

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 1965

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TENDER PRICES, GLADSTONE-MOURA
RAILWAY

Mr. Lloyd, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Transport,—

(1) Was a tender recently let to Thiess Bros. Pty. Ltd. for the building of a large section of the proposed Gladstone-Moura railway line?

(2) Did a French firm, Société Dumez, also tender? If so, what were the respective tender prices of Thiess Bros. Pty. Ltd. and Société Dumez?

(3) If the tender price of the French firm was lower, what was the reason for non-acceptance of their tender?

(4) If he was of the opinion that the French firm lacked local knowledge of working conditions, awards, &c., was an effort made to contact representatives of the company for consultation regarding this project?

(5) Is he aware that this firm has large-scale international ramifications and is a public works organisation in France of considerable substance and repute?

Answers:—

(1) "Public announcement of the acceptance of the tender of Thiess Brothers Pty. Ltd. for Contract No. 2 of the Moura-Gladstone rail link at the sum of £3,115,500 was made on October 28, 1965."

(2) "Although eight large contracting firms took out full contract specification documents, for which they paid £20 per set, only two tenders were received by the Commissioner for Railways at the time of closing of the tenders on September 27. They were: Société Dumez of Paris, £2,448,928; Thiess Bros. Pty. Ltd., Yeerongpilly, Brisbane, £3,115,500."

(3 to 5) "Immediately after the opening of the tenders in the presence of representatives of both firms and also the representative of a proposed sub-contractor, the tenders were submitted by the Railway Department to the project consultants and constructing engineers, Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, for examination as to conformity with conditions of tendering and ultimate recommendation of acceptance. On September 28, Ford, Bacon and Davis advised that there were such major differences between prices tendered for certain work by Dumez and their own estimates—which estimates were confirmed by prices quoted in Thiess Bros. tender—that they considered it necessary to immediately interview the representative engineer of Dumez who had been present at the opening of the tenders. This gentleman—Mr. Yaher of Paris, was located in Sydney—from which city he was preparing to return to Paris that day. At the consultants' request he delayed his

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

QUESTIONS

MEDIAN GARDEN PLOTS FOR CHARTERS
TOWERS ROAD, TOWNSVILLE

Mr. Coburn for **Mr. Aikens**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Mines,—

Consequent on the provision of a four-lane highway on Charters Towers Road, Townsville, is it proposed to establish flower plots along the middle of the highway, as in Flinders Street, for beautification and safety purposes?

Answer:—

"No decision has been made on this but it will be considered."

departure, and returned to Brisbane. He was interviewed by Ford, Bacon and Davis project manager (Mr. Niarchos), the company's chief engineer (Mr. Worthing) and also Sir James Holt, Queensland Co-ordinator-General of Public Works. As a result of the interviews, Ford, Bacon and Davis tendered a report and recommendation to State Cabinet dated October 11 and such report was accompanied by a letter from Sir James Holt supporting the consultants recommendation. The report stated:

The engineers' estimate for the contract was £3,277,539. Thiess Bros.' tender was 4.94 per cent. below the estimate. Dumez's tender 25.28 below the estimate. Because of the large disparity of the Dumez tender relative to the estimate and also the tender of Thiess Bros., Dumez's Paris engineer sent to Queensland for the purpose of lodging their tender was specially interviewed and Dumez tender documents and working papers were examined in his presence. It was ascertained that the low tender of Dumez was reflected primarily in the prices submitted for rock excavations and reinforced concrete. Illustrations were as follows:

	Dumez Price	Present Average Queensland Price for such work
Rock excavation (cubic yard)	13s.	£1 4s.
Reinforced concrete (cubic yard)	£20	£27 to £35
50 feet railway bridge spans, each	£3,600	£5,430

For Item No. 40—Paving and Surfacing—the engineers' estimate was £10,000, Thiess' tender £9,400, Dumez's tender £700. At the interview Dumez's representative stated that he had become aware from the information thus provided for him that if the tender proceeded his company would incur losses to the extent of £325,000. However, Mr. Yaher stated that his company would be prepared to abide by its tender regardless of the certainty of heavy losses as it was anxious to establish itself in Australia. Asked to outline the manner in which his company would establish itself in Queensland, Mr. Yaher stated that his company had no affiliation with any other Australian firm. Dumez intended to set up an entirely new organisation here. They had never tendered previously in Australia. They had no experience of Australian conditions of employment or the availability of labour. They would send out two or three French engineers and recruit all their other engineering personnel as well as labour locally. Mr. Yaher

said he had been sent out to review and appraise local and site conditions and to adjust, prior to lodgment, the tender price which had originally been prepared in Paris. Mr. Yaher stated that he arrived in Sydney on September 20—only seven days prior to the closing of tenders. He had spent only two days in Gladstone. He had had no one to assist him other than a car driver who drove him to a number of accessible points on the job site. He had not inspected the critical part of the work in the mountainous terrain. He had not endeavoured to ascertain the availability or otherwise of suitable labour to carry out the work. Asked whether in terms of the contract his company could commence work on November 1, 1965, Mr. Yaher stated that to enable the new firm to set up and procure necessary machinery and manpower, Dumez could not guarantee an effective start before April 1, 1966. The consultants also drew Cabinet's attention to the terms of the agreement entered into between the Queensland Government and Thiess Peabody Mitsui Coal Co. which provided that the railway must be finished and ready for operation on April 1, 1968. They considered that five months' delay in commencement of Contract No. 2 must delay final completion by at least that four months. Such could involve the Railway Department in very heavy penalties, plus a loss in revenue of at least £1,000,000 based on £250,000 per month. It could also involve Mitsui of Japan in loss of face with at least eight of the largest steel mills in Japan, and be detrimental to the expansion of overseas coal trade from Queensland. They concluded their report by stating that whilst Dumez was in their opinion a reputable and financially sound company so far as their overseas operations were concerned, they could not be recommended for Moura Contract No. 2 where all financial calculations and international agreements entered into by the Queensland Government and the Railway Department with overseas financiers had been based on a fixed completion date of April 1, 1968. They therefore strongly recommended the acceptance of the tender of Thiess Bros., which firm established its ability to commence the work as scheduled on November 1, 1965.

State Cabinet, after very careful consideration of the report and consultation with the Co-ordinator-General (Sir James Holt), decided on October 18, 1965, to accept the consultants' and the Co-ordinator-General's recommendation that the tender be let to Thiess Bros. and this action was approved of by Peabody Coal Company of St. Louis, Missouri

which overseas company is also internationally committed in the financial agreement covering construction of the railway. Cabinet also instructed that I should acquaint the Consular Agent for France in Brisbane of the reasons for its decision, and this I did by letter dated October 19, 1965. My letter to the Consular Agent was concluded with the following paragraph:

'Cabinet has, however, asked me to say that it is appreciative of the interest shown by Dumez in the desirability of that company to come to Queensland and that had the contract been one where completion was a matter entirely affecting only local operations—such as the building of a road where delay in completion would not seriously cause concern other than inconvenience—it would have been happy to entrust the work to the proposed new venture.

'It is therefore desired to indicate that failure to secure this contract should not be construed as a desire on the part of the Government to discourage the company from tendering for further work in Queensland. It is hoped that at some future date the Government will be able to give evidence of its sincerity in such direction.'

ELECTRICAL TRADES APPRENTICESHIP SYLLABUS

Mr. Houston, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

As he is reported in *The Courier-Mail* of November 3 as having said that the new Electrical Trades Apprenticeship Syllabus was superior to that which operated under the five-year scheme,—

(1) Why did the Electrical Group Apprenticeship Committee by four votes to two reject the new syllabus?

(2) Does the proposed new syllabus contain any new subject matter? If so, what is it?

(3) How can a syllabus that does not include instruction on lamination and welding and very little on electronics be classified as one that covers the work of electrical tradesmen?

Answers:—

(1) "I am informed by the chairman of the Apprenticeship Executive that the objection principally was in relation to the hours of training. Pertinent reasons for the hours of training in this trade were set out fully in my letter to the Honourable Gentleman of October 27, 1965, amongst which it was stressed that the four year training period in the United States of America is four years of 144 hours, making a total of 576 hours, as compared with 792 hours in Queensland over three years."

(2) "Yes. The section dealing with the winding of machines has been expanded, as has the section dealing with M.I.M.S. (mineral insulated mineral sheathed) cables on the practical side. In addition, instruction has been included on the connection adjustment and general maintenance of domestic appliances which are now in common use."

(3) "There is a section in the syllabus on illumination. In regard to the omission of electronics, extensive investigation by the Committee which framed the recommendations on which the new Act is based, revealed that the knowledge gained in this field by electrical apprentices in the past had been so limited that the value of retaining this item as part of trade training was extremely doubtful. However, any student who wanted to take study in this field would have a free post apprenticeship course available to him and this would also apply in the case of welding. I stress that the principal objective of this new approach to apprenticeship training in this State is to safeguard the interests of the lad who is being trained, and there is no doubt that this is also the aim of the chairman of the Apprenticeship Executive and the Director of Technical Education. The syllabus which was before the Electrical Trades Group Committee on October 21 last is considered to be superior to the syllabus which operated under the five-year apprenticeship scheme and is also considered to be adequate and satisfactory by the Director of Technical Education. Again, as I have also said previously, the standard required is considered to be superior to that required to pass the examination for a certificate under the provisions of "The Electrical Workers and Contractors Acts, 1962 to 1964." Furthermore, I must also stress that the standard of education required by persons entering the electrical trade is much higher than under the previous Act. It is considered this standard assists a lad to become proficient in this trade within the period of training prescribed. Due to the active interest by the Director of Technical Education and his electrical trades staff in regard to apprenticeship training, I am pleased to be able to announce that due to efforts in research, suitable text books are now available. These will be supplemented with stencilled notes, and these will therefore practically eliminate entirely the laborious and time-consuming practice which has operated previously in electrical apprenticeship classes whereby apprentices have been required to record such information in writing from dictation. It is obvious that not only will there be a considerable increase in time available for the teaching of the subject matter but for the first time, the apprentices will have an accurate and reliable set of notes from which to study. No Government

would be so naive, as I have said before, as to introduce any system for apprentices, or for that matter anyone else, that would result in their not receiving adequate training in the trade which they might be following. I took great pains to explain the position fully to the Honourable Gentleman in my letter of October 27, referred to above, and I now table a copy of that letter for the information of Honourable Gentlemen generally."

Paper.—Whereupon Mr. Herbert laid upon the Table of the House a copy of the letter referred to.

TRAINING OF ELECTRICAL TRADESMEN

Mr. Houston, pursuant notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

(1) Why did he refuse to meet a joint deputation from the Electrical Contractors Association and the Electrical Trades Union, who desired to put a proposal to him for improvement in the training and standard of electrical tradesmen?

(2) Was he aware of the proposal to be placed before him and, if so, what was it?

Answers:—

(1) "The Honourable Gentleman is referred to my letter to him of October 27, 1965."

(2) "As stated in that letter it is my firm view that any proposal which the Electrical Contractors and/or Electrical Trades Union might have must in the first instance be the subject of consideration by the Group Committee and then if considered necessary by the Apprenticeship Executive. The Apprenticeship Executive comprises:—Mr. T. J. V. Ludwig, chairman; Mr. C. Gilmour, B.Sc., B.E., Director of Technical Education, who made an intensive and extensive overseas study of the various systems in operation for the training of apprentices in the principal industrialised countries of the world; Messrs. W. Bishop, E. G. Christiansen and J. Thomas (employers representatives); and Messrs. J. P. Devereux, B. R. Milliner and N. D. Kane (employees representatives). As both Messrs. Gilmour and Kane are on this Executive and as there is a distinct difference of opinion between the views of the majority on the Group Committee on the one hand and the Technical Education and Departmental Officers on the other hand, it is considered that the appropriate place at this stage for the proposal referred to to be discussed is the Executive, and consequently under the provisions of section 11, I have asked the chairman to take this action and then report to me thereon. Any further action or decision by me must await the receipt and consideration of that report."

RESULTS OF PIANOFORTE EXAMINATIONS IN TOWNSVILLE

Mr. Tucker, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Education,—

(1) Further to his Answer to my Question on November 2 regarding the results of pianoforte examinations in Townsville, can his advisers advance any reason for the 50 per cent. failure rate in the final three grades of this examination, i.e., in Grades 6 and 7 and Associate Performing, and do they have any suggestions as to how this rate might be significantly reduced?

(2) Would not a branch of the Conservatorium of Music in Townsville materially assist our young people during these final vital years of their musical careers and, if so, could steps be taken to begin its establishment in that city?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) "The general picture for all centres is that the failure rate in the examination rises considerably in the higher grades. The A.M.E.B. Queensland Advisory Board last year conducted a seminar for teachers in Townsville and it is felt that the continued development of such seminars will give much assistance to teachers in the north and in other country centres. The Board is prepared to consider from time to time requests from any centres where it is felt that there is need of such assistance. It is not practicable at this stage to establish branches of the Conservatorium in country areas."

NOISE AND GLARE NUISANCE AT EVANS DEAKIN SHIPYARDS, KANGAROO POINT

Mr. Ramsden, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

As he had assured me that extensions to and continuation of work in Evans Deakin Pty. Ltd shipyards would not injuriously affect constituents of Merthyr, will he take whatever action he can to ensure that noise and the light from welding operations cease not later than 10 p.m. daily?

Answer:—

"The opening statement is an oversimplification of what was said. Quite clearly, I was conscious of noise and glare problems, and with Cabinet concurrence, I joined in a discussion with Evans Deakin representatives in the hope that the shipyards could be moved down the river below Cairncross Dock. In the course of those discussions, I learnt that the Kangaroo Point site was vital to a continuing ship building industry in Queensland. If that site wasn't available, the industry would be lost to the State. I learnt further that the new method proposed a tremendous degree of preparation

in enclosed shops and that the previously high content of open welding and rivetting would greatly reduce. I felt that this should contain the noise and glare nuisance and that the problem of New Farm residents should not be aggravated. I will bring the Honourable Member's complaint to the notice of the company with a view to alleviating the alleged position."

AVAILABILITY OF BEDS, NORTH BRISBANE AND PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITALS

Mr. Sherrington, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Health,—

(1) How many hospital beds are available to the public through the Brisbane General and Princess Alexandra Hospitals and in what classification are they?

(2) What are the daily numbers of persons either already hospitalized or requiring admission for treatment?

(3) Has it become necessary on any occasion to require private hospitals to house an excess of patients from these hospitals? If so, how many private hospitals have been affected and what are the numbers of patients involved?

(4) Is he aware that long delays are occurring at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in the issuing of reports concerning the results of post-mortem examinations?

(5) What is the cause of these delays and what action is being taken to improve the situation?

Answers:—

The North Brisbane and South Brisbane Hospitals Boards have advised as follows:—

(1) "The number of beds available to the public at the Brisbane General and Princess Alexandra Hospitals is:—

Classification of Beds	Brisbane Hospital	Princess Alexandra Hospital
Public	1,027	707
Intermediate	64	168
Chronic	Nil	187
Geriatric	Nil	102
	1,091	1,164 "

(2) "The number of patients in each of the hospitals on November 2, 1965, was:—

Classification	Brisbane Hospital	Princess Alexandra Hospital
Public	798	697
Intermediate	51	134
Chronic	Nil	177
Geriatric	Nil	92
	849	1,100

All patients are admitted to public surgical wards by appointment for elective surgery. Patients often request some time for preparation and settling of their private affairs before admission to a hospital."

(3) "Neither of the hospitals referred to has requested private hospitals to house patients for them. No *bona fide* case requiring immediate admission to a public ward for treatment is refused admission."

(4 and 5) "Post-mortem examinations include microscopic examination of many tissues, and preparation of these tissues for such examination takes time. This is particularly so where brain and spinal cord need to be examined. Microscopic examination of tissues from inpatients whose treatment and well being may urgently depend upon the results of the examination takes precedent over the examination of tissues from deceased patients. This frequently results in a lengthy period for completing the post mortem and advising the results."

TRAINING OF AUSTRALIANS IN PEARL CULTURE

Mr. Adair, pursuant to notice, asked The Premier,—

(1) Has every company indenting Japanese pearl culture technicians for employment in Queensland been required to agree, and has each of them agreed, to instruct local labour in the techniques of pearl culture production?

(2) Must local labour be trained in the fundamentals of the nucleus insertion operations and also in other techniques basic to the industry?

(3) Has even one Australian received any training at all in any or all of the techniques involved?

(4) What steps has the Government taken to ensure that the Australian companies shall honour their obligations to train local labour?

(5) Will the Government cancel the leases of any company which refuses to train Australians?

(6) What steps has the Government taken or is planning to take to train, encourage and assist Australians to set up all-Australian pearl farms so that the Australian pearl culture industry will not continue to be completely dependent on the Japanese?

Answer:—

"I would refer the Honourable Member to the Answer I provided the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition on August 25, 1965, in reply to his Question on the same subject matter."

TOILET BLOCK, PINKENBA STATE SCHOOL

Mr. Davies for **Mr. Melloy**, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Works,—

What is the reason for the delay in the installation of the new toilet block at Pinkenba State School and when is it anticipated that this work will be completed?

Answer:—

"The heavy and unexpected water concentration resulting from the unseasonal rainfall in July, coupled with the peculiar porous nature of the soil at the Pinkenba Primary School site, caused the delay. To meet the conditions which persist, alternative construction methods have been investigated and plans to enable the work to proceed are nearing completion."

PERSONNEL OF T.A.B., CAIRNS

Mr. R. Jones, pursuant to notice, asked The Treasurer,—

(1) What is the number of T.A.B. premises operating in Cairns?

(2) How many persons are presently employed there?

(3) What has been the turnover of employees since its inception in (a) permanent and (b) casual employees?

Answers:—

(1) "I am surprised that the Honourable Member is unaware that there are three T.A.B. agencies operating in the Cairns city area."

(2) "Forty-three, comprising three permanent and 40 casual employees."

(3) "The information is not readily available."

PETROL PRICES, ROCKHAMPTON

Mr. Thackeray, pursuant to notice, asked The Minister for Labour and Industry,—

As the State Transport Tax of three-pence per ton mile has been lifted on the Port Alma to Rockhampton road since July, 1965, when will his Department announce a reduction in the price of petrol to Rockhampton motorists?

Answer:—

"The fixation of prices for petrol is the sole prerogative of the Commissioner of Prices and not a function of the Department. However, the Commissioner has informed me that motor spirit sold to motorists at Rockhampton is brought to that city in bulk in three ways, namely, by rail tank car from Gladstone, by rail tank car from Port Alma and by road tanker from Port Alma. Retail prices of motor spirit at Rockhampton include a

differential of 2d. per gallon, which covers among other things the cost of transport of the motor spirit from the seaboard terminal to Rockhampton. The lifting of the State Transport Tax of 3d. per ton mile on the Port Alma to Rockhampton road was insufficient, when reduced to a per gallon basis, to warrant a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (the smallest unit of currency) in retail prices of motor spirit in Rockhampton."

FORM OF QUESTIONS

Mr. EWAN (Roma) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There appears to be a great deal of unnecessary preamble to the hon. member's question. I shall have a close look at it before allowing it to appear on the Business Paper.

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) having given notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Portion of the hon. member's question appears to be out of order. It will have to be re-framed before being allowed to appear on the Business Paper.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL

INITIATION

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

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to consider introducing a Bill to amend the Local Government Acts, 1936 to 1965, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES—
FIRST AND SECOND ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Hooper, Greenslopes, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1965-66

DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

Hon. G. W. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (11.34 a.m.): I move—

"That £5,187,400 be granted for 'Department of Railways—General Establishment'."

Two years have elapsed since the Committee of Supply had an opportunity of debating the Estimates of the two Government departments under my ministerial jurisdiction.

This year marks the occasion of the centenary of the Queensland Railways. The completion of a century of service by any undertaking is a creditable performance in any sphere. It is fitting, therefore, that we should record, at least for posterity, the judgment of hon. members on the functioning of this very important Government instrumentality which represents to the taxpayers of Queensland a capital investment of £119,750,000, and which for the financial year ended 30 June last had gross earnings totalling £39,609,000 compared with working expenses of £39,185,000.

On a number of occasions at functions to commemorate the railway centenary reference has been made to what was said in this Chamber over 100 years ago when legislation was enacted to provide for the construction of a railway system. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that when another century has passed others also will wish to refer to the records of this Parliament. Hence I am very pleased that in this centenary year the Estimates of the Railway Department have been listed for discussion.

Precedent was established in 1963 by linking, for the purpose of discussion, the Estimates of the Department of Transport with those of the Railway Department. No-one is more conscious than I am of the importance of the transport-cost element in the price structure. The linking of the Estimates of the Railway Department with those of the other department under my jurisdiction gives the Committee the opportunity to discuss transport in all its forms, and emphasises the desirability of perpetuating the practice introduced two years ago.

It is rather ironical that when these Estimates were last discussed in 1963 I mentioned that it needed but a slightly broader smile from Dame Fortune for the Railway Department to have a surplus of revenue over operating costs, in that the department was robbed on that occasion of the chance to completely balance its earnings and costs by a recurrence of flood conditions. Dame Fortune has now turned the other cheek and we are experiencing one of the worst droughts in Queensland's history, particularly in the western areas.

That, for the financial year ended 30 June last, despite the very widespread effects of the drought and the dire consequences of the prolonged Mt. Isa dispute, the Railway Department has been able to return an operating profit of £424,645 is indeed a very good performance. As is pointed out in the report of the Commissioner for Railways which I tabled a few weeks ago, the aggregate loss of revenue resulting from those two major setbacks is estimated at £2,000,000 at least. For the first time in almost a decade an operating profit was returned by the Railway Department for the year 1963-64. Thus for two successive years this department, despite many obstacles, has been able to balance its budget—the declared aim of this

Government when it was elected to office. I know that it is easy to make promises; it is much better to be able to be proud at having kept them.

Government Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. CHALK: Many factors have militated against the fulfilment of our aspirations in this regard, not the least of which has been the increased cost of basic wage and award increases. The additional financial burden placed on the Railway Department under this heading, while I have been Minister for Transport since 1957-58, is as follows:—

	£
1957-58	313,006
1958-59	1,176,409
1959-60	813,052
1960-61	1,431,295
1961-62	818,100
1962-63	137,156
1963-64	799,539
1964-65	1,751,028
Total	<u>£7,239,585</u>

As the figures show, since the present Government took office the wages bill alone for the department has increased by £7,239,585. I might explain that in the Commissioner's annual report the additional amount for basic wage and award variations and automatic increases for the last financial year is shown as £1,916,999.

The figures I have quoted, on the overall basis, do not include any provision for automatic increases which also have to be paid by the State. To the somewhat staggering figure of £7,239,585 has to be added the considerably increased costs for the purchase of coal, oil, rails, sleepers and the numerous store items necessary for the functioning of the department. I emphasise the tremendous increase in expenditure caused by the extra cost of these items.

It is a matter of record that, notwithstanding the additional costs which the department has been called upon to bear, there has been but one increase in freight rates and fares during the eight years this Government has been in office. During that period, by proper administration of the department, we have been able to effect economies so that we have not added to the spiralling costs of transportation. When we compare this record with the performance of our predecessors we see that, in 10 years, rail freights were increased nine times. We have every reason to be proud of what we have achieved.

It is also well to note that in many instances the department has found it necessary to reduce freight rates to retain or win traffic from alternative means of transport, the operation of which was made possible by the fact that the Government recognised the important role that private enterprise was entitled to play in the transport field and gave practical expression to

its belief by implementing the State Transport Act of 1960, which permitted any responsible person to enter the carrying industry. Despite our achievements, we offered private enterprise the opportunity to become an open competitor with the Railway Department. During the reign of the previous Government, the issue of permits to hauliers was governed by the capacity of the railways or licensed services to undertake the work.

Because of the competition thus created by the Government, it has been necessary for the Railway Department to quote concessional rates for the transport of goods from Brisbane to Dirranbandi, Cunnamulla, Quilpie and intermediate stations, from Brisbane and Rockhampton to stations in the Central West, and from Brisbane and Townsville to north-western centres. Similar concessions have recently been extended to centres on the Atherton Tableland. While all of this is going on in our midst and while we are achieving these results, we have been passing on freight concessions to many industries and people in this State.

The somewhat remarkable transformation in railway finance has, therefore, not been achieved by restrictive legislation designed to protect the State-owned railway system or by frequent increases in freights and fares. The ability of the Railway Department to flout convention by not passing on to its customers added labour and material costs, I believe, has given impetus to industrial expansion and has been of vital concern to the man on the land, particularly those in recent times who have been battling against the ravages of drought. The practice of the Labour Government was to pass on increased costs of operation by way of increased freights. We have changed that, and are proud of our record.

My point can, perhaps, be illustrated by reference to the grazing industry. Under Labour, graziers were obliged to meet, during the years 1950-57, an increase of 97·2 per cent. in wool freights notwithstanding that during this period there was a decrease of 44 per cent. in the selling price of wool. Accepting the figures supplied to me by the United Graziers' Association, the selling price of wool in 1964 was 38 per cent. higher than in 1957. The present Government, despite the difficulties of financing this instrumentality, was able, by application of the "bale" rate, to reduce wool freights by 8·4 per cent. Labour increased freights by 97 per cent. when the price of wool was falling; we reduced freights by 8·4 per cent. during a period when the price of wool increased by 38 per cent. That proves that the Government is battling with the freight problem of the man on the land.

Despite reimbursements by the Treasury to the Railway Department and the Department of Transport for the month of August, 1965, totalling £124,739—equivalent to an annual expenditure of £1,496,868—and the many other measures of drought relief

granted, it has been alleged in some quarters that more could be done in an attempt to help those who are in very unfortunate circumstances.

The Government has granted, and will continue to grant, the maximum drought relief within its means, having regard to its overall responsibilities. Had the man on the land, in addition to combating the havoc of drought, been called upon to meet repeated freight increases, as was the pattern under Labour administration, his position today would, I believe, be catastrophic. Those engaged in grain growing, sugar-cane growing, and the dairying industry are no less concerned.

Recent basic wage increases will cost the Railway Department £279,000 for the remainder of this financial year. There is, of course, a limit to the capacity to absorb these additional charges. Nevertheless, there is no present intention of increasing freights and fares, and we will not relax our endeavours to effect economies and apply improved operating techniques to delay as long as possible the necessity to resort to increasing charges as a means of balancing the budget.

Mr. Hanson: Tell us the number of passengers you have lost.

Mr. CHALK: I shall tell the hon. member; let him wait for just a moment. We have lost him as a passenger since he has been travelling by air—not that we got anything from him when he travelled by rail, either.

The question of railway finances has been dealt with in the Commissioner's annual report, and I do not intend to occupy the time of the Committee with a repetition of information that is available elsewhere. Those sufficiently interested to peruse this informative document may have observed that, whilst a record volume of 8,726,220 tons of goods was carried during the year, gross earnings from this source decreased by £1,175,021. The apparent anomaly in the comparison of gross earnings and tonnage hauled is explained by the fact that during the year considerably increased quantities of Moura coal were hauled over the relatively short distance from Moura to Gladstone. This increased the tonnage hauled but did not produce a comparable cash return.

Those hon. members who were associated with the centenary celebrations of the Railway Department are no doubt acquainted with the expression "pony railway", which was used in referring to the system 100 years ago. I believe it can be fairly said that we have traded the "pony" for a Clydesdale that is capable of much greater performance. I believe that every member of the Committee is keen to see the Railway Department proceed from the success that it has now achieved to further success, because its growth is in the interests of the State generally.

Principally, loan funds were expended in the construction of new rolling-stock, the re-laying of further sections of track with heavier rails, the completion of a new branch line to serve the oil terminal at Lytton, and various other works, full details of which are included in the Commissioner's annual report. I emphasise that loan money has been very wisely spent because it has been used on projects from which we hope to receive a fair and reasonable return.

I believe that hon. members will agree that the greatest single factor in making it possible for the department to combat ever-increasing costs and to provide a more efficient service unquestionably has been the extended use of diesel-electric locomotives. During the year, the department's locomotive resources were strengthened by the intake of 30 new 90-ton main-line diesel-electric locomotives. The commissioning of these locomotives brought the number of diesel-electric units in service at 30 June, 1965, to a total of 139—97 of the large main-line locomotives, and 42 of the lighter-type locomotives. A further 38 diesel-electric locomotives were on order at that date. Two have been delivered since the end of the financial year, and deliveries under each of the remaining contracts were scheduled to commence in October this year.

The number of steam locomotives in service was reduced to 613, in consequence of the condemnation of a further 48. Eleven diesel-mechanical locomotives constituted the balance of the department's effective locomotive strength of 763 units at the end of the 1964-65 financial year.

In the same period, 581 new wagons were placed into service, including 23 all-steel cattle wagons mounted on fast freight bogies fitted with roller-bearing axles. Manufacture of the underframes and superstructures of 100 wagons of this type is being undertaken by Scotts of Ipswich. The bogies are being supplied by Queensland Electric Steel Limited, and the balance of the construction work is carried out in the Ipswich workshops. One hundred and ten steel coal-hopper wagons manufactured in Japan were placed in service for the haulage of coal from Moura to Gladstone for export. The remaining 90 vehicles were supplied in July, 1965.

One subject about which I shall speak at somewhat greater length than I have on previous occasions is passenger travel, which was referred to by the hon. member for Port Curtis a few moments ago. In doing so, I am not unaware that the financial stability of the railways is dependent on sources other than the conveyance of passengers. Any person who has filled the position of Minister for Transport, or Minister for Railways, knows how difficult it is to get anything like a reasonable return from passenger traffic.

During the last financial year, country journeys decreased by 440,489, from 3,206,148 in 1963-64 to 2,765,659. The return of £1,896,372 was £161,572 less than that for the preceding year. Numbering 22,254,074, the suburban journeys fell short

of the previous year's total by 258,176 and the revenue of £948,130 was £14,310 less. The total number of passenger journeys made during the year was 25,019,733, compared with 25,718,398 in 1963-64. Overall earnings from passenger traffic decreased by £175,882, to £2,844,502.

At this juncture, it is not fully competent for me to discuss the Brisbane Transportation Study as the report has not been released in full. However, I do wish to recite some of the views I have already personally expressed.

