

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER 1975

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Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. J. E. H. Houghton, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Reports—

Films Board of Review, for the year 1974-75.

Manager, Golden Casket Art Union, for the year 1974-75.

Minister for Education and Cultural Activities, for the year 1974.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

The Supreme Court Act of 1921.

Justices Act 1886-1975.

Liquor Act 1912-1973.

Collections Act 1966-1973.

Judges' Salaries and Pensions Act 1967-1973.

Real Property Act 1861-1974.

Regulations under—

Group Titles Act 1973.

Building Units Titles Act 1965-1972.

Local Government Act 1936-1975.

Rules and Regulations under the Cemetery Act 1865.

Reports—

Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of South and Central Queensland, for the year 1974-75.

Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of North Queensland, for the year 1974-75.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**PAYMENT OF PENSION INCREASES**

Hon. J. D. HERBERT (Sherwood—Minister for Community and Welfare Services and Minister for Sport) (11.5 a.m.): This morning's "Courier-Mail" carries a report from Canberra in which the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Hayden, calls for my dismissal from Cabinet, claiming that I have misled State Parliament.

I reject this claim categorically. With typical Hayden duplicity, Mr. Hayden has twisted my words to this House. He claimed that I had stated that the Federal Government had ordered the State Welfare Department not to pay pension increases. Reference to Hansard makes it quite plain that the word I used was "advised", and this is precisely what happened.

After the Federal socialists refused the Opposition request to pass the pension increases through the House, the Federal public servants in Brisbane—alive to their responsibility—advised my officers that the

extra money promised may not be forthcoming. They were fulfilling their duty, and I have no intention of supplying their names for Mr. Hayden to vent his spleen upon them. When this information was transmitted to me, I contacted the State Treasurer, Sir Gordon Chalk, and he agreed that Queensland would pay the increase in allowance irrespective of the Commonwealth attitude. I understand that the Canberra socialists have now bowed to the Opposition demand and put the legislation through for the increase in pensions.

This desperate stalling by the socialists in Canberra is now being supported in Queensland by advertisements authorised by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Tom Burns. This shocking attempt to frighten the old and the sick deserves the complete condemnation of this House. Mr. Burns knows, or should know, that the money for pensions is not affected by the current situation in Canberra. If his bosses in Canberra continue to flout the Constitution by refusing to go to the people, there could ultimately be a situation where the public servants issuing the pensions may not be paid. That responsibility would have to rest with the Labor Party. All we ask is the opportunity to boot them out at an election when every citizen will have his say.

As a further example of Mr. Hayden's lack of responsibility as a Federal Minister, I table a copy of a letter and envelope handed to me by one of his constituents. This letter is blatant political propaganda. It is printed on Commonwealth paper and is in a Commonwealth envelope, with postage paid from Canberra. It would interest the taxpayers of Queensland to know that they are financing a mammoth postal campaign by the Federal Treasurer in an effort to bolster up his own flagging political stocks in his electorate. Again, because his vindictive nature is very well known, I have blacked out the names and addresses on the envelope.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable members, as questions and answers finish at midday, it is my intention to proceed with formal Government business before taking questions and answers until such time as the Estimates are concluded.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL**INITIATION**

Hon. L. R. EDWARDS (Ipswich—Minister for Health): 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 Health Act 1937-1974 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. INQUIRY INTO BREAD INDUSTRY

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Has he seen the report in "The Courier-Mail" of 8 August, wherein a Gold Coast Bakery executive urged a State inquiry into the bread industry?

(2) Are the small to medium-sized producers trading unprofitably and is the local baker becoming a thing of the past?

(3) As the Government said in the last election campaign that it would help the small businessman, what proposals has he made to help the local bakers in their fight against the large-group manufacturers of bread?

(4) In view of the announcement that bread is to rise again for the third time this year, will he delay this increase until the recommendations of the Consumer Affairs Council, arising from its previous investigation into the bread industry, are implemented, especially as they pertain to the shocking waste of bread and over-production?

Answer:—

(1 to 4) Problems confronting the bread industry—or any industry affected by escalating costs flowing, in the main, from national economic mismanagement—are, of course, of deep concern to a Government dedicated to the encouragement of free enterprise. The honourable member refers to a report on the bread industry by the Consumer Affairs Council in 1973 and, through some devious reasoning, appears to think this document could be the panacea for all the industry's ills. I wish it were all so simple. The report was prepared purely for the Government's information. It is normal practice to call for a cross-section of opinion which may be useful within the context of a Government's wider consideration of the problem as a whole. There is of course no obligation to publish the contents of reports such as these. So I propose to answer the honourable member's question by outlining customer habits, production costs, customer supply, national conglomerates, small manufacturers and price control. Firstly, there are many varieties of bread on the market and it is obvious that a preponderance of people are prepared to pay a commensurate cost for the wrapped and sliced types. Secondly, costs of production continue to rise in all aspects from the producer of wheat to the delivery man. Thirdly, there is the problem of over or under-supply to customer outlets and that of returns. It is academic nonsense to suggest it is possible to equate demand with supply. This has been attempted in South Australia, where bread returns are prohibited and increased costs have resulted. When a retail outlet

experiences an unanticipated demand, repeat deliveries are required. When the shop-keeper finds a surplus of supplies on his hands because of lack of customer demand, he has to bear the loss. Consequently he is cautious in his ordering and this in turn creates a problem for the housewife who finds there is no bread available and loses goodwill for the shop-keeper. It is highly significant that in South Australia, where rigid price control exists, the recommended retail shop price of a 900 g loaf of unwrapped standard bread in Adelaide is 4c more than in Brisbane and a sliced and wrapped loaf is 2c more. The same disparity of 2c is common virtually to all lines of bread. Fourthly, it is apparent that the lack of profitability of small bakers in this State is the direct result of the introduction of the Prices Justification Tribunal. As I said, there is no price control operating in this State and bakers in normal times are able to cover their costs as well as realising a necessary profit margin. Since the introduction of the Prices Justification Tribunal, the conglomerates have been obliged to seek approval for an increase in their prices. Because of product diversification, the big companies are better situated to last out the time lag between application to pass on increased costs and decision. The small man has fewer lines and cannot offset this time lag. However, whilst he is not subject to such controls and in order to remain competitive, he must match his prices with those of the conglomerates. Finally, for the honourable member to claim we are responsive to the lobby of the multi-nationals, is pure political claptrap.

2. MILLAQUIN SUGAR COMPANY LTD. PROFIT STATEMENTS

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) What were the findings of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs when the Brisbane Stock Exchange referred the matter of the variance in Millaquin Sugar Company Ltd. profit statements to the commissioner in September 1974?

(2) Have any steps been taken to ensure that investors are adequately protected from conflicting statements of this nature in the future?

Answers:—

(1) The matters referred by the Brisbane Stock Exchange to the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs in September 1974 concerning profit statements by the Millaquin Sugar Co. Ltd. were investigated by inspectors from that office and included direct inquiry and explanations from the executive director and the auditor of that company. Despite the conclusion that the two statements issued within days of each other by the

company showed a variation in over-all results in excess of \$1 million and that the directors could have given, or should have been in a position to give, a more accurate statement of the estimated profit results of the company in the first instance, it was the finding of the Office of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs that a successful prosecution for an apparent breach of section 94 of the Securities Industry Act 1971 could not be sustained.

(2) The Securities Industry Bill at present before this House has provided for amendments and expansion of the provisions with respect to false and misleading statements likely to induce a sale or purchase of securities or to have the effect of raising or lowering the market price of securities. Clause 110 of that Bill provides that, in addition to the circumstances where a person makes a statement or disseminates information and knows or ought reasonably to have known that the statement or information is false or misleading in a material particular, there shall be a prohibition where such person does not care whether the statement or information is true or false. It is felt that this provision will give greater opportunity for adequate steps to be taken in the event of statements being made in cases akin to the subject matter of this question.

3. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION POLICY

Mr. Wright, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

With reference to the motion carried last week-end by the Queensland Student Teachers' Union, which was in agreement with the attitude of the Australian Council of State School Organisations, criticising the education policy of the Commonwealth Liberal-Country Party Opposition, to allocate to the parents of primary and secondary school students vouchers equivalent to the cost of education at a Government school as being no more than a disguised form of per-capita grant which will encourage elitism and entrench poverty, will he clearly state where his Government stands on the issue?

Answer:—

The position of the State Government in relation to aid to non-Government schools is clear. We are committed to per-capita support as the most equitable means of allocating funds to schools. A voucher system is a particular variant of that means of support which we have not, to date, considered using.

4. EUROPEAN CARP

Mr. Neal, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Islanders Advancement and Fisheries—

(1) As there have been local reports to the effect that fish known as "European Carp" have been caught in the Balonne-Culgoa River system in the Dirranbandi area, has he any knowledge of these reports and, if not, will he check their accuracy?

(2) Do these fish present any danger to the survival of ordinary freshwater species in those streams?

(3) How did this species of fish get into Australia and for what reason was it introduced?

(4) Can the flesh of the fish be utilised for human consumption?

Answers:—

(1) In view of the advice received, I am having urgent steps taken to ascertain the over-all position and will take whatever remedial measures are possible.

(2) European carp appear to affect the survival of Australian native freshwater species of fish in those localities where carp have become established.

(3) It is understood that European carp were brought into Victoria by a resident of that State in the mistaken belief that they would provide a useful source of pond-cultured fish.

(4) Carp is an edible species. In fact, the September 1975 issue of the journal "Australian Fisheries" contains an article setting out ways of preparing this fish for the table.

5. TWO-PASSENGER ELECTRIC "CITE-CAR"

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Is he aware of a two-passenger car, known as a "cite-car", which is noiseless, pollution free and can be plugged into an electric power point and, if so, is he aware that a Sydney firm has brought two of the cars to Australia from the U.S.A.?

(2) As the car is comparatively cheap and as it will attract nation-wide interest, has any approach been made to have a demonstration model sent to Queensland for public viewing and departmental assessment?

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I am not specifically aware of this particular car and presume the honourable member missed the announcement in the news media earlier this week of the demonstration of a unit, similar in description to the one to which he refers, in Brisbane at the moment. To my knowledge, this is not the first of such models to be displayed in Queensland. A comprehensive report on electric cars has been prepared by the Bureau of Transport Economics and an

officer of the Queensland Department of Transport was one of 124 delegates from throughout Australia at an Electric Car Conference held in Canberra earlier this year. It is, of course, a matter for the trade to present these cars to give the public the opportunity of assessing them. If the honourable member is fortunate enough to test drive an electric car, I would be pleased to have the benefit of his observations.

6. **GLADSTONE POWER STATION AND COMALCO PTY. LTD.**

Mr. Hanson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines and Energy—

(1) What is the proposed final capacity of the Gladstone Power Station and what is the proposed commissioning date?

(2) What is the present commitment of Comalco Pty. Ltd. in regard to this power station and has there been any recent variation in its request for future supply?

(3) Have there been any requests from other industrial concerns for power requirements and, if so, will he supply details?

Answers:—

(1) The final capacity of the Gladstone Power Station will be 1,650 MW and it is expected to be fully operational in 1984.

(2) Comalco has exercised its first option for an 80 MW block of power to be taken not earlier than 1977. That indicates a firm commitment by Comalco to build an aluminium smelter at Gladstone. However, the effects of heavy inflation and falling demand for aluminium in overseas markets have had to be examined by Comalco and the Government as they affect the operation of the power option agreement. These factors have introduced uncertainty about the date of actual start-up and rate of subsequent expansion of the smelter.

(3) Yes, there have been inquiries from other organisations about locating possible power-intensive industries in Queensland. Details of these inquiries are confidential.

7. **NON-PAYMENT AND SHORTAGE OF APPRENTICES**

Mr. Simpson, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs—

(1) Did he read the article in the "Telegraph" of 21 October relating to the non-payment of apprentices and the likelihood of a future shortage of apprentices?

(2) Is there any truth in the allegations, and which Government, State or Commonwealth, is involved in this complaint?

Answers:—

(1) I read the article referred to by the honourable member.

(2) The Commonwealth Department of Labor and Immigration is responsible for the payment of these subsidies under the National Apprenticeship Assistance System. However, my officers in the Apprenticeship Office are responsible for checking details of the claims for the subsidies against their records. I am informed that the claims from Mr. Meiers of Meirson Auto Electrical and Spring Engines for the March and June quarters were only received on 10 September 1975 and were processed for payment on 10 October 1975. The claim for the September quarter was received on 8 October 1975 and was also processed for payment on 10 October 1975. Vouchers have been forwarded to the Commonwealth Government Treasury Office, Brisbane, for payment. I am further informed that payment will be made on all claims within a few days. The introduction of these subsidies some years ago was welcomed by employers generally and they have undoubtedly been of assistance towards stabilising the intake of apprentices, particularly in recent months. However, it will be recalled I recently stated that while the assistance given to employers by the payment of the present subsidies in relation to first-year apprentices is welcomed by them, a strong case exists for the extension of the subsidy principle in respect of apprentices in view of the unfair burden presently placed on industry in the training of young persons to become skilled tradesmen.

8. **WYNNUM POLICE STATION STRENGTH; TRAFFIC DETACHMENT**

Mr. Lamond, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Police—

Will he consider using some of the additional money to be made available to his department by way of the Budget to increase the strength of the Wynnum Police Station and to transfer a traffic detachment to this station, as requested by me earlier this year?

Answer:—

The matter of stationing additional police at Wynnum will be taken into consideration with the over-all requirements of the State when additional police are recruited and trained.

9. **PORT OF BRISBANE STUDIES**

Mr. Lamond, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Tourism and Marine Services—

(1) Have the studies been completed by the consultants employed by the Department of Marine Services to investigate the proposed port of Brisbane, together with roads, industry and other factors associated with the port affecting the surrounding areas?

(2) If the studies have not yet been completed, when will they be?

Answers:—

- (1) The studies are still being carried out.
- (2) It is anticipated that the studies will be completed in January 1976.

10. RAILWAY STATIONS AND SERVICE,
WYNNUM, MANLY AND LOTA

Mr. Lamond, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

Will he consider using some of the funds allocated in the Budget to his department to upgrade the railway stations at Wynnum, Manly and Lota and improve the train schedule in accordance with my submissions to him earlier this year?

Answer:—

I would refer the honourable member to the reply which I gave him in this House on 21 August, and which related to his earlier representations for the provision of car-parking facilities at Wynnum, Manly and Lota. There has been no change in the position obtaining. Finance allocated to the Railway Department in terms of the recent State Budget is otherwise fully committed. As the honourable member was also previously advised, all available carriage stock suitable for suburban passenger train traffic is being utilised to the maximum extent possible on both north and south-side peak services. The completion of the cross-river link and the electrification of train services will make possible the provision of more frequent services during peak hours.

11. UNREASONABLE DEMANDS BY
LANDLORDS

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

Is he aware that some unscrupulous landlords in Townsville, before renting a house to a reputable tenant, in addition to requiring the outrageous bond which seems to be the ordinary thing today and which places the landlord under no obligation whatever to keep the house in reasonable repair, while imposing tyrannical conditions on the tenant, refuse to lend the tenant a lawn-mower and insist that the tenant buy a mower to keep the grass in the yard cut or use scissors to cut it? If so, is this sort of thing supported by the law and, if not, what redress has a decent tenant against this type of landlord?

Answer:—

I am not aware of any such requirement by landlords in Townsville. If such an attitude did exist in any particular case, then the person concerned should seek his own legal advice.

12 and 13. CONDITIONS AT
STUART SCHOOL

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) As the elements over the years have so affected the external walls of the Stuart School that they resemble in appearance an old cattle dog with a bad attack of mange, can something be done to paint the walls?

(2) When was the furniture at this school manufactured, what cases or timber was utilised in the construction of it and when will it be brought even somewhere near the standard of that supplied to other schools?

(3) When will all the defects, structural and otherwise, which were reported by the principal several months ago, be considered for attention?

(4) Has he seen reports of the serious movement of the staff room away from the main building and, if so, what steps are being taken to prevent a serious accident?

Answers:—

(1 to 3) The effects of the Canberra-generated inflation have eroded the funds available for the maintenance of this State's public buildings, including school buildings. It is not possible to identify the date of manufacture of this school's furniture, and the position regarding its replacement falls into the same category of lack of funds. Reports and estimates of cost have been furnished by my departmental officers and it is proposed to undertake the repairs, painting and improvements and the supply of new furniture progressively, commencing later in the current financial year.

(4) There are no reports in my Department of Works indicating that a serious position exists in relation to the staffroom structure. I am advised that there is a small gap in the staffroom ceiling, which has been caused mainly by the shrinkage of the cornice moulding. There is no obvious movement of the buildings, and there is no danger of the roof sheeting falling. Repair work will be undertaken later in the current financial year, together with the other maintenance work.

Mr. Aikens, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities—

(1) Have strong representations been made departmentally for an enlarged and improved library at the Stuart School and, if so, in view of the urgent need for this, when will it eventuate?

(2) On his next weekly trip to Ayr from or to the Townsville aerodrome, will he arrange to stop over at the Stuart School en route to see the conditions under which teachers are required to work and pupils learn?

Answers:—

(1) The principal has made application for increased library accommodation and this has been noted for future planning. A programme of up-grading school libraries throughout the State is proceeding. No indication can be given when funds can be made available for the work at this school.

(2) I will contact the honourable member with a view to arranging a visit to the school early next month.

REDCLIFFE COURT CRIMINAL CASES

Mr. Frawley asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) Will he provide the House with a list of all cases other than civil heard by the Redcliffe Court during September 1975?

(2) Will he provide complete details of charges laid in each case and, if the list is comprehensive, will he table it?

(Originally asked on 8 October 1975)

Answer:—

(1 and 2) I table a list of all cases other than civil cases heard by the Redcliffe Magistrates Court during September 1975, as requested by the honourable member on 8 October last.

Whereupon the honourable gentleman laid the paper on the table.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

WYNNUM WEST SCHOOL TOILETS

Mr. BURNS: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Further to my phone call to his office this morning about the possibility of industrial action at the Wynnum West School as a result of health problems that have developed in relation to the new and old toilets, can he arrange for an urgent inspection of these toilets and action to allay the public concern?

Mr. LEE: As the honourable member well knows, as a result of a deputation to my colleague the Minister for Police—the former Minister for Works and Housing—he obtained a new toilet block at the school costing \$32,000. I believe that the children are now using the new toilet block and not the old one. However, I will make the necessary arrangements for an inspection.

REFUSAL BY PRIME MINISTER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON THE "LOANS AFFAIR"

Mr. GYGAR: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that this morning in the Commonwealth Parliament Prime Minister Whitlam stated that he would refuse to answer any future questions on any subject put to him by Mr. Lynch, the Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition, and, further, would refuse to answer any questions put to him by Mr. Fraser which were in any way related

to the infamous "loans affair?" How does this coincide with Mr. Whitlam's stated policy of open government and is this the death-knell of ministerial accountability in Australia?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is a very serious development indeed in the Commonwealth Parliament. From time to time the Prime Minister has promised open government and has then broken that promise, as he has broken countless other promises, and misrepresented the true position. There is no such thing as open government in Canberra. His action today is a further indication of the lengths to which he is prepared to go in an endeavour to protect himself and the Government. No doubt this is his reason for refusing to answer, because in recent days he has come very close to admitting that he was aware of what took place after 20 May in relation to what is known as the "loans affair". He said, "No doubt I have had conversations from day to day with Mr. Connor about a number of things", partly admitting that he had obviously been speaking about this subject, and there is no doubt in the minds of the people of Australia that as Prime Minister he would have known that conversations were going on and that the loan negotiations were continuing.

It is quite clear that this latest development is one of the methods by which he hopes to stave off the evil day when the truth becomes known that he is just as much implicated as the man he recently sacked, Mr. Connor. I would say that the people of Australia believe that the Prime Minister knew and that he is just as much implicated in this deception of Parliament as any of his other Ministers. If he is not, why would he now stifle questions about the matter from the members named by the honourable member?

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION AND THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. GYGAR: I ask the Premier: Is he aware of the statement by the Leader of the Opposition this morning on the radio programme "A.M." that he had not been in touch with the Prime Minister during the current crisis, and that the Prime Minister had not contacted him? Does this indicate that Mr. Whitlam considers Mr. Burns to be irrelevant, insignificant and ineffectual, a sentiment shared by the vast majority of Queenslanders?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: Obviously neither the Prime Minister nor Mr. Burns would get in touch with the other, because the last time they did so the results were disastrous. Honourable members can see that from the numbers in the Opposition. I do not blame the honourable member any more than I blame the Prime Minister—they are equally guilty.

VISITS OF SCHOOL-CHILDREN TO
PARLIAMENT; COPIES OF "HANSARD" FOR
SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Mr. HARTWIG: I draw the attention of not only the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities but also all honourable members to the fact that in the gallery today are 80 pupils from outlying schools in the Callide electorate—namely, Keppel Sands, Coowonga, Cawarral, Mt. Chalmers, and Joskeleigh—who are here with their teachers, at a cost of about \$2,000, and about 60 of them have never visited Brisbane before. As the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities has travelled extensively throughout the State of Queensland, will he indicate to the House the part that education is playing in furthering school-children's knowledge of Parliament? Would it be possible for both primary and secondary school libraries to receive copies of "Hansard"?

Mr. BIRD: I am very pleased that the honourable member has drawn it to my attention that children from schools in the Callide electorate are in the gallery of this Chamber today. I cannot praise too highly honourable members and school-teachers who arrange visits to Brisbane and to Parliament for children from outlying areas. Arrangements have been made for children attending schools in my electorate to see the capital city of the State and also to see this very important part of the system of government in Queensland and in Australia. It is to be hoped that the practice of arranging such visits will continue.

As to having copies of "Hansard" in school libraries—possibly it is a matter for individual members to arrange for copies of "Hansard" to be sent to schools. I should also bring to the attention of honourable members and to those who are now present in the gallery that arrangements are presently being made for the filming of the proceedings of Parliament so that they can be shown to children attending schools in country areas who normally would not have the opportunity to see parliamentary proceedings at first hand and to become aware of the way in which business is conducted.

AVAILABILITY OF BUSINESS PAPER AND
NOTICES OF QUESTIONS IN PUBLIC GALLERY

Mr. BYRNE: I ask the Minister for Education and Cultural Activities: In view of his expressed concern about school-children in the public gallery, will he consult with Mr. Speaker, or take whatever other steps are necessary, to ensure that school-children and other interested visitors in the public gallery are supplied with copies of the Business Paper and Notices of Questions for the day? School-children see honourable members rise and say, "Mr. Speaker, question No. so-and-so.", but they have no idea what the question is all about.

Mr. BIRD: I have often wondered about the small number of Business Papers distributed in the public gallery. I realise that

it would be very difficult to determine how many copies would be required each day. However, the honourable member has my assurance that I will discuss the matter with you, Mr. Speaker.

DELAY IN MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Mr. GOLEBY: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads: Is he aware of the delay in renewing motor vehicle registrations? What is the cause of the delay and when can we expect conditions to improve to normal to save the present embarrassing situation?

Mr. HINZE: I made a public statement last week when I inspected the new computer that has been installed in the Main Roads office. The time lag has been taken up completely. Although there was a delay of something like 15 weeks, it has been overcome completely. It is intended in the near future to diversify the office throughout the State and establish issuing offices at places like Toowoomba, Townsville and Ipswich.

EXCLUSION OF MEDICAL COSTS FROM
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Mr. AKERS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General: Is he aware that the Prime Minister has just released figures for the Consumer Price Index indicating an inflationary increase of 3.2 per cent? Is it not true that that figure does not include medical costs now included under Medibank? Would it therefore be true to say that the Commonwealth Government has deliberately excluded medical costs, firstly to hide their massive escalation since the introduction of Medibank and, secondly, to try to hoodwink the community by attempting to give the impression that there is only a slight increase in the inflationary spiral this quarter whereas the real inflationary increase would be about 8 per cent, indicating an annual rate of about 24 per cent?

Mr. KNOX: As was expected, the Prime Minister made a statement today about the Consumer Price Index. He tried to lean very heavily on the claim that over the last quarter it has increased only slightly, in an endeavour to suggest that we have turned the corner on inflation. Inflation, as described by the Prime Minister in the last 12 months or so, has been a circle, a rectangle, an octagon and all sorts of other shapes. We have turned so many corners that we are lost. The fact of the matter is that the inflation rate in Australia is the fifth highest of countries with economies similar to our own.

Mr. Houston: It's reducing.

Mr. KNOX: Reducing! The honourable member for Bulimba cannot convince the people outside that it is reducing. He cannot convince the housewives and others who

have to buy day-to-day goods that it is reducing. For some time a juggling of figures has taken place, and the latest juggling has been to exclude medical costs from the C.P.I. That does not deceive anybody at all in the community. When the housewife each week has to pay increased amounts of money to provide the same amount of food for her family, she knows what inflation is all about, and the Labor Party can forget all about the figures.

In conclusion, it is a fact that inflation in this country is running at far too high a rate, and nothing has been done to arrest it; but the Government attempts to mislead the people by juggling with figures.

ARCHITECTURAL AWARD TO MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

Mr. DOUMANY: I ask the Minister for Works and Housing: Will he publicly commend the honourable member for Pine Rivers on his recent achievement in winning the "Sunday Mail" House of the Week award for architectural design, which is further proof of the practical concern of Government members for housing?

Mr. LEE: I would have preferred the question to be placed on notice, because there are possibly quite a number of things that I could then have said that I cannot recall at such short notice. I would, however, like to say publicly that it is good to see a former Works Department architect, who is now a member of Parliament—

Mr. Aikens: Was he any good?

Mr. LEE: Very good indeed. Through his encouragement as a member of my committee, no doubt it will not be long before the Queensland Housing Commission enters the competition for the House of the Week award, and I am sure that it will win.

STATEMENT BY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION ON PREMIER'S USE OF GOVERNMENT AIRCRAFT

Mr. HALES: I ask the Premier: Is he aware that the Leader of the Opposition, during an interview last night on the A.B.C.'s "P.M." programme, made allegations that the Premier or his family used the Government aircraft for shopping trips?

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I did not hear the broadcast, but it has been drawn to my attention that last night and again this morning the Leader of the Opposition, true to form, told a number of lies, just as he tells lies on other occasions.

Mr. BURNS: I rise to a point of order. I thought that "lies" was an unparliamentary term. I ask that it be withdrawn. I do not tell lies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition objects to the word "lies". I ask the Premier to substitute the word "untruths".

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: The things said by the Leader of the Opposition are completely untrue. In so many instances today the Labor organisation, both Federal and State, resorts to telling untruths. For instance, their advertisement today in which it is said that pensioners will not be paid is completely untrue, and the Leader of the Opposition ought to know that it is untrue. If he does not know what he is talking about in some of his remarks, which is quite obvious, he should not make them. He should certainly not make them so as to imply that they carry the weight of the A.L.P. or his own position. It is completely untrue that my wife comes to Brisbane in the Government aircraft to shop.

Mr. Burns: I never mentioned your wife's name.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: I do not come down in the aircraft to shop, and it is completely wrong to imply that any member of my family uses it in that way. It is also utterly untrue to suggest that I use the aircraft as a toy to take my friends on trips. Cabinet has a very strict rule on travel in the Government aircraft.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I remind honourable members on my left of my previous warning that any member who persistently interjects whilst a Minister is on his feet will be dealt with under Standing Order 123A.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: There are many things that I could say about the Leader of the Opposition. I have received reports, for instance, of the way in which he uses his official car.

Mr. Knox: They are disgraceful.

Mr. BJELKE-PETERSEN: They are disgraceful.

What the Leader of the Opposition has said about the Government aircraft is completely and utterly wrong. He has free air travel wherever he wants to go, and a free rail pass. He has no ministerial responsibilities, so he has plenty of time to get on planes. What I object to most is his statement about the use of the aircraft for posting letters. That is typical of what the Leader of the Opposition says from time to time. There might be an appropriate way of dealing with the Leader of the Opposition in these matters to pull him into gear.

PRIVILEGE

NEWSPAPER REFERENCES TO PARLIAMENTARY BAR AND REFRESHMENT ROOM

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (12 noon): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Has your attention been drawn to the frequent Press references, mostly in a derogatory or derisory manner, of the prices charged to members of this House for food and drink from the Refreshment

Room, and, if so, could it be publicised that all Press representatives and those from the media in general, and assorted visitors, also partake of these facilities at the same prices as those charged to members? In particular, Mr. Speaker, could public mention be made of what appeared to be a Bacchanalian orgy on the balcony yesterday for pressmen hosted by the Leader of the Opposition and paid for at the usual prices? Will the Press headline this convivial gathering as a group of spongers—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BURNS: I rise to a point of order. I do not mind the honourable member defending the members of this House, but I was not on the balcony yesterday afternoon, and I never organise functions such as he normally conducts for two pressmen from the gallery every morning at morning tea.

Mr. AIKENS: He was in such a state that he didn't know where he was yesterday.

Mr. BURNS: I asked for a withdrawal of that. An ex-drunk who laid in the gutters of Townsville and bludged on his mates should never be talking about other people as far as drink is concerned.

Mr. AIKENS: I want to finish this—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for Townsville South to accept the denial of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. AIKENS: I will accept the denial that he hosted a group of pressman on the balcony. Everybody else must be blind, deaf and dumb, because everybody else saw him, and if he said he had to pay extra for it I would like to know what the prices were.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. AIKENS: But this is not the point. We will forget about him for the moment. He is hardly worth our notice, anyway. Will the Press headline this convivial gathering as a group of spongers on the public purse, as they frequently portray honourable members who avail themselves of the services of the bar and the Refreshment Room? I think it is about time the public were told that the members of the Press who frequently complain about us and criticise us are in on it themselves.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I advise the honourable member that I shall inquire into the matter he has raised.

Mr. AIKENS: Publish a photograph of the Leader of the Opposition getting away from the House afterwards.

SUPPLY

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— FIRST AND SECOND ALLOTTED DAYS

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. W. D. Hewitt, Chatsworth, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1975-76

RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT

RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to inform honourable 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).

For the information of honourable 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.

Before calling on the Minister for Transport, I advise honourable members that, following the usual custom, the Transport Estimates will be taken in conjunction with the Railways Estimates and therefore I propose to allow a full discussion on the administrative activities of both departments under the Vote General Establishment—Railways.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (12.5 p.m.): I move—

“That \$48,192,400 be granted for General Establishment—Railways.”

Queensland Government Railway achievements in the realm of increasing business are most impressive, even spectacular, but the problems of mounting costs are similar to those experienced in other large businesses and industries, particularly those like the railways where a high labour content is involved in their operations. I will speak at greater length on both these aspects of the Queensland Government Railways operations.

Honourable members are aware of the change in policy associated with road transport some 12 years ago which introduced an open road policy and offered a challenge to the railways to meet the resultant increased competition from that sector. The railways met this challenge with a programme of dieselisation, modernisation of rolling-stock and facilities, and upgrading of the permanent way, which has led to the running of faster freight trains carrying far heavier loads than previously. The success of these efforts has been recorded in annual reports of the Commissioner for Railways for the past 12 years. In each of these years, tonnages of freight have attained record proportions.

There has been an upsurge in passenger travel, mostly on the Brisbane suburban system; but in the past two years there has been an increase in long-distance train travel, thereby arresting a trend for declining long-distance train travel which had continued

for many years and was attributable to competition from other forms of transport, and particularly the privately-owned motor vehicle.

As will have been observed from a perusal of the commissioner's report for the 1974-75 financial year, the improvement in the railway performance has been maintained. New records were established, with revenue earnings of \$183,686,622 and the haulage of 30,208,127 tonnes of goods and livestock. These figures were \$33,843,046 and 4,807,189 tonnes higher than the previous records, which were established a year earlier.

To emphasise the tremendous increase in rail haulages, I contrast the past year's figures of over 30,000,000 tonnes of freight with the haulage of 9,300,000 tonnes just 10 years ago, in 1964-65. This more than threefold increase is most gratifying and far outstrips that of any other Government railway system in Australia.

The tonnage handled and the revenue earned by the Queensland Government Railways is now exceeded only by New South Wales, and in the former, we should be the undisputed leader next year.

Much of the increase is attributable to mineral haulages in Central and North Queensland, and these will continue to increase over the next few years at least, under existing contracts. If the restraining hand of the recently sacked Federal Minister for Minerals and Energy had been lifted earlier, there would have certainly been a new upsurge of mining ventures which would have required rail haulages of many more millions of tonnes a year.

I feel that the Queensland Government Railways can claim some of the credit for the success of these giant mining projects, which are today providing highly paid jobs for thousands of Queenslanders, as well as assisting the State through overseas earnings and royalties on their products. Efficient, economic haulage of minerals and mining products to coastal outlets is essential for these projects to prosper, and the railways have been able to make an important contribution in this respect.

The foregoing remarks outline a bright picture of rail progress in this State, but unfortunately, in today's era of terrific inflationary pressures, we have the anomalous situation of record haulages and revenue earnings on the one side and increasing deficits on the other.

It is true that similar circumstances are being faced by other businesses and industries, but in all, or nearly all, cases the cost increases are being passed on to the public. This has not, until the recent Budget, been the case with the Railway Department, which has held its freight rates at the 1966 level for the past nine years—a period, as honourable members would know, that has been marked by terrific cost increases, particularly in salaries and wages.

Owing to the benefits flowing from dieselisation, improved technologies and various economies in operation, the Railway Department had until two years ago contained the cost increases and returned a working profit for the 10 years to 1973. With the saturation point having been attained so far as economies through dieselisation are concerned, the department has in the past two years been hit by cost increases which have been staggering in their effect.

In the 1973-74 financial year, salaries and wages increased by \$27,072,207 over the previous year, and the increases for the 1974-75 year were even higher at \$52,004,651, and other costs have also risen substantially during this period. While the revenue earnings by the department for the two years under review increased by \$12,098,981 and \$33,843,046 respectively, they obviously failed to keep pace with the higher costs.

As the honourable the Treasurer said in announcing increased rail fares and freights in his Budget address:

"It is well to note that since the last rail freight increase in 1966 average weekly earnings, which reflect directly on railway costs, have increased by 184 per cent".

It is also worthy of note that the aggregate of basic wage and award increases paid to railway employees during this Government's term of office is \$128,364,191.

There is no question that the policy of holding rail freight charges at the 1966 level up until now must have exercised a stabilising influence on the general cost structure of many industries, with a consequential beneficial flow-on to the public of Queensland generally.

The Queensland railway system was completely dieselised in late 1969, and to cope with the increasing haulages the locomotive fleet has been increased to 489 units. This is still only a little more than half the number of steam locomotives that were formerly in traffic, but the diesels are hauling nearly four times as much freight.

