit of them, anyway.

Mr. Chalk: You sold them out; that is all you did.

Mr. HOUSTON: As I said before, I try to be very nice about these things, but the Minister's method is loud-mouth yelling——

Mr. Pizzev: How many times did your Government increase railway freights?

Mr. HOUSTON: What did the Minister for Education come in for? It is not the Education Estimates we are discussing. He does not even know what is going on. As my Leader said, railway freights did go up under Labour. And the cost of living went up, too. Don't forget that.

Mr. Pizzev: I thought you claimed you kept the cost of living down? You just said the cost of living went up.

Mr. HOUSTON: One must consider the rate at which the cost of living went up. I know the Minister does not like this type of thing, but the point is that he and his Government have certainly lost railway patronage. Because this year was slightly better than last year the Minister has tried to convey that he has done something remarkable. He is interjecting now; he can reply later. But he might be like the Treasurer. When the Treasurer replies he does not refer to matters that he does not like. Things he does like, he has a shot at.

Mr. Pizzev: Why don't you refer to something good in the Railway Department?

Mr. HOUSTON: What about the introduction of dieselisation by the Labour Government, for a start?

The Minister for Transport is boasting, now that he has his assistant over there with him. He claimed great credit for increased rolling stock. Let us look at the capital expenditure over the years. The Auditor-General's report for 1957-58 showed that in the period from 1945 to 1958, under Labour plus one year of this Government's office, there was capital expenditure of

£28,945,230 on rolling stock, locomotives, carriages, motors, etc., in other words, a yearly expenditure of £2,226,556.

Mr. Pizzev: Tell us what was spent in the five years before that, during the war.

Mr. HOUSTON: If he likes I will give the Minister the figures since 1945. If he wants to go back to the war years I challenge him to bring on his education Estimates and we will have a look at what was done.

In the next five years the expenditure rose to £37,139, 993. In other words, over those five years the increase was £8,214,863, an average of £1,642,925 a year. So even though the Minister is boasting this year that he has ordered this and that, during the five years for which records are available the average yearly expenditure is well down on what it was under the Labour Government.

Mr. Pizzev: What was that on?

Mr. HOUSTON: Expenditure on rolling stock, wagons, etc.

Mr. Pizzev: We use them more frequently now. We have a better turnover.

Mr. HOUSTON: Surely the Minister does not want to waste the time of the Committee by going into traffic-miles and all that kind of thing. Perhaps he and I went to different schools. I do not think the resultant product is as good in his case. So much for the boasting of the Minister for Transport.

Let us look at some of the other things the Minister said about the Railway Department. He made a point of the fact that when considering the financial position of the railways an apportionment had been made of the money required to take up the now-abandoned railway systems and that type of thing. I have no quarrel with that. When we are considering a railway service as a business concern, any money spent in that direction should be kept separate from the actual operations of the railways. When we are considering the operations of the Railway Department we have to have regard to its separate purposes. On the one hand we have the commercial phase of the railway system, which has been part and parcel of the operations of the department for donkey's years. That applies to railway systems in many parts of the world.

But the railways have another purpose. I refer to development. Without the availability of railway facilities, many parts of the State would be completely isolated. When we consider the Railway Department we should consider it firstly from its commercial aspect. In other words, feeder railway lines and similar lines should be used principally to give service to the people who are isolated, and railway lines used purely and simply to open up an area should not enter our calculations when we are considering whether the railway system is financial. Such an attitude would give a completely different set of

figures. When we look at Government expenditure we find that we spend millions of pounds on road construction, education, agriculture and stock, and irrigation and water supply. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are spent on other facilities, but not one of them is approached on a profit-and-loss account basis. It is ridiculous to say that because we are spending millions of pounds on education we must look for a return from it. I should say that, for every pound spent on education, the return to the State would be in the vicinity of £1,000. In relation to much of the money spent, the return to the State is not worked out in so many pounds, shillings and pence. The Department of Main Roads spends millions of pounds, but do we charge against the cost of providing the roads and maintaining them the return from transport fees, motor vehicle registration fees, petrol tax, and so on? Of course we do not, because we recognise that certain roads are developmental roads and project roads and, in Government finance, we do not look at expenditure on them as a profit-and-loss account. I suggest to the Minister and the Treasurer that they should consider our railway systems in the same manner. Why should the Government close down every little railway line on a profit-and-loss basis? We have recently had many examples of feeder lines, and other lines, being closed down purely on a profit-and-loss basis, but I firmly believe they should be considered on another basis.

The Department of Primary Industries spends many thousands of pounds and man-hours in advising the various farmers and primary producers on the best way to improve their products. They are not charged for such services, and they should not be. Again we find that the profit-and-loss account basis is not used to the detriment of the people of the State.

The Minister said that co-ordination of railways, tramways and bus services interested the Government. The Government should be concerned about it because, apart from the commercial aspect, the Railway Department must firstly give service. It seems ridiculous to me that, particularly in Brisbane, where we have a railway system, and bus and tram systems, all serving the same people, in many instances people can please themselves which service they use, and only a few minutes are involved. However, other sections of the people in Brisbane are from half-an-hour to an hour's walk from any public transport. The time is long overdue for an examination of these matters. Even if it means re-routing buses, in Brisbane or any other town, I believe that every person should have a means of public transport to get to his destination reasonably quickly and cheaply. The Minister said that more people are using private motor-cars to travel to the city. The only

reason for that is that they are not satisfied with the deal they are getting in public transport.

Mr. Pizzey: What authority have you for saying that?

Mr. HOUSTON: I have the authority of my own observation, and that is just as good as the Minister's.

Mr. Pizzey: I am not citing any authority; I am asking you.

Mr. HOUSTON: If some Government members spent more time travelling on public transport they would be able to form an opinion that would be of some use.

Mr. Chalk: He hasn't got a dog there at his heels, has he?

Mr. HOUSTON: Don't start bringing dogs into it or I will start talking about ducks and drakes and a whole lot of other things.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: The Minister invites these comments by his silly interjections.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! The hon. member is not obliged to take notice of interjections.

Mr. HOUSTON: The private citizen will continue to use his motor-car while public transport systems are not co-ordinated for his benefit. It is no use running any transport system that is designed purely and simply for the benefit of a council or Government; it must be arranged for the benefit of the public. I look forward to the day when the Minister for Transport will change his attitude towards the electrification of the Brisbane railway system. One of the great things that happened under Labour, with Jack Duggan as Minister, was the introduction of the electrification of that system.

Mr. Chalk: What did he introduce?

Mr. HOUSTON: He laid the foundation for a very sound system, as the Minister well knows.

Mr. Pizzey: Some day you will find out the real truth.

Mr. HOUSTON: I know the real truth now. I have been closely associated with it. I know some of the men who were employed on this work and who were sacked by the Minister and lost to the Railway Department. It is useless for him to suggest that electrification would not have been a reality today if Labour had been returned to office. And what better and quicker service could we have than an electrified service? It is clean and quiet. Today in the Chamber we have debated the Clean Air Bill at its introductory stage—a Bill designed to minimise the nuisance from soot and diesel fumes, and so on. So the

Government moves on the one hand to eliminate the nuisance and then on the other hand adds to it. In the electrification of the suburban railways we could use power derived from oil or coal. Coal is one of the State's natural resources.

Mr. Ramsden: I told you what Dr. Katz said.

Mr. HOUSTON: This was before the hon. member was ever thought of.

Mr. Ramsden: If you know more than Dr. Katz you are a mighty man.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. HOUSTON: Let us not become so blinded with the discovery of oil in Queensland as to think we can dispense with the use of our coal resources. There is plenty of room for both coal and oil. Electrification must come eventually and, whether the Government likes it or not, the use of diesel fuel and diesel traction is not comparable with electrification. The Minister emphasised that more diesels would be used for suburban rail services. I ask him to reconsider that before it is too late. Once a system is put into operation it is both difficult and expensive to change it. With the electrification of the suburban railways there could be evolved a co-ordinated plan to fit in with bus and tram systems, bringing about a quiet, effective and complete transport system.

Brisbane has the peculiar make-up of a centre where most industry and commerce is carried on, and then a dead circle surrounding it. Between Brisbane and Inala there is a dead area, and going to Wynnum and Manly one passes through Tingalpa and Murarrie, in which there is little development. The same thing applies between Brisbane and Sandgate and many other areas. The service through these dead areas has to be quick and efficient. A survey will show that most people using private transport come from the outlying areas. They do so for two reasons. One is the great length of time taken to travel from their homes to their places of employment, and the second is their objection to the heavy cost involved.

It must be remembered that, through no fault of their own, people are forced to live in the outer areas. Living at Inala are men who work at Eagle Farm. They have to leave home one or two hours before their starting times. They will do the natural thing and get to and from work as quickly as possible so that they can spend as much time as possible at home with their families. For that reason we should proceed with the task of electrifying the city's railways. I say this not because of any parochial attitude but because Brisbane is the capital city and the one that has to be developed for the benefit of the population.

(Time expired.)

Mr. SHERRINGTON (Salisbury) (5.52 p.m.): I rise to speak on these Estimates because, on perusing the report of the Commissioner for Railways, I, too, was struck by the reference in it to the decline in passenger traffic on the railways. I feel that a reading of the Commissioner's opinion must give cause for some alarm. He says—

"The decline in passenger patronage, revealed by reports and statistics to be a trend not peculiar to the Queensland Railways, was again manifest but was not so pronounced as in former years. Totaling 25,892,983 the number of passenger journeys was 621,875 fewer than in the preceding year—the fall in 1961-62 was 2,193,428 and in 1960-61 3,489,183."

After making a reference to the fact that the railways are dependent on revenue as well as on passenger traffic, he says—

"There was a drop of 145,119 in the number of country passenger journeys, whilst the suburban journeys were 476,756 fewer."

A little further on in the report he states that suburban traffic provided £966,321 of the total passenger revenue.

I feel that some of this decline in traffic is not caused, as the Minister claims, by the private use of motor-cars, because my experience is that many people would use the trains more frequently if suburban services were made more attractive. I say this because most motorists were severely penalised by the introduction of parkatarea meters, which meant that people using cars had to pay something like 10s. a week in parking fees. If the suburban passenger service could be brought up to a reasonable standard of efficiency, cleanliness, and so on, I am sure that passengers would again use the railways. In support of this argument, I should like to quote the opinion of a person who wrote to me yesterday about the condition of some of the rail-motors that are used in Brisbane. He suggested that the rail-motor that left South Brisbane on 21 October, 1963, at 5.43 p.m., be scrapped and that all other rail-motors of a similar class should also be scrapped. He listed the following reasons:—

"1. It is old and unserviceable as far as the passengers are concerned, in that it appears to be at least 30 years old, the lighting is far from adequate and the average newspaper cannot be read even sitting under the light, in darkness.

"2. The lighting has failed at least once per week and usually one carriage is in darkness or semi-darkness.