There has, in recent years, been a growing acknowledgment of the need for the establishment of improved metropolitan rail systems in cities throughout the world. That is not something that is peculiar to Brisbane. In Los Angeles, for instance—America is very often quoted by those who have certain ideas on transportation in this State—where emphasis has been placed on the development of a highway system to facilitate all possible movements by motor vehicle, it has been recognised that the highway system alone cannot provide the complete answer to the transport problem, and plans are being developed for the building of a metropolitan railway system.

In another American city, San Francisco, as recently as 1956 the key system of railway lines across the Bay Bridge was closed down and the space occupied by them given over to road users. Now, less than ten years later, plans are being pushed ahead for the production of what promises to be the most advanced rapid rail transport system in the world.

The estimated cost of providing the facilities recommended in the Brisbane Transportation Study is £170,000,000, and it is claimed that the works recommended will cater for a population of 1,000,000 in the metropolitan area by 1981.

After having had the honour to be Minister for Transport in this Government for eight years, it is my considered opinion that the solution to many of our inner-city and near-city traffic problems lies in the greater use of our suburban railway system, and that, before committing ourselves to spending £170,000,000—£50,000,000 more than the total spent in 100 years on the entire railway system in this State—we should, in the interests of maintaining some reasonable degree of fluidity on arterial roads, streets, and bridges, very carefully explore the possibility of the expansion of an existing asset which is so advantageously located and which operates over an exclusive right of way.

Further, in the time of my predecessor—I give him full credit for this—the department resumed land for the purpose of constructing a cross-river bridge, but that land could now very easily be swallowed up in the provision of facilities to bring private motorists into the city. I raise this matter this morning because I believe that I have

a responsibility to express my views as Minister for Transport—or, more particularly, Minister for Railways—on it.

Earlier I mentioned that despite the influences of the drought and the Mt. Isa industrial dispute, which are reflected by a falling-off in the conveyance of general merchandise, wool and "other minerals", the tonnage of goods carried advanced to a new record level. That goods traffic is the mainstay of railway finances is clearly evident from the fact that for the last financial year earnings from such traffic approximated £30,000,000 of the department's total revenue of £39,609,000.

Drought conditions had opposite effects on three categories of goods movement. On the one hand the railage of wheat decreased by 138,000 tons because of the withholding from export of a quantity of the 1964 harvest in anticipation of unfavourable conditions in 1965. Probably that was a very wise move. On the other hand, the tonnage of maize, hay, chaff, etc., rose because of the urgent demand for fodder in drought-stricken areas. The 1964 sugar harvest was a record one, and, although I am well aware of the plight of the sugar industry at the present time, the department benefited from the record harvest in 1964 from the increase in the tonnage of sugar and sugar-cane conveyed.

The consequences of the drought were also reflected in the transport of livestock. There was some falling-off of revenue from this source. There was virtually no movement of store cattle from western areas to fattening properties, and there was also a decrease in the number of pigs, calves and horses carried by the department. However, the need to clear stock from drought-stricken properties contributed to an increase in the number of sheep carried and, as some hon. members are aware, the department, because of the tremendous strain placed upon it in its desire to do all it possibly could to assist graziers in their plight, was temporarily embarrassed by the abnormal demand for the supply of trucks to meet the graziers' requirements.

Diesel-electric locomotives, which at 30 June, 1965, represented only 18.5 per cent. of the department's locomotive strength, accounted for 60.38 per cent. of the train miles and 73.8 per cent. of the gross ton miles jointly registered by steam and diesel-electric locomotives during 1964-65. This was an outstanding performance by our diesel-electric locomotives. We all owe a lot of respect to that basis of movement because it is through it that we have been able to present a reasonably satisfactory financial report.

Apart from being the centennial year of the Queensland Railways, 1965 will be recorded as a significant year in the history of the Queensland railways for other reasons. It marks the completion of the rehabilitation

of the Mt. Isa railway project; it marks the commencement of the construction of a direct line from Moura to Gladstone. In the aggregate the cost of those two major projects approximates £40,000,000. Never before in the history of the State over such a short period has such a "shot in the arm" been given to the Queensland railways.

The construction work under all major contracts on the Mt. Isa rehabilitation project has now been completed. The cost to date has amounted to £25,480,615. However, as the Treasurer said, there are still a few accounts to be settled. There are certain claims by contractors which are being considered. We hope that we will be able to complete this project at a cost of approximately £3,000,000 under the estimate.

The completion of the project has made possible the introduction of a revised schedule of train services featuring the complete substitution of diesel-electric traction for steam power. Here, on one of our largest lines, far removed from Brisbane, we are featuring a complete diesel-electric service. We are aiming, within the structure of our own financial stability, at getting completely dieselised as quickly as possible.

Provision has been made for the movement of substantially increased trainloads of goods and livestock, and variations have been made to improve the time-table of air-conditioned trains in that area. Amendments were made in the latter respect to reduce waiting time in Townsville for travellers to and from north-western centres, and to provide a return from Mt. Isa on the day of arrival. What is of most importance is the duration of the 603-mile journey from Townsville to Mt. Isa, which, with allowance for stops, has been reduced to 21 hours and, in the reverse direction, to 20 hours. Prior to effecting the track improvements, the west-bound journey occupied 25 hours and the train was regarded as reasonably fast-moving.

I have previously explained that by the application of economic measures and the rendering of a more efficient service, the Railway Department has been able to defy convention in not passing on added labour and material costs to its customers. In the sphere of construction it seems to be the normal practice today for estimated costs to be greatly exceeded. In this regard, it is sufficient to mention the Sydney Opera House. We have become accustomed to the cost of large projects continually exceeding the estimate. With the Mt. Isa project the position has been reversed. It gives me great personal satisfaction to reflect on the work that has been performed, firstly, by the consultants, Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis and by all those who were associated with this work, particularly the Commissioner and his departmental officers.

Mr. Walsh: Your own departmental officers laid the foundation for the figures.

Mr. CHALK: I am not denying what they did. I am paying my respects to them this afternoon for what they, and others, have been able to achieve. The rehabilitation has been carried out, as I said, well within the estimate. I publicly express my appreciation to the consultants, the Commissioner, and every officer of the department, and right down the scale to all who played a part in working in this very difficult part of the State. I should like to mention particularly the contributions made by Messrs. Poor, Deitz and Niarchos, who were located in Brisbane, and the field work performed by Messrs. Warren, Worthing and Dierking.

Mr. Houston: What is the saving on the estimate?

Mr. CHALK: £3,000,000.

Mr. Houston: That is on an estimate of £30,000,000?

Mr. CHALK: Yes. We hope it will be completed at a cost of £27,000,000.

The Mt. Isa project was quite an achievement. I visited various localities on the line, and I know the conditions under which the employees had to operate. They worked in the boiling sun, far removed from camps, in places where the water supply was not what it might have been. All of those difficulties were overcome.

We owe much to the employees from the Torres Strait Islands who did tremendous work, and whose efficiency reached such a high standard that only a couple of weeks ago large Western Australian contractors came to Queensland and induced them to go to Western Australia and work on railway construction. The conditions they have been offered are far superior to those under which they worked on the Mt. Isa project. Therefore it is not just my opinion that it is an achievement; it is also the opinion of experienced men controlling large contracting firms who look for the best type of employee to carry out their work.

A new 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railway to link Moura coalfield with the port of Gladstone is being provided—it is due for completion by March 1968—to ensure the adequacy of departmental facilities for the handling of the increased volume of export coal from Moura from the present level of 1,500,000 tons a year firstly to 3,000,000 tons a year and then to 5,000,000 tons a year. This construction will reduce from 198 miles to 115 miles the distance of the haul of coal from Moura to Gladstone and will relieve the congested section of track between Port Curtis Junction and Gladstone.

Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis Incorporated, who did such a good job in connection with the supervision of the Mt. Isa rehabilitation project, have been entrusted with a similar supervisory responsibility in the building of the new Moura-Gladstone line. Our own departmental officers will play an important part also.

When this line is completed and we move over onto the new line, I hope we will also be able to utilise the same rolling-stock and practically the same present-day facilities for the movement of anything up to 2,000,000 tons of coal from Blackwater. If that field were developed overnight the department could not handle any more than an additional 500,000 tons of coal approximately. I have given an undertaking to Utah that if it can come up with the finished product from the Blackwater mines in early 1967, as it hopes it can, the department will take at least 500,000 tons per annum from there.

We are working now to lift the Moura output to something like 1,700,000 or 1,800,000 tons. I believe that every hon. member can recall the position when this project started. The hon. member for Port Curtis, who was a member of the harbour board at the time knows something of the difficulties that had to be overcome in moving less than 500,000 tons. The rate of movement now is just a little better than 1,300,000 tons. I hope that in the "coal year", which is from 1 April to 31 March, we will be able to move at least 1,500,000 tons. That represents to the State an amount in excess of £2,000,000 in freight charges.

Let me assure the Committee that this is first-class business for the Railway Department. Perhaps those responsible for the administration of the mine might now take me up on that statement and ask for a reduction in freight rates. An agreement is in force for 10 years, and the freight is set. I can say that it is very profitable to the department. Indeed, it is amongst the most profitable business we have.

Mr. Muller: Has provision been made for increased costs?

Mr. CHALK: Yes. The freight is fixed. but it is subject to escalation on the basis of the basic wage structure. I do not expect any decrease in wages. I believe that the standard freight will never be less than what it is now, and, with increases in the wage structure, it could be higher.

Because this business is so profitable, I am proud to be associated, in the first place, with the establishment of the project and, in the second place, as I particularly set out to explain, when we move from the system under which we are now operating to the new one—

Mr. Thackeray: When will that be?

Mr. CHALK: On 1 April, 1968. If it is not ready then, penalties will be inflicted on the Railway Department. All aspects of the project have been carefully planned—earth-works are to be completed by a fixed date, the laying of rails is to commence at another fixed date, and so on—and we believe that we can keep to those dates. When coal from Blackwater is being transported, the return received by the Railway Department from its export will greatly assist the security of the railways.

The operation of longer and heavier trains has demanded increased maintenance. The use of long-length welded rails has been adopted; ballasting standards have been lifted; scientific equipment is being used for the determination of rail and other track deficiencies. A major advance in maintaining the permanent way has, of course, been the increasing extent to which manual operations are being replaced by mechanised procedures. Naturally, bridges have been strengthened, and in many cases new high-level steel and concrete bridges have been erected to replace low-level timber bridges that were subject to flooding.

The application of advanced techniques has not been confined to traffic operations. Accounting procedures and statistical compilation will be progressively improved following the introduction of data processing. Two computers have already been installed, one in Brisbane and the other in Townsville, and an order for a more powerful computer is expected to be filled next year. The department is proud of the fact that it now has two computers. I had the honour a couple of weeks ago of opening the computer in North Queensland, apart from the one at the university. In days gone by the Railway Department was regarded as being behind the times; here is an indication that in the North we are far ahead of the times.

From the application of this programme of modernisation has emerged a revitalised railway system, which, in an atmosphere of keen competition, has succeeded, and is succeeding, in providing a standard of service acceptable to many thousands of patrons.

As indicated by the Commissioner in his annual report, intensive planning was undertaken during the year in preparation for conversion of the transactions of the Railway Department to decimal currency. Orders have been placed for new decimal accounting machines, cash registers, adding machines, etc., and for the conversion, where necessary, of existing machines to decimal operation. The department is therefore geared for the change-over to the decimal system.

A considerable amount has been expended on the provision of improved amenities for members of the staff, and centres to benefit in this respect include Townsville, Rockhampton, Mayne, and Roma Street. In pursuance of the department's policy of progressively improving the standard of accommodation of those employees who are required to occupy camp-wagons while working away from their home stations, 23 carriages withdrawn from service were converted to camp-wagons during the year 1964-65, making a total of 82 units so converted since the policy was first implemented in 1961. Each new vehicle is fitted with gas refrigerator, stove, and lighting.

It has always been my belief that employees of the Railway Department render to the State service comparable to that of members of the Public Service, and for this reason

I believe that their conditions of employment should be not less favourable. Participation in liberally subsidised superannuation schemes has, in this modern age, become a condition of employment offered by most enlightened employers, whether governmental, semi-governmental, or components of private enterprise.

Indeed, the stage had been reached when I sincerely believed that the denial to employees of the Railway Department of the right to participate in such a scheme was detrimental to the attraction to the department of the right type of employee. Because of this, and because of my previously expressed belief that employees in the Railway Department are entitled to conditions of employment equal to those of their contemporaries in the Public Service, opportunity was taken, when consideration was being given last year to amending the Public Service Superannuation Act to extend its provisions to employees of hospitals boards, the Queensland Health Education Council, and the Golden Casket, to include members of the Railway Department as well. I believe it is something that employees of the Railway Department will appreciate. Although the scheme may not have very much appeal for a person who has spent most of his working life in the department, I believe that to the young man it represents not only more security but also a method of protecting himself and his family in the future by what might be termed compulsory saving.

Before passing to the activities of the Department of Transport, I wish to place on record my appreciation of the co-operation and loyalty of the Commissioner for Railways, senior administrative officers, and railway employees generally. Their combined efforts have done much, I believe, to create an awareness in the minds of Queenslanders that the Railway Department intends to retain its place of eminence in the transport field and values their custom and goodwill highly. They can take pride in the knowledge that their endeavours have been instrumental in returning an operating profit for two years in succession.

Having dealt with the Railway Department, I shall now make some observations about road transport. In my opinion, the Department of Transport plays a very important role in this State and, because of that, I think it is essential that we should have an opportunity to discuss all phases of its operations.

I was interested recently to read in an overseas magazine a reference by a leading economist to transport problems. He indicated particularly that he was conscious of the part public transport played in the every-day life of each individual. He also indicated how complex this particular problem is. In fact, although I do not know where he got his wording from, he said that transport is as actively exposed and as much on show as the showgirls in "Play-boy". There is something in that. It might

have been punning on words, but today transport is so important that it does play a vital part in our future.

In these days it would appear that almost everyone considers himself an expert because he uses transport in some form or other, and, as an expert, desires to tell those charged with responsibility for operations just how much better transport would function if someone would follow certain advice.

I think we in this Chamber have all experienced this public interest and, whilst we welcome criticism, we realise that solving the difficulties is not a simple matter. That is why the work of our State Transport Department is so important. No longer is it merely a tax-gathering and restriction-making authority.

Mr. Walsh: It is a pretty good tax-gatherer.

Mr. CHALK: Yes, it gets for the Government what we believe is a fair return for the services we provide. It is a most important adjunct to the Public Service departments.

Mr. Walsh: It does not cost much to run.

Mr. CHALK: No, it is run very economically. I shall have something to say about that in a moment.

In 1963 I reviewed progress made under the State Transport Act of 1960. I did this at some length because it was the first time that what we have described as the "new look" transport had come up for scrutiny in an Estimates debate and I felt that it was necessary to go to some lengths to explain what we had done and where I believed we were going.

The Act has now been in force for over four years and the position has had time to settle down. Early controversies have been settled and, generally speaking, there is a far greater public awareness of our transport policy.

Hon. members will recall that the most significant change was made in the field of freedom of goods transport. As a result, we have been extremely successful in maintaining a steady increase in the number of hire carriers, the number of hire licences having grown from 8,076 in 1963 to 10,979 in 1965. I can recall quite well that when I introduced that legislation I was told that I would be killing the local carriers. Hire licences are required only for intrastate operations and these figures are not affected by any changes in interstate operations. So that outside of this increase, in what I might term the intrastate operators, we all know that there is also a vast increase in interstate operations. Side by side with this, private intrastate haulage has progressed.

Some of the difficulties posed by section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution are still with us, but at the same time I believe that

we have been able to provide a basis which is reasonably acceptable to the people of Queensland. Many compliments have been passed about the manner in which the Commissioner for Transport and his officers have administered the affairs of transport.

In the passenger field, in recent times we have made some quite revolutionary changes. There was in existence a system under which road passenger tourist services operated whereby, following public advertisements, licences were issued to successful contractors with the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau for operation of the various tours. I am not denying that that system worked efficiently, but it had the effect of creating a monopoly for one or two operators, and newcomers were kept out of the industry.

We have progressively converted this field to a permit system as earlier contracts expired. We did not take anything away from anybody, but as contracts expired we introduced the new system. It has been operative in Brisbane and South-east Queensland for some time now, and hon. members will no doubt have noticed the variety of tourist coaches travelling through Brisbane. Some of these are smaller-type vehicles than the buses previously used.

It is interesting to observe that, contrary to some expectations, including my own, I have had no adverse comment from the public as to the type of vehicle being used. I can speak at first hand about this because I have made it a practice on my daily journeys to my office next door to the Tourist Bureau to mingle with the people catching tourist buses in Adelaide Street and ascertain their views. I found that the only problem was the necessity to have adjustments made to the availability of kerb space outside the Tourist Bureau because of the great surge in the tourist industry and the additional number of buses that have had to be provided. I express my appreciation for the co-operation I received from the Brisbane City Council in making the necessary space available.

The new arrangements, as at the close of September, were extended to North Queensland and, on our experience in this part of the State, I am convinced that the travelling public will welcome the changed conditions.

In collaboration with the Department of Education, the Commissioner for Transport maintains a watching brief over the hundreds of school transport services operating throughout the State. Some of these are directly subsidised and are exclusively for school services. On others, use is made of existing licensed services, the fares being met by the Department of Education. Apart from the latter, the operation of the majority of these services is a matter which concerns the Department of Education itself. The quality of the buses employed is gradually improving, and some of those being used for school services are of a particularly high standard.

The charter bus segment of the passenger bus service is also growing rapidly. Late last year it became evident that the policy that had been flexibly administered should be more clearly defined because of the diverging interests entering the charter branch of the passenger industry. On the one hand, we had licensed town and long-distance services fighting for a slice of charter work with unlicensed interstate passenger vehicles, while, on the other hand, the owners of school bus services also began to take an interest, particularly in local charter work.

We had interstate operators in an area saying, "We brought these passengers here; we want to carry them around the various scenic spots." On the other hand, we had very good bus operators in those cities who provided public transport for the local residents, in some instances virtually at a loss, but they were able to keep operating because of this charter work. We had to examine the position very carefully and ensure that we were being perfectly fair to the tourists and, at the same time, that we gave the local operators a chance.

As a preliminary measure, and in the further knowledge that some variation would ultimately be required, a policy was adopted of limiting the issue of charter permits to operators of school buses under the control of the Department of Education to—

- (1) Where the charter trip was for school children attending any school to which the operator provided the service; and
- (2) Where no licensed bus service whatever operated in the area from which the journey commenced.

However, this decision was not acceptable to some school bus operators, particularly those possessing a high-class type of vehicle.

A new aspect of the matter was also raised by the fact that, whereas up to that time charter work had been regarded as an adjunct to a licensed service, the growing interest of licensees in this type of work led to their stating that they considered charter operations should be regarded as completely separate ventures; in other words, that the fare structure of the town service should stand or fall on its own merits and not be affected by the success or failure of charter ventures engaged in by the same operator.

The change in tourist policy introduced another complication. Tourist operators previously held licences in conjunction with their contracts. On the conversion of these to permit work they lost the status of licensees, and any charter permit policy connected with any form of preference to licensees would react against these parties. In addition, some interstate operators were in the position that at one time they had held State licences.

After discussing the position with the Commissioner for Transport, I agreed that the time was right for a further review of the position. I must say that we were

materially assisted in this review by the Queensland Motor Bus Proprietors' Association, whose representatives saw both the Commissioner and me in deputations. Two basic questions were asked of the Association, and answers were received. The first question was whether charter work should be completely competitive, that is, whether permits should be available to any bus operator. The answer we received was that charter work should be completely competitive; that any bus operator could get a permit.

We also inquired whether the charter work of a licensed bus operator should be regarded as separate from his licensed undertaking. The reply was that charter work of a licensed bus operator should definitely be regarded as separate from the licensed time-table operating. In the light of these replies, and our discussions, we amended the policy to permit a measure of competition among all types of operators, namely, service licensees, omnibus licensees, tourist operators under extended permits, interstate operators, and school bus operators, including associated companies and firms formed within the structure of these operators, to participate in charter work.

Permits are now issued for omnibuses only—not motor-cars—under the condition that the vehicle must be used on service work, that is, intertown, local, interstate, tourist or school work. Operators will be confined to trips operating or originating in the area in which their service is conducted. In this context, "area" will be defined broadly; it is not proposed to confine, say, a city operator to a particular suburb. Where an operator so desires, he will be issued with an extended permit which, in the case of a licensee, will mean that he can keep his operations separate from his licensed undertaking. Failure to apply for an extended permit will, of course, be regarded as an indication that the licensee desires to have his charter and time-table business treated as one.

I now come to a very important point in transport, namely, the taxi-driver. Taxi control was entrusted to the department in 1959. Since then, with the co-operation of the industry, we have made considerable progress. An early resistance to meters in cities outside the capital has been overcome and, on a voluntary basis still, meters have been or are being installed in Ipswich, Toowoomba, Townsville, Rockhampton, Maryborough, and Bundaberg.

We have concentrated on improving the standard of vehicles and have laid down age limits for vehicles by stipulating the year and models at which taxi vehicles must be withdrawn from the road. Within the last 12 months, Transport Department taxi inspectors have almost completed a circuit of the State, not in any punitive manner, but with the idea of ascertaining facts and endeavouring, with the co-operation of the industry, to raise the standards in particular

centres. This is a function of the Department of Transport which renders a very substantial service to the public.

In centres where they have been requested, arrangements have been made for the appointment of special race ranks from which drivers may multiple-hire. There has been some criticism of this practice on the ground that the general public are being deprived of cabs but, as in such matters, the people who are getting the benefit of the arrangement are not vociferous enough to support the excellent service they are getting. The race-goers represent a substantial portion of the taxi-using public and are entitled to some consideration on the only days in the week they ask for it.

Taxi licences are now issued on a tender basis and all new licences are publicly advertised. At present Brisbane has 1,245 cabs in the metropolitan area, which is 50 more than it had last year. The new licences were issued at a ballot price of £3,250 each.

The department carries out checks of taxis on both the regular and the race ranks and has established good liaison with the Taxi Cab Owner Drivers' Association.

A feature of cab operations in Brisbane with which we are not completely satisfied is the wedding car. Serious consideration was given to the question of licensing special black car hire vehicles for this class of work. The taxi industry pointed out that it had sufficient taxi vehicles of a large type to meet the demand, and submitted that the taxi licensees were entitled to some protection in this regard. Accordingly it was decided not to proceed with licensing but to authorise the operations of non-licensed vehicles for wedding work on a permit basis. The number of permits was restricted to the number known to be engaged in this type of business at the time the position was reviewed, and it has been pegged at that number ever since. We still receive representations from parties interested in breaking into this section of the industry with unlicensed vehicles, but the department has never received a complaint from the public as to the unavailability of vehicles for wedding work. The department is continuing to keep this matter under examination and if at any time the Commissioner of Transport comes to the conclusion that there are insufficient black cabs available for wedding and special hire work, then, I believe, the answer will be to advertise additional licences at a fixed price.

Mr. Walsh: Don't you issue week-end permits?

Mr. CHALK: Yes, but only to the limited number who were in the industry when we pegged the figure.

The drive-yourself car, or what is now known as the rent-a-car business is also growing, and 89 new licences were issued during the last financial year. So far we have not imposed any restrictions on entry

into this type of business, apart from tests as to character and suitability of applicants and vehicles. There are some administration difficulties associated with the fact that vehicles may well start off in one State and finish in another. At the present time we are investigating the possible legal implications of certain aspects of this type of business involving the hiring of vehicles to firms.

Town bus services throughout the State continued to do a good job in the face of increasing competition from private cars. The past year has seen in Brisbane the conversion of one privately operated service to a council service. For the first time since this system of licensing came into operation under the previous State Transport Facilities Act, the period of franchise for existing bus licensees seeking renewal was extended to seven years, which is the maximum permitted under the Act. Previously most licences were issued for five years. This should give a greater security of tenure and encourage licensees to improve their facilities. The fare structures of buses are at present under review with the imminence of conversion to decimal currency.

Reference to bus services no doubt brings up the question of the recent Brisbane Transportation Study, which I mentioned when referring to the Department of Railways. Three segments of the reports have been made available to me. The first—the summary report—is one that is available to the general public and one that no doubt all interested members of the Committee have by now obtained. The second is a report on parking needs, and the third is the main report itself. This is a very large volume which as yet has not been printed in its final form with maps and diagrams.

I can say that I have studied the summary in detail from the point of view of road passenger transport and have found it easy to follow. The maps and diagrams help to explain the letterpress, and it is comparatively easy to assimilate the overall scheme by a reference to them. I have read the main report over an extended period. I must say, as I said previously in relation to the railways, that all the documents are exercises in logic.

What I am personally concerned about is not so much the building of roads for private motorists but the provision of public transport. Those hon. members who can recall what I said on the subject of mass transportation during the previous debate on transport will not be surprised that I am strongly opposed to providing all facilities for travel by private motor-car within the heart of the city if the railways and bus operators are not to receive the consideration that I believe should be given to them. I should like, however, to pay tribute to the honesty and sincerity of those officers of Wilbur Smith and Associates who were connected with

the preparation of the report, and at the appropriate time I hope to have a chance to discuss the report more fully.

I referred earlier to the number of hire licences in existence as an indication of the progress that has been made, and I point out that over recent years there has been a considerable increase in the revenue obtained from this source. In the year ending in June, 1963, the Government received £2,895,074 in revenue under the State Transport Act of 1960 and the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act. The comparable figure for the year ending in June, 1965, was £4,026,067. It is significant that over the period mentioned an increase in revenue of almost 50 per cent. has been achieved.

Another matter that I should like to mention concerns activities in road safety, a matter that comes within the jurisdiction of the Department of Transport. We have done what we can with the finance available to extend operations outside Brisbane. A field officer has recently been appointed to Rockhampton. He will cover the territory from Bundaberg to Mackay, thus allowing the field officer in the North to operate in more northern areas. In my opinion, field officers do a very important job in the sphere of road safety, and all that one can hope is that the efforts of the Road Safety Council of Queensland will be the means of saving at least some lives. Although it is impossible to judge what its efforts achieve, it is trying to do what it can in the interests of the people of Queensland.

Certain issues relative to the State Transport Act are at present under reference to the Privy Council. I shall refrain from discoursing on these at any length. However, where border-hopping operations are involved, the constitutional issues can become very complex and many fine lines are being drawn. I hope that the outcome of the cases that are now before the High Court of Australia and which ultimately may find their way to the Privy Council, will ensure that those who use the roads in Queensland will make a reasonable contribution to their maintenance.

Speaking of carriers generally, I believe that the ordinary Queensland operators play a very important part by providing excellent services in their local towns. In spite of the problems that have confronted it relative to road transport, the Government has endeavoured to liberalise the provisions of the Act that affect primary producers. It has given greater concessions than were ever extended previously, and, again, this is an indication of its desire to meet the needs of the man on the land. Since 1961, too, a considerable portion of the State has been exempted from the payment of permit fees for the carriage of livestock, and concessions have also been made in certain other areas.

As Minister for Transport, it has been my privilege to attend the annual meetings of the Australian Transport Advisory Council. Some people are prone to say that benefits do not flow from conferences of this type,

but I believe that the deliberations that have taken place at various council meetings have been in the interests of Australia as a whole.

Queensland's liaison with the Commonwealth Government has been quite good, but one or two problems relative to air transport are causing some concern at present. Representatives of the States have had talks with Senator Henty, the Minister in charge of air operations, and his officers, and I hope that, as a result, uniformity of views will be achieved between the Commonwealth and the States and that air services will be extended to a number of localities that are now seeking them.

I conclude by saying that these two departments play a very vital part in furthering the development of Queensland. Transport costs are possibly the most important factor in the price of both primary and secondary commodities, and unless we can ensure that raw commodities are carried at a reasonable price and that goods manufactured in the city for consumption in the Far West are carried there at a reasonable price, we shall only be adding to the overall cost structure of the State. All hon. members know the difficulties that confront a Government in the field of finance. The Government would like to be able to reduce some of the charges that it is making for operations on the roads of the State, but if it attempted to eliminate the revenue that it is now receiving as a result of the operations of road transport, it would have to find another £4,000,000 a year, as the figures that I have given in this Chamber show. I do not believe that that can be done at present, but I assure hon. members that the position will be reviewed constantly and carefully.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.]

The 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 Committee of Supply.

Mr. DUGGAN (Toowoomba West—Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 p.m.): The Minister has given us an interesting hour and a half's survey of the operations of this department. I think the Minister is justified in taking that time, or even longer, to deal with this very important ministerial responsibility. Unfortunately, because I have only 25 minutes to deal with the important department over which the Minister presides, I do not think I shall have an opportunity to deal with aspects of road transport during this debate.

I wish to make some general observations on the railways and to commence those observations by saying that I regret that the Minister did not elect merely to deal with the problems confronting his department and its many achievements. Instead of doing that, periodically he departed from this role and engaged in what I might be justified in regarding as political propaganda. His first observation was that Dame Fortune was unkind to the department because of the flood conditions in 1963-64 and that the same Dame Fortune was equally unkind to the department because of drought conditions in 1964-65.

I can recall the period when we were in office and I did not find any great disposition on the part of the then Opposition to take into account any of the worries that came to the administration because of either of those conditions.

I must readily acknowledge that drought is having a very serious effect on our economy at the present time and no doubt it reflects itself in the department's operations, but, as I pointed out, this sort of consideration did not seem to be extended by the then Opposition when we were the Government.

I have noticed that in the last year or so there is a tendency in Government propaganda to refer to the activities of the railways or the fact that the revenue of the department for a month or a quarter is at a higher level than at some previous comparable period. I think one could expect in a State like Queensland that, with its growing population and development, this would reflect itself in the Railway Department, but, just for the record, I should like to refer to railway deficits. People have short memories, or their memories are prompted by the fact that they like to remember that this Government has tried to surround itself, in all its ministerial departments, with the fact that there has been a tremendous upsurge since 1957-58 and that all of the things that are happening in Queensland which might be regarded as good in character are the result of its efforts.