Since this Government took office, we have spent more than \$87,500,000 on new locomotives. The more powerful diesels now being used are known as "second generation" locomotives and have twice the power of the early units. These new locomotives are used mostly in multiple to haul long mineral trains, also other heavy freight loads over long distances. This type of train operation has the dual advantage of moving huge quantities of freight and reducing congestion on the busier sections of single-track railway line.

Honourable members will have noted that since last April the railways have been running locotrol coal trains on the Goonyella line in Central Queensland, comprising six locomotives and 148 wagons for a gross load of 10,770 tonnes, including 3,600 tonnes

of coal. These are by far the longest trains ever run in this State, and are among the longest being run on a 1.06 metre gauge railway system anywhere in the world. Long trains are also being run in other areas of the State system. Four locomotives are being used at the head of coal trains running from the Blackwater area to Gladstone; three and four locomotives are being used on trains hauling nickel ore on the Greenvale line in North Queensland; three locomotive trains are hauling coal from Moura to Gladstone; and two and three locomotive trains are hauling mineral products from Mt. Isa to Townsville and coal from Collinsville to Mt. Isa. Two locomotive trains are being used as required to haul grain, livestock and general goods.

Paralleling the diesel change-over has been the evolution of the railway wagon fleet, which has resulted in the replacement of many small four-wheel wagons built of timber by high capacity steel and aluminium bogie wagons equipped with automatic couplers for use in express freight services. My Government's expenditure in this area exceeds \$83,400,000. These wagons range to 79 tonnes on the Greenvale line, 71 tonnes gross on the Goonyella line and to 63 tonnes gross for general freight haulages over much of the State system.

Other facets of the modernisation programme have been improved freight-handling facilities, power signalling with central traffic control systems on lines carrying heavy mineral and other traffic, and an extensive building programme.

The opening for traffic of 308 kilometres of line during the year ended 30 June last has enabled the Queensland system to regain the distinction of having the longest length of track among the Australian Government railway systems. There is now 9,780 kilometres of track open in Queensland, 9,754 kilometres in New South Wales, 6,657 kilometres in Victoria, 6,192 in Western Australia and 3,884 in South Australia.

Three new lines have been built within the past 10 years to meet the requirements of the mineral traffic. These are the 180 kilometre Moura short line opened in 1968, the 200 kilometre Goonyella line opened in 1971 with subsequent extensions to Peak Downs and Saraji mines, and the 218 kilometre Greenvale line opened in 1974.

In addition, major rehabilitation projects have been carried out on the 965 kilometre Townsville-Mt. Isa line and the 300 kilometre Blackwater-Gladstone line. Currently under construction is a 68 kilometre branch line, which will link the vast phosphate rock deposits south of Duchess to the Great Northern Line, enabling direct rail haulage to Townsville.

Much of the finance for these projects, together with the provision of powerful, new locomotives and high-capacity wagons, has

been provided by the mining companies concerned. While minerals have a priority on these new and upgraded lines, the lines are available, and indeed are being extensively used, for the haulage of general goods and other traffic.

While mineral haulages are playing a major role in railway operations, there has also been a strong demand for rail transport from other industries, both primary and secondary, and there have been times during seasonal production peaks when every available wagon has been in use, and more were needed.

The continuing increase in the haulage of general merchandise is due to a large extent to the running of express freight services, using modern louvred wagons equipped with passenger-speed bogies. These trains now run between Brisbane and northern centres at a rate of 34 a week and between Brisbane and Toowoomba and western centres at a rate of 10 a week, with additional services required at times. The schedules provide in most cases for next-day delivery of a wide range of general goods. In the opposite direction, these fast services bring fruit, vegetables, tobacco and other products to Brisbane and for forward consignment to the southern markets. Another factor in the increased traffic is door-to-door delivery of general goods, which is made in conjunction with forwarding agents. This facility is being made available to a steadily increasing number of centres throughout the State.

During the past five years, 3,700 new wagons have been placed in traffic to meet requirements for the haulage of minerals, grain, sugar and sugar-cane, meat, wool, livestock and general goods.

On the passenger side of rail transport, the trend for increased travel on the Brisbane suburban services has been progressive for the past 10 years. During this period, the number of passenger journeys has increased from 22,200,000 a year to 34,800,000 during the past financial year, which represents an increase of 56 per cent.

I am most confident there will be a further stimulus to suburban rail travel with the implementation of the improved public transport system for the Brisbane area, which is now in progress. Electrification and associated projects are now well under way, and the only problems are those arising from limitations on the promised Federal Government financial assistance. I will deal with these programmes later on in my speech.

As rapidly as finances permit, improvements are being made to passenger and freight-handling facilities throughout the State. New stations have been opened in the past three years at Rockhampton, Blackwater, Julia Creek and Baddow in the country, and at Brunswick Street, Bowen Hills, Northgate and Hendra in the Brisbane area.

With the completion of the railway centre as the first stage of the major redevelopment project above Central Station, administrative staff in the Brisbane area are housed in the one building for the first time, making for greater efficiency and direction of the State rail services.

Expansion and improvement of facilities for the handling of freight include the construction of new marshalling yards at Normanby, and progress with the new marshalling yards at Willowburn, Toowoomba.

Major projects, either recently completed or in the course of construction, include a new depot for the handling of interstate freight at Acacia Ridge—major extensions to the Moolabin Goods yard, improved siding access at Pinkenba and Hamilton, bulk-handling facilities at Mt. Isa and new goods sheds at Bundaberg, Richmond, Charleville and Charters Towers.

A continuing programme for the upgrading of the permanent way has involved the construction of many major bridges in prestressed concrete, as well as many smaller concrete bridges and pipe culverts to replace timber structures.

Since 1947, more than 35 per cent of timber bridging throughout the State system has been eliminated.

All bridges on the new Moura, Goonyella and Greenvale lines have been built in prestressed concrete.

Another continuing programme is the relaying of the permanent way with heavier rail, together with the provision of improved signalling. Main lines are being progressively laid with 41 kg rail welded into 110 metre lengths, while on the lines carrying heavy mineral trains, the heavy duty 53 kg and 47 kg line has been laid. On some sections, 110 metre rails have been welded into 440 metre lengths, and on the Goonyella line, 110 metre rails are being welded into continuous lengths. Our expenditure in this area since being in office amounts to over \$38,700,000.

Increasing use is being made of automatic power signalling on busy sections of line, while modern centralised traffic control signalling systems have been installed on the Moura and Goonyella lines and are currently being installed on the very busy section between Rockhampton and Gladstone.

For the maintenance of the permanent way, mechanised equipment is being used as a means of achieving a much faster and more efficient work-rate than formerly when this extremely heavy work was done manually. Approximately one-third of the system is now maintained by mechanised methods.

As honourable members are aware, railway employees receive a wide range of privileges, and, while I do not intend to enumerate these in detail, I would point out there was

a further \$2 a week increase last year in the service incremental payment scheme, which applies to all adult male and female wages employees. This now provides for an increment of \$8, \$10 and \$12 a week after one, two and three years of service, respectively.

I advert now to the Department of Transport under the administration of the Commissioner for Transport. The amount of \$4,527,920 to be granted for the year 1975-76 is an increase of \$1,042,292 over the amount expended last year. This increase makes provision for financial assistance of \$600,000 to private metropolitan bus services as outlined by the Honourable the Treasurer in his Budget speech, and the employment of outside consultants to examine urban passenger services in the Townsville area, estimated to cost \$50,000, of which \$30,000 will be required this financial year. The remainder of the increase is concerned basically with the payment of increased salaries and allowances from award increases.

The revenue collected by the Department of Transport for the year ended 30 June 1975 was \$1,352,723 less than the previous year. This was due to \$1,116,000 having been received in that year for the issue of additional taxi licences in the metropolitan area, the suspension of permit fees payable on the transport of cattle and sheep and the suspension of permit fees on several occasions during the year due to rail dislocations.

As previously announced, it is the Government's intention to phase out the payment of permit fees over a period of three years, and, as the Honourable the Treasurer has announced, the first stage in this phasing out will commence this financial year. It has been determined that the date from which the general reduction of permit fees will be payable will be 1 November 1975.

The revenue collected by the department stems from various sources under two principal Acts, the State Transport Act and the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act. The revenue under the State Transport Act goes to Consolidated Revenue, while that from charges under the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act to a special account in the Treasury called the Road Maintenance Account. Moneys from this account are applied to the maintenance of public highways as directed by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads.

It will be recalled that the principle of charges under this Act had its genesis in the problems created in obtaining reasonable contributions for the use of the road from vehicles used on interstate journeys and attracting the protection of section 92 of the Constitution. To avoid any semblance of discrimination, it was necessary that the charges be paid by both intrastate and interstate operators. Most operators, both interstate and intrastate, honour their obligations under

this Act. As will be seen from the commissioner's Annual Report, it is necessary for legal action to be taken from time to time against those who do not co-operate.

Resistance to taxation is understandable, I suppose, but it is, I feel, appalling to see a scheme for avoidance of charges under this Act publicised in a national journal. The heading to an article in the publication "Highway Transport" for August 1975 read, and I quote, "Information on the workings of a typical Naracoorte scheme for the avoidance of road maintenance charges is published".

Departmental Estimates also provide for disbursement from the Traffic Engineering Trust Fund, which is created by the allocation to it of moneys derived from the driving fee collected with the annual payment of motor vehicle registration.

The Transport Department should not be regarded merely as a revenue-raising department. It provides numerous—what may be termed—"service" activities. For some time the department has maintained the central register of driving licences and is gradually taking over the issue of drivers' licences from the Police Department. The Transport Department now administers the three driver-licence testing stations operating in the metropolitan area and plans have been made for the progressive involvement of the department in other centres. Of course it would not be feasible to dispense with police driver-licence testing in the smaller centres and it may be anticipated that this will continue for some time.

The Commissioner for Transport is responsible also for the registration of driving schools and the licensing of driving instructors, and it is pleasing to record that, with the co-operation of the schools, either individually or through their formal association, considerable improvement has been achieved in the standard of tuition and vehicles used.

Through the licensing of tow-trucks, a similar improvement has come about and reasonable order has been brought to what was previously at times a chaotic situation, where unscrupulous operators stood over and fleeced the unfortunate motorist involved in an accident.

Transport itself, of course, is movement, and the department reflects this movement and change which is symptomatic of the industry. Vehicle types and sizes and performance are continually altering and the types of vehicle now on the roads in the shape of modern buses and goods-carrying vehicles are vastly different to those which characterised the scene when the State Transport Act was initiated in 1960. There must be a constant effort on behalf of all of us involved with the department to keep abreast of the times and be in tune with progress. Regulations must be constantly revised to remove those that are out of step with present conditions and yet ensure that the safety of the public is kept paramount.

The construction and equipment of vehicles are matters with which the Traffic Act and regulations are vitally concerned. The Traffic Advisory Committee set up under the Act is of invaluable assistance to me and my parliamentary transport committee in formulating necessary changes to legislation.

Constant movement of people on interstate journeys requires that we endeavour as far as possible to maintain national consistency in our regulations, and in this regard I must count my membership of the Australian Transport Advisory Council as a most important factor. The Transport Ministers who constitute the Australian Transport Advisory Council are assisted by advisory committees comprising experts in the particular fields concerned, whose primary task is to update and revise the national codes for vehicle construction and driver performance.

One of these committees—the Publicity Advisory Committee on Education and Road Safety—is of immense significance to our Road Safety Council's activities as it provides the medium for a national standard of publicity in this vital field. The Queensland Road Safety Council functions as an arm of the Transport Department and it is my privilege to be its chairman. In this capacity it has been my most rewarding experience to attend and deliver two papers to the Annual National Safety Congress and Exposition held in Chicago recently.

The executive arm of our council is Government financed and staffed by Government employees on a professional basis. The council proper, that is, the council members, is a combination of voluntary representatives drawn from various sectors of Government and private enterprise, whose advice is of immense value and assistance to me. Apart from this advisory function, the primary role of the council is education, and our activities have been geared to appropriately publicising and educating the public on the dangers of misuse of the road system.

Through the defensive-driving courses conducted by the council we are making a major contribution to traffic-accident prevention by advocating correct driving attitudes. The council's officers who conduct the defensive-driving courses have themselves undergone intensive practical driving courses both in motor vehicle and motor-cycle control and have participated in many other training programmes designed to improve their ability to communicate. At the end of 1974 we had conducted 1,146 courses, attended by 30,471 persons throughout the State.

Two other activities attracting considerable public involvement are the safe-driving-award schemes which are designed to give recognition to the good driver who by his performance is able to stay out of accidents and be free of traffic violations. In determining whether people nominated should receive safe-driving awards, their records are checked with the central violation records.

A scheme for commercial drivers has been in operation for 26 years. In 1972 it was extended to graduates of the defensive-driving course, and persons who have completed the course may nominate for a continuing defensive-driving award.

Both types of awards are presented at public gatherings, and I endeavour to make a special effort to present them myself as I feel that the schemes have a large part to play in obtaining a continuing interest from participants in safe driving. We are presently considering quite a number of new measures including the expansion of the defensive-driving course by the use of a voluntary instructor system and the introduction of a motor-cycle training programme similar to that conducted in Canada.

The funds which we are providing for the Road Safety Council are primarily from State sources and it is regrettable that the Commonwealth grant to States has remained static for some time. In fairness, however, I should say that we do derive considerable benefit from Commonwealth sources in respect to the preparation of publicity materials on a national level and excellent co-operation exists with the Commonwealth Department of Transport. At State level, too, I must mention that we are assisted by a grant from the Liquor Act Trust Fund which is directed specifically towards highlighting the dangers involved in drinking and driving.

Public education in safe driving behaviour involves a complex communication problem and in the preparation of special campaigns we have had considerable success in the employment of professional advertising consultants. This has resulted in quite high-quality work, particularly where television is involved.

I mentioned earlier that movement was a particular characteristic of transport and I stressed the necessity for keeping up to date. This is particularly so in the spheres of interest of the Transport Department which lie in the fields of passenger and goods transport.

The department is charged with the over-all responsibility for the provision of efficient public transport services by road and air, and this is achieved by a system of licensing. The department's interests in the field of public transport extend not only to bus services, both metropolitan and inter-city, but to the ancillary types of public transport such as taxis, hire cars and drive-yourself or rent-a-cars. These ancillary types of public transport play an important role in our communities and it is the responsibility of the commissioner and his officers to ensure that proper standards of vehicles, performance and service exist. The department plays a particularly useful role here also in providing the public with an avenue for investigation of complaints which, percentage-wise, having regard to the number of

journeys involved, are rare but nevertheless do occur from time to time and need investigation.

In public transport the department, since its creation, has seen many changes. In the immediate post-war period there was a considerable expansion and usage of bus transport, much of which has been offset in recent years by the growth in the use of the private car. The expansion of urban services, particularly in the Brisbane metropolitan area, was related to the preferences extended in the legislation to a system of acquisition of privately operated services by a local authority.

The provisions for acquisition of private services are still in the current Transport Act and we have had representations from the bus proprietors' association that these should be repealed and the provisions have been criticised as socialistic thinking. It is paradoxical that the legislation was originally brought down by an old-style Labor Government in 1946, and that most advantage of the provisions was taken by Brisbane City Council administrations which were certainly not then Labor-oriented. Many of the bus services taken over and replaced by council services in those days were in a parlous condition and their replacement services were widely welcomed at inception.

Both private and municipal bus services today have a vital role to play, but their patronage has been seriously eroded by the private car, which has brought to the average person a degree of freedom which mass transit systems cannot provide. We realise that considerable improvement in the standard of public transport is desirable and that this requires a measure of assistance from Government sources. The extent to which this system should be at local authority, State or Commonwealth levels raises questions on which there will always be varying opinions but it would seem that at the present time the day of the "completely" independent private entrepreneur in urban transportation has gone. It is in realisation of the difficulties facing the private sector that we are initiating schemes for their financial assistance, but whether or not this will be necessary in the future is a matter of conjecture.

As I mentioned earlier, the recent State Budget provides \$600,000 assistance to private metropolitan bus services. Necessary legislation in this regard is being drafted, and I will cover the three schemes of assistance in detail when introducing the legislation. However, for the benefit of some honourable members I will outline the assistance programmes. A pensioner concession will be provided for travel on urban private buses to the extent of 50 per cent of the adult fare normally charged. To enable private bus fares to be held down, and at the same time help to ensure that the services remain financially viable, the Government will subsidise gross fare revenue of

urban bus operators. The scheme is designed to lift the operators' return to a reasonable level with a maximum subsidy of 10 per cent of the gross fare revenues.

In order to improve the urban bus system generally, we will guarantee loans, under certain conditions, for the purchase of new buses. This Government will also subsidise the interest on new loans for new buses to a maximum of 6 per cent, with such assistance decreasing by one-fifth of the original subsidy each year over a period of five years.

I know that there are schools of thought which suggest that the private car should be in some way outlawed. Proposals in this regard have to be approached rather cautiously as there are many who consider that possession of a private car and a person's own home makes him a small capitalist and that if these two things were eradicated the individual would become more amenable to a proletarian role in a socialistic system. To this I do not subscribe and whilst I will support every endeavour to provide adequate public transport, I do not favour moves which are afoot to deprive Australians of their basic freedoms.

I alluded in my opening remarks to a study which we propose carrying out in Townsville. This is an area which is serviced by several private bus services and where we have been receiving increasing public pressure for improvements. A formal study will be essential so that the decisions that are taken here will be practical and in the best interests of all concerned.

I do not propose at this point to dwell at any length on the action we are taking to improve public transport facilities in the Brisbane statistical division as a more appropriate opportunity will present itself. I have alluded to passenger transport in our cities and towns. An important role played by the department is the authorisation of inter-town and inter-city services and Queensland has for some time been almost unique in the network of long and medium distance services it has built up. These regulated route services are complemented by high standard tourist services and in addition we have the ubiquitous charter operation which has brought pleasure to so many. Thus modern passenger coaches range far and wide within the State and, of course, interstate.

With the co-operation of my colleague the honourable Minister for Industrial Development, Labour Relations and Consumer Affairs and his Chief Inspector of Machinery, we have operating in Queensland an efficient inspection system for commercial vehicles and particularly buses. A nationally accepted sticker identification system for inspections suggested by Queensland was agreed on some time ago with Queensland being the first State to implement it—and

this system applies both to intrastate and interstate operations. The conditions under which long-distance bus services operate at times present problems and it becomes necessary to balance the requirements, say to intermediate centres on a long-distance bus route, with the routes of shorter-distance local operators who service the particular town.

In collaboration with the Gold Coast City Council and the Department of Main Roads, we have reviewed the situation existing on the Gold Coast in relation to servicing the coastal strip by local and through buses. I believe we have come up with a workable solution which should improve travelling time to Brisbane and at the same time ensure an improved level of local service.

I have found that the necessity to regulate passenger transport is accepted by the public and by the industry, as there is a general recognition that untrammelled competition in the field of urban bus services could eventually result in their being no services at all, and a degree of zoning of operating areas is to be adopted.

Perhaps the most contentious area, however, is goods transport. In the 1960 Act we took a very positive step by replacing the previous monopoly licences with the present permit system. This, too, has its critics. On the one hand we have those who say that there should be no requirement to hold a permit or pay fees, and on the other hand we have those who are concerned at what they call "substandard operations" by individuals who undercut and take dangerous short cuts to reduce costs and who ruin the transport image.

Since the Act was introduced, we have worked progressively to improve the situation by granting permit-fee exemptions by areas or by commodities. For instance, as long ago as 1961 we removed the permit requirements in respect of the carriage of livestock in the far-western and northern areas of the State, and in 1972 took the step of removing the obligation for permits in respect of the carriage of fresh fruit and vegetables.

In his Budget speech, the Honourable the Treasurer announced further general concessions in respect of the rate of permit fees, and we anticipate that ultimately we should be able to phase out this requirement completely. I might add that appropriate action has now been taken to implement the Budget proposals by a general reduction as from 1 November in the rate of permit fees payable for the carriage of goods in Queensland.

Finally, I will deal with the Metropolitan Transit Project Board. Honourable members will recall that the Metropolitan Transit Project Board was formally constituted by Order

in Council on 5 September 1974. However, it did function as a committee immediately following the 1972 general election.

The board is constituted under the State and Regional Planning and Development, Public Works Organization and Environmental Control Act—an Act administered by the Honourable the Premier. In this respect I should also mention that the funds provided jointly by the State and Commonwealth, appropriated as the Urban Public Transport Fund, are administered by the Premier through the Co-ordinator General's Department. Hence, the annual report of the board will be presented to Parliament by the Premier.

The establishment of the Board in formal terms and the appointment of staff by no means constitute the first step taken.

Mr. MURRAY: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has now been speaking for some 40 minutes. As honourable members have only two allotted days in which to discuss these Estimates—in other words, the debate on them will finish tonight—can honourable members be assured that he will not take much longer to present his Estimates and so encourage the full discussion that you mentioned earlier, Mr. Hewitt?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no valid point of order. The Minister is not limited by Standing Orders in the presentation of his Estimates.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: To allay the fears of the honourable member—his point is well taken—I indicate that I have almost completed my remarks.

Mr. Wright: You are not going to do another "Toothie"?

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: No.

A great deal of preliminary work has been successfully concluded over a period of years—the transportation studies commissioned by this Government, and more recently the execution of the agreement with the Commonwealth and the composition of a programme of capital works designed to provide Brisbane with an electrified rail system and improved bus and ferry services.

The total transport content of the board's activities naturally engage my deepest interest as Minister for Transport. It will be my responsibility to introduce legislation in this session of Parliament to replace the Metropolitan Transit Project Board with a duly constituted authority charged with the important task of providing the metropolitan area with an efficient, adequate, co-ordinated system utilising all forms of transport.

The biggest project in our programme is the electrification of the suburban network. The rail electrification scheme naturally

entails a tremendous amount of work which is not immediately apparent to the community in general—for example, the design of the overhead wiring system, and preparations for the vehicles themselves. Tangible evidence of progress, however, is apparent in the reconstruction of overbridges where work has already commenced, notably in the Corinda-Darra area. The tunnel from Roma Street to the cross-river rail-bridge approaches is already nearing completion and works on the bridge itself have commenced.

To support the railway works themselves, new and better facilities will be provided at the majority of suburban railway stations so that rail commuters will have safe, adequate parking facilities. The evidence of these facilities is already available on the north side at Enoggera, Mitchelton, Petrie, Ferny Grove and Strathpine. Designs and cost estimates are in course of preparation for many other locations.

Bus feeder services to railway stations will also be included in many of the plans, with adequate provision for the discharge of passengers in close proximity to the station platforms. Bus services will be improved with the provision of additional new buses. The board also recognises that an expanded bus fleet requires adequate support facilities and many improvements are under consideration.

In conjunction with the capital works programme and the acquisition of public transport units, the board also is conducting a planning and research programme on a wide variety of subjects which will be the means of achieving further improvement and closer integration of the various transport modes. For example, a study of the Brisbane River as a transport corridor is at present being conducted and could reveal new avenues of transport from residential areas to the central business district.

The practicability of express bus services using exclusive bus lanes is also under consideration, and bus travellers may also find that car-parking facilities at selected points on bus routes, or at bus terminals, will be available to them to further improve the desirability of the public transport system as opposed to use of the private motor vehicle in congested areas.

Finally, I express my appreciation to the Commissioner for Railways, the Commissioner for Transport, the newly appointed chairman of the Metropolitan Transit Project Board, and all their officers for the dedicated work they have undertaken and completed since I became Minister for Transport.

I make special mention of the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Alva Lee. The report he presented to Parliament through me a couple of days ago will be his final report. He has served more than 50 years with the Railway Department as a dedicated and loyal servant. I want to pay my respects and that of the Government—and I am sure

of this Parliament—to Mr. Lee and extend good wishes to him for a very happy and healthy retirement.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I also extend to Mrs. Lee the best wishes of all of us here in the Queensland Parliament.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I also wish to thank the members of my personal staff for their loyal and enthusiastic support, which has been freely given at all times.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind honourable members again 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.

I remind honourable members also that Standing Orders and the Sessional Order provide that in the debate in Committee of Supply each member is allowed three speeches comprising 10 minutes, five minutes and five minutes, although that option is seldom exercised. For the information of honourable members, they will receive a warning bell after 10 minutes and another at 15 minutes.

Mr. JONES (Cairns) (12.48 p.m.): The statement of the Commissioner for Transport, Mr. K. M. Seeney, in the introduction of his annual report for the last financial year that—

“The demand for transport services, the relative importance of the various types and their co-ordination in the transport task have increasingly required an understanding at the policy and operating level of the many complex problems that arise in this sector of economic activity”

is both pertinent and cogent. I should have hoped that it would set the tenor for this debate, but, knowing what has happened in this Chamber lately, I can foreshadow that it will not. Other factors have precipitated the debate. Every action has a reaction, and it is fair comment that on the political scene nothing is as it appears on the surface. Being a professional politician and, I hope, a practical one, I suggest that the sequence of events of the Minister's arrival back from the United States last Saturday, the presentation to Parliament of the report of the Commissioner for Railways last Tuesday, its receipt yesterday by me and other members, and the bringing forward of the debate on the Transport Estimates one week calls for a little assessment.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: You realise that they were to be debated a week from now.

Mr. JONES: That is my point.

The conclusion I draw from this little drama is that the Treasurer is lurking in the wings and that he was a little fearful of an

expose on the projected 40 per cent average increase in rail fares and freights; he was a little fearful of their being dissected.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: In fairness to the Treasurer I point out that he did not know of the change until I informed him.

Mr. JONES: I accept the Minister's defence of the Treasurer, but, in view of the increased freights and fares to be gazetted next Friday, it would have been much better if the Estimates of another department had been debated first. That would have ensured a broader debate, with honourable members airing their views on the increased rates while these Estimates were being discussed. That is the logical time for such comments. Opposition members have not been hoodwinked but, at the same time, some Government members may not realise what has happened. The increases should have been debated and a detailed analysis placed before us. In some instances the full impact of the 40 per cent increase in rates could amount to a 90 or 100 per cent increase. I am sure that is of interest to all honourable members.

The Minister told us that last year was the first time in 10 years the railways suffered a deficit of revenue compared with working expenditure. Why were not freight charges increased last year when it became apparent that for the first time in 10 years there was a deficit? Although the railway system carried a record tonnage and earned record revenue, it showed a record deficit.

Mr. Burns: Last year was an election year.

Mr. JONES: That is so. That is why the rates were not increased, with the result that we had a boomer deficit this year. Perhaps it would be better described as a record bloomer this year. In any case, it indicates how the Government resorts to subterfuge.

As I said, the Opposition has not been hoodwinked by the Government, but the Government's actions should be brought to the attention of the public while these Estimates are being discussed. When the results of the 1974-75 financial year are being analysed, due cognisance should be given to that aspect of policy decision by the Minister and the Government. Resort to subterfuge of this type is certainly not the action of an honest Government.

The deficit, which includes interest and other costs, has been mounting for some years. This matter should have been brought to the Government's attention by the Minister. He should have been trying to influence the Government to increase the rates much earlier. Freight rates and fares should not have been allowed by any Minister for Transport to remain static from 1966 to 1975.

Since I first led the debate on these Estimates, the deficits have increased as follows—

Year	Amount \$ million
1971-72	25
1972-73	30
1973-74	53
1974-75	89

Those are hefty deficits to be carried by the State over such a long time.

The Commissioner said that last year was the first occasion in 10 years in which a working profit was not made. This year the excess of working expenses over revenue was \$44,000,000 compared with \$12,000,000 last year. That is a reasonable excuse for increasing rail freights and fares.

The Government has always placed great emphasis on records. In this field we must concede that it has set a record—a record of deficits. The Treasurer was Minister for Transport for eight years before he accrued a deficit equal to that incurred by the present Minister in one operating year. I wholeheartedly agree with the words of the State Secretary of the A.R.U. who, in a statement that appeared in "The Sunday Mail" of 6 July 1975, said that the rail system would run more efficiently with less political interference if it were part of a national system. He believes that, in the interest of achieving standard rail services and facilities, the Queensland Government should be working with the Federal Government towards a take-over of our railway system by the Commonwealth, instead of continuing the stupid argument about the States retaining their identity and operating rail systems of different gauges.

Another point that was not delved into by the Minister—and I believe that it should have been—was the amount allotted in 1975-76 for accommodation of employees, \$1,937,000. It appears that the priority for air-conditioned quarters for trainmen in Bluff, Winton, Bungalien and Cloncurry will result in the construction of other accommodation at such places as Torrens Creek and Bundaberg being deferred until late 1976. That in itself indicates, I believe, that insufficient funds have been allocated to that area of the Minister's responsibility.

The \$25,000 provided for general maintenance on existing buildings appears meagre, and the \$500,000 allocation for accommodation for migratory gangs also appears to be inadequate. There seems to be an over-all shortfall in the allocation for accommodation for employees. One would think it could be safely assumed that the commissioner would spend every cent possible on accommodation; yet there seems to be a backlog in the provision of employee accommodation in the Railway Department. That becomes obvious to any rail traveller, particularly one who journeys through the

western areas of our State. Shocking conditions are experienced by employees of the Railway Department in the West, and I believe that the Minister should have been advocating and pursuing a policy of greater appropriation for accommodation.

It seems to me that a Scrooge-like attitude has been adopted by the department this financial year to accommodation. On new projects lack of planning and lack of consideration are obvious in the provision of accommodation for employees, who after all are the people on whom our service depends. They keep the trains running. A lack of foresight over a long period and the adoption of a hotch-potch attitude to planning for new projects has resulted in the men who run the railways being forgotten. On every new project we seem to disregard the requirements of the staff—the people who sweat and toil for the railways; the people who work very hard in the trying and extreme weather conditions of our State. I believe that employees' conditions should be examined closely and kept in perspective, and that in planning new projects, particularly facilities for coal mines and development in the western areas of the State, the department should cater properly for its employees. It is a downright shame that, out of all the finance being allocated to the Railway Department for the implementation of its policies, very little has been set aside for accommodation for the ordinary man on the job. That has been neglected.

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

Mr. JONES: It was in 1971 that I first became the Opposition spokesman on transport and led the Opposition debate on these Estimates. Even before that time I had drawn the attention of the House to the need for the department to pay closer attention to future staff establishments. I called on the Minister to pay more attention to staff training and to influence his departmental officers to provide incentives to attract, train and retain staff.

I contend that, over the years, staff liaison, conditions and amenities have been sadly neglected. This is proved by the staff shortages at present being experienced by the department. There has been a gradual decline in staff numbers resulting, I believe, from the retrenchment policies of the department. Restriction was placed on employment, particularly at junior level. The non-induction of lad porters has resulted in the absence of properly trained personnel in the traffic branch. This applies also to juniors on other staffs. In addition, vacancies caused by resignations and retirements have not been filled. Today the department is on the brink of a staff crisis. It appears that the chickens are coming home to roost.

The paradox is that this policy is being followed at a time of great unemployment. Who suffers? The staff, because the employees are required to work excessive overtime

and they even experience difficulty in getting their annual holidays granted. This causes them to be disgruntled. I do not believe that this type of policy augurs well for a good service or a happy ship.

I am informed that implementation of the average increase of 40 per cent in fares will affect passengers adversely and will downgrade some of the conditions of the railway employees. The Minister was at some pains to make employees' conditions obvious in his speech today.

I understand that yearly and half-yearly season tickets are to be abolished under the new scheme. I have not heard of the demise of the quarterly season ticket. It might survive; perhaps it was overlooked. Railway employees, together with the public, will suffer because of the foolhardiness of the department. A time and motion study into the extra work involved in filling out daily privilege tickets instead of seasonal tickets would show this decision to be ridiculous.

In future, employees will not be allowed a rebate on the cost of their seasonal tickets when they are on annual holidays. Considering that, in some areas, fares will be increased by approximately 90 per cent, this is a pretty serious imposition on the public and the railway employees.

Over a period the department, in pursuance of its policy, has directed that nobody in the Railway Department is to engage extra staff. It would appear that, as a result, present staff members will not be granted annual leave or special leave. Annual leave should take precedence over other policy matters, but I believe that it is very difficult to obtain. Special circumstances must be argued to obtain long service leave, even when eligibility is not disputed. Doctors' certificates are even being required now before consideration is given to the granting of long service leave. This is a sorry pickle, and it is caused by the incorrect policies that have been followed by the department for many years.

Clerical staff in the railway service today are at a premium, as such workers are being syphoned off to more lucrative pursuits outside the department. Only service training and technical expertise keep many railway officials in the service today. Perhaps it is their dedication and loyalty to the department that keep them in their present positions. In the matter of leave generally, railwaymen are being less favourably treated than their counterparts in outside industry, and they are beginning to resent it. This does not make for the most efficient running of the department.

Running staff at some depots have had to go on strike to obtain relief from excessive overtime, and also to obtain leave. I understand, for example, that at Mayne there are 111 vacancies for guards. Even

with the schools that have been conducted—at my suggestion, I might say—and the other avenues of promotion open in the traffic section, only 45 guards will be available to fill these positions. It appears to me that the department is prepared to force men to work longer hours than the men consider to be a fair day's work in order to keep unemployment figures high. Alternatively, are wages and conditions in the railways service so poor that the department cannot attract new staff, or retain the ones that it has had for a number of years?

In the few minutes that remain of my speaking time, I should like to comment on an answer to a question that I asked the Minister for Transport. He told me the other day that if I influenced the relevant unions to accept the decision to fill a specific vacancy, it would be filled without delay. I therefore suggest, in relation to the position of shunting driver at Cairns, that it be designated as "driver". It appears to me that the answer to the problem at the Mayne depot is to engage a night roster clerk. There is also the problem of improved working conditions for employees in the Cairns area. I understand that provision has been made for the extension of the parcels office. The quicker that work is carried out, the better will be the service that these railwaymen are able to give to the public. There will also be a more contented staff.

When the Minister was in Cairns some time ago, we went with the District Superintendent, Mr. C. B. Walton, who is now the General Manager, to look at the new site for the railway marshalling yards. It was agreed on that occasion that, with the potential growth of Cairns, those yards should be resited in the East Cairns reclamation area. The Chamber of Commerce and various other bodies in Cairns are anxious for this to be done. It will have to be done at some time in the future, and the sooner the department gets on with that project the better it will be for the people of the area, and the flow of traffic in Cairns.

(Time expired.)

Mr. POWELL (Isis) (2.24 p.m.): In speaking in the recent debate in this Chamber on legislation dealing with recreation vehicles, I made the statement that this State was indeed fortunate to have as Minister for Transport a person who has taken his responsibilities very much to heart and who is very closely concerned with the running of his department and the administration of the Acts under his control. Altogether there are 17 of these Acts and it would no doubt be competent for me to speak about any or all of them during the time that is available to me. However, I would like to speak specifically about the Railway Department and some aspects of the Traffic Act.