"3. The travelling is very rough and the seating uncomfortable, the seating old-fashioned and not suitable to women's modern mode of dress, and tends to cause embarrassment.

"4. In wet weather the inferior type windows let in the rain and many seats are covered with water, also the height of the carriages does not allow the average man to stand upright.

"5. These type of rail-motors are an insult to the State of Queensland and any interstate visitor would have a jolly good laugh at our backwardness."

I think that the gentleman who sent this letter to me would be stating the facts without exaggeration. Is it any wonder, therefore, if a rail-motor of this type is used in a peak period when people are returning to their homes from their places of employment, that there has been a drift away from the railways? There might be some excuse for using it during an off-peak period when there are few passengers—I am not going to condone its use even then—but when it is placed in service in a peak period in the evening, it is obvious why there has been a decline in passenger traffic.

In my opinion, the department has not set out to tap the areas from which passengers could be attracted, and it has not tried to make passenger services attractive. I refer particularly to the abolition of the special concession rates that were previously available to shoppers. The Minister was prepared to agree to a cut in freights in order to attract freight to the Railway Department, and I have no quarrel with him on that score. I believe it is better to carry a full trainload of goods at reduced rates than to carry only half a trainload at high rates. But if a formula of that sort can be applied to the carriage of goods, why cannot a similar formula be used in an endeavour to attract passengers to the railways? The cutting out of this concession fare for shoppers must have resulted in a decline in the number of passengers. The Minister may come back with the argument that it did not prove a great success, but I do not know that any great publicity was ever given to these concession fares for shoppers in the off-peak period. I know too that, following the last increase in fares, particularly in the Inala area, the bus section of the co-ordinated service showed an alarming decline in the number of passengers carried daily.

As I said before, I feel that if concession rates for the carriage of goods can be applied in an effort to attract goods traffic, some attempt should be made to attract passengers back to the railways by offering special concession fares.

In relation to the area that I represent, I have on numerous occasions brought to the Minister's attention, and to the notice of this Chamber, the excessive fares that people in that area are called on to pay. I do not think it will be amiss if I recapitulate those details and point out that a worker's weekly ticket from Inala to Brisbane costs £1 0s. 6d. and, because of the fact that there is very little, if any, local industry, up to 90 per cent. of the workers in the area are forced to travel long distances to and from their employment. The bread-winner alone is involved in a cost of £1 0s. 6d. a week merely to travel to his employment, and if women are desirous of

using the railways to go to Brisbane, the single fare is 2s. 11d. and the return fare 5s. 10d. It is quite obvious that very few people, out of the wages they receive, could afford any great number of return journeys between Inala and Brisbane.

This brings me to the matter the Minister raised, namely, that he recognised that there was justification for the construction of a rail link to Inala, but that there was no money for this type of work and that the Government would have to obtain Commonwealth assistance. Considering the liberal concessions that have been extended by the Commonwealth for railway works in other States, I think there is every justification for the Minister or the Treasurer to make representations concerning this rail link. I cannot accept the statement that money is not available for this work.

If one considers what was done by previous Labour Governments in providing such things as water conservation schemes out of their loan allocations, and if this State is in such a healthy financial position as the Treasurer outlined in his recent Financial Statement, now is the time to make at least some move in constructing a rail link to Inala.

I can recall also the cutting down of the expenditure on the quadruplication scheme and I cannot see why the allocation for that work, and the men and materials, could not have been channelled into the construction of the Inala rail link. Justification for this rail link is very apparent in the report of the Commissioner for Railways when a comparison is made of some of the passenger journeys and the revenue obtained from other major stations in Queensland. Let us take a look at the figures for Darra—the terminal for the Inala co-ordinated service. Last year there were 967,037 rail passenger journeys from Darra. I realise that all of those would not be passengers to the Inala area. Nevertheless, a big proportion of those rail journeys would be by persons using the co-ordinated service. The passenger revenue obtained was £56,116. To take it a little further, the total revenue produced from goods, etc., amounted to £402,129. Let us compare that with Brunswick Street, one of the major stations in Brisbane. We find that from Brunswick Street there were only 907,871 passengers, returning £50,520 in revenue. So the Darra terminal ranks in importance with Brunswick Street station. For Gympie, 23,536 passengers are shown, providing £22,940 in revenue. Make the comparison with Maryborough, where there are two stations—40,669 passenger journeys, with a total passenger revenue of £35,037. A comparison of those figures reveals the justification for expenditure on a rail link to the Inala area. If that link were provided I submit that the passenger figures would increase. With a direct rail link it should be possible to reduce the fares for people in that area. As there would be no need for a co-ordinated service, passenger

fares could be decreased on a direct link. Even if the rail service received only the support of the present number of passengers from the area the line would prove to be more than economic. It certainly would play its part in the amortisation of any loan that might be needed for the construction of the line. I have been unable to obtain from the Minister any details of a proposed plan for the link, nor have I been able to obtain any estimate of costs. I have heard it said that it would cost £3,000,000 to build a rail link to the Inala area, but I do not accept that estimate. The Minister told us today that the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line will cost only £25,000,000, yet it is rumoured that a suburban rail link will cost in the vicinity of £3,000,000. I cannot accept that the construction of this link would be of such financial magnitude that it is beyond the bounds of possibility for the Minister to construct it in the near future.

I feel that the Minister has been guilty of a grave discourtesy to me as the member for Salisbury. In reply to an interjection by the hon. member for South Brisbane this afternoon I heard him say that he could not even answer his correspondence.

I received a letter today, dated 23 October, 1963, from the Minister for Transport, which says—

“With reference to your personal representations concerning the Kyogle railway crossing in Boundary Street, Coopers Plains, I regret that some little delay has occurred in forwarding a reply to you.

“The matter has been in course of investigation for some time and a scheme has now been finalised with the Main Roads Department and the New South Wales Railway Department for removal of the gates, widening of the road and installation of flashing lights at this crossing.”

The Minister then said that the cost would be borne on a 50-50 basis by the Main Roads Department and the Railway Department. This matter has been the subject of negotiations between the Minister and me for some time, but the Minister has been guilty of grave discourtesy to me, as this information appeared in a suburban newspaper of 23 September. One month after its publication I was acquainted with the fact that this work is to be carried out, but the very people of Coopers Plains on whose behalf I raised the matter, who were deeply concerned about the number of accidents and near accidents caused by this crossing, read the information in a suburban newspaper a month before I received it.

I must now refer to an article that appeared in today's "Courier-Mail". The Minister said that he has attracted more goods for carriage by rail. I agree that the more this can be done the better are the chances of survival for the Railway Department. However it is passing strange that while the

Minister has attracted more business to the railways he has given little heed to the handling of goods at the Roma Street railway yards. This is borne out in the opinions expressed by Mr. Luya, president of the Queensland Master Carriers' Association. He claimed—

“... facilities at the yard were grossly inadequate for handling freight now being offered to the Railways Department.

“Frequent and expensive delays in accepting goods were an every-day occurrence, and industry was paying the high price involved.”

He later paid a tribute to the Minister for introducing improved methods and freight concessions. However, if we are to attract freight to the railway system, there must be a modernisation of the facilities to handle the goods or it will not be very long before the new business is lost because of the many delays caused by inadequate equipment.

I well recall paying a visit to Dalby some years ago when I found that, because of the pilfering of timber from the railway yards, it was decided to strap the timber in bundles to make it harder for the pilferers. However, after the trouble and expense of bundling the timber securely, the Railway Department did not have equipment to lift the weight contained in the bundles. It is useless for the Minister to try to convince us that he is gaining more business for the railway system if an attempt is not made to modernise handling methods.

In any discussion of railway affairs I would not be telling the whole story if I did not put on record a very sincere appreciation of the fine work done by those volunteers who take part in the railway first-aid classes. I have often witnessed their demonstrations and I have always been impressed by their sincerity and the thoroughness with which they train and apply themselves to the job.

I appreciate, too, the co-operation I have had from Mr. Kropp and from the new Commissioner, Mr. Lee. I have often had occasion to interview both gentlemen. Only recently I introduced a deputation to Mr. Lee about the rail link to Inala and about the problems bound up with a co-ordinated service. I want to place on record my appreciation of their courtesy and help.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) 7.32 p.m.): Occasionally within the Australian Labour Party we have had men who, whether through some misdemeanour or through lack of a sense of loyalty, have had to be expelled from the party. We have expelled those men deliberately because we have not considered them fit to remain within the membership. This afternoon the hon. member for Townsville South gave a complete illustration of what follows their expulsion. They become the bitterest enemies of the party within this Parliament, even more bitter sometimes

than hon. members on the Government benches, and from time to time they manufacture material and say that it is correct and authentic. It is very unfortunate that sometimes, because those men had previously been members of the Australian Labour Party, the Press gives credence to some of the material that they use—unfortunate material that I believe is completely wrong and should not be allowed within the privileges of this Parliament, or any other Parliament.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. LLOYD: I am making my remarks relevant to the debate. Argument against members of the Australian Labour Party in the matter of transport permits and licences is, I believe, not an indictment against this party but an indictment against the Government, which introduced legislation completely altering the transport system of this State. The Government's attitude to road transport gave southern manufacturers an opportunity to flood this State with their goods and to bring them in free of any road tax, and every manufacturer in Queensland at the present time is suffering from it. Sawmills were closed down in South-western Queensland because of the rigid application of regulations under the State Transport Act introduced by this Government. Eventually the Government found the legislation unworkable and had to alter the original regulations. Sawmills were closing down and workers thrown out of employment. Manufacturers in Brisbane and places nearby were hampered by high freights and other transportation costs imposed on their material by the Minister for Transport. They were unable to compete with southern manufacturers, who were flooding the markets first of the south-east corner of the State and now further north. They were unable to compete when no taxation was placed upon interstate transportation. One has only to examine the position now to understand that in the past few years there has been a complete change in the road transport facilities throughout the south-east corner of the State. There has been a great rejuvenation of interstate transport. Firms operating intrastate transport were forced into the position of going interstate.

We are now finding some repercussions as a result of that policy, and many of the industries in the south-western portion of Queensland are suffering. There was a flourishing cypress-pine industry there before the introduction of this Act, and this timber was sent to the Sydney market. Today that market is non-existent. Concessions granted by the New South Wales Government in rail freights and road transport taxation have enabled industries in the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales to take over industries that were carried on in places such as Dalby and Chinchilla and the whole of the south-eastern corner of the State.

Many of these things have been caused by the ramifications of this Act that was introduced nonsensically by the Government. Interstate road transport has so developed in the southern portion of Queensland that it is detrimentally affecting Queensland industries.