I point out that for the eight years up to the last Budget of our administration, after taking into account deficits and surpluses and interest obligations, there was an aggregate deficit of £24,132,093. During the eight years under this Government, taking those same factors into account, there has been an aggregate deficit of £45,299,547. During our last years of operation the aggregate deficit was fractionally over £3,000,000 a year. Under this Government it has increased to £5,600,000 a year, so there has been a financial deterioration in the eight-year period of £2,600,000 a year, which amount has to be paid for out of Consolidated Revenue.

If a business firm increases its capital by issuing shares or undertaking some other financial commitment by way of overdraft, debentures, or whatever means it might employ to expand its operations, its profit is determined after taking into account that

injection of additional capital. No private company brings in additional capital unless it feels the need to compete more adequately and effectively with others engaged in a similar industry, or because it wants to modernise or streamline its activities and it considers that by the use of additional capital it can earn as much or more profit than it did previously. Any private company that had this injection of additional capital for modernising or other purposes would expect to see those figures better reflected than is the case here.

I point out to the critics of the performance of the Labour Government that the improvements in recent years in the earnings figures have to be offset by the interest obligations which arise by the use of new capital. There can be no other way of measuring these things. On various occasions the Minister for Transport has said that what the Government is doing is for the purpose of streamlining the railways to make them more competitive with other forms of transport. But that has been the aim and role of succeeding Ministers for Transport, no matter how many years we go back.

It is also interesting to note that these figures have been made possible after 671 miles of railway line have been closed. When the present Premier was Leader of the Opposition he said words to this effect: "Any closure of branch lines in Queensland will be over my dead body." Nevertheless, 671 miles of railway line have been closed. On examination, the branch lines making up this total were shown to be unprofitable sections of the department—lines where there were earning losses apart from the consideration of interest on the capital employed in those areas.

As an offset against those closures what has the Government done in the way of new lines? It has engaged in a major rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa railway line. I am not going to waste time on that matter because it has been thrown to and fro all along. I merely point out for the record that any any impartial observer who cared to go into the Railway Department or the Treasury would find that before the defeat of the Labour Government all the parties—the Commonwealth Government, when Sir Arthur Fadden was Treasurer, Mr. George Fisher, the then managing director of Mount Isa Mines Limited, the then Commissioner for Railways and the Cabinet of the day—were in agreement on the proposed expenditure of £30,000,000 on this line. All the necessary steps were being taken in the normal process of Governmental negotiation, which takes time, as everybody knows.

Had the Labour Government remained in office, this major undertaking most certainly would have been carried out and, I should say, without any marked variation in the time factor. The increased railway traffic because of the increased production that would flow from the use of additional capital

by Mount Isa Mines Limited had been worked out. The economics of the whole matter had been determined. The hon. member for Bundaberg, who was Treasurer at the time, knows that at a meeting with the Queensland Government, Sir Arthur Fadden agreed that this sum of money would be made available, and all the terms and conditions, except for minor modifications that the consultants would have determined in the normal examination of working plans, had been agreed to.

The only other recent major railway undertaking is the proposal to build 113 miles of line from the Moura coalfield to the coast to cater for the development of that field. Let us see what is happening elsewhere. I refer to these matters to see whether what is happening is peculiar to Queensland. What I am about to read is not propaganda issued by the Labour Party. It is from no less an authority than the Commissioners of the Commonwealth and State railways systems of Australia. It says—

“In Western Australia about 500 miles of private standard gauge line is under construction for the W.A. iron ore traffic.”

That is being built by private capital. No Government capital is involved in much of this construction work. That compares with the 113 miles to be built here, where the Government has undertaken the building of the line.

The article continues—

“In South Australia the 130-mile line from Adelaide to Port Pirie is scheduled for conversion to standard gauge. . . .”

That is within the State. It is not an inter-state connection which would attract heavy Commonwealth subsidy.

The article continues—

“ . . . and discussions are proceeding for a new 50-mile standard gauge from Whyalla to Port Augusta.”

Again, that is within the State of South Australia.

Then we find—

“The 197-mile standard gauge line between Albury and Melbourne was completed”

That line comes under the Commonwealth benefit.

Later in the article, this appears—

“The N.S.W.G.R. have begun the rehabilitation of 400 miles of the Western Line between Parkes and Broken Hill.”

What is happening here is not markedly different from what is happening everywhere else in Australia, except that we are less expansive here.

The Minister referred to the fact that there had been an improvement in finance. That is not peculiar to the Queensland railways. The book that I have from the Library admittedly goes back in some instances

only to 1963, and, no doubt, the Commissioner would have much more recent information available to him. However, it shows that in Western Australia the deficit in 1959 was £5,047,072. It is reported that for 1963 the deficit was reduced to £3,434,178. For South Australia, the last figures available are for 1963-64. The report shows that the earnings were the highest recorded and show an improvement of £936,059 over the previous year. The Commonwealth Railways showed a net profit of £725,996. That was well over £200,000 better than the previous year.

In New South Wales, in 1963-64 there was a surplus of £213,445. In 1964-65 there was a surplus of £88,000. In Victoria, for 1964, which is the last report available in the Library, there was a net improvement of £695,546 over the previous year. While I am on these figures, I point out that all railway systems in Australia, whether under Labour or non-Labour Governments, are showing a steady improvement in their financial position.

It is also worth noting the number of employees in the department over the period under review, without at this stage attaching any particular significance to them. Nevertheless, for the record, I would like them put in “Hansard”. On 30 June, 1957, there were 29,823 employees, and on 30 June, 1965, there were 25,609, a reduction of 4,214. However, those figures in the Commissioner’s report do not show whether many of the workshops throughout the State are understaffed. I am sure that the Commissioner and the Minister would be the first to acknowledge that they could advantageously place certain tradesmen in most of the major workshops in the State. Not only has there been a closure of branch lines, but there has also been an abolition, elimination or reduction in status of many depots throughout the State. There has been a reduction of staff at Cairns, and I am sure the hon. member for that area will have something to say about that.

The Minister referred also to the freight increases which took place in a 10-year period of Labour Government. He said there were nine increases. He said also that the price of wool decreased 40 per cent. in that period and that freights increased by 90 per cent. I am not in a position to argue with those figures, so I accept them as being broadly true. During all that time, until the advent of the present drought, which has nothing to do with rail freights, there was no diminution in the value of grazing properties. The figures do not show any reluctance on the part of people to buy good grazing properties.

Mr. Ewan: They would be book values that you are referring to.

Mr. DUGGAN: The figures for purchases went up tremendously, and we must take into account the deterioration in the value of money over that period.

The Minister mentioned the tremendous wage burden that is carried by the department.

He mentioned the figure of £7,239,000 which has been absorbed by the department during his term of office. The Labour Government, prior to 1957, had greater wage liabilities to absorb. On 2 May, 1949, the basic wage was £6 3s.; on 29 July, 1957, it was £12 1s., an increase of £5 15s. If that is multiplied by the 27,000 employees in the department, it will account for a larger sum than that mentioned by the Minister. In addition, there were marginal increases, which have to be added. Between 29 July, 1957 and 20 September, 1965, the basic wage increased from £12 1s. to £15 14s. Therefore the Minister's figure loses its significance.

At various times the Minister has emphasised the efforts of this Government to revitalise the department. I have his booklet and Press cuttings here. Admittedly he is not responsible for the heading which reads, "Railway troubles are heritage of Labour". The Minister mentioned a period of 25 years. Like the Minister, I was with the department for quite a long time, and Labour has nothing to be ashamed of in its efforts to revitalise the department. I deny that the revitalisation started only in 1958.

The Minister's booklet deals with transport in Queensland during an eight-year period. A similar booklet which I produced during my time as Minister also covers an eight-year period. Let us examine all these flamboyant claims about revitalisation and the use of more scientific equipment. The Minister's booklet says that from 1957—that takes into account some orders placed by the Labour Government—the Government purchased 2,081 wagons. That is in this period of tremendous improvement that the Government talks about. During a similar eight-year period the Labour Government purchased 8,821 new wagons which it placed in service.

In the Minister's booklet he talks about the strengthening of bridges.

It is recorded in my booklet that we introduced the Hallade track recorder which the Minister mentions as being purchased.

He talks about welding rails into longer lengths. In my booklet I speak of the same matter. The longest length today is approximately 260 feet. When Labour was in power we had produced lengths similar to that and were carrying out experiments to see whether we could go up to 320 feet.

The Minister speaks about portable huts for single men which he claims were a heritage from Labour. He points out that the number of houses provided for railwaymen totals, I think, 300. I should like to get the exact figure, because I should not like to misquote him.

During the period of time that I refer to the Labour Government spent approximately £407,000 on new cottages, and additions and alterations to others. It must also be remembered that a greater number of cottages could have been built for that sum eight years ago than could be built now. For example, the cost of building a home rose by £250 last year alone, and since the Government came

to office it has risen, I suppose, by about £1,000. As well as taking into account the number of units constructed, one has to remember that there was so much more value in a house at that time than there is now.

In the booklet that I have in my hand the Minister points out that 310 portable huts have been built by the Government to improve conditions for workers and to do away with the use of tents. We built 1,318 of them. No matter what subject the Minister likes to mention, Labour Governments have no need to feel ashamed of their efforts. During our term of office 99 air-conditioned coaches were built. We also built 12 or 13 new steel suburban carriages. It will be found also in this booklet that 18 months before we left office stainless steel and aluminium coaches were introduced and in operation. If he were here today, Mr. George Watson, the late managing director of Commonwealth Engineering Qld. Pty. Ltd., would confirm that. Let us keep the record straight when dealing with these matters.

The Minister has acknowledged that electrification of the Brisbane suburban railway system will come in perhaps 15 years' time. I believe that that is too long to wait for it. I do not think that using diesel-electric locomotives for suburban traffic is economically sound. An expensive unit costing about £100,000 is used in the off-peak period to haul two or three carriages, and six or eight during the busy time. With electrification, carriages can be taken off, and then brought back during peak periods. In Cleveland, Toronto, Montreal, Sweden, Belgium, The Netherlands, England and France there has been a swing from diesel-electric to electric traction. Electrification is extremely important in a State with a good supply of coal.

In overseas cities with populations not much greater than that of Brisbane rapid transport systems are in operation. People are encouraged, by the provision of parking space, to leave their cars at railway stations and proceed to the city area by, in most cases, electric trains. I suggest that the same should be done here.

The great disappointment is that there is a major difference of thought between the Minister for Transport and his Cabinet colleagues on the traffic plan produced by Wilbur Smith and Associates. I am sorry I cannot deal with the traffic survey because my time is running out. On the same day as the announcement was made concerning the implementation of a plan to cost about £170,000,000, the Minister for Transport expressed strong condemnation of it. Despite Cabinet's agreement to implement stage 1 of the plan, he still registered strong disapproval. It is quite undesirable to have conflicts of opinion on the solving of transport problems between a senior member of the Cabinet and other Ministers.

I think that those differences should be resolved before there is any suggestion that nothing will be done unless the Lord Mayor agrees to do this, that, or the other thing.

Cabinet must agree on what it intends to do before it starts telling other people what they should do. The trend that we see today is alarming.

I readily acknowledge that passenger rail traffic has declined in many parts of the world, but electrification of passenger services would do much to increase patronage. If the Government is able to build on the sketchy plan that I have outlined—time prevents me from elaborating on it—I think a satisfactory system of rail transport could be provided for Brisbane.

Mr. EWAN (Roma) (2.41 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on his very enlightening speech. He certainly gave all hon. members food for thought on the very important Estimates now before the Committee. I also congratulate the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Lee, on the report that he has submitted to Parliament. It is a record of solid achievement.

Hon. members heard a very interesting and vigorous defence by the Leader of the Opposition of his administration of the Railway Department. It is true that the Queensland railways did a magnificent job in the war years—I think even their critics will admit that—but they were in a very run-down condition when the Leader of the Opposition was administering them. He had a difficult task to rehabilitate them, as I think he will be the first to admit.

One of the most effective improvements from the point of view of the people of the West has been the continuation of the work of laying heavier rails, which has made possible faster services and larger payloads. From my own experience of travelling on the railways, I should say that the railways have now got away from the square-wheeled ride that they provided in the old passenger trains, particularly between Brisbane and Charleville and on the "Flying Flea" from Charleville to Quilpie. Travelling in a train in those days was like bumping up and down on a horse; it was impossible to drink a glass of water or a cup of tea, or even to read a newspaper. On many occasions I heard the opinion expressed that the carriages had square wheels. I am sure that all those who travel by rail have noticed the improvement in the service.

On page 5 of his report, the Commissioner for Railways says—

"More importantly, the duration of the 603-mile journey from Townsville to Mount Isa was, with allowances for stops, reduced to 21 hours and in the reverse direction to 20 hours. Prior to the effecting of track improvements, the westbound journey occupied 25 hours and eastbound 24½ hours."

In the latter case there has been a saving of almost five hours. There has been a similar improvement in the service to Charleville and Cunnamulla on the "Westlander", and the people out there appreciate it greatly.

The Commissioner goes on to say—

"Another important step in the direction of providing expedited services to and from distant centres was the action taken to increase the frequency of express freight train services which operate to the north, providing for the arrival of goods at Townsville 36 hours after their despatch from Brisbane and at Cairns in 48 hours."

Many of us know the delays that have occurred in the past, so we appreciate the services that we are receiving today.

Mr. Bennett: Tell us why there have been so many derailments in the last 12 months.

Mr. EWAN: I think that remark might boomerang back on the hon. member. There can be such a thing as sabotage, as the hon. member knows. He uses it on many occasions in this Chamber.

Let me say on behalf of the stock industry what a tremendous fillip the speed-up of stock trains has given it. I travelled in stock trains from Quilpie to Wallangarra on many occasions in the early 1920's, when a Labour Government that the Leader of the Opposition defended so vigorously was in office, and the average speed was about 10 miles an hour. Compare that with some of the services we are receiving today.

Let us consider also the improvement in the administration of the railways and the employment of goodwill officers, men who attend stock sales in an endeavour to bring business to the railways. They are succeeding in doing a tremendous job; they are looking for business, trying to increase it and to create goodwill. They are running the railways as they should be run, namely, on a business footing.

The tremendous courtesy one receives today from railway officers clearly indicates that they are receiving a lead from the top that goes right down through the service and is most commendable. We all appreciate it.

Mr. Davies interjected.

Mr. EWAN: I say it goes right down through the service and that that courtesy definitely was not extended 10 or 15 years ago. Any honest person would admit that 15 years ago the railways were backward and the service discourteous. One never saw a goodwill officer attending cattle sales and looking for business for the railways. If one asked for anything he was treated as though he was dirt beneath some officer's feet. That position no longer obtains. The improvement is in the interests of the railway service in this State and reflects great credit on the administration.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke about 671 miles of railway branch lines being closed. He admitted that they were unprofitable lines and then gave us a short treatise on the financial implications involved in increased capital expenditure. Modernisation of the motive power and rolling-stock

of the railways is important, and it must be admitted that the increased amenities will increase earning capacity and provide a continuation of the extension of improvements to buildings and services. It will also provide for better conditions than if the increased capital had not been spent.

Mr. Davies: What amenities are there?

Mr. EWAN: Doesn't the hon. member ever travel on the railways? I advise him to travel to Charleville and see the condition of the houses and other railway buildings along the line. They are beautifully painted in pastel colours, with rain-water tanks provided. Of course, due to drought conditions, at the present time water is being delivered to them all along the way. The state of those amenities was absolutely shocking years ago. Anyone who travels from here to Charleville today can see the modernisation that has taken place in these buildings. They are beautifully painted in pastel shades and have large windows and that sort of thing.

Mr. Duggan: I met a fellow this morning from the Gregory electorate who told me that he has water in every room; it comes through the ceiling.

Mr. EWAN: That was the state of affairs when I commenced to represent the Roma electorate but, thanks to the co-operation I received from the Minister, many of those conditions no longer exist. Anyway, if that occurs I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition has not reported it or at least shown sufficient courtesy to the hon. member for Gregory as to tell him in order that he may take appropriate action to correct that state of affairs.

Getting back to the closing of railway lines, I have one worry in my area. It is the unprofitable line between Roma and Injune, which is due for closure. I know that in accordance with the policy of this Government no railway line will be closed until there is an alternative all-weather road system available. The Main Roads Department is doing fairly well in providing an alternative service, but the tentative date of closure of the line is 30 June and I do not think that even in my fondest dreams there will be an all-weather road as an alternative means of transport by that date. I bring this matter to the Minister's notice, particularly in view of the expanding business in the Injune district. I know that, as businessmen, the Minister and his officers will give full consideration to the continuously expanding industry in that district. I refer to the brigalow scheme in the Arcadia area, the potential of which is likely to increase greatly the carriage of goods over the Injune railway line.

I sincerely hope that the line will not be closed precipitately on 30 June. The road will not be ready as an alternative means of transport. Should there be an increase,

as I now envisage, in the quantity of goods transported over the line before the time comes for its closure, I hope that full consideration will be given to the altered state of affairs. I am quite confident that the Minister and the Commissioner will examine the matter very closely before coming to a final decision.

Mr. Bennett: You wanted it closed, but Hughie O'Donnell stopped you.

Mr. EWAN: Hughie O'Donnell had nothing to do with it. He is a decent fellow. Unlike the hon. member for South Brisbane, he does not jump in on matters that do not concern him.

On behalf of my constituents and myself, I extend thanks to the Commissioner for Transport for his unfailing and unflagging courtesy when he is approached on any of the multitudinous problems confronting his administration. I also congratulate him on the presentation of his 18th annual report on the activities of his department. I do not know of anyone with a more difficult job. I think I am expressing the feelings of most thinking people in Queensland when I say that he has done a tremendous job which is deserving of the appreciation of all.

We well remember the cries that emanated from the Opposition benches on the introduction of the State Transport Bill in 1960. "A shocking state of affairs!" "The end of road transport!" "The end of everything!" "The imposition of a vicious tax!", hon. members opposite said. Let us examine the present position. I have with me details of motor vehicle registrations in Queensland up to August 1965. In 1957 there were 37,813 trucks and lorries registered in Queensland. In 1960 the figure was 39,624, and in 1965 it was 48,177. Since 1957 there has been an increase in registrations of 10,364, and, since the imposition of the so-called iniquitous State Transport Act of 1960, there has been an increase of 8,553. Why was there that increase? Was it because there were more goods to be carried, and therefore a need for more vehicles on the road, or was it because the road transport industry became so attractive to people engaging in that form of work that they bought these extra vehicles to engage in that occupation?

In 1957, in the time of the Labour Government, there were 1,144 buses registered in Queensland; in 1960 there were 1,493 and in 1965 there were 2,452. The figures show an increase of 1,308 since 1957 and 959 since 1960. That is an indication that the new method of administering the transport laws of this State, even though it involves a different form of taxation, is accepted, and the road transport industry has expanded as a result.

We in the rural industries of the State are very grateful to the Railway Department for the drought concessions we are receiving—starving-stock rebates and the like. Of course, those concessions were extended

in the days of the Labour Government, when we were equally appreciative. Under the new road transport system we are having fodder concessions granted for road transport.

There is one matter that I should like to bring to the attention of the Minister and the Commissioner for Transport. Allegations have been made to me—I understand that they are on firm premises—that the road transport tax concessions on fodder are not being passed on to the owners of starving stock but are being retained by the transport operators.

Mr. Davies: Did you report this?

Mr. EWAN: My word I did. I am reporting it again and I will continue to report it. On a 10-ton load the 3d. a ton road transport tax on the weight of the vehicle amounts to 2s. 6d. A very simple way to overcome it would be to check on the transport operators when they send their returns to the Transport Department. If they do not have a letter from the owner of the fodder indicating that the concession has been passed on, I suggest that the Commissioner of Transport should not pass the concession on to the road hauliers.

I now come to the unparalleled drought conditions existing in Queensland. In my opinion, they necessitate further assistance for those who are transporting livestock by road. I suggest lifting the charge of 1½d. a ton on the transport of stock in drought-stricken areas, provided it can be proved that they are being shifted for agistment to save their lives. On a 12-ton truck the tax would be 1s. 6d. a mile. That concession should be made available to the stock-owner.

Another point that worries me greatly concerns the administration of the State Transport Act. I refer to the taxes that are struck from point to point. If hon. members look at the map, they will see Roma, Dirranbandi and Glenmorgan. From Roma to Dirranbandi by rail is a distance of about 560 miles. By road, straight across from Roma to Dirranbandi, the distance is 170 miles. Is it reasonable that road transport operators between the two centres, a distance of 170 miles, should be expected to pay tax or to be classed as being in competition with the railways running from Roma to Toowoomba, to Warwick, to Goondiwindi, thence to Dirranbandi, a distance of 560 miles? I know that the Commissioner has helped with many of these matters that I have put to him concerning road transport operators—he has corrected many anomalies. Unfortunately he is not in a position to handle all matters but they will certainly be brought to his attention.

I now refer to the distance from Roma to Glenmorgan. By rail it is approximately 336 miles, whereas by road it is 90 miles. When stock is transported from Roma to Glenmorgan road transport tax has to be paid on a 12-ton vehicle at 1s. 6d. a mile

when the only alternative system in competition, the railway system, has to travel 336 miles.

Mr. Aikens: Are you advocating scrapping the railways?

Mr. EWAN: As the hon. member well knows, I am not advocating any such thing. That was only a stupid interjection to waste my time.

There are other matters which cause considerable trouble for the Transport Department. Stock can be loaded onto transports on properties but in many instances on branch lines there are no railway trucking yards available at which to unload transports and reload onto rail trucks. However, in these instances tax is chargeable as if in competition with the railways.

Mr. Duggan: Aren't these officers carrying out Government policy?

Mr. EWAN: The hon. gentleman has been long enough in administration to know that certain discretionary powers are granted. I am not making any apologies. I am saying that the Commissioner himself cannot possibly be expected to handle all complaints because there are a tremendous number of them, all of a diverse nature. In due course these complaints will be placed before the Commissioner in their entirety.

I conclude by thanking the Minister for his wonderful administration. It is the hope of my constituents and me that he will be long spared to carry on the good work.

Mr. LLOYD (Kedron) (3 p.m.): I cannot help feeling that in introducing his Estimates the Minister regarded himself as some sort of advocate for Messrs. Ford Bacon and Davis. One would have expected him in his Estimates speech to deal with the most important matters affecting the Railway Department.

His answer to my question this morning was of the utmost importance to the finance and future of the Queensland Railways and the good name of this Government. From the meagre information he gave me about the discrepancies between the two contracts let for the second stage of the Moura-Gladstone railway line, it is difficult to get a clear picture of whether the refusal to accept the tender submitted by Société Dumez of France, which was £666,000 below the successful tender from Thiess Bros., was in fact warranted at that stage. The excuse advanced for this highly expensive railway construction within four months of the commencement of construction does not stand up to argument. All contracts and tenders must comply with the Standards Association's specifications, which are concerned not with commencing dates but with completion dates. The report that the Minister received from Messrs. Ford Bacon and Davis contained no information as to the time of completion of the construction work of the second stage. For instance, a contractor who commences five

months later than another may be able to complete the construction sooner than the successful tenderer would. That is one point worth investigating.

Going back over the history of this railway line, we find that in "Telegraph" of 27 November, 1964, the Minister for Transport was reported as saying that the work was to commence not later than 1 April, 1965, yet the first contract let was the one to Thiess Bros. The Minister went to Gladstone and did the first little job in relation to that on 30 June, 1965. Is it because the Government has been slow in commencing this construction programme, or is it because the Government is concerned with being late, that it has rashly entered into a contract with one company when it had received from another company a tender for £666,000 less?

The report approved by Cabinet in this matter does not give a great deal of detail, but a few significant features of it are of vital concern to the Government and to the State. One feature is that Societe Dumez indicated that it wished to commence operations in this country and was prepared to accept a loss on its first project to establish itself in Queensland; it proposed then to spread to the other States.

From time to time the Government has stated that it is anxious to have skilled engineers and other people come to this country. We are short of these men for the work that will be necessary to develop new industries and for the follow-up work, not only in Queensland but in Australia, that will be financed by new companies of high international repute such as this one. Financially the company is very sound, and this offer has been made. Apparently it is prepared to accept the risk of making a loss on the contract. We are told that work could not start till 1 April next year. We were told also that Thiess Bros. would begin on 1 November, which was last Monday. No-one can tell me whether they have actually begun construction work on the second stage of the programme. I do not know what work is entailed, although I do know that the work on the first stage, which began on 1 July last, is far behind schedule.

Mr. Chalk: It is two months ahead of schedule now.

Mr. LLOYD: It started on 1 July, and it is two months ahead of schedule already?

Mr. Chalk: They did not start on 1 July.

Mr. LLOYD: It seems rather strange to me that they are already two months ahead of the programme when they started on 1 July of this year. This is a matter of great importance, as it involves the huge sum of £660,000. We were told definitely that this work would not be completed in time to allow the railway line to be finished by 1 April, 1968. How can we accept assurances given by a private firm, which could eventually, in construction work, completely

run the Government? What we do know is that originally the work was to be carried out for Ford, Bacon and Davis by Thiess Bros. In the early stages the company was to construct the railway line at its own expense. We now know that in all probability Ford, Bacon and Davis have purchased the survey upon which the work is to be done. These are important questions, as a lot of money is involved.

It is now known that £3,500,000 is to be taken from loan funds this year which, if the railway line were not being built, could have been used for other purposes. I am not suggesting that the railway should not be built. It will be of great value in opening up the land, and we recognise and accept the need for it. We do not accept, however, the wastage of money that could be channelled to other works. Already the Treasurer has said that other state activities will have to suffer from the diversion of loan finance to the construction of this railway line, as happened also during the reconstruction of the Mt. Isa railway line.

It is essential that these matters be examined carefully. When the agreement was first made, it was brought before Parliament, which is where it should be examined. It rather surprised me that I had to ask a question on this matter because the difference between the tenders was so great. If it was thought that that would prevent the completion of the railway line by 1 April, 1968, the Minister would have been quite entitled to make a Press statement at the time of the announcement of the successful tenderer. Surely these things are not going to be allowed to continue? If the difference had been £50,000 or even £100,000, no-one would have been much concerned. The company in question has a world-wide reputation and has done much work in other countries. Ford, Bacon and Davis admitted that. The approval of the Peabody Coal Company of America had to be received.

Mr. Chalk: That is in the agreement you helped to pass in this Chamber.

Mr. LLOYD: Of course it is. But who is paying for the railway? Do not tell me that Peabody is paying for it.

Mr. Chalk: You did not raise any objection to the clause when it was under consideration.

Mr. LLOYD: It is all very well for the Minister to say that. £6,700,000 or £6,900,000 is to be held in escrow by the State Government—money that has been borrowed from a consortium of American banks.

Mr. Chalk: Do you object to that?

Mr. LLOYD: The Commonwealth bond rate of interest is accruing on it.

Mr. Chalk: In other words, you object to the spending of that money?

Mr. LLOYD: No, I do not.

Mr. Chalk: Yes, you do.

Mr. LLOYD: Obviously, if we have to borrow the money, we have to pay interest on it. It certainly saves a greater impact being made on the State budget. However, I do object very violently to a company that has received a gift of this coal belonging to the people of Queensland—

Mr. Chalk: Nobody received a gift.

Mr. LLOYD: It was given to Thiess-Peabody-Mitsui. The State Government has accepted full responsibility for the construction of the railway line. Why should Thiess or Peabody or Mitsui have any say in who should be the successful tenderer? The Government is the Government of the State, and it should not leave it to Thiess or Peabody or Mitsui to say who should be given these contracts. It has forfeited its power and authority to an overseas company.

Mr. Chalk: We did nothing of the sort. You have been taking a brief from—

Mr. LLOYD: I have not been taking a brief from anybody.

Mr. Chalk: I will tell you where you got it.

Mr. LLOYD: If the Minister chooses to argue, I will join issue with him. I do not know that there is anything smelly about the matter—I do not intend to say that there is at this stage—but I believe that the Government must accept its responsibilities and not put itself in a position of having to accept the recommendations of consultants. I think far more investigation should have been carried out as to what machinery Société Dumez may have and whether they could in fact start on 1 April—

Mr. Chalk: We did all that.

Mr. LLOYD: —and what was the date for completion of their work. After all, it is only a 40-mile stretch of the 105-mile railway that has to be built, and I do not know whether that would have jeopardised the construction of the whole line within a certain period.

Mr. Chalk: 65 miles.

Mr. LLOYD: A 40-mile section, according to the tender that has been let.

Mr. Chalk: 65 miles.

Mr. LLOYD: Eight miles have been given to Thiess-Peabody; it is 105 less 48 miles.

Mr. Chalk: It is 115 miles of railway line, in case you did not know.

Mr. LLOYD: I do not know. The first time it is 105 miles; the next time it is 115 miles.

Mr. Chalk: If you had listened this morning, you would have heard.

Mr. LLOYD: That is beside the point. I do not wish to be diverted from this matter, because I think it is of public importance. The Minister might be able to reply satisfactorily to all the questions that I am raising; I hope he can.

Why was this matter not mentioned in the report? If we accept the reply to the question I asked this morning, apparently this was the complete report submitted to Cabinet by the Minister on the recommendation of Ford, Bacon and Davis. On the face of it, they are the people who will have the full responsibility of determining who shall be the successful tenderer, irrespective of the cost to the Railway Department.

It has been said that the original estimate of cost by the consultant engineers was £3,250,000, and both tenderers were below that figure. There is nothing really unusual about that; something similar happened when tenders were called for the construction of the Mt. Isa railway line. The Minister has admitted that the final cost of that line will be £3,000,000 less than the original estimate. In other words, the engineers added about a 10 per cent. margin to their estimate as a safety factor.

I believe that is a very important subject and one in which we should all be interested. The matter really gets back to whether a starting time and a completion date were stipulated when calling for tenders, and what dates Thiess Bros. and Société Dumez gave for the start of their programme of works and for its completion. There is nothing to show whether it would not be in the interests of the State to have one firm constructing the road and doing the earth-moving works that will be necessary when final tenders are called. So far as we know at the moment, some 2½ years was the estimated time for the completion of the whole programme. Over 12 months has been taken up already in calling two tenders, one for eight miles and one for 40 miles of line.

Mr. Chalk: 65 miles.

