

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1978**

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## THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1978

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

### PAPER

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

Report of the Police Superannuation Board for 1977-78.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

VISIT TO WEIPA ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY BY MR. M. MILLER AND MR. S. ZORN

**Hon. C. R. PORTER** (Toowong—Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs) (11.3 a.m.): Last evening the Weipa Aboriginal community was subjected to continuing incidents of quarrelling and fighting, which apparently resulted from a visit to the community by Mick Miller of Cairns and an American named Stephen Zorn. Miller is the person I have mentioned previously in this House as the principal of the North Queensland Land Council—a self-appointed group that recently received funding from the World Council of Churches and is active in stirring up hostility and unrest amongst Aboriginal people in this State.

The Stephen Zorn, I understand, is identical with the international agitator who up to recently was active in the Northern Territory, where serious unrest exists in relation to mining activities. It is understood that he was associated with the significant unrest some years ago at the Bougainville copper-mining deposits. Recent reports are that the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory have sacked him as their adviser.

The pair arrived at Weipa and received approval from some council members—it was not authority from the council itself—to hold a meeting, which was attended by approximately 20 persons of a population of approximately 700. The majority of the 20 were former residents of the Old Mapoon mission.

In the course of that meeting, it was conveyed that a group including Mick Miller, Mrs. Joyce Hall of Weipa and Jacob Walmbey of Aurukun—all well-known people—are proceeding overseas to stir up unrest. It appears that some document described as a petition to the Queen was being prepared. Miller and Zorn are accomplices of, and residing with, Mr. Terry O'Shane of Weipa North. O'Shane recently returned from a visit to Cuba, is an ardent member of the Seamen's Union and quite active. He is understood to be the son of Cairns militants who were associated with unrest on the waterfront in Cairns some years ago and who were members of subversive groups and had been overseas for indoctrination.

Mr. Walmbey of Aurukun, who recently appeared on a distorted "Four Corners" programme, is an activist in the land-rights movement.

**Honourable Members** interjected.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! I warn honourable members on both my left and right that I will not stand for interjections. I ask for their co-operation in this matter. If they do not co-operate, I will deal with them under Standing Order 123A. I warn all honourable members that I will not tolerate interjections while a Minister is on his feet.

**Mr. PORTER:** This Mr. Walmbey is an activist in the land-rights movement. He was the original chairman of the company Aurukun Incorporated at the Aurukun Community initially sponsored by B.O.E.M.A.R. of the Uniting Church and was, and still is, financially supported by the Commonwealth. Mrs. Hall is also an activist in the land-rights movement.

During the meeting, Mick Miller indicated he had engendered amongst Aborigines at Yarrabah threats of violence against staff at that centre and would do the same at Weipa if necessary. It is significant that recently there has been a spate of such threats at Yarrabah.

The Council of Weipa Aboriginal Reserve this morning decided that Miller and Zorn are not permitted back on the reserve.

I make this statement knowing the inevitable pattern of things that will be said by these extremists and events that we would then have to try to negate. I make this statement now giving the facts in advance of what they may endeavour to do.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

#### 1. INCENTIVE TRANSFER SCHEME FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS

**Mr. Burns**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Did the Teachers' Union and the Education Department present a joint report to him on 12 October on a proposal for an incentive transfer scheme for teachers in remote schools?

(2) Did this report result from four years' work and was it commissioned by Sir Alan Fletcher and subsequently by himself?

(3) Did the report make recommendations aimed at improving education for children in remote schools by increasing staff stability and continuity?

(4) As Cabinet rejected the report on 17 October before members of Parliament or the Select Committee on Education had an opportunity to study it, will he seek a reconsideration or a postponement of the Cabinet decision to allow full opportunity for consultation and thorough study of the report by all concerned before a final decision is made?

Answers:—

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes. Concern at the problem of staffing isolated and country schools prompted the work of this committee.

(4) My parliamentary education committee is considering the report in question. I will await the recommendations of the parliamentary education committee before I make any further recommendations.

## 2. TAXING OF PAYMENTS FOR UNUSED LEAVE

**Mr. Burns**, pursuant to notice, asked the Treasurer—

(1) With reference to the recent Budget decision of the Federal Liberal-National Country Party Government in relation to taxation on unused long service and annual leave at the time of termination of employment, how will these harsh new tax provisions apply in cases where termination of service is caused by the closing down of the firm concerned, such as Olympic Tyres and other recent cases?

(2) Will he make representations to the Federal Treasury seeking a guarantee that unused leave involved in such terminations of employment, particularly when the business closure came through economic circumstances, will be free from the savage new tax provisions of the Federal Budget?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Whilst I appreciate the sentiments behind the Leader of the Opposition's question, the matter he has raised is one of Commonwealth taxation policy which is an area in which the State has traditionally not attempted to exert influence on the Commonwealth. By the same token, the State would not expect the Commonwealth to attempt to influence its taxation policy.

## 3. CONTROL OF HEMMANT LAND BY PORT OF BRISBANE AUTHORITY

**Mr. Burns**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a circular letter forwarded to residents of Hemmant in the Lytton electorate by a group called Industrialise Hemmant Group, P.O. Box 49, Morningside, and, if so, is it true, as stated in the letter, that the Brisbane City Council has no control whatsoever over that area of Hemmant north of the railway line, that this is controlled by the Port of Brisbane Authority and that it has complete say as to what happens in the area and does not recognise the Brisbane City Council as relevant to the area?

(2) Is he aware of any legal precedents that indicate, as stated in the letter, that the Brisbane City Council is not even entitled to charge rates in the area?

(3) Is it also true, as stated in the letter, that for any sale to proceed in the area the Port of Brisbane Authority has to consent to it and that at all times it has the right to resume one's land?

(4) Do the Port of Brisbane Authority Act and the Harbours Act provide that property can be "resumed for a very low price before you know it", as stated in the letter?

(5) Will he investigate and report on other claims in the letter, which has frightened many elderly residents by portraying the port authority and the Brisbane City Council in a highly emotional way as bodies out to take the land and homes from local residents by force, if necessary?

Answer:—

(1 to 5) I have not previously seen the lengthy circular letter accompanying the honourable member's questions and I shall reply to the question on Tuesday.

## 4. PORNOGRAPHIC PUBLICATIONS INVOLVING CHILDREN

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Powell**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation—

What is the situation in Queensland in regard to pornographic publications specialising in the sexual exploitation of children?

Answer:—

About two years ago, a flood of pornographic material depicting children came on to the market in some of the other States, its distribution being mainly centred on Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

At a 1977 meeting of the relevant Commonwealth and State Ministers, it was agreed that action should be taken by the States to stop the sale and distribution of this type of material. The availability of this material in States other than Queensland highlighted weaknesses in their legislation and, in order to overcome these difficulties, some of them had to introduce special legislation. Queensland was the only State equipped to deal with such a menace. In fact, because of our legislation, the Objectionable Literature Acts, 1954 to 1967, and the effectiveness of the Literature Board of Review, publications of this type did not reach Queensland and to date none has been brought to the notice of the Literature Board of Review.

It will be seen that Queensland has the most effective laws in this area, and all the other States are now following Queensland's lead by prohibiting the distribution

and sale of child pornography. At the same time, I understand that the Commonwealth Customs Department is carefully checking imported publications to prevent this type of material entering Australia.

#### 5. RESTRICTIONS ON OWNERSHIP OF RACEHORSES

**Mr. Casey**, pursuant to notice, asked the Treasurer—

(1) With reference to the report in "The Sunday Mail" of 15 October which stated that a new rule No. 55 (2) is being used to prevent police officers from owning racehorses or coursing dogs, is it a fact that, at this time when discrimination is being practised against the Police Force, the chairman of the T.A.B. is able to not only race horses, but do so under the fictitious name of "Anthony Dare"?

(2) Has this practice of using a nom de plume in relation to ownership of racehorses been discontinued by major racing clubs throughout Australia, and is the chairman of the T.A.B. the last owner in South-east Queensland, and possibly Queensland, to enjoy this privilege?

(3) Will he point out to the Minister for Police the obvious inconsistency of the Government's approach to racing ownership and use his influence upon him to end the discrimination being applied against police officers under rule 55 (2)?

(4) Will he on behalf of the Government impress upon the chairman of the T.A.B. the undesirability of pursuing a practice in racehorse ownership that racing clubs themselves have discontinued and that is not available to other people connected with the turf industry?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 4) Under the Australian Rules of Racing, which have been adopted by the respective principal clubs of each State of Australia, rule 28 provides that the committee of a principal club may, at its discretion, register and from time to time renew the registration of an assumed name adopted by any person. I am informed that it is present practice that applications for registration of assumed names under the rule are not entertained; that they are frowned upon.

Notwithstanding the understandable reluctance of principal clubs to register assumed names, it appears that registrations which were in operation prior to 1 August 1948 automatically continue to remain active until the person involved either dies or elects to withdraw his registration. The Register of Assumed Names is held by the Registrar of Racecourses at the Australian Jockey Club in Sydney. It is not a public document. Obviously there

would not be many names still on the register, given the pre-August 1948 registration condition to which I have referred. If, however, for reasons best known to themselves, persons whose names are still listed wish to remain on the register, they have that right.

Rule 55 (2) mentioned by the honourable member relates to the employment conditions of police officers. The Police Act gives the power to lay down rules of this sort. The administration of the Act is, of course, in the competent hands of my colleague the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, who needs no advice from me on the matter.

#### 6. MEAT PRODUCTS SOLD IN SUPERMARKETS

**Mr. Casey**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) Is he aware that several manufacturers based in southern States are distributing semi-processed raw-meat products in Queensland supermarkets that do not conform with the definition for prescribed meats under section 6 of the Meat Industry Act or the sale of meat under section 119 of the Meat Industry Regulations?

(2) Does his department regularly inspect meat products on sale in Queensland supermarkets to ensure that they conform to the Meat Industry Act and regulations and, if so, with what results?

(3) Will he have a thorough investigation of all meat products on sale in Queensland supermarkets that have been manufactured in other States, to ensure that they conform with the definition of prescribed meats?

*Answers:—*

(1) No. I am not aware of the particular products to which the honourable member refers.

(2) No. Departmental inspectors restrict their inspections to registered butchers' shops and to reports of alleged breaches of the legislation at other premises which normally would come under legislation administered by the Health Department.

(3) No, but I would be prepared to have my officers investigate any specific products which the honourable member feels do not conform with the Queensland Meat Industry Regulations.

#### 7. RECONSTRUCTION OF SECTION OF KURANDA-EMERALD CREEK ROAD

**Mr. Tenni**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

When will reconstruction of a very dangerous section of some 10 miles in length, from Speerwah turn-off towards

Mareeba on the road between Kuranda and Emerald Creek, be commenced, as it should be treated as very urgent and should be the first section to be repaired?

*Answer:—*

For planning purposes, reconstruction of part of the section to which the honourable member refers has been included in an extremely tentative programme in the 1982-83 financial year. It will be appreciated that this date is well beyond the date on which the current Commonwealth roads legislation expires and is thus in a period of time for which we can only guess what the Commonwealth attitude to road funding will be. Consequently, my reply should be taken as a guess at what may happen.

8. KAMERUNGA BRIDGE AND AVONDALE CREEK CROSSING

**Mr. Tenni**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

When will tenders be called for the construction of the new Kamerunga Bridge and Avondale Creek crossing in the Barron River electorate?

*Answer:—*

It is intended that tenders for the new Kamerunga Bridge over the Barron River on the Brinsmead-Kamerunga Road will be called in November this year. At this stage I cannot advise the honourable member of the exact date.

Tenders for the Avondale Creek crossing will be called in the 1979-80 financial year, probably just prior to Christmas, though this tentative date is subject to review in the light of availability of funds at the time.

9. REEDS CREEK-DAINTREE ROAD

**Mr. Tenni**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

When will stage two of the Daintree Road between Reeds Creek and Daintree commence?

*Answer:—*

It is currently intended that the works about which the honourable member has asked will be released in the latter half of the 1979-80 financial year. Of course, a more accurate assessment of the release date will be made when the programme for 1979-80 is drawn up, based on a more up-to-date assessment of funds available.

10. HOUSE-BUILDERS' REGISTRATION BOARD, INDEMNITIES AND INSURANCE

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Austin**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

(1) When did the House-Builders' Registration Board first accept directors' indemnities from a proprietary limited company seeking registration under section 27 (2) of the Act?

(2) What is the current balance of the insurance fund of the House-Builders' Registration Board, what is the total of all payments made from this fund to date to or on behalf of house purchasers, and how much of the above payments has been recovered or is recoverable from registered builders?

*Answers:—*

(1) 3 July 1978.

(2) The insurance fund as at 18 October 1978 had a debit balance of \$67,525.24. To date, a total amount of \$41,816.97 has been paid, but none of this money has been recovered from registered builders. However, in an endeavour to recover this amount, the Solicitor-General has been asked to take action against the directors of one building company and the board has written to the other builder.

11. TESTS ON 2,4,5-T

**Mr. Ahern** for **Mr. Austin**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware that a French scientist has claimed that it is possible to detect dioxin in smoke from burning plants previously sprayed with 2,4,5-T?

(2) What tests has his department, in association with other departments, carried out on this matter?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes.

(2) The National Health and Medical Research Council has carried out an extensive investigation of this product and, following its eighty-fifth session, released a lengthy statement. The honourable member can be assured that I will bring any new information concerning this product to the notice of the council, and I will advise him accordingly.

12. HEAD LICE IN SCHOOLS

**Mr. Davis**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) Are regular checks taken in State schools for head lice?

(2) How many cases have been notified in the past 12 months?

(3) What steps are being taken to alert parents and others to the present epidemic?

Answers:—

(1) No. Infestation with head lice is a community and parental responsibility.

(2) Pediculosis is not a notifiable disease under the Health Act.

(3) Pamphlets are available from the Division of Health Education and Information of my department; articles are published in women's magazines and the local press; and talks are given to mothers' groups, parents and citizens' meetings, etc.

### 13. OVERSEAS TEACHERS IN QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS

**Mr. Davis**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) How many teachers who were recruited from overseas are still teaching in (a) Queensland State primary schools and (b) Queensland State secondary schools?

(2) Of those teachers originally recruited from overseas and still employed by his department, how many have yet to do country service?

(3) Will he state what the term "country service" is now taken to imply?

(4) If there are teachers recruited overseas who have not done country service, is it the intention of the department to include country service as a condition of continuing employment?

(5) If the employment of teachers originally recruited overseas were cancelled, what effect would this have on the employment of graduates from Queensland's C.A.E. teacher-education courses?

Answers:—

(1) The last check on the number of teachers recruited from overseas and still employed in Queensland State schools was undertaken at the beginning of the 1978 school year. At that time, 278 of these teachers were teaching in primary schools and 405 in secondary schools.

(2) The number who have not been appointed to schools in country areas is not readily available. To determine this figure, the employment history of each one of these teachers would have to be examined and such an extensive task does not seem warranted at the present time.

(3) Applicants for teaching positions with my department must agree to serve anywhere in the State, and teachers are aware that they may be appointed to schools in locations away from their home towns. Periods of duty in these locations is normally referred to as "service away from home" or "country service".

(4) The requirement to serve in any location in the State is a continuing condition of teacher employment in my department. This means that teachers recruited from

overseas must take up duty in locations and at times which meet the needs of my department, and ensure that schools are properly staffed.

(5) As all teachers recruited from overseas who are still employed by my department are now permanent employees, their services would be terminated only in cases of unsatisfactory performance. Consequently, this could have no effect on the recruitment of recent graduates from tertiary institutions.

### 14. ALLEGED SHOWING OF PORNOGRAPHIC FILMS FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Mr. Davis**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation—

(1) Is he aware of a statement by Mr. Drayton reported in "Sunday Sun" of 8 October in which it was claimed that Mr. Drayton had organised two pornographic film nights for members of the Queensland Parliament, and that they were for committees he was lecturing on the subject of obscenity?

(2) If so, will he inform the House of the names of the parliamentary committees referred to by Mr. Drayton?

(3) What are the names of the members concerned?

(4) Where and when did the showings of the films take place?

(5) Were the films ones that were banned by the Films Board of Review?

(6) Was the "hard porn" film one for which a citizen arranging a private showing would be liable to be charged under the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act?

(7) Do all members of the Films Board of Review have access to pornographic films for private viewing and showing?

Answer:—

(1 to 7) Unlike the A.L.P. with its weak-kneed permissive attitude, this Government has a definite policy on pornography and violence in film material, and I refer the honourable member to the provisions of the Films Review Act 1974 and to the annual report I tabled in the House yesterday of the Films Board of Review.

The Government believes that its backbenchers are entitled to see and be aware of the material prompting the Government's policies in this area, and earlier this year I sought the assistance of the chairman of the Films Board of Review in this regard.

On the occasion in question, the films shown ranged from examples of some overseas material of the type refused entry

to Australia to some which, while prohibited in Queensland, is still allowed to be screened in some other Australian States.

I might add that members present expressed themselves as extremely concerned with the latter type of film which, if it were not for the Films Board of Review and the powers given it by the Government, would flood Queensland. Presumably this is what the honourable member wants. All I can suggest is that, if he wishes to satisfy his personal prurient curiosity, he visit one of the A.L.P.-controlled States where this type of depraved production is more freely exhibited.

15. CLASS-ROOM LIGHTING, CUNNAMULLA STATE SCHOOL

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

Are there any proposals to install lighting in the class-rooms at the Cunnamulla State School, where visibility is very poor during cloudy or wet weather?

*Answer:—*

This work has now been approved following the honourable member's earlier representations. At an early date, a letter will be forwarded, giving details of the work approved.

16. HOME ECONOMICS BLOCK, CUNNAMULLA STATE SCHOOL

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

Are there any proposals to replace the old home economics block at the Cunnamulla State School and, if so, when will construction commence?

*Answer:—*

Planning has not yet commenced on this proposal as, to date, it has not been afforded a sufficiently high priority by the client department in relation to the funds available for work of this nature. The project has been included, however, on a provisional forward planning programme for the 1980-81 financial year.

17. DYEING OF MEAT FOR PET FOOD

**Mr. Turner**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

(1) With reference to the use of methyl violet as a dye to distinguish kangaroo pet meat, will the continued use of meat treated with this dye affect the health of pets?

(2) Why must this dye be applied to meat that is to be cooked and canned as pet food and, as a result, does not retain the dye?

(3) Owing to the unattractive appearance of pet meat treated with methyl violet and consumer reaction against purple meat for pets, will he give consideration to relaxing his department's provisions in this regard?

*Answers:—*

(1) No. There is no objection from veterinary authorities or from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty. Methyl violet is used in many countries.

(2) The dye is used to identify flesh intended for use as pet food up to the point of sale or processing. Once it is processed, identification by denaturising with dye is no longer necessary.

(3) No. Denaturising is necessary in order to protect the public. I doubt if pets find the dyed flesh unattractive.

18. TEACHING OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN SCHOOLS

**Dr. Lockwood**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Is his department aware of the number, location and ethnic language of children in Queensland who do not speak English as their primary language?

(2) Is his department aware of the number and names of teachers who can teach ethnic groups in both their mother tongue and English?

(3) If these personal facts are not known, will he, as a matter of urgency, have them researched for the education of ethnic language groups?