The honourable member for Cairns, who preceded me in this debate, lamented the fact that the discussion of the Estimates has been brought forward a week. I also lament this fact because I was hoping, as obviously the honourable member for Cairns was, that we would have some indication of the new rail fares and freights so that they could be discussed at this time. In fact, I rang the Railway Department this morning in an attempt to find out what the new rail fares will be as they affect my electorate, particularly the fares from Hervey Bay and Bundaberg to Brisbane. I received probably the same answer as most people. In fact, I was informed by the clerk who answered the telephone that if I wanted to travel by rail from Bundaberg to Brisbane and I bought my ticket before 1 November, I would get it at the old price. I said, "Thanks very much but I am more concerned with the new price." He was not willing to divulge that information over the telephone to me.

For as long as I can remember, the Railway Department has been the butt of many strange and rude jokes. Unfortunately, I think that probably many of them have some substance and they are a very sad reflection on the Railway Department. They are certainly not a true reflection on the men who work within the department. The department is losing a tremendous number of passengers and one gets the impression that it is not in the least interested in them; it is more interested in freight, particularly the more lucrative forms of freight, and I think this is a very poor outlook indeed.

In his opening remarks, the Minister said something about many people wanting to phase out the motor vehicle. It is true that some people would like to see the motor vehicle phased out and eventually removed from our roads altogether. However, I am not one of those people, because anybody who comes from the country or lives in the country as I do knows the value of having a motor vehicle and the necessity for it. No other form of transport is available to us. Those who would do away with motor vehicles are very short-sighted. Certainly in the city and near-city areas, the Railway Department should be doing a lot more to attract passengers. If the Railway Department—I know it is a very big "if"—could upgrade its lines and rolling-stock to make travel by rail more desirable than it is today, it would receive more custom.

Today people travel by rail, by motor vehicle, by bus and by aeroplane. Of course, for most people, the advantages of travelling by plane far outweigh the disadvantage of the increased cost; but surely we should be making rail transport far more attractive to the average man who has some time to spend on a holiday.

One rail service that particularly interests me is the daylight rail tour conducted from Brisbane to Cairns and back. I understand the rail motor stops at Bundaberg on the

way north and Maryborough on the way south. I have suggested to the Minister that, instead of stopping at Maryborough on the way south, it should stop at Hervey Bay. Honourable members should not infer that I have anything against Maryborough. Hervey Bay is in my electorate whereas Maryborough is not. Moreover, Hervey Bay is a tourist area, a place that people would like to see. As people go up the coast and back, they see quite a number of towns and it might be said that, once they have seen one town, they have seen them all. Maryborough is little different from the other cities along the coast, and to see something interesting a tourist would have to drive 25 or 30 miles to Hervey Bay in a motor vehicle. There is already a railway line to Hervey Bay and adequate accommodation is available there. Certainly the views at Hervey Bay are more pleasant than town scenes. Therefore I believe that the Railway Department should use its branch line to Hervey Bay in the way I have suggested.

It has come to my notice also that the Railway Department is thinking of phasing out one of the goods services to Hervey Bay from the main line. I have approached the Minister on the matter because I am particularly concerned at the suggestion. It would seem to me to be a really retrograde step to eliminate one rail service a week to Hervey Bay from the main line. I say that because a service is now being performed. There is a strong possibility, of course, that some people in the Railway Department do not believe that that service should be performed. They would prefer, for some reason or other, to reduce the mileage of the railways, especially on lines serviced by small, short trains such as those that go to Hervey Bay; but if the Railway Department upgraded the line and the type of rolling-stock used on it, it would attract more business.

At the moment—and it is probably not the fault of any one person—a horrible lack of initiative is being shown by people doing desk jobs in the Railway Department, and in fact throughout the railway service. The honourable member for Cairns hit the nail on the head when he mentioned the need for incentive and initiative. It is a fairly common criticism—and a fair one—that people, in large organisations in this State, like the Railway Department hide behind the size of the organisation. Consequently, they lose their initiative and their incentive.

I do not know the answer to the problem. It is not confined to the Railway Department. As I said earlier, it is common to all large organisations. Throughout the Public Service, for example, senior officers show a marked reluctance to give junior public servants any incentive or to allow them to use their initiative. That is a very poor attitude. Young people come into Government departments—and in this instance I am speaking particularly about the Railway Department—and are not given their heads. They are

not given a chance to use their initiative; they are not offered incentives. I believe that much more could be done to make large departments less impersonal and to give workers an opportunity to use their initiative to bring about desirable changes.

The honourable member for Cairns—who, I understand, was a railwayman before he entered this Assembly—obviously has some very sound information about the Railway Department.

Mr. Jones: I was upgraded.

Mr. POWELL: The honourable member thinks he was upgraded when he came here. I am not sure about that.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: In the Railway Department, he had an avenue of promotion not available to all lad porters.

Mr. POWELL: That is correct. It is a pity that promotion is not available to all people in every organisation—not only the Railway Department—who use their initiative and the incentives that are offered to them. That is the problem at present with the back-up services of the Railway Department and other Government departments.

The guards in the Bundaberg railway centre have complained to me that they are overworked. They have not said that they are underpaid, but they allege that they are overworked. They say that they have to work long hours of overtime and that this is not giving them a fair go. I do not know what the answer is. Perhaps someone more au fait with the Railway Department knows the answer. Perhaps it is just a case of not having sufficient men employed. I fail to see why that should be so at a time of rampant unemployment. It would seem reasonable to presume that we could get enough people into the Railway Department, who could work their way up to be guards and drivers so that the present guards and drivers could have a reasonable amount of time off. It seems ludicrous for many hours of overtime to be worked on any one job in the State while others are unemployed. Perhaps some re-organisation of rostering in several areas in the Railway Department is needed.

A problem in my area—one that is fairly often raised by the honourable member for Bundaberg—is the late running of the “Capricornian”. Periodically the Minister is asked questions about it. The problem is compounded by the coal trains running through to Brisbane which virtually clog the line north of Bundaberg. They get mixed up with other coal trains going through to Gladstone. It would seem that the only way out of the problem would be to construct a double track, or to improve the track that is already there. I know the department is taking action of that kind.

I hope that the Minister will look into the operations of the Railway Department and bring about some re-organisation. We do not want to have young people who enter the service pushed down and lost through the sheer size of that service. I know that the problems are immense. It must be very difficult to change the attitude of some of the older employees in the service—and I refer both to those working on the trains and those in the offices of the department.

It is plain to anybody who travels regularly on the railway that if the department is to upgrade itself it has to change many of its ideas.

I hark back to the line down to Hervey Bay. I can remember when regular passenger runs were made from Maryborough to Hervey Bay. Probably I first saw the sea while travelling on a rail motor from Maryborough to Hervey Bay. Now only five trains run each week. The service is so slow and disjointed that people are just not prepared to use it as a passenger service.

In view of the cost of petrol, motor vehicle parts and labour, I wonder if the day is fast approaching when the average citizen will find it financially impossible to own a motor vehicle. If that time comes will the railways be geared to take over the mass transportation of the public? They may be able to cope in Brisbane and on short runs from Brisbane, but what about long-distance trains? The “Sunlander”, the “Capricornian” and other air-conditioned trains may be very good, but the service offered to passengers is pretty poor. A person who purchases a first-class ticket still has to pay for his meals, even when a dining-car is attached to the train. A first-class or economy-class air ticket entitles the holder to meals, and a passenger is nowhere near as long in an aeroplane as the passenger is on a long-distance train.

Mr. Jones: In other places you don't have the trouble getting sleeping berths that you do in Queensland.

Mr. POWELL: That is so.

It is important that the Railway Department greatly upgrade its services. It is just not good enough and that is why the public are not using the railway system. Probably the number of clerks in the department is adequate to cope with the clerical work, but more guards, stewards and others who actually run the trains are needed.

It has been decided—very sensibly—that road tax should be phased out over three years. Some months ago I wrote to the Minister about the establishment of a co-ordinated goods service to Childers. No doubt honourable members will recall that some time ago the Isis branch line was torn up. As a result, goods are off-loaded at Isis Junction and transported by road to Childers and therefore the cost of buying

goods in Brisbane and transporting them to Childers is immense. It costs more to transport an item from Brisbane to Childers than from Brisbane to Bundaberg, which is 35 miles farther north. An anomaly like that should not exist, but creeps in fairly quickly when we do not watch carefully what is happening. Surely the Transport Department can do something about organising a sensible co-ordinated freight system to Childers. It is not fair that the people in this relatively small country town should have to pay so much extra for their goods simply because the Government decided to tear up the branch line. I have asked the Minister to look into the matter in the hope that he will see his way clear to organise a co-ordinated service to carry goods to Childers at a reasonable cost. I cannot see why it should cost more to deliver goods to Childers than to Bundaberg, or even to some places farther north.

The Minister administers the Traffic Act, which affects every person in Queensland. It is very important that people should know what is in this Act. When the Minister introduces amendments to it, he usually says that they are designed to improve safety for the majority of people. People criticise severely many provisions in the Act. I find it hard to understand why it is administered by the Transport Department and enforced by the Police Department while speed limits are a Main Roads Department responsibility. It is unfortunate that road safety matters are divided among three departments—the Transport Department, the Police Department through the Traffic Act, and the Main Roads Department through the speed limits. The difficulty experienced in getting a speed limit changed is incredible, and the red tape that has to be gone through to achieve anything at all in this field is equally incredible.

I thank the Minister for his very interesting remarks in introducing this debate and I look forward to his response to the matters I have mentioned.

Mr. MOORE (Windsor) (2.45 p.m.): When one considers the amount to be expended this year by the Railway Department and the Transport Department—over \$48,000,000—one can appreciate the size of the industry they control. One of the controversial aspects of the Budget has been the freight increase of 40 per cent. The increase will not be applied across the board (an average figure has been taken); consequently in some cases the increase will be greater than 40 per cent while in others it will be much lower. No Government of the calibre of this one would be heartless in its dealings with primary industry and other industries that rely absolutely on the Railway Department for the movement of stock, the cartage of fodder for starving stock and transport of all the other things that are needed in this vast State. Even though it is proposed to increase freight rates by 40 per cent, I am sure that

the Government will behave in a humanitarian manner when it comes to those who need assistance.

An increase in freight rates, however, could prove to be a blessing for some of the larger provincial cities. If the freight component in the cost of an article is very low, industries in the larger cities such as Brisbane can, through economy of scale, produce articles at a price that will allow them to pay the freight and sell them throughout the State. Brisbane, for instance, could produce bricks, concrete products and various other things for sale in the country; whereas, if the freight component is increased, places such as Townsville, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Mackay could become more attractive for the establishment of industry. Goods produced there could be more competitive on the local market than goods produced in a major centre. I know that places such as Toowoomba, Maryborough and Bundaberg, in which industries are established, have welcomed the increased freights. They are not particularly happy about freight increases on the raw product, but they cannot have it both ways.

It could perhaps be said that the increased freight rates will be passed on. There is virtually nothing free under the sun. But I do not see how primary industry can ever pass anything on. Primary producers are at the end of the rainbow. Although they are the producers, they have no way of passing on their costs. My heart goes out to them because they are competing on the overseas market, whereas generally speaking the rest of the economy is confined to the Australian market. It is true that some primary produce would be sold on the local market, but by far the major proportion of it is sold overseas. If a 40 per cent increase were applied across the board, and I am sure it will not be, it would be a great impost on primary producers and a grave disadvantage to them.

The previous speaker mentioned rail passenger traffic, and I had intended to comment on that myself. The honourable member for Isis was completely right in saying that for some years past it seems to have been Government policy or Railway Department policy (which I suppose has to be Government policy) to discourage the public from travelling on long-distance passenger trains. When one compares the facilities provided by the airlines with those provided by the railways, one can see that virtually nothing is done to encourage rail travel. I am not, of course, talking about suburban passenger travel.

I return to a matter I raised in the last debate on the Estimates of this Department—the griddle car. The Minister has done nothing about it. I hope he takes some action in the near future. If there is one disgraceful thing about the Queensland railways it is the service provided in the griddle car. It is a damned disgrace. It is about

time the Minister got off his backside and did something about it. I have had a bellyful of it and I think the public has too.

Mr. Frawley: I am not used to eating eight-course meals.

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member might be used to eating bread and dripping but I am not used to that type of fare.

Mr. Frawley: I am used to eating plain, simple food.

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member was in training at the time and was prepared to live on a sparrow's diet.

Mr. Murray: He ran alongside the train.

Mr. MOORE: He could do. I will come to the subject of the speed of trains later on.

The electrification of the railway system has been in progress for some years. We inherited an electrification programme but did not proceed with it. To some extent it is a shame that we didn't, because it would have cost less then than now. When this Government took office after 40 years of the dead hand of Labor, it found that everything was behind the times. Because of the lack of facilities in the education system, the money that would have been spent on the electrification of the railways had to be spent on the provision of new high schools. This Government had to get its priorities in the correct order. Electrification is again under way. The system will be far superior to that which would have been implemented, so possibly the delay is a blessing in disguise.

Electrification will not result in the carriage of one more passenger. Simply because the motive power is electricity, the wheels will still turn at the same speed. The same time-table will be used. If a faster time-table could be set for electric trains, it could be set just as easily for diesel-powered locomotives.

Electrification has one great advantage. Trains will be a little faster off the mark and will be pollution free, although that will not be so at the point of generation of electricity. Another advantage is that, in operating the system, we will not be relying on anything from overseas. We have the copper, steel and other components as well as the technical know-how. Australia can manufacture whatever is required—switch gear, transformers, diodes and so on—and because electricity in Queensland is generated by the burning of our own coal (and there is certainly no shortage of it), we will not have to rely on imported diesel oil.

Electrification may or may not be of advantage. The suburbs of Milton, Auchentree, Taringa and Indooroopilly, which are on the Ipswich line, are very hilly and people will not walk up hills and down dales to catch an electric train if a bus service passes nearby.

Mr. Frawley: We do not even have a railway service at Redcliffe.

Mr. MOORE: I do not know why the honourable member does not get to his feet and advocate it. If I had been there as long as he has, I would have been advocating the construction of a railway line to Redcliffe.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Let me say that you would do a far better job.

Mr. MOORE: I thank the honourable member. I have that in mind. I will be Minister for Transport one day. Joking aside—we do not live long enough to do all the things that we would like to do, and we cannot always achieve our ambitions.

When the suburban railway system is electrified, I only hope that parking areas will be provided at stations. People will not leave their cars at home and walk to stations, and they certainly will not catch a bus and then a train. Irrespective of what some people may say, we are in no position to prohibit the use of cars, so now is the time to provide parking areas at all stations. If a station has three or four old houses nearby, they should be purchased now. There would be no need to upset tenants. After all, houses will never be bought cheaper than they can be today. I have made representations to the Minister about parking at Wilston, where there is a reasonable area of close to half an acre that could be made available. It is not as large as I would like, but it would hold a few cars and it could be enlarged. If we do not look to the future, we will end up doing nothing at all. We have to make a start somewhere. I know that there are one or two parking areas at stations along the Ferny Grove line, but there are not nearly enough to be of any great benefit.

Time-tables are also worthy of comment. When I worked in the Railway Department I was once crawling around up in the ceiling of the general manager's office when I came upon a time-table for the Sandgate line in about 1880. I thought, "This will be interesting." I looked at the times, and I found that they were just the same in 1880 as they were when I found the time-table. I thought, "That's progress!" Trains travelled in 1880 at about 20 miles an hour, and they still do. As an old railwayman, I know the difficulties of time-table clerks and the problems presented by the stopping and starting of trains, but if there is to be a rail service that people will use it has to be efficient, fast and reasonably comfortable.

Dr. Lockwood: And clean.

Mr. MOORE: I have not found any real problem with cleanliness; I think the cleaning staff are very good. Vandalism is a big problem. Someone had carved his name on one of the seats of the brand new carriage

in which I travelled to the Exhibition recently. When the department provides an excellent class of carriage and louts carve their names on the seats, it is very hard to take. I do not know the answer to this problem. I suppose all one can do is hope that every citizen who sees this sort of thing happening will do the culprit in.

I come now to railway housing. The Railway Department has always been to some extent a Cinderella in the allocation of funds, and railway housing has never been adequate. The railways were always the last to be given additional finance. Things have improved, but not so very much. The Railway Department has a certain Vote, and it cannot spend more than it is allocated. It is pretty bad when railway workers such as station-masters, night officers and fettlers are allowed only a limited number of power points in their houses. That limitation is ridiculous. It still applies, although the number has been increased. In my day it was about three points. If that is not ridiculous, what is? There should be no limitation. In a railway house I think it would be reasonable to provide at least three power points in the kitchen, three in the lounge and at least one in every other room for vacuum-cleaning and so on. In placing a restriction on the number, the department is going back to the horse-and-buggy days. It is ridiculous in the extreme. Nothing is saved except perhaps part of the first installation costs. Railway electricians doing that sort of installation would put in five points a day, so I do not see that it would be very costly at all.

I never like to speak to the Estimates of the Railway Department without paying a tribute to the fettlers and the flying gangs, these fellows who work so hard with so little recognition. When travelling in trains, I often hear someone say, "Look at those fettlers there standing around doing nothing." What the hell are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to be using the beater on the ballast under the train when it is going past? If ever there was a bunch of hard-working people, it is the railway fettlers and the flying gangs. Their work in an emergency in taking out a length of rail damaged in an accident—or even doing maintenance—is poetry in motion. They are absolutely superb. The gangs work as if they were a cohesive whole. They are an absolute credit to the Railway Department.

Mr. Frawley: What about the Minister? He's a credit to the department, too.

Mr. MOORE: I am not going to talk about the Minister.

Mr. Frawley: You've given him a bucket; how about giving him a bit of praise?

Mr. MOORE: I have not given him a bucket; I have been nice to him.

I would like to see a change of attitude towards the closure of railway lines. I fear that the Brisbane Valley line is about to get the axe. I hope it does not happen and I hope Bill Gunn has enough guts to stand up here and throw a few things in the pipeline to see that it does not happen. The Cleveland line should never have been closed; nor should the Southport line, or the line to Samford.

Mr. Hartwig: Go on! You've got too many down here now.

Mr. MOORE: The honourable member for Callide—

Mr. Hartwig: Just rubbing you up.

Mr. MOORE: You couldn't prop yourself up.

Mr. Hartwig: Couldn't I?

Mr. MOORE: If the honourable member for Callide was half as good for the beef industry as he is with his mouth, it would not be in its present difficult situation. He should use his advocacy where it will do some good. I want to speak about the Ferny Grove-Samford line. I do not know whether the department still owns the territory. I hope it has not sold it, although I know there are five-chain curves around the Camp Mountain line. I can see the development that is going on in that area. If we are fair dinkum about improving urban transport for people in outlying areas, I say there is no better method of transport than a steel wheel on a steel track and we should retain it. There is nothing cheaper, better or safer.

Because of a short-sighted attitude in the past we have closed down certain lines. This was done because we had the accountants saying that keeping a railway locomotive in a certain area meant that it had to be costed and charged to that line. The damn thing is going to be idle somewhere at some time whether a line is closed or not. It is eating fuel somewhere else. The test should have been to see how much it really costs to keep the rails, the points, the signals and a few sleepers there, not the cost of the locomotive. If they are not there, they will be somewhere else. The other components will be there whether the line is closed or not.

(Time expired.)

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.4 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate from a somewhat parochial point of view but I make no apology for that. The transport industry generally and the railway industry specifically are very important to my area. The Minister's portfolio is vital to the growth and development of industry in this State, especially in areas outside Brisbane. Directly and indirectly the Acts administered by the Minister influence the quality of life and the general standard of living of people in

Queensland. So it is important that the policies adopted by him and by the Government are so defined as to promote the interests of all Queenslanders not simply the sectional interests of people in the metropolitan region.

It is regrettable that the railways in this State are running at a loss. In introducing the Estimates, the Minister indicated that, despite the proposed average increase of 40 per cent in freight rates, it is expected that there will still be an operating deficiency of \$41,000,000. I do not intend to dwell on that. It is highly debatable whether the role of the railways management is simply to make a profit. The railways have a far greater part to play in the community in developing industry and in generally developing the State. The contributions that the railway and transport systems have made to regional development surely must balance out the loss that we are speaking about here and the losses that have been experienced over many years. However, I still oppose the increase in freight rates because it will disadvantage people outside the Brisbane area—the manufacturers, the retailers, the distributors and, more importantly, the consumers. It will also deter industry from moving into country areas.

Honourable members have heard a great deal of talk about developing the State—developing the regions and the provincial cities—but this increase will deter industry from going to those areas and instead will encourage and promote centralism. It will lead to a significant increase in the cost of living for people in those areas—costs that must be passed on and therefore carried by the ordinary citizen. If there is an additional cost to the manufacturer or the retailer, under the present system he is not expected to bear it. He passes it on to the consumer, and the people in the small towns and rural regions must suffer.

It is a pity, as the honourable member for Cairns said, that the detailed increases have been kept secret. Honourable members are debating very important Estimates; yet they do not know exactly what the specific increase in rail freights will be in the area that they represent or what the exact increase will be on the general goods carried. For example, they do not know what it will cost an ordinary person to transport a refrigerator from, say, Brisbane to Rockhampton or other commodities from Rockhampton to places in the Central Region. Obviously there is a reason for this. It would seem to me that the freight rates that the Minister intends to introduce will further disadvantage the consumers. That is why he was not game to tell us the details when he introduced his Estimates. That is why they have been kept secret and will, I am told, not be released until next Saturday.

I accept the loss in the railways—it is to be expected; it is part of the obligation that Governments must bear—but I question

many of the policies of the National-Liberal Government, which I think are only aggravating the situation and increasing the losses. I refer first to the antipassenger policy of the Railway Department and the Government in Queensland.

Table No. 5, on page 20 of the Report of the Commissioner for Railways, sets out that in the Central Division revenue from coaching traffic fell from \$3,697,359 in 1973-74 to \$3,573,024 last year. If one then looks at the number of passengers carried—and this is exclusive of the season-ticket holders—one sees that the number fell from 104,484 in 1973-74 to only 86,929 in 1974-75. That is an indictment of the Government's policy. It emphasises the need to review the Government's attitude to the carriage of passengers. It is obvious, from what has been said many times before in this Chamber, that the Government is interested in carting coal for the large mining companies but takes little cognisance of the desirability of having some type of passenger commuting system. It also stresses the need for a public relations programme to encourage people to travel by rail again. It was virtually the original means of travel. Once everyone had travelled on a train. I wonder how many young people today have travelled by train, or how many parents are keen to have their children travel by train. The honourable members for Windsor and Isis and others have pointed out that we are losing tremendous revenue in this field. That stresses the necessity for upgrading the standard of travel in the first instance. I agree with the honourable member for Windsor that a lot could be done to improve the catering in the griddle cars.

Mr. Frawley: How would you know? You never use them.

Mr. WRIGHT: I often have to travel on the trains.

Mr. Frawley: I travel on the train to Townsville, and it's quite all right.

Mr. WRIGHT: That's the honourable member's view—if he does not want to see any improvement, that's up to him—but I believe we can do a lot better than what we have done so far.

We can start encouraging the young generation to use the trains, first of all by being a bit generous. Why can't we increase the number of free trips for pensioners? How many trains going from point A to point B have dozens and dozens of vacant seats? Why can't we encourage pensioners to use the trains by giving them more than one free trip? Very few of them will travel alone, they travel with families. The families would be paying passengers, so in that way both the usage of trains and revenue would be increased. Why can't we encourage families by giving further consideration to children? I should like to see free travel for

children up to, say, the age of 10 years, with further special consideration for older children. It would be an encouragement for families to use the trains. That might have to be done for only a few years, but over a period of time we would convince the future generation of the advantages of train travel.

But a different total approach would be needed. We must upgrade the total system. I have heard other Opposition members mention this. Some years ago the honourable member for Cairns spoke about the need for improving passenger train travel. Railwaymen have told me that there is nothing to prevent the installation of piped music in carriages and that there is nothing to prevent the attachment of special carriages. One of them could have a film room, where people could watch films and relax. There would be nothing wrong with having proper restaurant facilities. There would be nothing wrong with having a parlour car where people could totally relax. Let people make it a holiday. That is what I am talking about. We want people to use trains for travel, for relaxation and recreation. Why can't we have a special carriage as a playroom for children—a carriage manned by a trained kindergarten teacher or nurse? In that way parents could thoroughly enjoy their holiday and their children could completely enjoy themselves in that special carriage. All this may be radical thinking, but it is the only way we will get people back on the trains. I suggest that there is every reason why we should do that. We could reintroduce the observation car and we could improve bar facilities. Is there anything to stop us employing coach captains whose task it would be to explain the area being passed through and the various tourist attractions and facilities? Why can't that be done? If the Minister makes the trains a really great tourist facility people will get back to using trains. Such trips would be totally educational, recreational and relaxing. They would be ideal for a family for the holidays. How many parents relax when they travel by car? Mother and father are tense as they worry about accidents. No-one enjoys himself until the car journey is completed. Parents want to relax. They want a chance to throw off their burdens and responsibilities so that they can just sit back and see what is going on.

Mr. Frawley: You are typical of Labor philosophy. You want to do everything for everybody. You'd have people waited on hand and foot.

Mr. WRIGHT: I always thought that the honourable member for Murrumba was in favour of improving facilities and conditions of people. He does not mind if private enterprise does it and in so doing makes hundreds of thousands of dollars' profit, but the moment I suggest that our own railways should do it, he is against it. If he wants people to sit in dogcarts, and if he wants people to have the lowest type of conditions,

that is up to him. Let him say so. I don't think his electors will support him. I believe we need a totally new approach to the use of trains. I ask that the Minister consider these things.

Tourism is the growing industry of this State. It is our coming industry, and we have the national assets to make it the State's greatest industry. Train travel is the ideal medium for recreation. It is safer; it is more relaxing; it is the ideal way for families to travel on their holidays.

The second point I wish to raise pertains to the Government's attitude to private enterprise, this time to the railfast freight groups QRX and F. H. Stephens. I am amazed that special treatment is given to private enterprise transport groups to the serious detriment of the Railway Department. This is threatening the jobs of railwaymen, yet Government members are prepared to sit back and let it continue. They are prepared to give special provisions and conditions that are disadvantageous to the Railway Department and the consumers. I wonder what increase has occurred in general goods traffic since QRX and other firms entered the game? I am sure they are making great inroads into the tonnages carried by the Railway Department.

There are three rates. First is the classification rate for John Citizen; second is the contract rate for ordinary businesses and third is the bulk contract rate for QRX and the F. H. Stephens group.

As at 2 September 1975, the bulk contract rates to Rockhampton were: for the first 12 tonnes, \$22 a tonne with an additional \$11.80 a tonne on QLX wagons; for the first 10 tonnes, \$22 a tonne with an additional charge of \$11 a tonne for the VLC wagons. I shall compare those rates with the classification rates as per by-law 1038, which are as follows: Rockhampton, B class \$23.75; class 1 \$30.70 and class 2 \$57.60. The contract rate applying to an ordinary business is \$31.50 a tonne.

Mr. Jones: When they are costing the rate to charge the consumer, they always charge the classification rate, not the contract rate.

Mr. WRIGHT: That point is well made.

How many consumers benefit from the special contract rate under the bulk system?

Mr. Moore: Everybody does; it is passed on.

Mr. WRIGHT: No-one does, and the honourable member knows it.

People use it only because it is a door-to-door service—a special service. They are not required to get the goods to the railhead and pick them up at the other end. That is why they use it. The cost advantage is not passed on.

Special rebates are given on the transport of beer. I was told that it amounted to about \$8 a tonne on the transport of Fourx beer from Brisbane to Rockhampton. It certainly does a lot for our own brewery to know that it has to compete with something like that! When goods are railed from the metropolitan area to the country, the sender does all right with freight rates, but anyone who wants to send something from a country region to Brisbane hasn't a hope in hell. That is the trouble. The Government has always been pro the metropolitan area and anti the country regions. It is time we did something about it. It is time we gave the QRX groups a kick in the backside. They are not passing on benefits to the ordinary people or to the retailers in provincial cities like Rockhampton and country towns like Emerald and Blackwater. The situation is ridiculous. It is a wonder that the honourable member for Belyando has not raised it.

Mr. Lester: You know I'll be getting up.

Mr. WRIGHT: The honourable member has been very quiet to date.

The system is ridiculous. Fuel is transported from Rockhampton to Emerald and brought back to Blackwater. The extra cost is met by the people of Blackwater. That shows how ridiculous the system is and how it disadvantages the ordinary consumer. Priority is given to the QRX groups, especially when there is a shortage of wagons. The public do not know that many of these firms hold up their wagons for three or four days until they are filled. There is no advantage in price, only the convenience of the door-to-door service.

I ask the Minister, through you, Mr. Hewitt, why the Railway Department cannot introduce a similar door-to-door service? Why can't we compete properly? The Minister has said that we should be competing but that we do not want it tied up so that we are the only ones controlling it. The Minister announced relief from certain fees for road transport operators to encourage true competition. If there is to be true competition, surely the Railway Department has a right to compete, too. New Zealand has its own delivery services; it has its own railway and ferry services. The Railway Department is deeply involved in tourism. It even has its own safari tours. It is totally wrong to give these privileges to private enterprise when the Railway Department could provide a better service to the consumers and industries in the State.

If the Government is really interested in improving revenue, instead of increasing freight rates why doesn't it expand and improve its services. Let us be a little innovative. Let us be competitive. The present system is discriminating against the rest of the community. As I said before,

the bulk rates are far cheaper than the classification rates yet the benefit is not being passed on to the ordinary person.

How much consideration is given to the cartage of domestic goods? What does one pay to send a suite of furniture from Brisbane to Rockhampton? A massive sum! But if it is coal to be transported, the freight is something like one-sixth of that figure. It is time the Government started thinking about country people and industry in the provincial and rural areas instead of allowing private enterprise to monopolise our facilities to the disadvantage of the people of this State.

I am told that Archer Park Railway Station in Rockhampton is used by private enterprise for a very small fee. It has even been suggested that no fee is charged and that the Railway Department itself has spent many thousands of dollars upgrading its facilities for private enterprise. That is the people's money. I would be interested to know what revenue the department has gained from the Archer Park Railway Station. It is time that some priority was given to the people of Queensland and the ordinary consumer.

The final point I wish to raise in the few moments I have left to me is one that comes from the Annual Report of the Commissioner for Transport. He refers to the legislation covered by the Minister. We know that this covers rail, road, sea and air transport. There is a lot of dissention in the State about this Government's attitude to A.N.L. and how it is discriminating against ports such as Port Alma. It is time the Minister for Transport took over the responsibility for shipping instead of its coming under the Department of Harbours and Marine. It is time we repealed the Act introduced in 1960 that transferred the huge cost of running Port Alma to the ratepayers of Rockhampton. Something like \$700,000 has been committed over the years by the ratepayers to keep Port Alma going. Why can't it be involved in the intrastate trade?

Mr. Aikens: It's not enough.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am pleased to hear the honourable member say that. I thought he claimed to support people in the provincial centres. Apparently he is a metropolitan hack, too.

We should be thinking of the waterside workers. In 1971 there were 150 waterside workers at Port Alma. Today 66 men in Rockhampton are working on the wharves, averaging something like \$214 per month as a guarantee. That is because the port has not been given a fair go. We asked the Premier to do something about it. He refused on the basis that it would disadvantage the railways. That statement has been refuted by the A.R.U. It has been refuted by everyone else.

It is time we had an over-all look at transportation in the State. There is no reason why Port Alma cannot be given a go. It has been called a white elephant but it is a millstone round the necks of the Rockhampton people. I am told that it has been estimated that next year \$147,000 will have to be paid by the citizens of Rockhampton to meet the debts of Port Alma. That is unjust. That burden has been placed on the people by an Act of Parliament emanating from this Chamber—an Act of Parliament that should never have been passed.

The Minister for Transport should assume responsibility in this field. He should be responsible for ports. He should do something about removing these debts from Port Alma. He should be doing something to upgrade the 13 or 14 provincial ports along Queensland's coast, because they are just as important as the railways; they are just as important as road transport. However, it would seem that no cognisance is taken of their worth. No cognisance is taken of the many families who are suffering because the ports are dying. It is all very well for private enterprise. It is all very well to reduce or abolish road transport fees. What about the 66 wharfie families? What about the railwaymen who are directly involved? What about the transport workers, too, working between Port Alma and Rockhampton? What about giving them some consideration? What about doing something for all of those people in our provincial centre? I accept that the Minister has some problems with costs, but I believe he should adopt a different policy in his portfolio. He should expand its responsibilities and improve the facilities for the people of Queensland.

Mr. AIKENS (Townsville South) (3.24 p.m.): The honourable member for Rockhampton has spoken about the alleged neglect of the port of Rockhampton. It has cost the taxpayers of Queensland hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years. For many years I sat in this Chamber and heard Mr. Jim Burrows, the A.L.P. member for Port Curtis, express his opinions of Port Alma. I suggest that the honourable member for Rockhampton, who is always going to "Hansard" to pinch bits and pieces of my speeches to use as his own, go to "Hansard" and get some bits and pieces of Jim Burrows' speeches about the Rockhampton port and use them as his own.

I congratulate and compliment the Minister for Transport on his attitude to one of the greatest and most pressing problems confronting us today—the frightful slaughter and toll of the road. I congratulate him on at least saying that it is the duty of a member of Parliament to protect the lives of the innocent and decent people who use the roads. To that end, he believes that there should be adequate penalties for those drivers who slaughter and maim innocent people and adequate safeguards for those innocent people.

I read in today's "Telegraph" an article that disgusted most of us. It was headed "Drink-driving ease-up call". It was fed to the "Telegraph" by the honourable member for South Brisbane. I have never made a personal attack on anybody, so I shall not make one on him. But, as a politician, he would appear to be just as supercilious, sarcastic, and perhaps repulsive as the man he defeated—Fred Bromley. The present honourable member for South Brisbane advocates that this Parliament ease up on the murderers on the road; that we ease up on those people who slaughter and maim innocent men, women and children.

I would like him, and other Government members who were quite vociferous at yesterday's party meeting in their support of these drunken killers, to go into their electorates and tell the people where they stand. I want them to say to their constituents, "We are not concerned about you decent people. We are concerned only with the drunken drivers and with doing all that we possibly can to protect them from the exigencies of the law." That is a fair enough request.

Mr. Lindsay: They should go to the casualty ward at the Royal Brisbane Hospital on any Saturday night.

Mr. AIKENS: They should go to a casualty ward at any hospital at any time. There they would see the victims of the people whom they are doing all they possibly can to protect. I do not intend to labour this point. Politics is a matter of majority versus minority. I say without any qualification that 90 per cent of motorists are decent, law-abiding citizens. Those motorists, as well as those who are not motorists—the cyclist and perhaps the mother pushing a pram—want the drink-drivers cleaned up.