Mr. LLOYD: We had an indication from the Minister at the end of last year that the work was to commence on 1 April this year. There was a delay of some four months there. Now the excuse for not giving the French company the contract for this work is that they are four months behind in the commencement of their work. For all we know, the French company could have advanced its work much more quickly and thoroughly than Thiess Bros., but the only information we have is the report the Minister gave in reply to my question this morning. That is the report that went before Cabinet. Apparently Cabinet accepted it in its entirety and would not go any further in the matter.

I think greater consideration should have been given to this company, which could have been attracted to this State. The final reply, in the answer to my question this morning, is singularly weak and I do not

think it will do anything to attract this company, with its highly technical and skilled men, to this State to assist in its development.

Another matter on which I should like to touch is another reply, to a question I asked some days ago about rail and bus co-ordination in the metropolitan area. Considering the financial position of the Railway Department, I think this is a very important matter. I do not for one minute claim that the whole of the losses shown by the railways in the Southern Division of the State are attributable to lack of suburban passenger traffic, but a comparison of working expenses and earnings in the Southern Division indicates that in the last five years the Southern Division of the railways has incurred losses totalling £16.6 million. That is a considerable sum of money, which has a great effect on railway finances and, through them, on expenditure from Consolidated Revenue.

The Leader of the Opposition has said that nothing can be done to overcome many of the problems in the metropolitan area until electrification of the railways is introduced. The Minister for Transport, backed by the Treasurer, decided some six or seven years ago to scrap any plans for electrification and to concentrate on dieselisation. Unfortunately, progress in dieselisation has been very slow with the result that there has been a great deterioration in passenger traffic on our railway system. The administration has sought to meet the position in many cases by reducing railway time-tables, with the result that those lines cannot compete with the Brisbane City Council's bus and tram services. In any case, it has been obvious to anybody that the accumulated losses of the three forms of transport in Brisbane are becoming a very heavy burden not only on the taxpayers of Queensland but also on the ratepayers of Brisbane.

Mr. Aikens: Why don't you integrate them?

Mr. LLOYD: I have stated on two occasions already that in my opinion the whole of the transport services of the city of Brisbane should be integrated into one system. The Minister is disinclined to agree because he would have to accept the responsibility, as the New South Wales Minister for Transport has to accept responsibility for Sydney's transport services.

Mr. Chalk: You can't accept the responsibility for your own electorate.

Mr. LLOYD: I am accepting my responsibilities. I want to see in my electorate a railway service that is adequate for the needs of the people. Residents of Keperra and Ferny Grove who start work early need a train service that caters for them. Because the department will not provide an early morning service, they have to push a bike or walk all the way to the Enoggera tram terminus. An early morning service on that line would help to attract passenger traffic. If the Minister had any idea of the passenger

potential along that line following the development of the area and its growth in population, he would improve the service to attract the available passenger traffic.

It is all very well for the Minister to say that I will not accept my responsibility. I do not run away from any of my problems. It was my proposal that was taken to the Transport Department of the Brisbane City Council. I drew attention to the need for a co-ordinated bus and rail service. Although such a service would mean a saving to the Railway Department, the Minister adamantly refuses to concede a point in the sharing of any fares or costs.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. LLOYD: I will admit that the Brisbane City Council might not have been very helpful, but nor was the Railway Department. The very fact that profits are being made in the North while losses are being shown in the South is an indication that the people in the North are subsidising the tremendous losses in the southern part of Queensland. Such losses will not be prevented until the Railway Department accepts its responsibility and spends more money on providing adequate services to people in the Brisbane area—fast, clean, efficient services to the city which will attract passenger traffic or co-ordinating rail and bus services in the Brisbane area. Compare the number of passengers per train mile in New South Wales with the figures for passenger services in Queensland. The number per train mile in New South Wales is three or four times higher than the Queensland figure.

Mr. Chalk: We will put fares up if you like.

Mr. LLOYD: I am not talking about fares; I am talking about the number of people who use passenger rail services in Sydney and other parts of New South Wales compared with the number here.

(Time expired.)

Mr. THACKERAY (Rockhampton North) (3.25 p.m.): I listened very carefully to the Minister's remarks on the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa line and the Moura-Gladstone rail project. It seems that outside consulting engineers have a tendency to over-estimate the cost of jobs. I say quite plainly that that was the case with the Mt. Isa project. Although the men did a magnificent job, the cost of the job was over-estimated. Such a practice is not restricted to this department. It applies to other branches of the Government, not only in Queensland, but throughout the Commonwealth. Consulting engineers are not prepared to get down to a definite basis. They would rather over-estimate, and they hope that the actual cost of the job comes up to their price.

In relation to the Townsville-Mt. Isa project and the Moura-Gladstone project, we must consider the assistance rendered by the Commonwealth Government. When

we consider the money that State Governments have received from the Commonwealth Government we realise that Queensland has not received one penny in free assistance from the Commonwealth Government. We have only to read the journal "Railways of Australia" to learn that in 1968 it is expected that freight wagons from New South Wales will be rolling into Fremantle and that the golden yellow wagons from Western Australia will be a familiar sight in Sydney, South Brisbane and Melbourne.

That information is very enlightening. It means that there will be a one-track network of standard 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge competing with outside operators by sea, air, and road. This network should be able to specialise in freight rates and to compete on time and mileage, based on cost of delivery on a door-to-door basis.

We must examine what the future holds for Queensland, because the standard-gauge line ends at South Brisbane. We have never tried to build a standard-gauge line in Queensland. The Minister for Transport might say that we could have built the first one from Moura to Gladstone. That may have been an excellent idea. At some time in the future, perhaps not in our time but in generations to come, a national-gauge line will run from Cairns to Fremantle. As members of Parliament we should try to have the idea accepted and plan a railway system which, in generations to come, will give good service in the development of this country. The Commonwealth Government should give all States, more particularly Queensland, much better financial assistance in the development of our rail transport services.

On page 3 of the report of the Commissioner for Transport the number of prosecutions for the unlawful use of vehicles under sections 48, 49, 67 (1), 47 (4), and 72 of the State Transport Act are set out. It shows that in 1964 there were 1,083 prosecutions, compared with 1,901 in 1965, an increase of 818. However, for the 1,083 prosecutions, fines amounting to £41,113 were imposed, whereas for the 1,901 fines in 1965 the fines totalled only £25,329. That shows a reduction of approximately £15,000 in fines although there were 880 more prosecutions.

In 1964 there were 734 prosecutions and the fees ordered amounted to £44,410 6s. 9d. In 1965 there were 1,447 prosecutions and the fees ordered amounted to £37,619 14s. 5d. I ask the Minister to explain why, when there was an increase in the number of prosecutions, which I favour, there was a reduction in the amount of fines and fees.

Part IX of the report deals with safety. Many truck-drivers, both interstate and intrastate, do not obey the rules of the road, which are most difficult to police. Weigh-bridge inspectors are doing everything in their power to penalise such drivers. The Minister said that moves are under way to

have a uniform log-book for them. That is a good thing. Railwaymen and other unionists are obliged to abide by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and their awards, and I do not see why truck-drivers should be allowed to cause death and havoc on our roads and to disobey the law. The introduction of uniform State laws would assist in reducing the toll of the roads.

The Queensland Road Safety Council is doing a wonderful job. Its expenditure for the year was £30,900, of which £21,430 was provided by the State Government. It should advertise more on television. Road deaths in Queensland are increasing. In 1964, 441 people were killed on our roads, and, in 1965, 461 people were killed, an increase of 20. That is far too many people to lose on our roads. They are mainly young people.

National advertisers, such as tyre manufacturers and oil companies, should pay more attention and devote more time to informing young people of the many road hazards. I do not like to praise one oil company in particular, but I must mention the Shell Co. of Australia which sponsored a one-hour film on road manners. That film was of more value than other types of advertising which claim special features for a brand of petrol that will allow a car to accelerate from nought to 60 miles an hour in 10 seconds. It was also of more benefit than advertising tyres that can go round bends at 80 miles an hour without squealing, and brakes that, with a certain type of lining, will stop a vehicle in 60 ft. (They do not say whether that applies when tyres are bald!) All of these things should be taken into consideration and watched closely by the Queensland Road Safety Council, the Australian Road Safety Council, and those in the advertising industry.

I now wish to deal with a few other things mentioned in the report of the Commissioner for Railways. When introducing the Estimates the Minister referred in glowing terms to the operating costs of diesel-electric locomotives. No doubt they are in the main the reason for the better financial position of the Railway Department. We should also pay attention to the loss of passenger traffic and the losses in other fields, such as the hauling of wheat, some of which can be attributed to the drought and the industrial dispute at Mt. Isa. Without the business made available by coal, sugar, and mineral products from Mt. Isa, the overall picture of the Railway Department would not be as glowing as the Minister presented it.

With the mining of coal in Central Queensland and the return to full production at Mt. Isa, the loads hauled by diesel-electric locomotives in Queensland will increase considerably. This will place additional strain and worry on not only the running staff but all associated with the handling of trains, from the staff of the General Manager's office right down the line. We must also

consider the number of people employed by the Railway Department today compared with the staff in previous years. Reference to the 1965 report shows that there are today 584 fewer railway employees than there were a year ago. That is shown in Table No. 7 on page 19 of the 1965 report of the Commissioner for Railways. When one looks at the staff numbers in the Commissioner's and Secretary's Office, the Chief Accountant's Office, the Traffic Audit Office, Stores, Permanent Way, Signalling and Electrical, Locomotive, Traffic, General, and Railway Refreshment Rooms, one finds that in all of those sections there has been an increase only in the Chief Accountant's Office. In each of the others the staff has been reduced to more or less offset the cost of wage increases. Railwaymen have therefore—at least in the last year—had added responsibilities placed on them.

Under a policy of dieselisation, the report shows that there has been an increase of 20 tons in the average train load. With the hauling of mineral products from Mt. Isa to Townsville and the transporting of coal over the Moura-Gladstone rail link when it is completed in April, 1968, that figure will further increase.

I am very interested to know what will be the position of Rockhampton locomotive men when the line between Moura and Gladstone is in operation. I should like to know whether men will be transferred from Rockhampton to Gladstone, Moura, Baralaba, or wherever depots are established. As the Minister said, the maximum quantity of Utah coal the Railway Department can handle will be 500,000 tons. If the company decided to increase that tonnage, would it be economical to develop the 15 miles of railway line from Bajool to Port Alma? I am very interested in that question because the economic stability of Rockhampton depends largely on the handling of Utah coal. There have been arguments for and against the establishment of the port at Port Alma as a coal port, but I am not interested in them at the moment. If the coal could be taken there, the reconstruction of the line could be undertaken with loan money.

Let me turn now to annual leave and service leave for railwaymen. I can say quite openly that the Australian Labour Party supports the additional week's service leave. As the Minister knows, that is not being granted now. A variation of the award increased annual leave from two weeks to three weeks and abolished service leave.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. THACKERAY: I know I may be getting away from railway lines, Mr. Hodges, but this is service leave for railwaymen.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. THACKERAY: You have been very kind and gracious, Mr. Hodges, so I shall deal with another matter.

My colleague the hon. member for South Brisbane will be discussing the Railway Appeal Board later in the debate, but I wish to make one or two comments about it at this stage. Because the laws of evidence are not applicable to hearings before it, the board is a law unto itself. Action should be taken immediately to rectify this situation, and action should also be taken relative to the appointment of a magistrate as chairman of the board.

I should like now to make a suggestion that I think should meet with the Minister's approval. When I was overseas in June this year, an awful tragedy occurred in which five railway employees lost their lives. This is an age of automation, and we should use in our railway system the best equipment that is available. I believe it is possible to obtain an electronic warning device that can be fitted to tricycles and trolleys. When the device is turned on, it picks up the sound of a diesel engine and gives a warning signal indicating that the train is 3 miles away, or whatever it might be. I believe it is a good system, but it could be introduced only if sufficient qualified men were available to operate it. There is a shortage of tradesmen in the Railway Department because of the low standard of employment it offers in comparison with outside industry. The department has lost 260 tradesmen between last October and March of this year, and only recently 11 boilermakers left the Rockhampton workshop. The Minister will probably say that the rates of pay are fixed on a like-with-like basis with New South Wales, but it is a fact that the employees are leaving because they can obtain over-award payments, attendance allowances and better conditions and amenities outside the department.

In my opinion, the Minister should consult with the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Lee, and offer more technical fellowships next year to enable boys to become indentured for a number of years and trained for electronic work in the railways. We have not sufficient trained men in the Railway Department, and outside industry is not training them.

We offer cadetships in drawing, draftsmanship, and other such callings but we are not offering any in the field of technology. With the advent of the new school of technology at Rockhampton, we could offer at least 15 scholarships or cadetships in technology to boys who could be bonded to the Railway Department. We would then have the nucleus of a force of trained and efficient men who could handle not only this branch of the work but also the data processing machines. We should train these men now. It will be no use thinking about it six or seven years hence. These men have to be trained now; that is the only way to advance. If we are not prepared to accept criticism and advice, the railways will slip back.

Those are just a few of the matters that concern me. Another is the appointment of consultative committees. A further faux pas on the part of the present Government and the Minister for Transport is their refusal to agree to the appointment of consultative committees. Undoubtedly they would be good for the Railway Department.

Mr. Chalk: I will not agree to a committee on industrial conditions.

Mr. THACKERAY: There are many other matters that could be dealt with by these committees if the Minister would agree to their appointment.

Whilst on the matter of employment, I should like the Minister to tell me the position of a railway employee who drives a registered railway vehicle on a road and is "pinched" by a police officer and given an on-the-spot ticket; who pays the fine, the employee or the Commissioner for Railways? That position has arisen not only in Rockhampton but also in Brisbane. In Rockhampton the Railway Department has on the road trucks that do not measure up to the standard set by the Machinery Department. Many of them have baldy tyres, or no rear-vision mirrors, or faulty stop lights, or no reflectors. This is not peculiar to the Railway Department. Main Roads Department men are told to take out trucks that are in a similar condition. I know of one instance in which a man was pulled up by a policeman who was not a bad fellow. He said, "Look, I do not know who to 'pinch'. I am certainly not going to 'pinch' you. You work in the railways; they have more money than you." That was his point of view but that attitude will not always be encountered. Many of them will issue a ticket very quickly, and the position should be cleared up.

The Minister spoke of the number of railway cottages that have been built. One has only to look at the dieselisation and the rolling-stock introduced by Mr. Duggan and give him full credit.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. THACKERAY: The Minister must be very like Lord Buddha.

Mr. Chalk: I know all about Lord Buddha.

Mr. THACKERAY: I know the Minister knows all about Lord Buddha—and also about "The Green Idol" overseas.

Getting back to the cottages that have been built, the Leader of the Opposition cited the number of cottages that he built. In the Minister's booklet he does not instance one. The hon. member for Roma said the railway buildings in the West were beautifully painted and so on. He, of course, was simply telling untruths. It is no more than a fable to speak in that way of the condition of railway cottages. I think the amenities provided by the Railway Department are shocking and deplorable.

Mr. Houghton: You are getting a new railway station at Rockhampton, aren't you?

Mr. THACKERAY: That is being built and, when it is opened, full credit will be taken for it by the members of this Government.

(Time expired.)

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.50 p.m.): I listened with considerable interest to the speech delivered by the hon. member for Rockhampton North. As he is a former railwayman with very limited experience, I thought he might have something to tell us about the Railway Department. I will say that there were one or two parts of his speech to which I think the Minister should give serious consideration. However, he spoiled it at the very end by comparing the work done by—as he said—John Duggan for the railwaymen with the work done by our present Minister for Transport. When we consider in a calm, impartial manner the many concessions and little acts of justice that have been given to the railwaymen by the present Minister but which were denied to them for many years by men who claimed to be representatives of the working class, I think the hon. member for Rockhampton North and others like him should hang their heads in shame.

I remember only too well—I fought against it for years in this Chamber—that when a railwayman's wife and children were travelling on a train on a pass that the railwayman himself had earned as part of his wages and conditions, they had a lower legal status than a dog or any other animal travelling on the train. If a dog were killed as the result of the negligence of the Commissioner or any of his employees, the owner of the dog could sue the Commissioner for damages, but if the railwayman's wife and children were killed or injured as the result of the negligence of the Commissioner or any of his employees, the railwaymen could not sue the Commissioner for damages. I do not want to develop that aspect of it. I am sure that the present Minister for Transport, with the transparent modesty that characterises him when he speaks in the Chamber, will be able to do that for himself.

I do want to draw attention to the position of the Railway Department in my beloved city of Townsville. Quite recently the Minister for Transport, in company with his officers and other prominent citizens, opened the new extension to the railway station at Townsville. It is a very fine extension and a credit to the Government and the Railway Department. However, when I ride my bicycle along Flinders Street every day in the week and look over at the railway buildings that line Flinders Street, cheek by jowl with the new administration offices, I am reminded of a man dressed in full evening suit and top hat but with a big patch sewn on the seat of his pants and wearing sandshoes. That is the appearance of the railway buildings in Flinders Street, Townsville.

Right against this magnificent new edifice, which of course adjoins the old railway station, which still looks particularly well, there is the parcels office. It always reminds me of the drunks' room in the back yard of a bush hotel. Anyone who comes from the bush could be pardoned for mistaking the parcels office in Townsville for what they call the doss-house in the back yard of a bush hotel. Further along Flinders Street is the brand-new diesel shed, which, of course, was once known in its unfinished state as "Duggan's monument".

Then you see the buildings that house the iron-working section of the railway workshops in Townsville. Many of these rusty, old, dilapidated buildings would be a discredit to any Congolese village, but there they are right in Flinders Street in the very heart of the city. I should like to know what the Minister proposes to do with all those old buildings which today constitute what is known as the iron-working section of the workshops in Townsville. We know, of course, that, with the passing of the steam locomotive and the introduction of dieselisation into the railway service, there is not the same measure of work for the iron-working section as there was when steam locomotives were the order of the day. I am glad that you are in the chair, Mr. Hodges, because I can say that when a steam locomotive is in full running order it has a tender behind. I could not say that if Mr. Speaker were in the chair. He would think I was offending some galah up in the gallery.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order!

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: Now we have the biggest galah in the Chamber coming in.

I know that the iron-working shops are becoming a thing of the past, but cannot something be done to make them look at least reputable and decent? Can the Minister give us his long-term view as to what he proposes to do with the iron-working section in the north yard in Townsville? I know we must still have the blacksmith's shop, the wheel shop, the machine shed, and certain sections of the boiler-making shed. It is quite possible that, as time goes by, the running shed and the erecting shop will have to go. It is time the Minister told us what is proposed to be done with all these rusty, old, dilapidated structures, which are a disgrace to the Railway Department and to the city of Townsville. If he will let us know what he intends to do with them, and if there is to be any move to demolish them in the distant future and to reconstruct them, or build some other buildings on the land, we will be only too happy to hear about it.

On the south side they have a good working section, where conditions are not so bad.

When the hon. member for Rockhampton North was expatiating on the virtues of the Leader of the Opposition as Minister for Transport, I felt like calling his attention—if he would come to Townsville—to the fact that the clerks in the goods office at the Townsville South yard goods-shed worked in perhaps the most disgraceful and terrible conditions imposed on any section of workers in this State. For years and years they worked there under the Government that was supposed to be politically representative of the working class. Of course, the old goods-shed office has been replaced by a very modern building. However, I believe that even the new building is becoming a little cramped for the work carried out there. I should like the Minister to let us know what he intends to do about extending and further modernising the clerical office at Townsville. I give him credit for doing what he has done for Townsville, and I give him great credit for what he has done for the railwaymen in this State. He raised their status from that of virtual galley slaves to that of ordinary, standard human beings, and that is to his credit.

Some time ago I asked him to tell me something. Because I believe in giving due and mature consideration to every problem that confronts me, I have had a look at this matter over the months that have intervened. I cannot agree with the Minister. I am reminded of the story of the first Henry Ford, who walked through his big assembly plant at Detroit and came to one floor where quite a lot of men were sitting at tables tapping machines and doing this and that. They were all well dressed, although they wore the vacant, imbecilic, inane expression that we often see on the face of one of the legal members of this Chamber. Henry Ford asked, "What is that mob doing over there?" His general manager said, "They are the research department." He said, "Sack them." He was a man who knew what he was talking about, and they were sacked from that job and put onto some useful work.

Perhaps the Minister will be able to tell me exactly what happens in the statistical data office. For every ticket that is sold today in the Railway Department, for every parcel that is sent, and for every item of goods, the clerk who enters it up must make an entry in several different columns. For all I know, he may have to enter it in six or even nine different columns. He does not just write down that he has sold a ticket from Townsville to Brisbane and that the cost is so-and-so. He has a great big sheet. It reminds me of the sheet in the bookmaker's book. He has to fill in all the columns as he goes along. It takes him longer to enter the particulars of sale of a two-bob ticket than it takes him to sell the two-bob ticket, or to weigh the two-bob parcel.

The Minister said that all of those details and voluminous documents come down here to the data-processing section which no doubt is staffed by well-intentioned people. I suppose they are qualified to work the

various machines in that section. But that huge mass of data, compiled laboriously by the booking clerks, goods clerks, and parcel clerks, has to come down here and be put through some big computing mincing machine, and what comes out? I hope that the Minister will tell us what useful purpose is served. Any man with a meagre knowledge of accountancy could turn out all the facts and figures produced by all these people in the data-processing section as a result of the hours of unnecessary labour expended by the clerks in the railway service. I hope that the Minister will tell us coherently, and in a way we can readily and easily understand, what purpose is served.

Mr. Chalk: You will be accommodated.

Mr. AIKENS: I am open to be convinced. I will admit that the Minister has at least a smattering of the work of the Railway Department. I cannot say that the hon. member for South Brisbane has a smattering of the law.

Another matter that the Minister should investigate comes about, I suppose, because of the welfare State in which we now live following on a general betterment in working conditions and working standards in the last seven or eight years. These particulars were supplied to me by people who know what they are talking about. In 1957 one Townsville railway employee in 14—and I suppose what goes for Townsville goes for the other railway centres—drove his car to work, and the problem of car parking for railway employees was not an acute one. Today in Townsville 11 out of 14 railway employees drive their cars to work. Although the position has not become chaotic on the south side, where there is parking space on railway property, employees in the workshops and the running shed on the north side are faced with an acute parking problem. There is a great stream of railway employees' cars parked in Flinders Street, Fletcher Street, Jones Street, Knapp Street, and Morris Street, and on the railway land behind the railway workshops. The Railway Department should provide adequate parking facilities on railway land. It has to be done by everybody else so why not by the Railway Department? Why should railway men have to park their cars in those streets? It will not be long before the Townsville City Council, broke as it always is, will introduce parking meters. Where will the railwaymen park then? I am happy that 11 railway men out of 14 can drive their cars to work. I hope the day is not too far distant when 14 railwaymen out of 14 will drive their cars to work. I hope they will have better, bigger, and brighter cars than they have today.

Mr. Chalk: That shows the prosperity that they are enjoying.

Mr. AIKENS: I do not know whether their prosperity is the result of the Government's tenure of office or of the general

raising of economic standards. The Minister, instead of listening to me, was over magging to someone in the lobby.

Mr. Chalk: I heard you.

Mr. AIKENS: When the Government came to office, one railwayman in 14 in Townsville drove a car to work; now 11 in 14 do. I really believe that something has to be done to get these men's cars off the street. From half-past 7 in the morning till half-past 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the kerbs are occupied by the cars of railwaymen. The Railway Department should face up to its obligation to provide parking space for them.

It is well known that, over the years, there has been a great loss of passenger traffic and the revenue that it produces to the Railway Department, and that seems to be symptomatic of all railway systems throughout the world. The great attritional factor in the loss of railway revenue has been the private motor car. Railwaymen, even when they hold passes for their annual leave, which they earn as part of their wages, will tell you that when their holidays come they bundle their families into their cars and go off by road. They are quite entitled to do that if they want to, and I would be the last man to sit in judgment on them, or criticise them, for doing so.

Because I like to see things for myself instead of relying on second-hand or third-hand information, I sometimes travel in Brisbane suburban passenger trains. No wonder they are not paying, and no wonder they are the millstone round the neck of the Queensland railway system. I have said that before, and I say it now without any hesitation or equivocation. If the Minister for Transport could sell or give away the Brisbane suburban railway system or pay someone to take it off the shoulders of the Railway Department, the department and the taxpayers would be the better for it. Although I have not looked at the figures for this year, I think the Brisbane suburban railway system alone loses about £2,000,000 a year, which has to be made up by railway operations in other parts of the State. I am not going into the matter of integration of transport or of whether Clem Jones will take over any private transport operators. Even now I take trips on Brisbane suburban trains. Like all other members of Parliament, I have a gold pass, but, except in the main centres, I have never been asked to show it. I have walked off trains at wayside stations and never seen a station master, porter in charge, station mistress, or anyone else in charge. I would say that the department would be lucky if three passengers out of 10 paid their fares. Is it any wonder that so much money is being lost? When it is suggested that someone should be on duty at suburban stations in Brisbane, as well as at the main ones, to sell and collect tickets, all that is received is a nonchalant shrug of the shoulder from

the Minister and the Commissioner and a statement that it would not be economic to do so.

People travelling from Ipswich to Brisbane have to buy tickets at Ipswich in order to enter the station there and leave the station at Brisbane. They see other passengers joining the train at intermediate stations along the line. They know that they have no tickets, and they see them walk off the train and out of the stations at other places. Some stations have near their exits small metal boxes (if someone has not pulled them down or the kids have not put holes in them with a .22 rifle) in which to put tickets, but no-one ever bothers about them. It is a bit like when the Chairman of Committees calls, "As many as are in favour say 'Aye', to the contrary 'No'," and nobody says a word.

I should like the Minister to have a long-term, serious investigation made into the actual percentage of Brisbane suburban passengers who do not pay anything to travel on the trains—who are travelling day after day, week after week, month after month, without paying anything.

Mr. Bennett: Do you say that people in Brisbane are dishonest?

Mr. AIKENS: No-one would know better than the hon. member for South Brisbane and other members of his profession that opportunity makes the thief. The legal profession provides wonderful opportunities for men to be thieves; so also does the Brisbane suburban railway system provide wonderful opportunities for passengers to be thieves.

I wish to deal now with road-transport drivers. Many transport drivers in Townsville have spoken to me and claimed that those who work for the big, reputable road-transport firms have not got this problem but that those who work for the mushroom road-transport operators complain bitterly that, when they go along to pick up their load and ask the boss for the permit, the boss says, "There is no permit. You just get going." They say to the boss, "What is going to happen if I get caught?" and the boss says, "If you get caught, that is just your bad luck." If a vehicle is overloaded, the driver says, "I think this vehicle is overloaded." The boss will say, "Take it out of the yard. Get going, or get home." What is the unfortunate driver to do?

As I understand it, the State Transport Act places on the driver of the vehicle the responsibility for the weight that the vehicle is carrying and any overweight that it may be carrying. It also places upon the driver the obligation of seeing that he has a permit for his load. What is the position of a man who may want to hang on to a job because he needs the money and who is told by one of the mushroom road-transport operators, "Take your load out. I know that the vehicle is overloaded and I know that you have no permit. Take your load out and get going, or I will find someone to take your place."

I really think that the Minister for Transport should appoint a competent, zealous, honest officer to investigate not only road-transport drivers but also the mushroom road-transport operators. If he likes, he can employ many of the tactics that are employed—I have no objection to his doing it—to catch sly-grog operators or gambling-joint operators. I have no objection to agent provocateurs if they are used in the interests of the people and their safety.

Mr. Bennett: Do you believe in sneaks?

Mr. AIKENS: I certainly do not believe in the hon. member for South Brisbane; I have no faith in him; I have no confidence in him.

Mr. Bennett interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: The hon. member asked me did I believe in him. He asked me did I believe in sneaks, and he is the only sneak that I have within my range of vision at present.

It is true that many unfortunate road-transport drivers who are seeking to earn a living on the roads are being blackmailed into lawlessness by unscrupulous road-transport firms. I repeat: they are not the big men. If a driver gets a job with one of the big reputable firms, he is told that they are out to obey the law. They say to the driver, "If you break the law, it is your responsibility." The big road-transport operators do all they possibly can to make their drivers obey the law, whereas the small, snide, mushroom transport operators do all they possibly can to make their drivers break the law.

It cannot be done in a day; it probably cannot be done in a year; but the Minister for Transport must have some men in his department—if he has not, he should recruit them or second them from another department—who can be sent out on a State-wide basis to work quietly, consistently and diligently to run to earth this type of road-transport operator. When they have done that, the operators should be debarred from holding a State transport licence; that would be the most serious penalty of all for them.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DONALD (Ipswich East) (4.15 p.m.): I should like to express my appreciation of the courtesy and assistance the Minister, the Commissioner, Mr. Lee, Mr. Girard and Mr. Alan Evans have extended to me in the many representations I have made to them from time to time. As Ipswich is one of the largest railway centres in Queensland it is not surprising that in the course of my parliamentary duties I have to make many representations to these gentlemen. I am very pleased to say that in these representations I have always been treated very courteously indeed.

I have a suggestion to make to the Minister and the Commissioner, which if put into operation, will fulfil a long-wanted

service and at the same time greatly benefit the travelling public as well as the Railway Department.

The Railway Department owns approximately 2 acres of land which is not being used to any extent, if at all, adjoining the down platform of Booval railway station. On this property between 200 and 300 motor vehicles could be parked for a nominal fee payable by railway passengers and people doing business with the Railway Department on an hourly, daily or weekly basis. It would certainly relieve congestion in Station Road, on the southern side of the railway station, as well as being a regular source of income to the Railway Department. Regular customers could be allotted individual parking spaces.

With this suggestion, the department should inaugurate an express service from Booval to Roma Street. I strongly recommend that the workmen's train leaving Ipswich at 7.36 a.m. and Booval at 7.43 a.m. should run express from Booval to Roma Street, and, on the return journey, depart from Central at 5.16 p.m. If this service was made available it would reduce travelling time from 67 minutes for a train stopping at all stations to 40 minutes for the proposed Booval-Roma Street express train. I honestly believe that the department would be capable of providing this service, and I am confident that it would be appreciated by the rail-travelling public and would be a great success.