*Answers:—*

(1) My department does not maintain detailed State-wide records on the number, location and ethnic language of children in Queensland who do not speak English as their primary language. However, information of this type about particular localities is available within my department. This information is, for example, available in respect of those schools to which a specialist migrant teacher is appointed, and in respect of the Aurukun and Edward River State Schools, where a bilingual programme is being conducted.

(2) Again my department does not maintain detailed, State-wide records of the numbers and names of teachers who are able to teach both English and the mother tongue of a specific ethnic group. However, information of this type is available in respect of the 51 specialist migrant teachers employed by my department. A limited survey has also been conducted by my department among primary teachers in the three Brisbane regions, to obtain details of the languages other than English spoken by those teachers. Further information of this type is also available to staffing

officers from the personal records of teachers, largely as a result of a teacher's indication of particular skills or interests.

(3) My department has been exploring the collection of the information referred to by the honourable member, and further considerations of this possibility will continue. I would point out, however, that there are serious difficulties associated with the collection and maintenance of accurate and up-to-date information of this type.

19. RIGHTS OF DISQUALIFIED DRIVERS

**Dr. Lockwood**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police—

(1) May a person disqualified from holding a drivers' licence sit alone in the front-passenger, rear or driver's seat of a motor vehicle?

(2) May such a person ride a bicycle in a public place or on a road?

(3) If the answers to (1) or (2) are in the affirmative, will he have the Police Department publicise the remaining rights of disqualified drivers to sit in vehicles or otherwise travel in public?

*Answers:—*

(1) A disqualified person cannot drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle upon any road.

(2) There is no restriction on a disqualified driver from riding a bicycle in so far as his disqualification is concerned.

(3) Licensed drivers should be aware of these requirements and it is not proposed to publicise the remaining rights of disqualified drivers.

20. UNREGISTERED CAR DEALERS

**Dr. Lockwood**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) What types of complaints has he, as Minister for Justice, or the Corporate Affairs Office received concerning unlicensed car dealers?

(2) How many actions were taken in the last financial year against unregistered car dealers?

(3) What were the results?

(4) What are the requirements for obtaining a motor dealer's licence?

*Answers:—*

(1) The Commissioner for Corporate Affairs has advised that the type of complaint he receives involves certain individuals who may be carrying on business as unlicensed motor dealers.

(2 & 3) Nine summonses were laid during the last financial year against unregistered motor car dealers. Eight of

these were dealt with by the courts and fines were imposed ranging from \$40 to \$250, plus costs of court. The other summons was not proceeded with as the defendant could not be served with the summons.

(4) The honourable member is referred to section 54 of the Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1977, which sets out the criteria to be satisfied by applicants for the granting of a motor dealer's licence.

21. BRISBANE CREMATORIUM LTD.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) What are the names and addresses of the directors of Brisbane Crematorium Ltd.?

(2) What is the paid-up capital of this company?

(3) What was the net profit of this company for the years 1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77 and 1977-78?

*Answers:—*

(1) The public register held by the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs indicates that the names and addresses of the directors of Brisbane Crematorium Ltd. are as follows:—

Cuppaidge, Edmund Russell, 27 Eblin Drive, Hamilton. 4007;

Francis, Robin Tremlett, "Ben Varden", Lake Manchester Road, Mt. Crosby. 4035;

Martin, Archibald Johnston, 33 St. Osyth Street, Toowong. 4066;

Herring, Roger John Oxley, 16 Jolimont Street, Ascot. 4007;

Love, Antony James, 48 Miles Street, Woolloowin. 4030.

(2) \$140,000.

(3) 1974-75, \$53,825 (after tax); 1975-76, \$62,350 (after tax); 1976-77, \$58,434 (after tax); 1977-78, the annual return including the accounts for this financial year has not yet been received by the commissioner.

22. SOIL CONTAMINATION, CARINDALE ESTATE

**Mr. K. J. Hooper**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) With reference to the arsenic contamination at the Carindale Housing Estate and the answer he gave the Leader of the Opposition to a question on 13 September 1977, wherein he said, "The only question that comes under my jurisdiction is that which relates to a possible hazard to health", and the answer he gave the member for Chatsworth on 13 September 1978, wherein he stated that he was aware of tests taken by the Department

of Local Government and that he considered all of these tests to be of an unsafe level, as the developers have started to subdivide part of the land on which tests taken by the Department of Local Government showed unsafe levels of arsenic, will he take steps to ensure that contaminated land is not sold to future land purchasers?

(2) As the health of Queenslanders is his responsibility, will he order a full investigation into the possible health hazard to future occupiers of this land?

(3) Until this investigation is completed, will he take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that no land in the area bounded by Creek Road, Old Cleveland Road, Scrubb Road and the Pacific Golf Club is developed further?

(4) In these investigations will his department obtain health authority reports from both North Carolina and New York State, as soil contamination by chemicals has caused the North Carolina authorities to spend millions of dollars in removing contaminated soil from the road edge and the New York State authorities to evacuate the Love Valley Estate because of birth deformities and abnormal growths on residents?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 4) I am advised that the land on which tests were taken by the Department of Local Government which showed unsafe levels of arsenic has not yet been subdivided. I have been given an assurance by the Brisbane City Council that subdivisional approval will not be issued until suitable precautions have been resolved in all of the areas known as possible contamination areas.

I am fully aware of my responsibility to safeguard the health of Queenslanders and will take the steps deemed necessary in conjunction with the responsible local authority, the Brisbane City Council.

Any reports of investigations in other countries will be considered if necessary.

## 23. EDUCATIONAL AID FOR FOSTERED CHILDREN

**Mr. K. J. Hooper**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Welfare—

(1) Where a child that has been fostered attends a State school, are school books and outfitting paid by his department?

(2) Are these expenses not met if the child attends a denominational school? If not, what is the reason?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) All children in the care of the department, regardless of the school which they attend, are provided with all school requisites and outfitting at regular intervals or as the need arises. Both aspects are provided for under the Children's Services Regulations.

## 24. SOUTH EAST FREEWAY ACCESS

**Mrs. Kyburz**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) Is he aware that many motorists barge onto the South East Freeway, in some cases causing accidents and in most cases taking no account of the speed of the motorists on their right?

(2) Will he give consideration to placing "Give Way" signs on all access roads onto the freeway?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) The Main Roads Department some years ago issued a brochure entitled "Freeway Driving is Different", and sometimes I wonder whether this brochure should be reprinted and given wide circulation again.

One of the points made in this brochure was that motorists already on the freeway have an equal responsibility to see that traffic merges freely, and accordingly should adjust their speed and permit new arrivals to make a smooth safe entry. I suspect that lack of adherence to this principle is causing the need to barge on the part of motorists entering the freeway.

The honourable member will no doubt have gathered that I believe what is needed is not more signs, but more courtesy.

## 25. SECURING OF LORRY LOADS

**Mrs. Kyburz**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

Will he make every effort to ensure that the regulations regarding the covering and securing of loads on lorries are implemented in the strictest terms?

*Answer:—*

As the question asked by the honourable member concerns the enforcement of the Traffic Regulations, I suggest that it be directed to my colleague the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police.

## 26. POLICE COLLECTION OF FORENSIC DATA

**Mrs. Kyburz**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police—

Does his Police Department employ a forensic pathologist or a forensic biologist for collecting forensic data from victims of sexual assault?

*Answer:—*

No. There is no forensic pathologist or forensic biologist in the employ of the Police Department. As a rule, forensic evidence is collected by police officers and/or government medical officers, and any

scientific examination required of this nature is conducted by specialists in the employ of the State Health Department.

27. HOUSING COMMISSION HOUSES, DECEPTION BAY, CABOOLTURE, BRIBIE ISLAND AND WOODFORD

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

How many Housing Commission houses (a) are being rented and (b) have been sold by the commission in Deception Bay, Caboolture, Bribie Island and Woodford?

Answer:—

—	Rental	Sold	Financed under Mortgage
Deception Bay	206	25	46
Caboolture ..	35	40	115
Bribie Island	1	..	10
Woodford ..	1	1	1

In addition, there are 12 pensioner units at Bribie Island and six at Caboolture.

28. USE OF MONEY COLLECTED BY Q.A.T.B.

Mr. Frawley, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health—

(1) Must money collected by the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade for a specific purpose be used for that purpose?

(2) If an ambulance brigade conducts an appeal and collects money to purchase a new vehicle and the public contributes specifically for that purpose, may the money be used for other purposes?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) According to section 32 of the Ambulance Services Act 1967-1975, the trust fund of a committee shall consist, inter alia, of all moneys arising from any bequest, legacy or gift received by or vested in the committee. It would be a requirement of the committee to expend such moneys raised upon the item concerned.

The State Council of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade has, in the past, circularised all committees, advising them that, in view of provisions of the Act and following upon departmental advice, any gifts or donations made for a specific purpose such as purchase of cars, equipment, etc., should be placed in a trust fund and payment subsequently made from the fund in respect of the purchase concerned.

29. BREACHES OF FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT

Mr. Prest, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Labour Relations—

(1) What is the total amount of moneys recovered over the last five years under the Factories and Shops Act from employers who have been in breach of the appropriate award?

(2) How many convictions have been recorded against employers under the relevant section of this Act?

Answers:—

(1) Under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act moneys due under awards made by the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Commission of Queensland and Apprenticeship Regulations may be recovered upon application to an industrial magistrate.

The amounts recovered by the industrial inspectorate over the last five years were—

Year	Moneys Recovered
1973-74 .. ..	\$296,174.16
1974-75 .. ..	\$395,897.15
1975-76 .. ..	\$447,801.96
1976-77 .. ..	\$413,300.39
1977-78 .. ..	\$504,588.72
Total .. ..	\$2,057,762.38

(2) Over the same period, the number of convictions recorded against employers by an industrial magistrate under the relevant provisions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act are—

Year	Convictions
1973-74 .. ..	82
1974-75 .. ..	129
1975-76 .. ..	111
1976-77 .. ..	143
1977-78 .. ..	256
Total .. ..	721

30. RESTRICTION OF AREAS FOR SPEAR-FISHING AND DIVING

Mr. Prest, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

(1) As I spoke with him months ago regarding divers or spear-fishermen being separated from their boats or markers and the risk of accident when persons surfaced in front of speed-boats, is he aware of a recent article published in "The Observer", Gladstone, in which it was reported that two persons were snorkeling near Heron Island and were hit by a speed boat?

(2) Will his department be taking action to have regulations introduced restricting spear-fishermen or divers from operating outside specified limits?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes.

(2) Consideration is being given to controlling diving activities in marine parks. Except in areas of high-density activity such as occurs in marine parks, it is not practicable to control such activities.

31. REFUND OF SUPERANNUATION  
CONTRIBUTIONS BY GLADSTONE CITY  
COUNCIL

**Mr. Prest**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) As a Mr. Bode ceased to be employed by the Gladstone City Council as from February and immediately claimed a refund of money owing from the Local Government Superannuation Scheme, has this payment been made and, if not, has Mr. Bode been advised why payment has not been made, and when was he advised officially?

(2) If the board has still not made a definite decision as to whether payment will or will not be made and as it is now eight months since the claim was made, will he ensure that a decision is made and Mr. Bode advised without further delay?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) I am informed that the Local Government Superannuation Board made a decision in respect of this matter on 18 October 1978, and that this decision will be conveyed to Mr. Bode in the near future.

32. PAVEMENT CONSTRUCTION METHODS

**Mr. Row**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

What new methods of pavement construction are being investigated by engineers and advisers of the Main Roads Department in order to cope with the growing volume and weight of highway traffic in Queensland?

*Answer:—*

I appreciate the honourable member's concern for the need for stronger pavements resulting from the ever-increasing volume of traffic and the increasing capacity of road transporters. In a sense, there are no new methods of pavement construction, but rather existing methods are being constantly improved and refined as more research, such as that undertaken at James Cook University in co-operation with the Main Roads Department, sheds light

on problems not previously fully understood. The increasing volume of traffic means that the use of naturally occurring ridge gravels can be tolerated less and less, being superseded by crushed rocks and deep-lift bituminous concrete in order to perform satisfactorily for their designed life, which is usually 20 years.

As the matter is essentially a technical one, however, I think it inappropriate to pursue it any more deeply in this House. However, if the honourable member so desires, I will make the necessary arrangements for him to discuss the matter in greater detail either with officers of the Main Roads Department either in Townsville or with specialist staff in Brisbane.

33. LANDHOLDINGS OF IWASAKI SANGYO  
Co. (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Blake**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

(1) What areas of (a) freehold land and (b) leasehold land are held by Iwasaki Sangyo Co. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. or its associated companies?

(2) What areas of freehold or leasehold land are presently in process of being transferred to Iwasaki Sangyo Co. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. or its associated companies?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) At the time of passing of the Queensland International Tourist Centre Agreement Act 1978, the Iwasaki Sangyo Co. (Aust.) Pty. Ltd. held about 3 328 hectares of freehold land, and a further area of about 1 400 hectares of freehold land was under contract to that company.

The company presently also holds about 360 hectares of leasehold land as special lease No. 32827, and is in the process of acquiring a further 2 882 hectares of leasehold land subject to prior freeholding by the present lessees.

In addition to those, and in terms of the agreement Act previously mentioned, the company is to be granted a special lease over about 269 hectares at Sandy Point, and is to acquire the freehold of about 106 hectares from the Livingstone Shire Council and of about 4 hectares in water reserve R. 10, Parish of Woodlands.

My department is not aware of any other purchases or of any associated companies.

34. FORESTRY DEPARTMENT ADOPTION  
OF STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Blake**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Lands, Forestry and Water Resources—

Does the Forestry Department plan to adopt any of the recommendations of the University of New England School of

Natural Resources Study commissioned by Hyne & Son Pty. Ltd. and Wilson Hart & Co. Ltd. and, if so, which recommendations will be adopted?

*Answer:—*

The recommendations of the University of New England School of Natural Resources Study were taken into account in the formulation of the Department of Forestry's submission to the inter-departmental committee at present preparing a management plan for Fraser Island. This committee has a copy of the University of New England report.

The Department of Forestry is awaiting completion of the management plan before making decisions on any specific recommendations of the University of New England report.

35. TERMINATION OF APPRENTICESHIPS,  
BUNDABERG AREA

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Blake**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Labour Relations—

(1) How many apprenticeships in the trades in the Bundaberg Apprenticeship Advisory Committee area last year have been cancelled owing to failure of technical college course examinations?

(2) How many apprenticeships have been forfeited owing to apprentices' voluntarily withdrawing from their trade during the course of their apprenticeship?

(3) How many apprenticeships have been cancelled owing to bad conduct?

(4) How many apprentices have ceased on-the-job training or have had apprenticeships cancelled because of the employer's inability to continue their employment?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 4) In the area of the Bundaberg Apprenticeship Advisory Committee during the year ended 30 June 1978 one apprenticeship was cancelled owing to failure at technical college examinations.

In the same period 13 apprenticeships were cancelled by mutual consent of the employer and the apprentice. This figure includes cancellation as a result of voluntary withdrawal by the apprentice and employers' inability to continue employment of the apprentice. It is not possible to give a specific break-up as requested by the honourable member.

No apprenticeships were cancelled owing to bad conduct.

Since 1 July, a further apprenticeship has been cancelled owing to failure at technical college examinations.

36. MUNGINDI HOSPITAL

**Mr. Neal**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) As the Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal and Island Affairs has finally advised that his department will not be providing funds for a new hospital at Mungindi, as promised by a previous Labor Government, and as that hospital provides medical facilities for people in both Queensland and New South Wales, has he had discussions with his counterpart in New South Wales on this matter, and what is the current situation?

(2) If not, will he be having such discussions for a joint approach for a new hospital?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) Following representations by the honourable member, my department is currently endeavouring to finalise plans with the Balonne Hospitals Board for the proposed new hospital at Mungindi. This project will be included in the hospitals capital works programme to be submitted for approval by the Co-ordinator-General and Treasury. Cost estimates are not yet available.

37. UPGRADING OF MITCHELL/ST. GEORGE  
ROAD

**Mr. Neal**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) What is the intended programme for the upgrading of the Mitchell/St. George road?

(2) What work will be carried out this financial year and what is the estimated cost?

*Answers:—*

(1) On completion of the current works on the Mitchell/St. George Road, it is intended to undertake works on the Surat-Roma road for the balance of this financial year and in 1979-80. It is then proposed to undertake further schemes on the Mitchell/St. George Road commencing in the 1979-80 financial year and carrying through into 1982-83. Two schemes are involved, each to the value of some \$400,000.

The honourable member will appreciate that, as these plans extend beyond the expiry date for the current Commonwealth road legislation, they are extremely tentative and subject to review when the new road legislation is passed. I should add that the priorities implicit in this planning have been made in consultation with the Warroo Shire Council.

(2) The work to be carried out this financial year on the Mitchell/St. George road is the completion of a 9 km section

about 124 km south of Mitchell, the total cost of which will be of the order of \$380,000. Completion is anticipated in December and expenditure in the current financial year will be in the order of \$145,000.

38. [Deferred]

39. GRANVILLE BRIDGE BASCULE SPAN

Mr. Hansen, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads—

(1) What records does the Main Roads Department keep of traffic delays caused by the raising of the bascule span on the Granville Bridge across the Mary River?

(2) Will the span continue to operate after the bridge has been widened?

(3) If the span will continue to open the bridge for the passage of ships, will consideration be given to providing faster, modern lifting gear to replace the slow gears that have been lifting the span for the past 51 years, which contribute to the delays?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) The Main Roads Department does not keep continuous records of the traffic delays caused by the raising of the bascule span on the Granville Bridge across the Mary River. Nevertheless, it is conscious of the delays which occur—so much so that, when the bridge is widened, the bascule span will be replaced with a fixed span with a clearance sufficient to accommodate the largest vessels still using this water-way.

40. PRINTING INTERSTATE OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION CHEQUES

Mr. Hansen, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Industry and Administrative Services—

With regard to the Government's much-publicised "Buy Queensland Made" campaign, why are workers' compensation payments made on material printed interstate?

Answer:—

I am delighted to learn of the honourable member's interest in the "Buy Queensland Made" campaign. The State Government's initiative not only in this matter but also in applying preference to Queensland manufacturers in its own purchasing has been responsible for the awarding to local industry of many contracts which otherwise would have gone to southern or overseas firms.

In relation to the particular matter raised by the honourable member, I am informed that, at the time of the establishment of the

Workers' Compensation Board, tenders were invited by the State Government Insurance Office for the printing of cheques for payment of workers' compensation benefits. The cheques had to be compatible with programming of electronic cheque-producing machines, and I am advised the only firm that was able to fulfil the tender requirements was situated interstate.

I propose, however, discussing the situation with my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Labour Relations with a view to overcoming any difficulties that may exist in relation to having future cheques printed in this State.

41. VILLAS FOR THE INTELLECTUALLY HANDICAPPED, MARYBOROUGH

Mr. Hansen, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

When does he expect the villas for the intellectually handicapped, which have been completed for the past eight months, in Neptune Street, Maryborough, to open for occupancy?

Answer:—

The actual construction of the Maryborough villa for the intellectually handicapped was completed in advance of staffing arrangements. Applicants for positions on the staff of the villa have now been assessed and interviewed, and the villa will be occupied as soon as possible.

42. FAILURE TO VOTE, MOURILYAN ELECTORATE

Mrs. Kippin, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

(1) How many people enrolled for the electorate of Mourilyan apparently failed to vote in the State election last November?