But we have men such as the honourable member for South Brisbane and perhaps another half dozen vociferous members of the Government who say to the world, "Never mind about the ordinary, decent, law-abiding motorists or citizens. We will take our stand shoulder to shoulder with the drunken killer." I repeat that I want them to go out and tell the people what they believe. If ever I go into their electorates I will tell the people—I know the supporters in the Government parties of the drunken killers. I think it is a monstrous state of affairs.

Mr. McKechnie: They are only a very small minority.

Mr. AIKENS: They are a small minority but the article in the "Telegraph", which was fed to it by the honourable member for South Brisbane, creates the impression that the majority of Government members are on the side of the drink-drivers.

It is the avowed policy of the A.L.P. to stick with the drink-drivers. I said that a long while ago. I also suggested that the name of the party should be changed to D.D.P.—the Drunken Drivers' Party. There should be a coalition of the six or 10 Government members and the A.L.P., to form the D.D.P. Of the 11 A.L.P. members, only four are on the side of the decent, law-abiding citizen.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Australian Labor Party attitude to this matter has nothing to do with the Estimates under review.

Mr. AIKENS: Thank you, Mr. Hewitt. To be quite candid I anticipated your rebuke. I know what an excellent Chairman you are. I know that you are a man with a lot of humanitarianism in you and that you feel, as I do, for the innocent citizens who are slaughtered and maimed on the roads each day. I shall not pursue the matter, Mr. Hewitt. I know that I cannot embarrass you when you are in the chair—it is almost impossible to embarrass you anywhere—but I will say this: I feel sure that you are not on side with the eight to 10 members of the National and Liberal Parties who, with the honourable member for South Brisbane, stand shoulder to shoulder, sword, buckler and shield, with the drunken slaughterers on the roads in this State.

I now want to reply to a few of the points that the honourable member for Rockhampton tried to make. He spoke about boosting the image of the Railway Department in passenger travel. I do not know how many railwaymen go on holidays every year, but when they do they are given free first-class railway passes for themselves and their families. I am prepared to say that only 10 per cent of them ever use those passes.

Mr. Wright: Do you want to know why?

Mr. AIKENS: I know why.

Mr. Wright: Conditions are shocking.

Mr. AIKENS: "Conditions are shocking" nothing! Anyone will tell the honourable member for Rockhampton (of course, it is impossible to tell him anything) that the greatest enemy of railway passenger traffic all over the world is the private motor-car. It is the greatest economic enemy of the railway service. I know railwaymen; I mix with them. I do not live in a little ivory tower in a cloistered atmosphere. I mix with the workers every day. I mix particularly with railwaymen because I am an old railwayman myself. When their holidays come round, railwaymen load the family into the car or semi-trailer and away they go.

Mr. Burns: Semi-trailer?

Mr. AIKENS: Well, whatever you call it—caravan. You couldn't get them onto a train with a bulldozer, and that is all there is to it. If the honourable member for Rockhampton knew anything about people, he would know that that is true.

The honourable member for Windsor made a few remarks (they were almost incomprehensible, but we got the gist of them) about the griddle car and a few other things. I travelled from Mt. Isa to Townsville by the "Inlander" only a couple of months ago. I think that I would know as much as any man here of working conditions in the Railway Department. I worked for 27 years in that department under the shocking, deplorable, shall I say Afghan conditions to which we were subjected in the days of an A.L.P. Government. We worked on the old steam locomotives under shocking conditions. We camped in apologies for quarters. I wonder if the honourable member for Cairns happened to be in the Railway Department when there was a little broken-down tin shed at Innisfail that did service as railway quarters?

Mr. Jones: I was not there when you were sacked in the 1931 strike.

Mr. AIKENS: I was not sacked in the 1931 strike. The Moore Government refused to re-employ me because I was a striker against that Government. I stuck by the A.L.P., and many men who scabbed on me and my mates in the 1931 strike came into this Parliament later as A.L.P. members. I am surprised that the honourable member for Cairns mentioned the 1931 strike.

Was the honourable member ever in the Dajarra quarters in their blooming days, with the dirt floor, the goats eating the soap, and the old canvas stretchers that we had for beds?

Mr. Wright: Would you say things have changed?

Mr. AIKENS: They have changed. Anyone who worked in the Railway Department under the A.L.P. knew what work was. As a boy of 17 years I worked on trains when, even if we ran to time, we were 17 hours 10 minutes on duty. No-one can tell me about conditions in the Railway Department in those days.

I worked, too, for 13 years on the downs, as they are called, from Nonda to Cloncurry, when the line was only a 42 lb. rail on a sleeper bed with very little ballast under it. We would run the C16s, and we would hop and jump along. As a matter of fact, some of the greatest buckjump riders in the world could not have ridden the engines that we worked on the western downs. Some of the conditions we worked under were absolutely shocking, so it was a great surprise to me that my return journey from Mt. Isa to Townsville on the "Inlander" was a pleasure. I went to Mt. Isa—I think just

after Christmas—to address a couple of meetings, make a couple of statements and appear with others on the first colour television performance in that city.

I think the “Inlander” ran to Townsville about seven hours faster than we used to do it in the old days of steam. I had a very good sleep all the way from Mt. Isa. As a matter of fact, I slept from Duchess to Prairie, if honourable members know where that is. Then I went back to the griddle car and had what I thought was a very satisfactory meal. Comparing the conditions enjoyed by passengers today in the “Inlander”, the “Sunlander”, the “Midlander” and the “Westlander” with the conditions under which passengers had to travel when the A.L.P. was in power is like comparing Buckingham Palace with a rag-picker’s hut, so members of the A.L.P. should be the last people—

Mr. Jones: It was Jack Duggan who introduced those trains.

Mr. AIKENS: Jack Duggan introduced the “Inlander”, and what happened when he introduced it? Although I was not in the railways at the time, my mates worked that train and they had to put two T17’s on it to pull the damned thing.

Mr. Lamont: Before your time runs out, repeat to my face what you said behind my back.

Mr. AIKENS: I have no time to talk to you. You go and talk to those drunken killers on the roads. You go and talk to your political blood brothers.

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. I take severe umbrage at the comments of the honourable member for Townsville South and I would like him to prove the statements.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no onus on the honourable member to prove anything.

Mr. AIKENS: I say again with all the calmness at my command that he should go and take—

Mr. LAMONT: A point of order!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member wishes to take a point of order.

Mr. LAMONT: I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark, which I find offensive to me.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. AIKENS: What remark?

The CHAIRMAN: I should imagine the honourable member is taking umbrage at the comment that certain drunks are his blood brothers. I uphold his point of order.

Mr. AIKENS: If he takes umbrage to it, Mr. Hewitt, I will withdraw it, and I am glad

I hurt him. He deserves to be hurt. Any man who will line up with drunken slaughterers and maimers on the roads—

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. I again take exception to those remarks and ask that they be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that remark. I suggest that he then come back to the Estimates.

Mr. AIKENS: I withdraw it. I know you are very fair, Mr. Hewitt. But, as I say, time has always vindicated me. Time will tell. Time will show on whose side the honourable member is.

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr. LAMONT: That is a qualified retraction. I ask for an unqualified withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no further point of order.

Mr. AIKENS: I agree with you, Mr. Hewitt; he should confine the rest of his activities to crawling and trucking to the drunken killers. Now, I just want to say—

Mr. LAMONT: I rise to a point of order. I find that remark offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I sustain that point of order.

Mr. AIKENS: If it hurt him, as it obviously did, I am pleased to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: I should be pleased if the honourable member would return to the Estimates:

Mr. AIKENS: I will clarify that point before I am finished.

Let us see what has happened in South Australia and, I understand, in Tasmania, where the A.L.P. Governments—and Labor would do it in this State, led by the honourable member for Lytton—handed over the railways to the Commonwealth Government. As we know, the railways are losing money. They are performing a public service and, if the Commonwealth Government took over, one of two things, perhaps both, must happen. It would have to either increase freights and fares or cut services.

I know how glad members of the Labor Party—not only the Federal Labor Party but the State Labor Party—would be to cut services to the back-country people of this State, because we all know how much they hate the man on the land. They hate the farmer, they hate the miner, they hate the pastoralists, and they are doing all they possibly can in the Federal sphere to bankrupt everybody who does not live in the capital cities. If we give them control of our railways, they will do exactly the same,

they will use the Railway Department as a bludgeon or instrument to further cripple and wound the people who live and work in the country—the salt of the earth. Without the people who work in the country, without those who produce things in the country, no nation can survive.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr. AIKENS: I am probably hurting some of the friends of the drunken drivers. If I am, I am happy about that.

Having made my point, with the tolerance that I expect from you because of the broadness of your vision and your humanitarian attitude, Mr. Hewitt, I am happy now to go and catch a plane to my beloved Northland. When I get there, I will expose every friend in this Parliament of the drunken killer—I know them, the whole nine of them; seven members of the Liberal Party, two members of the National Party—and I will name every one of them.

Mr. LESTER (Belyando) (3.40 p.m.): I preface my remarks by making a few complimentary comments about the Minister for Transport. First, I take the opportunity to thank him for coming to my electorate on many occasions and doing his best to try to assist those who work in the Railway Department in Clermont and other centres. His efforts are very much appreciated, and I assure him that his visits have not gone unnoticed.

I also take the opportunity to say a few words of praise to all the railwaymen who live and work in my electorate, many of whom do a great deal to assist the community in a great number of ways. Their contribution is very valuable, and I am sure that we would all be much worse off if we did not have their assistance. In the Belyando electorate, people rely heavily on the Railway Department and the railway system. The railways carry grain, cattle, coal and sheep from the area and they bring into it building materials for houses, and so on. They also carry people to and from the area.

I am very disappointed at the 40 per cent increase in rail freights, and I ask the Minister to take up the matter with a view to having the magnitude of the increase reduced. It is very difficult for country people to meet such a high increase at present. I can easily understand why it has been introduced, and I remind the Committee that it is not nearly as bad as some of the increases in transport charges introduced by the Federal Labor Government since it assumed office. Increases in aviation costs, for example, have been scandalous.

I wish to comment briefly on vandals—people who make their mark on trains and, indeed, on the property of many Government departments. I appeal to them to show

respect for and look after Government property. If they do, they will find that in the long run they have less tax to pay because the maintenance costs of Government departments will be reduced. I would simply say that if I find any vandal marking Government property, God help him! He knows very well that he should not be doing it.

I should like now to gently remind the Minister that a new railway station at Duaringa would be very much appreciated. Besides being a very important change-over point in the coal traffic, Duaringa is the centre for the Foleyvale and Woorabinda Aboriginal Communities. Of course, I have a very soft spot for Duaringa because I began my career there. I will always remember the good and wonderful people in that town. The railway station is very old and plans are in hand for the construction of a new one. The people of Duaringa and surrounding areas would be very happy if the Minister could expedite its construction.

Dingo, which has a large station, is a centre for railway fettlers, and septic toilets would be very welcome there. As the Minister is aware, very serious accommodation problems exist at Bluff. We greatly appreciate what the department is trying to do in the provision of more houses and single-men's quarters. Major expenditure by the department is necessary in this most important change-over point for the carriage of coal from Blackwater to Gladstone. I hope that in future some of the problems can be avoided by greater contributions by mining companies towards the cost of providing facilities for railwaymen employed on the carting of coal. Coppabella is an excellent example of the results of co-operation between the Railway Department and the coal-mining companies in the provision of good accommodation. Of course, when Blackwater was first starting up we were more or less still working out the best deal possible for railwaymen and the mining companies. Unfortunately, Blackwater was somewhat of a guinea pig, but I am sure we will gain from what we learned from that exercise.

I should like to see more amenities provided in Blackwater. The accommodation for fettling gangs should be upgraded, and amenity blocks should be provided without too much delay. I appreciate the fact that many of the fettlers' huts have had electricity connected. All the way from Bluff to Blackwater and Comet electricity is progressively being connected, and this is deeply appreciated by the fettlers. Although there is a lot of criticism about fettlers' conditions, much of which I agree with, we should remember that until the Labor Government went out of office many railway fettlers lived in tents. In saying that I am not being critical; I am merely pointing out the fact. Admittedly, fettlers' conditions could be improved; nevertheless they are a long way ahead of what they were when Labor went out of office.

Emerald is a major town in my electorate. It is the centre point for the branch lines to the West, to Springsure in the south, and to Clermont and Blair Athol in the north. The establishment of the maintenance and shunting area is very much appreciated, but there is a very definite need to upgrade the existing facilities. A lot of the equipment, sheds and so on are very old. I know the department has drawn up plans for necessary renovations, and it would be appreciated if that work could be done quickly.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: A very important centre.

Mr. LESTER: I thank the Minister for reiterating my point. The Minister has inspected all the buildings in Emerald. He made a very good name for himself when he went there. Without doubt, his visit to Emerald helped me to win the seat of Belyando. His excellent performance in that town helped me, and I thank him for it.

Recently I went through the workshops at Alpha with some of the railwaymen, and I again inspected the facilities provided for maintaining the locomotives that are used on the Western line. The men there are doing a particularly good job. We have, however, had a problem with the trucking yards. They should be combined with the saleyards to make it easier for cattlemen to sell their cattle and have them railed away quickly. Inspectors board trains to inspect cattle for ticks and other pests.

Jericho now has a new railway station, so that, with the new one at Blackwater, the Belyando electorate now has two new stations. That is an indication of the progress in that area.

I should like to see a little more work done on houses for the Capella people, including the station-master. Although excellent maintenance work has been done on the Clermont Railway Station—and this is appreciated—a new station for Clermont should be high on the list of priorities. Recently the railway station was repainted. Honourable members should have seen it before that!

The railway station at Blair Athol is being phased out of service as a station and will be only a checkpoint for the loading of coal.

I look forward to the day when there is a rail service to the town of Moranbah. Goods sent by rail to Moranbah are off-loaded at Coppabella, which is about 30 miles away. This is very awkward for people in Moranbah, who have to arrange the transport of goods from Coppabella at additional cost. At the same time, road transport to Moranbah is encouraged. While I recognise the value of road transport, I realise that railwaymen play an important part in the communities in which they live. They put back into these towns some of the money they earn. I am sure that anything I can do by way of pushing for a

railway line to Moranbah will be appreciated by the local people. Moranbah is going ahead in leaps and bounds and will grow into a very large town. I ask the Minister to consider extending the line to Moranbah. That would make things much better for everyone concerned, including the honourable member for Belyando.

Collinsville has its housing problems. I thank the Minister for his personal efforts in helping me solve some of them. I am afraid I do not know how we can overcome all of them.

Mr. Frawley: I hear that you are on the New Year's Honours List.

Mr. LESTER: When the honourable member gets a railway line to Redcliffe, I shall listen to his interjections.

The railway line between Collinsville and Scottville, which is used to carry coal, is in a very poor state. Unless care is exercised by train crews a derailment could well occur.

Whilst a lot needs to be done to improve the railway services in the area I represent—I know a lot more is to be done—much has been achieved in it. I again express the appreciation of the railway people in my electorate, who are trying their best to give good service to the community.

Mr. Frawley: They all vote for you.

Mr. LESTER: Many railway people have voted for me. At Bluff, the vote was very close. It is a fact that many railway people have voted for me. However, my speech this afternoon is not designed to get anybody to vote for me. I am only highlighting the good qualities of the railway people in my area and what needs to be done. I am telling the Minister about these things. The area's needs are a matter of concern to every railway station-master, ganger, guard and engine driver who lives there. I am sure that they support my representations.

Goods are carried to the Belyando electorate by rail, aircraft and McCafferty's Highlander bus service. I know that the Minister has no control over aircraft charges, but since the Federal Labor Government came to power I have been greatly distressed to note that aircraft charges have been increased dramatically. The Federal Government believes that the Department of Civil Aviation should be totally self-supporting. While this idea is good in concept, it does not work well in practice. Eventually the cost has to be met by the consumer. It becomes extremely costly for him to use the service. In my area we are faced with very high aircraft freight charges. Passenger fares have also increased. It is a fact that many of the commuter airlines in Queensland have been phased out since the increase made by the Federal Labor Government to air navigation charges. A private individual who owns a Cessna aircraft has to meet a cost of \$800-odd just to leave the

aircraft on the ground. That cost is too high. Some people might consider an aircraft to be a luxury for country people. For many of them, especially those in the more remote areas, it is an absolute necessity. And they are the people who, by their pioneering, have made such a valuable contribution towards the development of our country.

It is disappointing to me that so many charges incurred by owners of light aircraft have been increased. If charges imposed on commuter airlines continue to rise, many more services to the country areas will be phased out. We do not want that to happen. In fact, recently the tendering system was changed. Ansett, who have done away with the services of Nationwide—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is straying too far from the Estimates under review.

Mr. LESTER: Very well, Mr. Hewitt. At least you know now what my thoughts are on the subject. I will return to the relevant Estimates.

I refer to McCafferty's Highland Bus Service. The licence for its operation was granted by the present Minister after I had made representations to him. The service is going very well and is providing an excellent service to the area of the Central Highlands. Only the other day I spoke with the proprietor, Mr. Jack McCafferty, who told me that he was very pleased with the public's response to the service. He is happy about the co-operation he has received from the Minister and his department. No doubt he has a few rows with the department now and again on some aspects of policy, but generally speaking he has received good co-operation from the Minister since the introduction of the service.

Might I add that the service will be even a more valuable one if the Comet River Bridge can be attended to fairly quickly. I have written to the Minister about the possibility of placing a loading ramp at one end of the bridge with a view to transporting vehicles across the Comet River by a shuttle train in time of flood. A little while ago the Minister said that he would look at the matter. The wet season is coming, so I would like him to look at it very soon so that something might be done to avoid the enormous problems that occur at about Christmas-time when many people are left stranded after rain.

The Central Highlands is a tourist area which relies for its prosperity on the railways, the roads and the bus service. If something could be done to provide an access across the Comet River until the new bridge is built (that will be after the Dawson River Bridge is completed), it would be appreciated.

Mr. Frawley: Have any representations been made to the Minister about your electorate by the member for Rockhampton?

Mr. LESTER: That is always on. I have become used to that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That, too, is not particularly relevant.

Mr. WRIGHT: I rise to a point of order, which I think needs to be taken.

Mr. LESTER: I am used to it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Belyando will resume his seat while I listen to the point of order.

Mr. WRIGHT: I do not think I have ever made representations on behalf of the member's electorate. What he is saying is untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Is the honourable member for Rockhampton asking for a withdrawal?

Mr. WRIGHT: Yes, I am asking for a withdrawal.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I wish that when honourable members take points of order they would not belabour them. I wish, too, that the member for Murrumba would not disrupt proceedings so much by interjection.

Mr. Frawley: I was trying to help.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Belyando will accept the honourable member's request for a withdrawal.

Mr. LESTER: I will be a man and, since the remark is offensive to the honourable member for Rockhampton, I totally withdraw it. I am dreadfully sorry that I offended him. I hope I never offend him again. And might I say I hope he never offends me or comes to my electorate.

(Time expired.)

Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (4 p.m.): The Estimates and functions of the Department of Transport are under review in this debate. That department is quite complex and interesting. It is divided quite clearly into more than one section. It demands quite a degree of supervision by the Minister to ensure that some of the professional officers under his control do not become gods in their own right. By and large the Minister does a fairly good job in keeping a watch on his subdepartments and in managing them.

The Minister for Transport is regarded highly in the community. Whenever he visits country towns, he is well received by the various sections of the community who study at first hand the problems that can arise in both the Department of Transport and the Department of Railways. The Minister is honest and forthright. The comments made by country members about his visits to their electorates and how well he has looked after those electorates are warranted.

I shall direct most of my remarks to the road toll and road safety. These subjects should concern all honourable members. Statistics give a clear indication of the disastrous increase in the toll of the road in recent years. It may not be generally known by some honourable members that in the past 20 years, from 1954 to 1974, the number of persons injured on the road has increased by 118 per cent, while the number of persons killed during that same period has increased by 90 per cent. All honourable members should be deeply concerned about those two simple figures. The cost of road accidents to Australia is estimated at between \$500,000,000 and \$1,000 million per annum, or about 2 per cent of the Gross National Product of this country.

The reasons for this dramatic increase include an increase in the volume of road traffic. Since 1954, the number of motor vehicles registered in this country has increased by something like 200 per cent. Greater affluence and growth in population have had a striking effect on motor vehicle usage. In addition, traffic situations encountered by motorists have become more complex.

The mobility afforded by the motor vehicle, particularly the motor-car, has led to new patterns of social behaviour and communication across our State and across this continent. The motor vehicle has also become a means of social expression and is regarded by many people as being a status symbol. Just as the tycoon or company director has to drive a Mercedes Benz saloon, the young man about town needs a new with-it sports car, the latest and fastest motorcycle, or a fancy panel van to carry his surfboard to the coast. The motor vehicle also leads to anti-social expression by a few people in the community. It has led to increased problems in road safety and has become a greater menace in recent times. Road safety engineers have become almost scientists and the collection of statistics has become an art that tends to confuse many people.

I was interested in some of the criticisms that appeared in the October issue of the R.A.C.Q. journal, "The Road Ahead". The article—I do not know whether it is to be believed—criticised the basic information which was available to the R.A.C.Q. survey team in its recent appraisal of the State's highways. This is the comment made—

"Neither the Queensland Road Safety Council, the Police Department or the Main Roads Department are able to provide the R.A.C.Q. with a list of accident sites in which fatal accidents occurred in the past 12 months on a particular highway being surveyed."

I think that that is rather disappointing. I can remember some years ago the introduction of the practice of marking on roads the sites of fatal accidents. I know from personal experience with people with whom

I was associated at the time that this had a distinct effect on the way in which they drove in the vicinity of those marks.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: The red diamonds?

Mr. LANE: Yes, marked on the roadway. They instilled a degree of fear in motorists and warned them to be careful when driving near such spots. The answer apparently received by the R.A.C.Q. when it made the request that I have mentioned to the three agencies was that the compilation of such statistics is time-consuming and "will be examined when to hand". One would expect those agencies to have this information readily available.

There are some quite notable accident sites in the city. No doubt we all remember the Normanby Fiveways and the Shafston Avenue-Main Street intersection at Kangaroo Point, where a number of red triangles were painted on the road. Those places became known, at least by those who were attempting to drive carefully and ensure that they did not become involved in accidents.

I think that in recent years the problem of road safety has become so immense that too often short-term and over-simple solutions are sought and sometimes applied—on many occasions to suit a political end by enabling someone in the area of road safety to make a dramatic statement to the Press to offset an accusation made by an equally irresponsible person on the road toll. One of these over-simple solutions has been referred to in the Press in recent days. I refer to the imposition of unnecessary and excessively harsh penalties on traffic offenders. I am one who believes that the motorist is already paying enough for the right—I believe it is a right these days—to operate a motor vehicle on the roads. Yet daily he has imposed on him extra taxes, extra penalties and extra restrictions that I think have become excessive. I would rather see more time spent on finding a whole set of varied solutions to the problem of bringing down the road toll.

The president of the R.A.C.Q. commented in the same journal on what he referred to as a fragmentary approach to the causes of road accidents, and he was critical of the machinery in Australia for reducing the road toll. He said that the present approach was fragmented. All kinds of organisations had been set up, he said, by the State Government and the Federal Government to research these causes, but there are too many of them. Mr. McCafferty was on an inspection tour of R.A.C.Q. facilities in North Queensland, and he made his comments during the course of his tour. I know him, and he is a responsible man. I think he has made fair comment on the analysis of road statistics.

The trouble is that people tend to look for one simple solution to the problem of reducing the road toll. Perhaps they really do not care; they may be merely playing at politics.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: One of the real problems is that there are so many individual experts in their own right.

Mr. LANE: Certainly with so many individual experts, so many bush lawyers in the field, that's right. It is a matter that interests everyone as almost everyone drives a motor vehicle or is a pedestrian. I think that the problem is a very complex one and we should examine a whole range of solutions to bring down the road toll, things that may not in themselves be overly dramatic but will be effective. I suggest that it is results that we want—not drama, not grandstanding not publicity, but results—because it is a very serious problem.

I do not deny the necessity for having adequate penalties provided under the Act. There should be adequate fines so that it is an imposition to pay them, something that people would avoid and, in avoiding them, perhaps observe the road laws. There should, in the more serious cases of dangerous driving and reckless driving, be provision for the imprisonment of the frequent offender, the person who comes back for more each time. He should be put in gaol before he perhaps kills someone else.

I think the revoking of drivers' licences under the Act is a very good idea, but I think it is applied in some areas where it is unnecessary. For example, I am opposed to the proposition that points should be marked against a man's licence for the simple breach of not fastening his seat-belt before he drives off. This sort of offence should be treated in the same manner as illegal parking. A driver should be fined for it. There should be a greater degree of enforcement in this respect but I do not think the penalty should extend—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to remind the honourable member that the rule of the Committee provides that the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply. In other words, Committee discussions must be related to Estimates and administrative matters only.

Mr. LANE: Well, an administrative matter I would like to apply myself to is the enforcement of the Traffic Act, which is one of the Minister's responsibilities. I suggest that more attention should be given to the enforcement of the provisions of the Traffic Act. I would like to see more drivers under the influence of liquor—not drunk, but under the influence of liquor—prosecuted and to have a more reasonable penalty so that the provisions of the Act would cover a wider section of the community. If more people were concerned that they might be caught after having seven or eight glasses of beer and then driving their motor vehicles, we would be better off. Those are the people we are talking about—not people who are dead drunk and fall over on their face but people who have had just sufficient liquor

to affect their reactions in extreme circumstances. I think that category of people should be put before the court more frequently than they are but I do not believe there is any necessity to throw the book at them, particularly if they are first offenders.

Mr. Dean: Wait outside the hotels for them to come out.

Mr. LANE: The honourable member for Sandgate would like the police to wait outside the hotels for people to come out. No doubt they would all have to spend 15 minutes blowing into a bag or a machine before they could get into their cars. He would probably throw them on the ground and take a blood test as well.

Mr. Dean: I wouldn't.

Mr. LANE: In fact I know exactly what the honourable member would do. He would close all the hotels. He would also close all the licensed restaurants. He would close any place that sells alcoholic liquor at any time and bring about total prohibition. That is the view of the honourable member for Sandgate. In my opinion it is a very narrow-minded view. I think he has a stupid prejudice, but certainly he is entitled to it. I believe there should be greater enforcement of the provisions of the Act—more prosecutions—as the first plank in a plan to cut down the road toll.

Probably one of the most important steps to improve road safety is to design roads in such a way that people are prevented from running into one another—for example, divided roads on each part of which all motorists travel in the same direction and only the most foolish will run into the rear of the vehicle in front.

I have referred on other occasions to the Shafston Avenue-Main Street intersection at Kangaroo Point. Those honourable members who had an opportunity to see the accident-analysis map in the office of the Superintendent of Traffic in Brisbane before the installation of the overpass know that the map was covered with pins, flags and markings of all sorts at that intersection, indicating that there had been numerous deaths and quite a large number of persons injured in the many road accidents that occurred there almost weekly. Some improvements were made to the road and an overpass was installed. I had a look at the map again after the work had been done and there was not one pin on the map in that area. That illustrates the great benefits that flow from well-designed roads on which the curves and grades are engineered in such a way as to ensure that the greatest opportunity is provided for motorists to drive safely.

The surface of the road is another important feature of road design. It should be textured in such a way as to create more friction and give better skid resistance to the tyres on motor vehicles. Road surfaces should be adequately drained so that rain water

can escape readily. This can be done by allowing an appropriate degree of slope when the road is designed. Simple things such as these, which can be done by engineers, save lives on the road.

Another feature of road design is what are referred to as roadside objects. They include traffic signals, overhead lighting, trees, fences, posts and so on. If they are badly placed or too stout or too strong, in some instances they may kill a motorist whose vehicle runs off the road. It is quite possible for any of us to have a tyre blow-out, Mr. Gunn, and run off the road. If there is a tree or a stout steel post at the roadside and our vehicle runs headlong into it, there is a chance that we will at least be seriously injured and possibly be killed as a result of that accident. It is necessary to take that into consideration when roads are being designed.

Road safety can also be improved, of course, by ensuring that proper road signs are provided so that each motorist knows where he is going, where to turn off, where to stop, and where dangers lie in his path. Roads should be adequately line-marked to encourage drivers to keep to their correct side of the carriageway. When I was taught to drive, there were no white lines down the middle of the road. I was taught to watch the left-hand edge of the bitumen—where there was bitumen back in the days of Labor's administration—and keep the left wheel of my vehicle an inch or two from the edge of the bitumen. These days drivers tend to aim between the edge of the bitumen and the white line in the middle of the road, and there is a tendency for them to wander from side to side as the part of the carriageway that is available to them narrows or widens.

Mr. Campbell: In those days you had to be careful of the corrugations, too.

Mr. LANE: Yes. Of course, anyone who has driven on some of the roads in the West in the days of Labor's administration will know just how little the A.L.P. thought about road construction. It had no part in the master socialist plan.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DEAN (Sandgate) (4.20 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to this very important debate. First of all I express my gratitude to the Commissioner for Transport (Mr. K. M. Seeney) and his staff, and the staff of the Minister's department, for the very courteous treatment and consideration I have received over the last 12 months whenever I have had occasion to write or present a query or problem. The response has always been very good. I ask the Minister to convey to them my words of appreciation. I am sure I am echoing the sentiments of every honourable member in the Chamber. Mr. Seeney

is a highly qualified and very competent public servant. He is proving that as Commissioner for Transport.

I have always believed that the Transport Department should have its own staff to carry out its own functions. The point I make is that the police should not be called upon to perform many of the duties they are now required to carry out in the implementation of the State Transport Act. Police officers should be allowed to do the police work they are trained to perform, particularly the prevention of crime and the apprehension of offenders. Too often we see policemen and policewomen doing work on the streets for the Transport Department. That same work could be done by another type of public servant—perhaps they could be called "transport wardens" or some name like that. Police officers should be able to devote their time to the police work for which they have been trained.

The honourable member for Merthyr spoke about the dangerous condition of highways contributing to road accidents. That is right. I have in mind some of the sharp crests and narrow bitumen strips that have to be negotiated. Of course, it all comes back to the driver of the vehicle. No matter how rough a road is or what the conditions are, if the driver is alert and intelligently giving his attention to his driving, he can usually avoid accidents. However, as the honourable member for Merthyr said, the state of some of the roads contributes to road accidents.

The State's railway facilities leave a lot to be desired. I am not placing all the blame on the present Minister; it must be shared by many previous Ministers. Many years ago Queensland's long-distance trains, particularly the "Sunlander", were the pride of the State and the envy of many interstate visitors. Unfortunately, the expected improvements over the years have not been made. Today I cannot think of anything more uncomfortable to travel on from here to the North than the "Sunlander". It cannot compare with the "Limited Express" that travels interstate from South Brisbane, particularly in the way of facilities and the service offered by the staff.

I do not want my remarks to be misconstrued as an attack on the Queensland railway staff. Having regard to their working conditions and the amount of work they have to perform in a specified time, I say that they do an excellent job. When I travelled on the "Limited Express" to Sydney I was informed that there was a conductor to each coach. The conductors take pride in their job and get satisfaction out of it. Unfortunately, on the trains to the North, there are not enough staff to provide the necessary service. I ask the Minister to give serious consideration to this matter. It is not a pleasure to travel long distances on the Queensland railway system and conditions are becoming worse each year.

Some months ago I had the pleasure of a rail trip on "The Ghan" from Alice Springs to Port Pirie, across the Simpson Desert. Our service cannot compare with the service on it. Although the train is made up of old wooden carriages, they are air-conditioned and the service is excellent. The dining facilities, too, are first class. We have never really had dining facilities on our northern trains to compare with those on southern trains and the one that crosses the Simpson Desert. If we are to succeed in encouraging people to use our railway services, we must provide good facilities. I am not thinking only of tourists. In fact I am becoming sick and tired of hearing about what we should do for tourists. We should think first of our own people. If we provided a better service, many more of our own people would patronise the railways.

Mr. Houston: Many of our own people are tourists.

Mr. DEAN: They are.

In recent years our railway service has picked up, thanks to dieselisation. Travel in the suburban areas is much more comfortable. But a lot more remains to be done, and if we are to relieve the extreme traffic congestion in the metropolitan area, a lot more will have to be done. The Sandgate electorate carries very heavy traffic from the Redcliffe Peninsula. I sincerely hope that it will not be long—and I am sure that on this I speak for the honourable member for Redcliffe as well—before there is a rail link to the peninsula. That would certainly relieve traffic congestion in the Sandgate area, which is far worse than it should be.

Parking facilities at Sandgate for people living in the outlying areas who travel by car to the station are very poor. I hope it is not long before the car park is finished so that people may leave their vehicles with safety while they are commuting between their homes and Brisbane.

The volume of Redcliffe traffic that passes through Sandgate makes the area very uncomfortable, especially during peak hours. Suburban commuters are fairly well catered for at the moment. However, they need extra services after 6 p.m., when very few trains run. Many young people who drive to the city from the Wynnum and Sandgate area would leave their vehicles at home if a good late service were provided. They are forced to use the road and so increase tremendously the traffic hazards.

While on the subject of extra services late in the evening, I shall deal with a very serious problem which arises at night. We are pestered by vandals in parks and other public areas at all times of the day, and these pests seem to travel to their areas on the last trains from the city. People complain bitterly to me about the trouble they cause on the last train to Sandgate and other places. Occasionally the department

calls on the police to restore order. After a raid and the apprehension of one or two offenders, conditions quieten down, but only for about 24 hours. I suggest to the Minister, through you, Mr. Gunn, that permanent railway police be engaged to protect railway property and passengers.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: We do have a railway squad; you realise that?

Mr. DEAN: I think more men are wanted. It has to be a 24-hour service. Many of the culprits are very cunning. They pick times when police are not on the trains.

It was pleasing to hear mention by the Minister of the cross-river rail link. That has been proposed for a long time. We look forward to the day when Roma Street will be linked with South Brisbane, with the railways providing a service to people on both sides of the river. It will be of particular benefit to people travelling to and from work. One has only to stand near the approaches to Victoria Bridge in the morning to see the thousands of people walking across the bridge who could otherwise be travelling by public transport. After the rail link is completed, they will be able to travel by train. I hope that that project is spurred on by the Minister.

Road safety was mentioned. That is a very important facet of the Minister's department. The defensive-driving course has been a great success, but I think it should be mandatory for people obtaining a driving licence. It should be a condition that applicants for a driving licence should first undertake a defensive-driving course. I do not know any people who have taken advantage of the course who have not been full of praise for it and glad that their own ability has been improved by the knowledge they have obtained from it. Many of my friends have said to me that they have found themselves in dangerous circumstances in traffic and that, but for the experience, cautiousness and alertness gained by them at the course, they could have found themselves in serious difficulty. Consideration should be given to making the course mandatory. That would cost a little more, but what is cost compared with injuries and death? I think the Minister's committee should consider that when it discusses the ramifications of tuition in the defensive-driving course.

The Minister also mentioned taxi services. He referred to additional revenue obtained through the issue of new taxi licences.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I was referring to last year.