Time is universally recognised as being one of the greatest assets a man can have and, as this proposal would save some hundreds of workers almost an hour a day, it is worthy of careful, thorough and sympathetic consideration.

Should the department feel that it is not possible, though many people believe it is, to run this train express from Booval, I suggest that it investigate the chances of having it run express from Goodna.

The decrease in the number of employees in the Railway Department, by 584 to 25,609, and in the permanent way staff, by 268 to 6,316, may be in keeping with the general trend in industry of greater productivity with fewer employees, but the wisdom of the large reduction in the permanent way staff is open to serious question. These employees would be numbered among the hardest workers in the Railway Department and are employed on one of the least congenial occupations. Though their earnings would be among the lowest, they form a very important section of the department's huge work force and on their work depends the smooth and safe working of our trains on more than 6,000 miles of railway line.

I once asked one of these employees if the diesel-electric locomotives were spreading the rails and making the employees' work considerably harder, which was then generally thought to be the case. His reply to me was, "The crew of the locomotive are

now entitled to a higher wage than they received on steam locomotives, although their work is considerably lighter. Our work is made harder and more difficult, but our wages remain the same."

In the 2,635 railway employees (including tradesmen in the metal trades and wood-working trade, semi-skilled tradesmen and labourers) and 293 apprentices at the Redbank and North Ipswich workshops, the department has a splendid work force. Over the years, again and again it has been demonstrated that those workshops can turn out better work, and at lower cost, than any outside firm. It is a shame that the departmental workshops are gradually being reduced to maintenance and repair work and given very little, if any, new work.

The railway workshops have produced a number of leading engineers, technicians, and advisers, not only in Queensland but throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. Indeed, many men occupying prominent and leading positions in private engineering firms were trained in the Ipswich Railway Workshops. Probably others have come from other workshops throughout the State, but I can speak from my own knowledge only of those trained in the Ipswich workshops. Over the years the Ipswich Railway Workshops have proved that they can train apprentices as they should be trained. It has a proud record of achievement with the lads who served their apprenticeship there. I hope that this will continue and that present apprentices will be given an opportunity to work on the most modern locomotives and rolling-stock and not be confined to repair and maintenance work. From these lads we should get our future workshop superintendents and railway managers.

It is to be regretted that the painting of railway buildings and railway stations is being carried out by outside contractors instead of by the department's own work force. I am reliably informed that many of these men, as well as their tools of trade and material, are not transported by the railways but by motor vehicles.

Attention is drawn in the report of the Commissioner for Railways to improvements made in the Railway Department during the last 12 months. The Mt. Isa railway rehabilitation project is referred to. I think we can all agree that that was a gigantic project. Perhaps it would be fitting to remind hon. members of a few facts about this line because there would be some on the Government side who would not know that when the original line from Townsville to Mt. Isa was built many years ago the then Labour Government was severely criticised by members of the Opposition, which was made up of the parties that occupy the Government benches today. They referred to the construction of this line as folly and a sinful waste of money. They suggested that all that was being accomplished was the building of a railway line from Townsville to a hole in the desert. The success

of the Mt. Isa mine and the Mt. Isa railway line is just another instance of Labour's forward thinking. The foresight of those who occupied the Treasury benches more than 20 years ago has resulted in the present flourishing condition of Mount Isa Mines Limited and the Mt. Isa railway line.

The Commissioner's report draws attention also to the Moura-Gladstone railway project. That line is being completed, in the main, for the specific purpose of carrying coal from the Moura coalfields to the coast. We do not have hard coking coal in abundance, yet the coal will be carried over this line for export to Japan so that the Japanese steelworks can manufacture the steel we need. It is a pity that more effort was not made to have another steelworks established in Australia, preferably in Queensland, so that we could use our own raw materials instead of exporting iron ore and hard coking coal to Japan and then importing it in the form of steel that we could and should manufacture in Australia.

It is useless to argue that steel cannot be manufactured in Australia, because Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd. has shown that it can be. Until recently B.H.P. produced not only the best steel in the world but also the cheapest. We know that now its price has been undercut by the Japanese.

There has been an improvement in railway rolling-stock with the more extensive use of diesel-electric locomotives. I am quite prepared to admit—and I do so quite openly—that this improvement was necessary and that it has been effected. However, greater consideration could have been given to improving the living and working conditions of railway employees, and particularly to overcoming the lack of accommodation for employees who are transferred from centres where they have their own homes to outback centres. This applies equally to single men and married men. In the commencing stages of this debate we were given instances comparing conditions under which railway employees are forced to live and those that they should be enjoying as decent, respectable citizens.

The increasing use of diesel-electric locomotives and their advantages are clearly shown in the Commissioner's report by the fact that although they represent only 18.5 per cent. of the department's locomotive strength, during 1964-65 they accounted for 60.38 per cent. of the train miles and 73.8 per cent. of the gross ton miles jointly registered by steam and diesel-electric locomotives.

However, it should not be forgotten that diesel-electric locomotives were introduced to our railway system during the currency of a Labour Government. If credit is to go to any particular person for introducing diesel-electric locomotives it must go to the present Leader of the Opposition as he was Minister for Railways when they were introduced to the Queensland railway system.

Attention is also drawn in the Commissioner's report to the excellent service rendered by the Brisbane-Cairns section of the railways during World War II. He says also that it is inevitable that this line will perform a similar function in any future conflict involving fighting in the Pacific area. If such a calamity should happen—and God forbid that it should—I shudder to think just what our position would be. During World War II steam locomotives bore the brunt of our transport obligations and difficulties, as recorded by the Commissioner in his annual report.

I must also add that the services rendered by the Queensland railways during that world conflict won the admiration and gratitude of those in control of the American Forces in Australia. During that period petrol was severely rationed in order to keep other forms of transport and industry moving. Today we are in a very different position and, I feel, a more unfortunate position. The steam locomotives, so favourably referred to by the Commissioner and our American allies, are no longer with us, but the problem of obtaining fuel to keep our transport in motion, and our industries going, is still with us—and in a greatly aggravated form.

The building of the Redbank Railway Workshop, again, was the result of Labour's thinking, Labour's administration, and Labour's practical work. I can remember visiting the Ipswich Railway Workshops in the company of the hon. member for Bundaberg, who was then Minister for Railways. He found what was common knowledge amongst the railway employees, that is, that there was far too much overcrowding there and that in order to attain greater efficiency and safety new workshops would have to be built adjacent to Ipswich. The result was the Redbank workshops.

I give credit to the late Hon. E. M. Hanlon, who was then Premier. I told him that many people whose homes were being resumed desired to stay in Redbank but could not as no land was available. I asked him to do something to assist these people to remain where they had lived for many years. He considered my request and said it would need special legislation. He did not hesitate; he introduced legislation to enable the Railway Department to purchase portion of the Redbank Rifle Range from the Commonwealth Government and on that property a number of homes were erected for these people, and they are still there.

It was a Labour Government that was responsible for building the Redbank Railway Workshops, not this Government, as many of its members would have us think. It is only a few months since the Minister opened the new moulding section, which is a credit to the department. It is claimed to be one of the most modern moulding shops in the Commonwealth. The construction of the railway workshops was interrupted by the inactivity of the present Government, and they are not completed yet.

I should not like to miss this opportunity of saying something about the electrification of the suburban railways. The Minister will probably say what he has said on many occasions, that is, that we have not the population to justify electrification. I have said before that the solution of the suburban railway problem is the electrification of the traffic from Sandgate to Ipswich. A good deal of work was done in this direction. The permanent way was widened to four tracks instead of two. If that work had been carried on we would have been in a much happier position than we are. If the Minister's claim that we have not the necessary population is correct, one way to get population would be to have an electrified suburban railway service. People desire a clean, swift method of transportation.

We have only to go to Sydney, Melbourne, or any other large city to discover the benefits of electrification. The electrified railway system goes well out into the country surrounding Sydney; it is not confined to the suburbs. The same applies in Melbourne. People in London do not recommend travelling by taxi or bus but by the tube, which provides a clean, prompt and fast service. It is the only answer. If we have not sufficient porters or checkers to ensure that passengers buy tickets, let us have electrification and that will solve the problem. In the 100 years it has existed, the Railway Department has successfully overcome several problems which appeared at the time to be as great as any that electrification might present.

I am pleased that the Commissioner referred to the centenary celebrations. Everyone who took part in or witnessed those celebrations must have felt very proud indeed. All credit goes to the Ipswich Little Theatre Society for its interest in this matter. It required a great deal of imagination to re-enact the opening of the railway line in the costume of the day, and I must pay a tribute to the way in which this was done by the theatrical group at Ipswich. They made a great success of it and won the admiration of all those assembled there.

No less credit and admiration went to the little "Puffing Billy" and the carriages behind it when that locomotive stood beside the last steam locomotive bought for the Queensland railways. They were two splendid examples of the engineering capacity of man. This showed not only what progress has been made in the short space of 100 years but what people 100 years ago could do with very little at their disposal. The engine-driver, fireman, and guard of the train were splendidly dressed to represent those who occupied similar positions 100 years ago.

The centenary dinner held at the Church of England Hall in Ipswich a few nights after the celebration at Grandchester was a great success. Great credit goes to the Railway Department and those associated with its organisation. A large number attended, and I do not think even one was disgruntled or

disappointed with either the dinner or the function on the Saturday, although it was a pity that it was marred by rain.

I now wish to pay a tribute to the system of training railway ambulance teams sponsored by the Railway Department in every important railway centre in Queensland. The benefit of their knowledge and training is made available not only to railwaymen. As I worked in the mining industry, in which accidents are prevalent, I thought I should take the opportunity to become acquainted with first aid. I went to railway ambulance classes, at which I qualified for the St. John's bronze medallion in first aid. I was then confident to go to the assistance of any workmate who was injured, whereas previously I had been afraid to touch an injured man in case I aggravated his wounds. I think special praise should be given to the present Commissioner and past Commissioners, to Mr. Girard, and to all those who have such a wide and practical interest in the Railway Ambulance Brigade.

I think all hon. members will share my pride in the knowledge that the Railway Ambulance Brigade from Rockhampton was successful this year in winning the championship of Australia at a recent competition in Sydney. In addition to being the winning team, one member won the individual championship, and I think it only fair to have their names recorded in "Hansard". The members of the Rockhampton team were Mr. A. Ellison, Mr. T. V. Cronin, Mr. R. E. Pattison, Mr. L. J. Haughton, and Mr. J. G. Hopper. The individual championship was won by Mr. Cronin. If my memory is correct, I think that Queensland won the competition last year, when the successful team came from Townsville. If that is so, it is another indication of the versatility of Queensland railwaymen and shows that they are not, as they are often pictured publicly and even in this Chamber, loafers and people who get their money without working for it.

The department has offered "Puffing Billy", one of the first locomotives to operate in Queensland, to the citizens of Ipswich. I am sure they will gladly accept the gift of this gallant little locomotive.

(Time expired.)

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (4.21 p.m.): When a business such as the Queensland Railways can absorb wage increases amounting to £7,250,000, in addition to increased costs of fuel and stores, with only one minor increase in freight rates in the past eight years, I think all those connected with the department should be highly complimented.

Mr. Bennett: That is a heavy increase.

Mr. Chalk: That is not true.

Mr. McKECHNIE: In my opinion, everyone in the department, from the Minister down, should be complimented for doing a good job. In short, the railways are being run as a business, and a very successful business, but, as the Minister so ably pointed out, they were not always run in this way.

New South Wales and Queensland have approximately the same mileage of permanent way. Although the gross income of the New South Wales Railways is far in excess of that of the Queensland railways, the net result in this State is virtually equal to that in New South Wales. Again, this is a tribute to the work of the Minister, the Commissioner and all the employees of the Queensland Railway Department. The density of traffic in New South Wales is much greater than it is on the far-flung railway lines in Queensland, so it should be easier for the railways in New South Wales to operate successfully.

As I said earlier, there has been only one rise in freights in eight years, but in the same period many minor concessions have been granted. For example, the freight on wool has been altered from a per-ton basis to a per-bale basis and the resulting slight difference is in favour of the growers. About five years ago, if my memory serves me correctly, special freight rates were introduced for the conveyance of fruit from the granite belt to Brisbane, and since then special fruit trains have been running very successfully from that area. The growers have benefited, and they appreciate what the department has done for them.

The considerable amount of work being done on the south-western line is a long-range indication that dieselisation is coming. It cannot come too quickly for the people living in the areas served by that line. For them, it is a case of "the faster the better". It is obvious that the salvation of the Queensland railways lies in dieselisation. As the Minister said, only 18.5 per cent. of the department's locomotives are diesels, but they are pulling 73 per cent. of the ton miles over the length and breadth of the State. That shows the direction in which we should be heading, and I am sure we are.

It is the quantity of goods hauled on the railways that makes them successful or otherwise, and I am very appreciative of the assistance that I have received from the Minister and various members of his staff in getting industry to tie in with the railways. I should like to refer particularly to the Minister's assistance in providing sites for wheat dumps at Yelarbon and Goondiwindi, together with the necessary loops. The Minister, the Commissioner and other officers of the department co-operated in that instance although the dumps are of more assistance to the industry than they are to the department in hauling wheat.

I must confess that I was horrified by the condition of some railway residences that I inspected at Mundoey on the Inglewood-Texas branch line. There was nothing for the Government or the Parliament to be proud of; I am afraid that they have been in that condition for at least 10 years. I doubt whether they have had much attention since they were built many years ago. I was not aware of their condition until a short while ago, but I have now drawn the Minister's

attention to the matter, and I am pleased to say that I have obtained his assurance that they will be rectified in the very near future.

During the current drought the railways have been doing a wonderful job in hauling fodder for the affected areas.

Mr. Houston: Has road transport given any concession on fodder?

Mr. McKECHNIE: I fully realise that those concessions come from the Treasury, but the railways do much of the work of checking these claims and forwarding them to the Treasury. Whilst it may be truthfully said that the drought concession is not a claim against the railways, they do play a big part in assisting with the claims and seeing that they are handled in the correct manner. The producers generally are appreciative of the work done by the Railway Department just as they are of the actual money that comes from the Treasury.

The stock-owner in drought-stricken conditions at Rockhampton receives rail freight rebate whether he draws his fodder from north or south. Unfortunately, some of the country worst hit in this drought is along the southern border and, in addition, it has suffered longer than most areas. In some of those areas graziers have been hand-feeding since January but, because half, or over half, of their fodder is drawn from New South Wales sources, the rebate does not apply. Naturally, as stock-owners in Queensland are not in any way assisting the New South Wales Treasury, they cannot obtain any rebate on service rendered by the New South Wales Railway Department.

At the same time, the northern areas of New South Wales are the worst-stricken areas in that State, and they in turn are drawing quite a lot of fodder from Queensland. Fodder such as peanut hay, sorghum stubble hay, meat-meal, and molasses, in particular, are going to the northern areas of New South Wales, and they also do not get a rebate on their fodder when it is north of the border. Admittedly, once it crosses into New South Wales they get their rebate, and Queensland residents get the concession on fodder coming from the south once it is delivered to the Queensland railways. I think it is unfair that people living in that area should be denied part of the fodder rebate, while other residents, in both States, who do not live in border areas, can draw fodder from any direction, wherever it may be available, and receive the freight rebate.

I have brought this matter up elsewhere, but I now bring it to the attention of the Minister. I think a reciprocal agreement could, and should, be reached with New South Wales to assist these people. It would vary in different years according to which State was worse affected but I am confident that in this current year we would have drawn more fodder from New South Wales sources. When I say New South Wales, I

include some from as far away as Victoria and South Australia, but basically it is New South Wales fodder from the areas around Forbes, grown on the irrigated areas along the Lachlan River.

I think the trend in the years ahead will more likely be in the reverse direction because New South Wales has very few irrigation projects in the northern areas, whereas we are developing some in our southern areas. Consequently, in times of extreme drought we will be supplying quite a considerable amount of fodder to New South Wales and possibly it will bear more heavily on our railways in the future.

If there is a reciprocal agreement, the fodder that is going to New South Wales stock-owners is paid for by the New South Wales Treasury. I do not think that we have anything to fear from such an arrangement. Basically, in all cases, it will be adjusted by the Treasuries of the two States, so that neither the New South Wales railways nor the Queensland railways should have anything to fear. However, at different times wheat has gone both ways. It depends where it is available—opposite the Queensland demand or opposite the New South Wales demand. I think a fair quantity of wheat has gone both ways.

With the completion of the Coolmunda Dam and the Leslie Dam—the latter is just about completed—there will be an opportunity for greater fodder production. It could well happen that, when we had a reasonably good year in Southern Queensland, they had a bad one in Northern New South Wales. In that event it would be of advantage to the New South Wales stock-owners to be able to get fodder from Queensland on a rebate basis paid for by the New South Wales Treasury. The growers would be able to sell their fodder at a reasonable price, and even enter into contract arrangements with people on both sides of the border to supply fodder in good years.

Mr. Ewan: Is there any water in the Coolmunda Dam yet?

Mr. McKECHNIE: No. It will be approximately two years before it comes into operation. The Leslie Dam is almost completed.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister and his officers upon a job well done. With the Minister's business-like approach to the State's railways I am confident that under his guidance we will see much progress in the department in the near years ahead.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (4.52 p.m.): I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister's remarks when introducing his Estimates. I have listened also to the wonderful contributions and ideas advanced by informed speakers on this side. Apparently there is a desire on the part of hon. members opposite to accuse members of the Australian Labour Party of all sorts of sins of omission in railway administration while Labour was in

office. The Labour Government had a grand record in railway administration, as was very forcibly brought to the notice of the Committee by the Leader of the Opposition in his very interesting speech. He gave figures which completely justified many of the actions of the administration when he was Minister for Transport. He clearly showed that the Labour Government had a grand record of achievement in this direction.

Under the Railway Standardisation of New South Wales and Victoria Agreement Act of 1958, the Commonwealth Government advanced £15,973,000 for railway standardisation in New South Wales and Victoria. For an initial survey, £14,000 was advanced. Under the terms and conditions of the advances by the Commonwealth, each of the two States was to repay 15 per cent. of the cost of construction by instalments over a period of 50 years.

Under the South Australian Railway Equipment Act of 1961—a Commonwealth Act—an advance of £1,325,000 was made. The Commonwealth supplied all the capital. One-third of the loan had to be repaid over a period of 50 years. Under the South Australian Railway Standardisation Act an advance of £8,800,000 was made, 30 per cent. of which had to be repaid over a period of 50 years. If we look at the No. 1 railway project mentioned quite often today, namely, the Gladstone-Moura line, and examine the Act passed by this Parliament last year, we find that there is no Commonwealth participation. I do not know whether the Commonwealth Government was approached for assistance in this direction. I do not know whether the Commonwealth was even sounded out for an advance for this undertaking. It would not surprise me if there was some sounding to try to enlist Commonwealth participation but that the Commonwealth said it would not consider advancing Queensland any money.

In the case of the Mt. Isa project, the Commonwealth was prepared to make loan funds available to the extent of two-thirds of the cost. In other words, there would be a 33½ per cent. participation by the State. In the aggregate, the assistance was not to exceed £20,000,000 and the interest rate was 5½ per cent. As mentioned by the hon. member for Rockhampton North, this project has not cost as much as was estimated, and that is not without some significance.

If we examine the treatment meted out by the Commonwealth Government to the States I have mentioned, Queensland is definitely not as well off as the other States that have undertaken railway ventures. This is not surprising. As we all know, prior to 1961, Commonwealth participation, whether for railway work or in other directions, had to be looked for microscopically and even then it could not be found. After the virtual electoral disaster the Commonwealth turned its attention to trying to obtain the good graces of the electors of Queensland. The incompetence and the inefficiency of the

present Queensland administration is reflected in Queensland's not getting a better deal for the projects we have in hand.

There was considerable disputation and vain argument about our obtaining money for railway projects. The Treasurer of the State "beefed" off to Wall Street to try to influence New York brokers and the World Bank to bring money here to start the Mt. Isa line venture. We were told by a Press that was sympathetic to the Government that these grand ideas and accomplishments would present no difficulty for the present Government; it would foster them and we would see the project started very quickly. There was considerable argument and political log-rolling before the Mt. Isa venture could be started, and even then it began on financial lines not as favourable as those enjoyed by the other States.

It is desirable in the interests of the State's economy that the Moura-Gladstone project should be carried out. A matter involving human values has been brought to my notice and I pass it on to the Minister and the Committee. The building of a direct line from Moura to Gladstone must be acknowledged by every progressively minded person as the first major step in correcting the big economic disadvantage associated with the export of products from this highly productive area. Time will not allow me to discourse on the immense value to the economy of Australia that a continuation of this line to Roma would be. This fact was brought to the attention of many people. My friend and colleague the hon. member for Roma may smile, but as the crow flies, the Port of Gladstone is possibly closer to Roma than the port of Brisbane is.

Mr. Ewan: Would you like us to send you some natural gas?

Mr. HANSON: We will have sufficient natural gas at Rolleston, which is closer to us than Roma is. Even then, in the opinion of those engaged in the industry, or who are conscious of the national fuel policy, it will not replace coal, which the Railway Department will carry in the central region.

The matter that concerns me and every other fair-minded person in the community is the sacrifice that many useful, hard-working people will make on the altar of progress in order to make the construction of this project cheaper and faster. Along the route of the proposed railway there are a number of mixed farmers and selectors, and one fairly large grazier with a highly improved stud property. They face the prospect of seeing their properties mutilated by this great development. On a recent inspection of some of these properties, I could not help but think how ruthless and cruel we can sometimes be in the name of progress. Ideals which we may nourish, such as security of tenure and the sanctity of people's rights, are soon blasted when it is realised that many of the victims concerned in this project will see

much, if not all, of the fruits of their labour and industry of many years buried under the tracks of huge bulldozers.

It is true that some cash consideration will be open to the people affected by this proposed railway, but the most generous, prompt and sincere treatment of those who can prove financial loss as a result of this work and the invasion of their properties cannot replace the pride and satisfaction of their efforts over the years in developing their properties. However, the inevitability has to be faced, and the question is whether the Government will add insult to grievous injury by challenging the claims of those unfortunate people in an unreasonable manner. I am not assuming for one moment that a policy of indifference or an inhuman attitude will be adopted deliberately, but I am conscious of the human thoughtlessness that sometimes creeps into matters of this nature.

Mr. Chalk: Be fair.

Mr. HANSON: I think I am being very fair.

Mr. Ewan: Is this for the Moura-Gladstone line?

Mr. HANSON: Yes. It reminds me of the engineers who built the Panama Canal, without mentioning the sacrifice of the lives of tens of thousands of workmen engaged on that colossal undertaking.

The point on which I, and every fair-minded person, will judge the part that the Government is to play in this enterprise, which will not only have a great influence on the economy and development of this country but will also prove the possibility of our sharing our resources with another nation to our mutual advantage, is that if only one family is denied justice in the form of reasonable consideration for the damage and disturbance it will suffer, all the figures that the Minister will quote on the economics of the proposal will be meaningless.

Mr. Sullivan: That is not your language. Who wrote that for you?

Mr. HANSON: I am quite capable of expressing myself in this manner, because a lot of my thoughts come not from the rectum but from the heart. In my dictionary, justice is not something that can be obtained only by long processes of argument, appeals, and counter appeals through the courts of law, which are outside the financial resources of the people who really matter. I am not accusing anyone charged with the responsibility of this big venture with already making up his mind that the dispossession of part or the whole of the properties of a few "cow cockies" is nothing compared with the benefit that this and another nation that is friendly with us will derive from the project. I am, however, going to express my anxiety that this inhuman attitude may be adopted.

In excuse it will be said by many thoughtless people that capital will be made out of the position by selfish or unscrupulous landholders. Again I must admit that possibility, as landholders are no more or less virtuous as a class than any other section of the community. The point that concerns me very much is the complexity of the claims that these people are required to make, and I am very much concerned about the long delays that could occur in matters such as these.

First of all, the victim has to engage a solicitor and carefully inform him of all the facts and factors necessary to substantiate his claim. The claim is irrevocable, and, after time for full consideration, it is forwarded to the department. In turn, the department seeks the opinions of others, such as the Valuer-General and the capable officers of the Department of Lands, who refer it to their local officers. In due course—probably 6 to 12 months unless the landholder has grossly under-estimated his losses—negotiations are begun. These are pursued till one or both of the parties regard them as abortive and there is an election to refer the case to the Land Court. Many hon. members in this Chamber have had dealings with the Land Court and, whilst I am in no way critical of that body, in matters such as this it is well known that there are delays.

The injured party is then faced with further delay and costly litigation, and, in desperation, in most cases he will surrender. The fear of protracted delay is real, and it dominates the thoughts of many people. It is the antithesis of justice and the worst enemy of democratic government. In this instance, it can be dispelled by prompt action on the part of the Government.

I now wish to advance something that I think could be of material assistance to the Minister, his department, and his officers. I think that a tribunal could be appointed to visit each one of the affected properties. It could consist of one person appointed by the Minister or the Commissioner for Railways, one representative of the property owners, and an independent chairman who, I suggest, could be one of the number of very capable officers of the Department of Lands. The tribunal could be given authority to make on-the-spot decisions with individual property-owners, and it should not be manacled by red tape and legal formalities.

This is a matter to which I have given much thought, and when I visited some of these properties recently I could not help thinking what a great advantage it would be if the Minister, in the exercise of his ministerial responsibilities, could spend a day amongst these property-owners and discuss their problems with them. Such a visit by him would clear the air greatly and much good would come from it.

I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the possibility of a grave injustice being done to a small minority of people; but I also wish to remind every hon. member that, quite

unconsciously, Governments can be tyrannical in their zeal to do something spectacular. In this instance, I hope this important development can be accomplished with an absolute minimum of bitterness and disappointment on the part of those who will be dispossessed of their land or displaced in the name of progress.

Recently I visited a property on which the proposed railway will go through the middle of the owner's dam. He realises that he has to build another dam and that the survey is the best possible survey from the point of view of the Railway Department. But his bank manager cannot wait for his money, and we should keep it in mind that the property-owner has commitments to meet. This man and many other property-owners in the area have not had a good fall of rain for many years. If an on-the-spot decision could be made, he could possibly get a new dam built and have it filled when the wet season comes. In those circumstances, he would not be inconvenienced unduly. The man to whom I am referring is a very hard worker. He cleared his property and then made it his life's work, and I should not like to think that the proposed Gladstone-Moura railway line will upset him in any way in the twilight of his years.

As I said earlier, many other property-owners are in a similar position, and a considerable number of resumption notices have been served. It might interest the Committee to know that a couple have been served on me. However, I am not worried because I know what is going to happen. When the inevitable occurs, I shall take appropriate action. I am fortunate that I am able to look after myself; many of the people concerned are not conversant with all the formalities.

During this debate a number of hon. members have mentioned the reduction in the number of people using the passenger services provided by the department. On page 129 of the Auditor-General's report, this paragraph appears—

"Compared with the peak year of 1954-55 the total of passengers carried during 1964-65 declined by 10,736,399 or approximately 30.03 per cent. Compared with 1955-56 suburban traffic was lower by 7,493,371 or 25.19 per cent. and country traffic dropped 3,645,851 or 56.86 per cent. when compared with 1952-53."

These figures are very alarming.

When I dealt with land resumptions, I said that my remarks dealt with human values. The question arises as to whether, in the future advancement of the Railway Department, we are to consider those who virtually own the department, or whether we are to have in mind only a desire to get bulk freights, and so on, to the coast as quickly as possibly and present a glowing financial report and balance sheet on the operations of the department to Parliament and to the people of Queensland. I think all fair-minded persons agree that passenger traffic has decreased because no real attempt

has been made to improve passenger services since the Government came to office. On the line from Brisbane to Rockhampton, which I travel fairly frequently, a number of the carriages that are being used now were used seven or eight years ago on trains on the Sunshine route. Many of them are very uncomfortable, and I have spoken about them previously in this Chamber.

I always like to be positive and I think that an air-conditioned train should run between Brisbane and Rockhampton to link with those running between Rockhampton and Longreach and Brisbane and Charleville, so that people travelling over that line could be given the same service as they receive on the Midlander and the Westlander.

Airline companies and shipping companies make money because they keep their planes in the air and their ships at sea. There is a lesson in that for the railways. In order to make money, rolling-stock must be kept continually in operation. I realise that the difficulties encountered in doing that would be onerous, nevertheless I think there are great possibilities in the ideas I have advanced. People travelling on the Rockhampton-Brisbane run would then get a service comparable with other main line services throughout the State.

When air-conditioned trains were first introduced by the then Minister for Transport, Mr. Duggan, the Press published a statement that the Rockhampton-Brisbane run would be the last to have an air-conditioned service. It has not come to us yet. Owing to the inadequacy of the passenger service available on this run, there has been a considerable depletion in the number of passengers.

(Time expired.)

Mr. R. JONES (Cairns) (5.17 p.m.): As one who was, until recently, engaged in the railway service, I should say initially that I take strong exception to the insinuation made in this Chamber this afternoon that railwaymen are discourteous, or that they were seven years ago but, with the advent of this Government, are discourteous no longer. May I remind the gentleman who made the statement that courtesy begets courtesy. Having known and worked with these men for 23 years since I was a lad of 16, I know they work at times under duress. Passengers are very difficult. I have seen many situations in which passengers were in the wrong and it was only the courtesy of the railwaymen in extreme circumstances that averted a situation that could have had bad repercussions.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. R. JONES: The hon. member says that he has had some trouble. Perhaps he was a little overbearing. Most workers in Australia will be courteous to those who are courteous to them, but try to stand over them and treat them as underlings and naturally the hair rises on the back of their necks and they take exception.

To those of us who have been engaged in the transport industry and have had an opportunity to study recent developments in transport, it is obvious—as it must be even to the uninitiated—that in the Railway Department particularly we seem to move along without any long-range policy. The railways do not seem to have any pattern. There are no futuristic schemes; we seem to live from hand to mouth. That was reflected in some of the remarks made in the Chamber this afternoon. It can be seen in many places from Mayne to Forsyth. Buildings seem to be just “plonked down” in an area. There does not seem to be any reason or plan in putting them where they are, and they appear to be there for all time.

There does not seem to be any plan for the future. We seem to go from year to year and from one lot of Estimates to another without any overall plan. The railways seem to be planned as they go along, and buildings are erected in a higgledy-piggledy manner.