It is completely wrong for the Government and the hon. member for Townsville South to state that we have received money from transport companies, because no longer does their livelihood exist here. Any "slush" funds now in existence will be found in the organisation of the Liberal and Country Parties, not the Australian Labour Party. We do not want that sort of money. We have at our disposal ample funds to fight the type of campaigns that we want to fight. We do not need contributions from any other organisations, nor do we want to be tied by any monopoly, whether in the road transport, retailing, manufacturing, or any other field. We can stand on our own feet and fight our own electoral campaigns and have no wish to be tied to any people wanting something for themselves. We do not want to be associated with any of those things that have occurred in the last few years when people have gone to the Government parties and, as a quid pro quo, have requested things for themselves for the making of donations. We have our contributions from the trade unions affiliated with the Australian Labour Party, and we can well exist without the sort of finance that has been referred to.

A comparison has been made between the operating losses of the Railway Department for this year and other years. Some attacks have been made on the Leader of the Opposition for what happened whilst he was Minister for Transport. Turning to page 78 of the report of the Auditor-General for last year we find that operating results, excluding and including the interest charge, for the years 1953-54 to 1962-63 amount to £48,712,209 including interest and £12,857,472 excluding interest.

I think the 10-year period is a convenient one, and if we take the first five years up to 1957-58, we find that, under the administration of the Leader of the Opposition, excluding interest charges, the deficit amounted to no more than £3,200,000. During the five years in which the present Minister for Transport has been administering the department, the deficit is £8,000,000. It is important to bear in mind that the Ministerial head of a department lays down its policy, and figures such as the ones to which I have referred give an indication of the efficiency of his administration. During the five-year period when the Leader of the Opposition was in charge of the Railway Department, earnings exceeded working expenses on two occasions.

Perhaps the most important feature is the heavy burden placed upon the people of Queensland and the finances of the State

by railway losses in past years. The Auditor-General points out that a charge of £48,700,000 has been placed upon the State as a result of the operations of the Railway Department. I might add that this is not confined to Queensland but applies to almost every other Australian State and to many countries in the world. My principal criticism has been that insufficient attention has been paid to modernising the Queensland railway system to give it a chance to make its earnings exceed working expenses. That will never be done until our capital expenditure each year enables us to modernise the whole railway system.

When the Leader of the Opposition was Minister for Transport, he at least gave the people of Queensland some indication of his intentions. He realised that the majority of the losses were sustained in the Southern Division. Whereas year after year profits are being made in the Northern and Central Divisions and in some of the other smaller divisions, losses in the Southern Division have been so great that there has been a charge on the State of £48,700,000 over a period of 10 years. How long can this or any other State continue to carry losses such as that? The leader of the Opposition began a quadruplication and electrification scheme for Brisbane suburban services, and he also commenced dieselisation. As a result of the report of Ford, Bacon and Davis, the Government decided to abandon electrification because the capital cost would be too great. That is an important point. In this Chamber we hear hon. members representing country districts criticising the plan for the electrification of Brisbane's suburban railway services. They ask, "Why should all this money be spent in Brisbane when it is necessary to spend money outside Brisbane?" They do not realise that charges in the other divisions of the Railway Department are higher because of the losses made in the Southern Division, mainly on suburban passenger traffic. Increased charges had to be imposed on people—mainly primary producers—in other parts of the State to enable some near balance between earnings and working expenses within the Railway Department. To give the Committee some indication of this, I think it is necessary to turn to the last report of the Commissioner for Railways, at page 21, and to indicate exactly how these losses have affected the deficit to which attention has been drawn by the Auditor-General.

From 1958-59 to 1962-63, a full period of five years, we find that in the Southern Division excess working expenses over earnings were: in the first year £3.4 million; in the second year £1,000,000; in the third year £4.1 million; in the fourth year £3.8 million; and last year £3.5 million. That does not take into consideration the fact that in 1962-63 there was demolition of assets, closure of branch lines and other factors as the result of which an amount of at least £500,000 was paid to the Loan Fund from the Railway Department.

There you have a figure far in excess of the actual working loss of the Railway Department in the Southern Division. I have mentioned this matter previously in these debates and I think it is sufficiently important to warrant some form of attention being given to the modernisation of the railway system in Brisbane.

On the matter of capitalisation, the present situation is not confined to this State. On page 73 of the Commissioner's report there is a comparison of the capitalisation of all railway systems in Australia. The capitalisation of the whole of the Australian railway systems amounts to £681,000,000, upon which all the States of the Commonwealth have to bear an interest and redemption burden. So far as Queensland is concerned that burden last year amounted to £5,000,000. I think all hon. members will realise the advantage of having that £5,000,000 within the Consolidated Revenue account of this State, to enable greater expenditure on schools, education, hospitalisation and all those services that are demanded by the people. If, because of some ancient debts, many of which might go back almost 100 years, £5,000,000 is contained in the Budget of the State, then we are to be confronted year after year with the continuation of the loan indebtedness of the Railway Department. That indebtedness amounted to £16,000,000 over the last five or six years, increasing each year by the amount of the interest bill. We shall eventually be faced with a situation in which we could become almost impossibly bound by the interest and redemption charges for the railways.

The point I wish to make on this matter is that the same indebtedness occurred in the period 1927 to 1929, when the Commonwealth Government forced the financial agreement upon the States of Australia. At that time there was a total public indebtedness of £680,000,000 among the States of Australia and the Commonwealth Government decided to compound that indebtedness, and to transfer and accept responsibility for the whole of it; and, from 1 July, 1929, it did exactly that. It created a sinking fund into which the States of Australia would have to pay each year amounts of some 7s. 6d. per £100 owing, and the Commonwealth Government itself would make some contribution towards the National Debt Sinking Fund and assist the States to meet that indebtedness. That did, at least at that time, give some stimulus to development within the States of Australia. If the original purpose of that financial agreement had been carried out we would not be in the present position of not being able to afford to develop the State, and at the same time provide essential services for the people.

Seeing that there is this indebtedness of £681,000,000 on account of all railway services in all the States of Australia, my suggestion is that negotiations should be commenced immediately with the Commonwealth

Government, which should be asked to compound that indebtedness and accept responsibility for it. During the past 10 years £888,000,000 has been taken from Commonwealth revenue and loaned to the States for works and services. While our net Public Debt has increased to a very great extent, the net indebtedness of the Commonwealth, because of that, has decreased by £1,000,000,000. It is time that all States, confronted as they are with problems associated with railway revenue and the efficiency of their railway systems, approached the Commonwealth Government and asked for the compounding of these debts, and the acceptance of the responsibility by the Commonwealth Government with the States contributing to a sinking fund. That would provide all States with a measure of relief—in the case of Queensland more than a £5,000,000-a-year charge on Consolidated Revenue—so that they could immediately embark on their schemes of capitalisation of new investment to improve their railway systems.

We will never have a system that will give the people of Queensland an adequate and sufficient service to meet the needs of primary and secondary industries until we have an acceleration in the modernising of the railways. Some years ago, when he was Minister for Transport, the Leader of the Opposition embarked on high capitalisation in the railways with the idea of modernising the system by improving rolling-stock and providing greater carrying capacity. That is the only way we can ever compete adequately. We have only to turn to the reports to see that freight rebates are granted every day, and most of them are because of road competition. Under our present system it is impossible for the railways to compete unless freight rebates are granted. That position will always obtain while our railway system is so far behind those in other highly-industrialised countries. First of all the system must be modernised. Before we can do that we must have sufficient finance to purchase new equipment and adopt modern methods. We cannot do it with the present system of budgeting. We cannot do it while we are carrying a debt of £106,000,000, with £5,000,000 coming from Consolidated Revenue each year to meet interest payments on that indebtedness.

The Commonwealth Government is responsible to the people for the development of this country. To develop Australia—and I include the development of industries—we must have an efficient transport system. We will not get it under the present system. If the States could negotiate successfully with the Commonwealth Government to have this indebtedness compounded immediately, and accepted as the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, with a sinking fund held by the Commonwealth Government, into which was made equal payments by the States and the Commonwealth Government, it would relieve the

interest burden on the States and would give each of them an opportunity of embarking immediately on a new programme.

One of the unfortunate features of the Ford, Bacon and Davis Report is that Part I says that there will be an investigation of the feasibility of securing increased earnings in relation to working expenses, but very little consideration is given to new investment. With the present accountancy system it is impossible to secure results from any investigation. It seems that the charter given to Ford, Bacon and Davis did not refer to the manner in which money should be spent for the best possible results for the department. They were asked only to investigate directions in which people could be dismissed.

I have mentioned the loss sustained by the Southern Division. I believe it is very important to the people of Queensland that the railway system should be given an opportunity to make at least some profit. In the past few years the New South Wales railway system has made a profit. However, that State has a metropolitan transport board. Until we have a metropolitan transport board in Brisbane, combining the city council tram and bus services and the suburban railway system in a semi-government organisation, without any capital expenditure or interest burden, we will not have an efficient transport system nor will we ever make a profit. On the one hand we are continually placing a taxation burden on the people of Queensland because of the losses in the Southern Division and, on the other hand, we are imposing charges on the ratepayers of Brisbane because of the losses sustained by the Brisbane City Council Transport Department. (Time expired.)

MR. HOUGHTON (Redcliffe) (7.57 p.m.): I rise to express my views on the Estimates before the Committee, and I congratulate the Minister on his enlightening speech concerning the Railway Department and the other transport facilities under his control. He is to be heartily congratulated on the manner in which he has administered his portfolio. I believe that I am expressing the views of the majority of hon. members in this Chamber when I say that.

We hear a great deal about balanced budgets, particularly for the Railway Department. However, the Railway Department has been the best milking cow in the State because many people ask for, and get, relief when there is a drought. The Minister is then criticised for presenting Estimates that reveal a loss. Even with the wisdom of Solomon no person could balance his budget with the demands that are made on this department from time to time. It has granted many concessions over the years.

I am very pleased that the Minister included road transport in his speech, because I wish to offer some comments on transport, particularly to Redcliffe. Before I do so, I pay tribute to the Minister, and to Mr. Kropp, the Commissioner for Transport,

because they have both done an excellent job in performing their duties. It is imperative for Redcliffe to have a railway service. It cannot survive unless something is done quickly.

The remarks of the Minister on problems that he thought confronted Inala were very enlightening. That may well be.

Mr. Sherrington: Why don't you join me in my efforts, and then I might be able to help you?

Mr. HOUGHTON: I will join with the hon. member as long as he joins with me in my efforts to get a railway service to the Redcliffe peninsula at some time in the future.

Mr. Sherrington: As long as I get Inala fixed up first.

Mr. HOUGHTON: Transportation is a matter of prime importance. There is no way in the world that transport can operate successfully without a master plan to ensure the maximum use and full co-ordination of all forms of public transport. Long delays will prove costly. Redcliffe is the fastest-developing city in the State, and has been for the last five or six years so the sooner we tackle the problem the better. Several surveys have been undertaken for the extension of railway facilities to Redcliffe but over the years they have been knocked by the pressure groups—the very pressure groups that are still squawking and squarking in the city at present.

Mr. Bennett: You don't have to take any notice of them.