(2) How many gave acceptable explanations to the Electoral Office and so have been re-enrolled in their correct electorates?

(3) How many electors failed to reply to "please explain" letters and consequently were struck off the electoral rolls?

Answers:—

(1) 810.

(2) 566 electors gave acceptable explanations. Of these 566 electors, 27 have been re-enrolled in other electorates.

(3) 244.

## 43. TIMOLOL MALEATE

**Mrs. Kippin**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Health—

(1) Is the use of the drug "Timolol Maleate", which has just been released in the United States of America for the treatment of chronic simple glaucoma and is claimed to give dramatic effective relief from the disease, being considered by Australian doctors?

(2) Will he instigate the evaluation of this drug in Queensland immediately, if this is not already in progress?

*Answers:—*

(1) I am advised that Queensland doctors are aware of the reports of the use of this drug.

(2) I am further advised that the Commonwealth Department of Health, Canberra, is at present carrying out evaluation studies on this preparation.

## 44. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PLANT AND EQUIPMENT LOSSES

**Mr. Shaw**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What procedures have been adopted by his department to eliminate the substantial sums outstanding associated with the loss of plant and equipment that the Auditor-General has referred to in his reports?

(2) How were the losses incurred and is it possible to estimate the amount involved?

(3) What will be the cost to his department to (a) establish accurately the amount involved, and (b) follow new guide-lines that will prevent such loss occurring?

*Answers:—*

(1) Thefts of equipment from schools and vandalism of school property are problems which are causing increasing concern to education authorities throughout the world. No education authority has, to my knowledge, eliminated the problem.

My department, in conjunction with the Department of Works, has undertaken a number of measures in attempts to reduce losses. Such measures include the marking of school equipment, provision of secure storage areas and barring of vulnerable access points in areas such as administration buildings. We have sought and obtained the assistance of the police in protecting school property as well as in detecting and prosecuting offenders.

Officers of my department also keep themselves informed of new measures being developed and tested by education authorities in other States and overseas.

Schools are, by virtue of their comparative isolation and limited use, vulnerable to illegal entry. In Queensland particularly, the design of old school buildings makes them extremely difficult to protect. Many factors have to be considered, including the practicability and cost of protective measures. The uncontrolled installation of security bars could, for example, turn a building into a fire-trap. The cost of wholesale protective measures could be many times the total cost of losses.

(2) Most losses of plant and equipment from schools are as a result of theft. My department records all such losses and submits a statement annually to the Auditor-General. The total loss as a result of theft in 1977-78 was \$94,291.

(3) See answers to (1) and (2).

## 45. TEACHERS, WYNNUM STATE HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr. Shaw**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) Has his attention been drawn to a letter published in "The Courier-Mail" of 17 October in which a student of the Wynnum State High School complains that several classes in that school are without a teacher and that no replacement will be appointed this year?

(2) Will he have this matter investigated and take action to ensure that students of this school are not disadvantaged by not having a teacher?

*Answers:—*

I see that the honourable member has not read the letter to the editor that appeared in "The Courier-Mail". The answers to his question are—

(1) Yes.

(2) The teacher who resigned has already been replaced. The replacement teacher commenced duty at the school on 13 October. In the period between the resignation of the teacher and her replacement taking up duty, the principal of the school ensured that the students in the classes concerned were properly and adequately taught and there is no evidence that any student suffered disadvantage during the period.

## 46. MANLY BOAT HARBOUR

**Mr. Shaw**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Maritime Services and Tourism—

(1) Will he provide details as to the actual cost incurred by the responsible body for (a) management, (b) control, (c) supervision and (d) administration at Manly Boat Harbour for the years 1975-76, 1976-77 and 1977-78, together with particulars as to the estimated cost under each of the foregoing headings for the year 1978-79?

(2) Will he provide details as to the duties and functions included under each of the foregoing headings, including details as to the number of staff involved and the portion of the time expended by the staff on each of the abovementioned functions?

(3) Will he provide details as to the cost of maintaining (a) pile moorings, (b) buoy moorings, (c) dinghy racks, (d) dredging, (e) roads, (f) parking areas, (g) services, (h) lawns, (i) trees and (j) all facilities of the boat harbour excluding the foregoing?

*Answer:—*

(1 to 3) The information, if available in the detail required, will be collated and forwarded to the honourable member.

#### 47. CLOSURE OF GLOUCESTER STREET RAILWAY STATION

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Fouras**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) As the Gloucester Street Station is closing on 5 November, three weeks before both Nyanda and Holmview Stations, what is the reason for the earlier closure of the Gloucester Street Station?

(2) As surveys have indicated that some 400 schoolchildren use this station, will he reconsider the closing date with a view to at least keeping it open until the end of the school year?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) Following the opening of the cross-river rail link on 18 November 1978, the operation of stainless steel suburban carriages now restricted to northside services will be extended to southside services. To provide the necessary clearance at Gloucester Street for the running of these cars, it will be necessary to demolish a platform and realign the track. A similar situation does not exist at the other stations mentioned. The closure of Gloucester Street Station on 5 November is accordingly necessary to permit of the required work being carried out prior to the opening date mentioned.

#### 48. PRISON VISITING REGULATIONS

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Fouras**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Welfare—

(1) Is he aware that Queensland is the only State that, by its Prisons Regulations, deprives a prisoner of a visit for each letter written?

(2) Will he, as a matter of urgency, rescind this regulation, whose only purpose appears to be to effectively isolate prisoners from their friends and family?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) The question of letters written by and visits to prisoners within the Queensland prison system is covered by a number of regulations under the Prisons Act. Because of discretionary powers which exist in regulations, it is difficult to make an adequate comparison. However, in Queensland, regulation 315 provides that a prisoner who does not desire to avail himself or herself of visits may substitute letters for the visits. When considered in conjunction with other regulations, it does not isolate prisoners from their friends and families.

The honourable member is referred to regulations 314 and 376. Regulation 314 permits a prisoner to obtain more frequent visits, and regulation 376 permits additional or more frequent letters.

Many prisoners make requests under these regulations for additional letters and/or visits, and these requests are treated with great leniency by the Comptroller-General and the various superintendents. From a summary submitted to the last meeting of Ministers in charge of the administration of prisons throughout Australia, it is considered that prisoners confined in institutions in this State are not disadvantaged when compared with prisoners confined in other parts of Australia in so far as visits are concerned.

#### 49. ACCESS OF ADULT ADOPTEE TO NATURAL PARENTS

**Mr. Jones** for **Mr. Fouras**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Welfare—

(1) Is he aware that in England, Wales and many parts of the United States, adopted persons 18 years and older may have access to their birth certificates and records after a mandatory interview with an adoption counsellor?

(2) Does he support the right of an adopted person, having reached legal majority and following consultation with an appointed counsellor, to have access to his or her original birth certificate?

(3) In the light of world-wide changes to adopted children's legislation, will he recommend that the Queensland Council of Social Service set up a Standing Committee on Adoption to make recommendations on the rights of adopted persons, natural parents and adoptive parents?

*Answers:—*

(1) Yes. I am aware that, in certain circumstances, adopted persons 18 years and older may have access to birth certificates and records in some overseas countries. In this regard, I would refer the honourable member to the answer I

gave to a similar question on 17 October, when I mentioned an article that appeared in the publication "New Society" of 3 November 1977, wherein reference was made to the system in the United Kingdom. I would add that an adoption register was commenced in South Australia in August 1977 and that an adoption contact register was commenced in South Australia in October 1976.

(2) Again I would refer the honourable member to my answer to a similar question on Tuesday last. The issues involved in the rights of adopted persons to have access to birth certificates are deep and there is a considerable divergence of opinion. In my answer on Tuesday last, I indicated that I was aware of the ongoing need for access to genetic and family health history, but I considered that it would be extremely difficult to state categorically that access to natural parents would be psychologically beneficial for adoptees who claim this need.

Experience in New South Wales, South Australia and the United Kingdom has shown that such access registers are not used very much. The report I referred to earlier from the publication "New Society" indicated that in the first eight months of the establishment of the general register office in London, only approximately 1 per cent of adopted people applied for their birth certificates—in other words, 5,000 out of an estimated 500,000 adoptees.

In South Australia, the adoption register, which, as I already indicated, commenced on 1 August 1977, showed that by 30 June 1978 only 104 persons had registered, of whom 53 are natural parents and 51 are adopted people. As at 30 June 1978, there had been no linking.

In New South Wales, I am advised that since October 1976 no linkages have been made directly through the contact register. It is my understanding that, since the inception of the register, 123 natural parents have registered, 108 adopted persons have registered and 19 others such as cousins, grandparents, etc. have registered. I have no definitive statement as to the percentage this represents of eligible people, but my understanding is that it is very small.

Whilst it is agreed that there is some strong feeling of support for access to original birth certificates by adoptees, a completely opposite view is taken by the Queensland Adoptive Parents Association, which is an organisation with a large following.

(3) The question of the setting up of a Standing Committee on Adoption by the Queensland Council of Social Service is a matter entirely for that council.

50. SAFETY OF MICROWAVE OVEN

Mr. Milliner, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) With reference to the "Four Corners" programme of 30 September 1978, in which it was reported that leakages from microwave ovens could cause eye damage, is any testing of microwave ovens carried out by his department and, if so, have any ovens been found to be faulty?

(2) Has his department had any cases reported to it of eye damage suspected of being caused by microwave ovens?

(3) Do manufacturers of microwave ovens give a 100 per cent guarantee that their products are not faulty?

Answers:—

(1) My department has had equipment for the testing of microwave radiation leakage from microwave ovens for over five years. During this period, at the request of the owner, many ovens in commercial and domestic applications have been inspected for microwave leakage.

Of all ovens tested, only one unit in use, which was recently tested, has been found to have leakage slightly in excess of the prescribed limit of 5 milliwatts per square centimetre at a distance of 5 cm. This was rectified by simple adjustments. The particular oven in question was one manufactured prior to these units' becoming prescribed electrical items and therefore did not have to meet the requirements at the time of manufacture.

(2) My department has no knowledge of any reported instances of eye damage having been induced as a result of the use of microwave ovens.

(3) As microwave ovens are prescribed electrical items, approval for their sale comes under the jurisdiction of my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police.

51. ITEMS ISSUED TO POLICE OFFICERS

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

(1) Will he specify items of clothing and equipment provided by the Police Department as personal issue to police constables, including the number of particular items, such as pairs of boots, issued in a given period?

(2) Do police sergeants receive additional items of personal issue?

Answers:—

(1) The basic items of uniform supplied annually to all male and female constables of the Police Force are as follows:—

Male constables—2 tunics, 2 pairs of trousers, 2 summer shirts, 1 winter shirt,

1 summer cap, 1 pair of boots, 1 belt, 8 colour patches, 8 insignia of rank and 2 ties.

Female constables—1 tunic, 1 winter skirt, 1 pair of slacks, 1 summer dress, 1 skirt (summer), 2 blouses, 1 tie, 2 pairs of shoes, 1 shoulder bag, 1 belt, 1 summer hat, 6 colour patches, 6 insignia of rank and 1 safari jacket.

Members are entitled to apply for alternative items in lieu of certain articles in the basic issue. However, the articles issued will depend upon individual applications.

(2) Sergeants do not receive additional items of personal issue apart from insignia of rank.

All members may be issued with baton, 1 pair handcuffs and 1 firearm. Police in specialised areas, such as motor cyclists or mounted police, receive a basic issue plus items they may require to do their particular work.

## 52. ADOPTION AND FOSTERING OF CHILDREN

**Mr. Bourke**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Welfare—

(1) How many names of couples are on the adoption list maintained by his department?

(2) What is the present estimated waiting-time for the adoption of a baby boy?

(3) What is the present estimated waiting-time for the adoption of a baby girl?

(4) How many children suitable for home fostering are at present in the department's care in institutions?

*Answers:—*

(1) At the present time, 649 couples are on the adoption list as provided for in section 17 of the Adoption of Children Act of 1964. Owing to the long waiting-time for placement, applicants are now interviewed at a time closer to placements and, therefore, many of these couples only have a provisional approval. The 649 couples do not represent the total number of applications that have been received from couples to have their names included on the adoption list. Most of the applications received in 1977 and this year are still in the process of assessment leading to provisional approval or non-approval. Whilst time did not permit an accurate count of the number of applicants still in the process of assessment leading to a provisional approval or otherwise, I am informed that the number would be approximately 1,000.

(2 & 3) Owing to the length of the adoption list and the decreased number of infants available for adoption, the department is no longer able to estimate waiting-times for either boys or girls.

Sufficient data is not available to make such estimations. It is found that the quoting of times that could become inaccurate has led to unnecessary disappointments for waiting couples. The necessity for matching also makes any estimation almost impossible. Couples now receiving placement have been waiting approximately four years.

(4) At the present time, 38 children in departmental residential care facilities are awaiting placement with foster parents. Most of these children cannot be readily placed because of large sibling groupings and the lack of foster parents who will readily accept children who are moderately to slightly intellectually handicapped or are unable to care for children with behavioural problems. The Department of Children's Services is constantly seeking foster parents who can care for children with special needs such as those I have already mentioned. Many children in care because of their special circumstances are satisfactorily placed in residential care facilities, particularly family group homes. The possibility of placing children with families is kept under constant review.

## 53. SCHOOL EXPANSION, YARRAMAN

**Mr. Bourke**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Education—

(1) In view of the expected expansion of the Yarraman district as a result of the Tarong Power Station project, when will the Yarraman School be expanded to provide grade 11 and 12 courses?

(2) When will the school centre at Yarraman be constructed?

*Answers:—*

(1) Departmental policy is to provide year 11 and 12 classes at schools such as Yarraman when enrolments in years 8, 9 and 10 reach 200 students. Current enrolment at Yarraman is 132 students.

I should like to thank the honourable member for his continued interest in this matter and assure him that my officers are well aware of the implications for the district consequent upon the establishment of a power-station at Tarong and are geared to take any necessary action to ensure that provisions for secondary education are adequate to meet changed conditions.

(2) The Yarraman State Pre-school has operated quite satisfactorily as an interim unit in the Yarraman Kindergarten Association building. These arrangements will continue for this financial year at least. The timing of the provision of a permanent pre-school will be kept under continual review in the light of expected enrolment increases.

## 54. PAY-ROLL TAX

**Mr. Bourke**, pursuant to notice, asked the Treasurer—

What was the amount of pay-roll tax paid in the year 1977-78 by (a) Government departments, (b) local government bodies, (c) universities, colleges of advanced education and non-government schools and (d) semi-government bodies?

*Answer:—*

I regret that the method of recording pay-roll tax receipts does not provide for dissection of revenues under the headings sought by the honourable member and I am unable, therefore, to provide the information that he has sought.

## 55. HEALTH DEPARTMENT MEANS TEST ON PENSIONERS

**Mr. Mackenroth**, pursuant to notice, asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health—

(1) When did the State Health Department introduce a means test on pensioners requiring medical equipment and aids?

(2) What is the ceiling of this means test?

(3) On what items does it apply?

*Answers:—*

(1) A means test was imposed on all persons applying for medical aids and articles of equipment on permanent loan on 29 August 1977. This course of action was necessary in view of the decision of the Department of Social Security not to take into consideration a person's assets in deciding eligibility for the maximum rate pension from that department.

(2) The department's means test takes into account all assets held other than family home, motor vehicle and similar possessions, but is applied in a manner which ensures that no person in need is denied assistance.

(3) A means test is applied to determine eligibility for supply of all items of loan equipment and all medical aids.

## 56. ELECTRICITY REBATES FOR PENSIONERS

**Mr. Mackenroth**, pursuant to notice, asked the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police—

As he stated that the relevant legislation in Queensland does not allow discrimination in electricity charges to consumers whose usage falls into the same tariff classification, will he, in order to introduce a system of rebates for pensioners, introduce immediately the necessary amendment to the Act to enable cheaper electricity tariffs for pensioners?

*Answer:—*

Only last week I told the honourable member that, whilst I am most sympathetic to the difficulties experienced by pensioners, the granting of concessions in electricity charges (which involves electricity authorities in discrimination between consumers according to their means) does not appear to offer a practicable way of achieving this. The financing of social services is a matter for the Commonwealth.

## 57. PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY PUBLIC SERVANTS

**Mr. Mackenroth**, pursuant to notice, asked the Premier—

(1) Will he outline any guide-lines laid down by the Government or the Public Service Board as to the rights of public servants, whether they be police officers, teachers, railwaymen or departmental public servants, to make public statements or to criticize elected members of this Parliament?

(2) What is the Government's attitude to individuals such as the Police Commissioner, Terry Lewis, and the former Maryborough Adult Education Officer, John Sinclair, making public statements critical of elected members of this Parliament, and has the Government taken any action against either gentleman?

*Answer:—*

(1 & 2) The only statutory limitation on public comment by officers of the Public Service is that contained in regulation 36 made in pursuance of the Public Service Act 1922-1976.

It is my experience that public servants generally have a deep respect for the institution of Parliament. Unfortunately, in reverse, the members of the Opposition have not missed an opportunity to denigrate the Public Service. Overall I believe the officers of the service have shown commendable restraint even when provoked by unsubstantiated allegations made under privilege by members of the Opposition.

In short, the Opposition cannot have it both ways.

## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

## FIRE BRIGADE LEVY IN INSURANCE PREMIUMS

**Mr. BURNS:** I direct a question to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Health. As he has said that he will be Treasurer in a few months' time, is he aware of the discontent over the savage increases in tax resulting from the Fire Brigade Charges Refund Act, which came into force on 1 July? Is he satisfied with this existing method of financing the protection of life

and property from fire, and does he believe that the existing legislation should be changed? As the new Treasurer, will he institute an investigation into this problem which has caused so much concern to so many Queenslanders?

**Dr. EDWARDS:** The Government is aware of certain publicity that has been engendered regarding the application of fire levies for insurance purposes. The Government has taken into account all the representations that have been received on all occasions. My colleague the Minister for Mines, Energy and Police, who is the Minister responsible for this legislation, recommended to Cabinet the setting up of a committee to investigate the problem. The committee is already meeting, and a report will no doubt come to the Minister in due course.

At 12 noon,

*In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.*

## SUPPLY

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ESTIMATES— THIRD ALLOTTED DAY

(Mr. Miller, Ithaca, in the chair)

ESTIMATES-IN-CHIEF, 1978-79

RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT

RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! Before calling on the Minister for Transport to move the Vote for his Estimates, I desire to inform 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 full discussion on the administrative activities of both these departments under the Vote Railways—General Establishment.

**Hon. K. B. TOMKINS** (Roma—Minister for Transport) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$53,499,000 be granted for ‘Railways—General Establishment’.”

In accordance with previously adopted procedure, honourable members will have the opportunity to debate matters pertaining also to the Department of Transport and to the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

It is less than 12 months since the three departments were placed under my ministerial control, therefore this is the first occasion on which I have had the honour to introduce the Estimates into the House. Coming from what I might term a non-trading portfolio, namely, the Department of Lands, Forestry and National Parks and Wildlife Service, I have been deeply

impressed by the enormity of the business of running the State's transport services, particularly the Railways.

As in other areas, the Railways are continually facing escalating costs, and this is clearly illustrated by the fact that the amount being debated has risen by \$18,000,000 over the corresponding figure six years ago. The annual report of the Commissioner for Railways will show that the financial year just ended was not a good one for the department in overall goods and passenger traffic.