Possibly there was some justification for the closure of some branch lines but I could not see any justification for the closure of branch lines in the Cairns district or the closure of the Cairns Railway Workshops. Cairns is an area that is developing—we are always being told of its great potential—yet railway lines have been torn up. I instance the Millaa Millaa line. After the line had been torn up it was realised that railway houses, railway fences, shelter sheds and so on were still there. If there had been any plan, surely the accommodation would have been pulled down, working from the terminus back, so that it could be transported by rail and used elsewhere.

Indecent haste was shown in the closure of the Cairns Railway Workshops. There was no overall plan to provide employment for the personnel engaged in the workshops. Their numbers were reduced from 227 to 81 at the same time as the sugar bulk-handling facilities were opened. It dealt a body blow to Cairns. It caused great disruption to our community, particularly the business community. Only now are we beginning to recover from that blow. Repairs could have been effected in the Cairns Railway Workshops as cheaply as anywhere else. The closure of the workshops showed a complete lack of foresight. Work on conventional wagons could have been farmed out, instead of having it all done at Ipswich, Redbank and other southern workshops centres, but Cairns was to receive the first blow. I am sure that the administration has learned a lesson from Cairns and that, in future, workshops will not be closed with such disregard for railway employees.

Surely the department could have borne a slight loss in the Cairns Railway Workshops, which would have been made up by the future development of the Cairns area. Surely the department could have incurred

a slight loss during the transition period. Not all people want to go to centralised points like Townsville and Brisbane. Not all people insist on the environment of a big city. Most employees in the Cairns Railway Workshops were quite happy to live in Cairns. For many of us, Cairns is a domicile of choice, and we are quite prepared to remain there to live and work. The Railway Department should have brought work to us instead of taking employment away. The closure of the workshops was an infringement on the right of choice of those people who do not want to be centralised. The Government says that it believes in decentralisation, yet it closes workshops in areas distant from Brisbane. It does not follow that workers who live in the remote areas by choice are not entitled to conditions comparable with those enjoyed by their city brothers. Immediate savings for budgetary consideration alone do not justify any kind of sacrifice for expediency or convenience. It is a remarkable fact that the communities where Government installations, such as the Cairns Railway Workshops, are in the balance, there could be a challenge to offset immediate saving by development. This should have been effected in the West, where the crippling blow of deflating these towns could destroy them completely.

From time to time big schemes such as the Townsville-Mt. Isa railway rehabilitation project and the Moura-Gladstone project are undertaken. In the initial stages of the rehabilitation scheme the Minister went to see for himself the conditions under which the men worked, and today he admitted that their working conditions and environment were difficult, to say the least. When initial planning and estimating is being undertaken for these projects, provision should be made for the human element. The conditions of the workers' employment and their environment should be taken into consideration so that they may be happier and more diligent in their application to their tasks. Employees living in the remote areas in the western and northern parts of the State should have amenities provided to make living conditions easier for them. The immediate expense would be offset by development in the area. If the Government were to show the initiative in this matter, it would develop the areas and increase prosperity. In this way, satellite towns in the western areas could be established instead of the higgledy-piggledy huts that are there at present.

I know that the department is increasing the use of mobile gangs. This is a step in the right direction. I suggest that discussion should take place between the administrative branch and the employees concerning the mobile-gang wagons in which they live and spend their leisure hours. The interior fittings and other requirements for these wagons should be discussed with the employees or their representatives. Great strides are being taken in this sphere by the Commonwealth railways. I believe that the Government should provide recreational

facilities in the wagons for these men as well as eating and sleeping facilities, for they spend 24 hours a day on the job.

From my knowledge of the railway service, the maintenance section is regarded as being in the lower scale of the transportation field, and it is one of the most neglected sections of the service. Gang motors are one of the first essentials needed for the employees. They should also be equipped with field telephones so that they can establish the location of trains and the running schedules. After all, according to rule 3 in the rule book, the first and most important duty of railwaymen is to ensure safety. The department has an obligation to provide for the safety of its employees. The provision of field telephones would be only a beginning and, as the hon. member for Rockhampton North said, electronic approach-warning devices should be introduced in the interests of the safety of maintenance men on gang cars.

Industrial safety helmets, which are used a good deal in the electrical industry, should be provided as a normal safety precaution for employees engaged in bridge work, pile excavation work, or in the construction of buildings.

Now that we have centralised mobile gangs, the quadricycles that were used on the Mt. Isa rehabilitation scheme should be given to the gangs working in the coastal areas which have the steeper gradients.

To those of us who have been engaged in the transport industry and who have had an opportunity to study recent developments in transport, it is obvious that unless some positive steps are taken without delay to establish an authority on which transport trade unions have direct representation without any restriction on rights to participate in the determination of policy, chaos is inevitable. I say that without fear of contradiction. I feel that the individual employees and their representatives should be consulted.

I should now like to draw the Committee's attention to the overseas trends in regard to diesel locomotives. It would be unreal to deny that, before World War II, the railways industry in Australia was in a neglected and run-down condition. Rolling-stock was inadequate to meet the demands of the nation. Many locomotives had passed the age of usefulness. The strain that the demands of war made on the industry, which had been neglected—why we could never understand—added to the problems when peace was declared.

In Queensland, as elsewhere, the inadequate locomotive power was supplemented by the purchase of the Beyer Peacock Garratt locomotive. This was thought to be the answer to the modernisation plan which everyone agreed had to be undertaken without delay. These locomotives evidently did not come up to expectations although they were hailed by the authorities as the answer to the immediate demand for motive power.

They were succeeded by the diesel locomotive. In my view the enthusiasm with which the diesel locomotive was greeted in administrative circles resembled the drowning man clutching at a straw. In making that statement I do not deny—because it would be wrong and foolish to do so—that they have given good service and have met an important and pressing need to rehabilitate the railways industry.

C. R. Hetherington & Co. Ltd., of Alberta, Canada, in their report of 2 December, 1964, to the Queensland Government on the energy resources of Queensland and their use, said that the railways would continue the trend towards dieselisation. It would be interesting to know whether that is an authoritative statement based on information supplied by the Queensland Government or the Commissioner for Railways, or whether it was made by a party who is interested in the construction of pipelines for the conveyance of oil. The reason for this direct question is that ample evidence is available that in some countries the tendency is towards the extension of electrification and the elimination of dieselisation in the railways. If it is a partisan statement, I suggest it be viewed with care and thought before any great weight is placed on it.

I draw attention to the very interesting and comprehensive reports of the Director of the International Labour Organisation, namely, the general report and reports on the general condition of work of railwaymen and the social consequences of changing methods and techniques in railways and road transport.

It will be noted that, while the first move in the countries mentioned was from steam to diesel traction, subsequent moves were from diesel to electric traction. The report states at page 14—

“As noted earlier, among the most spectacular of these changes is the changeover from the Steam to Electric and diesel traction.”

I place less reliance on the change to diesel traction in the United States, with its abundant oil supplies and its monopoly of the world's oil fields, than I do in other countries that have not natural supplies of oil or large investments in the oil-producing countries similar to the U.S.A.

The three paragraphs on page 15 of the report show the trend; for instance, the trend in Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and England is to electrification.

The following statement in paragraph 3, on page 15, dealing with electrification, is important—

“It is, of course, known that a number of other Railway systems are heading towards the same objective.”

It is important to note from the report that, with the extension of electric traction in the German Federal Railways, diesel locomotives are being relegated to shunting duties and

use on secondary lines. As will be seen from the report, this is happening in other countries, too.

The improvements in France are mentioned on page 18. The second paragraph on page 19 is one of the most important in the report as it deals with the saving in fuel. I feel that I should quote the following from it—

“Further electricity may be drawn from poorer grade coal which might otherwise not find an easy market or be worth transporting.”

This, as the report says, is the policy of the French Government and the French railways.

To ignore the importance of the statement contained in the first paragraph on page 21 would destroy the purpose of my submissions. This shows the extent of the inquiries by the I.L.O. and the important conclusions reached by this specialised agency of the United Nations. I feel that I should place the following on record—

“If electrification and dieselisation have been treated together, it is because their consequences are in many respects similar. . . In fact, in many countries, dieselisation is regarded as a first stage towards electrification. . . The savings in operating costs of electric over diesel traction may more than offset the interest on the higher initial capital costs involved . . .”

I draw attention to the fact that the source of the important statements contained in this report is shown at the foot of the page, and, if hon. members feel that they would like to analyse the statements, I am sure that the documents would be available in some Government department.

Mr. S. Greene, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen of England, who is also a member of the Executive of the British Trade Union Congress and the International Transport Federation, and who has visited many countries in Europe as well as Canada and the U.S.A., in his report to the annual conference of his union in 1964 dealt extensively with the question of railway traction. “Railway Review”, the official journal of the National Union of Railwaymen of England, in the issue of 16 October, 1964, reports Mr. Greene as saying—

“I have always regarded electric traction as being the most efficient and economical form of motive power for the railways. . . Other countries are spending colossal sums of money on electrification schemes in spite of a considerable experience of diesel traction.”

Continuing the discussion on the merits of electrification, the “Railway Review” of 20 November, 1964, draws attention to the failure of the Minister for Transport to define a policy and says—

“Railwaymen—or some of them—and many others will be disappointed that the Minister passed the responsibility for decisions on electrification on to the Railways Board. . . .”

The article also states—

"There is no doubt that electrification is more efficient. The Government must also bear in mind that the present diesel programme has very grave weaknesses quite apart from that occasioned by the need to import fuel oil."

The following statement in a responsible journal that is recognised and quoted outside England cannot be ignored—

"Railways in North America are finding that it is more economical to scrap perfectly good diesel fleets and replace them with up-to-date types."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hodges): Order! I trust that the hon. member will come back to the Estimates before the Committee.

Mr. R. JONES: I was trying to prove to the Committee, by referring to world trends, that electrification must supplant dieselisation in this field. The Government must take world trends into consideration, and they must also be reflected in our deliberations.

By discontinuing the quadruplication and electrification scheme in the metropolitan area, the Government has indicated that it is not interested in electrification; but I think the people of Queensland are interested in it. They are interested, too, in the fullest use of the natural resources of the State and in the use of power stations built on the coalfields to provide power for railway traffic.

Mr. Windsor interjected.

Mr. R. JONES: The hon. member's interjection is ridiculous. The Minister has told us already that, as a result of the increase in ton-miles, it is his policy to direct the railways more towards goods traffic. I am saying that electric traction must be used for both passenger and goods and freight services.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HOUSTON (Bulimba) (5.42 p.m.): Much of what the Minister said when introducing the Estimates for his department was of great interest to me and to my constituents. I do not profess to be an expert on how the railways should be run, but I suggest that hon. members can discuss in a fairly logical way how the railways affect the particular electorates that they represent.

I am rather concerned about the recommendations in the summary report on the Brisbane Transportation Study that has been made available to hon. members. The final details are not yet available, of course, and I look forward with great interest to reading them. In my opinion, the recommendations that have been published so far are worthy of discussion, and I refer first to page 19 of the summary report, on which this appears—

"Passenger assignments were made for the 1981 suburban rail traffic on the existing network. The Sandgate, Petrie, Ferny

Grove, Kuraby-Beenleigh, and Ipswich branches have daily patronage levels of 6,000 to 11,000 passengers and continuation of these is recommended. However, the Pinkenba and the Manly-Lota lines will not have enough patronage to warrant continuation of passenger services. Therefore, discontinuance of passenger service on these segments is recommended. Service on the existing trackage should be continued for goods movements and industrial developments."

Naturally, the recommendation for the discontinuance of passenger services from South Brisbane to Manly-Lota is of great interest to the people in my electorate, and I say very emphatically that I am completely opposed to it. I hope I have the support of the Minister in my opposition.

I do not wish to get away from the Estimates under discussion, but in dealing with public transport it is necessary to refer to systems of transport other than the railways. The summary report goes on to recommend the abolition of trams. A tram is a vehicle driven by electric power, and the power supply and the seating accommodation are all in one unit.

In an electric railway system there is usually a rail motor with one or more carriages. In some instances the vehicle that has the traction also carries passengers. Therefore, I think it could be reasonably argued that in a general sense the vehicle that carries tram passengers and the one that carries railway passengers and operates electrically could be one and the same vehicle, although it must be conceded that the tramway system moves on public roads and has to share the carriageway with other modes of transport such as motor vehicles and buses, whereas the railway system travels on its own right-of-way.

In any discussion on transport one must consider all the various modes of transport in conjunction with one another. I do not think we can cut out one system without having some effect on the others, and the idea of cutting out the railway service between South Brisbane and the Lota-Manly area will have the effect of throwing onto the roads in those areas a tremendous number of buses. One amazing feature of the report is that the road system from Wynnum to Brisbane—along Wynnum Road and Lytton Road—will not be increased to any extent, yet we all know that the present roads are completely inadequate.

On other occasions I have suggested that Wynnum Road be made a main road with the idea of having money spent on it from State sources in order to make it a much better highway. That request has been denied. Without arguing that point, however, we are now going to ask that the people of Wynnum and Manly, and other places along the route, such as Cannon Hill, travel by bus. The result would be one of the greatest traffic jams of all time and I believe that taking

away this line would add nothing to the easing of our transport problems; in fact, it would add to them.

The hon. member for Ipswich East advocated the electrification of the suburban railway system. Naturally, I fully agree with him. Other hon. members too, have advocated electrification and I believe that history will record that the present Leader of the Opposition played a major part in commencing electrification of the railway system in Brisbane. I also believe that the present Minister for Transport will regret that he did not proceed with electrification after he assumed office. Had he done so and had he pursued a vigorous programme of electrification at that time we would now be in a much happier position.

It is well known that rail transport is the cheapest form of transport. The hon. member for Ipswich East has made available to me the cost of rail transport from Booval, which is approximately 22 miles from the centre of the city. A worker's weekly ticket, good for 6 days, costs 18s. 6d. whereas a man in my electorate, for a six-day weekly fare pays 18s. It is obvious from those figures that there can be no argument that rail transport is the cheapest form possible. That has been proved in other cities of the world—and an electric railway system is cheaper still.

Another very important factor in the electrification of Brisbane's transport system, whether it be railway or tramway, or a combination of both, is that we would not have to rely on imported fuels.

I am sure that this has been said before, but it is well worth repeating: in times of international trouble Australia, and particularly Brisbane, cannot allow itself to be completely dependent on overseas fuel. We all know that during the war years there was petrol rationing in Australia. I am not quibbling with that at this stage, but there has been an enormous increase in the number of vehicles on the roads since those days. We must realise how essential it is to have alternatives in times of international trouble. Brisbane has access to supplies of coal and natural gas, both of which could be used as powerhouse fuel to generate electricity, possibly more cheaply than oil.

What I say about the railways should not be construed as an expression of opinion on whether or not the tramways should go, but I say emphatically that we cannot afford to discard one system and rely completely on another.

The Minister made the statement that an improved road system does not overcome a lot of our problems. A similar statement was made in "Railways of Australia Network", and I think the following is worth recording—

"It is a paradox that heavy expenditure on highways to relieve traffic congestion has only served to increase congestion and to reduce still further the speed and mobility of road vehicles at peak periods.

World-wide evidence points solidly to this conclusion. Highway construction alone cannot keep ahead of the growing traffic—relieving the pressure with more highways is as effective as a dog chasing its own tail."

I completely agree with that statement. We do not want to be stampeded by the Wilbur Smith and Associates Report into taking action that we could regret later.

It has been said by many that Brisbane cannot afford railway electrification, but on 1 January, 1963, David Bray, in a very enlightening article in "The Courier-Mail", reported that Oslo, with a population of 500,000, as against Brisbane's 600,000, had started to build an underground railway system. Brussels, Amsterdam and many other towns in Europe are taking their railways underground. In some places they are known as underground tramways. It does not matter very much about the actual physical features of the vehicles used. It does not matter very much whether they are trams or trains; the important thing is that they be a form of electric, mobile transport that can shift people quickly and cheaply. One of the great advantages of an electric railway system is that it can move great numbers of people quickly and under clean conditions. One thing that forces people away from public transport to private transport is the delay that occurs and the time taken to get from one point to another. People like to arrive at their destination in a clean condition.

It is true to say that in the latter part of the life of the Labour Government, and during this Government's term, attempts have been made to keep our rail carriages clean so that people travelling in them may remain clean. Unfortunately, owing to the soot from steam locomotives, particularly in tunnels, cleanliness is very difficult to maintain. Once people forsake rail transport for another form of transport it is very hard to win them back. The department will have to undertake a selling campaign, particularly in Brisbane, to win people back to train travel.

I have examined the various reports and checked on the number of passengers carried by the Railway Department, particularly on the south side of Brisbane. I know of no reason why my personal knowledge of the south side should not be applicable to other parts of Brisbane. People will travel by train, or any other mode of transport, if they can get clean, quick and cheap transport. The closing-down of lines, or a reduction in the frequency of services because of lack of patronage, is not the answer. Patronage will continue to decline when services are curtailed. As an electrified system cannot be produced overnight, something must be done to attract more passengers in the meantime. I suggest that a more frequent service to Manly and Lota—a well-advertised service, not necessarily with big trains—would attract passengers. I have seen an engine with quite a number of carriages doing the job that could be done

by a rail motor, which would keep running costs down to a minimum. By providing more small trains we would encourage more people to use the service.

I believe that the public will refuse to use public transport because of the time factor involved, and I intend to give hon. members an idea of the time taken on some journeys. Here again, I must thank the hon. member for Ipswich East. The journey from Booval to Brisbane takes 68 minutes, whereas a 4-mile journey by tram can take as long as 45 minutes. This proves that trains can be much quicker than trams. I have also noticed, particularly on Monday mornings, that, travelling by private vehicle, it can take as long as three-quarters of an hour to travel 4 miles.

From the point of view of cleanliness, from the point of view of making money for the department and from the point of view of convenience for those who patronise the railways, I urge the Government to get on with the electrification of train services. Last but not least, in times of national emergency an electrified rail system would be of the utmost importance in that the transport system would not depend on "Yankee" oil to keep it running. It would use our own powerhouses, fuelled by our own oil, natural gas, or coal.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.]

Mr. HOUSTON: When the Lord Mayor of Brisbane was overseas he investigated the underground tram and rail systems in other parts of the world, realising that eventually we would have to consider that form of transport in Brisbane. Traffic congestion is such that the present rate of road development will only alleviate the position and will never overcome it because of the increasing number of vehicles using the roads. I hope that the Minister will co-operate with the local authorities in the introduction of electrified rail and tram systems similar to those that have been developed in other parts of the world. It was announced recently that the Victorian Government will spend £100,000,000 in Melbourne during the next ten years in developing a rail system.

In various parts of Brisbane the railways are not paying. Once the system is modernised and made speedier, cheaper and cleaner we will have more industrial development and potential for housing, as we have at present on the south side of Brisbane.

Agreement has been reached between the Brisbane City Council and the Railway Department to build an overhead pedestrian bridge near Murarrie station, between the Murarrie Housing Commission area and the State primary school. That school is not used to the fullest extent possible because parents send their children by bus to other schools rather than allow them to cross the railway line. We all know that no matter how much children are told to walk down the road and cross the line at the station, they will not do it. The overhead bridge

has been approved, and the work should be commenced prior to the start of the 1966 school year so that the parents can enrol their children at the local school.

The next matter I wish to deal with concerns requests I have received from railway travellers who use second-class sleepers. If sheets and blankets could be provided for second-class berths, particularly on the long runs, the railways might receive added support. I know that passengers travelling first-class receive all these amenities, and there are only two berths in each compartment. When a family of three—mother, father, and young child—travels, quite often it is more convenient to have a second-class sleeping compartment containing three berths. Apart from the lower cost, which is, of course, an advantage, they might well prefer the added convenience of having three berths in the one compartment. However, unless they have sheets and blankets, the accommodation is not the best. I think that this is something well worth consideration. If the provision of sheets and blankets encouraged more people to travel by rail on the long-distance routes, something good would have been achieved. I use this opportunity to raise the matter for the Minister's consideration.

Mr. SULLIVAN (Condamine) (7.21 p.m.): I enter the debate conscious of the fact that these could possibly be the last Estimates of these departments presented by the Minister. It has become more or less accepted generally that, when the Treasurer retires, the Minister for Transport will assume his portfolio. The people of Queensland, and we on the Government side of the Chamber, are very confident that as Treasurer he will do as good a job as he has done in the administration of the Railway Department and the Transport Department.

It is true that this year has been a difficult one; that seems to have been acknowledged by speakers on both sides of the Chamber. The industrial strife at Mt. Isa cost the Railway Department £2,000,000 in revenue, and the drought conditions that have obtained throughout the State have placed a great strain on its revenue also. As I represent a primary-producing area, I feel it incumbent upon me to express the appreciation of those engaged in primary industry of the concessions that have been made by the Railway Department and, latterly, by the Transport Department. Because of the size and climatic conditions of Queensland, droughts are ever-recurring, and the railway give much assistance to those associated with primary industry.

Not only in the lifetime of this Government has that aid been given. The railways have assisted in times of drought under Labour administration, and I think most people are appreciative of that help. Possibly not enough of us avail ourselves of these concessions to store fodder. The recent drought has perhaps been less localised

and more extensive than any other drought has been, at least during my lifetime, and I think that that has had the effect of educating people to the need to store fodder. Even in recent weeks on the Darling Downs farmers could be seen baling hay and taking steps to store fodder instead of allowing it to go to waste. If they take advantage of the concessions given by the Railway Department, they can have fodder transported from the growing area to drought-stricken districts. Although they are required to pay the full freight, a rebate is allowed provided a declaration is made that the fodder has been used only to feed drought-stricken stock. People are becoming more conscious of the need to avail themselves of this concession, and, on behalf of all those associated with primary industries, I express my appreciation of what the Railway Department is doing for them.

With the wheat harvest in progress, there is an added responsibility on the Railway Department, if I may put it that way. In certain wheat-growing areas the crop has failed this year, and it may be possible for the department to provide a quicker turn-round of rolling-stock and thus assist farmers to reduce their storage costs. As hon. members know, railway wagons used for the transport of wheat are allocated to the Wheat Board, which has an officer working in conjunction with the Railway Department allocating wagons to various wheat-growing areas. In the last three or four years, there has been virtually a complete swing to bulk handling of wheat, and in the area where I live, which was essentially a dairying area up till the last couple of years, many people are now growing grain. If the Railway Department and the Wheat Board, working together, can ensure that there is a quicker turn-round of rail wagons, it will reduce costs by making double handling of wheat unnecessary during the harvest, which lasts only about three weeks.

The Wheat Board is not in a financial position to provide bulk storage for the whole of the crop, and in my area the quota for bulk storage at present is 17 bushels an acre, or slightly under six bags an acre. If a farmer has a crop averaging 10 or 12 bags an acre, which is fairly common nowadays, he has to store almost 50 per cent. of his crop in his own farm storage. That means extra work, extra handling and extra capital outlay for him, and the Wheat Board does not pay him until it has taken delivery of his crop. If he gets his quota of six bags into bulk storage, he is paid for that immediately; but usually farmers are not paid for the whole of their crop until about the end of April in the year following the harvest. Hon. members know the sort of seasons that we have just experienced, so I think it will be agreed generally that farmers need the money as quickly as they can get it. The Commissioner for Railways is in the lobby, and I bring the matter to his

notice in the hope that he can do something to assist. If he can, he will receive the thanks of all wheat-growers in Queensland.

The next point that I wish to make is only a small one, but I must draw it to the attention of the Minister for Transport and the Commissioner for Railways. I have received a number of complaints that tarpaulins used to cover bulk wagons are not always in the best of repair and sometimes have tears in them. There is a section of the department that carries out repairs, and tarpaulins should be kept in the best possible condition.

In the short time at my disposal, it is not possible to cover all facets of the Railway Department and the Transport Department, but there is one matter I should like to bring to the Minister's notice. The decision to build the railway from Moura to Gladstone will lead to a big demand for sleepers. In my area, at Barakula, outside Chinchilla, there is a sleeper mill with six contract sleeper cutters and hauliers, who are very concerned about a reduction in their quotas to the mill.

Mr. Hanson: It has been going on for years.

Mr. SULLIVAN: It may have been going on for years, but I want to draw the Minister's attention to it. It has been put up to me by these contractors and I think their suggestion is good. At Barakula at present, there is a stockpile of blocks equivalent to 50,000 cut sleepers. I am not sure how many sleeper mills there are in Queensland but I hope that the Minister will give consideration to drawing a portion of the sleepers required for this line from this mill. It will help these men considerably. I have roughly worked it out that between 200,000 and 250,000 sleepers will be required and I ask that a proportion of those be taken from the Barakula mill.

It has often been said that the quality of the ironbark available in this district is second to none elsewhere in Queensland, and the haul from Barakula mill to Moura is not long. Some of these contractors pointed out to me that, for the construction of a new railway line in Western Australia, sleepers were costing the department £8 each delivered on the job. I think we could do it far cheaper than that from Barakula. Whether those figures are correct I do not know.

Mr. Chalk: I will cut them myself for that.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I would, too. I should say we would be able to deliver them from Barakula on the job, cut, for about £2.

I am not here to say whether the figure is right or wrong but I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that all these men are married; they have quite an amount of capital invested; they are all good, genuine, hard-working men, with their homes at Barakula; and they are keen to remain on the job.

They had their quota cut in July and it is fairly difficult for them to make ends meet, especially when they have to employ one or two men. If something could be done to help them, they would be very appreciative. I have sufficient confidence in the Minister to think that he will give my request every consideration.

The next point I wish to raise would perhaps be in contravention of a railway's regulation but it is something that could be considered. Objection would probably stem from the maxim "One man, one job". However, we have had a problem previously with railway workers going out harvesting to earn a few extra pounds over the week-end for two or three weeks in a year. They get the farmer out of a difficulty by doing a bit of bag-sewing. Hon. members may think I am being a bit contradictory in this. Nevertheless, there are many bags to be sewn and a couple of railway workers, working over a week-end, could greatly assist farmers with this work; but what would happen if they did? Farmers have the bags there to be sewn; it is not doing anyone out of a job. Labour is almost impossible to get in the wheat areas. It is somewhat different from the sugar season, which lasts six months; the wheat season lasts only a few weeks. Workers from all avenues of life, whether from grocer's shops, or the construction of main roads or swimming pools go out early in the morning at week-ends, together with their wives, and earn a few extra pounds, and the farmer gets his job done.

Mr. Duggan: This is a little different from the speech you made two or three years ago, when you talked about the lazy railwaymen.

Mr. SULLIVAN: I think that might be a figment of your imagination. If you study the last election figures, you will notice that I got a 5 per cent. increase in my vote, and that would include many railway workers.

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

Mr. SULLIVAN: Should complaints about these railway workers come in, I ask the Minister that his department be not very much concerned about them because these people are endeavouring to do a job to assist the wheat farmers. It surprises me to hear hon. members opposite more or less trying to talk me down and "rubbish" these hard-working fellows who are prepared to work over the week-ends.

I should like to devote a little time to the Department of Transport. I commend the Minister for the work of this department. We have witnessed a great change in the road-transport system since the introduction of the State Transport Act of 1960. What has happened gives the lie to those who objected so vehemently to that legislation. At one stage I had certain misgivings about the Act, but today the road

transport industry is playing a very important part in the development of Queensland. The passage of that legislation meant that people who wanted to enter the transport industry were at liberty to do so. It enabled them to purchase vehicles and operate under the permit system.

Although I was pleased to do it, I was amazed when I had to defend the Minister against the criticisms of a certain transport operator. I will not embarrass him by naming him, because he is already suffering sufficient embarrassment. When he condemned the State Transport Act, the Minister and the Government, I told him that he was condemning me because I was a member of the Government that passed the legislation and I accepted my share of the responsibility for it. This was a case of a road-transport operator who had not paid his road-transport fees. Actually the operator does not pay any road tax at all because, as I pointed out to this man, it is the person for whom the operator is carrying who pays the tax. The operator adds it on to his charge. In this instance, the operator was not paying his dues to the Department of Transport. He criticised the Act because it contained a section giving power to the Department of Transport to seize an operator's books. In this instance, the department found about 670 discrepancies, and obviously the department has to have power to seize an operator's books so that it can determine what is owing to it.

In my area, and in many others men have entered the transport field and established flourishing businesses. Before starting, they knew they had to pay tax. They ran their businesses efficiently and paid the tax at the end of each month. They collect the tax from the persons for whom they are working and just pass it on. When this transport operator was complaining to me, his criticism fell on very infertile ground.

Cabinet's decision to extend concessions for the transport of fodder by road transport is deeply appreciated by primary producers affected by drought. My only criticism is that the relief should have been given sooner, for many people who bought fodder for starving stock found that they had paid transport tax on it prior to the lifting of the tax. The legal difficulties involved were pointed out to me in that certain transport operators were intending to take legal action against the department. I am grateful that a way was found around the difficulty and I am only sorry that the concession was not granted sooner.

The same concessions should be provided for people who are still suffering from drought conditions. Some of them have suffered the drought for so long it is monotonous. The tax does not apply to the movement of starving stock to relief country. I should be very pleased if the Minister could find a way around the problem. In answer to a question the other day, he said that it was impossible because

of transport companies wanting to test the validity of the Act. We should explore every avenue for passing on this concession to the drought-affected people, and we should not be intimidated by the transport operators who are threatening legal action.

One primary producer in the electorate of the hon. member for Roma, a Mr. Bassingthwaite, has a property at Wallumbilla and another one at Injune. If he were to use rail transport, the distance would be 140 miles. If he were to use road transport he would have to carry his stock only 110 miles. We must bear in mind that he has his own transport, yet he is required to pay tax because he is running in opposition to the railway. His cattle were in such poor condition that they could not stand being put on a truck on his property, untrucked at the railway yards, put on the rail to Wallumbilla, and then untrucked and taken out. We should explore every avenue to assist these people. This man is not hauling for anyone else. He is carrying his own cattle. It would be a different matter if he were a transport operator. I know that much has been done and that he gets a concession by registering his vehicle as a farm vehicle. If people are faced with losing stock—as this man is with one of his properties right in the throes of drought, and another one which has had some relief—we should do everything to assist them.