Mr. HOUGHTON: They are still squawking on my right! That is what has killed every proposal so far. You get people like a former Minister for Agriculture and Stock making these silly remarks about the transport problems of Redcliffe! It is the easiest thing in the world to say, "When you agree amongst yourselves, come back and see us." That has been going on for years and years with Labour in office.

As we all know, traffic has doubled in the last 10 years and the only transport link Redcliffe has with the metropolitan area is by road. Unless something is done quickly the city of Redcliffe will not survive because it cannot do so while relying entirely on road transport. The only way improvement can come about is by closer liaison between the interested local authorities—the Brisbane City Council and the Redcliffe City Council. In the absence of co-ordination, nothing is being done about widening the highway to Redcliffe. That disturbs me. I think it is incumbent on the Government to take the necessary action because the Brisbane City Council have their problems and they are not worried about whether the city of Redcliffe lives or dies. If anything, they would like to see it die so that its population would move back into the city of Brisbane.

Mr. Bennett: That is an uncharitable observation.

Mr. HOUGHTON: The hon. member is already dead.

They are the problems that confront us and that will continue to confront us until the co-ordinating committee builds expressways or makes some other provision. While we rely entirely on road transportation to the metropolitan area we will be in dire circumstances.

We hear a great deal about the Hornibrook Highway and the abolition of the toll. I do not subscribe to the abolition of the toll unless the Government takes over responsibility for all maintenance on the structure. I should be loth to accept any responsibility for its maintenance. I must compliment Hornibrook Highway Ltd. on their foresight, their vision and their wisdom.

Mr. Bennett: It was a Labour Government that was responsible for that.

Mr. HOUGHTON: It was the Labour Government that gave an extra 20 years' franchise without reference to the ratepayers of the city of Redcliffe, mark you! I say that Hornibrook Highway Ltd. has done an excellent job for the development of the city of Redcliffe. If the Government is not prepared to look into the matter of road transportation as it affects Redcliffe, particularly the construction of expressways, these are the things that must annihilate us.

Some 4,400 people travel from Redcliffe to the metropolitan area daily by all methods of transport, and the road congestion evident today will be very difficult to overcome unless it receives immediate attention. Access to Redcliffe at present is possible only by road. If the position were examined, it would probably be found that it is only the patronage of passengers using the co-ordinated service to Redcliffe that makes the Sandgate railway line an economic proposition.

I am convinced that the only method of mass transportation today is the electric railway or a monorail service. An electric train will pick up 900 passengers at a time. Let all hon. members consider how long it would take to pick up that number by other transport methods. Those 900 passengers would require 650 cars to provide the same amount of transportation. When those 650 cars enter the city proper every day, some place has to be found to accommodate them. That number of cars would require from four to five acres for parking or, failing that, two miles of continuous kerbing.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! I hope the hon. member will now tie his speech to the Vote under discussion. He is discussing roads at the moment.

Mr. HOUGHTON: I am trying to tie up all the difficulties and problems associated with transport, particularly concerning the road system and what is required for the city of Redcliffe.

As I said before, Redcliffe has no railway, and what I was endeavouring to bring to the notice of hon. members were our transport problems. If we are to be confined to road transport, then necessary parking facilities must be provided when vehicles arrive at their destinations.

The Minister has dealt with rail and road transport. I take it that I am at liberty to introduce the subject of water transport. This is another method to which the Government should give serious consideration, particularly its effect on small areas. As I have already mentioned, the entire system must be looked at carefully and a master plan introduced to cover all fields of transport.

If it is incumbent on the Government, because of the economics of the situation, to remove certain railway lines throughout the State, it should also be incumbent on it to re-lay those lines, in the shortest space of time, where they will become the most economic, particularly in areas that are developing rapidly, such as Redcliffe and Inala.

In my opinion, all these problems require a great deal of consideration from a monetary angle. The question of decentralisation, too, has to be considered, and this will be achieved only when there is a plan covering all forms of transport within a 50-mile radius of the city of Brisbane. Where only one method of transport is available, the people served by it should be able to make full use of it. The City of Redcliffe, for example, is served only by road transport, and, as you know, Mr. Hodges, it terminates at Sandgate. Its people are therefore denied the right of free movement by road to the city of Brisbane. Sandgate has both road and rail transport systems, so surely the people of Redcliffe are entitled to some concession in the matter of road transport. Until such time as the Government co-ordinates all forms of transport and gives effect to its policy of decentralisation, the transport problems of the city of Redcliffe will remain acute.

If the Government is unable to extend an electrified rail system to Redcliffe, it should consider carefully the possibility of installing a monorail system. As hon. members know, this system has been very effective in Seattle and in Japan. It has operated for many years without accident. Although I have not had the opportunity of seeing the monorail operating in Seattle, the information that I have obtained indicates that it would be an asset in Brisbane, particularly on short runs. I visualise a monorail from Redcliffe to Brisbane, going over Hayes Inlet, through the Kallangur area and Petrie. This would assist the development of these areas industrially and residentially.

A scheme such as this presents many problems, and the Minister has said that the capital outlay is beyond the resources of the State Government. I suggest that an approach should be made to the Commonwealth Government for funds for this purpose, because it is the responsibility of the Government to provide transport facilities in areas that are thickly populated. If it does not do, so, people will tend to crowd into the city and decentralisation will not be achieved.

These matters concern not only the city of Redcliffe but all areas within a 50-mile radius of Brisbane. All forms of transport—road, rail, and water—should be co-ordinated in an overall plan, and people living on the outskirts of the area should be given the benefit of reduced fares. Instead of people in the city proper getting to work for 6s., if we are to have decentralisation, the transport system must allow people who live on the outskirts—in Scarborough, Redcliffe, Strathpine, and such places—reduced fares to encourage them to live in those parts, to come to the metropolitan area for their bread and butter, and at the same time, enjoy some of the privileges enjoyed by those living in the metropolitan area.

Until such time as a co-ordinating board is set up to examine these things, I see great dangers to the survival of the city of Redcliffe, particularly if the present transport problem is allowed to continue. I suggest that the Minister look closely not only at Inala, as he said he would today, but also at Redcliffe, and to ascertain the requirements of the people who have decided to live there. It is a city that offers every facility with the exception of good transport. If he is not prepared to do that from the angle of railway extension, then he should do so by considering the construction of expressways as quickly as possible. If the Government feels that it cannot itself construct these expressways or a monorail, it should call tenders for their construction.

I am bewildered when I hear comments from time to time in this Chamber regarding the construction of another Victoria Bridge. Conceding that it may be necessary, until such time as our transport problems are solved so that we can offer those who live out of the city proper—at Sandgate, Redcliffe, Ipswich and such places—better transport facilities, no consideration should be given to matters such as the building of another Victoria Bridge.

The thinking in regard to the construction of these expressways for the provision of modern transport disturbs me. There must be a different line of thinking on many of these problems. In this modern age many local authorities are building vehicular ferries. Soon they will be getting out bows and arrows to go shooting. It is archaic. If we cannot overcome our transport problems we will cease to exist unless we live under the Town Hall clock.

Mr. BENNETT (South Brisbane) (8.18 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate with mixed and disturbed feelings. I listened to the Minister painfully and laboriously reading a two-hour speech that contained much statistical information but which, in its presentation, was most uninspiring. I view with regret the fact that the Leader of the Opposition had to follow him, knowing full well that he, as our Leader, comes in for his measure of criticism. That, of course, is understandable. Being a public man, he accepts the principle, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a Crown."

Having listened to the arguments of them both, and viewing in retrospect the administration of the Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister for Transport and Railways, I could not help but think what a sorry thing it is for Queensland that there has been a transference of that administration from him to the present Minister. In respect of the criticism that I say is levelled at him from time to time, as it is at any public man, I think it is fair to say that all Queenslanders who have a knowledge of our Leader's administration as Transport Minister, and the railway staff who served under him, from the highest to the lowest, have the utmost admiration for his capacity, his energy, and his efficiency. It is sad and disappointing that now, as an Opposition and as Queenslanders, we have to tolerate something that is just second best, to say the least. The figures presented to us by the Auditor-General show that the present Minister has nothing to be proud of as the result of his efforts. They show clearly that the efficiency of the Duggan administration—the Australian Labor Party administration—was of a much higher standard than presently prevails in spite of the fact that the so-called non-paying branch lines having been eliminated, and in spite of the fact that services, allegedly uneconomic, have been wiped out. We found that the Australian Labor Party Government under Jack Duggan was prepared to keep going the so-called uneconomic branch lines, and to keep in employment the full work-force of the Railway Department in fair times and in foul, even though the budgetary figures would not show that it was managerially sound to retain those services. It was the convincing belief of the A.L.P. Government and Jack Duggan that these branch lines, these men, and the services provided by them, were of great economic value to the overall welfare of the State.

It was these so-called uneconomic branch lines that assisted materially in the development of Queensland. In the pioneering stages they carried freight that no other authority was prepared to handle, and they provided employment in towns and outback areas for men who perhaps could not otherwise have been gainfully employed. That policy of the Australian Labor Party, in my

estimation, was a profound and wise one—one which could well be followed by the present Minister and his Government.

In spite of the Minister's so-called modern business methods application, we find that the deficit for the last year was £5,260,857. Jack Duggan would have been considerably embarrassed to have had to admit to such a deficit. We find that the railway finances have degenerated to that extent from a £4,351,000 deficit in Labour's last year of office. At one stage during the present Minister's regime the deficit reached the record level of £6,500,000. On what basis can the Minister be proud of his achievements, bearing in mind that even in the last financial year of operation branch lines to the book value—well written down, of course—of £119,191 had been eliminated, and since 1 July, 1960, that is, in the last three years, no less than 329 miles of line have been wiped out? In spite of all that the figures, to say the least, are still not good.

It was during Jack Duggan's term of office that we reached the peak year of passenger traffic. That was in 1954-55. In the year just closed there was a decline in the number of passengers carried by 9,863,149, or a decline of approximately 27.58 per cent. in passengers. That is a clear indication that this Government and this Minister are lacking somewhere in attracting passengers to the railway service. We hear a lot about attracting tourists, encouraging people to travel in the North and West, and decentralisation, but the railway figures show that the people are not moving to Queensland as the Government would have us believe.

The working expenses for 1962-63 exceeded the figure for the previous year by £59,972. In spite of the cutting out of the branch lines and the curtailment and sacking of staff, the working expenses increased by a relatively astronomical figure, equal to .16 per cent., during a period when the Government claims to be working with business efficiency following the payment of a colossal premium to independent, imported, alleged experts to show it how to run the railways according to business methods.

We find, too, that the history of this Government in the motor vehicular transport field has been most unsatisfactory. Scurrilous allegations are made by the hon. member for Townsville South from time to time. I regret that he is not here this evening. He is never here at night-time. I do not know what he does down here at night-time. Certainly he is not looking after his constituents.