Haulage of minerals, particularly coal, once again dominated the goods tonnage. However, the expansion in coal railings owing to industrial trouble and the problems of flooding was not as high as expected, and failed to compensate for losses on most other types of commodities conveyed by rail. This resulted in an overall decrease of 81 964 tonnes in goods traffic—the first such decline since 1960-61.

Yet, despite this decrease, the department returned a record revenue of \$249,690,390 from the carriage of 34 154 747 tonnes of freight. This, of course, was influenced by two factors—the increased coal railings and the application for a full year of trading at the increased freight charges introduced from November 1976.

One point that I must mention in relation to the reduced freight carriage is the failure of sorghum and barley crops, which resulted in a decrease in railings of almost 480 000 tonnes compared with last year's figures. Another contributing factor was the increased use of road transport following the complete removal of permit fees.

Regrettably, patronage of passenger services, both metropolitan and country, fell during the past year. Revenue from this source—\$12,639,469—was marginally up on the previous year's figure, although metropolitan patronage fell by some 1,750,000 journeys, and country journeys by just under 53,000. Total revenue from freight and passenger services was \$273,530,871, or just under \$11,000,000 up on last year.

I mentioned earlier the problem of escalating costs, and I have to report that in the year past this reached 12 per cent, resulting in operating expenditure totalling \$337,002,046. It is obvious, therefore, that we have incurred an operating loss of almost \$63,500,000 during the past financial year.

However, I emphasise that there is no need for despondency; on the contrary, I have always been an advocate of optimism. We have real prospects of better returns through the expansion of our mineral-based industries. We have the challenge to prove ourselves a competitive carrier, which will require a concentrated effort at all levels aimed at containing costs and increasing efficiency.

We must play our part in ensuring that industrial relations remain cordial, and that the best possible working conditions exist

for our employees, no matter where they are located. In this regard, we must realise that the railways is a labour-intensive operation, with salaries and wages absorbing an enormous amount of money. Of course, this is only to be expected in a State the size of Queensland. Indeed, I say with confidence that there would not be any country with a railway that was paying its way through receipts.

It is an accepted fact that, as a common carrier, the railways must rely on Government funding to meet financial gaps. In this context I pose the question, "Where would Queensland be today if it were not for the role the railways played in opening up the State for development?"

From the conventional steam locomotives, we have seen the dieselisation of the railway services. The introduction of more powerful engines has meant that the use of rolling-stock with greater carrying capacity has been possible. As a consequence, there has been a programme of track upgrading and modernisation of facilities to ensure faster transport of goods and passengers. These measures are aimed at tapping the market of potential users.

I say quite confidently that we are concentrating on these areas because we do not believe the answer to our deficit lies in increasing fares and freights any further at this stage. A close study of our operations over the past few years will reveal the degree to which the department has been able to absorb its rising costs, mainly through the dieselisation programme. However, I have to concede that increases did in fact become unavoidable in the years 1975 and 1976, and earlier this year. I stress that the increases were definitely not profit-motivated; they were designed merely to cover increased costs brought about by rises in the wages and materials cost structures.

Faced as we are with the increased road competition that I mentioned earlier, a further rise in fares and freights is almost out of the question; our efforts must be directed towards greater efficiency. For instance, the use of containers is an area where real savings in time and cost can be achieved.

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending a field day at Bowen, which was staged by our Railway Department and other organisations to show the benefits to farmers of shipping their produce to Brisbane and interstate markets safely, quickly and with a minimum of damage. The system eliminates individual carton handling during transshipping to the interstate railway line in Brisbane, thereby reducing bruising to an absolute minimum. In simple terms, it is a speedy, efficient way of getting fruit and vegetables to market in off-the-farm condition. I cite this as an example of the progressive thinking of our Railway Department.

I think it is appropriate to note at this point that North Queensland is served by 32 fast freight trains southbound each week, while there are 24 such trains conveying goods to northern areas each week. Another area of improvement has been the acquisition of 30 new refrigerated wagons and 10 refrigerated containers to cater for traffic which previously was transportable by road only. The department has on order another 15 such containers.

Recently I had the pleasure of accepting from the successful tenderer, Commonwealth Engineering (Qld.) Pty. Ltd., the first of the State's largest box wagons (the C.L.O. class wagon), which were built on behalf of the transport firm Q.R.X. These wagons have a carrying capacity of 37 tonnes, and are of the most modern design. Here again, our efficiency will be enhanced by the use of these new wagons. Another specially designed wagon is the H.W.O. for the transport of long lengths of steel. There are 125 of these wagons, each capable of carrying 42 tonnes.

I think the most graphic illustration I can give of our efforts to improve the department's ability and capacity to effectively handle any types of goods offered for conveyance is the fact that in the last two financial years we have spent more than \$36,000,000 on the purchase of locomotives and rolling-stock. This money was expended on 30 diesel-electric locomotives and 863 wagons in a variety of classifications.

Complementing this introduction of larger units of rolling-stock into the system is a continuing programme of upgrading our track and bridge standards. The need to speed up schedules to enable our department to compete with other forms of transport has led to the introduction of new signalling and control procedures known as centralised traffic control. This is already in operation on the Goonyella line, and between Rockhampton and Gladstone, and it is being extended to include the section between Port Curtis and Tolmies, and branches to Laleham, Kinrola and Gregory, and between Gympie and Maryborough.

**Mr. Prest:** And Gladstone-Moura.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** It is going to Gladstone. Contracts are to be let in the near future for carrying out similar work between Cotton and Avondale, and between Saraji and the new Norwich Park mine.

At this point, I think it is pertinent to mention the big railway developmental projects associated with two new coal mines at Gregory and Norwich Park in Central Queensland. The Gregory project involves the mining of coal from the B.H.P. mine at the rate of some 3 000 000 tonnes a year, and transporting it by rail to the new export

terminal at Callemondah, near Gladstone. The railway portion of the project consists of three main sections—

- A new 68 km branch line from Tolmies on the Central Line to the mine site;
- Upgrading and extension of passing loops on the Central and North Coast Lines between Tolmies and Gladstone; and
- Construction of maintenance and terminal facilities at Callemondah and Clinton, near Gladstone.

Cost of the project is \$90,000,000, of which the largest component is for rolling-stock (\$31,000,000) and the line (\$24,000,000). It is due for completion on 1 April 1980, when the first coal train will be due to run.

The Norwich Park railway, to be built from the present mine at Saraji to the new mine site, will be 43 kilometres in length and will cost \$14,700,000. The rolling-stock will comprise 14 locomotives and 320 wagons, costing \$22,500,000, and the total cost of the project is \$45,000,000. Norwich Park is scheduled to begin raiiling coal for export as from July next year.

Closer to home—we are engaged in the mammoth job of electrification of the suburban railway system. Including the cross-river link, which is to be opened by the Honourable the Premier on 18 November, this project is costing approximately \$220,000,000. At the end of the last financial year, we were approximately at the quarter mark, with expenditure having reached almost \$55,000,000, and the first trains will be running between Ferny Grove and Darra by about the middle of next year.

Honourable members will be aware of the financial problems being faced in connection with this project, which is being funded jointly by the State and the Commonwealth on a one-third/two-thirds basis.

**Mr. Houston:** Why did you stop electrification in the first place?

**Mr. TOMKINS:** While I have been Minister we have endeavoured to carry on with the programme.

**Mr. Houston:** You stopped it in 1958. Why?

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I was not here in 1958.

**Mr. Casey:** You have to accept the blame.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** Government policy of the day stopped it.

The money being made available by the Commonwealth under the five-year plan for urban public transport funding is only \$7,000,000 a year. With the State's contribution of \$3,500,000, this is still far short of the amount required to meet commitments. The situation was further complicated by the Commonwealth decision to withhold from the States this year a "floating" amount of \$20,000,000 which was to have been allocated on the basis of projects under way.

As Brisbane is the only city in Australia with an undertaking of such magnitude in progress, we were confident we would have had a good case for a major share of the \$20,000,000. However, as I have said, the Commonwealth withheld the money as part of its belt-tightening policy. Nevertheless, we are making continuing representations to the Federal Transport Minister in the hope that the required money can be made available to enable the programme to be completed. I will be giving more details of the electrification project in the Metropolitan Transit Authority section of the Estimates.

The question of railway housing continues to be a source of controversy, but I can assure honourable members that the department has been spending, and will continue to spend, in this area to the limit of its financial capability. I have conceded in the past that everything in the garden is not rosy so far as housing is concerned, and I am deeply conscious of the need to do everything possible for the comfort of our employees, especially those in remote areas or in migratory gangs.

Last year, we let tenders for 49 new houses and bought two other homes, accounting for almost \$1,900,000. We spent a further \$1,000,000 on upgrading of existing homes and installation of sewerage and \$750,000 on upgrading accommodation for migratory gangs.

**Mr. Prest:** I believe you're putting in hot water systems now.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** We understand the problems confronting railway employees. I will continue to do everything I can for them.

Last year I also had the privilege of officially opening the new trainmen's quarters at Bluff, which happens to be in my electorate. This was after the untimely death of the Honourable Keith Hooper. I say without hesitation that those quarters would be among the finest of their kind in Australia.

**An Opposition Member:** Do you think you might have used your political influence?

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I have a very happy relationship with the employees at Bluff. I visit the place regularly and attend to their problems.

**Mr. Houston:** You said you are doing better than Keith Hooper did.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Houston:** You are saying you are doing better than Keith Hooper did.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I said no such thing. As a matter of fact, the trainmen's quarters were designed in his time. I was lucky to be in a situation in which I officially opened them. That is all I said.

In regard to housing, I should also point out that the department now owns 2,150 homes, of which 464 are for occupancy by station officers rent-free and with free light, power

and fuel. In other instances where rents are charged for railway houses, these are pegged at \$35 a fortnight, new homes included, and many of the rents are of the order of \$10 to \$15 a fortnight.

I repeat that our housing policy is consistent with our obligation to keep our track, rolling-stock and other facilities in the best possible order, thereby ensuring security and continuity of employment to our 25,000 employees.

In speaking of obligations to employees, I should like to turn to some benefits and concessions that have been made during the past few months. The major one, of course, is the granting of increased entitlement to retiring allowances for employees with long periods of service. This increased entitlement ranges from 7½ months on full pay after 30 years' service to 12 months' full pay after 45 years' service. This replaced the old entitlement of a maximum of six months' salary after a minimum of 25 years' service.

A further benefit granted in the retiring allowance was its extension to include employees who are not contributors to the superannuation fund and who had attained the age of 30 years, rather than 40 years, at 31 March 1965. This added provision removed disadvantages to the employees who had elected, because of age, not to join the superannuation fund when it was introduced in 1965.

Another significant benefit was free travel by train when travelling to and from work. I submit to honourable members that these concessions show the importance the department places on good industrial relations.

There are two matters that have caused me grave concern during my brief period as Minister for Transport. One is the closure of the Phosphate Hill mine in North-west Queensland, and the second is the predicament of the Greenvale nickel project. Had the previous Federal Labor Government been less restrictive in its mineral policies, Phosphate Hill could well have been a viable proposition today. As it turned out, intolerable delays at Federal level eroded the markets that had been secured, and further problems have now seen the project shut down.

As for Greenvale, honourable members will be aware of the Government's commitment in this enterprise, hence the intense efforts now under way to save it from financial collapse.

I would like to end this section of the Estimates address on a more optimistic note and say how much I have been impressed by the degree of co-operation between the railways and industry. We see evidence of this in the great coal-mining ventures and other mineral enterprises. In this context I shall quote at this stage an extract from the "National Times". As honourable members are probably aware, it is not prone

to giving praise unless praise is really due. This is what was written of the Utah agreement—

"Effectively, the company gives the railways an interest-free loan to build the new line and then pays the Government a profit margin on top of the costs of operating its line. This, the industry says, is where the State makes its money from mining.

"In 1977 Utah paid the Government \$62 million for carting its coal. The Queensland railways, despite their quirks, are reckoned by some experts to be amongst the most efficient shippers of bulk materials like coal in the world."

**Mr. Prest:** Do you know why? You are very fortunate that you have a commissioner who takes a great interest in his job.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I thank the honourable member for that remark. I agree with him. That is what makes my job considerably easier. We get on very well, and that helps, too.

The exercise at Bowen, to which I referred earlier as demonstrating the advantages of containerised transport of fruit and vegetables, is another example of co-operation, this time with primary producers. This development with the Bowen Farmers' Co-operative has tremendous advantages. It enables the freighting of tomatoes and other perishables to the Sydney market in about 3 days. Handling is saved because containers are used. I pay tribute to my department for the way it is working in with industry.

Yet another example is the liaison with the firm Q.R.X., a predominantly road-orientated operation that recognises the value of the long haul by rail and the short haul by truck. This type of co-operation indicates the continuing importance of the railway system in the transport field and, conversely, shows the railways' appreciation of the fact that these two forms of transport can work together for the benefit of the consumer.

The Department of Transport is under the administration of the Commissioner for Transport. The amount of \$6,866,480 to be granted for the year 1978-1979 is an increase of \$637,308 over the amount expended last year. Of this increase, \$305,035 is the increase in the amount of \$1,230,000 over the financial assistance provided last year for assistance to urban private passenger transport. The balance of the increase follows generally increases in the payment of salaries and allowances from award increases.

The revenue collected by the Department of Transport is estimated to be \$1,555,000, which is a decrease of \$1,241,483 over collections for 1977-1978. This is substantially the result of the final phasing out of permit fees as from 1 November last

year. The Government has therefore honoured its policy announced in November 1974 of phasing out the payment of permit fees over a period of three years.

The revenue of the department is collected mainly 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 is paid to a special account in the Treasury—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 recently the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act was amended to give the department some teeth in dealing with the problem of straw companies, mainly those registered in South Australia, which were endeavouring to take advantage of their interstate operation to avoid the payment of just charges for the use of Queensland roads.

It is a fact that, because Queensland has a high degree of decentralisation, the provision of adequate roads is of great importance and, of course, it is just as important to ensure that funds are available for proper maintenance. This also is a matter of concern for local authorities, which are involved in constructing and maintaining the road system for which they are responsible. With a State the size of Queensland, it is important that sufficient revenue is generated to maintain the road system of some 192 000 kilometres, apart from the construction of new roads.

The Department of Transport is not merely a revenue-raising department. It is responsible for many service functions. It maintains the central register of driving licences and is progressively taking over the issue of drivers' licences from the Police Department. It administers the three driver licence testing stations operating in the metropolitan area and has driver licensing offices at its headquarters in the Valley as well as in Adelaide Street.

Recently I officially opened the department's first regional office in the former Supreme Court Building, Cleveland Terrace, Townsville. The civilian testing officers who were attached to the Townsville Police Station were transferred to the regional office, which now looks after all the licensing requirements for the area. It is planned progressively to take over from the police these civilian-type functions at other large provincial centres, and a similar centre should be established in Rockhampton in the foreseeable future.

A new comprehensive system of driver licence testing was introduced at the three Brisbane testing centres from 1 January 1978. It is based on similar systems in use in other States and overseas and includes a

written test of the Traffic Regulations and a driving test in which points are allocated according to errors made during the test. Every applicant is given a test report form showing clearly the result of the test. This new procedure has been readily accepted by persons taking the tests and educates as well as tests the applicant.

A booklet entitled "A Guide for New Drivers in Queensland" has been produced by the department, which explains in detail the procedures and requirements involved in obtaining a Queensland drivers' licence. In the administration of driver licensing, it soon became evident that such a booklet was necessary to explain in a concise form the duties and obligations of persons who would be driving on our roads.

The department has also instituted a programme of ongoing training for civilian testing officers, who now attend driver education courses conducted by the Queensland Road Safety Council for learner drivers and actively participate in driver improvement and defensive driving courses.

The Commissioner for Transport is also responsible for the registration of driving schools and the licensing of driving instructors, and, progressively, improvement is being achieved in the standard of tuition and vehicles used.

Through the licensing of tow-trucks under the Tow-truck Act, which was brought in in 1973, a considerable improvement has come about in what was previously a chaotic situation. Nevertheless, in this area the position is continually kept under review in order to ensure that the undesirable practices that were prevalent in 1973 do not again become a matter of public concern.

It is generally recognised that transport itself is important from the role it plays in the movement of people, in the production process and in the distribution of finished goods. It has played an important role in promoting rural settlement and in the development of natural resources. It has a major influence on industrial location and the distribution of population centres, and has the effect of bringing our products onto the world markets. It is a complex industry involving a great number of people and, in the road area in particular, the volume of goods being carried continues to increase.

But it also brings with it many problems which are of public concern, and I would like to mention two that are under examination at the present time. These concern the movement of heavy vehicles through major city streets and the transport of liquids or cargoes of a potentially dangerous nature in heavily trafficked areas, as well as through heavily populated residential areas.

Unfortunately, there are many factors to be taken into account in looking at restrictions on heavy vehicles, the most important of which is the origin and destination of the goods being carried. In the Brisbane city

area many of the routes are determined by the availability of cross-river links such as the Story Bridge, the Victoria Bridge and the William Jolly Bridge, as well as the location of the destination, or the delivery points.

So far as the transport of dangerous goods is concerned, Cabinet has approved that a survey be undertaken on the manufacture, import, transport and storage of flammable goods and hazardous substances so that all the facts are available from which some solution to the problem of the movement of heavy vehicles carrying these goods can be obtained.

There is no doubt that recent explosions in Spain and Mexico involving road tankers carrying liquefied petroleum gas have highlighted the potential hazards with the greater use of road transport for the carriage of dangerous goods.

In particular, with the transport of L.P. gas, its use is spreading a long way beyond the fuel industries, whose technicians are conscious of the potential hazards and are trained in its proper use. I doubt very much whether many caravanners filling their bottles with L.P. gas at the handiest garage realise that it is much more dangerous to handle than petrol and certainly needs to be treated with great care.

While standards in Australia for designing tanks are much higher than in many countries overseas and there is a greater degree of supervision by the industry, there is no room for complacency. The Australian Transport Advisory Council, consisting of State Ministers as well as the Commonwealth Minister for Transport, shares a common concern with this problem and while it has produced a Model Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road, which has been widely distributed, it recently instructed its officials to review the code with a view to ensuring that its standards are maintained at a high level.

In Queensland, because of our decentralised population, carriage by rail is used extensively and the conditions of operations can be kept under close scrutiny. The standards of tanks meet the design specifications laid down by the Chief Gas Examiner.

I have indicated the complex nature of transport but, of course, so far as road transport is concerned, the importance of a regular supply of portable fuel cannot be underestimated. The Australian Transport Advisory Council, in looking at this problem, noted that the world oil supply outlook was uncertain and that it was possible, after the mid-1980s, that there could be an escalating risk of supply disruptions and price increases at a time when Australia was likely to be increasingly dependent on imports. Under these circumstances plans should be formulated now to conserve oil and develop alternative liquid fuel supplies.

It may not be generally known that the transport sector is the largest consumer of petroleum fuel—about 60 per cent of total petroleum energy—so that it has a major responsibility to restrain the rate of growth of its use of this fuel.

One major issue so far as Queensland is concerned is the relative roles of road and rail for long distance transport of goods. Rail is about five times more energy efficient than road and this factor is one that should be carefully looked at in considering future policy and direction of planning of transport.