Mr. DEAN: Yes. It prompted me to remark that a little tidying up is required in the taxi service. I venture to say that 85 per cent of taxi drivers are diligent and courteous. I have travelled in taxis from time to time, and I think that more could be asked of some than they are giving at the moment. Many of the cabs could be a lot cleaner. I know

they have their rush times and that during peak hours they do not have the opportunity to clean the inside of their cabs; but in the off-peak times they could show a little consideration by doing so.

Some of the drivers are careless about their habit of smoking in the cabs. If they want to smoke, they should do so outside the cab. They should give some consideration to passengers who might find the smoke injurious to their health. I am not saying that because I am a non-smoker. Some people I associate with are asthmatics or have other bronchial conditions. One gentleman I know suffered a lot of inconvenience through a taxi driver's smoking. Because he was afraid that the driver might be insulted, he did not speak to him about it. When the driver finished smoking, he dropped the cigarette butt into the ashtray without extinguishing it. Smoke continued to come from it and the passenger was rather ill by the end of his journey. I think that taxi drivers should refrain from smoking while they are transporting passengers. They should also make sure that no odour remains in the car, because there is nothing worse than the smell of stale tobacco smoke.

Mr. Houston: Worse than alcohol.

Mr. DEAN: The combination is absolutely dreadful.

I think I have said enough about taxi-cabs. I am not casting reflections on all drivers. All callings have the good and the bad, and some do better jobs than others. The taxi services in other cities such as Sydney, which is the largest city in Australia, seem to be better controlled than those in Brisbane. Perhaps we could speak to the companies or associations and get them to tell the drivers to smarten themselves up a little and to take more pride in their calling.

The Minister made brief reference to co-ordination of the Brisbane transport system. It has been mentioned on many occasions and has been Government policy for some time. The sooner one transport authority is established for all the transport facilities in the metropolitan area, the better the service will be. At the moment we have mainly bus transport, which is not very comfortable. In fact, it is far from being comfortable. I have always been a great supporter of trams, but it is too late to worry about them now because they have been dispensed with. Many people find modern buses a very uncomfortable form of transport. We have them and we have to make do as best we can with them.

A smaller bus could be used in the city area outside peak hours. This would reduce our traffic problems. Large buses take up a lot of room in city areas. One of the Brisbane City Council aldermen was reported in the Press as advocating the use of minibuses in the city area in the middle of the day. He also advocated a more frequent

service in outer suburbs. I am not condemning the council. With its limited resources, it is doing the best it can. But transport is not a council responsibility. It is too big for any local authority.

Mr. Hartwig: Clem Jones pulled up the tramlines.

Mr. Burns: He didn't. He wouldn't allow them on the bridge.

Mr. Hartwig: Boofhead Burns.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member for Callide will refrain from making interjections such as that.

Mr. DEAN: They do not worry me, Mr. Gunn, so do not worry about them.

I hope that it will not be long before a more frequent service is provided in the suburbs. I have received a large number of complaints from housewives about bus services during shopping time. Although many wives can drive cars, not all can, and they ask their neighbours to drive them to the city to do their shopping. They would be much safer using a good, fully co-ordinated transport system. I appeal to the Minister to expedite the co-ordination of the transport system that we have been awaiting for so long. I refer particularly to a co-ordinated road and rail system.

These Estimates form a very important part of the Budget. Many honourable members feel, as I do, that the Department of Transport requires a great deal of money and that it should be provided even at the expense of some other departments which might have to be squeezed a little to make the extra finance available. I would be willing to do all I could to readjust some of the finances of the State to provide a good transport system.

(Time expired.)

Mr. HARTWIG (Callide) (4.40 p.m.): I rise to make a few observations on some items of interest in the Transport Estimates for 1975-76 introduced by the Minister this morning. In the first place, I should like to say that last year I travelled through Asia with the Minister, and at all times he showed a keen interest in the transport systems in the various countries that we visited. I know that he has noted changes and improvements required in the Queensland railway system.

In these Estimates we are dealing not only with railways but with road transport, taxis and various other aspects of transport and communications. The honourable member for Sandgate made what was, in my opinion, a very good contribution. It is a pity that a few more members of his party could not similarly be a little more reasonable and rational and give credit where it is due.

Mr. Houston: Tell us where it is due to the Premier.

Mr. HARTWIG: I will in a moment.

Mr. Houston: The worst railways in Australia are in Queensland.

Mr. HARTWIG: Labor's wonderful Treasurer Hayden budgeted \$46,000,000 to assist South Australia in its loss on the railways, and offered the beef producers of this State \$10,000,000 at 11 per cent interest. That demonstrates his sense of justice.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. HARTWIG: What has he done for Wodonga and Albury? Nothing but a lot of promises!

Providing a service is the main business of the railways. Let us then look at the situation in Queensland, and the vast distances that have to be covered. Let us get out of Brisbane for a change. Some Opposition members think that the railway system of Queensland ends at Caboolture.

Mr. Frawley: The honourable member for Bulimba has never been past Caboolture.

Mr. HARTWIG: I agree. The distance from Brisbane to Cairns is 1,043 miles. I have not gone into kilometres—and I am not going to refer to "ki-lometres", the way Whitlam pronounces the word. From Brisbane to Quilpie is a distance of 620 miles, and it is 604 miles from Brisbane to Cunnamulla. The honourable member for Bulimba should say "ki-lometres", because that is how Gough says it. From Rockhampton to Longreach is 427 miles, from Rockhampton to Winton 537 miles and from Townsville to Mt. Isa 603 miles. No other State has to provide a railway service over such distances.

Mr. Houston: What about Western Australia?

Mr. HARTWIG: They're not in the race; nor does that State have the degree of decentralisation found in Queensland. But, of course, under a Liberal-National Country Party Government Western Australia is bound to get decentralisation. They certainly would not get it under the A.L.P.

Over the years, some railway lines throughout Queensland have been closed. That was like pulling up the tramlines in Brisbane, which was done by the Lord Mayor of this city. We now know the huge cost and inconvenience brought about by that stupid decision. Queensland still has approximately 6,000 miles of railway line throughout the State.

I now turn to increased mineral production and the part that it has played in contributing not only to the revenue of the Railway Department but to the decentralisation of the State. This Government has provided new railway lines in the State, something that the A.L.P. in 20-odd years in power did not do. It did not build one yard of new railway line—not one yard! Yet honourable members opposite rose here today and criticised this Government and its Railway Department.

We have built the Gladstone to Moura line, the Hay Point-Saraji-Peak Downs-Gooniyella section and the Greenvale line, which has meant the expenditure of many millions of dollars. We have upgraded the Gladstone-Blackwater line at a cost of \$10,000,000. I am very pleased to see that \$1,200,000 was spent on upgrading the line from Earlsfield to the Callide Power Station, which is in my electorate. It is probably the best electorate in Queensland—certainly the best represented.

I do not envy the Minister his task. Last year the Railway Department lost something like \$87,000,000. However, the gross earnings of the department for the last financial year were \$183,686,000, an increase of \$33,800,000 over the previous year. The receipts from the haulage of coal and other minerals were \$91,300,000. That represented 55.27 per cent of revenue derived from the haulage of goods on those sections of line. Last year we had the largest amount of coal ever hauled by the Queensland Railway Department—a total of 19 781 000 tonnes, or an increase of 2 700 000 tonnes over the previous year.

We have commenced the construction of a line from Phosphate Hill near Cloncurry. We have already shifted some 31 000 tonnes of phosphate from that area.

I am concerned about the talk of hauling coal from the Callide coal mine to the super power station in the electorate of Port Curtis. I am told that, when the Gladstone Power Station is in full production, it will consume 4 000 000 tonnes of coal per annum. All I can say is that, with due respect to the State Electricity Commission, I believe that this will mean a duplication of the railway line from Gladstone to Blackwater and will cost the State many millions of dollars. I hope the commission takes that into account when it talks about enlarging the power station complex. It will also mean the haulage of coal from Callide, where we are now producing by far the cheapest power in Queensland, and the use of it in the generation of power at Gladstone. In other words, we are putting all our eggs in one basket and I believe if we do not change that, we will regret it for ever and a day.

Let us look at the variety of livestock that was carried by the railways in the last 12 months. There was an increase of 48,634 head of cattle on the number carried the previous year—a total of 1,650,000 head. Just for the carriage of that stock, graziers and cattlemen paid \$7,848,000, so the grazing industry contributes very largely to the Queensland Railway Department. The number of sheep carried was down by over 100,000 and I presume that reduction was caused by an increase in the use of road transport. There was also a reduction from 93,000 to only 78,000 in the number of pigs carried.

Last year, the Queensland Railway Department cost the State \$227,924,000, an increase

of \$66,000,000 over the previous year. Persistent wage demands have accounted for the greatest part of that increase. The purchase of additional rolling-stock was recommended, and the department now has 489 diesel locomotives, of which 404 are diesel electrics. The railways carried 1 300 000 tonnes of sugar and 379 000 tonnes of chaff.

As I said earlier, the gross earnings were \$183,000,000. But the Treasurer said in this Chamber recently, "I will increase fares and freights by an average of 40 per cent." Let us see what will happen if he does that.

Mr. Jensen: It should have been done last year.

Mr. HARTWIG: The honourable member for Bundaberg—

Mr. Frawley: He woke up!

Mr. HARTWIG: Yes, he woke up. The revenue from the passenger side of the railway service was a little over \$9,000,000, which represents 5 per cent of the gross revenue of the Queensland railways. Revenue from the coal traffic represents 49 per cent of gross revenue. Together, they amount to about 55 per cent. Where did the remainder of the revenue come from? It came from the primary industries of the State and from people who pay dearly to have merchandise carried over long distances on the Government railways.

That shows clearly the contribution that people outside the Brisbane metropolitan area are making to the railway revenue of this State. In fact, 45 per cent of \$85,000,000 was contributed by them. Sir Gordon Chalk said, "I am going to increase rail fares and freights by an average of 40 per cent." If one takes 40 per cent of \$85,000,000, one finds that people in country areas will be contributing another \$42,500,000 to the revenue of the Queensland Government Railways. If one takes 40 per cent of the \$9,000,000 that the hundreds of thousands of people in the suburbs of this city contributed, one finds that it is only about \$4,000,000. If fares are increased by 40 per cent, revenue will increase by only \$4,000,000; if freights on cattle, pineapples, pigs, sheep, and so on, are increased by 40 per cent, revenue will increase by about \$42,000,000. It is obvious which will be more valuable to the State.

That is why I have risen in my place in the Chamber today to express my disgust that rail freights are being increased now. It is all very well for the Treasurer to say that there has not been an increase for nine years and that costs have increased by 184 per cent in that time. I tell him now that primary producers are taking 200 per cent less for their product than they received seven or eight years ago. I cannot see any argument in favour of the 40 per cent increase, and I represent the people who will be paying that 40 per cent.

Yesterday the station master at Yeppoon received a message that there would be an increase of 40 per cent in the freight on fruit. In answer to a question asked by the honourable member for Mourilyan, the Treasurer said that he did not hold out any hope of a reduction in the rail freight on cattle. All I can say is, "God help us!" Primary producers will have to meet the cost somehow.

I tell the Committee now that thousands of cattle will never reach the market in Queensland if the 40 per cent increase in freights is implemented, and I understand that it is to be introduced on 1 November. Already the cost of freight is more than the cost of a beast. I was told yesterday that a man was charged 10c a lb. by the meatworks to take the hide off a beast. When he wanted to buy it back tanned, it cost him \$80 for the hide; yet hides are being given away.

The Treasurer says, "We want an increase of 40 per cent on what you produce." With all due respect to him, Mr. Gunn, I point out that I represent people who will be penalised very severely by the increase and treated unjustly. It is no good the honourable member for Bundaberg shaking his head. The industry can afford to pay only so much.

The pineapple growers in Yeppoon will be paying \$1,500 a year more as a result of the 40 per cent increase in freight. Last year 89 growers contributed \$336,000 in freight. Forty per cent of \$336,000 is about \$140,000. If that is divided between 90 pineapple growers, it is obvious what it is going to cost them. That is the sort of displeasure I am forced to express here today. I am sorry to have to do it because I agree with many other things in the Budget and in the Transport Estimates.

I turn now to road safety. In my area a lot of farm vehicles are called up for safety checks. As I have driven around Brisbane, I have seen cars riddled with rust and about to fall to pieces. They are on the road every day in the full view of members of the Police Force and machinery inspectors. The last time I flew to Rockhampton, the taxi driver followed one to the airport. It was completely riddled with rust. The man on the land who has been embarrassed by the 50 per cent increase in registration has his vehicle called up for machinery test. I appeal to the Minister to give him some relief.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: It doesn't come within my jurisdiction.

Mr. HARTWIG: Road safety does.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: But the inspection of motor vehicles doesn't.

Mr. HARTWIG: No, but look at the condition of those vehicles! If that doesn't affect road safety, I don't know what does.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I agree with you but it does come under another portfolio.

Mr. HARTWIG: That is so. The point I am making is that in the full view of all the machinery inspectors and all the Police Force, vehicles that are riddled with rust are allowed to run around Brisbane. Every member would have seen vehicles riddled with rust from the tail-pipe through to the front bumper-bar. It is a shocking state of affairs that those vehicles are not called up for inspection.

I still believe that the railway system is the most efficient and durable form of transport. If we had something like the bullet trains that operate in Japan running between Cairns and Brisbane, people would travel by rail. There is no reason why we shouldn't have trains travelling between 60 and 80 miles an hour. Road construction costs have got out of hand. Duplication of the railway line to the North would involve enormous capital cost but, in the long run, it would be a cheaper means than road construction of providing an efficient service for people in the northern and western areas of the State. If such a system were operating, they would come back to the railways.

I appeal to the Minister to reintroduce a rail-motor service between Rockhampton and Yeppoon. We do not seem to be able to get anything done to the Rockhampton-Yeppoon road. At least let us have a rail-motor service so that elderly people in particular can get to the coast at the week-end and enjoy the sea breezes.

A goods train gets into Biloela on a Friday afternoon. I am making an important point here. The Minister can talk to McKechnie any time afterwards. I would like the Minister to listen to me. I'm not going to shout myself hoarse for nothing! He can talk to McKechnie outside or down the road. I am asking the Minister to introduce a road service between Biloela and Thangool so that when the train gets into Biloela on a Friday afternoon the goods can be transported immediately to Thangool instead of having to be held in Biloela until the following Monday. The railway station at Biloela is a damned disgrace to the department. For goodness' sake, let the Minister see if he can do something about that! That Central Queensland line is paying, but the Minister's officers at Biloela are having to put up with shocking conditions. Over the years I have been asking for something to be done about the Biloela Railway Station. I appeal to the Minister again to look at it. The station master's office would not even make a good chicken coop.

(Time expired.)

Mr. DOUMANY (Kurilpa) 5.1 p.m.): I rise to commend the Minister on his presentation of these Estimates. In doing so I remind the Committee of the enormous

magnitude of the sum involved and the vastness of the State to which the Estimates relate. When we are critical of transport in Queensland and compare it with that in other places it is very easy for us to forget how big Queensland is and how heavily we depend on its transport services, particularly the railways.

I believe that the Government has adopted a very constructive approach to railway development in the past decade, during which the open-road policy referred to by the Minister has been espoused and fostered. I am the first to admit that many deficiencies exist in the railway freight and passenger services, but no-one could deny that a great deal of progress has been made. As well as criticising the areas of deficiency, we should look at the positive advances made, but I am afraid that the temptation to criticise is always paramount.

When we look at the enormous increase made in railway traffic over a decade we see a threefold increase in freights and a twofold increase in metropolitan passenger traffic. An enormous strain has been placed on the railways by the expansion of mineral industries, and the Minister and his department are to be commended on what has been done.

One economic aspect of railways management should be emphasised and re-emphasised. When the 1974 report of the Commissioner for Railways is examined it is seen that on page 3 it contains a graph showing that until 1973 the Railways Department's earnings were able to keep a little ahead of working expenses. There was a narrowing of the margin in the years from 1970 onwards. After 1973, however, we see the burgeoning of salaries and wages. That is not a coincidence; as we know, in December 1972 the Federal Government in Canberra changed. It is quite significant that the impact of its industrial-relations policies was felt at that time. The wages-and-salaries line on the graph shows a steep upward inflexion, indicating that the economic squeeze on the railways really intensified. As a result, the Treasurer, with the Minister, has been forced to increase rail freight rates and fares. That is a reality that has to be accepted.

I shall put aside economic issues for the moment to look at a comparison of rail versus sea freights. I think it was the honourable member for Rockhampton who, earlier in the debate, lamented the small quantity of goods passing through Port Alma. Quite frankly, with the impact of the militant seamen's union on the costs incurred by the domestic shipping operators, it is quite remarkable that in Australia any goods other than bulk commodities are transported by sea. Only the carriage of bulk commodities is worth while. Any port without bulk-handling facilities is just not in it. So is it any wonder that the railways have taken such a large proportion of the transport of non-bulk commodities? The

railways also carry their share of bulk commodities along the coastal route from Brisbane as far north as Cairns. The fertiliser industry, for example, depends to a great extent on the railways except for the cartage of bulk supplies imported from overseas. The Railway Department has made a tremendous contribution towards assisting an industry such as that.

Before I turn to more specific items, I shall dwell briefly on the desire of the Commonwealth to take over our railway system. It is extremely fortunate for Queensland that our Government and the Minister have stood fast against such a move. As so much incentive and encouragement have been given to our mining and other industries by a Government that has underscored the needs of the industrial and mining sectors and done its best to foster the development of the State, the transfer of the railways to the Commonwealth would probably be one of the most reprehensible steps that could be contemplated. If the Commonwealth were to take over our railways, among the first casualties would be those industries as well as others that are to be established in the future.

Mr. McKechnie: They would close nearly all the lines in Queensland.

Mr. DOUMANY: It would be a disaster.

Mr. Lindsay: They would do what they did to the common stamp.

Mr. DOUMANY: Absolutely. Freight costs would be increased threefold. I think that fact should be recorded in this debate.

I turn now to the Brisbane metropolitan transport situation. There is no denying that it poses a major challenge to the Minister—and he has taken it up. One of the most exciting developments at the moment is probably the cross-river rail link, which will connect the lines on the southern side of the river to those on the city side. For southern suburbs serviced by the railways it presents a most exciting prospect. Anyone who visits Sydney will see the tremendous moves made in public transport by the expansion of the railway system into the suburbs. It is obvious that when the bridge across the river is built a great number of benefits will flow from it. I for one, on behalf of my electorate, am looking forward very much indeed to its completion.

I am heartened also by the remark that railway stations will undergo a commensurate rate of development. There is no doubt that the railway system, when combined with feeder bus services and adequate parking facilities at suburban stations, will adequately meet the public transport problem of this city. No other means of transport is available to handle it as efficiently.

I suggest to the Minister that we not only improve the parking facilities at our railway stations but also look at their potential as very valuable real estate. I would

like to see some of the suburban railway stations that handle a large volume of passenger traffic developed into shopping and office complexes. They are a natural focal point for commercial activity. Such a scheme offers a definite means of improving facilities for passengers and providing the most desirable mode of travel. I would very much like to see full use made of department-owned real estate at stations, particularly at prime stations. This offers a very exciting prospect for the people of this city.

Electrification is another area of development noted by the Minister in his Estimates. I hope sincerely that over the next two to five years the necessary Commonwealth funds are forthcoming to get this very important project off the ground. I know that the Minister has been plagued by broken promises—and broken promises they are. He has alluded to them on previous occasions in this Chamber. It is a tragedy that one of the most constructive areas of expenditure not only for today but also in the long term has been thoroughly neglected by the Federal Government. It has been thrown into the dust bin. As the Minister indicated, we will strive to electrify our suburban railway system because electrification is one of the most important steps to take in improving and upgrading our railway service.

One serious repercussion of a series of decisions made in the past three or four years was that of the withdrawal of the metropolitan tramway system. We are very heartened at the great plans made and activity undertaken by the Minister and the Department of Railways, because today we heard of the Minister's offer to the Brisbane City Council of loans for the purchase of additional buses. We are aware of the council's appalling record in providing Brisbane with a bus service—after having burnt the trams, which was an act of vandalism.

I, for one, look forward to March next year when a Brisbane City Council election will take place. We must put the bus services back into the hands of responsible and competent people and integrate those services with the Minister's transport system. There is no doubt that dispensing with the tramway system was one of the greatest blows to public service in the history of this city.

As a member whose electorate fronts the Brisbane River, I am very excited to learn that the Minister has initiated a river transport study. The river provides enormous potential for transport, which can easily be integrated into the existing and future railway and bus systems. It will lift enormously Brisbane's attractiveness as a city to live in.

Mr. Lindsay: Paint a white line up the middle of the river.

Mr. DOUMANY: If we can do that, let us do it.

I look forward very much to the development of river transport on a very concerted and large-scale basis. The Brisbane River is a beautiful waterway and travelling by water is very tranquil and peaceful, as the people of Sydney will testify. In fact, I do not think that Sydney Harbour is as tranquil as the Brisbane River.

I conclude by referring to road safety and the defensive-driving courses that the Minister has so vigorously promoted in Queensland. The response from the public has been quite remarkable. Since the inception of the defensive-driving programme in 1969, 33,000—probably even more by now—have gone through this course of instruction.

There is no question that the way to tackle the problem of the road toll is the positive way, not the negative way. Whilst I concede that there must be penalties and other negatively slanted approaches to controlling the road toll, let us not fail to appreciate that our children, the drivers of tomorrow and the drivers of today, will respond most of all to a positive stimulus. It is therefore most heartening to see the number of people who have gone through the course. It is also heartening to know that we have a Minister for Transport who takes road safety so seriously and is doing so much to promote it further.

I end my contribution by again commending the Minister on the presentation of his Estimates and I give him my assurance of full support in his efforts to develop transport services and facilities in this State.

Mr. HANSON (Port Curtis) (5.17 p.m.): The opportunity to take part in debate on the Estimates of the Transport Department and the Railway Department does not come every year. Now that the opportunity is here, I am very pleased to see Opposition members taking a keen interest in matters concerning those two departments. Their submissions have been very erudite, and naturally they have been made only after considerable research and many hours of laborious study.

On this occasion a considerable number of new members are taking part for the first time in Estimates debates. I have listened with considerable interest to what they have said, and as the debate progresses I hope that many more points of interest will be raised. Many, of course, are points that will no doubt create interest in the Minister's mind, whilst others will be consigned, as usual, to the waste-paper basket. Nevertheless, I advise the new members not to be disappointed, as this is usually what happens. If they are lucky enough to remain here after the next election, they will find that if they raise matters constantly some interest in them will eventually be taken by the ministerial head of the day.

On this occasion I associate myself with the Minister's remarks about the Commissioner for Railways, who will shortly be leaving the Railway Department after 50

years of meritorious service and hard work. He will leave with my personal thanks for the kindness that he has shown to me during my service as a member of Parliament and over the period when he was a high-ranking departmental official and I was chairman of the Gladstone Harbour Board. He was very helpful to me on many occasions.

I should also like to mention the fine liaison officer of the Railway Department, Mr. Alan Evans, who constantly answers my many requests. He is always very courteous and gives good service to me and, in turn, the electors of Port Curtis. I thank him very much.

The commissioner's report this year discloses that goods freight reached record levels. To 30 June 1975, it was 4 731 000 tonnes, which was an increase of 19 per cent over the tonnage for the previous year. The earnings on this freight amounted to some \$157,000,000, which was \$30,000,000 in excess of earnings for the previous year. These are very significant figures and alert one to the department's huge volume of traffic and business. There was a big increase in coal haulage and, according to the report submitted to Parliament, nearly 20 000 000 tonnes was carried on the various lines.

The Trust Fund expenditure on new locomotives and rolling-stock amounts to 51.8 per cent of capital expenditure. This is very significant when one considers that a great proportion of this rolling-stock is oriented towards goods traffic, especially coal and other minerals. Unfortunately, I must join with my colleagues and other speakers who decried the complete absence of any capital expenditure on passenger coaches. As one who travels occasionally on the "Capricornia" and other trains throughout the State, I deplore the lack of fulfilment of the great hopes of Jack Duggan in the days when the first service started on the line from Brisbane to Toowoomba. The coaches were actually acclaimed by the then American consul as being of world standard. Of course, such is not the case now. Very little maintenance has been done on these coaches over a long period.

One has only to look at page 5 of the report to see a vivid photograph of the longer cattle wagons that have been introduced which can carry 26 head compared with 16 by standard wagons. That reflects the thinking of Government members. They want to herd people in like cattle. That is all they are interested in. They are not interested in the comfort of passengers. That photograph reflects Government thinking. Is it any wonder that the commissioner is willing to retire? After putting up with the present administration for 15 years, he has had enough. He would want to put his feet up and have a very good rest or get out on the beach when he feels like it.

We find that from the Trust Fund there was large expenditure on C.T.C. equipment for some of our coal lines, the principal one

being between Blackwater and Gladstone. We find also that money was expended from the Trust Fund for the extension of cross-river bridges. Unfortunately many of the older long-type bridges were replaced with a box-culvert type of construction. We also find that large banks have been built up in the divisions around Ambrose and Mt. Larcom.

I am not opposed to the Railway Department getting an easier flow of traffic, but I am opposed to this sort of construction. I have warned the department repeatedly about this. These box culverts have been placed near Yarwun, Mt. Larcom and Byellee. The department is going to be responsible for flooding the people in these towns out of their homes and businesses and creating havoc with road traffic on the Bruce Highway. What does it care? It doesn't care a hoot. Despite the warnings that I and the residents of these areas have given to the department, we cannot get past first base. The department seems to know everything. It knows nothing about local conditions.

With the wet weather coming on, I do not want to be responsible for anything that happens. I have put up the warning signals for the department. I have told the department repeatedly of the inadequacies of the engineering skill used and the advice it was given about this matter. It should be held responsible for the enormous losses that will be incurred and for the tremendous damage that these areas will suffer, as well as for the disruption to road traffic. I want to put on record right here and now that in good times no doubt the flow of coal to Gladstone will be easily maintained; but at the same time, the department has overlooked one of its primary responsibilities, and this will mean that the people generally will suffer considerable hardships and anxiety.

The Treasurer's Financial Statement, which was very adequately debated by members of the Opposition, contained provision for a 40 per cent increase in rail freights. The Minister for Transport has stated that until 10 years ago the Railway Department had good working profits. Why has it been necessary to increase rail freights so suddenly? Elections were held in 1969, 1972 and 1974. That is why there were no increases in those years. The Government parties were playing politics in a stinking fashion and trying to capture 100 per cent of the rural vote. They would not move to try to relieve some of the anxiety in the minds of the Commissioner for Railways and his officers, who were faced with increasing losses and greatly increased expenditure.

Unfortunately, the stage was reached when 80 per cent of the operating costs of the Railway Department went in salaries and wages, simply because the Government would not face up to its responsibility and see that ordinary, sensible commercial practice was followed and that people were not aggrieved or inconvenienced. They will certainly be

aggrieved and inconvenienced by the 40 per cent increase that the Government is now imposing on them.

The whisper is out around the ridges that, under the new arrangements, if a person wishes to send his private car by rail, he will have to meet a 60 per cent increase in rail freight. I understand that the QRX people, Stephens and the others will have to meet only a 20 per cent increase. I wonder whether they will pass the benefit on to the consumer. I very much doubt it. That question should exercise the mind of any administration.

Within the last 18 months a widely publicised survey was undertaken in the Brisbane metropolitan area by the Bureau of Transport Economics. It was on the subject that I mentioned earlier—the standard of comfort on trains. Almost 2,000 Brisbane people took part in that survey, and their answer simply was that comfortable seats were the first requirement of the travelling public. Unfortunately, although there has been some improvement in the standard of seating, passengers are not always able to find a seat.

Mr. Burns interjected.

Mr. HANSON: As the Leader of the Opposition says, there are not enough carriages. The Government is more interested in cattle, as one sees from page 5 of the commissioner's report. It wants to herd people in. In my infrequent peregrinations in this city in the morning, I have sometimes found myself in the position of virtually having to use a shoehorn to get people into railway carriages at a suburban station. Cognisance should be taken of the results of the survey of the Bureau of Transport Economics. I hope that Government members have the courage to advocate the adoption of some of the findings made on the basis of the opinions expressed by people in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

So much for the Railway Department. I now turn to the Transport Department, from which I have received a considerable amount of courtesy and very friendly service. I mention particularly Mr. Seeney, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Anderson, and an old school friend of mine, Mr. John Mackintosh, all of whom are very efficient and provide one with quick answers to questions. The Minister ought to be very happy to have such fine public servants under his administrative control.

The information I have received from the Minister, both in letters and in statements that he has made in this Chamber, indicates that the Transport Department is gradually taking over from the Police Department the issuing of drivers' licences. That is a matter of very great concern to me. Every day of the week I receive a complaint in my electoral office about delays experienced in the issue of driving licences in Gladstone. There should be quicker service. That is now the responsibility of the Police Department. As every honourable member knows,

the police have enough to do with their own work. Their involvement with rows of people seeking a driver's licence delays them in carrying out their prime responsibility, which is guardianship of the people's safety and interest. It is up to the Transport Department to accelerate the transition. I hope I have not to put up much longer with complaints from the Chamber of Commerce and other sources in my locality. It is up to the Minister to get going and see that local testing centres quickly become a reality. I have received complaints even from friends of mine who have come to live in Gladstone.

Under the 1969 Act the Minister has control of motor vehicle driving schools. The revenue from that source for the year was \$23,445, made up of registration fees and testing charges. I have no doubt that in Brisbane some very fine driving schools are carrying out a commendable public service, but what about the person in a far-flung part of the State? How does the adolescent get tuition in driving a car properly? How can he go to a driving school? Usually he has to rely on his parents. Many have to rely, as my children did, on someone in a small town who conducts a driving school. At such driving schools learners are taught in their own cars. Under the regulations certain fees are charged and driving schools are required to use dual-control vehicles. All sorts of onerous conditions are imposed. I do not disagree with that in the metropolitan area, but I do disagree with the enforcement of those regulations in centres of small population.

The youngster at Blackwater or at Blackall is just as entitled to be taught to drive a car properly as the youngster who lives next door to a driving school in Brisbane. All learners should be given the same tuition and be inculcated with the same driving responsibility. Cognisance should be taken of the problems of driving schools in small centres, and onerous conditions should not be imposed on them. Within the department consideration should be given to the State as a whole. It should apply all the conditions where sophisticated driving schools can exist. Because it is not profitable for it to do so, that sort of driving school will not open up in country areas.

I notice that collections under the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act 1957-1972 for the year totalled over \$5,000,000. As honourable members know, that money is credited to the Roads Maintenance Account, and is not included in the receipts of the Transport Department itself. It becomes part and parcel of the Roads Maintenance Fund operated by the Main Roads Department through the local authorities. There have been disbursements over the years to the Brisbane City Council and other local authorities. The Transport Department has a very serious responsibility in the collection of those fees. The Act was brought down to cover the cost of repairing highway

damage caused by heavy vehicles. At the time there was some conjecture and argument about interstate vehicles. Certain fees are now payable both by interstate and intrastate vehicles. No-one has any argument against that. From an accountancy point of view, however, the methods of collection and disbursement of the moneys are rather clumsy in that one department is responsible for the collection of this money—and it is not shown in its receipts or expenditure—and there is an immediate transfer of it to another department, which is followed by a further transfer to the Local Government Department where it is finally split up. That seems to be very higgledy-piggledy. I wish the Minister would discuss this matter with the Treasurer to see if some better accountancy procedure could be adopted so that these collections will not involve considerable working time for those who are responsible for posting this money in the various books of account.

Like the Minister, I believe that membership of the Australian Advisory Transport Council is essential and should be prized. This afternoon we have heard a great deal about drink-driving. The large motor companies have a responsibility to produce safer vehicles.

(Time expired.)

Mr. FRAWLEY (Murrumba) (5.37 p.m.): When the Minister opened the debate, he told us that new records had been established, with revenue earnings of more than \$183,000,000 and the haulage of over 30 000 000 tonnes of goods and livestock. Anybody who has studied the Estimates knows that those figures are higher than the record figures of the previous year. Yet Opposition members constantly cry about the inefficiency of the Queensland railways. By controlling mining in Queensland, the Federal Government severely restricted operations of the Queensland railways. If Opposition members were to get onto some of their Federal colleagues and tell them to give Queensland a fair go, the Queensland railways would make a lot more money from carrying the increased freight for the larger mining operations.

The pensioner concession of 50 per cent of the adult fare for travel on urban private buses announced by the Minister is excellent. I sincerely trust that this concession will apply to Caboolture, which is outside the urban area. I sincerely hope that pensioners living in the areas around Petrie, Deception Bay and Redcliffe will be eligible for that 50 per cent concession.

Mr. Moore: In which direction do you propose the line to Redcliffe should go?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I shall talk about that matter very shortly. I am glad that the honourable member has reminded me of it.

It is very pleasing to note that the Government is to subsidise interest payments on

loans for new buses. Transport in Queensland—which is the most decentralised State in Australia—certainly needs a Government boost. This proposal will really help suburban transport operators to improve their services.

When referring to transport, it is timely to remind honourable members that at the Labor Party Convention held at Southport in about 1973 a Western Australian branch submitted a motion that the feasibility of limiting a family to one car be investigated. If that was not a dirty, rotten, filthy Communist motion, I have never heard one.

Mr. Moore: Who did that?

Mr. FRAWLEY: The Labor Party at its convention at Southport. What they had in mind was similar to what they are trying to do with home ownership. They do not want people to own more than one car and they do not want them to own their own homes. That is typical of the Communist domination of the Federal Labor Government, which extends to its Queensland parliamentary branch—this one-man-short cricket team, if I may so describe it.

Mr. Casey: In view of the recent registration and insurance increases, that could well be the case.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I do not think it will be.

I congratulate the Minister on the great service he has done the people of Caboolture in allowing the 1.26 p.m. train from Brisbane, which normally terminated at Petrie, to carry on to Caboolture for a period of three months. I take the credit for that. Thanks to my representations on more than one occasion on behalf of the pensioners of Caboolture, the Minister finally agreed to this proposal. I did not have to twist his arm or kick him in the guts to get him to do it. I simply wrote him a few nice letters and he agreed to it. Now the people of Caboolture will have an extra train from Brisbane, continuing from Petrie, as well as an extra train from Caboolture to Brisbane; it leaves at 2.50 p.m., arriving back in Brisbane at 3.59 p.m. So they have two extra services—one to Caboolture from Petrie and one from Caboolture to Brisbane.