The hon. member for Salisbury submitted that a branch railway line should serve his area, and, no doubt, with modern developments, his arguments are justified and were put before the Committee in a forceful fashion. I suppose it is equally true to say that, with modern developments, it is also desirable to have a new branch line to Redcliffe. However, it is rather amazing, and

somewhat anomalous, to hear a Government member arguing for the construction of branch lines when, at the same time, he votes for the elimination of existing lines. That seems to me to be completely paradoxical. I think the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Salisbury will have more persuasion with the Government than those of the hon. member for Redcliffe, because I am sure that even the present Government would be uncertain about the authenticity of his arguments, not knowing whom he represents or from what sources he gains his information. For that matter, it is doubtful to which party he belongs when he makes the representations.

An Opposition Member: He has only a branch line into the Country Party at the moment.

Mr. BENNETT: I suppose the only party he has not stepped into so far is the A.L.P. There is one good reason for that: we would never lower our standards.

I have referred to the State Transport Act and the scurrilous allegations by the hon. member for Townsville South. I state emphatically that he is renowned by those who know him for putting gross untruths before this Parliament, and he seems to be able to do it with impunity so far as the Government is concerned. It seems to endorse his immoral and amoral actions, when he does not advert to the truth, by strongly supporting him in every election campaign and using him as a mouthpiece for any scurrilous allegation that individual Government members may wish to make but are afraid to make officially from their own lips. He made the allegation but did not produce one shred of evidence to fortify it. I could dismiss it—and I shall in the brief time that it deserves—by saying that, in any case, road hauliers do not need to contribute to any political party to gain the measures that they desire because they have shot holes in every piece of legislation that this Minister has brought before the Parliament. His weak legislation has been the source of litigation that has been costly and unsuccessful for the taxpayers of Queensland. If only the Minister were prepared to confer with me more often, he would not plunge the State into such expensive litigation.

In my addresses to the Chamber I always prefer to avoid controversial issues. I have an obligation this evening, however, to introduce a matter that I know does not find favour with many people. Nevertheless, it is a matter that I consider to be urgently important to the development of Brisbane and, in particular, to the welfare of my electorate. I refer to the existence of the Woolloongabba railway yards.

Let me preface my remarks with the statement that I have the utmost respect for railway workers. My family background is closely associated with the railways and railwaymen. I do not need to stress that,

because my grandfather was a guard and my two uncles drove from the 'Gabba railway yards over a period, between them, of at least 60 years. Therefore I have a clear consciousness of their difficulties as railwaymen and I certainly would not advance any arguments designed to damage the future of railway workers generally and, in particular, of those from the 'Gabba yards.

But I believe it is in the interests of all railway workers—certainly it is in the interests of all people—to have the Woolloongabba railway yards removed. I am not suggesting their abolition, merely their relocation. I know that, since I have been in Parliament, the Minister has written me a letter to the effect that the yards will not be removed in the foreseeable future. He offered as some explanation the need to provide a service to the flour mill in the Woolloongabba area. I noticed with interest the remark of Mr. Lee, the present Commissioner, that it is part of the planning of the Department to shift the Woolloongabba railway yards, but he very cautiously avoided any indication as to when that might happen.

I sincerely hope this Government will galvanise itself into action as soon as possible because these railway yards are impeding the proper and suitable development of South Brisbane. They are killing Woolloongabba as a suitable shopping centre, and depriving the residents of the area of a clean and healthful living space.

It is rather ironical that the Government should introduce a Bill to eliminate smog when I suppose it would be true—in fact, I know that it is true—to say that, as a result of scientific and analytical tests, the smog incidence in South Brisbane is higher than in any other area in Brisbane.

That is due in no small measure to the steam engines and, also, to the presence of Hancock & Gore's timber mill in the locality. And, as was pointed out earlier, by one of my colleagues, diesel fumes are even more damaging to human life and property than smoke from trains.

Mr. Chalk: Was that letter that you referred to the only one I wrote to you about the Woolloongabba yards?

Mr. BENNETT: The Minister likes to be facetious, of course. Certain organisations wished to have a deputation to the Minister—this will be used in reply, of course—and I made representations in writing for the Minister to see them. He in turn wrote saying that he would see them on—

Mr. Chalk: 8 October.

Mr. BENNETT: He in turn wrote and said—

Mr. Chalk: I wrote a letter to you—

Mr. BENNETT: Please let me answer. The Minister asked a question, which I am answering. He spoke for two hours. I

shall ignore him in a minute because he is so hopelessly insulting when he is speaking. He bawls out like a big bull, reading something that someone else has prepared, and is not game to answer queries. I am answering a query, so I ask him to let me answer it and not interrupt.

He wrote this letter, which I received some four to five days prior to the date fixed for the appointment. I was busy in carrying out my normal duties, but I went to see a member of the association personally to inform him on the matter. I did that at night. I left Parliament House and went and advised him. I showed him the letter and did not try to conceal the date of it or when I had received it. I was informed that the deputation was otherwise engaged for the next day till 11.15 or 11.30 or whatever it was, and the Minister was advised accordingly.

What issue the Minister wants to make out of that, I do not know. I can quote other occasions when he has taken a long time to answer correspondence. I should like him to know that I do all my work myself without the assistance of a large, highly-paid staff such as the Minister has. Even his letters are dictated for him so that all he has to do is sign them. Half the time he does not even read them. I am a working man and a very busy one. I get from all over Queensland correspondence complaining about this Government and, in particular, the Minister for Transport. I am kept busy answering it.

To return to the Woolloongabba railway yards, I say that the Minister has endeavoured to pull people's legs. Although he may meet deputations, he has no intention of shifting the yards but is endeavouring to deceive people, as did my predecessor who represented my electorate and who also did nothing about removing them. If they are relocated, they could be built in a modern style to cater properly for diesel traction.

I agree with my Leader that electric traction is much more desirable than rail-motors for suburban railways. It is more economic because it would use our own coal and provide local employment. We are assured of having coal when we want it, which contrasts sharply with the situation that we would be in if international disturbances prevented the importation of diesel fuel. If we had electric traction, municipal transport could be kept moving. All the arguments are for it, the only one against it being the dictates of Big Business and the oil companies, which have the Government by the throat.

If the Woolloongabba railway yards were relocated and suitably reconstructed, a fine recreation area could be provided that could be converted into park space, a centre for senior citizens, and similar things. I do not propose to embark on the desirable type of

development that could be undertaken, because I know that that is not apposite to this debate.

The elimination of these yards would mean the removal of dangerous level crossings on five of the busiest arterial roadways of the city on which there have been numerous accidents but which seem to be ignored by the Government. It would eliminate the archaic and antiquated system of a man going out in front of a train ringing an old cowbell, with the immediate duty of warning of the approach of a slow steam engine. In fact, interstate visitors take photographs of it, thinking that it is a particular type of welcome that they are receiving from some out-back area of one of the northern colonies of Australia. I am told that when test cricket is being played at the Woolloongabba ground, the commentaries in England are disturbed by the noise of the old cowbell which is carried all the way to England on the international radio network. The Government is still prepared to have us shown as a hick town. On one occasion, unfortunately the man who was ringing the bell was killed. The smoke is certainly a nuisance and annoyance, and spectators at international and interstate cricket matches and other sporting fixtures have their view interfered with by the heavy pall that comes over the ground from time to time.

The only reason advanced for the retention of the railway yards at Woolloongabba is the existence of a flour mill in the area. A director of the flour mill, who formerly achieved some fame politically but who fell foul of his party when he was in the Federal Parliament, is apparently still able to exercise a great deal of control over the Minister and the Government. I believe that the flour mill could be well served by motor transport instead of rail transport, and it should not be necessary to retain the railway yards to serve one flour mill.

The five level crossings disturb the flow of incoming and outgoing traffic, particularly during the morning and evening peak hours, and thousands of workers are subjected to inordinate delays every day of the week because of the existence of these antiquated railway yards. Some hon. members may say, "You tell us so much about what Mr. Duggan did when he was Minister for Transport. Why didn't he do it?" The Leader of the Opposition did a great deal when he was in charge of the Railway Department. He listened attentively to any proper representations made to him by members representing the various electorates. However, I know that the member who represented South Brisbane prior to my achieving that distinction, instead of making representations for the removal of the railway yards at Woolloongabba, insisted on their retention for the paltry reason that they might give him a few possible plebiscite votes. I am not a man of that type; I look to the overall development of Brisbane. I am not parochial or personal in my

outlook, and I certainly hope that when my term of representation of this area expires—

Mr. Herbert: It won't be long.

Mr. BENNETT: I do not care one way or the other how it expires, but at least I hope I can be proud of saying that I was responsible for the removal of this eyesore, which is a blot not only on South Brisbane but also on Brisbane generally. Even people going to the South Coast are disturbed by it.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HUGHES (Kurilpa) (8.43 p.m.): I support the Estimates introduced by the Minister, and I take this opportunity of paying a tribute to him on behalf of the many people who have benefited from the wisdom and initiative with which he has controlled his portfolio.

I believe that the Minister's crystal-clear knowledge of the affairs of the departments that he administers is borne out by the Estimates that are now before us for consideration. In the Railway Department alone, revenue has increased by more than £3,000,000 at a time when road transport has been offering the fiercest competition that the State has ever seen. In discussing the subject of road transport, I believe that the Minister indicated clearly that the Government had overcome the chaos that existed for many years under Labour administrations. In those days many road operators and private persons, particularly farmers and others who owned motor vehicles, who wished to convey their goods were denied the right to use their own vehicles upon the roads for which they were paying taxes. There were many glaring anomalies, and many grave injustices were done. However, amendments to the Act brought down by this Government have made it possible for common sense to prevail. That has not only operated to the advantage of one particular section of our community, but it has meant a greater degree of competition to the Railway Department. This department, providing a public service in the transport of both goods and passengers, has been suffering, as have all public transport departments throughout the world, from not only forced competition but, in modern society, from a mode of transport that is not taken so much advantage of today by members of the public as was previously the case. Throughout the world the same pattern applies, of public transport suffering to a great extent through lack of usage because of competition from road transport.

I believe that the Minister has, to a great extent, put the Railway Department back on its feet. He has taken away the rotting timbers that supported it and substituted foundations on which he brings forward these Estimates and on which, in future, we should see built larger Estimates that will take from

the State a financial burden that has prevented the Government from doing all it should have liked to do in relation to education, hospitals, and so on.

Mr. Davies: It is still running at a loss.

Mr. HUGHES: It has to be admitted that it is still running at a loss, but that is the pattern throughout the world. No doubt hon. members of the Labour Party would subscribe to the view, as most public men would, that it is providing a public service and that, to some extent, common sense must be balanced with the economics of the situation. It will run at a loss in providing a public service, in some cases where there is no private enterprise to service the transport of both goods and passengers. That is not peculiar to Queensland but applies throughout Australia, in Labour-governed States, and indeed, throughout the world.