As a practical example, a comparison of rail and road haulage on a typical trip from Brisbane to Cairns—a distance of 1 689 kilometres by rail or 1 825 kilometres by road—on the basis of fuel consumed per tonne of goods carried, shows that the rail task could be performed on 12.5 litres compared with 56.3 litres by road, a ratio of 1:4.49 in favour of rail.

In many areas, of course, where bulk traffic is concerned, there could be a wasteful use of resources with both road and rail competing with each other for a limited volume of goods transport. This to my mind would be an inefficient use of transport modes.

**Mr. Davis:** What are you going to do about it?

**Mr. TOMKINS:** I do not know. It is a very big problem. I believe in rationalisation. It is ridiculous to see heavy transports running parallel with the railways. It is a great waste of natural resources.

The Queensland Road Safety Council, of which I am chairman, is heavily involved in all practicable measures to reduce the road toll, while the behaviour of drivers is dictated to a large extent by the enforcement of the Traffic Regulations. There is a continuing education campaign to bring to their notice their obligations as road users so far as their own safety and the safety of others is concerned.

In the field of road safety there are many who claim to be experts, but no-one has yet provided the best solution for reducing road deaths and injuries. Much work has been done, and I would like to express my appreciation of the contribution that members of the Queensland Road Safety Council have made in our approach to the problem.

At a national level the Publicity Advisory Committee on Education in Road Safety of the Australian Transport Advisory Council plays a co-ordinating role for a national approach through publicity in this very important field of road safety. It arranges road safety publicity and educational programmes that are designed to give the maximum effect in all States and ensure that there is a common basis for tackling many problems in communicating with the public.

During 1977-78 the defensive driving course was again the major area of mass education programmes conducted by the Queensland Road Safety Council. Two hundred and thirty-two courses were conducted at major centres of population throughout the State, with a total enrolment of over 4,000 persons. Over 50,000 graduates have now participated in the course and there is no doubt from the reports that I have received that the defensive driving programme is a practical contribution to road safety. The field officers of the Queensland Road Safety Council who conduct these courses have undergone intensive practical driving training both in motor vehicle and motor cycle control and have participated in other training programmes designed to improve their ability to communicate with the public.

Two other activities of the council which involve the public 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. As well as this, with the assistance of the Department of Education, the learner driver course has been expanded into high schools in the Brisbane area and teachers from each of the Brisbane education regions have undertaken instructor training courses to enable them to conduct the learner driver courses in their own high schools.

**Mr. Davis:** I suggested that five years ago.

**Mr. TOMKINS:** We have taken some notice of you, too. This course is also still available to the general public to a limited degree and during the past year 51 courses were conducted in Brisbane, Townsville and Rockhampton.

The motor cycle training programme has continued to be most successful and provides an opportunity for motor cycle enthusiasts to learn all aspects of safe riding. The co-operation of the motor cycle industry in supplying motor cycles for the training programmes is very much appreciated.

Public education in safe driving behaviour involves a consideration of many complex communication problems and where necessary professional consultants are employed in order to maintain a high quality of presentation, particularly where television is used. Contrary to what might be suggested by some who have little knowledge of the activities of the Queensland Road Safety Council, its members do not rely only on their own enthusiasm, but have at their disposal a considerable range of expertise to draw upon in considering measures to reduce the road toll. At the present time its research committee, under the leadership of Dr. Barry Smithurst, has undertaken four major research programmes concerned with burns in motor cycle accidents and the design of motor cycle fuel tanks, a study of motor

cycle fatalities, a study into public attitudes on defensive driving, and a review of scientific reports on the effect of drugs on driving.

Funds provided for the Queensland Road Safety Council come primarily from State sources, with a small contribution from the Commonwealth, but, of course, the Commonwealth provides a wealth of publicity materials at a national level for use by the council in its safety campaigns. At a State level, funds are provided from the Liquor Act Trust Fund to be directed specifically towards the education of the public in the dangers involved in drinking and driving. Apart from this, major organisations such as the Royal Australian Air Force, the Brisbane City Council, the Department of Army, Mount Isa Mines and Telecom all have volunteer instructors conducting defensive driving courses under the guidance of the field officers of the Queensland Road Safety Council. The work of the council is considerably enhanced by the considerable support it has received from the public and from commerce, industry and other Government departments.

As I mentioned earlier, the Budget provides for an increase in the amount of financial assistance to be provided for urban private passenger transport. This is an extremely difficult area but one thing is certain, that is, that, without Government assistance, the private urban bus operator would have found it difficult to continue to provide public transport to the extent to which it is available at the present time. There is no doubt that urban transport has been vitally affected by the growth in private car usage, which has brought a considerable degree of mobility to the average citizen above what can be obtained from public transport. This is a fact of life and little change can be expected in the foreseeable future unless other factors such as the shortage of fuel or an increased cost of fuel will give some advantage to public transport to compensate for the mobility desired by potential passengers. Since the scheme of assistance was introduced, it has been continually improved in the light of experience and it is again being examined to ensure that the private sector can continue to fulfil its complementary role to the public urban passenger services provided, particularly in the city of Brisbane.

As indicated by the Honourable the Treasurer, one particular area that has been closely examined is the provision of finance for the purchase of new buses. In this area a greater understanding by the banking sector of the Government's involvement in maintaining the private ownership of urban passenger services is being sought, and the terms under which normal bank finance is made available with a Government guarantee are being closely examined. There is no doubt that the provision of new buses will do a lot to encourage their use by the public as well as reduce operating costs for repairs and maintenance.

Queensland has led the way in building up a network of bus services between our major towns and cities to provide a more convenient way of moving around our State. These regulated route services are complemented by high standard tourist and charter services, which are very important for our tourist industry.

Apart from road transport, the department is becoming increasingly involved in considering the role of air transport intrastate. In co-operation with the Commonwealth Department of Transport, it is looking at ways of improving air services to our outback areas to overcome the disadvantages of isolation. The development of regional air services as distinct from trunk-line operations is being actively explored, but at the same time regard must be had to alternative modes with a view to ensuring that each is maintained at a viable level. With our vast distances, passenger transport as well as goods transport can be rather costly and, in many cases, social factors must be taken into account when financial aspects are being examined.

I will deal now with the report on the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The authority was constituted by Order in Council on and from 1 October 1976 to provide an efficient, co-ordinated system of public passenger transport in the declared region encompassing the city of Brisbane and adjacent areas of South-east Queensland.

The authority replaced the Metropolitan Transit Project Board established in October 1974 to initiate a programme of works designed to improve public transport and has continued the works undertaken by the former board. The principal works involved are—

- \* Construction of the cross-river railway bridge;
- \* Electrification of the suburban passenger rail system;
- \* Replacement of buses and acquisition of new buses; and
- \* Construction of interchanges at railway stations.

As honourable members are aware, the cross-river rail link is virtually complete and will be open to traffic in the latter part of November. The bridge will complete a link between the north and south-side rail systems, which will add greatly to the effectiveness of the system, particularly on the south-side where passengers today have to walk or catch a bus across the river from South Brisbane Station. Completion of the bridge will satisfy a need that has been recognised for 100 years. The final cost of the bridge is estimated to exceed \$20,000,000, of which almost \$13,000,000 has been contributed by the Commonwealth Government as a non-repayable grant, the balance having been provided by the State Government.

In connection with the cross-river bridge, alterations have been made to platforms on the south-side so as to allow stainless steel trains on the south-side system. The cost of

this work to 30 June 1978 was \$361,000, of which the Commonwealth has contributed \$518,000.

Electrification of the suburban rail system is also becoming a reality. The first stage of the scheme, between Ferny Grove and Darra, is approaching completion. Sections will be in use for vehicle-testing and crew-training early in 1979, and passenger services will commence early in the second half of 1979.

This section, which takes in the busiest parts of the suburban rail network, includes major works for upgrading of many aspects of the rail system to modern standards. For example, the inner city tunnels between Brunswick Street and Central Stations, and between Central and Roma Street Stations, which had deteriorated owing to the action of ground water and atmospheric pollution over many years, have been completely refurbished and enlarged to accommodate the overhead wires and our new EMU vehicles. The signalling system has been completely upgraded. The track has been improved and realigned in many places.

A new depot has been provided at Mayne to house the electric cars. The balloon loop at Mayne will enable the electric trains to gain access to the depot without interfering with other rail traffic. A new control centre has been provided at Mayne, which will allow much better supervision of the rail system to be maintained in the future.

As is evident to everyone, most of the overhead wiring system has been completed, and a new substation is being provided at Corinda for the supply of electricity. In addition, many substandard bridges have been rebuilt. In some cases, such as Gipps Street, a much wider bridge has been constructed in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, thus providing long-term benefits to road traffic.

The expenditure to 30 June 1978 on Ferny Grove to Darra electrification was \$20,270,000, of which the Commonwealth Government has funded \$12,374,000 by way of grant.

Additional trackage has been provided between Brunswick Street and Northgate to allow for the running of express trains and to assist in separating passenger and freight traffic. Expenditure to 30 June 1978 on additional trackage was \$5,759,000, of which the Commonwealth Government has funded \$2,742,000.

In addition to electrification of the scheme from Ferny Grove to Darra, it was possible in the latter part of the previous agreement to begin work on the section between Darra and Ipswich. Trackwork has been upgraded, the Bell Street Bridge in Ipswich has been replaced, and some of the wiring has been done as far as Redbank.

Expenditure on the Ipswich to Darra section to 30 June 1978 was \$3,676,000, of which the Commonwealth has funded \$1,009,000 to date. The planning for electrification of the rail system as a whole

has been largely completed, and as a result progressive electrification will be able to go ahead.

Since 1974, the Brisbane City Council has benefited to the extent of approximately \$3,300,000 in the form of Commonwealth contributions towards the cost of new buses. Of a total of 105 new buses purchased, comprising seven Leyland National vehicles and 98 Volvos, the council has received two-thirds of the cost of no less than 74 of these vehicles. This has enabled the replacement of many older buses in the council fleet, with a result that the council bus fleet is now up to a high standard, and no vehicle is more than 14 years old, the majority being under ten years old.

The programme also included improvements to interchange facilities. Bus/rail interchanges have been built at four suburban railway stations. The major ones are Sandgate and Oxley, which I am sure everyone would agree are of considerable benefit to interchanging passengers and an improvement to the amenities of the area. Off-street car-parking facilities have been provided at 37 stations, comprising a total of more than 3,300 car-parking spaces in order to encourage passengers to leave their cars at stations and travel to the city by rail. These facilities have been very well patronised. The total cost of the interchange programme to date has been \$3,835,000, of which the Commonwealth has contributed \$2,112,000. This type of facility will be provided at further sites to improve the attractiveness and accessibility of public transport.

The programme of capital works has been carried out under the terms of the States Grants (Urban Public Transport) Act 1974. Under this Act, the State and Commonwealth Governments agreed to undertake essential improvements to the public transport system of the capital cities of Australia on the basis of a two-thirds contribution by the Federal Government and one-third contribution by the State.

Members will be aware that after a promising start to the programme of works proposed by Queensland, financial difficulties encountered by the then Federal Government in 1975 and 1976 meant that the original intent of the programme was lost. Consequently the projects had to be consolidated into an initial minimum scheme, which comprised the cross-river rail link, the Ferny Grove to Darra electrification, interchange projects and the buses for the Brisbane City Council. Essential elements of the programme as originally conceived were never approved. The result was that the State Government was obliged to enter into major contracts, particularly for electric railcars (exceeding \$20,000,000) without any guarantee of a contribution being received from the Federal Government.

In February this year, the Prime Minister announced a new programme by which the

Federal Government would contribute \$60,000,000 per annum towards improvements to urban public transport, and this agreement has now been enacted as the States Grants (Urban Public Transport) Act 1978. Unfortunately, owing to budgetary problems, the Federal Government in June announced that it would distribute only \$40,000,000 to the States in the financial year 1978-79, although it has reiterated its intention of fulfilling the total promise of \$300,000,000 over the next five years.

This means that for the fiscal year 1978-79 the State Government faces a commitment of \$25,700,000 to which the Federal Government will contribute only \$7,000,000. In addition, further sums will be required if the momentum of the ongoing five-year programme is to be maintained. I have recently been having discussions with my colleague the Honourable the Treasurer and the Federal Minister for Transport, the Honourable Peter Nixon, with a view to exploring means of making up the deficiency in funding for 1978-79, and this matter has also been taken up by the Premier with the Prime Minister. I have every confidence that the resources will be found to maintain the programme.

Under the Planning and Research Act, the Metropolitan Transit Authority carries out research projects aimed at improving urban public transport. Prior to 1 July 1978, these projects were funded two-thirds by the Federal Government and one-third by the State, but since that date, the new Act has placed the funding on a one-to-one basis. The agreement by Federal and State Governments to invest funds in this area was a recognition that for many years insufficient research into transport had been carried out.

The research projects completed under the Act have provided a large amount of information on public transport and have assisted in policy decisions affecting the provision and financing of public transport in the Metropolitan Transit Authority area. In particular, the projects have assisted in the design of buses, trains and interchange facilities and, as such, have been directly instrumental in improving the effectiveness of public transport investment.

Over a long period of time there have been representations for the extension of rapid transit services to areas such as the Gold Coast, Redcliffe and Redlands. Studies to evaluate the benefits and costs of such improvements are in progress. I understand that a report on a rail line to Redcliffe has been completed by consultants and I hope to be able to make an announcement on this subject in the near future. The Gold Coast study is well advanced and the final report is being prepared.

Recently, the Lord Mayor announced that the Brisbane City Council was to implement a series of bus priority measures for buses in Brisbane. In his Press release he referred to the fact that many of these schemes for

improving the flow of buses through the city have been worked out using funds provided through the Metropolitan Transit Authority. These research studies showed that considerable time-savings to bus passengers could be obtained by bus priorities at a relatively modest cost.

There has been much public debate about transport and traffic movement in the central area of Brisbane, particularly associated with schemes for pedestrian malls. Earlier this year I held a meeting with the Lord Mayor and his officers to discuss possible bus terminals in the central area. Research into the destination of passengers and the effect of location of bus terminals is being carried out so as to assist in planning transport facilities in central Brisbane. Furthermore, a study has been carried out into routing of a central area circular bus system. Members are aware of similar downtown bus circuits in other State capitals.

For many years, people have advocated greater use of the Brisbane River for passenger transport, and a study on this subject has been completed for the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The research pointed out the difficulties of providing competitive river transport on a winding river but recommended consideration of high-speed craft. Research is continuing into whether a suitable type of craft could be found. The research has also detailed the improvements that are required to existing facilities in order to maintain something that forms only a minor part of the transport scheme in Brisbane but nevertheless is an important facility for a number of people who use it. Partly as a result of the report, the Government has decided to provide financial assistance to one of the ferry operators, who is providing a useful service.

For some time I have been very concerned about the financial viability of private bus operators, who provide an essential bus service for the inhabitants of many areas within the Metropolitan Transit Authority area and around the fringes of Brisbane. As mentioned elsewhere in my speech, it is the intention of the Government to improve the present subsidy scheme for private operators.

A number of research projects into private buses are being carried out by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. These are generally in response to requests from local authorities that are concerned about the planning and financing of local bus services on which their ratepayers depend for their public transport services.

Honourable members are asked to bear in mind that with our public bus system, namely, that operated by the Brisbane City Council, the State pays 50 per cent of gross fare revenue as an operations subsidy, and this will increase progressively to 60 per cent in five years. This yields a State subsidy per Brisbane City Council bus passenger of just under 10c per passenger trip, or, in other words, approximately \$8,227 per bus per year.

By comparison, our private bus subsidy scheme as operated in 1977-78 was based on a maximum of 25 per cent of gross fare revenue. The pay-out in the Brisbane statistical division for some 16 private operators was under \$500,000. This is equal to about 6c per passenger, or only \$1,720 per bus per year.

In looking at such figures, one must bring to mind the greater urban density of areas serviced by the public bus services. This is reflected in the greater revenue per kilometre—53c per kilometre for the public bus compared with only 40c per kilometre for a sample of seven private operators studied over the past year.

There is no point in providing transport facilities unless the public are able to make use of them, and the authority has been conducting research into marketing and user aids. One of the results of this project has been the production of a pocket map of Brisbane and the surrounding region, which lists the services available by rail, bus and ferry in the whole area. This is the first comprehensive public transport map of this kind that has been produced and made available for over 70 years. I feel that this project in itself is an indication of the value of the work being done by the authority.

Under its Act, the authority is charged with the preparation of a development plan for public passenger transport in the region to be drawn up within two years of its formation. The preparation of such a plan is an immense task, and two years has been little enough time to complete the task, having regard to the need to obtain the necessary nucleus of staff. Recently the authority applied to me for an extension of time and I have agreed to an extension to no later than 31 December 1979, on the understanding that the plan will be presented at the earliest possible time. With the many problems of public transport in the area, particularly the financial situation and the position of the private operators, I believe that adequate time is necessary if the plan is to be a success. I am looking forward to seeing a document that will be a significant contribution towards formulation of Government policy in this regard.

In concluding my statement concerning the work of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, I would emphasize that the funds now being sought for 1978-79 provide for—

	\$
Payments of interest and redemption charges on debenture loans raised by the authority to meet the State share of the costs of capital works	2,600,000
Other administrative expenses, staff salaries and contingency items incurred by the authority	860,000
Total expenditure	<u>3,460,000</u>

I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

**Mr. DAVIS** (Brisbane Central) (12.53 p.m.): I have just listened to a very long speech by the Minister for Transport. When I consider the matters dealt with in the last part of his speech, particularly the Metropolitan Transit Authority—

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs:** Will you agree that that was one of the most boring speeches you have heard?

**Mr. DAVIS:** At this stage, I would not say that about the Minister's speech. Later on I may discuss the delivery of it.

When I consider what has happened in some of these areas, I realise how ineffectual the Fraser Liberal-Country Party Government has been.

**A Government Member:** It is the National Country Party.

**Mr. DAVIS:** It is the Country Party. I have never recognised the National Party, and I do not refer to it as the National Party. It is still, and always will be, the Country Party.

When I recall what the Minister said, and compare the generosity of the Whitlam Labor Government with that of the Fraser Government, I notice the difference.

In my opinion the Minister's Estimates are the most important to be discussed this session. One criticism I could level is that we have not received and been able to study reports from various departments controlled by the Minister, particularly the report of the Commissioner for Railways, which was tabled only yesterday. If we are to debate the Railway Estimates in earnest, that makes our task very difficult. I am amazed that the Transport portfolio does not include the Main Roads Department. That is not a novel idea.

**Mr. Burns:** It would save a Minister, too.

**Mr. DAVIS:** It would cut down on the number of Ministers and would help to reduce the Treasury deficit by a couple of hundred thousand dollars.

As I said, that idea is not novel. I could be corrected, but I think that Queensland is the only State in which the Main Roads Department is not incorporated in the Transport portfolio. The Federal Minister for Transport, Mr. Peter Nixon, looks after transport, roads, and so on.

I have mentioned before in this Chamber, particularly during the debate on the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act, the lackadaisical attitude to the way in which road transport has grown—not just in this State, but right throughout Australia. I was most interested to find out what has happened in New South Wales, perhaps one of the most enlightened States in Australia.

Even before the Labor Government was returned with that massive victory last Saturday week—

**Mr. Katter:** It wasn't as big as ours.

**Mr. DAVIS:** It wasn't too bad for openers on the way back. It will be interesting to see the result here in 1980. When we are returned to power in 1980, we will probably incorporate—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Miller): Order! I ask the honourable member to come back to the Estimates under discussion.