While I am speaking about Caboolture, I have to throw a little brickbat. The parking area at the Caboolture Railway Station, although adequate in size, is in a shocking condition, especially in dry weather when a hell of a lot of dust comes from the station. I have no doubt that, whoever went up from Brisbane to look at the area, after I had written suggesting that it be surfaced with bitumen, probably drove up, had a couple of drinks at the Club Hotel across the road from the railway station, looked through the window and said, "Oh, that will do for the hicks up here." The parking area at the Caboolture Railway Station ought to be bitumen surfaced. We are not complaining

about the number of cars that can be parked in that area, but the dust nuisance is another matter.

Mr. Moore: What about ant bed?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I don't care what is put on it as long as something is done to alleviate the dust problem.

I shall now talk about the griddle cars. The honourable member for Windsor complained bitterly about them. Not often do I disagree with him, because he and I were in the same class at college and I have always found him to be a worthy associate. However, I disagree with him on this. I like simple food. I do not want four-course or six-course meals in the griddle car. I am quite prepared to eat the food that is served. I have been to Townsville twice on the "Sunlander" and each time I have found the food to be satisfactory. The service has been good also.

Mr. Moore: What was the food you ordered?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I can't remember that now.

Mr. Casey: Cheese sandwiches.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I hate cheese, so it wouldn't have been that.

Anyone who wants to make a comparison with the service on the Queensland railways should travel on the interstate train to Sydney and experience the damned rotten service on it. The passengers have to sit on stools that are tilted forward. The tea spills over. That is one thing about the "Sunlander". Its chairs and little tables are a lot more comfortable for eating a meal than the stools at the bar on the train to Sydney. Anybody who complains about the dining cars on the Queensland trains should take the rail trip to Sydney. I must admit that the train from Sydney to Victoria and the Victorian, South Australian and Western Australian railways are miles ahead of us. Their dining cars are well and truly in advance of ours. However, I repeat that the griddle car on the "Sunlander" suits me. I am not complaining about it at all.

The honourable member for Rockhampton carried on about the provision of more facilities in trains. He mentioned piped music. I am not against piped music, even though I hate rock and roll. If they do install piped music, I hope they play some of the old-time tunes.

An Honourable Member: What about a smokers' car?

Mr. FRAWLEY: I don't care about that. I don't smoke. I don't give a hoot whether there are smokers' cars or non-smokers' cars, as long as people don't smoke near me.

The member for Rockhampton suggested providing cars where people could leave their children. Too many people today are evading

their responsibilities and dumping their children in child-minding centres and kindergartens. Now it is suggested that they do the same on trains. People can look after their children on trains satisfactorily, and there is no need to provide kindergarten carriages. What does he see himself as? A tour conductor? That is the only job he will get if he is put out of here.

One does not have to be very smart to realise that the member for Rockhampton spouts out the changing philosophy of the Labor Party. It is not what it used to be years ago. It is presently dominated by Left-wingers and Comms. They want to do everything for the people and have them dependent on the Government for everything. God help us if it ever comes to pass that the Government is Big Brother to everybody. People are handed this and handed that by the Government. They should learn to do something for themselves. We do not want any Big Brother tactics here. Once that happens, heaven help us.

I shall now make a plea for a rail link to Redcliffe. I am serving notice here and now that there had better not be a restoration of the rail link to the Gold Coast before we get one to Redcliffe or there will be a hell of a fight in this Chamber. I will have Mr. Speaker on my side, too. Different surveys have suggested various routes for a rail link to the Redcliffe Peninsula. Somebody put forward the suggestion that a line be put from Dakabin to Redcliffe, which is 15.5 km. Honourable members will notice that I have converted the mileage into kilometres for the sake of members of the Opposition who complained bitterly about one Government member giving distances in miles.

Other suggestions were for the construction of these lines: from Petrie to Woody Point, which is 16.5 km; Petrie to Redcliffe, 16 km; Petrie via the State school, 17.5 km; and Sandgate to the Redcliffe jetty, about 10 km. I am against any railway line joining Sandgate and Redcliffe. I shall have more to say on this subject later and I hope that the honourable member for Sandgate backs me up.

Over the years there has been a great deal of correspondence, but there has been no detailed investigation into the provision of a railway service for Redcliffe since 1921. Owing to the considerable development that has taken place on the Redcliffe Peninsula—the population of the city is now 41,000—a fresh detailed survey should be made to ascertain the most practicable route for a railway line. I can save the Government a good deal of money by telling it the best route.

In April 1957, a report was compiled for the Redcliffe Town Council dealing with public transport to the Redcliffe Peninsula. It proposed the extension of the railway line at Sandgate. I have already said that I am opposed to that proposal. It was indicated

that, if the Redcliffe Town Council or any other authority wanted to build its own transport system between Sandgate and Redcliffe, consideration would be given to arranging a co-ordinating service similar to the existing one.

In July 1957, a proposal was put forward by the Redcliffe Town Council. This was when the Speaker (the honourable member for Redcliffe) was mayor of the Redcliffe Town Council. It had not been declared a city at that time. The extension of a system from Sandgate would involve great expense in land resumptions on both the Sandgate and the Redcliffe sides of the Hornibrook Highway, although the resumptions would not be as expensive on the Redcliffe side. There is no doubt that a new bridge over Hayes Inlet would be required and a great deal of expense would be involved in building that. I am certainly not in favour of extending the railway line from Sandgate. If it were extended, areas on the western side of Redcliffe, such as Rothwell and Kippa-Ring (where I live) and also Deception Bay in the Shire of Caboolture would be disadvantaged.

In 1958, the then Transport Minister (Sir Gordon Chalk) replied to representations made by Mr. David Nicholson (later Sir David Nicholson), who made representations on behalf of the Redcliffe Town Council for the provision of a railway service to Redcliffe. I might add that the present Speaker was still the mayor of the Redcliffe Town Council. The reply was that, in all the circumstances and in view of the likelihood of all available finance and all the other rubbish that we are told when we get knocked back, it was considered that the matter of the extension of the rail system to Redcliffe should remain in abeyance.

In 1959 the Railway Department informed the Redcliffe Town Council that it would not require any land and the council wrote to the department in reference to its town plan. The reply was that the department desired to inform the council that it would not require any land in the area of the town of Redcliffe as it was not envisaged that a railway would be constructed on the Redcliffe Peninsula.

Further representations were made pointing out the increase in population. The then Minister replied that he was unable to hold out any hope of a decision being made in favour of the provision of a rail service to Redcliffe.

In 1970, the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce wrote a letter pointing out that, with the development of the industrial estate at Narangba and the encouragement of industrial development there and as Narangba was fairly close to Redcliffe, provision of a rail link to that area should be made and thence to Redcliffe.

In 1973 another appraisal was commissioned but still nothing was done.

All of this was tied up with the Wilbur Smith plan. The proposed construction of a railway to serve residents of Redcliffe Peninsula was examined during the course of the Wilbur Smith, South-East Queensland, Brisbane Region, Public Transport Study which was undertaken in 1970. The construction of a railway line was not included in the recommendations of the consultants. That bears out what I said when I was a member of the Redcliffe City Council—that Wilbur Smith and Associates were incompetent and did not know what they were doing when they drew up that plan.

Since I became the member for Murrumba, I have made many representations to obtain a rail service to Redcliffe through the Narangba Industrial Estate, which is 16 km from Redcliffe and only 3.2 km from Deception Bay. That is a township in the Caboolture Shire, which has been sadly neglected over the years. The Minister can bear out what I am saying. Deception Bay urgently needs a public transport system. It is situated in the Caboolture Shire and gets its water from the Pine Rivers Shire, because it allowed its pipeline to be tapped. The Redcliffe City Council takes the sewage from Deception Bay to the Redcliffe treatment works. Deception Bay is something like an orphan township between Redcliffe and Caboolture. Some services were provided by the council of the shire in which the township is situated.

In September 1974, a public meeting was called by the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce to set up a Rail for Redcliffe Committee. The honourable member for Redcliffe and I were members of that committee, as was the late Senator Milliner. I give him due respect, because he, too, had the interests of this area at heart. The honourable member for Redcliffe and I took a deputation to the Minister for Transport in 1974. We put the case for a railway to Redcliffe and we were given a good hearing.

On 21 February, another deputation waited on the Minister. This time it included the honourable member for Pine Rivers, because a rail service to that area would benefit his constituents. Anyone who says that the honourable member for Redcliffe and I have done nothing to have a rail service to Redcliffe provided is a straight-out liar. We have done everything in our power. I am fed up with the A.L.P. in my electorate using some of their dirty, filthy, rotten lying tactics by saying that both the honourable member for Redcliffe and I have done nothing to obtain a rail service for Redcliffe. I throw the lie back in their teeth. We have done a hell of a lot to get that service, and anyone who says that we have not is not only a liar but a dirty rotten liar. I have been accused by the A.L.P. of doing nothing. But that, as I have said before, is typical of their rotten tactics. In fact, they tried to mislead the public before the 1974 election

by saying that they had received a letter on this subject, dated 2 July 1973, from the Commonwealth Minister for Transport. The Leader of the Opposition is not the only one who can obtain copies of other people's correspondence. I have a copy of that letter that was sent to the man who opposed me in Murrumba at the last election to give him ammunition to shoot me down. But those tactics backfired.

The A.L.P. claimed that the Commonwealth Government stated in this letter from Senator Cavanagh, who was at that time the Acting Minister for Transport, that they would support financially a scheme for a rail link from Petrie to Redcliffe. There is in fact nothing in the letter to say that the Commonwealth Government would support anything financially. Anyone who says that is not telling the truth, either. The letter in fact stated that consideration would be given to the suggestion of the Petrie electoral council of the A.L.P., who jumped on the band wagon after I had made the original suggestion, that a rail link be provided from Petrie to Redcliffe. Senator Cavanagh said that consideration would be given to such a scheme when the Australian Government undertook studies into urban, inter-urban and regional passenger and freight movements to facilitate long-term planning.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: And when we get the funds.

Mr. FRAWLEY: That is right. No one is placing any blame on the Minister. We know that he has done his best to get this railway.

Redcliffe desperately needs a rail service. Even though the population has increased to 41,000, the number of passengers using the co-ordinated bus and rail service from Redcliffe to Brisbane has actually decreased. The Minister was good enough to furnish me with statistics of tickets issued in the various years. I shall not mention singles and returns. The number of workers' weekly and weekly season tickets sold in 1969-70 was 47,000. Workers' weekly and weekly season tickets were then abolished in favour of multi-trip tickets, and the number of such tickets decreased from 47,000 in 1969-70 to 30,900 in 1971-72. They increased to 45,000 in 1972-73, and decreased to 41,000 in 1973-74. Monthly season tickets decreased from 100 in 1969-70 to 29 in 1973-74. Quarterly tickets have decreased from 7 in 1969-70 to 5 in 1973-74. Yearly tickets have not decreased greatly in that same period—from 50 to 45. But I must refer again to return tickets, because they have decreased from 59,000 in 1969-70 to 51,000 in 1973-74.

The reason for these decreases is that people find travelling by bus from Redcliffe to Sandgate a rotten trip. I have done it on more than one occasion, and it is indeed a rotten trip. At times passengers have to

stand all the way from Sandgate to Brisbane, and in the evenings anyone who does not hit the platform and start running before the train stops does not get a seat in the bus. That is where I got some of my training as a 100 metres runner, and I always finished in the first three. I had no trouble.

An Honourable Member interjected.

Mr. FRAWLEY: I was in front of the widows and their dogs. I was never behind them.

Let us look at the population density of the area that would be served by such a rail link. Redcliffe has approximately 41,000 people. A transportation study was carried out in 1967 at a cost of something like \$6,000. It was estimated that by 1985 Redcliffe would have a population of 56,000. The parts of the Caboolture Shire which would be serviced by a rail link from Narangba to Redcliffe would be Deception Bay, Burpengary, Morayfield, Narangba itself and Caboolture. There are 9,900 people in that area now and the projected figure for 1985 is 51,000.

Parts of Kallangur, Petrie, Lawnton and Strathpine are in my electorate. The population of that area is 26,000. The people of that area also would be assisted by a rail link. It is projected that there will be 43,000 people in that area by 1985. There are also people in the Nashville-Brighton area who would be well served by a rail link, but we do not want it to come across from Sandgate. I believe that would be the wrong route. As I said before, I think the honourable member for Sandgate backs me up on that. I hope he does. I want to illustrate the inadequacy of the existing road link via the Hornibrook Highway. As I said before, Redcliffe has a population of 41,000. It is essentially—I hate to use the word—a dormitory city of Brisbane. But, after all, over 10,000 people in the area work in Brisbane. The number of vehicle trips across the Hornibrook Highway has reached 160,000 a week. That figure does not include ambulances, buses, Government vehicles, Redcliffe council vehicles and motor-cycles.

(Time expired.)

Mr. MILLER (Ithaca) (5.57 p.m.): In the few minutes available to me before the suspension of the sitting for dinner I want to pay tribute to the Minister for Transport for the honour bestowed upon him by the American people. I understand he is the only Australian ever to have been invited to participate in seminars in America on drink-driving and road safety. I think it is a credit to our Minister that of all the people available in Australia he should be the one that the Americans saw fit to invite to Chicago on 29 September to participate in these seminars. It could well be that when the Americans came over here not too many years ago they were very impressed with what this Government was doing in the

area of road safety and drink-driving. We all know that America led the field in this regard until quite recently, but I had the privilege of speaking to these Americans when they were here and they paid special tribute to the former Minister for Transport and the present Minister for Transport on the work that has been done in this area by this Government.

The honourable member for Port Curtis says we still have an awful lot of deaths on our roads caused by drink-driving. I agree with him, but what we have to realise is that this is not an easy area to control. Our police cannot take action until they see a driver disobeying the rules of the road. We live in a democratic society and I do not think there are too many people who would be prepared to go along with the practice of every person leaving an hotel being tested before being allowed to drive, so while this goes on surely we must continue to have accidents associated with drink-driving. To highlight the situation I want to quote two paragraphs from the Minister's address to the seminar, and I commend him on it because it shows the very serious situation in Australia today regarding people who drink and drive, and most Australians do drive. The Minister said—

“During 1972/73, Australians consumed 1 702 443 000 litres of beer; 130 015 000 litres of wine and 16 378 000 litres of spirits. This is equivalent to 130.1 litres of beer, 9.9 litres of wine and 1.25 litres of spirits per head of population, or, if you like, 654 seven ounce glasses of beer, 348 ounces of wine and 44 ounces of spirits.”

It is rather amazing that Australians can consume so much liquor. As a matter of fact, we lead the English-speaking nations of the world in per-capita consumption. We rank in front of America, and I thought America was the home of alcoholics. I thought that America had all the drink-driving problems; but when I look at the paper given in America by the Minister for Transport, I see that Australia is 11th on the list and America is 17th.

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

Mr. MILLER: Before the dinner recess I quoted figures indicating that Australia was by far the leading English-speaking country in the consumption of liquor. While Australians continue to consume liquor at that rate—and I am a little bit worried that consumption of liquor might be increasing—the Government must not renege and allow a weakening of the laws relating to drink-driving. That is very important.

Mr. McKechnie: It would be far better if people drank Granite Belt wines in their own homes.

Mr. MILLER: People would be far better off drinking in their own homes—I could not agree more.

The debate on these Estimates is very wide and varied, but in terms of finance the most exciting portion probably would be that relating to the transportation of coal. The Queensland Government is making increasing profits on the transport of coal following expansion in the coal-mining industry.

For the city of Brisbane, the most exciting portion of the Estimates is that relating to the co-ordination of transport and the electrification of rail services in South-east Queensland. It is very unfortunate that this exciting project has to be downgraded. I realise that the Federal Government is in financial difficulties and has to make cuts somewhere.

Mr. Tenni: That is because it doesn't know how to manage its finances, isn't it?

Mr. MILLER: That is true; but it concerns me that cuts have to be made in this area, which is so important to the people of Brisbane.

Mr. Jones: We have only been waiting 30 years to bring it to fruition.

Mr. MILLER: I agree with the honourable member for Cairns that we have been waiting 30 years. However, I am one of those on the Government side who believe that the rail system in Brisbane should not be electrified until there are sufficient people to justify its electrification.

In 1958 the Government would not have been justified in spending the amount of money needed for rail electrification when so much was needed for education. It is very important to remember that. In its last year in office, the Labor Government spent 43 per cent of its Budget on transport and only 13 per cent on education. When the Country-Liberal Government came to office, it believed that it should spend much more on education. Over a period of years, successive Country-Liberal Governments have increased the expenditure on education until it now leads the field in Budget expenditure. As I said, in the days of Labor, transport led the field. Members of the A.L.P. believed that electrification of the railway system in Brisbane was far more important than building schools, training teachers, and bringing children in outback areas into schools. Honourable members on this side of the Chamber believe that education has a much higher priority.

Mr. McKechnie: Rather than bring in dieselisation, the A.L.P. had men shovelling coal into a hot fire.

Mr. MILLER: Again the honourable member for Carnarvon has made a very valid point.

Honourable Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! There is too much cross-firing.

Mr. MILLER: The A.L.P. was determined to keep men shovelling coal over the longest railway lines in Australia while people in Brisbane enjoyed the benefits of rail electrification.

However, the stage has now been reached when the Government wants to electrify the railway system in Brisbane. What do we find, Mr. Dean? The Queensland Government wants to spend just over \$26,000,000 this financial year. What happens? Instead of getting \$26,000,000 from the Federal Government Queensland gets a lousy \$10,600,000—and that from the party which believes we should have electrification in Brisbane. If Opposition members really believe that we should have electrification, they should condemn the Federal Government for the wasteful expenditure of money in certain areas of art at a time when we are suffering a cut-back in finance for transportation, particularly the electrification of railways in Brisbane. I remind the Leader of the Opposition that a five-year agreement between the Australian Government and the Queensland Government has been signed—an agreement that is not going to be honoured.

Mr. Lindsay: What we want is electric poles, not "Blue Poles".

Mr. MILLER: We certainly need electrification rather than "Blue Poles".

Even the Opposition must be concerned at the cut-back that is going to take place in the electrification of rail services in Brisbane. Although we have planned to have it completed in a certain time, I cannot see how we can possibly do it.

The honourable member for Murrumba mentioned a rail link to Redcliffe. I quite agree that there should be a rail line to Redcliffe, and it should be an electrified line, but if we cannot get an electrified system in Brisbane within the planned time, I cannot see any railway line being built to Redcliffe for many years to come.

In recent months we have seen a tremendous waste of money under the R.E.D. scheme. The Federal Government should have seen fit to spend that money in areas such as transportation, where it could have been wisely spent under the supervision of engineers. In Queensland we have civil engineers out of work and roaming the streets, yet we have other workers sitting under bridges when they are supposed to be cleaning drains and creeks. They are doing no work whatsoever because they believe what they are getting from the Federal Government under the R.E.D. scheme is a hand-out.

The Leader of the Opposition was very critical of the Minister for Transport for voicing concern about the reduction in the Federal Government's allocation. I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition criticise the Australian Government. When we make an agreement with that Government, surely it

should be honoured. The Opposition spokesman for transport did not even refer to it. He is the man who, on behalf of the Opposition, is supposed to be concerned about transportation within the whole of Queensland.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The ruling of the Chair was that no member could refer to proposed legislation. In the Minister's introduction of his Estimates he said that the Metropolitan Transit Project Board was going to be the subject of legislation this session. I ask for your ruling, Mr. Dean, on whether the honourable member is out of order, and whether he is in order in condemning me for not referring to that particular legislation.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! No notice of that legislation has been given by the Minister. However, I would ask the honourable member for Ithaca to stick to the Estimates before the Chamber.

Mr. MILLER: I point out that I am speaking about railways. If railways are not part of the Estimates of the Minister for Transport, I will resume my seat. I also point out that under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government the electrification of only one full line has been agreed to—the line from Ferny Grove to Ipswich.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The Minister said in his speech—

“Honourable members will recall that the Metropolitan Transit Project Board was formally constituted by Order in Council on 5 September 1974.”

He continued by saying that this matter would be the subject of legislation in this session of Parliament.

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I rise to a point of order. I have not given formal notice to the House that legislation will be introduced.

Mr. MILLER: I think the honourable member for Cairns is a little embarrassed by overlooking the most vital area of transport in Queensland today. He is the Opposition spokesman on transport but he did not bother to refer to the electrification of rail lines in Brisbane. We have agreement with the Federal Government on one short line in Brisbane, but the Federal Government has said that it will not continue the line from Northgate to Brisbane. A monument will be built in Brisbane to the inadequacies of the A.L.P. in Canberra.

The Federal Government asked the Queensland Government to co-operate on rolling-stock. The Queensland Government agreed to do so, but what happened? Because no agreement was reached prior to this financial year, the Federal Government will not participate in any agreement for rolling-stock in Queensland. The Federal Government

wanted a standard form of rolling-stock throughout Australia. The Queensland Government, having its own designs, held back to see what the Federal Government had to offer in the way of rolling-stock for the whole of Australia. It had a train on show in front of the Brisbane City Hall. We waited to see it. Because we waited, because we were prepared to co-operate with the Federal Government, we missed out on any money for rolling-stock this financial year and next financial year.

Mr. McKechnie: Did you notice that the Leader of the Opposition walked out in disgust at the attitude of the shadow Minister for Transport?

Mr. MILLER: I could not blame him.

Co-ordination of public transport encompasses much more than electrification of the rail service in Brisbane. It embraces also new diesel buses and passenger trains. I have just dealt with the new electric passenger trains. Under the agreement signed by this Government and the Federal Government the Brisbane City Council was to get enough finance to buy 105 buses. We all know the result. It is to get 23 buses. The A.L.P. council is very embarrassed; but because it is the Federal A.L.P. Government that has rejected the money it was supposed to get for the buses, it cannot say very much. The council asked for \$7,000,000 for 105 buses and was given finance for only 23. Although Brisbane's bus service is ailing, no help is forthcoming from the Federal Government.

If we cannot get money from the Federal Government, we should look to private enterprise to help us out of our public transport problems. If we cannot get our money after reaching agreement with the Federal Government and if the city council cannot finance the necessary new buses, we should look to public enterprise to supply the buses.

Alderman Thomson, who represents the ward of Corinda, said on 24 June this year, “Let Canberra run the transport of Brisbane.” I do not agree with him. The State Government will do a far better job of running transport in Brisbane than the Brisbane City Council or the Federal Government. We have seen the Brisbane City Council try to run the bus service in Brisbane. It has failed dismally. It even took the trams off the road. It has been proved world wide that trams are the fastest, cleanest and cheapest method of transporting people—and what did the Brisbane City Council do? It burnt the trams. Not satisfied with that, it ripped up the lines.

Mr. Jones: What has that to do with the Transport Estimates?

Mr. MILLER: It has a lot to do with the transport committee, because we are talking about co-ordinated transport. I remind the honourable member that the Minister referred to setting aside corridors on our roads for buses. If we intend to go to that expense,

I think it would be far better to take the next step—the step that many cities in the world are taking; the step that Sydney has already decided to take; and the step that Melbourne decided to carry on with. Anybody who goes to Melbourne knows that its transport system is operating very well indeed.

(Time expired.)

Mr. K. J. HOOPER (Archerfield) (7.31 p.m.): Once again I raise the matter of a rail link to Inala. It is a pertinent issue. I give the Minister and his advisers fair warning that I intend to raise the matter as often as necessary until I get the message across just how important such a link is to the people of Archerfield and the other south-western suburbs of Brisbane.

Mr. Alison: That is very good of you.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am trying very hard. It is most necessary. I say to the Minister that a rail link to Inala is very necessary and certainly justified.

Mr. Lindsay: Have you read this speech through?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I have.

Mr. Lamont: Have you got this one off by heart?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I would know as much about transport as the honourable member for South Brisbane knows about music. His favourite tune, I believe, is "Love in the Moonlight" in A flat.

Government Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! I am finding it very difficult to hear the honourable member.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The Wilbur Smith report points out that new developments in the area justify the provision of a rail link.

Mr. Lamont: Are you allowed to ad lib like that?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am—and I am doing very nicely.

The Wilbur Smith report states that these developments will produce a greater need for public transportation before 1981. As the Minister knows—I have spoken to him before on this—the present transport system in Inala is totally inadequate. The bus service at Inala is controlled by private enterprise, and, along with the dictum of the Tory Government and the Tory members of this Assembly that private enterprise can do no wrong, they put profitability before service. I say quite emphatically that public transport is a Government responsibility.

The present method of travel from Inala to the city is via Oxley and Darra Railway Stations, which, as we all know, is both

unwieldy and frustrating. Nor is there ready access to any of the major public hospital facilities, bearing in mind the length of time taken on a journey to the hospitals. The distance from Inala is only about 11 miles, so it is hardly 20th-century travel by any standards. I point out, too, that Inala is equal in population to the cities of Mackay, Bundaberg and Mt. Isa.

Mr. Lindsay: Why didn't you support me on redistribution?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is quite obvious that, when the honourable member for Everton advocates redistribution, he is worried about his political hide. He knows that he is a political oncer. He fluked the seat in 1974. At the next elections in 1977, the electors of Everton will pass judgment on him and he will have to return to his former profession of school-teaching.

The next aspect I should like to deal with is the Acacia Ridge service. Acacia Ridge is a twin suburb to Inala, being approximately 3 miles from it. If anything, the present transportation service there is worse than that at Inala. At the moment, people from that area have to travel by private bus to Moorvale and thence by council bus to the city. This journey of approximately eight miles takes 70 minutes. The time-table offered by the Sunnybank Bus Service is very poor, to say the least. The last bus leaves Moorvale for Acacia Ridge at 6 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays. On Saturdays it still leaves at 6 p.m. On Sundays no buses run. Acacia Ridge is a large dormitory suburb. At weekends the residents of Acacia Ridge are virtual prisoners in their own suburb unless they have private transport.

Mr. Frawley: What are you reading—another Trades Hall brief?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I do not intend to take any interjections from the honourable member for Murrumba.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! The honourable member is not obliged to accept interjections.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The honourable member for Murrumba knows nothing about the Transport Estimates. He is more conversant with kicking old ladies' dogs.

At the moment Pallara is a sparsely populated area between Inala and Acacia Ridge. It has no transportation except for a school bus that travels once a day from the school to Acacia Ridge and back.

The main topic of my speech is the proposed rail link for Inala. The term "rail link" is a misnomer. I have been advocating for some time, and the Minister has agreed with me, that the existing railway line should be extended from the Wacol Industrial Estate through Inala, Pallara and Acacia Ridge to link up with Coopers Plains or Salisbury on

the Beenleigh line. With the linking of the South Brisbane and Roma Street Railway Stations by the construction of the Merivale Street bridge, the whole of the south-western suburbs would be linked by rail. During a previous speech I made in this Chamber, the Minister, by way of interjection, asked the distance between Wacol and Salisbury. I said it was approximately 10 miles. The Minister said he thought I had made a good point, and it is a good point.

A Government Member: Mr. Hooper—

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not going to take any more interjections because most interjections are frivolous and I do not intend to deal with them.

Mr. Lamont: And it is such a serious speech, isn't it?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is a very serious speech.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I am having great difficulty in hearing the honourable member for Archerfield.

Mr. Frawley interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I will not warn the honourable member for Murrumbidgee again.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: When this was advocated some years ago, following the advent of this Tory Government in 1957, the argument was that it was too costly to cross Ipswich Road. However, once the Wacol Railway Station got under way there was no trouble in putting a spur line under Ipswich Road to the Wacol Industrial Estate. I say quite emphatically that this Government is concerned only with the needs of big business and that the needs of the people come last. If the line can be extended from the Wacol Railway Station to the Wacol Industrial Estate, why can't it be extended through the suburbs I have mentioned so that it can serve the needs of the people, who, after all are far more important.

Mr. Lamont: Why don't you get your local alderman to do something about a bus service?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is a rather inane interjection. The Brisbane City Council has no jurisdiction at all over this matter or over the bus service at Inala. The present bus proprietor has a franchise which does not expire for some considerable time.

If this rail link were built through the suburbs I have mentioned it would, in addition to serving passengers, link the main Ipswich line with the Acacia Ridge freight yards via the Wacol Industrial Estate. It would be a financial proposition for the transportation of both passengers and freight.

According to the 1971 census—and it is reasonable to assume that the figures would have increased considerably since then—the population of the suburbs I have mentioned was in the vicinity of 80,000. With the rapid development that is taking place in the adjacent suburbs of Ellen Grove, Algester, Ridgewood Heights and Calamvale, it would serve in the next 10 or 15 years a population of some 100,000 people—approximately one-eighth of the population of the metropolitan area. In addition, there are large areas of land on the outskirts of Inala. One area of some 3,000 acres adjacent to Inala has a name that rolls nicely off the tongue—Doolandella.

Mr. Lindsay: What about one vote one value?

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I will not take that interjection because it is obvious that all that the honourable member for Everton is concerned about is preserving his own lousy political hide.

Incidentally, in these areas there are very many people on a low socio-economic scale. There are many deserted wives and widows who are bringing up families, and high fares and the lack of suitable transport prevent them from having outings with their children. The attitude of the Government towards transport in the last 17 years has been negative, to say the very least. It is very interesting to contrast the Government's attitude to freight lines with its attitude to passenger lines. A line can be built to a coal mine at the drop of a hat.

It is interesting to look back and see the closure of the railway line to the South Coast as a classic example of the present Government's lack of foresight. That closure was widely condemned in 1964 as a short-sighted action. Nevertheless the closure went ahead and, to make doubly certain of it, lines were ripped up and land was sold. In my opinion, that was done to pay off certain transport companies for their financial support of the Government at the previous election.

Mr. BYRNE: I rise to a point of order. I draw attention to the fact that Mr. Speaker ruled a few days ago that honourable members were not to read speeches. I point out that for the last few minutes the honourable member for Archerfield has not raised his eyes from his speech.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not reading my speech, Mr. Dean. It is passing strange that the Minister, when introducing his Estimates, read his speech word for word. I am not reading; I am speaking from copious notes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dean): Order! The honourable member will continue his speech.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I shall take no notice of the seminarian drop-out—the evil friar from Belmont.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will continue with his speech.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: The evil friar—or perhaps I might say the noisy friar.

The closure of the South Coast line was for the specific purpose of paying off large transport companies that supported the Government at the previous election.

Mr. Burns: The Premier said during the Albert by-election that they would put that line back.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I distinctly recall the Premier making that promise; but, like all his promises, it has never been honoured.

Mr. Burns: They are promising to put the Cleveland line back, too.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: That is another line that should not have been pulled up. The Cleveland line used to link Lota, I believe, with Cleveland. Since the line was pulled up, the Redlands district has been one of the areas of most rapid growth in Queensland. What a boon it would be to residents of that district if the rail link were still there! The present member for Redlands is only a new member. He is not even dry behind the ears. He is learning, but so far he knows very little.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will proceed with his speech.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: Getting back to the rail link through Inala—Ipswich Road has always been the stopper for the provision of a rail passenger service to the suburbs that I have mentioned. But as soon as the Wacol Industrial Estate was established, there was no problem in putting the line under Ipswich Road. As I have said before, if the Government can serve the needs of big business, surely it can serve the needs of people.

The time to act is now. As a matter of fact, I spoke to the Minister privately some time ago on this subject. I say to his credit that I think he is one of the better Ministers. He is one of the few who are au fait with their portfolios. It is notable that, when he is asked a question during question time, he has no trouble answering it. He is quite different from many other Ministers who have to arrange to be asked Dorothy Dix questions. I ask the Minister to give consideration to conducting a feasibility study to see whether the rail link that I have suggested is practicable. I see that the Minister is nodding his head in agreement, and I thank him.

Mr. Lamont interjected.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am not taking any more interjections.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much noise on my right.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: If this rail link were provided—it is certainly long overdue—it would deter use of the motor-car there. I think we all agree that today motor-cars are choking our roads and that we have to do something about them. Even in America, where the motor-car has been deified, studies have now been started to see if more railway lines can be introduced into the large cities and the use of the motor-car thereby restricted.

The thing to do is slow down the use of Ipswich Road. As we know, Ipswich Road is one of the six busiest roads in Australia, and the only way we can get people to use public transport and leave their motor-cars at home is to give them decent alternative methods of transport, and the best way to do this is through the establishment of a rapid and efficient rail service. It can be done. We just have to look at the service given during the Brisbane Exhibition. I pay the Minister this tribute—that during the Exhibition every year the Railway Department does an excellent job in transporting people from the city to the Show. It is noticeable that the number of passengers using this service grows each year. We also have to extend off-street parking. The Minister has done this at Darra. It was long overdue, but the Minister has now made provision for extension of the off-street parking in the area and it will pay dividends. If this rail link—

Mr. Jensen: If you play up to him a bit you will get that line.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: I am trying very hard. If in his wisdom he can persuade his Cabinet colleagues to agree to provide this rail link into Inala, he will have to provide a lot more off-street parking. Inala is a very large suburb. It is certainly the largest in Brisbane, and irrespective of where the railway stations are located, people will still have to travel to and from them. I think that from point to point Inala is approximately three miles long. When the rail link is introduced, there will have to be covered parking areas. As well, the areas where passengers disembark from feeder buses will need to be covered.

Mr. Jensen: What an original idea.

Mr. K. J. HOOPER: It is an original idea. I thank the honourable member for Bundaberg. If he learns, we might even get it through to Bundaberg. It is imperative that we start now. The longer we leave the commencement of this rail link to Inala, the

more expensive the land resumptions will be. When established, the line will be profitable from both freight and passenger use. Combined with the new Merivale Street bridge, the rail link with the southern and south-western areas and the maximum use of rolling-stock will certainly help to keep operating costs down. I ask the Minister to treat this as a matter of urgency.

In conclusion, I agree with what previous speakers have said. I am only sorry the honourable member for Murrumba is not here. As a rule he does not make a very worthwhile contribution, but for a change I agree with him. I think Redcliffe, too, has a claim for a rail link. But I think we must get our priorities straight. The rail link to Inala should be given first priority and I ask the Minister to give it his fullest consideration.

Mrs. KIPPIN (Mourilyan) (7.49 p.m.): I rise to speak in this debate because in my maiden speech I complained that the Innisfail railway station was in quite a decrepit state and the town urgently needed a new goods shed. I am now pleased to report that the railway station has been painted, as have the station master's house, the trainmen's quarters and the inspector's quarters. This left only the rental houses, and it looked as if they might miss out. However, the railway painters have turned up and are now painting these houses—and not before time. It is well over 10 years since those houses were painted. Innisfail has a very severe climate with over 120 inches of rain a year. Honourable members can imagine what that does to a house. I am sure the tenants in these homes will be overjoyed today.

I am disappointed at one aspect of the painting of the railway station. For quite a long time we have been trying to get the parcels office extended. The station master had requested this, and it was finally approved. Just after the work had been done, along came the painters to paint the railway station. It would have been a much better idea to renovate the whole railway station before painting it. I cannot blame the Minister for what happened, but surely someone further down the line should deal with matters such as that.