Mr. Herbert: There are terrific losses in New South Wales.

Mr. HUGHES: That is so. The situation in Queensland as it is at the moment is that there has been an alleviation of the difficulties of road transport but the railways have bettered their position in spite of this competition. I believe that the service has been improved in very many ways. Without going into any specific detail, but generalising, one might say that in dieselisation there has been a tremendous improvement which has affected the economics of the department in such a manner as to keep the loss to what might be described as a "creditable minimum" on the part of the Minister and the Government.

Dieselisation has provided for the haulage of a greater tonnage load, as described by the Minister, and has provided passenger carriages that are better designed—in stainless steel in many instances—for suburban traffic, air-conditioned on many lines, providing greatly improved passenger comfort.

One has only to look round the suburban areas to see the vast re-building programme that has been undertaken by the Government in recent years in relation to railway stations.

It seems to have been the policy, by design or dilatoriness, of Labour's administration to allow its capital assets, such as railway buildings and other public buildings, to deteriorate to such a stage that maintenance became impossible or uneconomic and the task of rebuilding had to be undertaken. That can be seen with police stations and even here at Parliament House. It could certainly be seen in railway stations. But now one need only take a short trip around the suburban areas to see many new stations built to a modern concept of architecture adorning our landscape and providing a greater degree of passenger comfort.

The innovations in the new booking system have also been mentioned and the Minister is to be commended for the fact that, where criticism is levelled—although sometimes levelled unwarrantedly and discredibly—he

has followed matters through to their conclusion. In so doing, he has been able to make certain innovations that have proved of advantage to passengers who desire to book rail accommodation.

At this stage I should like to join with other hon. members and pay a personal tribute to Miss Mercia Doran. Many are the occasions when she has assisted me in bookings for visitors from the South. She has helped me, too, in the positions I hold in many youth and other organisations. I can remember when a team of young people from country centres was participating in a sports carnival in Brisbane. They could not get transport back to their country towns. It was only by virtue of the good graces and co-operation of Miss Doran and others in the department that we were able to alleviate their problem at that time. On many occasions and in many ways she has provided worth-while co-operation and has been solicitous of the welfare, comfort and convenience of passengers. She has gone out of her way to be helpful to people. She has set a tremendously high standard for her successor, and certainly she has provided a wealth of goodwill for the department and the Government.

The present state of railway finances is due to the initiative and hard work of the Minister particularly, and the loyalty of many of his officers—

Mr. Bennett: You don't mean that, really.

Mr. HUGHES: What I say here I would say anywhere else.

Mr. Bennett: I know you would.

Mr. HUGHES: At least I have the courage of my convictions and at least I have common sense and principle.

At this stage the finances of the department are buoyant. This is due to the loyalty of its officers and the initiative of the Minister.

When the State Transport Act was introduced in 1960 hon. members opposite said that it would spell the doom of the Railway Department. The Labour prophets of doom were making a great cry throughout the length and breadth of the State, wailing that this legislation spelt doom for the Railway Department.

Increased competition was brought about by justice being given to the community generally in that they were entitled to use vehicles on the road as long as they had transport permits, and in some cases free use of the roads where a farmer was conveying his own produce. This fierce competition over recent years, with the trend of people to use road transport to a much greater extent, has brought tremendous hardship, and more or less disaster, to shipping, but it has not had the same effect on railway transport. From the estimates before us we can see that the department is enjoying record revenue. It is up £3,500,000 on any previous

year. That is a singularly notable fact and a credit to the Minister and his departmental officers.

In the course of these events the Government's policy has been fully vindicated, and security and stability have been achieved. We can speak at great length on many aspects, but I am merely surveying in a general way some of the issues associated with the department. I could speak of dieselisation and the mechanisation that has led to the effective economies which have enabled such Estimates to be produced for the scrutiny of the Committee and the public of this State. Dieselisation has had a marked effect in many ways. It has modernised a rather antiquated transport system. Although it is costly, in the long run it more than pays off. Although the initial capital cost may be somewhat of a burden to carry it has been proved that the services rendered by modern diesel locomotives have enabled the department to earn increased revenue in spite of fierce road transport competition.

Mr. Bennett: The Labour Party introduced dieselisation.

Mr. HUGHES: I am not suggesting that it did not, and I give it due credit. However, the hon. member must agree that it was not the manner in which dieselisation was introduced, but its continuation and later administration that spelt success. The initial capital is only the first move. If the hon. member is fair he must admit that the modernisation and continued dieselisation have meant that losses have been reduced and revenue has been increased by over £3,000,000.

Mr. Newton: Don't you agree that we should have had dieselisation on the lines that have been closed down instead of closing them down?

Mr. HUGHES: The hon. member talks about closing lines down and the effect of dieselisation. If we are to be business-like about it we must face up to the fact that there cannot be more money for hospitals and education, and greater losses in the railways. The cry is for more and more money for just about every known thing under the sun. We cannot have our cake and eat it; let us be business-like and practical. If the hon. member would apply the virtues of business practice in this instance he would readily agree that where a line is losing heavily, and is not being used by the public because of motor vehicle ownership, which averages one to every 3.6 persons—we are the second most car-conscious country in the world—we should close it down. Does the hon. member suggest that we should continue to run them, with heavy losses, for the occasional use of some people at their whim, to the detriment of free hospitalisation and better education? I ask the hon. member to apply business acumen because we cannot have it both ways.

There is a call and clamour for a reduction in the Railway Department's deficit. It has been proved that the deficit has been considerably reduced, thanks to business acumen, foresight and administrative ability. That being so, where sufficient service is provided by vehicular transport we must realise that it is useless to bury our heads in the sand about closing down a rail service. I am fully in agreement with the Minister's policy, as expressed in this Chamber and in other places. Wherever there is justification for the closure of lines because of modern transport trends, we must face the situation if we are to do better in the future.

The figures in the Commissioner's report show that the passenger traffic revenue for last year was £3,143,503. Suburban lines earned only £966,321, but the total revenue for the department was £36,648,339 and the total for the passenger service revenue was £47,050 lower than in the previous financial year. We must face up to this loss. The Government's aim was to accept the facts as they were presented, and do something about it. I do not suggest the closure of suburban lines when there are sufficient passengers to warrant their continued use. In those circumstances we must continue to provide the service.

Mr. Newton: Would you support the closure of the line where it is giving a service to the farmers?

Mr. HUGHES: How can we adopt the ridiculous attitude of operating a line for the benefit of one or two farmers at a cost of thousands and thousands of pounds a year? How long can we continue to give a service to a few persons in the community to the detriment of the community generally and the health and welfare services of the State? The hon. member must realise what is necessary.

The hon. member for South Brisbane referred to the loss on passenger services. There were 476,756 fewer passengers carried on suburban lines last financial year. That is one of the problems affecting the revenue and the Budget. I think it is only a localised problem and one that must be considered in conjunction with the transport problems of the State as a whole.

Over many years the Brisbane City Council, under both Labour and anti-Labour regimes, has had a continuing series of losses on its public transport systems. Queensland has one motor vehicle to every 3.6 persons and the vehicle registrations total 401,994 to this day. On that basis, with the modern trend for comfort and convenience and speed of travel, the public are using more and more private vehicles, and public transport systems are not receiving the passenger patronage of the past.

Mr. Bennett: I'll bet you would go crook if they cut out your bus service.

Mr. HUGHES: There are many people in the city going crook about the cutting out of bus services. Let them try to do it out at Yeronga, where I have stood on the side of the people and fought the council on many occasions, even my own administration.

This loss is continuing in spite of the fact that the Government has introduced 86 new diesels and 91 steel cars into the suburban rail service. I understand that the policy is being continued and another 21 are on order.

The hon. member for Kedron suggested the setting up of a board to co-ordinate Brisbane's traffic, implying that transport should be taken away from the control of the Brisbane City Council, presumably because public transport of passengers is not a paying proposition. That is obviously what he is getting at, unless he is fed up with the transport chaos of the Brisbane City Council, as so many others are. The Brisbane City Council has expressed its intention to take over further licences from private enterprise next year. This is just in furtherance of their plank of socialisation. Again it rears its ugly head. The Brisbane City Council want to carry out their policy. Even though they cannot make the services pay, they want power and more power regardless of how they hurt the people or whom they hurt. They could do no better than let private enterprise run the services. Private enterprise would provide the services where required and display a more personal interest. I do not say that in detraction of the efforts of members of the council's transport service—most of them are good fellows—but private enterprise seems to get things done, to make things pay and to take a more personal interest than public authorities do.

I am in favour of a modern suburban railway system and a system of electrification. Fast, clean transport has proved itself throughout the world and there is a pressing need in Brisbane for the fullest co-operation for the survival of all forms of transport instead of having the Railway Department and the Brisbane City Council pulling against each other in competition.

Mr. Newton: The Government cannot make the railways pay and you expect the Brisbane City Council to join forces with them?

Mr. HUGHES: It should not be beyond the ability of men of big thinking to get together, conscientiously believing in the needs of the citizens and drawing on the buoyancy of their own revenue, because it is public money. Buses can and should work as feeder services to trains. It should be worked out on the basis of fairness to the council and the Government and economy and service to the community.

The Brisbane City Council cannot expect to take all the cream off the cake and let the Railway Department carry the burden of the work at its own expense. In some cases the difference in fares is ridiculous. In one

scheme—Indooroopilly to Brisbane—the council got the cream while the Railway Department was expected to carry the burden of the work for only 4d. an infinitesimal figure. They should get together in common sense in a conciliatory attitude of co-operation, which will be of benefit to all.

I have only a minute of two left, but I wish to say that I feel that there is room for bigger thinking by the State Government and the Federal Government on railways.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. HUGHES: If there were fewer jack-asses on the other side of the Chamber and more men with a little more public spirit, they would get far better results than by continuing their inane chatter, which seems to be proceeding all the time.

There is a necessity for a link between South Brisbane Station and Roma Street Station, which calls for Federal aid. We can, and should, put forward a series of special projects for consideration for Federal aid. There is the Snowy Mountains Scheme, and many other projects, in the other States, and we in Queensland are rightfully entitled to our share. We need a new Victoria Bridge, and, as a matter of economy, convenience, public welfare, and facility of services, we need the link between South Brisbane and Roma Street stations. Defence considerations also come into the matter, as who knows what the future might bring?

I believe that a case could be presented to the Federal authorities justifying consideration of the need for financial aid to enable the carrying out of not only electrification of the railway system but also the provision of this necessary link. We are indebted to the Commonwealth Government for its aid in the Mt. Isa rail project, which will be of tremendous benefit to the State, but consideration is also needed of other large projects that will provide a public service and assist the economy of the State.