**Mr. DAVIS:** I was saying that, if we are returned in 1980, we will bring the Transport Department and the Main Roads Department under the one portfolio. Of course, I will have to discuss that further with my leader.

**Mr. Prest:** The member for Flinders is only interested in camel transport.

**Mr. DAVIS:** Whatever he is interested in would be as out of date as he is.

The submission of Mr. Peter Cox, the very able Minister in charge of transport and railways in New South Wales, has instituted an inquiry in New South Wales. Queensland should have done that years and years ago. In 1957, when Labor unfortunately lost office, the Liberal and Country parties assumed the Government benches in Queensland. Ever since, we have had problems with road transport. In 1957, licensing was abolished.

For the benefit of the Minister for Transport and his advisers, I shall give an indication of some of the ideas to be canvassed in the transport inquiry in New South Wales, which will be of benefit to the transport industry in general, both rail and road. The first consideration for the inquiry will be the economy and efficiency of the industry generally, especially owner/drivers. I know that the "Minister" for Cunningham—I said "Minister", but obviously that is only paper talk—has also advocated action of this sort. Owner/drivers form a very important part of the road transport industry.

The second point is the need for rationalisation of the carriage of freight between rail and road transport, and between various operators of road transport. You will recall, Mr. Miller, that in a reply to an interjection the Minister said that there should be some rationalisation. Road transport has been allowed to grow unchecked in this State. There have been huge increases in the tonnage carried by road. Even in his own statement, the Minister said that the decrease in rail freight this year was 81 000 tonnes of general goods and 480 000 tonnes of sorghum and barley crops. Obviously a lot of that loss of freight was the direct result of the abolition of road transport fees. While I

have no objection to their abolition, at the same time that was a political decision to appease some of the Country Party backers. That is no way to run transport.

The third factor in the inquiry will be whether a licensing system and/or other form of control over entry into the industry is desirable. I have spoken on licensing before. It is most important. Coming within the purview of this Minister is the taxi industry, which is licensed, and buses, which are licensed. We even license air transport in this State. The only section we do not license is road transport.

The fourth line of inquiry will be into safety standards and environmental factors associated with road operations.

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

**Mr. DAVIS:** Before the luncheon recess I was discussing the tremendous asset of the New South Wales Labor Government's call, prior to the last election, for an inquiry into transport. I believe that the Queensland Minister should do exactly the same thing.

The sixth proposal on the submission to the inquiry was—

“Whether the industry is making an equitable contribution towards the cost of road construction and maintenance”.

I know that this is a very ticklish point for the Minister. During the debate on the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act Amendment Bill, he was vehement in his support for the legislation. The honourable member for Cunningham is chairman of the National Party transport committee. Its policy and the policy of the National Party is that a fuel tax should be implemented. Obviously the Minister is at loggerheads with his own party on this matter. The Commonwealth Minister, Mr. Peter Nixon, who is another Country Party member—

**Mr. Tomkins:** A good Minister.

**Mr. DAVIS:** If he is, perhaps the Minister, in his summing up, will verify what I claim that Mr. Nixon has said. On 25 September he said that most of the States—he did not nominate which States were involved—were collecting only 40 per cent of the tax. He said that 60 per cent of the operators were not making their contributions to road maintenance. The commissioner's annual report points out that many thousands of dollars were collected in fines for the non-payment of this tax. I cannot give the answer to the problem. The introduction of a fuel tax would be one step towards solving it.

The Minister has indicated previously that Mr. Nixon will not be a party to collecting this form of taxation. Recently this Liberal-Country Party Government flogged the motorist for \$650,000,000 in extra taxation. So Mr. Nixon says at the Australian Transport

Advisory Council meeting that he will not collect the tax and then goes ahead and collects it.

The contribution to road maintenance tax—and its collection—is a farce. We are getting touched left, right and centre. Operators in country areas are not paying the tax. The only ones who are paying it are the interstate operators who use the weighbridges and the operators in South-east Queensland.

**Mr. Neal:** You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr. DAVIS:** The truck operators in the honourable member's area would probably be the worst offenders in avoiding this form of taxation.

I now turn to another part of the commissioner's report. Quite a number of Queenslanders do not realise that the State Government is so involved in the licensing of intrastate airlines. I believe—and I am not the only one who believes it—that the two airlines in Queensland and in Australia are licensed because they made an agreement many years ago and, according to the proof I have here, they can revoke the agreement. I believe we are paying far too much for air fares throughout Queensland.

I now want to deal with the Traffic Act. That also comes under the Minister's portfolio, although he has not had much involvement with the march issue. Other members of the Opposition intend to deal with it. The matter I wish to discuss has received a fair amount of publicity recently, and it relates to persons who have been disqualified from driving. I notice that the National Party has said recently that it would like the Act to be amended to allow disqualified drivers to drive under certain conditions. I believe this is too big an issue to leave to one party, but I think it would be fair enough to have an all-party committee look at changes to this section of the Traffic Act.

The points system is something else which should be more fully discussed, especially the way it is policed. I do not believe members of the Committee realise the basis of the points system at the present time. If a person receives nine points over a two-year period, he then receives a letter directing him to report to the District Superintendent of Traffic, or an officer representing him. He is then asked to explain why he has received the nine points. My objection to the present system is that police officers not only enforce the law but also decide whether a person should lose his licence after he has received nine points. I have actually represented quite a number of persons who have been called up before the District Superintendent of Traffic to see whether they should or should not lose their licence.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn):** Order! I remind the honourable member that he is discussing legislation. A

ruling was made this morning on matters which could be discussed in this debate. I ask the honourable member to return to the Estimates.

**Mr. DAVIS:** The Traffic Act is dealt with under the Minister's Estimates, Mr. Gunn.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Estimates.

**Mr. DAVIS:** Could I just finish on this point? I believe the system should be completely changed, and that an arbitrator should be appointed to decide whether a person should or should not lose his licence.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member has now made his point.

**Mr. Neal:** A very blunt one.

**Mr. DAVIS:** The present system is completely unsatisfactory. Of course, if the honourable member for Balonne received nine points, he would not have to worry; he would just go and see his friends in Cabinet.

The Minister made great play of what is being done by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. In a couple of weeks' time we will see the opening of the Merivale Bridge—admittedly 21 years too late but, nevertheless, better late than never.

**Mr. Tomkins:** We're inviting you there, too.

**Mr. DAVIS:** I will be there because it will be an historic occasion and I would not miss it. I would not miss any historic occasion, no matter which Government is involved. I always remember the time around 1970 when the report of the Wilbur Smith transport survey was presented with a great fanfare of trumpets, even though the great majority of the recommendations included in that survey would not be implemented. Being an Opposition member, naturally I was not invited to the function at which the report was presented.

Although the Minister commented a great deal on the Metropolitan Transit Authority, I think at this time we should rehash some of the recommendations of the Wilbur Smith report just to see how far we have gone in the eight years since the report was presented. The first recommendation was for the electrification of the suburban railway system. Fair enough, that has been started. The construction of the Merivale Bridge was eventually started. We were to acquire 390 air-conditioned electric railcars, through the purchase of 278 new vehicles and the conversion of 112 stainless steel carriages now in use. I do not think that we have gone very far with that. I think that there are only about 40 or 45 such vehicles.

Then there was to be the establishment of co-ordinated rail and bus services as railway improvements were completed. To

be quite truthful, I think that in the last eight years there should have been a little better co-ordination between the Brisbane City Council, which runs the buses, and the Transport Department, because one of the big needs in public transport in this city is to have buses associated with the railways; and we must have a one-fare system to make it really work. I know that, in reply to a question by me last year, the Minister tried to blame the Brisbane City Council for the present position. Obviously, co-ordination between the buses and the railways has not eventuated.

Then there were to be improvements in other bus services, and the purchase of air-conditioned buses. We have gone into that.

One of the big features of the Wilbur Smith transportation study was a proposal to build a central-city underground railway line. I should like the Minister to inform the Committee whether plans for implementing that proposal have been made. As I have said previously, if, in 1957, we had gone ahead with electrifying the city rail system, for the \$23,000,000 that we have spent on the construction of the bridge across the river we could have electrified the whole city rail system.

The transportation survey recommended that the city underground rail system should start in about 1984. I do not think that there has been any indication of when it will start. Will it be started, or is it planned to scrap the proposal? Everybody agrees that the electrification of the railways should be one of the big features of public transport. Obviously, we cannot allow the system to remain as it is, with just a few lines electrified. We must start electrifying the railway lines into the new suburbs, and we must start on the city underground railway line. I was very impressed with that report concerning the city underground railway line because with a such a system we would have a bridge over the river from Woolloongabba and an underground station situated near Parliament House (that would be good; it would save people driving their cars into the city), another one in Queen Street, another one further along and a final one at Brunswick Street, which would make a central loop. These improvements should be made.

We talk about having a real transportation system for Brisbane. Are corridors still to be kept? I know that the honourable member for Archerfield will comment on the need for a line to Inala, which he has been advocating for years. He is one person who has really pushed that. He is a dedicated member who looks after his constituents, the people in the developing suburbs.

(Time expired.)

Mr. ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (2.29 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Estimates for the Transport Department I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Minister and his department on a few innovations that they have introduced in the last 12 months.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: If the honourable member for Archerfield were sitting in his usual seat, I might take his interjections.

Some of the things that the Minister and his department have done have been tremendous steps forward. In particular, I refer to their idea of shipping fruit from the Bowen area to the markets. That is the sort of thing that we must consider if we want to see the railways get out of the doldrums and make more of a show in relation to their running cost. When we see that the railways have a deficit of about \$81,000,000, we realise that there are tremendous problems there.

I accept what the Minister said here today, that is, that railways are a public utility and that, generally speaking, railways in all countries do not pay. Obviously we must accept that philosophy up to a point, but I believe that there are some things we can do. I instance what the Minister brought forward this morning. I should like to put up a few more ideas. To me, it is not a foregone conclusion that we must constantly accept cost increases. Not to try to improve the present situation would be to take a negative approach. We should be looking at further changes. We should consider putting station-masters on some sort of a commission or percentage basis to encourage them to bring business to their respective stations.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Don't you have good officers in your area?

Mr. ELLIOTT: I have first-class officers in my area, but that has nothing to do with what I am talking about. I am talking about the giving of incentive. We are a Government that believes in incentive, and it is important that we try to apply that principle to the running of the railways. There is no reason why it will not work there as well as it works in other areas.

Mr. K. J. Hooper interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: If the honourable member for Archerfield were not so unintelligent, he would understand what I am saying. If he were reasonable, he would listen to and perhaps understand a little of it. If station-masters were given an incentive to drum up business, and more right to make decisions, they would be able to make more money for themselves and at the same time there would be more work for the railways. What would private enterprise do?

Mr. Vaughan: Don't you know that the department employs goodwill officers?

Mr. ELLIOTT: I do; I was about to come to that. The goodwill officers who go around the countryside are doing a tremendous job. In addition to goodwill officers, I would like to see representatives out on the road, just as private industry has. We should have people going around talking to people in industry generally and trying to drum up trade for the railways. It is not good enough to sit back and accept the present situation. The previous Labor Government sat back and said, "The more railway people we have employed, the more we will have voting for us and keeping us in office." That is where that sort of thinking started. We must realise that we are in the 20th Century and therefore have to upgrade the way we operate the railways.

I commend the Minister on railway housing.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: With the standard of representation we see on the Opposition benches, we would expect railway housing to be far worse than it is.

Opposition Members interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Gunn): Order! There is far too much cross-firing in the Chamber.

Mr. ELLIOTT: We do have a responsibility to improve the standard of railway housing in all electorates. I commend the Minister on making a reasonable start in this direction.

Mr. Houston: Only reasonable?

Mr. ELLIOTT: I would say that that is probably fair comment. It is only a start, but we have to start somewhere. I commend the Government for at least making a start now. The trouble with honourable members opposite is that they are retrospective in their outlook. They are always looking back into the past; they never look to the future. Until they learn to look to the future, they will remain where they are.

I turn now to the high capital turnover of the Railway Department and the high capital costs incurred by it.

Mr. Prest: You know a lot about that.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I think I know a good deal about it.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. ELLIOTT: That is a matter of opinion. That is a very subjective view. I can see a very real need for further capital expenditure on railway rolling-stock to bring it into line with present-day demands. It is important that people realise this. Take the grain industry, for example.

Mr. K. J. Hooper: Oh, we are getting onto that, are we?

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** Yes, we are getting onto the grain industry, because I represent a large grain-growing area. Obviously I would discuss it in this debate.

It is important that Queensland's grain-handling facilities, which are probably already the best in the world, be upgraded even further. Grain growers should realise what the Government is doing in this direction. The introduction of the latest series of grain wagons has brought greater efficiency to the handling of grain. I congratulate the grain growers and the Minister on their negotiations that led to the introduction of contract rates for grain. They were long overdue. Contract rates give the growers a footing on which to base their production and their costs of production. They know where they stand in relation to rail freights. No-one can be expected to plan ahead and budget for the next five years without having some idea of freight charges.

I turn now to fertilisers. Unfortunately Phosphate Hill has closed down, thereby depriving the railways of another lucrative market. The Federal Labor Government's attitude to that was expressed quite clearly by Mr. Whitlam.

**Mr. Prest:** You always have to bring his name into it.

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** Of course his name has to be brought into it; he was the leader of the Federal Labor Government at that stage.

It is very important that in the long term the phosphate deposits at Phosphate Hill be further developed. We must see a return to sanity. The overseas reserves of phosphate will eventually disappear.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** What has that got to do with rail transport?

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** The subject has a lot to do with rail transport. If the honourable member for Archerfield was not so narrow-minded in his outlook he would realise that the railways would gain a great deal of revenue if they were able to carry phosphate.

To turn to another aspect of transport—a matter that causes me a great deal of concern is the movement of heavy vehicles carrying explosive substances such as l.p. gas and petroleum through the Fortitude Valley and city areas. I commend the Government for its forward planning in relation to a bridge over the lower reaches of the Brisbane River. When it is completed, traffic will be able to bypass the congested inner-city areas. The heavy transports passing through the city area raise the likelihood of a major explosion in a densely populated area.

While dealing with this matter I will mention what could well be a better method of carrying petroleum. I refer to a new type of road tanker that could sharply reduce the risk involved in transporting petrol and other dangerous chemicals. It is being tested now in the United Kingdom by the Shell Oil

Company. I urge the Minister to ensure that A.T.A.C. or some other relevant body looks closely at this method of transport, which has only recently been developed. It involves the use of a type of plastic cocooned in polyurethane foam in which it floats within an outer fibreglass shell.

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! The honourable member for Wolston may not interject from other than his usual place in the Chamber.

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** With this method of transport, the risk factor would be minimal; the reduction of the risk would be very great indeed. The outer skin of the tanker could fracture without affecting the inner storage. Because this matter is of particular interest to me—I have not had time to research it thoroughly as I received the information only today—I will investigate it further and raise it with the Minister's transport committee on which I have the pleasure to serve.

The Government is to be commended on providing rail interchanges and parking facilities in conjunction with the rail electrification programme. When we consider the energy resources available to us and the rate at which we use them, and remember the ratio of efficiency of 1 to 1.49 for road to rail transport cited by the Minister, we must surely realise that in the long term we will have to use our vast coal resources to generate electricity and use the electricity to run our railways. In the even longer term, we must use nuclear fuel for the same purpose. In this way we will save tremendous quantities of oil that could then be used to meet the more urgent needs of primary production. As I instanced in the debate on the Primary Industries Estimates, regrettably there is not an alternative to diesel tractors.

The Opposition spokesman on transport referred to driver education. I mentioned this subject when Keith Hooper was the Minister for Transport and I suggested that we could well take up an offer from a company that was prepared to institute a driver-training curriculum throughout the schools. I now suggest to the Minister for Transport that he re-examine this proposal. I realise that, to a degree, we have driver-training in the city area. Training is a positive way of reducing the national road toll. There is no better age for training than school age, when young people are most impressionable. If we taught children to drive properly and gave them a firm grounding in the basic safety rules, there would be a real chance that they would behave in a more reasonable way on our roads.

I would also like to raise the subject of public transport within city areas. It is my belief that we should look very seriously at using private enterprise for public bus services. Let us look at a comparison of the

subsidy costs of the Brisbane City Council and private operators. For the B.C.C., it is 10c a passenger, or \$8,000 a bus, whereas for private operators the figures are 6c or \$1,720. To make matters worse, a further \$8,000,000 is being paid by the ratepayers as a subsidy towards the running of the city's buses.

It may well prove in the long term to be more economic to turn bus services over to private enterprise. It would appear from those figures—they are open to debate, and maybe someone can prove to me that I am wrong—that it could well be a better proposition to have private enterprise running the transport authority, with some form of subsidy. In the long run, it may cost the taxpayer less. Therefore, I would ask the Minister to look into that suggestion.

I should also like to commend the Minister on the listing of all public transport facilities. This is a step in the right direction. If facilities of various types are available, it is very important for the public to be informed of them and for them to be catalogued and displayed clearly and well advertised.

While I am speaking about public transport, I must say that I feel we should be looking more closely at ferry services on the river. This city has quite an extensive river system. Ferry transport will not overcome all our traffic problems, but it may well help to alleviate some of the traffic congestion encountered in the city area. My own experience of travelling from Sydney suburbs to the central city area to do business at various times during my lifetime was that I felt a great deal better if I travelled by ferry than if I fought my way through the traffic amongst the smoke, the grime and people tooting their car horns.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. ELLIOTT:** And rude people like the member for Archerfield, with their bad road manners. If one can get to work without all that bother, one feels a lot better on arrival and is much more likely to feel like doing a job.

In conclusion, I reiterate my belief that the Minister is introducing some fairly new and interesting innovations into the department, and I hope that he continues to do so.

(Time expired.)

**Dr. LOCKWOOD** (Toowoomba North) (2.49 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate on the Transport Estimates, I should like to say that the issue of ferry services was once dragged into a Brisbane City Council election. I don't think the issue helped the party that raised it.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** We've never been out of office since.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** The honourable member is quite right. There never was a deader issue than transport on the Brisbane River.

There is a need for this Government to complete a great many surveys into the

future use of public transport in each and every one of the cities of Queensland. While fuel is cheap and parking is available near their places of work, a great many people will continue to use private motor vehicles. The private motor vehicle, of course, has the tremendous advantage of being able to take a person direct from where he lives to where he wants to go. That can never be matched by any form of public transport yet devised.

A great many disadvantages are inherent in Brisbane. It has an immense suburban sprawl and the housing suburbs are located many miles from the industrial suburbs and the commercial centres. While this remains the case, Brisbane will have an extremely complex system of public transport. The problem cannot be solved by the provision of ring roads or ring railway lines or the creation of a network or web of roads. No matter how the Government and the local authority direct public transport, people will have to make two or three changes to get from their homes to their places of work.

In many areas the parking problems have been solved by the provision of multi-storey parking complexes. This has turned out to be a worthwhile commercial venture and certainly has been of benefit to the local authority. The Railway Department is to be congratulated on providing ample parking space adjacent to railway stations.