I have made an approach on behalf of the Chinchilla people. A gentleman wants to obtain a permit to run a passenger bus service from Chinchilla to Toowoomba, or, preferably, from Miles to Toowoomba. I have had good news about the timetable of the rail motor that runs daily from Miles to Chinchilla but, while that timetable will help, it is not a practical proposition for people to go from Miles or Chinchilla to Toowoomba for a day to do some shopping or business. In addition, quite a number of people from that area have children in Toowoomba boarding schools. If this bus service were running, those children could get home for week-ends.

(Time expired.)

Mr. TUCKER (Townsville North) (7.46 p.m.): The time allotted for speaking in this debate, 25 minutes, seems too short to deal —

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gaven): Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber. It is difficult to hear the hon. member for Townsville North. I ask hon. members to give him an opportunity to make his speech.

Mr. TUCKER: I was saying that 25 minutes seems too short a time in which to deal with the Estimates of these two very important departments. There are many aspects that I should like to deal with, but, owing to the limited time, cannot.

On page 5 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways there appears the following—

“As notified by the Consultants, Messrs. Ford, Bacon and Davis, Inc., in their final progress report, construction work on all major contracts of the Mount Isa Railway Rehabilitation Project has been completed by 30th June, 1965.”

It could be claimed that this project is in its final stage. It seems to me that the rehabilitation project was done in three stages. The initial stage was commenced at Richmond and moved steadily west from there to Cloncurry. The second stage was from Hughenden to Townsville. Railwaymen who have travelled over it have claimed that the reconstruction of the line from Richmond to Cloncurry is of a high standard. The permanent way was completely reconstructed and all the banks were re-graded, so that no uncomfortable dips remain. The railwaymen who work the line are appreciative of that fact.

Large quantities of earth were shifted to make this 180-mile section a first-class section. At present there are no rough dips in it. The track was re-laid with 120-ft. lengths of 82-lb. rail, and the ballast beds were well constructed and were well built up on the line itself. All the bridges were completely reconstructed with concrete head stops, pillars, and pre-stressed concrete slabs. It was a first-class job. It appeared at that stage of the reconstruction that the finished line would be of a high standard throughout. Railwaymen said to me, “If this standard is maintained, what a line this is going to be!”

Unfortunately, from that moment the rot seemed to set in. When the project came to what might be called the second stage—from Hughenden to Townsville—there appeared to be a complete reversal of the form that had been followed previously. All that I can conclude is that some interim costing must have been done during that period or something must have been brought to the notice of the contractors or the Railway Department, because suddenly the standard dropped alarmingly. Apparently there was a reconsideration of the standard of work to be maintained at that stage of the reconstruction.

Re-grading on the second section was done only in places where the existing line had a grade steeper than 1 in 90, or when it was necessary to deviate from the old track. As a result, many of the old and contentious dips are left in the line. What are known as vertical curves, which are hated by railwaymen, remain as a hazard in the hauling of long trains. This issue has been, and is continuing to be, raised in the North.

The only new bridges constructed on this section were on sections that deviated from the old track. Where the reconstructed line followed the old track, all the old wooden bridges were left without any additional strengthening. Where it was necessary to raise their levels because of the increased

height of the ballast bed, wooden blocks were used on top of the piles of the old bridges without any steel supports at all. From the sublime of the previous section this went to the "Gorblimey".

Throughout the line from Townsville to Mt. Isa there are 123-ft. lengths of 82-lb. rails; all the 60-lb. rails have been lifted on those two sections. This has not been done on the section from Nome to Collinsville. Nome is nine miles south of Townsville, and little rehabilitation has been done on this section. There are 120-ft. sections of 82-lb. rail on some of the curves, but in the main the track remains as it was. Is it any wonder that the Government has saved, as it claims, £3,000,000 on this project when the standard of construction has been so lowered on the two sections that I have mentioned?

It is perfectly obvious to anyone who knows anything about it that there certainly would not have been a saving of £3,000,000 if the standard set for the first section had been maintained. It was saved by altering the original plan for this line, not by efficiency. The general public has to swallow the Government's propaganda relative to the Mt. Isa line and has no means of getting an overall picture of the work done under this rehabilitation scheme. Very few people in Queensland other than the running men in the Railway Department know that things of this sort were done on the Mt. Isa line. The backslapping that has gone on has been only a cover-up by the Government of a very poor job on some sections of it.

I will readily admit that other sections were done well, but no grading has been done on the 150-mile section from Nome to Collinsville and, consequently, there are still steep grades on it. Reports have been given to me by railwaymen at Bowen—I suppose the Minister has received them, too—that serious creeping is taking place on the ranges on the Merinda-Collinsville section. This is caused by the movement of very heavily loaded trains, known as "WHO" wagon trains, which bring coal to the coast and eventually, of course, to Mt. Isa. The trains bear down heavily on the rails, forcing them to elongate. When this happens, a piece has to be cut off each end of the rail. If it is not done, the permanent way buckles. Therefore, gangs are constantly removing the excess pieces of rail after creeping has taken place on this section. Surely this is not normal railway practice, but it has to be done regularly on the Nome-Collinsville section.

As hon. members know, the heaviest diesel-electric engine in service with the Queensland railways has an axle load of 15 tons. The "WHO" wagons in which the coal is now being hauled from Collinsville have an axle load of 15½ tons. This means, of course, that when fully loaded they have an axle load heavier than that of the biggest and most modern diesel-electric locomotive in Queensland. It will be appreciated, therefore, that these fully-loaded coal trains over-stress the old type of permanent way between

Nome and Collinsville, which has not been rehabilitated, and railway running men are quite sure that unless this section of line receives considerable attention and rehabilitation, serious derailments of trains composed of heavily loaded "WHO" wagons will occur.

I think note should be taken of this before a derailment occurs. There have been serious derailments in other areas, and railwaymen have put forward good reasons why they have happened continually. As I said, railwaymen from Bowen and other places in the area are fearful that heavily loaded trains will be derailed, and I hope that the Railway Department will try to rehabilitate the section completely and remove the light rails, which are of no use there.

West of Townsville the crossing loops are known as 214F lengths. "F" in railway terms stands for something like 15 feet. Hon. members can work out the lengths for themselves, but the loops are known, as I say, as 214F lengths. West of Hughenden the loops are 194F length. South of Townsville to Collinsville there has been no extension of existing loops at all. This suggests to me that the rehabilitation of the Mt. Isa line was done to three standards. From Richmond to Cloncurry it was done to first-class standards; from Hughenden to Townsville the standard dropped very low compared with the first-class standard; and from Nome to Collinsville rehabilitation is almost non-existent.

At the other end, the line from Cloncurry to Mt. Isa, owing to its nature, was rehabilitated to some extent, but the Duchess-Mt. Isa section still retained all the old dangerous dips which men on the running staff abhor; so much so that a limit of 70F length of conventional drawgear wagons was placed on this section by the department without any pressure from the unions. That shows just what the department thinks of that section.

It is as a result of this low standard of rehabilitation of the line in the sections I have mentioned that the argument regarding the long-length trains into Townsville arises. The railway unions are sure that the line cannot safely carry the long-length trains envisaged by the Railway Department. For instance, the Australian Railways Union policy as laid down is—

"The maximum length of trains shall be 90F in length excepting where the train comprises wholly of eight-wheel bogie stock; two-way communication between engine and van and siding accommodation for the crossing of trains sufficient to allow trains to cross without standing foul, in which case, if all these conditions are met, trains shall be worked to a length of 120F."

Other unions have somewhat similar ideas. They also express their apprehension of the long trains that are being worked on this line. Unions are convinced that there cannot

be any extension of train lengths under present conditions, and I can understand their reasons as I advance them here this evening.

Very early this year a test was made by Mr. Lettice, and the train failed to stop within the prescribed distance as laid down in the rules although there had been an emergency application of the brakes. Under the old rule, when a train stalled on a staff section with another train following, the guard would first have to secure his own train and lock the guard's van in order to prevent the train moving away. He would then have to walk back with four detonators a distance of 400 yards, place three of them on the line, then walk back a further 100 yards and place another detonator on the line—a total distance of 500 yards. As I have said, however, tests proved that heavily laden trains would not stop in a distance of 500 yards on that line.

A Townsville guard took part in one test with a 1,300-ton "WHO" coal train. Detonators were placed on the line 400 yards apart. The train went back a certain distance and an attempt was made to hit the first detonator at a road speed of something like 50 miles an hour. Because of an upgrade the train had not reached 50 but only 43 miles an hour when it hit the first detonator. The next detonators were 400 yards farther on. Even if the train's braking system was up to standard it could not stop in the 400 yards. Although there was an emergency application of the brakes the moment the train hit the first detonator, when it hit the second detonator 400 yards farther on it was still doing 30 miles an hour.

Is it any wonder that railwaymen are worried and frightened? It was acknowledged that obviously the train could not be pulled up in that distance, so the distance was increased to 900 yards. This is where the catch comes in. The interval between trains was not increased. Under the old rules the intervals were 15 minutes in daylight and 20 minutes at night-time. The guard now has to go back 900 yards. How could a guard secure his train, lock his van, do all the other odds and ends that are necessary, and then walk back 900 yards—over half a mile—to try to stop a trainload of "WHO" wagons running 20 minutes behind his train? He would have to be really walking to do it! Obviously the time interval must be greater if the distance is to be 900 yards.

This is important to all of us in the North. We have mixed trains such as 44 Up and 19 Down operating on this line. They use the old conventional-type wagons, which often break their draw-hooks. If these trains break down they must be protected. Sometimes they carry up to 20 passengers. It is well known that they often break down. If the present time interval is adhered to a train of "WHO" wagons could come thundering down the track without a chance of

the driver's pulling it up in time after it hit the first detonator, even with an emergency application of the brakes.

I appeal to the Minister to try to understand what the unions are talking about and why they are worried. These men are fully experienced. They see Westinghouse engineers carrying out brake tests and know they are still not sure how long it will take to pull a train up. These railwaymen do not like to be "rubbished", and that is what it amounts to when they come forward with these ideas. It is completely impracticable to ask a man to walk back 900 yards to place a detonator on the line to try to stop a train which possibly by that time is less than 20 minutes behind him. It no doubt will be claimed that this sort of thing cannot happen, but there is always the odd chance that it could, and we should never take that one chance.

I ask that redundancy committees be set up in Townsville, and that the unions be allowed to sit in with the various railway executive officers who deal with this subject of redundancy. Many men, such as guards, drivers, and other railway staff, are worried about what will happen to them in Townsville. It seems as if they may be sent anywhere in the State. The other day we had an example of their unrest when some of the running staff in the western area called a lightning strike.

I do not always agree with lightning strikes because they hurt only the little people such as mothers with babies, who, because of their financial position, must use the trains. However, I understand the reasons behind the strike. These men get very disgruntled and frustrated; they do not know where they are going, and no-one will tell them. I have received letter after letter about it.

I can understand the men's position. If union representatives were able to sit in conference and put forward the men's ideas rather than being handed what I might call a fait accompli, they could work out something to the advantage of the department as well as the men.

(Time expired.)

Mr. GRAHAM (Mackay) (8.11 p.m.): It is pleasing to read the Commissioner's comments on the contribution the railwaymen have made during the year. He says—

"The successful functioning of the Department is dependent, to a large extent, on the efficient discharge by individual members of the staff of their allotted role and I would like to place on record my appreciation."

It is very gratifying that the Commissioner recognises their work. It is publicly acknowledged that railwaymen, irrespective of their status in the department, have always given good service to the Minister and the Government over the years. One has only to cast one's mind back to the war years when

railwaymen were called upon to give exceptional service, and they gave it willingly, with great credit to themselves.

It is somewhat disturbing to see in the Commissioner's report, despite the glowing picture he paints of the year's activities, the statement that the gross earnings decreased by over £1,000,000. Of course, he said that the Mt. Isa strike and the drought conditions were somewhat responsible for the decrease in earnings. Be that as it may, in the next paragraph he says—

“Coaching traffic returned £223,903 less than was the case during the preceding year.”

While he may blame the Mt. Isa strike and drought conditions for the loss of revenue from hauling minerals and so on, I suggest it would be somewhat difficult for him to blame the Mt. Isa strike and drought conditions for the loss in coaching traffic. This is a matter that must be looked at by the Commissioner, the Minister, and the Government.

Over the years there has been a continual loss of coaching traffic. I am fair enough to say that there are several reasons for it, such as improved air services available to the travelling public and improved roads, making for their greater use by motor traffic. However, the fact remains that the coaching service is being affected. The Commissioner must realise that if he is to bring passenger traffic back to the department, especially for long hauls, he must improve the service offered to the people who desire to travel by train. I know that services have been improved to some extent with the advent of air-conditioned trains and the use of diesel locomotives. However, I still believe that a great improvement in the service could be given for passengers using the railway service, especially for long trips, and more especially by keeping the trains on time. I have raised this matter repeatedly on the floor of the Chamber. As one who uses the service to the North quite frequently, I find that, while the Commissioner or the Department is always anxious to keep the northern mail train on time to as far north as Rockhampton, it becomes a slow goods train as it goes farther north.

Mail trains are continually running late in North Queensland. That puts a bad taste in the mouth of the travelling public. One has only to listen to the comments made when a train arrives an hour or an hour and a-half late. Once a train starts to lose time, owing to our single-line service, it is difficult to catch up. Insufficient consideration is given to the fact that these are mail trains carrying passengers. At times they are sidetracked and delayed to allow less important traffic through. If the Commissioner wants to recapture this traffic, he will have to improve the service.

On page 15 of his report, the Commissioner says that the department has lost 7,000 first-class and 20,000 second-class passengers. It

is only because of the increased coal traffic in the Central Division that the Commissioner has been able to balance his budget. Without that revenue, the finances of the department would be in a sorry state. The Minister will have to make a greater effort if he wants to regain what has been lost.

The report says that refreshment rooms continue to incur losses. I do not know how those rooms could be made a paying proposition. A couple of years ago I spoke against refreshment rooms because they were not giving service to the travelling public. I understand there has been an improvement in the service, but there are still complaints. If losses are to be incurred, it would be better to lose more money in order to give a good service to the travelling public.

The dining-car service between Bundaberg and Mackay is a good one; but consideration should be given to introducing a service similar to that which operates in New South Wales. Not all people can pay the dining-car charges of 7s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. a meal; all they can afford is a cup of tea and some sandwiches. The New South Wales buffet service provides a cup of tea or a light meal at any time a traveller desires it. That would bring to the department a greater return than the present system of providing only meals.

All I want to say about Brisbane accommodation is that recently I visited the audit office of the Railway Department. Likening it to the Black Hole of Calcutta would be putting it mildly. I agree with the Commissioner that there is ample room for improvement in that accommodation.

Let me now deal with accommodation problems where they concern me more, namely, in Mackay. While some little improvement has been effected by a coat of paint here and some new lino there, I think the Minister and the Commissioner will agree that the time is long overdue for making extensive improvements to the accommodation provided, especially for the administrative staff. Many years ago there was talk of adding a storey to the railway station. I still think that that should be considered. With increasing staff, more room has to be provided. Unfortunately, the building at Mackay can provide no additional room as it is completely occupied now. The train clerks and general administrative staff are working under very crowded conditions. The coaching office is a shocking disgrace. It is small, and about eight men—telegraphists and members of the coaching staff—work there. If consideration is given to the construction of an additional storey and the use of the upper portion for administration purposes, much benefit will flow from it.

There is another matter to which I think the Government should pay some attention at Mackay. For years there has been advocacy for the covering of both ends of the railway platform. Only limited protection is provided when long trains are at

the station, and in inclement weather people have to enter and leave carriages in the rain. Money was found to erect an awning right along the platform at Bundaberg, but none can be found to do the same for the people of Mackay. To encourage people to use the railways, some service has to be given, and this is one thing that could be done for them in Mackay. The time is long overdue for this improvement.

I think that the intention of the department to redesign the goods-shed facilities is something completely out of order. I cannot for the life of me understand why people who claim to have some vision and to be able to see into the future railway requirements of Mackay would undertake shifting the goods shed from its present location to a site about 200 yards away, where it must cause no end of inconvenience to the public. Why cannot the department use the area that it selected many years ago at Paget Junction for the building of a goods shed? Why is there a disinclination to leave the city proper? In Rockhampton, and other centres also, the inner city is cluttered up with railway installations. Everyone—the Chamber of Commerce, commercial interests, the local authority—wants it at Paget Junction, yet the Railway Department has dug its toes in and said, "No, we will build a goods shed where we say it will be," which is right in the centre of town, where it will cause inconvenience, disruption to traffic, and annoyance to the general public. The department has 50 acres of land at Paget Junction but will not move the goods shed there.

In view of the development that is taking place in Queensland, which includes Mackay, I think that the Railway Department should look further afield for its requirements. It is said that the time will come when railway installations will be moved from the centre of the city. At present, thanks to a lack of vision by those who designed the railway line to the harbour, it runs through virtually the centre of the city and over a bridge in the centre of the city, and that, too, has caused, and is causing, a certain amount of inconvenience and upset in Mackay. One wonders why, when the harbour was designed, the railway was not taken from north of the Pioneer River to the harbour instead of along River Street and over the bridge.

I am not an authority on this, but it has been said that the railway bridge over the river has caused, and is causing, flooding. If this is so, the Government will be committed to heavy expenditure, because, if Mackay gets another flood like the one in 1958, God help Mackay. The Government cannot close its eyes to this problem all the time. It has closed its eyes to every request that has been made to open the viaduct from the river to Barnes's Creek; it has closed its eyes to the effect of closing the bridge area behind Biddle's Hotel, which causes flooding in the Lawson Street area;

it has ignored the request of the Mackay City Council to open up the railway line in the O'Keefe Street area, which is causing flooding.

Mr. Chalk interjected.

Mr. GRAHAM: The O'Keefe Street area has always been wet, and I do not say that the railway line has caused flooding there. However, the land has been subdivided and homes have been erected on every available block of land. The railway line is ponding water in the area, and there is a responsibility on either the local authority or the Railway Department to put two or three culverts in. It would not cost the Railway Department very much to build culverts in the Paradise Street section.

Mr. Chalk: Why didn't the local authority do it?

Mr. Bennett: You can't pass the buck all the time.

Mr. GRAHAM: Has a local authority to put culverts under a railway line?

Mr. Chalk: Which was there first?

Mr. GRAHAM: The railway line was there first, and there was no need for culverts at that time.

Mr. Chalk: If a railway line goes through a city, the local authority avoids its responsibility?

Mr. GRAHAM: It was not flooded then; it is flooded now. The people have to put up with the flooding.

Mr. Chalk: And they pay their rates to the local authority.

Mr. Bennett: And they pay their taxes to you.

Mr. GRAHAM: Will the Minister let the local authority put a culvert under the railway line?

Mr. Chalk: We would be quite prepared to let them do it.

Mr. Bennett: You should do it yourself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GRAHAM: I believe those matters should be taken into consideration.

In my opinion, the plan devised by the Railway Department for the extension of railway facilities in Mackay is contrary to good practice. The department should have had conferences and discussions with the local authority and obtained its views on the matter. Instead it adopted a very high-handed attitude and did not consult the local authority. In fact, I think I made the first approach to the Minister after the local authority complained that it was unaware of what was happening relative to the provision of these facilities. If the Railway Department wishes to regain the support of the public generally and of the local authority, it will have to adopt a different approach.

But for the increase in coal traffic and improved business on the Mt. Isa line, the financial position of the Railway Department would be much less satisfactory than it is. The capital indebtedness of the railways has increased by over £4,000,000, but I suppose that does not really matter when one remembers that the Battle of Waterloo has not yet been paid for.

There is one other matter that I should like to mention while I have the opportunity. It relates to the proposal—if there is one—to extend the Collinsville line into the Nebo coal area. I do not know whether this is a fact, but where there is smoke there is usually fire. Some months ago the Mackay District Development League wrote to me following a meeting of the Federated Chambers of Commerce of North Queensland held at Charters Towers at which it was disclosed that certain northern interests were pressing for the construction of a rail link from Collinsville to the Nebo coalfield, with the ultimate objective of transporting Nebo coal through Collinsville to Bowen by rail, for export overseas, or for use by any industry that may be established at Bowen.

As much as I should like to see the Mackay hinterland developed, if there is any intention of going into that area by rail, it should be from Mackay. I can take my mind back many years to the time when agitation was very rife in Mackay for the building of a railway line from Mackay to its hinterland—that is, to Nebo—and eventually to Clermont. Despite approaches to past Governments, that never eventuated. I introduced a deputation on that matter to the late Hon. F. A. Cooper when he was Premier. However, that is by the way.

I know such a venture would entail the expenditure of a large amount of money. We would have to get the same degree of outside capital to develop the Nebo coalfield as was obtained to develop the Moura and Callide fields. But, if there is any intention by the Government to develop the Mackay-Nebo hinterland and its coal resources, Mackay should get the benefit. There is plenty of coal there because the Powell Duffryn report indicates that in the Lake Elphinstone area there is something like 30,000,000 tons of coal, but it will be many years before that area is developed.

I think the coal resources justify road access into the area. There was a deputation recently to the Minister for Main Roads in connection with the improvement of the road, which is in a shocking condition. However, the point I make is that, if the statement made by the Mackay District Development League or the Chambers of Commerce of North Queensland is correct, and if the Government is interested in the development of the Nebo coalfield, Mackay should have the benefit of any development that takes place. Between Nebo and Clermont there is a vast area of country, which I know will eventually be developed and give new production, not only of coal but of agriculture as well, and it may be necessary at some

time to give good road or rail access to the area. We in Mackay are conscious of the need for inland development. We have bodies in Mackay like the Mackay District Development League, actively interested in this phase of development, so, if the things I have mentioned are to be done, the Government should give heed to these bodies.

In the next 12 months I hope railwaymen will be given greater recognition for the amount and type of work they are doing. As I said in opening my remarks, railwaymen are, and have been, giving very good service to the Commissioner. While the average railwayman is fairly contented with his lot because he has had an improvement in wages and conditions, there is still some discontent in the Railway Department. The hon. member for Townsville North made comments that the Minister should take heed of.

I believe that the department is going just a little bit too far in increasing train loads without giving the necessary attention to strengthening the track. I know that the strength of the track has been improved by cutting down grades and inspecting bridges, but that is not sufficient. With dieselisation and improved track conditions the department has been able to greatly increase train loads, but there must be a limit to how far this can go. Unless tracks are in sound condition it is looking for trouble to try to operate increased loads at fast speeds.

Mr. BROMLEY (Norman) (8.35 p.m.): I pay tribute to the loyal employees in the departments under the Minister's control. I particularly commend those employees who work under adverse weather conditions and other difficulties in various parts of the State and suffer the added hardship of having to live away from their families. Naturally their families, too, are making sacrifices.

Let me turn my attention first to the transport of school children. This financial year the Brisbane City Council carried over 15,000,000 children in council vehicles.

Apart from regular services it operates 2,155 special school trips a week, for which it receives no Government subsidy. This extensive service has cost £514,375. Admittedly the Government makes subsidies available outside the metropolitan area, but unfortunately it does not assist in Brisbane. This poses a tremendous problem for the Brisbane City Council. Every 3d. fare paid by a child represents a loss of 8·55d. a mile. The average cost per child per mile is 11·55d. It is estimated that 95 per cent. of the children carried would be transported to their place of education.

Mr. Chalk: Whom are you attacking? The Railway Department, the Department of Education or the Brisbane City Council?

Mr. BROMLEY: Nobody at the moment. I am pointing out facts. I believe that the Government will have to subsidise the Transport Department of the Brisbane City Council

so that children in the metropolitan area can receive the education to which they are fully entitled. The Government has completely ignored representations from the council, not only the present Minister—

Mr. Chalk: I have never ignored the council.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister has ignored the council's requests for assistance.

Mr. Chalk: I would not ignore them. The position is that I would not grant them.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister would not grant them. That is the answer. He would not grant these services. In America, Governments, both State and Federal, are subsidising similar school transport services, but this Minister glibly replies that he would not ignore these requests but that he just would not grant them. With all due respect to the Minister, I think he should be ashamed of himself. I do not think this will assist him in his attempt to become the Leader of the Liberal Party, although I personally believe he has a very strong chance and would be an odds-on favourite.

The Department of Transport puts out its hand to take 4 per cent. of the gross revenue that the council receives in bus fares. This year the Government, or the Department of Transport, will get the sum of £72,000 from the Brisbane City Council. At the same time the council is paying to the Government £27,000 for the right to use its own roads—roads that it maintains.

Mr. Chalk: Do council buses go outside Brisbane on charter work?

Mr. BROMLEY: Not outside.

Mr. Chalk: You don't know what you are talking about. They accept charter work.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister is now introducing an entirely new subject.

Mr. Chalk: No, I am not.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister will not deny that the council pays £72,000.

Mr. Chalk: No.

Mr. BROMLEY: I am stating facts.

Mr. Chalk: I am admitting that we followed the policy that the Labour Government laid down.

Mr. BROMLEY: Possibly the Government is, but we should not continually live in the past. Why don't we do something to improve the position?

Mr. Hanlon: The burden on the council has grown tremendously in recent years.

Mr. BROMLEY: That is absolutely correct because of the increase in population, yet the Minister sits there and all he does is laugh. He does not suggest anything at all worth while.

I now wish to pay a compliment to some organisations and, in doing so, I will probably be paying a backhanded compliment to the Minister.

Mr. Anderson: Be charitable.

Mr. BROMLEY: I believe that, at times, I am very charitable, not only on Saturdays and Sundays, but day and night, and in here.

I will be paying a backhanded compliment to the Minister yet, at the same time, he is not charitable enough to accept it in the way I intend to put it.

I pay a tribute to the R.A.C.Q. and the Queensland Road Safety Council, of which the Minister is chairman. The Minister is not "going crook" at me, because I am paying him a nice compliment. These organisations continually do good work in framing suggestions for the better use of our available transport and they assist constructively with ideas for road safety, co-ordination of traffic matters, services, and so on. Many suggestions are advanced by the R.A.C.Q. and the Road Safety Council. The latter body issues reports and regularly asks for co-operation by everyone concerned. The Government is included, although it has an obligation. On the front page of the report appears the phrase, "Life is so precious". That is apparently the motto of the organisation.

In my opinion this journal should be read by many more people; it will assist in saving life and play an important role in transport. I have spoken frequently about the extensive use of advertising and how it plays an important role in road safety and transport. I now want to put forward some suggestions on advertising relative to speed and power.

I have asked questions about this matter. An article in the September issue has the headline, "Road safety organisations fight uphill battle against speed and power advertising". So they are. It also mentions that the Minister attended a conference of Transport Ministers and State Premiers. I appeal to the Minister to do something to stop this type of advertising, which appeals to the young people. There is a blurred photograph in the journal of what appears to be a car which is supposed to be travelling at a terrific speed, and it has the caption "High performance".

We must endeavour to reduce the road toll. While I am not in favour of the medium of advertising used on the main roads to the North Coast and the South Coast, I suggest that pictures of cars, as illustrated by these Press cuttings, smashed to smithereens, should be enlarged and placed on hoarding boards at vantage points on the main roads and alongside railway tracks where travellers will see them. Then we would remember that speed is dangerous. I realise that this matter might not come under the Minister's Estimates, but he spoke at length about road transport. This may be described as "Shock Publicity".

I ask the Minister to reconsider the section of the State Transport Act which makes transport drivers responsible for the weight of their loads. The driver of a trailer has to rely on the weighing method used where the trucks are loaded, and some of them are antiquated; they are not like the modern ones on the South Coast road.

Mr. Chalk: That is not provided for in the State Transport Act. You are talking about main roads.

Mr. BROMLEY: I know it is there somewhere.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BROMLEY: I believe that there is a section which covers this.

Mr. Chalk: You show it to me and I will buy you a Casket ticket.

Mr. BROMLEY: Only the other day I was going through the State Transport Act and saw it.

Mr. Chalk: I am telling you it is not under the State Transport Act.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister is only trying to waste my time, and I want to deal at length with certain aspects of his Estimates which I consider important.

I estimate that in the last 12 months semi-trailers and trucks have been involved in 2,700 accidents. While this matter may not come under the control of the Minister, many accidents are caused through overloading and drivers taking pep pills because of the conditions under which they work and the distances they have to travel.

When it is considered that last year there were 2,700 accidents involving trucks and semi-trailers, it will be seen that this is something that should give the Government, and all thinking people, cause for concern. Even if the Minister is not interested and says that it does not come within his department, I think he could well look into it. I think perhaps overloading has something to do with it.

With more and more private vehicles choking the roads, serious thought should be given to the co-ordination of road and rail transport. I know that the Minister has at times spoken on this subject. I believe that co-ordination is something that must eventually come, and it will be made more difficult by the closing of railway lines. From memory, I think 54 lines have been closed throughout the State. I do not think any more should be lifted, or even closed, especially in the rapidly developing areas. A few months ago an announcement was made in Sydney that the New South Wales Government had appointed a permanent consultative and advisory body comprising the Commissioners for Railways, Transport, and Main Roads, the Chairman of the State Planning Authority, and the Under Secretary of the Treasury. Furthermore, a transport co-ordination plan for Sydney to cost more

than £100,000,000 over six years—that is real money—was to be commenced without delay. It includes the construction of an eastern suburbs railway that will cost £32,500,000. When the hon. member for Salisbury asked for a rail link to Inala, which is just as necessary—

Mr. Sherrington: He hasn't got a "quid" for that.

Mr. BROMLEY: Not a "zack". There is no money for that, yet the New South Wales Government is to spend £100,000,000 on a traffic co-ordination plan, and in the initial stage there will be a railway to the eastern suburbs costing £32,500,000. There is to be a co-ordinated rail and road transport system in the metropolitan area and satellite towns.

Mr. Chalk: I am all in favour of it.

Mr. BROMLEY: In the August issue of "Railways of Australia Network", which I suppose the Minister finds time to read, the editorial is worth including in "Hansard". Unfortunately in the time available to me I cannot quote all of it, because I have a few things to say about Woolloongabba and the level crossings at Coorparoo and East Brisbane. I suppose the Minister will not ignore me on those matters but he will still do nothing even though I have been asking for a long time for something to be done.