The coming of decimal currency will involve the department in great expense. Goodness knows how much it will cost to convert all machines to deal with decimal currency. There is a need for more diesel locomotives, more stainless-steel coaches, and electrification, and, although these are being provided in a worth-while manner, still more is required.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (9.9 p.m.): I must say, on rising to speak to the Estimates, that I have found today's proceedings nothing short of a revelation. I have found that the Minister has run true to form. He started off with a great fanfare and flurry of trumpets, and for the first hour he was going in great fashion. Then he somewhat died in his run, and throughout the course of his address he was unlike a good Melbourne Cup colt. He

stopped somewhere in his tracks, refused to adopt a sensible course, and tossed unwarranted tons of abuse upon the Labour Party and the previous railway administration.

He ran true to form, because I have heard him on a couple of occasions in defence of his department. I have heard him also doing what other Government members, particularly those on the ministerial benches do, that is, throw unwarranted abuse at past Labour administrations. I know that he has over the years had some curly problems in his department, and that there have been occasions when people have desired to have no truck with him. I was very pleased, as were all other hon. members on this side of the Chamber, to hear the reply of the Leader of the Opposition in which he rebutted many of the allegations that were made and defended his administration of the Transport portfolio. If members of the Government parties had a little more sense and reflected upon the good work done by J. E. Duggan when he was Minister for Transport, they would agree with the words of the poet Marvell, who lived in Cromwellian days—

“’Tis madness to resist or blame
The force of angry Heaven's flame;
And, if we would speak true,
Much to the Man is due.”

I realise, of course, that, even having heard those words, the Minister would not come forward and offer his congratulations to the Leader of the Opposition for the services that he performed in administering the department whilst he was a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Hughes: He gave him credit for dieselisation.

Mr. HANSON: It is a pity they did not dieselise you.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HANSON: If we look at the report of the Commissioner for Railways, we find that revenue from passenger traffic for 1962-63 was £47,050 less than it was in 1961-62, and the report for 1961-62 shows that it was then £34,218 less than it was in 1960-61. In 1961-62 revenue from suburban traffic was £15,005 more than it was in 1960-61, but in 1962-63 it was £10,941 less than it was in 1961-62. Revenue from country passenger traffic in 1962-63 was £36,109 less than it was in the previous year.

The Minister claims that he is trying to run the Railway Department on business-like lines. After looking at those figures, a business man might well ask, “Why are we losing revenue on this traffic?” In his report the Commissioner for Railways mentions that more motor-cars and other motor vehicles are being used, and I agree that that definitely has an effect. However, there has been an increase in population in Queensland, and in Australia generally, and people are coming to this State in their thousands, particularly in the winter season when the climate appeals to

southern visitors. The Director-General of the Tourist Bureau reports that there has been a big increase in the number of tourists coming to Queensland, and it is somewhat astounding to find, therefore, in scrutinising carefully the figures relating to the Railway Department, that revenue from passenger traffic has decreased considerably. I do not wish to be highly critical of the administration, and I shall try at all times to be constructive, if possible. In my opinion, the present Commissioner is a very fine officer, and there are many fine railwaymen in the department. I should say that the great body of railwaymen are fine unionists; they are very happy to please, and, from my experience with them, as a man engaged in business and, in the last few months, as a parliamentarian, I have found that they are most courteous and at all times willing to give assistance. On this occasion I wish to pay a tribute to them. But, just by way of diversion, in debating the Estimates it is a revelation to me how few Government speakers there have been. I should say, on behalf of railwaymen, that there are many men, particularly in the Country Party—such as the hon. member for Condamine and the hon. member for Roma—who, throughout their careers previous to coming into this Chamber, would have been the recipients of many favours from railwaymen. I do not doubt that on many occasions they have made demands on or called upon railwaymen, out of their normal working hours, to do them some favour, or to expedite the passage of some goods or freight. I should say that in virtually every instance the railwaymen in Queensland would have been only too happy to fulfil their obligations and to uphold the traditions of their service and dispense such favours to such people. I should have thought that, if only as a matter of ordinary common courtesy, they would have at least risen in this Chamber and paid a tribute to the many men in the Railway Department who live and work in far-flung, outback areas throughout the State. I have travelled extensively throughout this State of ours and on my passage I have found them on all occasions most courteous and ever-willing to give assistance.

I should like also at this stage to pay a tribute to one section of men in the Railway Department who are probably the last to get a rise and the first to get a reduction, namely, the poor old lengthsmen. When travelling through the State by car you can pull up when they are having their lunch and talk to them, and they are always quite happy to invite you to have a cup of tea. I thought it would have been only proper for members of the Country Party, or any members on the other side of the Chamber who at times have experienced a favour from men in the department, at least to stand up and pay a tribute to them for courtesies freely extended.

To get back to my point relative to the decrease in revenue from passenger traffic, to me it is somewhat alarming that anybody,

in the execution of his business, on finding that there was a deterioration in his revenue, would not at least take stock and find out just where the deterioration was occurring. I sincerely hope that the Minister is fully charged with a high sense of responsibility and will try to find out where this drift in revenue is originating.

I noticed some years ago in my travels through New Zealand that, on the run from Wellington to Auckland, which is a very good overnight service, the carriages were very clean and comfortable, and that there was a considerable number of amenities. The charge might have been a little more than one would pay for overnight travel on our railway system but I noticed that in the sleeping cars on virtually every carriage there was a coach captain, or what we would call a conductor. He had a little kitchenette, and during the night-time you could press a button and ask for a cup of coffee, a glass of warm milk, or a cup of strong tea, and in the morning the newspaper was delivered to you. Those are little services that are available on other railway systems in this country, and I hope that they can be provided on Queensland trains.

Of course, it may be said that people will not pay the charge. In the train on which I travel on Thursday nights, the Rockhampton mail—from now on it will be Friday nights—the sleeping arrangements are ancient. The mattresses are lumpy and the whole carriage gives the impression of not being very hygienic. The employees are doing their best under very tiring and difficult circumstances. I hope that we can get a considerable improvement on that line. A considerable amount of passenger travel is lost to the airways. With a little bit of planning something better could be done for passengers on the Rockhampton mail. I certainly would welcome it. After leaving Gladstone on a Monday night and arriving in Brisbane the following morning you feel that you need about six hours' sleep.

The railway refreshment rooms would not encourage a return of tourist traffic. They are dismal and unpainted. If the Minister is desirous of keeping tourists away from the Queensland railways I commend him upon his efforts. Last year the revenue from railway refreshment room services was £446,487. This represented a decline of £13,631 on the previous financial year. The reduction in passenger traffic would certainly explain that decline. I know that there has been a leasing of non-paying refreshment rooms to private licensees, but I do not know whether there has been a great rush to get the lease of any of these rooms. As the department has been showing a loss on them it is analogous to what happens if you find a dead cat in your yard; you might want to throw it over into your neighbour's yard. The people working in the railway refreshment rooms are very courteous and, unlike the Minister, they are very responsible.

When I travelled recently on the Sunlander I noticed that breakfast was served in the buffet car in different sittings. Some people were not able to get their breakfast until 10 or 10.30 a.m. when the train arrived in Gladstone. To my mind 10.30 a.m. is too late for breakfast. By that time the worms would be growling.

A complaint that has been echoed a considerable number of times in this Chamber is the lack of punctuality of the Rockhampton mail and the Sunlander. Recently an instruction was sent out by the department about the grouping of passengers. It comes under Clause 46, Sub-clauses 1 to 27, By-law 892. Under this instruction the conductor on the Rockhampton mail—I assume the same applies to the Sunlander—is supposed to group passengers at small towns. For instance, on the Rockhampton mail, at Marmor or Mt. Larcom, he is supposed to group passengers to a central part of the train so that they can all alight at one place, without having to stop the train twice. I am definitely opposed to that practice. On one occasion on which I travelled on the train a lady of 82 years of age was also travelling and the conductor was supposed to “group” her. I said to the conductor, “What’s the matter?” He said, “I have to ‘group’ her so that we will not have two stops at Marmor.” I have never heard of anything so ridiculous as trying to get an old lady of 82 through three carriages, doing a waltz with her, and swinging on the bars. He said, “I cannot abide by the regulation. There will have to be two stops.” I do not know if he got into trouble, but common sense should prevail. If the control clerks did their job properly the trains would run to much better times.

Last year, there was excess expenditure from the Loan Fund of £344,777 for rolling stock. The estimated expenditure for 1963-64 is £2,748,200, which represents a considerable increase. I suppose the estimate is considerably enhanced this year so that there will not be the over-expenditure experienced in the previous year.

Insufficient money has been spent, and is likely to be spent, in the railway district in which I reside. We have considerable commitments to meet in our area. I know that the Minister is well aware of our commitments for coal on the Gladstone waterfront. Only the other night the Minister and I were guests on the “Sangoh Maru”.

Mr. Chalk: We were buddies that night.

Mr. HANSON: I have never seen a gentleman enjoy raw eggs so much as the Minister, because he should have been the recipient of a considerable number of them in the Lockyer district.

On the Gladstone waterfront we have increased the space for stockpiling coal to carry 70,000 tons from Moura. I pay a tribute to the department for the remarkable job it is doing in delivering coal to the waterfront. There are many difficulties but the department has recently stepped up its

loadings to six trains a day. It is definitely doing a good job. We on the Gladstone Harbour Board are always conscious of an opportunity of grabbing extra trade, and over a number of years the harbour board has been very efficient in the management of its affairs. We have proved to the department that we do not delay the trucks to any great extent. We have had to meet a terrific number of problems in providing the extra labour to unload the trucks, but we too have measured up to our responsibility. The other night the Minister said that the future development of this trade presents a challenge to his department. I hope that it will meet the challenge. I do not think enough money is being spent on rolling-stock and I say that very conscientiously. We need more rolling-stock in our area.

After leaving the ship to which I have referred the other night, leaving the Minister to his raw eggs, I received a call from a gentleman in the South who was desirous of shipping 6,000 tons of coal from his mine, which is further west, to a European country. I have not taken the matter up with the Minister yet, but he will be informed of it very shortly. This is the sort of development that is taking place and these matters are handled expeditiously. I want to pay tribute to the department for accelerating development.

The Yarwun quarry, in my electorate, some 12 to 15 miles from Gladstone, supplies a considerable quantity of stone to the Railway Department, and is a very good supplier indeed; but on a visit there I was shocked to see that the men working in the quarry have very few amenities. They have no amenities shed and they have to eat their lunch out under a tree. The machines the men use are stored in a shed and in wet weather they have to group around those machines to eat their lunch. I have been told that requests for improved conditions have been made to the department and I trust that the Minister will see that everything is done to put the place in apple-pie order.

Level crossings have been mentioned several times tonight. If the Minister is on the level, as I think he seldom is,—

Mr. Chalk: I am fair and square, too.

Mr. HANSON —he will do something about the level crossing at Mt. Morgan and Glen Gordon, which has been the subject of much negotiation.

(Time expired.)

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (9.33 p.m.): Mr. Gaven—

Mr. Davies: Does this close the debate?

Mr. CHALK: No.