I have received a number of complaints from pensioners in Innisfail who have to travel to Cairns for medical treatment. Most of them find it necessary to use the train, and there is a gap of about 1 ft. between the surface of the platform and the bottom step of the railway carriage. Some of these people are very old and not very agile and they have difficulty in climbing into the carriage. If one of the railwaymen could place in position a block that the pensioners could use as an additional step, it would serve the purpose and cost very little.

I have also received complaints about the unavailability of sleeping cars on the "Sunderland". Admittedly, these complaints relate

to holiday periods, but unless one books months in advance it is very difficult to get a sleeper from anywhere in North Queensland to Brisbane during holiday periods.

The Minister might consider reintroducing on trains to the North the equivalent of the old parlour cars. The trip from the North still takes two nights and a day, and a parlour car on the train would ease the congestion in the sitting coaches and give passengers somewhere to go when they were sick of sitting in their own seat looking at the same people.

I remind the Minister that a new goods shed is still needed at Innisfail. When he finds the money for its construction, officers of his department should first come to Innisfail and talk to local railwaymen. I make that request sincerely, because it is imperative that they ascertain what the local conditions are before construction of a new building begins. The existing goods shed is built completely the wrong way round.

Mr. Jensen: It sounds as if you ought to do something about having the manager of the Northern Division replaced.

Mrs. KIPPIN: Oh, no, I get on very well with him.

Mr. Jensen: From the state of things, it doesn't sound as if there is a manager there.

Mrs. KIPPIN: The honourable member probably would know more about that than I do.

The existing goods shed was built a long time ago and, as I said earlier, was built the wrong way round. I want to prevent something similar happening when a new goods shed is built.

The side on which the wagons stand faces the afternoon sun. In most cases, railway men have to unload in the afternoon, which means that they are working in the afternoon sun. The other side faces directly into the wind and the rain. When the truckies come to pick up the goods, they have a great deal of trouble transferring goods from the shed to the trucks without getting them wet. These problems would not arise if the goods shed had been built the other way round. Railwaymen would have been protected from the sun and the truckies would have been out of the rain.

Mr. Jones: Why not put the railway line on the other side?

Mrs. KIPPIN: We will just build the new shed on the other side of the yard.

I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of the Railflex programme. Railway workers at the Innisfail station were rather upset when it was first introduced, principally because they were worried about losing their jobs. However, I suggested that they give

the scheme a trial for a few months and see how it worked. They are now very pleased with it, because the truckies can take the goods straight from the wagons onto their trucks and there is not the same flow of goods through the shed. As I said, the goods shed is too small for the quantity of goods it handles, and the Railflex scheme has assisted quite a bit to overcome the problem.

Another problem in Innisfail is that the railway line crosses the main northern route to Cairns. Railwaymen are required to do most of the shunting over that crossing, which is very close to the station. Often traffic is held up for long periods. A while ago it was being held up between 8 and 8.30 a.m., which was very inconvenient. The manager of the Northern Division in Townsville has helped overcome the problem by ensuring that trains do not arrive in Innisfail at about that time, and has changed the shunting hours. That has helped a lot, but it is still very inconvenient to be held up for any length of time at the crossing.

Another problem in the electorate is the shortage of train crews during the cane-crushing season. Probably they are not required all the year, but we do need extra crews when the crushing season starts. At the moment they are working at approximately half the required strength and some crews have to work many overtime shifts. With the expansion of the sugar industry we need an extension of some of the cane lines. The expansion has extended up into the hills, and on the range roads it is very hard in rainy weather to get the cane out with tractors trailing bins. Many residents have asked that the lines be extended so that the dangers of loaded tractors on range roads, particularly in the mornings and afternoons when school buses are travelling, can be avoided. We did appreciate the extra diesel locomotive provided for cane traffic this year. Towards the end of the year it will really be handy in overcoming the hold-ups in crushing.

I was surprised at the statistics in Table No. 5 in the Report of the Commissioner for Railways.

Mr. Jensen: You lost \$260,000 last year.

Mrs. KIPPIN: Yes, but if the honourable member checks all the other lines he will see that they are not doing much better than ours. In our district we had generally thought that the tramways were very profitable to the Government. Most of the cane farmers were saying, "We have one of the most profitable lines in Queensland." That was before the coal lines were opened up. When I looked at the table I found that our tramways were profitable until 1973-74, but in that year the working expenses exceeded revenue earnings by \$64,000. In 1974-75 expenses exceeded revenue earnings by \$260,000. In that table I could see evidence to support the 40 per cent increase in rail charges.

From the graph at the beginning of the report we can see why expenses have overtaken earnings. In 1974 the increase in salaries and wages was double the increase in revenue earnings. In 1975 the increase in salaries and wages again far outstripped the increase in earnings. To top it off, other working expenses increased considerably, too.

The necessity to increase railway charges has come at a most unfortunate time for northern people. In particular, fruit growers, cattlemen and small businessmen have been severely hit by the present economic chaos.

A Government Member: Brought about by the Federal socialist Government.

Mrs. KIPPIN: No doubt it has been, but I am afraid there is little we can do about it at the present moment.

Mr. Tenni: Get rid of it.

Mrs. KIPPIN: If we can get rid of it I hope that northern people will have an upturn in their businesses. At the moment the northern people will feel the increases sorely. I do hope that when the charges are fixed the Treasurer will particularly consider the primary producers of North Queensland.

Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (8 p.m.): I wish to address myself first to the over-all increase of 40 per cent in rail charges. We all know that the increase was long overdue. It was a decision that had to be taken in the light of the loss of about \$90,000,000. In normal circumstances the concept that the user should pay is probably an excellent one. I therefore believe that the decision to increase charges by 40 per cent is sound. Having said that, I must point out that there is bitter feeling in the North, and particularly in the North-west, about the 40 per cent increase, and the bitterness is not primarily over the 40 per cent. The increase itself is the touchstone of the age-old grievance in the North that the profit being made there is eaten up by losses on the southern lines.

About five or six years ago a very detailed study indicated that the profit made in North Queensland was equivalent, roughly, to the loss made in the southern sector. In those days the accounting for the three areas was separate and the figures could be compared very easily, but that cannot be done today. The profit in the North, I repeat, was about the same as the loss in the South and, at that stage, the Central Division broke even. But the trend has moved appallingly in the direction of further and greater injustice. The Central Division is now making far more profit than it did. Of the \$90,000,000 over-all loss, the loss in North Queensland was only \$3,000,000. We are still carrying the cost of running the railway system throughout Queensland. To say the least, we are not at all happy with the situation. We will not accept a continuation of this injustice.

While the comparison between the North and the South is odious, one study done five or six years ago indicated that the profitability of the western line in the southern sector was 100 per cent better than the lack of profitability of the south-eastern corner, more specifically the Brisbane commuter system. It is a gross, appalling injustice that the people of North Queensland, particularly those in North-west Queensland, have to carry the people who live in relative splendour in Brisbane. The people of North and North-west Queensland will not accept this situation in the future.

The problem arises through the cost structure and the mechanism by which charges are levied for the carriage of goods. The major components in the over-all cost of carrying goods are those for paperwork and for the loading and unloading of goods. The forwarding of one parcel involves a lot of paperwork. As well, it must be picked up and put on the train. Once it is loaded, a train is the most efficient means of moving goods from point A to point B. Hundreds of thousands of tonnes of goods can be carried, with only three men doing the work. Trains are the cheapest and best means of transport. Rail services have been the life-line of industry in all countries throughout the world since the invention of the system in 1840.

Mr. Jensen: The rail system is said to be inefficient.

Mr. KATTER: It is not inefficient. Nothing is inefficient if there is ability to control its costs. The charges can be increased until the venture becomes profitable. However, we are interested in the pricing structure. This is a Government-run activity, so we can control the price structure of the commodity. The price structure should be based not so much on distance as it presently is, as on handling costs and the cost for each item, not each mile. I very strongly urge the Minister to consider a new pricing arrangement whereby the charge is based not so much on distance as on the cost of handling each item.

Mr. Jensen: Do you think the transport companies would give you that consideration? Don't be silly!

Mr. KATTER: I accept the interjection. It is truly amazing that cattle are being transported by road in preference to rail. A lot of inefficiencies are apparent in the railway system. I spoke to one station-master who said, "If I was given any degree of flexibility and the opportunity to use my own initiative, I could triple and quadruple the throughput of goods, but I am not given that flexibility. I am simply burdened down with the knowledge that road transports are carrying out of and into this area cattle and various other commodities that we should be handling."

I switch to another department, that of Main Roads, which adopts a very decentralised system of control. Each district engineer covers a certain area where he is the plenipotentiary. To go past him, one has to go all the way to the commissioner. He is the ultimate decision-maker in that area. I think the Railway Department should look very seriously at decentralised systems of control, with one person in charge of a particular facet—call him a station-master or what you will. I realise that there are certain problems with the unions—a lot of problems—but we must examine decentralised systems of control in the Railway Department if we are to achieve the degree of flexibility that will enable it to compete in the future.

I return to the 40 per cent increase in rail freights and wish to speak specifically about the effect it will have on cattlemen. I think that is very relevant to this discussion. The price of beef is now only a quarter of the price three years ago. In the same period inflation has increased by nearly 100 per cent, thanks to our Federal Government. So cattlemen are in a desperate situation. If honourable members think for a moment that I am exaggerating, I point out that in the last three weeks I have had two families sitting in front of me at my desk and the wife on each occasion cried continuously. A grown woman crying is not a very pleasant sight. I do not think this Government should be a party to any action that would continue or exacerbate the present hardships of such people.

One of the heaviest costs faced by cattlemen, particularly those in western areas, is the freight charged to get the beasts to market. With the present huge problem of oversupply, the idea is to get the beasts to market as quickly as possible. I plead with the Minister to give them special consideration. I should say that there will be a revolution in the West if concessions are not made to beef producers when freights are increased.

It is simply not true that the primary producer in Queensland is being feather-bedded by the Government, if that is the thought of anyone. In New South Wales, no matter where a bale of wool is shipped from, the cost is the same. That is a brilliant move to foster the principle of decentralisation. It is a major concession to rural industries that does not apply in this State. I think there is an opportunity for us to give some sort of concession along those lines to the beef producer, who is in a desperate plight.

To those who say the Government is subsidising the beef producer, I say that the beef producer is subsidising the rest of the State at the present moment. Anyone who puts his labour on the market and is not being paid a fair day's pay is subsidising whoever is receiving the benefits of his labour. On that basis, Queensland's beef producers are subsidising every man, woman and child who eats beef.

In conclusion, I applaud the increases in so far as they will enable the Minister to provide proper facilities for workers in the Railway Department. I cannot plead too strongly with the Minister and the department to provide adequate housing facilities in western areas. I believe that the department is shying away from this problem.

Mr. Glasson: We are accused of feather-bedding?

Mr. KATTER: By the A.L.P., for starters. It constantly claims that we are feather-bedding primary industry.

I know of seven men who were living in hotels while their families were still living where they were last stationed—in most cases Brisbane and Townsville. This was breaking up family life. The reason is that there are simply no houses available in western areas. In Cloncurry 12 railway houses were bulldozed to the ground. That is a shocking reflection on the Government that built them. Of course it was the Labor Government. We expected that sort of thing from it.

We are being just as short-sighted in building the present type of structure for railway employees. The housing is totally and completely inadequate and is the wrong type of housing for those areas. Houses are still being constructed of wood, which rots, deteriorates in the sun and needs painting every four or five years. If these houses are not repainted, the same thing will happen to them in 15 or 20 years' time as happened to those built 20 years ago. They will be bulldozed to the ground.

If the 12 houses that were bulldozed to the ground in Cloncurry had been built with steel frames, sheeted with fibrolite instead of wood and roofed with colorbond or galvanized material, they would still be standing and there would be no shortage of housing. The same can be said of houses in Hughenden. With strikes and other ancillary problems, this shortage of housing will probably tie up the line for three or four years.

There is an obvious solution to the problem. I am sure that railway employees would be prepared to pay a higher rental for decent housing. At present there is simply no housing available. Paying \$25 a week to rent a house is a damned sight better than living in a hotel at enormous cost and trying to maintain a family in a house in Brisbane or Townsville. In the interests of preserving family life and of being humane, the department should look at this problem of housing. I plead with it to do so.

Mr. MELLOY (Nudgee) (8.13 p.m.): I propose to deal in the main with the traffic confusion that exists in the city area of Brisbane. It is greater than could be expected to be found anywhere else, and has

not been relieved by the construction of the Captain Cook Bridge or the Riverside Expressway. In fact, the confusion has been added to by them.

I do not think we would find greater confusion than that in George Street. At certain times of the day it takes 15 minutes to drive from Parliament House to Adelaide Street. It is a slow crawl because of the volume of traffic that comes across the Captain Cook Bridge and leaves the expressway at Elizabeth Street.

Dr. Lockwood: You could walk up George Street faster.

Mr. MELLOY: That is true. I have done and still do.

The congestion is also worsened by traffic from Charlotte and Mary Streets. By the time the traffic reaches Elizabeth Street it is almost impossible for it to move. This situation continues down to Turbot Street. Nothing seems to be done about it. The problem is growing every day and, over the past five years at least, no attempt has been made to come up with a solution to the problem.

Mr. Gygar: That's rubbish. You get stuck into us whenever we want to build a free-way.

Mr. MELLOY: That does not contribute in any way to the alleviation of traffic congestion. At the time when all traffic used the Victoria Bridge, the confusion was on the south side of the river and only one lane of traffic came across the bridge. Now, in addition to the line of traffic coming across Victoria Bridge from areas such as West End, Dutton Park and Hill End, there is also a large volume of traffic coming over the Captain Cook Bridge. The two lines of traffic converge on the city, and the confusion is added to rather than relieved. I think the stage is being reached when certain types of traffic will have to be banned from the inner-city area.

Mr. Katter: Couldn't we use the river and build a footpath along it for bicycles? University students would use it no end.

Mr. MELLOY: That may be true, but I doubt whether the expense of a bicycle track along the river would be justified. I do not know if it would contribute in any way to a solution of the city's traffic problem. It might please those who use bicycles, but it would not help the traffic flow.

The stage will be reached where certain transport will have to be banned from the city at specified hours. In overseas cities trucks are queued up for miles from the outskirts waiting for the time when they are allowed to proceed into the city to deliver or pick up goods. Something like that will have to be done here. Trucks move through

our city delivering and collecting goods at all hours of the day, and they will have to be restricted in some way or other.

Consideration will also have to be given to the use of private motor vehicles. Every day cars containing only one person are driven into the city, cluttering up the highways and parking at the side of roads, without any real justification for being there at all. We will have to exercise some discretion in allowing their use, or alternatively introduce a system of permits for people who want to drive cars into the city. To obtain a permit, a person will have to give a good reason for wanting to drive into the city.

This leads me to a consideration of public transport. If the private motorist is to be kept out of the city, there will need to be a wide-ranging public transport system and even the provision of a city-circle railway through Roma Street, Normanby, Mayne Junction, Bowen Hills, Brunswick Street, Central and back to Roma Street. Such a circular line, with parking areas at each station, would relieve the traffic congestion in the city. At some time very drastic steps will have to be taken to relieve the traffic problem.

One area on the fringe of the city where traffic confusion occurs is the Fiveways at Albion. I am very familiar with it. At 3.30 p.m. it is almost impossible for a motor-car to move there, because there is no police officer on duty and traffic is converging from five directions.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! Is it the honourable member's intention to relate his remarks to the co-ordination of transport and roads?

Mr. MELLOY: I think the Minister is responsible for the traffic matter that I am referring to, because I approached him about it on several occasions and he dealt with it. But it is the transport problem that must be dealt with so far as the city is concerned. It is the Department of Transport that is presently under discussion, and that department controls all aspects of road transportation, including taxi drivers.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: Traffic comes within my jurisdiction, but roads do not.

Mr. MELLOY: I am not discussing roads; I am discussing the traffic on the roads. There is a distinction.

Another traffic problem that must be considered is that arising in the Roma Street goods yards. Conditions are cramped and are dangerous to truck drivers. There is a state of constant confusion in that area. The time is approaching when the loading area will have to be moved from Roma Street perhaps to Mayne and the marshalling yards shifted from Mayne to Zillmere. This would leave in the Roma Street yards an

area in which transport terminals for the railways and also the airline companies and bus service could be established. When the rail line is extended across the river to South Brisbane the Roma Street area would be an ideal location for such a transport-terminal complex.

The improvement of parking areas at railway stations is important. I realise that with increases in rail fares there perhaps might be a decrease in the number of suburban train travellers, nevertheless if suburban services are maintained, steps should be taken to make it much more convenient for motorists to leave their cars at railway stations and travel to and from the city by train. As I said earlier, if we impose restrictions on the entry of cars into the city, we must provide an alternative method of entry to the city. This can be done only by providing ample car-parking facilities at railway stations so that people can leave their cars parked all day and travel to and from the city by train.

Another matter I want to deal with concerns driving instructors. Large areas should be set aside where driving instructors can teach their clients the basic skill of driving before they take them out on the road. If we had a large area of about 10 acres at some point just outside the city a pupil could learn to drive there without requiring an intimate knowledge of the traffic rules and without posing any danger to pedestrians. The instructors could set the basics of good driving there, and when the pupil had acquired sufficient knowledge of the car and had assumed control over it he could be taken out on the roads.

At the present time learner drivers are a menace on the roads, particularly in the city and inner suburbs, where there are many driving schools. Many of the clients are taken on the roads for their first driving lesson. They cause quite a few near accidents because they panic in certain traffic situations. If we were able to provide some area where they could first be taught to control the car, to brake, turn and use their gears, they could later be taken out onto the roads without creating a danger to other road-users.

I wish to deal also with tow-trucks. I know that this is a matter for the police, but there is a tendency for tow-truck operators to race to the scene of an accident. How they know that an accident has occurred and how they get there in such a short time is another matter. There are, of course, many stories about that. I understand that often there are unfortunate scenes involving people who have been in an accident. They are virtually besieged by tow-truck drivers. In many instances, although they are in a state of shock, they are embarrassed by tow-truck drivers in their efforts to secure the right to take the car away. Something must be done to prevent that. There should be a regulated

approach to accidents, and perhaps certain areas could be defined in which only certain tow-truck owners could operate. I do not really know what the answer is, but certainly action must be taken to assist the victims of accidents and save them from such embarrassment.

The drivers of tow-trucks are fairly ruthless. They are prepared to put their hands in their pockets to get business. They are even prepared to bribe the police and, unfortunately, some police are susceptible to bribery. It is a matter that should receive the Minister's urgent consideration.

That brings me to the question of public transport in this city. At present, the Brisbane City Council, the Railway Department, hire cars and taxis are involved in providing public transport in the city, and I think it is high time that the Government assumed full responsibility for all public transport. I am aware that it would involve the Government in a good deal of expenditure and that the suggestion has already been considered by the Government, but I firmly believe that the Government should assume over-all control.

The Minister referred in his speech earlier today to some form of general control of public transport, and the present situation cannot be allowed to continue. It is getting beyond the financial capability of the Brisbane City Council to provide the public transport that the city needs, and only the Government is in a position to remedy the situation. I suggest to the Minister that he ask the Government to give greater consideration than it has up to date to assuming full control of public transport in Brisbane.

Let me turn now, Mr. Miller, to taxi licences. At times, particularly at night, it is impossible to hire a taxi in Brisbane, and the decision of the taxi companies to restrict the hours within which female drivers may operate taxis could lead to an even greater shortage of taxis at night.

I have been in the city at quarter past 11 at night and waited at one of the main city ranks for over half an hour for a taxi.

Mr. Herbert: You look pretty dangerous, of course.

Mr. Melloy: Yes; they might have shied clear of me. The point is that insufficient taxis are available at that time of night. I can understand drivers being a bit diffident about driving their taxis at night because of the problems of law and order now existing in Brisbane. Many employee drivers are averse to driving taxis at night. Again the question arises of police surveillance and co-operation in the inner-city areas.

Fare increases are another problem. The taxi-drivers themselves are concerned. They fear that there is a possibility that they will price themselves out of business, and that is a very realistic attitude for them to take.

After all, they must earn sufficient money to enable them to continue, but the more the fares go up the more the people are inclined to drive their own cars.

On the social scene that is developing among young people, there is a tendency to go back to the old style of dress for weddings and other ceremonies, and to hold receptions at farm-houses and other similar places. Many young couples would like to hire veteran or vintage cars—"Genevieve" cars—to tone in with their wedding. But at the present time vintage or veteran cars cannot be registered as hire cars. The Minister should give consideration to the registration of a certain number of them to be used for that purpose. I am sure some young couples in the community have that romantic streak in them. Everything is so practical these days that the romantic streak seems to be gradually disappearing, but those who have it might like to hire a vintage or veteran car on their wedding day.

I do not know whether water transport comes within the Minister's portfolio. It could provide a very efficient means of transport in the city. The river runs through the heart of Brisbane from the western and south-western suburbs to the eastern and north-eastern suburbs. I am sure that many people would be prepared to use water transport if it were available and that the ferry proprietors would be interested in providing such a service.

(Time expired.)

Mrs. Kyburz (Salisbury) (8.32 p.m.): It is with much pleasure that I rise to make this my first contribution to the Estimates debate. I am particularly interested in transport as it affects my electorate greatly. Some of the initiatives taken by the Minister are very pleasing. Not only is he a forward-thinking gentleman but also he is displaying those qualities in the programmes implemented within his portfolio, and it is very pleasing to see. However, although he deserves to have roses thrown at him, some criticism, too, is appropriate. I realise he would be expecting it, particularly from me.

I am most pleased to see at last—at long last—the beginning of the cross-river rail link. It has certainly been a long time coming. The people of Queensland have been promised it again and again. However, it is under way, and it will make a great change.

Also we are seeing an electrification programme, which, of course, is going to cost a great deal of money. In the initial stages, it will take place on two lines. I wonder when the Beenleigh line is going to be electrified. I presume that that will take probably five to six years. I realise that, as we need the cross-river rail link to get from the Beenleigh line to the city, in which most of my electorate is situated, we will have to wait for that link to be completed.

I was pleased to learn at the beginning of this year that one can in fact make a protest to the Minister to get flexibility in services, particularly in suburban bus routes. After being approached by many people in my electorate, some of whom were using the Salisbury Railway Station in travelling to the Griffith University, I asked the Minister whether a bus service could be provided for that special purpose. Fortunately, it was approved quite quickly. People who criticise should go to the right place and they might not then have cause for criticism.

I am pleased to note that the Railway Department provides excursion tours. However, they could be pushed a little harder. It seems that there is a tendency not to advertise them. I know that advertisements are inserted in "The Courier-Mail", but many families are unaware of these tours, which are usually to very interesting places and are extraordinarily cheap. Might I humbly suggest to the Minister that these tours be more widely advertised, particularly in local papers?

It is fortunate that we are at last seeing the construction of a ring-road system in Brisbane. Eventually, it will provide clearly marked routes around the city area. It will provide access corridors for interstate truck drivers particularly. This is an excellent system. Anyone who has been to Sydney realises that it is easy to navigate from one side of the city to the other simply by following the numbers. Brisbane used to be a hopeless shemozzle. I remember that, on the first occasion I had to go through the city of Brisbane, I was lost so many times I could not keep count of them. Tourists find it very difficult to navigate their way through the Valley area particularly. I hope that we will see the ring-road system in even wider use so that people may use the Indooroopilly Bridge to get to the university at St. Lucia instead of coming into the city and going down Coronation Drive.

I was very interested in the comments made by the honourable member for Nudgee. I agreed with most of what he said, particularly his suggestion that we should use the river more. I have before me one of the Minister's Press releases. It says that hydrofoils will play a large part in river transport. I was very pleased to see that statement because we are not using the river as much as we should be. The Press release adds—

"The study would examine community costs and benefits in the years 1980 and 2000 for three or more ferry services in terms of financial viability, environmental impact and integration with other transport services."

As for that environmental impact study—I believe that the impact of the automobile on

our environment will be far more damaging, particularly by the year 2000. A river feasibility study is therefore very necessary.

I shall deal now with railway stations, particularly those in my electorate. I dealt with this matter in my speech in the Budget debate last week. Some of the stations are appallingly ugly; some of them are dark, and some of the toilets are such a hodge-podge of paint that in more ways than one it pains one to use them.

I have referred to the Kingston Railway Station on other occasions but, as it is in the electorate of Salisbury, I feel that I have a duty to bring it to the Minister's attention again. The railway station is approximately half a metre below the level of the trains. Older people, pregnant women and young women with young families experience great difficulty in catching trains. When I asked the Minister to look into this matter, he said that with the electrification programme we would see not only a new platform but also new railway carriages. I can only repeat that we are really looking forward to those days because this is a young, growing and thriving community.

Of course, the need for park-and-ride railway stations—or kiss-and-ride, which I think is a very sweet if not altogether accurate terminology—has been noted and acted upon. I hope to see within my electorate quite soon—perhaps even at the Salisbury Railway Station—the development of a parking area. I have noticed that the majority of park-and-ride or kiss-and-ride parking areas are on the north side. In fact, they are at the stations that will benefit from the electrification programme.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: That is only because of the cross-river rail link.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I realise that but, for the sake of the people I represent, I have to urge faster progress.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I am in the same boat.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I thank the Minister.

I have a few suggestions to make about the transport of senior and aged citizens. I feel that, as well as in other fields, we are particularly letting down our elder citizens in the field of transport. That appals me. Particularly when I do Meals on Wheels, I encounter many old people who never leave their home, who are not visited by relatives and who do not go to shows or the theatre. In fact, they rarely get out. The reasons for that are twofold: firstly, they do not have a car or anyone to transport them and, secondly, the public bus service is not within walking distance of their homes.

I think that perhaps a mini-bus service, perhaps even using volunteer drivers, could play a much-needed role in the community. Within the friendship of my own peer group I could perhaps raise 10 or 12 women who would be most willing to staff a mini-bus service. I am thinking in terms of a voluntary bus service.

Mr. Tenni: Have you considered the attitude of the unions?

Mrs. KYBURZ: Surely the unions would adopt a humanitarian approach to this.

Mr. Tenni: They won't, you know.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I can only try.

If a senior citizen wished to travel anywhere and needed transport to get to the train or another bus service, perhaps he could call one of the citizen volunteers and be picked up in a mini-bus. Expense is not a very important consideration. After all, we spend money on rather grandiose schemes in other fields. I am concerned about the senior citizens in our community and the fact that they are not moving out of their homes. This would be one way we could help them.

I turn now to drink-driving. I know that the Minister has taken great initiatives in this field. So has the Road Safety Council. But still I do not think we are doing enough. We can mouth, but public mouthings by politicians do not count for very much. We must do more than speak; we must act. We must punish the drink-driver, which I believe we are probably doing to the best of our ability—or to the best of the ability of the courts, because there are many such offenders. However, I think that the solution in the long term, as with most social problems—and this is a social problem—lies in education. I refer to the Minister's speech, in which he said—

“The funds which we are providing for the Road Safety Council are primarily from State sources and it is regrettable that the Commonwealth grant to the States has remained static for some time.”

At a later stage he said—

“Public education in safe driving behaviour involves a complex communication problem and in the preparation of special campaigns we have had considerable success in the employment of professional advertising consultants.”

I presume we have all seen the results of those advertising consultants on television. Some of the advertisements are very good.

I ask all members to note the sex of the majority of offenders in drink-driving charges. Unfortunately, they are nearly all of the one sex. That gives rise to my submission that perhaps one sex is subsidising the other in motor-vehicle insurance.

The sex that has the majority of charges cannot expect to be lumped together with the other in the fixing of premiums. I feel that perhaps women under 25 years of age, if they have a clean record, should have their insurance premiums subsidised.

I listened to your speech, Mr. Miller, in which you said we could not possibly charge people when they came out of hotels. I agree with your comments. However, I think we should be doing more to lessen the power of the majority of hoteliers and publicans, who are unwilling to instruct their bar staff not to serve people who are obviously inebriated. I cannot see why that should be allowed. I realise that it is bad for business. So what? If it is bad business because of one patron one night, it is good business from another person another night. The thought of having children killed on the roads and having head-on collisions because drivers are drunk, irresponsible and uneducated is shocking. We must take a stronger line on this matter.

I realise that initiatives are being taken in regard to car safety. As I have said before, the car lobby is too strong and it is getting stronger because everybody is in it. Let us face it: there are votes in motor-cars; but we have to start looking beyond that aspect. I do not know whether it has been done before but I propose a system of graduated licences under which a youth or young lady with a new driver's licence may drive only a four-cylinder vehicle. I cannot see that this would be taking any of their freedoms from them; the benefits could quite easily be pointed out to them. Of course, there are unscrupulous motor-car firms and unscrupulous manufacturers who are still not meeting the standards that should be required.

My brother's case is no exception to what is happening all the time. When he obtained a driver's licence he immediately wanted the most powerful and beautiful car. He should not have been allowed to have it. For obvious reasons, he should have been restricted to a four-cylinder vehicle.

A particular problem that has worried me for some time as a lady member of Parliament is the worry of travelling on suburban trains at night. It is of concern particularly to women. Many women in my electorate have approached me about this matter. Women who are perhaps night cleaners in the city are concerned that they might not reach home safely. They are also concerned that they cannot even seek aid from their fellow travellers. I cannot understand this.

Mr. Burns: The people who work the trains, such as guards, have been bashed up.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I realise that. I have read through quite a number of Press reports. One of them contains the following paragraph—

“One guard said yesterday, ‘The department had better come to the party—or else.’”

I prefer not to offer a solution to this problem because I do not know one. Hooliganism is widespread in our community—in our schools, on our trains and even on our buses. I do not think that the answer is to arm the guards; probably more plainclothes police should be on the trains.

Mr. Burns: You would have to change the law, too, because bus drivers have taken passengers to two or three police stations and they have been put back onto the buses.

Mrs. KYBURZ: I agree. The Minister has been looking at this problem for some time and the Press releases on it are up to date.

It is a grave problem. Many women are afraid to travel on South Brisbane to Beenleigh trains, which run through my electorate. The new carriages in the electrification scheme will be better lighted, air-conditioned and relatively safer than the box carriages in use at the moment. I suggest that women go prepared. Perhaps they could carry something such as an umbrella, which is a very good weapon. It hurts when it is jabbed in the right place. Women should be prepared for these things. Employers of women who have to go home late at night should consider paying their taxi fares. After all, getting home safely is more important than having dinner or lunch, or even working overtime. A solution has to be found for this problem, as well as the problem of female taxi drivers. They are at the moment an under-privileged class. The male drivers not only wanted to keep them out of driving after 4 o'clock; they wanted to keep them out completely in some areas.

I think I have harangued the Committee for long enough.

Mr. McKECHNIE (Carnarvon) (8.51 p.m.): In rising to speak on these Estimates, I compliment the Minister on being a decent fellow and on the attentive way in which he listens to the many deputations that wait on him. On the other hand, I register my protest at the attitude of the shadow Minister for Transport. When people read your speech in "Hansard", Mr. Miller, they will see interjections by the shadow Minister for Transport indicating his narrow-minded attitude to transport. He is interested in only one area, and all I can say is, "God help Queensland if ever by some fluke he became Minister for Transport."

He claimed that the Government should have increased fares years ago. Fair enough; it might have been somewhat wiser politically to put them up a little each year.

Mr. Tenni: Fancy him saying that, with the effect that rises have on the people he represents.

Mr. McKECHNIE: That is right. The people of Queensland have had nine years

without any freight increases. That is the difference between this Government and the A.L.P.

Mr. Tenni: The people of Cairns will be interested to hear that.

Mr. McKECHNIE: They certainly will. He said that freights should have been put up ages ago.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misrepresenting me. I said no such thing. I think the honourable member must have been somewhere else. He is completely misrepresenting me.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! Is the honourable member for Cairns asking for a withdrawal of those words?

Mr. JONES: Yes, I am.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Carnarvon to accept the denial of the honourable member for Cairns and to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. McKECHNIE: In deference to your position, Mr. Miller, I withdraw what I said. But I note two things. The first is that readers of "Hansard" will see exactly what the honourable member for Cairns said when you were making your speech. The second is that perhaps Hansard have recorded my interjection to the effect that the Leader of the Opposition walked out straight after the shadow Minister for Transport made his shocking interjections. I have some idea what the Leader of the Opposition might have thought of them.

The shadow Minister for Transport also told us how keen he was to have electrification of the Brisbane suburban railway system carried out many years ago. Let us be clear on this point. The Government had to choose between making a start on electrifying the Brisbane railways and expediting dieselisation throughout the whole of the State. It chose the latter, and dieselisation proved to be a very great cost-saver to the railways. Again the attitude of the shadow Minister for Transport amazes me. By wishing to delay dieselisation, he shows that he would rather see railway employees sweating in terrific heat over the fire boxes and shovelling coal into hot furnaces than working in clean diesel locomotives. I know what the railwaymen in my electorate think of this Government for bringing in dieselisation. My votes in Wallangarra alone indicate just how good they think this Government is.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the Committee. My point of order is that dieselisation was introduced by the Labor Minister for Transport, Mr. Jack Duggan, many many years ago.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I am sorry, but that is not a valid point of order.

Mr. McKECHNIE: Thank you, Mr. Miller. I have handed the Minister his bouquets. I am very pleased to see that the Commissioner for Railways and the Commissioner for Transport are in the precincts of the Chamber listening to this debate. They are true gentlemen and dedicated public servants. But I think the time has come when the powers of those commissioners should be pruned a little. The Government should give the Minister more power than he has. Too much power is vested in his commissioners, and I hope it will not be very long before the Government takes some of their power away from them and vests it in the Minister. This is not a personal attack on the men occupying those positions; they are two very dedicated public servants. Nevertheless the Government should govern and the Minister should have more power than at present to administer his portfolio. If he likes to suggest this, I am sure this Government will back him in any move to regain that power.

I would offer another criticism to the Minister. Most constituents come to their member of Parliament because they have gone through the ordinary channels and have not received satisfaction. Sometimes a member makes representations to a Minister and the departments do not get the message. The Minister's liaison officer, Mr. Evans, is a very good and very attentive officer, but somewhere further down the line the system breaks down and it takes too long to get satisfaction. If I come to the Minister as a member of Parliament and do not get satisfaction it is not the Minister's fault, nor is it the fault of Mr. Evans. But somewhere the system is wrong and it has to be changed. I see the Minister nodding his head and I hope he will take some steps to improve the situation.

To return to the railway employees in my electorate—I must say how impressed I am with those with whom I deal. I find them most polite, and usually the ones I deal with are very dedicated to their job. I cannot heap too much praise on the people in my electorate who work in the Railway Department. The town of Wallangarra contains a large number of railway employees. There is no doubt in my mind that it should be a much bigger change-over point than it is at this moment. I know the department tells the Minister there are all sorts of reasons why it cannot be enlarged, but we must decentralise, and that is one of the logical places to do it.