In each and every city of Queensland surveys should be conducted to discover the future trends in advance of needs. Suburbs, even in cities such as Toowoomba, have virtually no public transport except private buses, private cars or taxis. With an uncertain future for liquid fuel, we must know the cut-off date for the use of certain types of transport in looking ahead five, 10 or 20 years. By then we must expect to see the use of the private motor car wane as the preferred method of travel. We must look for the latest date for the provision of electrified transport services. This is what it will come back to. At the moment our technology is such that the only alternative to the use of liquid fuel is the provision of electrified services. In this State we do not have one trolleybus or tram. We are moving towards an electrified rail system in Brisbane. But if we run out of liquid fuels, we have had it.

I have mentioned many times in this Parliament the priorities that should be set for the use of liquid fuel. The top priority, of course, is defence. The need to defend our country will be ever present. Next on the list are primary industry and remote public transport—and that includes haulage. The medium with the lowest priority is the private motor car.

No State in Australia is in a position to change at present from the use of liquid fuel. This Government has to go quite solidly into electrification projects. It has

to know the lead-in time needed to put in trolleybuses in cities such as Brisbane, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Bundaberg and even Gladstone. We could eventually be faced with a perpetual shortage of liquid fuel, such as we were during World War II. Because of the expansion of our cities, we will be in dire straits.

There is no way that most of our people can continue to commute by car. Honourable members should know—and it is time that the public realised—that 36 per cent of all liquid fuel is used by the private motorist; so that if there is a squeeze on liquid fuel supplies—such as we have not known since World War II, with the exception of one prolonged fuel strike five years ago last August—36 per cent of all transport will come to a halt. Many workers will have to live on the job because their residences are too far from their places of employment. They will not be able to cross cities such as Brisbane to go to work. The Government needs to plan for all of the steps that must be taken should that stage arrive.

Our future depends on electricity. For the present we can cope with our electricity needs by burning coal, but we have to consider an alternative energy source. One that has been mentioned recently, which every boy and girl science student has known about for years, is hydrogen obtained through water electrolysis and burned either with oxygen or in air, which would give us a portable fuel. But this can be provided only at very great expense because it will need tremendous amounts of electricity. I venture to suggest that the private motorist of the future will not have a bumper sticker on the rear of his car saying "Ban Uranium", he will have a sticker saying, "I support the nuclear reactor industry because it gives me my portable fuel".

This is the state of affairs the motorist of 10 or 15 years hence may well be looking at, and we as a Government have to be interested in it because I understand that it will take a great deal of time to install electrification facilities throughout the suburbs of Brisbane and the rest of the State to power trolleybuses. I understand that even to bring into production a factory producing liquid fuel from coal would take 10 to 15 years, so this Government has to be vitally concerned about alternative energy sources. It is not good enough for us to say, "It won't happen in our lifetime"; I think it will happen in our lifetime, or at least in the lifetime of those of us who are reasonably young.

Looking now at some of the other problems in the Minister's portfolio, I wish to discuss first the cancellation of drivers' licences. Drivers incur points for a great many offences, not all of which are dangerous or should lead to disqualification. Drivers incur points for rolling through a stop sign at 1 or 2 km/h—an incomplete stop observed by a very keen-eyed policeman or policewoman. This is a technical breach

which can attract points, as can a slightly dirty windscreen or an obscured tail-light bulb.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Gunn): Order! I have already stopped one honourable member who was speaking about measures other than those contained in the Estimates. The honourable member is dealing with legislation, and I ask him to return to the Estimates.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** I appreciate your point, Mr. Gunn, but this comes under the Minister's portfolio.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** It is not in the Estimates; that is the difference.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** Traffic comes under his Estimates, and so does road safety.

**Mr. Davis:** I didn't argue.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** The honourable member lost the argument; that is the point. There is, nevertheless, a need for improved road safety, and the Minister has to provide more money towards it. It is as simple as that.

A great many drivers in this State have lost their licences through these technical breaches, and I suggest that the Minister should allocate money for a bit of quick research to find out how many people have lost their licences through purely technical, trivial breaches. I am referring to people who have lost a few points here and a few points there for doing a couple of kilometres an hour over the speed limit, failing to slow down as quickly as they should when proceeding from a 100 km/h zone into an 80 km/h zone—

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs:** I was pinched in Toowoomba two weeks ago.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** The honourable member will be glad to know that I was pinched in his electorate, so we are back to square one.

If people are losing their licences for technical points, I think we need to look at a system under which a driver with 10 technical points has to attend a technical course. The Minister has the wherewithal to provide courses of technical instruction for drivers who are a bit vague on technical points. This is one area of driver education in which we could do a great deal.

Then there are what I refer to as courtesy points incurred by people who drive too slowly in the right-hand lane, forcing vehicles to pass them on the left, who fail to use their trafficators, and who cause convoys to form by travelling too close to the vehicle in front. I suggest that people who receive 10 of these courtesy points should be sent off to do a Road Safety Council course in road courtesy.

I agree that anyone who gets 10 danger points for things such as going through red lights, going through stop signs at speed,

failing to give right of way and causing danger, and driving at excessive speed deserves his points. And in each and every case where a driver incurs danger points, he should lose his licence. In fact, it would be a good idea to provide that anyone who incurred five points for dangerous offences should have his driving tested to see whether there was some course of driver instruction that he could undergo to make him safer on the road not only in his own interest but also in the interest of other road users.

There is also a need to make money available urgently to publicise the need to change our law relating to stop signs and give-way signs. There is no doubt that drivers in this State regard stop signs as indicating one course only. Under the law in Queensland, drivers stop and then proceed. But they can then be killed stone dead by someone from New South Wales or Victoria who is driving according to the road code in those States. It is time that money was made available to bring into line the law relating to stop signs and give-way signs, in the three eastern States, in particular. We have been talking about this matter for three years, and I have no doubt that in that period many people have been killed as a result of the different laws relating to stop signs and give-way signs.

The drivers involved in these instances have not been bad drivers. Some of them have been well trained and have probably received good drivers' awards in their States. I was nearly cut in two in Toowoomba by a serviceman driving a R.A.A.F. Kombi van. I saw the other people in the car scream at their driver. I knew what they said—"He has the right of way." He proceeded as though he were in a southern State. A collision was averted. The Armed Services do not allow their vehicles to be driven by medium rating officers, who are discourteous and in total ignorance of the law. Nevertheless, the quicker the three States get into line on this law, the better.

I think there is also a need to withdraw the radar guns that are used to police the Traffic Act. I believe that they are much better than the old radar sets, but there is still a doubt in a person's mind when a policeman shows him a reading from a radar gun. Although the figures are there, he has no real proof that the policeman had been pointing the gun at his car. There is a simple way to overcome this problem; it can be done with the technology available today. This system is used in other places.

**Mr. Moore:** Incorporate a camera in it.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** The honourable member for Windsor is quite correct. A camera can be incorporated in the radar gun. If we are going to use mobile mounted radar, it should include a camera.

**Mr. Moore:** An infra-red one for night.

**Dr. LOCKWOOD:** Yes. The reading should also show the date and time, and there should be a photograph of the vehicle. It should also show the speed of the vehicle. It is no good saying that these things have not been invented. They are already in use in Hong Kong. I have seen them there. I have seen the photographs. When people there are confronted with the information, there is no doubt in their minds that it relates to their car. They can see the date, the time and the speed; and they pay up like lambs.

A simpler modification could be made to radar guns. I believe that they are very accurate. All that needs to be done is to modify them to incorporate a LED display showing the time that has elapsed since the gun was last used. If a motorist is pulled up and shown that it is 12, 15 or 20 seconds since the speed shown was recorded, and the time is ticking by, he knows that it refers to him. It would be impossible for him to say, "It wasn't me; it was the car that was passing me." This would be particularly valuable when there was a chase after a motorist. As it is, a motorist in these circumstances will invariably deny that he went through a speed trap. He will assert that the police have been travelling around with the radar gun locked on a particular reading, and will plead that he is an innocent victim.

I would now like to refer briefly to the survey done in Toowoomba to provide resource and research material to the department for deciding future allocations under the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act. The survey has been completed, and I think it is time that the findings were made public. We need to know what is going to happen in Toowoomba in the next five, 10 and 20 years, given predicted rates of growth. We need to know the immediate future of our bus operators. The sooner that sort of thing is known, the better.

The survey firm used students from the Darling Downs Institute. I know that those students did their very best. Like all surveyors, they were given a rough time by some people. Some told them that they travelled on the bus for seven trips a day, whereas the buses do not run seven times a day. Others told them that they used the buses seven days a week, whereas the buses do not operate seven days a week. I hope the Minister will soon be in a position to make the findings of that survey public. When that is done I hope he will be able to clearly predict the future needs of public transport in Toowoomba, given our existing fuel use. Perhaps he could even indicate what might happen to public transport in Toowoomba if there is a diminishing supply of liquid fuel and ever-increasing costs for it.

Mr. WRIGHT (Rockhampton) (3.8 p.m.): Whenever we debate departmental Estimates there is a risk that members on both sides of the Chamber will come up with all sorts of suggestions that would require greater expenditure. That is understandable, because we desire to see improvements in our own electorates and because we want to see the money spent in line with our needs and priorities. It is important, however, that we look at the ways in which Governments raise money and the principal sources of their revenue.

As we all realise, the most important sources of finance are grants, payments under the financial agreement between the Federal Government and the State Government, and the indirect and direct taxation imposed by the State. There are the special payments from the Commonwealth; there is interest on loans and investments; and there is the sale and rental of Crown land. In addition, there are the miscellaneous sources such as fines and fees. Often overlooked by Governments of the Liberal and National Party colours are those business undertakings controlled and operated by the State. The Railway Department is a prime example.

When looking at Financial Statements and generally considering the budgetary process, we realise that the formulation of any Budget appropriation is done by the Executive. There is the authorisation by this Legislature—we are doing part of that at the moment—and then there is a requirement on the departments to execute what has been decided. The final aspect is appraisal. That is a role we play in this Assembly. We appraise the proposed expenditure areas and the previous expenditure areas.

One notes that in recent times there has been a tendency for departments to carry out their own self-appraisal. That is good. It is important that we do this because we are responsible to the people for control of the purse. It is vitally important that we consider very carefully the ways in which money is being spent. When one looks at the Railway Department figures, one notices that in 1977-78 the loss was some \$68,000,000. In anybody's language, that is a lot of money.

In the Financial Statement, the Treasurer states that estimated receipts will total \$294,900,000. However, he is looking at an expenditure totalling \$375,900,000. That represents a budgeted loss of \$81,000,000. When the cost of servicing the general debt that has to be met from Consolidated Revenue is added to that, the result is an actual loss of \$115,000,000. That sum represents a lot of homes, a lot of schools, a lot of wage increases and a lot of general capital works. So it is important that we look very carefully at the business operations of the State and particularly of the Railway Department, which, as I have said, has incurred a massive loss.

We must not forget, however, that the Railway Department's role is not simply the making of profits. We must adopt a realistic attitude and understand that the Railway Department contributes to the economy of the State in many ways. Numerous benefits flow on from its activities.

The Railway Department plays a vital role in assisting industry in the Brisbane area to send its goods to people in country areas and provincial towns and vice versa. Its operations therefore benefit industries in outlying regions. They also have an important effect on our standard of living. If the Railway Department does not open up areas and if, as a result, the costs of transport remain high, the profits of business in those areas will drop, wages will drop and the standard of living will be lowered.

The operations of the Railway Department play an important part in the overall progress of the State. If we trace our history we will see that it was because of the Railway Department and the railway employees, who made a wonderful contribution to the development of Queensland, that the State enjoys its present high rate of progress. In the early years, pioneers were prepared to spend their lives in the bush areas and men and women were prepared to give the best part of their lives to the service of the Railway Department.

The Railway Department can have a tremendous effect on private enterprise. Without it many businesses would not be able to earn such high profit returns. It plays a part in providing services to the community and, as well, it employs a large number of people.

Whilst I acknowledge these benefits and advantages, I cannot lose sight of the fact that it is wrong that any department should lose \$115,000,000 a year and that nothing should be done about it. I know that the Government cannot choose the alternative of not spending money. It cannot say, "All right, we will cut the suit according to the cloth. We will not spend any more money." It must continue to upgrade the services and facilities that are provided.

I note that in the Financial Statement the Treasurer points out that, over the next year, \$1,300,000 will be spent on marshalling yards and station yards, \$1,700,000 on improvements in workshops and machinery, \$2,000,000 on new residences, \$1,900,000 on new quarters and \$11,300,000 on the provision of electricity, sewerage, and further communications. Money is also to be spent on level crossings, the elimination of timber bridges, the construction of new air-conditioned carriages, brake vans, refrigerated containers, diesel-electric locomotives, rolling-stock, wagons and so on. The list is endless. Expenditure on all those items adds up to \$9,900,000. I note that work will continue in the Central Division, where tremendous development is occurring.

There must be an improvement and an upgrading of facilities, which calls for greater expenditure. There is, however, still room for improvement. All of us could get up and say that we need more refrigerated vans, more money spent on the removal of timber bridges and so on, but we must look at ways of improving the receipts of the departments.

This improvement should not be effected by increasing fares. Such a move does not provide the answer. It concerns me at present to note that there is not much difference between the cost of a first-class sleeper berth between Brisbane and Rockhampton and that of a flight by either TAA or Ansett between the same two towns. That is a pity, because the railways should compete in money terms as well as in the quality of the service rendered.

The improvement cannot be achieved, either, by an increase in freight rates on ordinary domestic goods. Recently the member for Port Curtis and I made a trip to the Central West and we found that costs were extremely high. We talked with local business people and shopkeepers, who pointed out to us that because of freight charges they are forced to add approximately 6 or 10c per lb to the cost of items sold. That represents a large addition to the cost of every-day items.

We also noted that under the Commonwealth system sales tax in country areas is paid on freight charges. That is a serious anomaly. It has not been changed, and the State Government has done little about it. Rather than sales tax being paid at the point of sale on the cost of manufacture, as it should be, the freight cost is included in the amount on which it is levied. The system is wrong, and it should be changed.

I do not suggest that we should increase the freight cost on ordinary domestic goods, but I do suggest that we should widen the activities of the Railway Department. This is a real avenue of development that is open and it is being tapped. In recent years the Railway Department has become aware of the value of the tourist industry. However, considering that the tourist industry is the second biggest industry in the State and is a massive income earner for Queensland, little has been done. We have the opportunity and the facilities to expand tourism. We can provide the service, because we have the necessary expertise. But not enough is done.

The Railway Department deserves a larger share of the Queensland tourist industry, but to get it a change in attitude is required. A different approach is developing, but it is not developing fast enough. We should consider providing even more tourist trains, with better facilities. We have to go out and get our share of the tourist market. The tourist dollar is just as good as the dollar paid by the mining companies or the food-producing companies. We must make inroads into all areas of the tourist industry.

On looking around the schools today, I note a tendency for students to become involved in extracurricular activities and adventure programmes that involve travel to various parts of the State. I note also that in many instances the students use road transport. When they come to Brisbane, arrangements are made through the Tourist Bureau to use trains. If an all-out programme was developed, we could encourage schools to regularly book trips on trains. That could be done only by an acceptance of the value of rail travel and the employment of people with the required expertise to formulate a proper plan.

In my opinion, a special tourist-promotion committee is required in the Railway Department. We have access to the Queensland Tourist Bureau and to other people who could assist us with public relations. I ask the Minister to consider forming a tourist-promotion committee in his department. Everything cannot be achieved overnight. We cannot say, "We will spend millions of dollars and suddenly get our share of the tourist dollar."

**Mr. Jones:** In earlier days, under Labor Governments, the Tourist Bureau was an adjunct of the Railway Department.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** I was unaware of that, but it seems to back up what I am saying. If that is so, the Railway Department and the Queensland Tourist Bureau would both benefit. Queensland would certainly benefit.

The tourist committee could see what happens in other countries. It could send a deputation to New Zealand and other western countries to see how they develop their tourist industries through the use of trains.

**Mr. Moore:** Will you lead it?

**Mr. WRIGHT:** I would certainly be willing to go. Because of the honourable member's former interest in the railways, he has a positive attitude to these things. I would welcome him as a partner in such a venture. However, I am sure that there are other members, such as the members for Cairns and Brisbane Central, who would be more than capable of leading the deputation.

We have to find out what is happening, and learn from other people's mistakes and gains. It will require expenditure not only to see what is happening in other places but also to undertake a State-wide promotion programme. I will not be debating tourism generally, but I will say that we do not spend enough on promoting Queensland. We produce films and have agencies in other States, but much more could be done on a State-wide and a nation-wide promotional basis. We should link up with other tourist centres in Queensland. We should have an arrangement with private entrepreneurs who run buses, and we should link up with the Rockhampton City Council and other councils that have their own buses, to ensure that trains can go from A to B, the tourists can

spend a day or two on buses in certain areas, then link up with the train and move on to another town or region.

That is one way in which to increase revenue. There are others. It is time we had a good look at the freight returns from mining enterprises. If we look at the profits made by Utah, there is certainly a good argument that they can afford to pay more. Compared with the benefit derived, they make a minor contribution. I agree that they put in \$60,000,000—I think that was the figure given by the Treasurer—but, when it is considered that the Queensland people pay for the railway lines and all the equipment and facilities used, that is not really a great contribution. Whilst we acknowledge their role in increasing employment through the increased transportation of goods, we need to review the hard cash benefits that we get from these companies. That is one real and positive way of offsetting losses.

We ought to remove the unfair competition of private enterprise. I cite specifically Q.R.X. It somewhat bugs me personally that Q.R.X. is able to operate and actually makes its profits because of the existence of the Queensland railways. Why cannot Queensland, through the Railway Department, have its own system of door-to-door delivery? Why is it that we have to give this away to private enterprise? Why can we not combine road and rail transport as a new concept? Business enterprises today are asking for goods to be delivered from the point of manufacture to the point of sale. That can be totally controlled by the Railway Department. We ought to have our own road transport system that has its activities co-ordinated with those of the Railway Department. That is one way in which we will not only increase profits but also employ more people. Overall, I think that would improve the standard, the status and the image of the Railway Department. Our aim must be to improve the total return.

**Mr. Prest:** And also the efficiency.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** Yes, it would certainly improve the efficiency.

We are dealing with a multimillion dollar business and I believe that the losses could be cut. It is not good enough for the Treasurer, year after year, when he presents his Financial Statement, to say, "Look, we've got massive losses in the Railway Department, but it can't be helped." I suggest that it can be helped.

In the few moments I have left, I turn quickly to a couple of local problems. I ask the Minister to please—I could even say "pretty please"—decide when the Denison Street railway line in Rockhampton will be relocated. When one travels throughout Australia, one hears people say, "Rockhampton? Oh, that's the town where the railway line runs down the main street." Well, it is not the main street; but it is time

that something was done about it. The local mayor has certainly added his support to this request, as have the Chamber of Commerce, the promotion bureau and the political parties.

All have said that it is time we did something about it. It is totally unnecessary to have the line where it is and it ought to be changed. It is the cause of much wasted time for general traffic. When one looks at the number of trains that use it—there might be two or three a day—it would appear that it is unnecessary even for the Railway Department. It seems to me that there has been procrastination by the Government. I know that people at top levels of the Railway Department want to see some changes, but still nothing is done.

I refer also to a vital issue that has been worrying me for a long time and which has, I know, been worrying other members of the Opposition and the trade unions. I refer to the sacking of railway employees who get involved in some sort of crime or offence. I have spoken to the Commissioner for Railways about one such case in which two young fellows in my own area stole some pigs. They decided that what they had done was wrong and they took them back. However, they now stand to lose their jobs. They have been suspended.