Mr. Davies: It just robs us of another speaker!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order!

Mr. CHALK: I want to reply to just a few matters that have been raised during the debate today. It is not my intention to deal with all the matters that have been raised by hon. members but I feel that one or two should be clarified.

Let me say to the hon. member for Port Curtis, who attempted to make political capital of his statement that country members on this side of the Chamber had not referred to matters relating to railwaymen, that, if he checks on the speakers to date, he will find that, with the exception of the hon. member for Townsville North and himself, every speaker on the Government side has been a city member; therefore his statement, if it applies to this side, applies equally to his own. The point of the matter is that members of the Government will speak on matters relating to the department if they consider there is a need to raise any affecting their own area.

The Roma Street railway yard has been the subject of Press comment in the last day or two, brought about principally by a reference made by Mr. Suggars to what he termed a certain amount of palm-greasing. All I want to do is repeat what was said earlier in answer to a question in the House, that is, that the Commissioner for Railways has accorded Mr. Suggars the opportunity of meeting him and disclosing the source of his knowledge. I believe that there is a duty on Mr. Suggars, as a responsible citizen, to come forward and furnish to the Commissioner the source from which his information was acquired. After all, he has made a definite charge but he has gone no further than that. In his second Press statement he said that he was not prepared to disclose the source of the information because he did not know whether he had the authority of the person who made it to make it available. In the latest Press report this morning, after having backed down on his first statement, he implies that the Commissioner should correct these things.

He cannot have it both ways. Either he establishes the source from which the information was obtained so that we can investigate it, or he discontinues making charges which he himself is not prepared to substantiate. Mr. Suggars will have an opportunity tomorrow morning to meet the Commissioner for Railways, and I hope that he comes forward and is prepared to clear the men or name the person who furnished him with the information so that the necessary inquiry can be held.

Because of the comments made by Mr. Suggars, there has been a further newspaper article on what has been described as the "problems" at Roma Street. Mr. Luya, the president for this year of the Master Carriers' Association, has also entered the discussion and has indicated that he has information about delays to vehicles at Roma Street. He has not made any charges in the way in which Mr. Suggars has.

I know that there is some delay at Roma Street. My predecessor, the Leader of the Opposition, will also have had knowledge of delays that took place there years ago. We have endeavoured in recent times to correct some of the difficulties, but they cannot be corrected entirely while the facility remains as it is. There has been a certain amount of planning over the years. Some of the earlier planning that I saw, and which I have discussed with the present Commissioner, has become out of date during the period in which it has been more or less pigeonholed because of lack of finance.

The previous Commissioner, Mr. Moriarty, was very keen to have what might be termed loading yards at various points of the city. During the administration of the previous Minister for Transport a long-range plan was developed for the construction of new marshalling yards at Zillmere to replace those at Mayne, and the provision of a new goods yard at Mayne itself. That planning has been examined in recent times, and it is the view of the present Commissioner, and one to which I subscribe, as well as being supported by the Chief Engineer of the Railway Department, that we cannot leave Roma Street. The natural trend today is to have a centralised place, otherwise merchants would be asked to take their goods fairly long distances. If we did that, I believe we could easily lose business, because I want every member of the Committee to realise that road transport operators have their depots in the heart of the city, or very close to it.

Mr. Duggan: There may be merit in what you are saying—I am not disputing it—but the new fruit markets are some distance out of town.

Mr. CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition refers to the fruit markets, and I agree with the point he has made. However, the people controlling the new fruit markets were not prepared even to allow the Railway Department to come into the markets themselves. We are putting a siding there and goods will be transferred from it to the markets. I am trying to make the point that we must plan for the quick handling of goods.

Some people have charged us with not being aware of what is going on, and one speaker in this Chamber accused us of doing nothing about it. I say here and now that I have in my hand a plan, which has been developed over recent months, for alterations to overcome the problems at Roma Street. Again it is a question of finance and, as a result, we are faced with certain problems. We require finance for the development of Clapham Junction, which in days gone by was what might be described as the terminal of interstate transport activities.

Mr. Duggan: Will you give a general idea of what the proposals are?

Mr. CHALK: I will come to that.

Park Road was the basis of the plan under which we have handled much of the interstate goods traffic. Because of the extension of the uniform gauge in the South and the vigorous competition with road transport that has been entered into by the New South Wales and Victorian railways, we are now receiving a great volume of goods from the South. The basis of the establishment of Clapham Junction was that Queensland would accept financial responsibility for the terminal. We get freight for only about 68 miles on every ton of goods coming from the South. On the other hand, on Victorian goods sent to Queensland by rail, New South Wales collects freight for about 800 miles, from border to border. In spite of that, we are expected to provide finance for the development of the terminal in this State. I am endeavouring to arrange for a workable agreement between the New South Wales and Victorian Governments under which they will make some contribution towards the costs of developing the terminal, which is of vital importance to both those States as well as to Queensland.

One of our problems is to decide whether that project should take priority over others. We have acquired land at Salisbury and are moving very quickly towards establishing yards there, so Clapham will become much more of a goods yard than it is at present. Park Road is still a problem. Certain large haulier organisations are moving out of Park Road because they have established their own sidings, which relieves the situation to some extent.

We also have this problem at Roma Street, and the scheme we have in mind at present is for the construction of a new marshalling yard at Normanby to replace the present group of marshalling sidings at Roma Street, the provision of new facilities for the receipt of goods at Roma Street, and the ultimate enlargement of the marshalling yards at Normanby to provide for marshalling of all trains including those at present made up in the goods yard at Roma Street.

Mr. Duggan: Would that involve the resumption of any land?

Mr. CHALK: Very little. The remodelling on a modern standard of existing goods yards facilities in the Roma Street yard would be the final step. The Leader of the Opposition has asked whether it would involve the resumption of any land. It would involve the resumption of a small area parallel with Victoria Park but, outside of that, we have the land available and I believe that this is the best suggestion that has been put forward so far.

Mr. Hanlon: Where would access to the new goods section at Roma Street be based?

Mr. CHALK: Roma Street, as we know it now, would be the basis whereby all goods would go in, but the proposal would be to

establish what might be termed a centralised shed. That is something that I believe is very badly needed.

One of our problems today, as everyone knows, is that when a vehicle goes to Roma Street to be unloaded it goes from truck to truck. There are only two doors for getting goods into any closed wagon and the result is that there has been a limitation of loading facilities. If you go along to any of the transport depots in Brisbane you will see that a truck comes in bringing the goods; they are immediately unloaded and then shifted from point to point by the staff in the transport depot, and ultimately they are loaded into one truck to go to wherever their destination might be.

Mr. Baxter: Are you telling us that Normanby will be just a marshalling yard?

Mr. CHALK: That is correct. We will shift the marshalling from where it is and utilise the space in the yard for the receipt of goods. I have seen the proposal and the Commissioner has followed it through very carefully. I give him full credit for the time he has devoted to it, because it is a problem. We have in mind now a design for a shed which will enable trucks to come in on what might be termed an angle-parking basis. They will be able to unload 10, 15 or 20 trucks at a time. Those goods will then be assembled so that they can be put into one particular truck for wherever the destination might be. I do believe we can overcome this problem. All I have to say at the moment is that its construction will have to be attacked in two stages: firstly, the construction of the new yards at Normanby, and, secondly, the provision of the facilities for the receipt of goods at Roma Street on the site of the present marshalling yard. I have had estimates of costs taken out and I say that it is going to cost us in the vicinity of £1,000,000. It is a project that we are grappling with at the moment. As time goes on I believe that the facilities that we will provide will meet the requirements and the demands of this city.

There are other problems at Roma Street relating to wagons. I am not denying that on occasions we have been short of wagons but, as I said in my opening remarks, it is extremely difficult to cater for what might be termed the "flush" periods. You can have a number of box wagons, a number of coal hoppers, a number of cattle wagons and so on, but in one portion of the year there is a tremendous demand for the movement of that particular type of goods or livestock. Then there is a lull. What we are trying to do is acquire sufficient wagons to meet what might be termed the normal demand. I referred today to the number of wagons we have ordered and what we are trying to do. When we have this increased number of units, and when we can follow the pattern we are now laying down, I believe the problem at Roma Street that has been referred to will be overcome.

The other point raised to which I particularly wish to reply tonight was that made by the hon. member for South Brisbane about the Woolloongabba yards. I do not deny some of the arguments he put forward, but the hon. member would have us believe that this problem is something new, and that the odium as a result of it should be directed at this Government. The Woolloongabba yards were established long before the hon. member was born.

Mr. Bennett: That is true, but they have outlived their usefulness.

Mr. CHALK: He says that they have outlived their usefulness. For 30 years his Government was in power. What did it do to overcome this problem? On his own admission, in his desire to cast some reflection on the man who previously held his seat, he said that nothing had ever been done there—that the previous member for that district had not desired to have anything done there as it would affect some votes.

Mr. Duggan: You know we bought land there.

Mr. CHALK: The Leader of the Opposition is quite correct. They bought land, but the buying of the land did not get them out of Woolloongabba.

Mr. Bennett: It is a step.

Mr. CHALK: Yes, it is a step in the right direction. However, it is easy enough to acquire land, but it is much more difficult to overcome the problem. We are not unmindful of it. The hon. member would have us believe that he is the champion of this cause. Yesterday morning I devoted three-quarters of an hour to meeting a deputation that the hon. member was supposed to introduce to me. He comes here tonight as the custodian of the whole affair, but yesterday morning I waited for him to bring a deputation.

Mr. BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. No arrangement was made for me to introduce a deputation. I deny the truth of that statement. An appointment was made for the Minister to meet a deputation in my absence. I had no intention of introducing the deputation.

Mr. CHALK: I accept the hon. member's explanation. He wrote a letter to me asking me to meet the deputation. I replied on 8 October telling him I should be pleased to meet the deputation on 23 October at 11.30 a.m. The secretary of that deputation telephoned me at 10.5 yesterday morning and said that he had only just been informed of the matter by the hon. member and that it was too late then to have the deputation—he could not get the members together—and in future would I please communicate direct with him as the secretary, because until that time he had not even had a letter from the hon. member.

Mr. BENNETT: I rise to a point of order. That statement is completely untrue. I did not see the secretary. I saw another member of the deputation, a business man in Woolloongabba. I took the letter over to him personally.

Mr. CHALK: When?

Mr. BENNETT: Prior to yesterday. So I ask the Minister to accept my denial of his statement that I saw the secretary only yesterday. I have not seen the secretary, and I do not intend to.

Mr. CHALK: I am only repeating to the Committee the message given to me yesterday morning by the secretary of this deputation.

Mr. BENNETT: Who was he?

Mr. CHALK: Mr. Massey. He was the man, and he is the one to whom I propose to convey a fresh date for the deputation. So either the hon. member was too busily engaged in other matters or he does not desire to associate himself with this deputation. As he has indicated, he has no intention of going along with it.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 15 October, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.