I should mention also that the men at Wallangarra have no full passenger-train service. If they were living in Toowoomba or somewhere else and wanted to go on leave, they could go by train; but because the passenger services have been taken away from the Wallangarra area, they do not have the

same privileges in relation to travel on recreation leave. This anomaly should be rectified as well.

Another protest I would lodge relates to the granting of Christmas leave for railway employees in my electorate. I have checked my facts and there is no way in the world that railwaymen in my electorate get their fair share of Christmas leave. I do not know why this occurs, but I imagine that the senior officers they apply to are in either Brisbane or Toowoomba—I think it varies. There is no doubt that a little bit of favoured treatment is given to employees in those cities, and I am not going to stand by much longer and see railwaymen in my electorate miss out on their fair share of Christmas leave. I know that at that time the wheat is being shipped and the fruit season is coming in, but it should be possible to transfer men from other areas to see that the railwaymen in my electorate get their fair share of leave. They are not receiving it now, and I do not intend to stand for it much longer.

Housing for railwaymen is not as good as it might be. Admittedly, the Government has to make up for years of neglect by former Labor Governments. A start has been made, but a more intense effort must be made not only in the field of railway housing but in the field of housing generally. All housing must be given a high priority in Government spending.

The average increase of 40 per cent in freight rates is very unpalatable. None of us wanted it, but the Railway Department was making heavy losses and I do not think the Government had any alternative to taking the action it has. However, I am sure that the Government will not be so lousy as to increase the freight rates on the fruit train from Stanthorpe. These rates have been increased recently, so the situation is different from that in most other areas. The growers can thank the D.S.G.C., my father and, more lately, myself for having that rise postponed for so long. It was a combined effort by various industry leaders and members of Parliament. Freight rates were eventually increased, and I hope that the Minister will not impose an additional increase of 40 per cent. I am sure that he will not.

Let me deal now with the 40 per cent increase that the grain industry will have to meet. The Treasurer has told the leaders of the grain industry that the cartage of grain is profitable. The feeling in my electorate is that the grain industry is subsidising suburban passenger services in Brisbane.

I notice from the report of the Commissioner for Railways for 1974-75 that in those years the average fare in Brisbane was only 12.64c and that total earnings from suburban passenger services amounted to \$4,400,000. I will be surprised if it does not cost much more than that to operate the

suburban services in Brisbane. I give the Minister notice that in a few days, or perhaps in a week, when I have my facts straight, I will be asking him questions as to just what the loss is on suburban passenger services, and I am sure he will be good enough to give me the answers. The commissioner has been able to supply details of the losses on the lines from Warwick to Wallangarra and from Warwick to Dirranbandi, so I am sure that, if he really puts his mind to it, he will be able to tell us what the loss is on Brisbane suburban services.

I do not think that it will be nearly as great as some honourable members fear, nor do I think there is any need to cover it up. The loss on the Brisbane section of the Southern Division is \$34,000,000. However, as honourable members are aware, maintenance and many other items from other sections are charged to this section. Therefore, I do not think it will do any harm to give the figures. As the Minister is such a good bloke, I am sure he will give them to us.

With the exception of the mineral lines in Central Queensland and the possible exception of the Townsville-Mt. Isa line, losses were made on virtually every line in Queensland. I ask people to ponder what would happen if the State Government was blackmailed into handing over railway lines in Queensland to the Commonwealth Government. A 40 per cent increase would be peanuts! The Commonwealth Government says that the user should pay. It would either increase freights by over 100 per cent, in addition to the increase now being imposed, or close almost every railway line in the State.

There has been a good deal of talk about the efficiency of Queensland railways. To 30 June 1975, operating losses were 24 per cent of revenue earned. In South Australia in the year ended 30 June 1974—these are the latest figures available—operating losses were 57 per cent, so there is no doubt that Queensland railways are much more efficient than those in South Australia.

Let me say how happy we are to see that the Minister has begun to remove road permit fees. I will do no more than express the hope that he gets rid of the whole lot very soon. Perhaps in the next Budget he may be able to do a little better than he did in this one.

I want to make a few quick points because I know there are other speakers. The first is that not only do the mining companies provide the Government with a good operating profit on certain lines, they also provide rolling-stock, and it is time the people of Queensland realised that. Secondly, I should like to see the Minister make a special effort to get this year's record wheat crop moved. I am sure he will. Next, we

desperately need more refrigerated wagons and other wagons in the Granite Belt. Furthermore, among the weighbridges that are being closed down all over Queensland, the Minister has agreed to close down three in a very small area of my electorate. I am sure he will look into that as he promised me he would. I hope he will keep at least one of them open.

Finally, whatever else happens, the last thing I want to see is the closure of the Texas-Inglewood line. The Minister has not said that he will close it, but I point out to him that the township of Texas relies on it. No matter how unprofitable it might become, it is a must that the line be kept open.

Mr. BURNS (Lytton—Leader of the Opposition) (9.7 p.m.): Thank you, Mr. Miller, for the opportunity to spend just a few minutes on these Estimates. The honourable member for Carnarvon should have checked some of his facts on dieselisation. It was Jack Duggan who, as Minister for Transport in the mid-fifties, introduced dieselisation. The scrapping of electrification had nothing at all to do with dieselisation. Dieselisation was under way years before this Government came to power and scrapped electrification. Without trying to be political, we have to admit that we have now placed ourselves in the position where we are a lot more dependent on oil than we should be in this day and age when the Arab oil sheikhs and others control oil prices and thus our costs. It may have been a decision that will be an expensive one, not only because of the buildings and equipment that were scrapped and the land that was sold in 1958 after this Government came into office, but also because we will pay by way of oil-price increases for years and years to come rather than being dependent on electrification based on our own coal resources. It took from 1958, when the Government scrapped electrification, until 1972 when a Federal Labor Government was elected, before anything was done about it.

Mr. McKECHNIE: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition is misinterpreting what I said. The implication of what I said was that this Government had done something to expedite dieselisation. I ask him to withdraw his remark.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw the remark.

Mr. BURNS: Yes, I withdraw it. If he is going to write that into his pulls tomorrow, I withdraw what I said.

The same thing applies when Government members talk about railway lines. It is easy to continue to debate the past. There are more important things to discuss than the past. We continually hear statements from the Minister for Local Government and

Main Roads that he wants a line built to Southport. Labor can say, "Well, you scrapped it and the Premier promised to restore it in 1971". The honourable member for Redlands wants a new line to Cleveland. The line was pulled up by his Government and he, like the Minister, wants it back. The Redcliffe Labor branches want a line to the peninsula. It's time we started talking about over-all planning of the resources in this city, in this south-east corner of Queensland and the whole of the State. We are making mistakes not moving quickly enough with the area transport authority covering an area from Noosa to the border and out to Toowoomba. We have to co-ordinate transport, planning not just for Brisbane, not just for the Gold Coast, not just for Redcliffe, and not just for Cleveland, but to cover the whole State. We are responsible for the transport of people and goods in the whole State. We have to get to the point of looking a little further than a member's local interest and his speeches for local consumption. We have to look at the whole area and our total responsibility.

One thing that struck me as passing strange was what Mr. Seeney was reported as saying on 23 August 1975 when he was a member of a panel of transport experts who spoke at the seminar on co-ordinated transport organised by the Brisbane Development Association. He suggested that transport could be planned only about 15 years ahead. A month before that, we had the first of the Premier's TV shows, in which he said that plans had been made for the year 2000. While the top member of our transport authority—an officer employed by the department—was saying that we should not plan more than 15 years ahead because of changing conditions, the Premier appeared on TV with stories about the Mitsubishi transport system, mono-rails and so on.

We believed in 1958—and we still believe—that the decision to scrap the electrification programme and go ahead with dieselisation was wrong. It was doubly wrong in the light of today's oil crisis, but no-one could foretell in 1958 that an oil crisis would hit us in 1975. I think Mr. Seeney's statement about long-term planning was correct.

I am concerned that no-one on the Government side has put forward proposals for new rail lines in the metropolitan area. The Government has been in power for a long time but not one new mile of railway line has been built in the metropolitan area. It is all very well to talk about existing services and the ones that were pulled up, but there are large areas in this city in which new suburbs have exploded in the past eight or 10 years. Thousands and thousands of people live in them. We can spend millions of dollars on freeways to bring cars into the town, then spend millions of dollars on car parks for them, and then find we have to spend millions of dollars

to control the smog created by the cars. We have only to drive across the Story Bridge to see how the blue poles on the side of the bridge become stained by pollution from cars.

Mr. K. W. Hooper interjected.

Mr. BURNS: The next time the Minister crosses the bridge—

Mr. K. W. Hooper: I thought you were talking about the Federal Government's "Blue Poles".

Mr. BURNS: This is another blue-poles situation. The poles are painted every six to eight months. A man spends most of his time painting the poles but immediately afterwards smog from the cars stains them brown. And we breathe the same foul air most of the time! It is not a matter of how much money is wasted; it is a matter of planning rationally what we want to do with the money we spend. We really need a rapid-transit system—rail or bus—for the new areas as well as the old areas. Electrification will provide a new service only for people who live close to existing rail lines. It will do nothing for the people at Mt. Gravatt, Mansfield or other areas that are not serviced by rail. We should be thinking and talking about them, too.

On co-ordination, we are in a fairly difficult situation with rail passenger vehicles in Queensland. They are in short supply and have to be shuffled around. I do not know how many times I have written to the Minister asking for four carriages instead of three on trains on the Wynnum line. When there are only three carriages, people stand up on the way home on the 4.57 p.m. When four carriages are provided, they can sit down and travel in comfort.

I know, and the Minister knows, that in his answers to me he has admitted that we have a difficulty with rolling-stock. It is easy to suggest that we should put on buses to bring people to the trains. If that were done for people living on this line and many others, many people would be standing in the trains. We would be unable to handle them. In my Budget speech I said that I was disappointed that the Budget did not provide for any major order for rolling-stock. That would have been one way of providing employment and passenger comfort at the same time.

From time to time the Minister for Mines and Energy has spoken of a free bus service for Brisbane. Such statements appear in the Press, but nothing is done about them. As a result, people say that politicians do not keep their promises or stand by what they say. On more than one occasion, the Minister for Mines and Energy has referred to a free bus service in Brisbane. I do not know that very many people will believe

that he will ever introduce a free bus service. Even if it were introduced, as soon as it started to lose money—as it must, because there is no return—somebody will argue that a charge should be put on it, and if it is this Government that is in office, it will be a heavy charge. Then the scheme will be in trouble.

I rose to speak principally about three things: the use of the Brisbane River for transportation, safety in charter and tourist buses, and the matter of the use of vintage cars for weddings.

The first time the subject of hire cars was raised with me, it was raised by a constituent who had a set of American cars that were a little older than the number of years laid down by the Act. He tried to obtain exemptions to allow him to continue. His case was only one of those that have drawn my attention to the problem with hire cars. Another relates to the firm on the Gold Coast with cars such as "Genevieve" and restored cars of a similar type. People wanted to hire that type of car to go to their wedding. The Transport Department said, "No, you cannot hire that type of car. It is not legal for it to operate as a hire car because it is over a certain number of years old."

Mr. Katter: Your wife wants to make more, does she?

Mr. BURNS: In this day and age, I think we must allow people to have what they want.

Mr. Frawley: There is something sinister in this.

Mr. BURNS: The honourable member for Murrumba can make something sinister out of it. Quite truthfully, I think this pair of rat-bags are carrying on a little stupidly about this, Mr. Miller. Whilst my wife's car is old, it's not vintage and it is not for hire. The submission I make is that some people require this type of service. Some cars are properly restored. In fact, I would think that many of the old restored cars would probably be a lot safer than the cars being driven around with roadworthiness certificates handed out by inspectors at garages at Redcliffe and elsewhere. I suggest it is time that we pursued this matter. I can see no reason why the fellow on the Gold Coast should not be allowed to make his vehicles available for hire. There seems to me to be a rather unreasonable restriction placed on this type of vehicle. A movie was built around "Genevieve". Stories are built around cars of this type. People want to use them. The man wants to hire them out. The Government says that it believes in free enterprise, but it won't let him do it.

I turn now to the subject of transport on the Brisbane River. Until we build a cross-river bridge at Murrarie—the new gateway

bridge—an urgent need exists for additional cross-river transport for trucks and cars. Anyone who has gone down to catch the ferry at the end of Queensport Road will realise that. It is a 15-minute trip across the river. Large numbers of trucks queue up and the wait can be much longer than the trip. I suggest a major Government subsidy or the provision of a couple of Government barges or cross-river ferries at that point until such time as we build the bridge that this Government has been promising for some time. I understand the existing ferry is a paying proposition. All the industries in the area would support additional ferries on a short-term basis. Anyone who lives in the Valley or along the road leading to the Story Bridge or who has to queue up each day at Newstead to get across the Breakfast Creek Bridge would agree with me that it would be well worth while providing a ferry as a means by which transport could bypass the city until a bridge or tunnel is constructed at Murrarie.

I suggest at this stage that we ought to take away from the city council or from the Department of Harbours and Marine and others the responsibility for the installation of pontoons and landing places along the river, because the major block to expansion of river ferry services is the high cost of installing pontoons.

Mr. K. W. Hooper: We are looking at it.

Mr. BURNS: I thank the Minister. I think it is important. I do not believe that we should place people such as Charlie Mewitt in the situation of wanting to provide an up-and-down-river service but being prevented by the high cost of pontoons. If any member wants a beautiful morning's trip into town, I advise him to catch the ferry from Mowbray Park or one of the other points. It is beautiful, clean and restful. It is important that we urgently consider the question of river transport because, by providing amenities and fast, clean travel we can train a whole new generation to use the river.

My last point concerns the living conditions of people on the Central railway line. Early this year I had the opportunity to look at some of their houses. In Blackwater there is a tremendous difference between the living conditions of employees of mining companies and those provided for Government employees, who live in masonite huts with cold-water taps out in the yard, showers covered by galvanised iron, very poor and cramped facilities and, in some cases, electricity only recently installed. The large losses on the railway system should not be used to justify the conditions these people have to put up with. They should have gone out in 1880. It is time the Minister took a very close look at accommodation at Bluff, Blackwater, Comet and other places

on the Central line. That line must be making money today and if it is, the people working for the Queensland Government should have living conditions no worse than those enjoyed by employees of the overseas countries on the other side of the tracks.

Dr. LOCKWOOD (Toowoomba North) (9.22 p.m.): I shall address my remarks firstly to the question of private versus public transport. About 16 or 18 years ago the Government was sold a pup when it was conned into accepting the unchecked expansion of private motoring in the Brisbane area at the expense of public transport. In the past few years this fact has come home to people of all political beliefs. It is not only because of the recent oil shortages that people have had to take notice of this problem.

Anybody living on the high hills surrounding Brisbane will see that every morning the city lies under a tremendous pall of smog, consisting of unburnt petrol, unburnt diesel oil, carbon monoxide and a great deal of lead.

Many years ago this State took pride in getting the lead out of paint. The only people who were affected were a few children who licked verandah rails or water tanks. We protected them, and thought we were achieving something great. But now we have the whole population of Brisbane—young and old—breathing lead every day. The situation is worse on days when there is an inversion followed by smog.

Recently, with other people, I took part in a fund-raising venture for charity. We rode bicycles from Toowoomba to Gatton and everybody agreed that each time a car passed at about 100 km/h there was a smell of raw petrol in the air.

Mr. Burns: Have you ever cleaned the slime off your windscreen after travelling over the Story Bridge?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: Special chemicals are required; it is unburnt oil.

An Honourable Member: Did you ride back to Toowoomba?

Dr. LOCKWOOD: I went back in a vehicle. I had to hurry back to church.

This problem has been brought to the notice of the lay public by the shortage of oil. People are wondering what their motor vehicles will be worth in a few years' time. Many of the big cars will be worthless. We have already seen a squeeze in the car market, Governments and business aside. We have the prospect of a diminishing motoring public. Escalating costs of oil, particularly imported oil, will force us out of the V8s and back to the small 4s, and eventually back to public transport. There is a danger that, as motorists find fuel becoming more

and more expensive, our expressways will become playgrounds for the use of skateboards. It would be good and sound governmental policy to place a 50c a gallon tax on fuel in any city with a smog problem and to increase it quite regularly so that people will use public transport. This is not an idle whim or something to catch the Press; it is offered as a serious solution to the problem of congested roads, smog and public transport in general.

Electrification is a very clean means of shifting people by train, tram or trolley bus. I suggest that it might well be a mixture of the three that would best suit Brisbane. Certainly trolley buses could operate on the roads with only the addition of overhead wires. I seriously commend trolley buses to any transport study.

Rail routes should also be surveyed now. Such a survey should cover not only a circle route but also routes to the South-west, North-east, and perhaps from the West to the South-east. Such rail links should be surveyed and land acquired so that there would be minimal disturbance should they ever come to pass.

For the haulage of freight there has been no better system in Queensland than the railways. I have seen great damage done to highways by very large trucks. I think all Queenslanders are well aware that many trucks travel overloaded, and the truckers have worked out devious ways of getting round departmental checks. I have had occasion to attend autopsies on victims of accidents involving five-ton trucks that were licensed to carry 17 tons, or a total of 22 tons, but had in fact an all-up weight, truck and grain, of 44 tons. Vehicles of this type do untold damage to roads, and if in an emergency they need to stop suddenly there is no way that the braking system can enable them to do so. It has only about a quarter of the efficiency that it is supposed to have. On two occasions in and around Toowoomba such trucks have killed people.

Trains do not have such shocking accidents when they haul freight. The dedication of train crews to the task in hand should be commended. Rail crews are quite small; three can shift a considerable quantity of freight. We in Toowoomba see long trains coming in loaded with grain or taking cattle to the meatworks in Toowoomba or further down the line to Cannon Hill, and they do it safely and with a minimum of inconvenience to the public.

Certainly, railway workers have an excellent record for sobriety—which is more than can always be said for truckies, who are notorious for parking outside or near

hotels and having a sojourn which might be intended to last only half an hour but is often extended. Some have a nap whilst they are at those places, and good luck to them if they do. But railwaymen have a greater sense of responsibility, as they are well aware that the great tonnages they are hauling require men who are keen and alert on the job.

A problem has arisen in Toowoomba recently, which I hope will be alleviated when the Willowburn railway yard is fully operational. I refer to the blockage of Russell Street, the second busiest east-west street in Toowoomba, by shunting goods trains. There are often delays at Bridge Street, and very long hold-ups at Willowburn. I know that a railwayman's leaving his engine or guard's van is virtually equivalent to a captain's deserting his ship, but I think it would be helpful sometimes, particularly at the Willowburn crossing, if a message was somehow sent to those in waiting cars saying, "Look, you fellows have no chance of getting across this road for another half hour." I would appreciate being given such information. I was tempted to break the law one night, and it is just as well that I did not, because a police car was right behind me. After waiting about 20 minutes I turned and backed away. A wagon was half across the road, and I could have sneaked through. However, I turned and went the long way around.

I should like to add my comments to those of other members who have spoken about the need to take steps urgently in the provision of housing for railwaymen. Many men stationed at Toowoomba are transferred to other places, such as Bluff and Charleville, and they leave their families behind for two, three or four months. The Railway Department should look at a system of putting these men on different shifts so they can get home more often. As well, there is an urgent need to upgrade the standard of railway housing. I can tell honourable members right here and now that no policeman would live in one of these houses, nor is there any way in the world a school-teacher would live in one.

Mr. GLASSON (Gregory) (9.30 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Railways and Transport Estimates as my electorate would probably be one of the hardest hit by the increase in freight rates proposed in the Budget. I listened with interest to the contribution of the honourable member for Salisbury. She was concerned about the transport situation in her electorate. I cannot help commenting that every member of the Committee, no matter where he or she comes from, should be concerned for the people

who live in their areas. However, I am much more concerned about the people who live in the most isolated areas in Queensland. They suffer from a lack of transport of any type.

I believe that we have to be fair and reasonable in our contributions to this debate if we are to be completely honest. While listening to the Budget debate the thought struck me that never in my life had I heard so many requests from so many different areas—most for exemption from the increase in freight rates. Everybody wants something done with the money available, but no-one is prepared to pay for it. We have to be completely honest with the people of Queensland. Government and Opposition members alike have to realise that we have to give if we are going to receive. In all fairness it should be recognised that over the last eight years the Railway Department has absorbed an increase in costs of 185 per cent, and yet people say that the proposed increase should not have been made in one hit but should have been applied little by little over that period. I believe we are being dishonest in saying that a 40 per cent increase is inevitable if we are to balance the budget of the Railway Department; it will not go anywhere near doing that. The Government has made a sincere effort over the years and at least has stalled off the increase until now.

As I have said before, the person most distant from the capital city is the most deprived. Let me relate a few facts about the electorate of Gregory. I will try not to repeat what I said in the debate on the Financial Statement. My electorate has a common border with New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory. It is the most southerly, south-westerly and westerly electorate. Perhaps I am wrong in saying the most westerly, Mt. Isa being as westerly. As I said in my speech on the Financial Statement, people in my electorate face crippling freight rates, especially with our industries situated as they are in this State. In that debate I made a special plea that any increase in the price of consumer goods in my area be held to a minimum. The price of goods will be affected by the increase in rail freights, but in my area we have a further problem in that goods have to be transported from the railhead to the most isolated areas of this State, and this increases prices even further.

Any rise in the price of consumer goods results in a rise in the cost of living and that adversely affects the living standard of every person in the area. I concede that people in my area are allowed certain tax deductions, and that is of some benefit, partly because of the price of consumer goods, but only to

those in a position to pay income tax. Fuel probably is one of the consumer items that is most important to people living away from the railhead, and the Treasurer, recognising the effect that increases in the cost of consumer goods such as that will have on Crown employees, has made an allowance of 33½ per cent for it.

Newspapers reported today that the average increase in the cost of living in Australia in the last quarter was 0.8 per cent. That is a lot of hogwash. It might be the average in the capital cities, but it is not the average throughout Australia. We should be fair and honest when we quote figures showing how people in country areas will be affected.

In my contribution to the debate on the Financial Statement, I mentioned the effect that increases in freight rates would have on goods coming into my electorate. I remind the Committee that people do not now market their stock at the railhead. They market them at places up to 400 road miles from the railhead. I have checked this, and the most distant cattle property in my electorate is 400 miles from the railhead. Consumers will be burdened with the increase in rail freights plus so much a ton-mile for each ton carted from the rail, and the overall increase will be astronomically high. That will not be through any fault of the producers. Freight increases such as these will eventually make the man at the end of the line insolvent. I am being completely honest in saying that, and it is a factor that everyone in the community must appreciate. As I said earlier, we all want to take everything we can get, but we do not want to pay. These people I speak of will not be in a position to pay.

Let me turn now to the people of my electorate and how they are affected. I must begin by giving credit where credit is due, although my remarks probably will not be as commendatory of the Minister as those of the honourable member for Belyando. In fact, I thought I might pay the Minister's fare to the electorate of Gregory to see whether we could achieve there what has been achieved in the electorate of Belyando.

In all fairness, I must say that in the last few months there has been an improvement in the quarters for railwaymen at Winton. And not before time! Anyone who has seen them would bear out what I am saying. I went there at 6 o'clock in the

morning. An old mate of mine said, "When will you be up?" I said, "I'll be there early in the morning." When I arrived he said, "Gee, I didn't think you'd be this early." That is by the way. I give the Government full credit for what it has done there.

However, I do not give it credit for the dog boxes set up along the central-western line in which men are compelled to live. All the buildings between Winton and Longreach have recently been painted. In one gang, six men are living in dog boxes at Chorregon, while just down the line at 507 there are very good quarters. These men are not permitted to move into the buildings that have been painted, because they are married quarters. They are there, with their doors swinging in the breeze, but the men cannot use them. I appeal to the Minister to try to improve the conditions under which these men live.

There is a bridge gang working between Winton and Ilfracombe. The ganger has bought a deep freeze and paid for it out of his own pocket to keep his men on the job. I applied for a refrigerator at another camp, but have not yet received an answer to my application. When I went to that camp, the kerosene refrigerator, for which the men had purchased parts themselves, had its burner tank chocked up with wood to keep the flame burning in the flue.

Problems such as these are easily solved, but one rarely receives a favourable reply to one's representations. I wonder why? It is sometimes said that the useless and the unemployable are found in railway gangs. I do not agree with that statement. However, the department is not likely to attract the man with a wife and family. He will not seek to make his livelihood in the railways when the accommodation offered is so inadequate.

Mr. Hartwig: And without hot water.

Mr. GLASSON: No. I could name a person who puts an immerser in a 12-gallon drum. He holds a certain position in the railway. He was asked, "How much did that cost you?" He said, "It didn't cost me anything. Many of the other men are out boiling theirs in a 4-gallon drum." There's a bit of a lurk somewhere. We have to try to be reasonable about the allotment to the Transport Department. I give full credit for what is being done in many areas. I only hope that the department can see fit to make allowances for people in isolated areas, and review the 40 per cent increase.

Hon. K. W. HOOPER (Greenslopes—Minister for Transport) (9.41 p.m.): In the very short time allowed me to reply, I wish to prefix my remarks with several important comments made necessary because of a number of ill-informed statements.

Firstly, several honourable members expressed concern about the apparent high working expense for sections of lines in their electorates compared with the revenue earned. This points to the necessity to increase the railway revenue to offset the astronomical increases in wages and other associated costs. Again, let me highlight this point: since the last rail freight increase in 1966, average weekly earnings, which reflect directly on railway costs, have increased by a staggering 184 per cent.

Some honourable members also referred to the non-availability of details pertaining to railway freight and fare increases. I will stress for their benefit that it is not a matter of these details not being released until Saturday, but rather the bringing forward of this debate by a week meant it was not possible to have these details available in time.

As has happened in previous debates, the contribution of the honourable member for Cairns was most disappointing. He offered nothing constructive in the time allotted to him. He expressed disappointment that freight rates were not increased earlier.

Mr. JONES: I rise to a point of order. The Minister has misrepresented my contribution. What I pointed out was the hypocrisy of the timing of the freight increases. That is what I highlighted. It is understandable that the Government did not like me exposing that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Miller): Order!

Mr. K. W. HOOPER: I am quoting exactly from my notes of what the honourable member said.

Apparently he wants a return to the position which existed under a Labor Government, when, in the period from May 1948 to August 1956, on no fewer than eight occasions freights were increased. That includes one period when there were two increases in six months. Since this Government came into power, there have been, until now, only two freight increases—once in 1960 and another in 1966. But in the same period there have been two reductions in certain freight rates—in 1968 and in 1972.

I submit that the honourable member for Cairns, instead of castigating the Government for delaying the implementation of increased freight charges, should commend the Government for its policy because there is no doubt that the "moratorium" in higher charges has helped to stabilise the cost of living, so far as rail freights are concerned,

particularly in the country areas. That particular honourable member also referred to the necessity for upgrading amenities for railway employees. The amount of money which can be devoted to such improvements must be related to the total loan funds available, and a priority must be fixed to maximise the effective use of such funds. However, I feel that the honourable member must admit that the Railway Department is not acting unreasonably in allotting 7.8 per cent of available loan funds this year to improve accommodation. An amount of \$1,038,000 has been provided this year for new quarters for trainmen at Bundaberg, Torrens Creek and Winton, including \$570,000 to commence the Bluff project.

It is estimated that \$124,200 will be spent on new amenities buildings, \$275,000 for new cottages and improvements to existing cottages and \$500,000 for upgrading accommodation for migratory gangs.

Expenditure from funds other than loan funds will include \$450,000 for the construction of new camp wagons. So that exclusive of the money made available by the phosphate developers for housing at Hughenden, Cloncurry and Bungalien, a total of more than \$2,300,000 will be spent this financial year on improved accommodation and amenities for employees.

I thank the honourable member for Isis for his kind remarks. It is most unfortunate that the honourable member regrets the number of Government departments involved in the Traffic Act. I wish to point out for his benefit that this involvement is necessary if one considers the respective responsibilities of the departments concerned. The honourable member referred to various other aspects particularly in the Railway Department and also in the field of road safety. I am sure he appreciates that we will examine all his contributions.

The honourable member for Windsor believes that electrification of the Brisbane suburban network will not mean more passengers, and he wanted to know why land for parking at railway stations was not being acquired. Taking his first claim, I wish to inform him that electrification will mean faster trains due to quick acceleration and will undoubtedly attract many additional passengers as has been the case in almost every centre where electric trains have been introduced. Brisbane's planned electric trains will shorten existing journey times over all and they will also provide a high standard of comfort and convenience.

I can inform the honourable member that priority is being given to utilising the spare railway land at many suburban stations because of limited funds from Canberra, but in the future it may be necessary to purchase privately owned land at or near stations.

I wish to acknowledge the unshakable support of the honourable member for Townsville South in his dedicated campaign against

those people in the community who drive under the influence of liquor. I share his concern that there are drivers who wilfully persist in consuming excessive quantities of alcohol and then irresponsibly get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle, putting the lives of countless innocent road-users and pedestrians in acute jeopardy.

The honourable member for Belyando spent much of his time renewing representations he has made seeking new railway stations at several centres in his electorate, along with improved and additional railway housing. What I said earlier will cover most of that field. I can assure him that his requests will not be pigeon-holed, and I thank him for his kind remarks. Finally, I am pleased he raised the question of Commonwealth aircraft charges, because I have been concerned by the Federal Government's callous attitude in this regard and its lack of concern for inland residents. By contrast, this Government, very early in office, took action to remove the substantial State licence fees for air services imposed by a State Labor Government.

I also thank the honourable member for Merthyr for his kind remarks. I appreciate the interest that the honourable member has shown in road safety and endorse his advocacy of greater enforcement to bring about the certainty of punishment as a deterrent. As far as accident-site data is concerned, he can be assured that there is an efficient system of reporting these sites to the appropriate traffic authority and for their assessment with a view to improvement.

The honourable member for Sandgate, as always, made an excellent contribution. I thank him particularly for his comments about the rail link to Redcliffe. However, as the honourable member for Murrumba indicated, there are varying views on this matter. I am certainly interested and will continue to push for this facility. The honourable member for Sandgate is also looking forward to improved car-parking facilities. He knows quite well—and I am sure that he appreciates this—that new car-parking and railway facilities are being made available in his electorate.

Work on the Brisbane River rail link has been in progress since August and will be completed and opened for traffic as quickly as possible. I know that the honourable member is aware of that. The honourable member also referred to the possible introduction of traffic wardens. It is not generally realised that we have already accomplished a great deal in relieving police officers of civilian-type duties.

I can inform the honourable member for Rockhampton that door-to-door services were introduced by this Government in 1970 and followed the pattern of similar services operating in other States and overseas. For the honourable member's benefit, the rates to the bulk-loading operator are less than those normally applicable but are for minimum truckloads, and the department is

responsible only for the line-haul. The operator is responsible for pick-up, loading, unloading and delivery, and accepts all risks of transit. If it were correct that no savings were passed on, then obviously the service would not be used in preference to the ordinary rail service.

I was most surprised at the reference made by the honourable member for Callide to a rust-ridden taxi. The Transport Department makes strenuous efforts to maintain high standards in the taxi industry. He can be assured that, if he can produce evidence substantiating what he put before the Parliament tonight, we will most certainly investigate it immediately.

The honourable member for Kurilpa referred to the cross-river rail link. He also referred to the broken promises of the Federal Government. Like the honourable member for Ithaca, he pointed out what the Canberra-based socialists had done in breaking their promises to supply the finance necessary for that undertaking.

I have noted the comments of the honourable member for Port Curtis about driving licensing and instruction as applied to country areas, and particularly the Gladstone area. He referred to revenue received under the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act, and obviously he is not aware of the way in which that fund is administered.

The honourable member for Murrumba, as I have just said, advocated a rail connection to Redcliffe.

As usual, the honourable member for Ithaca spent considerable time and effort in researching material for this debate. It is most refreshing to hear from an honourable member who checks his facts and figures. I appreciated his remarks about my recent attendance at the National Safety Council's Congress and Exposition in Chicago. It was a very informative visit, and I can inform honourable members that there was a beneficial exchange of road safety schemes and ideas.

I was surprised—in fact, even delighted—at the soft line taken by the honourable member for Archerfield, who spoke at considerable length about the need for a rail link to Inala. He has my assurance that his proposal will be seriously examined.

The member for Nudgee spoke about banning goods-carrying vehicles from the city centre. It must be remembered that the matter of night deliveries is allied to industrial problems created by the necessity to employ staff in buildings outside normal hours to receive the goods and merchandise delivered. Brisbane is a busy port, too, and it would not be feasible to ban trucks from the city as that would delay the servicing of wharves, container terminals and so on. However, as the honourable member has brought this to my notice, I am prepared to consider the matter.

Credit should be given where credit is due. Were it not for this Government's initiative in embarking on studies and physical works, there would have been no new Victoria Bridge, no Riverside Expressway and no improvements at Kemp Place and Shafston Avenue. Of course, the honourable member is right off beam when he talks about the traffic coming into the city centre.

I thank the honourable member for Mourilyan for her contribution. I can assure her that the request she has made for her electorate will be seriously and speedily considered.

The honourable member for Flinders is well aware of the work that has been carried out in his electorate. I know his worries and concern about railway housing. The matter will be looked at in conjunction with the special committee that has been set up by the Government into all Government housing.

I compliment the honourable member for Salisbury on her well-presented address, which traversed many aspects of transport, driving and social problems. She advocated graduated driving licences. That is a subject that has to be approached on a national level because of the mobility of our people in travelling from State to State. It is being considered principally in respect of motor-cycles.

The honourable member for Carnarvon complimented me, and for that I thank him very much. He is concerned about Christmas leave for railway workers. I inform him that I will be only too happy to consider the matter as one of urgency. He is concerned also about the work carried out in the Wallangarra area. This is very difficult. One naturally has to hasten very slowly with any alterations. However, I respect the honourable member's representations. He is not happy with the 40 per cent increase in freights but is big enough to admit that it just had to come.

The Leader of the Opposition explained that dieselisation was introduced when Mr. Duggan was the Minister for Transport, but I believe he was a little off beam when he said it had nothing to do with this Government's shelving the idea of electrification. It certainly did. The Government at that time decided to dieselise the whole of the State and not to spend the maximum amount on electrification in the metropolitan area. In other words, we wanted to spend the money over the entire State.

He also expressed concern at what he said was not an over-all planning scheme for an area extending from Noosa to the Gold Coast. I think that was the area he mentioned. I am prepared to have a look at that matter.

He also mentioned rail as being rapid transit. I think that, like me, he was in a heck of a hurry. We all realise there are many other modes of travel. He later mentioned the Brisbane River. He will be pleased

to know that this matter is being investigated in a research project that is being undertaken at the moment.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 22 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Railways and Transport.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Railways—	\$
General Establishment ..	48,192,400
Railways and Transport—	
Balance of Votes, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and	
Loan Fund Account ..	298,942,730.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at 9.57 p.m.