The editorial reads—

"The often quoted M. Louis Armand (the former General Manager of the French National Railways) was recently asked if a nation couldn't simply do without railroads and use other forms of transport? In reply M. Armand said—'Is there a truly responsible person anywhere who would plan to meet a nation's future transportation needs without making room for railroading? None would dare do such a stupid thing! Great growth is coming in all nations, in population and in production. More things will have to be moved in greater volume than ever before—and while freight traffic will grow with output, there's no limit on the growth coming in travel.

"Then think of the enormous urban agglomerations that are being formed for the new millions. How could these possibly be supplied without mass transport over railroads?"

This section is very important—

"How could you provide space for all the trucks that would be necessary without railroads? How would it be possible to recruit the hundreds of thousands of truck-drivers at a time when labour for such work is becoming increasingly scarce?"

Of course, the position is similar here.

It goes on—

"At present," M. Armand continued, 'each network undertakes its own studies of its own problems. It would be infinitely

more economical and effective if all railroads could get together and pool their research efforts. If they could single out problem areas—then go to supply companies and allocate portions of mammoth projects.

'When one considers the dramatic progress made in aviation, it is certain that similar progress could be made in railroading with systematic development programs.'

Mr. R. Jones: They should build the permanent ways.

Mr. BROMLEY: Yes. I do not think there is any definite long-range plan in Queensland for a systematic development programme, other than perhaps for the types of locomotives and carriages.

The editorial continues—

"M. Armand is a man who radiates confidence in the railroad's future—not from the bluster that stems from wishful thinking, but with the sure knowledge of an individual's needs and desires, of a nation's economic demands and political compulsions and of technological trends."

The trends are obvious today. The public desires a fast, economical means of transport that will not clutter up the roads as they are being cluttered up at present as a result of the closure of certain railway lines. There is no railway line connecting the interstate railway with the centre of the city. That is a shocking indictment on any Government.

Mr. Chalk: I will second that.

Mr. BROMLEY: Will the Minister take notice of it?

Mr. Chalk: Yes.

Mr. BROMLEY: The Minister may be able to build castles in the air, but there is no way in the world that he will ever build bridges over the river. He will not be in office long enough to do that.

Much work is required in my electorate to assist in the dispersal of traffic, and I shall deal particularly with the bottle-necks that exist because of a system of level crossings. There are level crossings at the Woolloongabba Fiveways (I have spoken about that one before), further along Ipswich Road, in Logan Road, and in Stanley Street.

Mr. Chalk: What do you suggest we do about it?

Mr. BROMLEY: I am going to make a suggestion in a moment.

Mr. Chalk: I will listen.

Mr. BROMLEY: I hope the Minister will be able to make money available to implement it.

The level crossings to which I have referred are on main roads leading into the city, and outbound traffic, including buses, travels to the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Wynnum and the Redland Bay area along these roads. Tourists

from the North leaving the city and those from the South coming to the city have to cross these level crossings, but no attempt has been made to alleviate the congestion the crossings cause. When one thinks of all the traffic that goes along Ipswich Road to Moorooka and Ipswich, all the traffic that goes along Logan Road to Holland Park, Mt. Gravatt, the Gold Coast, or interstate, and all the traffic that goes along Stanley Street to Wynnum and Redland Bay, one wonders what the Government is going to do, or whether it is going to do anything.

I have received hundreds and hundreds of requests that something be done to eliminate traffic hold-ups at Woolloongabba. On many occasions I have seen motorists coming into the city, or on their way out of the city, pull up and ask the policeman on duty which way to go. There is a five-ways there, and no signs worth anything to tell people which road leads to where. I have seen policemen courteously direct motorists on their way. Of course, as they go further along they are held up at the level crossing. I think those places should receive urgent attention and should be the responsibility of the Government.

Mr. Chalk: What do you want us to do?

Mr. BROMLEY: All I want done is to have overpasses or underpasses built at Woolloongabba, Coorparoo and Stanley Street East. It would be easy to do but the reply is always the same—"No money".

Mr. Chalk: How would you put an overpass at the 'Gabbra?

Mr. BROMLEY: If the Minister likes to come to my office tomorrow, I will explain how it can be done. It would be simple to put an overpass there with streets running off it in the various directions.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DAVIES (Maryborough) (9.2 p.m.): Because of the remarks of the hon. member for Roma, who cast a reflection upon railway workers throughout the State when he charged them with a lack of courtesy in the days of an Australian Labour Party Government and complained about the lack of service by railwaymen to the man on the land, I have decided to place on record some facts about the achievements of the railways in 10 years of administration by the Leader of the Opposition—who incidentally will be Premier of the State after the next election.

Before doing that, however, I should like to mention a few matters of parochial interest. Maryborough is a very large railway centre and it is pleasing to know that it joins with one or two other centres in the State with favourable returns of revenue earnings. The Maryborough section of the Southern Division earned 41s. 3½d. per train mile and the working expenses amounted to 38s. 7½d. per train mile. In this connection, I have pleaded over the years for the preparation of what

might be called a master plan of development, because Maryborough has a different set-up from other stations such as Gympie, Gladstone, Bundaberg and Rockhampton. Possibly Bowen is an exception. The set-up at Maryborough is similar to that at Newcastle years ago when mail trains used to back into the central station but now pass through a suburban station. At Maryborough the Townsville mail, and on most occasions the Rockhampton mail, pass through Baddow and do not come into Maryborough.

It is difficult to know just where to request new buildings, such as a new railway station and new administrative buildings, because of the lack of a master development plan. I believe it is time that the Railway Department knew just what is to be done. For quite a long time now conditions that should not exist have been tolerated. For instance, at Baddow there is no protection when it rains and people have to walk at least 50 ft. from cover to the nearest carriage. There is always some distance to walk in the open to any carriage, some of which may be far along the platform.

The platform is not level, and because of the importance of the centre at least some money should be spent on levelling it. After a train comes in it is only a few minutes before it goes out again, so there is always a lot of hurry and bustle. It is very awkward, and quite dangerous for aged people and people with young families. It is an island platform. People can be taken out from the main station in a tender, but most people prefer to go out in private cars or taxis. On arrival they have to park in a rather dark area which is not level.

With the importance of this centre, surely some money could be spent on the yard. It is a dangerous crossing and people leaving the island platform have to cross a line along which there is regular shunting. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to levelling the platform, and improving the crossing and the yard where cars are parked.

Mr. Ewan: For how many years have these conditions obtained?

Mr. DAVIES: The hon. member is the person I am going to reply to on behalf of the railwaymen. He said—

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr. EWAN: I rise to a point of order. That deliberate untruth of the hon. member for Maryborough is very offensive to me, and I demand that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Maryborough to withdraw the untruth referred to.

Mr. DAVIES: I cannot recall any statement by me that was untrue.

Mr. Pizzey: He made an attack on the railwaymen.

Mr. DAVIES: I quite agree with the Minister.

(Opposition laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has been asked to withdraw his statement.

Mr. DAVIES: Which statement?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Roma said that the statement of the hon. member for Maryborough was untrue, and he asked for its withdrawal.

Mr. DAVIES: Very well, I withdraw it.

I have previously asked for flood-lighting at the Baddow shunting-yards. I am pleased that the lines where the trains are shunted are to be increased in length. Although the lighting has been improved, flood-lighting is still not provided. Certainly two large flood-lights are needed in the area. Anyone who thinks I am exaggerating should see the area for himself. The Minister's department is endeavouring to save money at the expense of public safety.

I realise that with the increased number of steel wagons the use of timber and woodwork is gradually decreasing in the department. I appreciate the provision of two very good sheds for the depot where work on steel wagons is carried out. I believe the quality of the work performed there is equal to the work done anywhere else in the State. I am sure the Minister appreciates that fact. The same applies to the quality of the work in the other sections of the workshops.

I appreciate the successful effort of the Minister to restrain a desire on the part of anyone to interfere in any way with the status of the workshops because, although each section is small, it is very important because of the quantity of work handled. I emphasise the quality and quantity of the work, the long-standing high reputation of these men, the fact that they have their homes in the city, and the importance of maintaining the workshops in Maryborough at their present strength. The workshops help decentralisation, and also help to frustrate the desires of those who may wish to see a railway empire built up south of the Brisbane-Ipswich line. I feel that the Minister's understanding of the situation will be sufficient to overcome any attempt to advise him against their continuance. I have every confidence in leaving the matter with the Minister, believing that he will safeguard the interests of the railway centre in Maryborough in the interests of decentralisation.

I appeal to the Minister to retain the refreshment rooms on the station platform at Maryborough. We had very successful refreshment rooms there and the quality of the meals served was very high. There is no other railway refreshment room between

Gympie and Bundaberg. I know the problems associated with the provision of a refreshment room. However, with the number of people on the trains there is a necessity for the department to provide refreshment facilities as part and parcel of the railway service. Serious consideration should be given by the department to maintaining refreshment rooms at Maryborough.

Very few members of the Government parties have spoken in this debate. There seems to be a reluctance on their part to enter the debate following the arguments advanced by the Leader of the Opposition. They have been so deflated that they realise the falseness of the charge laid on other occasions that the Labour Government failed to administer this department well. To provide further confirmation, I have gone through reports and gathered certain facts. Although in some ways they may sound like repetition, as we have driven these facts home on each occasion the Railway Department Estimates have come before us, it seems that, as things stand, constant hammering is needed to have any effect on some of the back-benchers on the Government side. I know the Minister himself recognises all the achievements of Labour Governments and knows full well that much was done by them.

There should be no need for me to remind hon. members that after the war the railway service was worn out—physically tired, I might say—as a result of the tremendous strain placed on it. I have said before that the Commonwealth Government failed sadly in its duty to this State. Queensland accepted the responsibility of maintaining the railway service. Had the service fallen down in any way our war effort would have been badly affected. This State accepted all the cost of repairing and rehabilitating its railway services without any effort being made by the Commonwealth Government to contribute in any special way to the repair of the run-down railway service—it was run into the ground. I believe that at one stage, before the Chifley Government was defeated, negotiations were afoot for some assistance to be given. However, it was unfortunately defeated and the new Commonwealth Government made no effort in that direction.

In the period from 1947-48—just after the war—to 1954-55 the quantity of goods carried by the railways jumped from 5,232,000 tons to 8,212,000 tons. The Labour Government was alleged to be falling down on the job. Having managed the country well during the war, it came out of it with a shortage of material and manpower. Any thinking person will admit that rehabilitation of the railway service was a terrific job. At a later stage, so was the gigantic task of dealing with the upsurge in our school population.

During the period from 1947 to 1955 the percentage increase in quantity of goods carried by the railways were as follows:—

	Per cent. increase
Coal	60
Fertiliser	78
Wheat	114
Maize and grain	23
Hay and chaff	7
Fruit	50
Sugar cane	166
Sugar	114
General merchandise	41
Livestock	25

It was necessary, therefore, for the Labour Government to organise a tremendous programme of improvements designed to increase the capacity of the railway system generally by providing more locomotives and carriages and repairing the worn track.

I pay tribute to the railwaymen of this State for the magnificent job they did, never sparing themselves in the hours they worked on repairing locomotives and the track, making yard and station improvements, and so on.

On 30 June, 1947, we had 778 locomotives, and on 31 December, 1955, we had 845 locomotives. Although that represents an improvement of 67, because 110 worn-out engines were scrapped there were actually 177 new locomotives.

Then we had the injection of diesel-electric locomotives into the service. The Leader of the Opposition passed some interesting comments on the use of electric power, linked up with our coal production, and the problems that would confront us if war broke out again.

Because locomotives were run into the ground during the war, a tremendous number needed repair.

To hear members of the Government talk—the few who did—one would imagine that it was only during the present administration that we had fast freight trains. When the Labour Government was in office special freight carriages and special freight trains ran five days a week. They travelled from Brisbane to Townsville in 40 hours, which was a tremendous improvement over that period of 10 years.

If the hon. member for Roma had any sense of appreciation of accomplishment or fairness, or any respect for our parliamentary system, he would pay tribute where it is due.

I remind the Committee that it was the Australian Labour Party administration which placed on the tracks of this State, for the benefit of the people who lived in the far distant spots, nine air-conditioned trains with all the comforts that go with them. We were the only State in the Commonwealth at that time which had air-conditioned sleeping and sitting cars. There

is no need to mention all the amenities and benefits of air-conditioned travel. The people of the West and of the Far North benefited from those trains. We were unjustly accused then, and have been accused since, of being a Queen Street Government.

It is 1,043 miles from Brisbane to Cairns. Only one line in Australia, from Port Pirie to Kalgoorlie, is longer, and then only by a few miles. It is 604 miles from Brisbane to Cunnamulla, 537 miles from Rockhampton to Winton, and 603 miles from Townsville to Mt. Isa. We can say that the most impressive car improvement scheme ever undertaken in Australia was carried out by an Australian Labour Party Government at a time when materials and manpower were short. Those trains were built in Queensland at a cost of £3,250,000.

Carriages taken off those main lines were used on branch lines, so that there was a general uplift in the standard of accommodation provided for all people of this State, and those who travel by train are mostly the ordinary working people.

Mr. Ewan interjected.

Mr. DAVIES: It is all very well for the hon. member for Roma to interject; he is used to travelling in luxurious cars, not trains.

From 1 July, 1947, the Labour Government built 30 suburban cars, 12 sitting cars, three composite sleeping and sitting cars, 66 brake vans, one dining car, and 44 second-class brake vans. In 1950 tenders were called for the construction of 128 suburban cars of steel or other metal. In 1950-51 two new rail-motor trains, each consisting of a 102-h.p. power unit and two trailers, were put into service in the Northern Division. From 1952 to 1954, six 4-car diesel-motor trains were put into country service. Each comprised a power car at each end and two intermediate cars, and could be divided to provide two services.

No period can compare with that of the Australian Labour Party's term of office under the leadership of the Honourable J. E. Duggan. Good Government cannot be hidden because of the break in 1957. Too many people try by that means to hide sound administration.

It was also mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition that, in contrast with the number of wagons built by this Government, 8,821 wagons, most of them of steel construction (partly because there was a shortage of timber owing to the big demand for it for homes) were added to the rolling-stock of the Railway Department by a Labour administration. In addition, 200 bogie louvered cars and 50 steel refrigerated cars were ordered for use on fast freight trains.

On the new railway workshops at Redbank a total of £962,667 was spent to 1956. I doubt whether it is finished even now. New

bulk stores were built at Redbank, and a new wagon repair depot at Wacol costing £108,845 was in operation in April 1953. Areas for development at Rockhampton and Townsville were resumed. A new wagon repair shop costing £80,000 was built at Toowoomba, and plans were prepared for new workshops for the civil engineering branch at Banyo. A sum of £900,000 was spent on new machinery for workshops throughout the State.

Taper pins were produced on a machine costing £9,866, the saving thus effected in one year being £4,320. In 1955 a modern copying lathe costing £10,700 was purchased; it can produce 16 rolled bar axles a day; a cold sawing machine was acquired; elimination of the rack section on the Mt. Morgan line cost £364,130; bridges were strengthened, one over the Elliott River costing £37,582; the new Indooroopilly bridge was built at a cost of £510,048; the Burdekin River bridge was built out of funds that had been conserved and without any assistance from the Commonwealth Government. I have not a note of the amount that it cost, although I know it was a very large figure.

A total of 297 miles of track was re-laid at a cost of £2,368,050, and 94-lb. rail was welded into 200-ft. lengths for 100 miles of that distance. Rails were welded into longer lengths, and elastic spikes were introduced in 1951. Great improvement was effected in mechanical equipment available. I have had those things placed on record before and I have not time to go through them all now. New railway stations were built, at Cairns at a cost of £385,000, and at Charleville at a cost of £76,760. A new carriage shed at Rockhampton cost £116,000.

The Leader of the Opposition told the story about the huts provided for railway workers. Improvements were effected to railway cottages throughout the State. I have the figures with me but not the time in which to give them. I have been told that the Government claims to be the first to introduce hot-water systems to camps.

Mr. Ewan: And refrigerators.

Mr. DAVIES: They were provided by us. Amenities buildings were erected at Woolloongabba, Maryborough and Willowburn, costing £3,553, £14,500, and £3,150, respectively. New camping quarters estimated in 1956 to cost £16,500, were provided for trainmen at Mungallala.

I could go on and on. Ours was a magnificent achievement, and it followed not a period of equally good administration but four or five years of war. What a mighty job the Labour Government did, which I am sure the Minister would be the first to recognise.

I have not dwelt on what the Minister claims has been achieved during the Government's eight years in office, but I do say that

the figures given by the Leader of the Opposition and those that I have recorded show that the Country-Liberal administration has not achieved as much as the Leader of the Opposition achieved in his 10 years of administration.

Hon. G. W. CHALK (Lockyer—Minister for Transport) (9.26 p.m.): There are a few matters to which I wish to reply before the Committee adjourns tonight, and I shall refer first to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition.

He spent most of his time making comparisons between the 10 years before this Government took office and the eight years that it has been in office. I do not deny him that right. He based his comparisons on certain figures.

Mr. DUGGAN: I rise to a point of order. I do not want to interrupt the Minister, but I think I should say for the record that the figures I used this morning were for a comparable period.

Mr. CHALK: I will accept that they were for eight years, although I noted that they were for 10 years. As I said, I concede that the Leader of the Opposition has a right to compare figures for the eight years prior to the Government's taking office with figures for the eight years since it took office; but, if a comparison of those figures is to be made, the cost structure in the relevant years must be taken into consideration.

All I have claimed in this debate is that the Government has been able to absorb the various increases that have taken place and has increased freight rates only once during its eight years in office. My condemnation of the hon. gentleman's administration as Minister for Transport was that, on virtually every occasion on which costs increased, the increase was passed on to the users of the railways. In my opinion, that was one of the reasons why the Railway Department was being priced out of business by its competitors. This Government decided to ensure that there was competition between the road hauliers and the Railway Department and that, with no rises in costs, it could compete successfully.

The Leader of the Opposition referred also to railway development in other Australian States, and he referred particularly to Western Australia. Indeed, I was surprised to hear him mention the building of certain railway lines in Western Australia by private enterprise. The Moura rail link could have been built by private capital if the Government had accepted a proposal that was put to it.

Mr. Hanlon: You did under the original agreement.

Mr. CHALK: That is true, but I believe that the Government has acted correctly in ensuring that the revenue from such a line goes into the coffers of the State instead of into the coffers of a private undertaking. I

make no apology to private enterprise for saying that, because I believe that the State is entitled to any profit flowing from railway operations. The money it receives can then be used for further expansion and improvement of railway facilities in other parts of Queensland.

Mr. O'Donnell: How did you get that past your Liberal Party colleagues?

Mr. CHALK: I got it past both my Liberal Party colleagues and my Country Party colleagues because they have an interest in this State and because they believed, when the feasibility and economics of this scheme were explained to them, that it was fair that the State should be the benefactor and not some private outside party.

Now let us look at some of the other remarks that have been made so far in this debate. The hon. member for Roma made particular reference, firstly to the Railway Department, and secondly to certain activities of road hauliers. It is in relation to his remarks about road hauliers that I desire to reply this evening. The hon. member said that some road hauliers were not passing on the drought-fodder concessions to people for whom they carried goods. All I can point out to this Committee is that it is a requirement of the Transport Department that, for the free issue of a "drought-stricken" permit, the name of the applicant for whom the fodder is being carried must be stated and the application form signed by that party. Having received that particular form, completed by the person for whom the carting is being done, the road haulier then, in submitting his monthly returns, submits that particular docket and then does not make any payment of fees to the Transport Department. But, so that we would be within the ambit of the Act, the Treasury, in exchange for that free permit, makes payment to the Transport Department of the fees involved.

If, by some means the haulier charges the client a greater sum than he would normally have charged had he made the journey and not included any charge for tax, that is a matter between the haulier and the client and there is nothing that I know of that this department can possibly do about it.

But I warn graziers who are operating on this basis to be sure that they have an understanding with the road haulier as to the amount they are going to pay for the haulage of such goods, and, if they have had any previous dealings, they should ensure that the amount being charged is at least the value of the tax less than what they paid on previous occasions.

The hon. member also referred to drought relief for starving stock. The Government is already making a considerable contribution towards drought relief in stricken areas and I want to record here the payments that have been made since June, so that the people of Queensland, and particularly members of this Committee, will know the contribution the

Government has made towards the relief of starving stock during the past five months. In transport fees alone, the Treasury has reimbursed the department to the extent of £29,698. But, in addition, for rail freights, the Treasury has reimbursed the Railway Department to the extent of £474,872. So, in the last five months, this Government has made a contribution of just over £500,000 in assistance in the transportation of fodder and the movement of stock from stricken areas. That is a very large sum in our budgeting but, as a Government, we believe that it is necessary to do it and we are prepared to continue this assistance, whatever the financial position might be, until such time as the drought in the West breaks.

The hon. member said also that fees should not be paid where there are no unloading facilities, or where stock are being taken across country. One of the problems facing the Department of Transport under the new system of unrestricted road transport is that the operators want what I have described on previous occasions as the best of two worlds. They want road transport but unfortunately they do not want to pay for it. The hon. member has suggested that, where there are no loading facilities at a station, no fees should be paid. I want to correct him and those who are raising this matter.

It is not a matter of the provision of facilities for unloading that they are raising. Almost all station yards are provided with facilities to enable stock to be loaded from the railway yard into rail trucks. The Railway Department has provided these facilities. The point that some hauliers want to make in condemnation of the Railway Department is that there are no facilities to unload from transports into railway yards. I must confess that, on the basis that the department has provided facilities in the past, these things have not been made available. I believe that most hauliers who are raising these points are not concerned at all about these facilities, but they want to use the lack of them as an argument to get concessions in taxes to enable them to go past the railways. The levying of fees on cross-country movement is done in what I believe is a reasonable way. If rail can be used for only a small part of the journey, a sliding scale is applied. There is no question of this Government's trying to force this traffic on to the rail. What we have said is that there is freedom of movement. There is a scale of fees to cover the length of the journey which is competitive with rail. Any person can move his stock by road from any part of Queensland as long as he pays fees for that part of the journey which is competitive with rail.

In its scale of fees the Government has allowed substantial reductions on the transport of livestock. Ever since the introduction of the Act, we have given concessions on livestock movement. At the present time, we collect approximately £232,000 a year

on the basis of 1½d. a ton mile, and £33,000 on the basis of 1d. a ton mile, so our total collections are £265,000. If fees were all at the standard rate of 3d. a ton mile, we would be collecting £563,000. Therefore it can be argued that in livestock movement we are making a further concession of at least £300,000.

Exemptions have been given by this Government to the far western areas beyond Charleville and Jericho. As the hon. member mentioned, we have also given other concessions to primary producers.

The hon. member for Kedron raised a matter on which he asked a question this morning. I believe I gave to this Assembly a very fair and full reply to his question. Firstly, we were faced with a problem that had a time factor in it. It is true that the French firm's tender was £600,000 less than the local firm's. On the other hand, we know that, unless this contract is completed by 1 April, 1968—the railway has to be ready by that date—we will lose at the rate of £250,000 a month. As the consultants, and also Sir James Holt—who is the adviser to the Government on matters of this nature—indicated that it would be impossible to complete this project with a delay of less than four months, if we proceeded with the cheaper proposal we knew we would lose at least £1,000,000 in freight during that period.

Mr. Bennett: Why didn't you tell the people all this at the time you accepted it?

Mr. CHALK: I issued a Press statement. I am not in a position to dictate to the Press what it will publish.

Mr. Hanlon: Don't you think the real significance lies in the fact that Thiess-Peabody originally accepted the obligation to build the line? Under your agreement, you have now accepted the job of building it yourself. This same company is now tendering to you on a cost which, against the French company, is very high. That is the significant part.

Mr. CHALK: Let me make it quite clear to the hon. member. I believe he is fair and reasonable. Thiess Bros., whilst having an interest in Thiess-Peabody-Mitsui, have now only a very small interest, and the company that tendered for this was Thiess Bros. of Queensland. Whilst it had a small interest in this, let me make it quite clear—and I am very sincere in this—that Thiess Bros. had nothing to do with the acceptance of this tender. Firstly, the decision was made by the consultants; secondly, it was approved and fully supported by the Co-ordinator-General, and then it was carefully considered by State Cabinet. A decision was made by Cabinet which, in accordance with the section of the Act passed in this Chamber, had then to be conveyed to Thiess-Peabody-Mitsui. They were not consulted in any way until the decision was made by Cabinet.

Mr. Hanlon: They accepted the original obligation, as part of the group, to do the job. You, as a free-enterprise Government, suddenly said, "We will bring in another agreement to let the Government do it." Now you get a tender from them.

Mr. CHALK: The hon. member is trying to reintroduce the question of the two agreements—whether this railway should be built by private enterprise or by the Railway Department.

Mr. Hanlon: That is right. You changed your mind and you are now starting to get higher tenders for the job.

Mr. CHALK: I have explained the matter to the Chamber, and I believe I have given a fair interpretation of the decision that was arrived at. We are anxious to ensure that this contract is completed in accordance with the original planning because it is so important not only to the revenue of this State but also to the public relations that exist between the coal-mining interests of this State and the steel merchants in Japan who are purchasing the coal. I was there and I know the deliberations that took place. I know the undertakings that were given in relation to the provision of coal. If, as a State, we fall down on the undertaking we gave to deliver, it will be the death knell of the coal ventures of this State.

Mr. Hanson: What undertaking did you give for 1968?

Mr. CHALK: That the line will be ready and in operation on 1 April, 1968.

Mr. Hanson: I am not talking about that. What annual rate of loading was undertaken?

Mr. CHALK: The latest figure for 1968 is 3,000,000 tons. On top of that, we will be able to take 2,000,000 tons from Blackwater if it is ready. So, in addition to what we would lose if the new line were not ready, we would lose an equivalent amount because we would not be able to rail the Blackwater coal.

This decision was made sincerely in the interests of this State because we believed that the financial obligations were so great that we could not do otherwise.

The hon. member for Kedron also referred to my reply to his recent question about the co-ordination of road and rail services. I indicated to the hon. gentleman that I believed that the type of bus service operating in his area is such that his area lends itself more than any other in Brisbane to a trial system of co-ordination of rail and road passenger services. I was sincere in the offer I made to him, in reply to his question, that the Railway Department is prepared to enter into a basis of co-ordination from that locality. We cannot guarantee full dieselisation at the moment, but we would move progressively towards it. It cannot be based on the

proposition that we have buses coming down the street and running in competition with the railway into the city. If we are to have co-ordination, we must have the bus services to act as feeders to the railway. We will provide the rail facilities. I asked the hon. gentleman to indicate the wishes of his electors, if he knows them. If he will establish them with me, I will accept his decision. If he is prepared to advocate that we go ahead with it, we will look at it straight away.

The hon. member for Rockhampton North had quite a lot to say about the accounts office of the department. He indicated a falling-off in the staff in several departments, but said that we were increasing in our accounts section. That is true. We have established a data-processing section, where we have installed computers. It was necessary for us to put into that department a certain number of trained personnel from outside to operate those units. But we did not dismiss any of our own employees. We are prepared to carry certain employees in those departments until they reach the age of retirement or until we can find equivalent positions for them in other departments. I believe that that is a sound policy. I do not think that the hon. member for Rockhampton North would want us to do otherwise.

He referred also to the total of fines collected in 1965 as compared with 1964. He pointed out 1,083 people were prosecuted in 1964 and 1,901 in 1965. Although there were 900 more prosecutions, the amount received in fines was only £25,000 as against £41,000 previously. Many of those fined earlier were first offenders, and no doubt for that reason the fines were lighter. The hon. member for South Brisbane will agree that it is the right of the magistrate to decide how much the fines will be. In my own area, one man had 60 prosecutions and, because they were first offences, the fine was about £5. If that number of offences had been committed by major transport companies, possibly the fines would have amounted to thousands of pounds instead of hundreds. That is the explanation of that apparent discrepancy.

The hon. member for Norman referred to road safety. I believe we should do our utmost to encourage oil companies, motor-car companies and all other organisations not to advertise speed as the essence of their product. This is a matter that has been taken up at Commonwealth level. It is not something on which agreement within the State is sufficient, as many of these advertisements come from outside the State. The matter was discussed at the last meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council, but no decision was reached.

Let me point out how difficult it is to reach agreement between the States. I believe that we put forward a reasonable road safety proposal in the compulsory installation of seat belts. The attitude taken

by some of my counterparts in the other States was, "Yes, it is a very good idea, but we are not prepared to do anything about it." That, of course, is their business, and I instance it only to indicate that it is not merely a simple matter of suggesting that something of this nature be done when it has to have Commonwealth-wide application.

I hope we shall be able to convince many of the advertisers that they can advertise their product and indicate its quality without stressing that it will produce terrific speed—and this applies particularly to motor vehicles and petrol.

The hon. member referred also to subsection (10A) of section 30 of the Railways Act, which deals with evidence at appeals. Let me point out to him that the subsection reads—

"The Board shall investigate any and every appeal without regard to legal forms and solemnities, and shall direct themselves by the best evidence they can procure or that is laid before them, whether the same is such evidence as the law would require or admit in other cases or not."

If he can prove to me that it should be revised, I am prepared to look into it. However, it was written into the Act by a Labour Government in 1951, and this Government has accepted it as the basis of appeals and has not altered it. I wish to ensure that the appeal board functions satisfactorily. What is the use of having it if it does not? I know that I have had some arguments with certain people about this, but the duties of the appeal board are laid down in the Act and the Government has not varied them. Because of that, I do not think we can fairly be criticised if on occasions the appeal board does not work as some people think it should.

Mr. Bennett: Why did you remove Mr. O'Connor from the appeal board?

Mr. CHALK: I did not remove Mr. O'Connor from the appeal board.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr CHALK: I did not, and I challenge hon. members opposite to prove that I did.

Mr. Hanlon: You did not weep any tears when he was removed.

Mr. CHALK: I have never had occasion to weep over any man. When Mr. O'Connor's appointment to another position eventuated, naturally another man came along. Let me make it quite clear that I challenge anyone to prove that I had anything to do with the removal of Mr. O'Connor from the appeal board.

At 9.55 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 20 October, progress was reported.

The House adjourned at 9.56 p.m.