I would understand it if they had stolen something from the Railway Department. If they had been involved in the defalcation of funds, I agree that they ought to lose their jobs. But what will happen? They will go before the court, the magistrate will hit them with a \$100 penalty, they will be suspended from the Railway Department and, in this instance, they will lose their apprenticeships. They face a double penalty.

Not so long ago a young fellow was alleged to have stolen a pair of spectacles from the top of the bar of a hotel. He claimed he did not take them. Later on, another person said that this young fellow was not the one who took them. He was, however, convicted and he lost his job. If this is justice, then I do not know what justice is all about. I have been told that some young fellows have been involved in shop-lifting and that they, too, have lost their jobs. If they are robbing the Railway Department, let us do something about it; but the present approach is archaic and is apparently based on a Cabinet decision that was made decades and decades ago. That Cabinet decision ought to be changed.

**Mr. R. J. Gibbs:** You are aware, of course, that if you are a Government employee and a member of the Cricketers' Club, you are exempt.

**Mr. WRIGHT:** I did not know about that and it is worth noting. I hope the Hansard reporters heard it.

The system ought to be reviewed because it is unjust. A person should not lose his job in those instances. He could certainly

be found alternative employment. There is nothing wrong with employing him again in a labouring capacity or, if he is an apprentice and has not been involved in stealing from the department, allowing him to continue his apprenticeship. The other aspect is that if a decision is to be made at commissioner level, there ought to be some discretionary power vested in the commissioner, or other person in authority, to determine the issue in the light of the circumstances. There ought not to be a black-and-white rule or a cartel-blanche approach by which the employee has to be sacked.

I have mentioned the problems of railway housing. I note that the Minister has set aside some millions of dollars for this purpose. For instance, there is one allocation of \$2,000,000. In Brisbane it would be enough to build 40 houses. Recently, on a trip to the West, I noticed that the cost of some of the houses was \$45,000. They could be constructed in Brisbane for between \$12,000 and \$20,000. The department is being ripped off. I raised this matter in my Budget speech. We ought to start looking at the involvement of the State in the manufacture of prefabricated or modular homes. The Railway Department could certainly benefit here. Instead of building 40 homes with the money that has been allocated, we could then build 80 or 90 homes. This requires a different type of attitude. At the moment the department is being ripped off, and it is public money that is involved.

My final point concerns the electrification of the Rockhampton-Brisbane railway line. I note that \$500,000 has been set aside for mainline electrification studies. This will benefit Central Queensland tremendously. It certainly will benefit the tourist industry. I hope that it will not be another of the cases of procrastination that we have seen in the past, such as removal of the Denison Street railway line or the promise given so many years ago that the Archer Street Railway Station would be used eventually as a museum. These things are promised, but they never come about. I urge the Minister to make this a very important personal platform and to carry out his promise, thus indicating that this is not political puffing on his part.

**Mr. MOORE (Windsor)** (3.28 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Transport Estimates, I point out that all people must agree that the Railway Department is a massive business. Of course, the Minister for Transport controls other forms of transport as well. The Vote is \$375,900,000-odd. It is said that the Railway Department is not run very efficiently, but one must consider the miles of track and the isolation of some of the areas it serves. Even though it runs at a loss, the service is maintained so that people in the outlying areas can keep their heads above water and operate at a profit. The loss is therefore a form of subsidy to the people in many areas of the State.

I do not doubt that there are inefficiencies in it. That is bound to be so because no commissioner can be on top of a job of

that magnitude. All departments of that size have to rely on the conscientiousness of departmental heads, managers and staff. I worked in the Railway Department for 20 years. I know that some fellows duck off for a beer and so on. I have seen it happen and I have done it. But when they are called upon to do a little extra, they work back or work through their smoko or lunch break. There is a little bit of give and take.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Row):** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber, particularly among honourable members on my left. Would they lower the level of their conversations?

**Mr. MOORE:** On occasions somebody is hauled over the coals and finds himself in trouble for doing one of those minor things. But generally I have found that tradesmen and others employed in the Railway Department are very, very skilled. I cannot help paying a tribute to the skill of those in the tool and gauge section and others. The quality of their work is second to none, as was the quality of work of the carriage builders in days gone by, although they are not doing quite the same type of work now.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Back in the days of Peter Cronin.

**Mr. MOORE:** That is true.

One would never see a railway carriage builder belt a screw in with a hammer or do anything stupid. If he put a screw in, it would have wax on it, there would be a hole of a certain size for the shank and a certain size for the thread, and if he had to dismantle a job ten times and still put the screw back in the same hole it would be as good at the finish as it was at the start because it was never overstrained. I cannot help commending them on the quality of their work.

Their speed might not have been great on occasions, but to some extent this was the result of design faults. A tradesman might have a job practically done and along would come an engineer or draftsman and say, "Haul that out and do it this way." So he would dismantle it and put it back together, and then someone else would criticise him for taking too long to do the job.

I have nothing but admiration for those men. The railways are a vast enterprise and employ fitters and turners, welders, scale-makers, carpenters, painters, bridge carpenters, civil and electrical engineers—

**Mr. Davis:** Truck drivers.

**Mr. MOORE:** And fools like the honourable member—one or two of those.

When one looks at the size of the department from the commissioner down to the tradesmen and other workers, one can understand how things go awry on occasions. Strikes do occur, but generally not in an isolated section of the department. While I was employed by the railway department, I went

on strike a few times. On one occasion we stayed out for nine weeks, but it was a strike that was badly handled from go to whoa by the union, the Railway Department and the political parties. It had been brewing for a couple of years before it finally occurred, and then the Communist bogey was brought in. Of course, the Communists got into it, but they got in after it started; they were not the initiators. No-one can tell me that the Communists are going to lead people out on strike unless there is a good reason for the strike in the first place.

I do say to the Minister that the staff in the public relations side of his department are a little bit heavy-handed. There seems to be a lack of understanding by them of the lower ranks of the department. One thing that I hope will be corrected—I am sure it has not—is the discrimination between white and blue-collar workers so far as compassionate leave and first-class rail travel, amongst other things, are concerned. Some people are considered to be salaried employees while others are considered to be wages employees, and there is something wrong with a department that tolerates that sort of discrimination. I am sure it still does occur, and I hope the day comes when it is absolutely and totally eliminated. All workers have their dignity; but, when a clerk is able to obtain a first-class ticket to go on holidays while a tradesman received a second-class ticket, there is something wrong.

In the 10 years since I entered this House, I have been able to achieve a few reforms within the railways, and I hope that someone takes notice of my complaint about discrimination and that it becomes our policy to remove it.

The Labor Government started the electrification scheme, which would have been very good if it had been continued, but it would not have been nearly as good as the one that we are about to introduce. If the scheme had been implemented then, the overhead gear and so forth would have been installed, and it could have been upgraded now. The scheme could have been introduced then for about £10,000,000. Now it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

It will become more and more expensive to use diesel trains. The day will come when the railway system will be electrified, except, perhaps, for a branch line, although I doubt that I will see it. I cannot see any future for the Railway Department in the long term unless the railway system is electrified. Our modern system is based on alternating current. I have forgotten the voltage, but I think it is 25 kV. The voltage is applied to the power car, and the necessary regulation is achieved through the modern semi-conductors and so forth.

The whole problem, of course, is that we say everything is very expensive and that we have to cut back. Whatever the time we do something, we will never do it any cheaper than now. Whenever something has

been proposed, we have always said, "It is just too expensive. We will have to wait for some more opportune time." We might have to change our priorities; but there is no more opportune time than the present. We say that we cannot do something because there is inflation but, as I have said, we will never do anything cheaper than we can do it now.

Electrification of the rail system would require labour-intensive activity. A large number of men would have to be employed on the project. If we wait until the economy picks up, we will find that there is a shortage of workers. We will then come up with the lame excuse, "Sorry, we can't get the work-force to do it." The time to do things is when you can do them. Rather than just borrow money to overcome a deficit, we should borrow it to undertake works within the State. We should not commence work that requires the purchase of overseas equipment. That will not benefit our economy. As I have said, the modernisation of our railways would be very labour-intensive.

Soon after we assumed office, we made a bad mistake in the way we upgraded the Townsville to Mt. Isa railway line. There is talk now of upgrading it further—and it needs it. The line was built across plains, and the people responsible for building it knew nothing of the area. They believed that it was a dry area. They did not know that when it rains, miles of country is covered with water—it looks like the Pacific Ocean—and the line is washed away. When we upgraded the Townsville to Mt. Isa railway line, we should have converted it to 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. All co-haulage railway lines should have a 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. It is said that that would cause some problems, but if it did nothing else, it would standardise the railways throughout Australia. It would allow freight to be loaded for transport to any other part of Australia without further handling. It is the handling which is costly. With a wider track the bed and the levels do not have to be quite as good for the trains to do the same speed. It is said that fast trains can travel on a 3 ft. 6 in. gauge, but with that gauge there is a great overhang. With bad loading of a wagon, all sorts of trouble can occur on curves if there is a slight movement of the track. We made that mistake with the Mt. Isa line, and the day will come when we have to rectify it. We will have to make a start at some time. We need to put in that third rail throughout the State. By commencing on that, we can gradually get to a standard gauge railway in Queensland.

I could not mention the Railway Department without referring to the fettlers, breakdown gangs and flying gangs. If anyone works hard and does a good job in hot and wet conditions and in times of emergency without complaining, they do. Their work is like poetry in motion. Ten or 20 fellows work on a section of line in between trains.

An armchair critic in a passing train looks out and sees a fellow leaning on a shovel. Expecting him to be working under the wheels, the critic says, "Look at that fellow standing there, getting paid for doing nothing."

**Mr. Bourke:** We threw our papers to him.

**Mr. MOORE:** I used to do that, but with modern air-conditioned trains that can't be done now.

**Mr. Warburton:** The same men deserve decent accommodation, too.

**Mr. MOORE:** Of course. I have a note about that. We have improved very little on the old tent houses that the fettlers had. The only good thing about them was that they were cool. They had nothing and they have nothing now. We still have any amount of bondwood huts and showers hanging on the end of a rope. These workers have to toss a kerosene tin of hot water over themselves while standing outside in the breeze. Their conditions are primitive. Those fellows are hard and tough, and they put up with it. If a person stops at the camp and has a yarn with the fettlers, he soon learns that many of them are not the fools that the average person thinks they are. Because they have time on their hands, many of them are very well read. They like the open-air life. They are a credit to their occupation.

We should do more about railway housing generally. The department adopts a parsimonious, pinpricking attitude towards the number of power points supplied and other minor matters. That sort of thing causes strikes that need never occur. Of course, the trade union movement latches onto that sort of thing, and that does nobody any good.

**Mr. Bourke:** What about the dining cars?

**Mr. MOORE:** I thought we had done something about the dining car. We might have done something about the dining car itself, but we certainly have done nothing about the buffet car on such trains as the "Capricornian". Although one might not get a stomach ache from the food, it is certainly monotonous fare. The reason that not many people get a stomach ache from it is that not many eat it.

**Mr. Frawley:** It is better food than you get here in the parliamentary dining room.

**Mr. MOORE:** I am not suggesting that the Parliament House dining room is any good. The food would be pretty poor if it wasn't better than that. Never mind the Refreshment Rooms; I will be pulled into gear if I start talking about them.

I turn now to road safety. In the first Address-in-Reply debate that I heard after my election to Parliament, a large number of members talked about road safety. They claimed that in that year 300 persons were killed on the road. Last year 587 persons

were killed on Queensland roads and, in addition, a large number were maimed. On top of that, numerous accidents occurred in which no-one was injured. These days, the road toll hardly rates a mention.

No-one could convince me that speed is not the main cause of road accidents. As I have said before, they are caused by a combination of inattention and speed, carelessness and speed or arrogance and speed. The common denominator is speed.

The metropolitan area contains approximately 47 per cent of the State's population and it has the highest accident rate. However, the highest death rate occurs in areas of lesser population. The reason for that is that the distances to be travelled are greater and the driving speeds are higher.

**Mr. Austin:** Too much grog.

**Mr. MOORE:** On that topic, of 375 persons who were killed on the roads and whose blood was tested to determine the alcohol content, 200 reacted positively, showing that they had consumed alcohol. In other words, 175 of the persons who were killed showed no blood alcohol content whatever. If the 200 deaths were caused by alcohol, what caused the other 175? It is not simply a matter of saying that, because 200 persons died from one mad cause, the other 175 persons died from one other cause. Honourable members talk about grog. Some statistics show that clergymen who have not consumed alcohol are responsible for a large number of accidents on the road. It is wrong to blame all traffic accidents on the consumption of alcohol. The point I am making is that statistics can be used to say anything you want them to say.

**Mr. WARNER (Toowoomba South) (3.48 p.m.):** I cannot help being overawed by the tremendous loss of \$64,000,000 incurred by the Railway Department last year, and the predicted loss for the coming year. For some years we have been used to this sort of thing in the Railway Department's Estimates. However, we must not let ourselves become complacent. I do not believe for one moment that the Railway Department has become complacent. It is simply a matter of losses incurred because people are not using the railways. As well, the economic factor plays an important part.

People who used to consign freight by rail no longer do so. In my area people just do not use the railways any more. I cannot see why that should be so. The Railway Department offers one of the best freight services that are available from the Darling Downs and Toowoomba. The passenger service provided by the department between Toowoomba and Brisbane is not patronised. I believe this is the result of a lack of advertising on the part of the Railway Department.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** This Government places too much emphasis on road transport and not enough on the railways.

**Mr. WARNER:** I would agree with that. As I have said before, the Railway Department's business has diminished. People simply are not using the railways. I would ask: Why? There is ample evidence to show that in other countries that have efficient rail services they are patronised by the people as a means of carrying both passengers and freight. Compared with Australia, Japan has an enormous population, and 21,000,000 people use the Japanese railway services daily. In Japan, passengers can board a train and travel at more than 100 miles an hour in almost complete silence. They can get from A to B by train far quicker than they can by any other means of transport.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** It is the best train I have ever been on.

**Mr. WARNER:** It is a very good train.

All that is necessary to promote the use of trains is a quick, efficient service. Although a comparison of Queensland and Japanese trains is odious, I point out that the freight services in Germany, the United States, Canada and other overseas countries I have visited are very fast and efficient, although some of them are run at a considerable loss. Queensland needs a fast, efficient service.

I am well aware that there are overriding budgetary considerations and I should not like the Minister to think otherwise, but surely we should determine priorities and start to lay high-speed rail beds that will carry passengers daily between Brisbane and Toowoomba, and Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. That is where our electrification priorities should lie in the immediate future. I realise that we cannot provide such a service right up the coast. I certainly wish we could provide a service to compete with air and bus transport and take passengers in silence and comfort to the North. It would be of untold benefit to our tourist industry. If the money could be found for such a service, it would be well spent and would return large dividends to the State.

Last year's Budget referred to the electrification of the rail service between Brisbane and Toowoomba. This section must be given priority. Nothing would do more for Toowoomba and the Downs than rail electrification, with the use of new, high-speed lines to carry freight and passengers. I emphasise that a daily service between Brisbane and Toowoomba would serve the 80,000-odd people of Toowoomba and the 350,000 in the surrounding areas.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper:** Toowoomba is the gateway to the West.

**Mr. WARNER:** It is the gateway to the West.

I hope that this is not just a pipe-dream. In my few years in Parliament I have heard a few schemes put forward that have not gone any further—

**Mr. Prest:** The Government is noted for promises, promises, promises.

**Mr. WARNER:** I would not say that. Tremendous achievements have been attained. The honourable member knows what has been happening in Brisbane.

While this may be parochial, I am pushing my barrow to ensure that the highest priority is given to establishing a fast electrified rail service between Brisbane and Toowoomba. If the Government wants to be forward-thinking, and I believe it does, it should consider what is no pipe-dream—a tunnel underneath the mountain from the Lockyer straight through to the Downs. To the majority of members, that may sound like a very costly venture. However, what I postulate was put forward by the Railway Department some years ago. Plans were made for it. It would not be costly when one considers the number of overpasses that would be required in Toowoomba to take the enormous traffic that will be generated on the Downs in the future.

I have gone into the tunnel proposal fairly thoroughly, although I do not have the complete details on it. Spring Bluff, on the Lockyer side, which is no more than 150 ft. up from the Lockyer, is exactly the same height as the Downs on the other side of the mountain. If a tunnel were to be put straight through, it would come out at a place called Gowrie Junction. When one considers the enormous cost involved in rebuilding the railway line up the range, one sees that the tunnel concept should be given immediate consideration. As the honourable member for Windsor said a little while ago, there is no time like the present to do these things.

A tunnel would service the grain area and bypass the centre of Toowoomba. An enormous amount of railway traffic passes through Toowoomba. For the benefit of members who have not been to Toowoomba recently, I can tell them that during grain harvest time 50 trains a week may pass through the city. With the enormous development that is to come to the Downs, there will be an accompanying increase in rail traffic. If the Millmerran coal project starts—and I believe it will—Toowoomba will then have train loads of grain, coal and oil passing through it. We cannot allow that to happen. I am sure that the Minister for Local Government and Main Roads would turn pale at the thought of providing overpasses at all the rail crossings in Toowoomba. The cost today would be many, many millions. It is the Government's job to compare the cost of a tunnel with the cost of overpasses and a relaying of the track up the range.

No single mode of transport has exclusive rights to any given field of operation. I would agree with that, and I am sure that you would, too, Mr. Row. However, some modes perform particular tasks far more effectively than others, and with more efficient use of resources. Our task in Queensland is of such magnitude that all forms of

transport should fulfil an important and particular role. Road hauliers have made considerable inroads into long-distance freight transportation, but I am doubtful whether that mode of transport provides the most effective utilisation of resources. Various freight-forwarding organisations have stated publicly—and to me—that they have no desire to be involved in long-distance road-haul operations. However, as financial incentives are involved, the subcontracting road operator will continue to operate, even though his operations may not be cost efficient.

I am quite certain that every member knows in his electorate of a man who is in a position similar to that of a man I know who has just bought a second-hand Mercedes diesel truck. He is its eighth owner. Each previous owner has either gone broke or thrown in the towel under the circumstances operating today. As inflation increases, he will have to carry bigger loads to make a living. It is a case of the dog chasing its tail. He will have to get a bigger business.

Enormously increased loads are causing damage costing millions of dollars to our roads. One has only to look at the arterial roads to see what is happening. In addition to causing damage, big transports cause a large number of accidents. They cannot get off the road and they are driven at excessive speeds. This results in pot-holing of roads. The damage is so excessive that local authorities will never have the money to repair it.

A serious situation will arise unless we return to line-haul operations by the railways, particularly where volume is involved and where it has been proved to be cost efficient for both parties, and leave short-haul operations to the legitimate road transport operators.

Turning to another subject—we must innovate and look ahead. There appears to be a need to establish adequate terminal facilities for rail freight handling on the northern side of Brisbane. The southern side is well served by the Moolabin complex, which has replaced Woolloongabba, and the container and steel-handling facilities at Acacia Ridge. These facilities are being looked at by the department, so it is engaging in forward-thinking.

Apart from the work undertaken on the Pinkenba line, mainly because of the need to service port facilities, few major initiatives have been undertaken to establish a bulk terminal in the northern part of the city. It is essential that full consideration be given to the transport requirements of existing and potential developments north of Brisbane.

The foreseeable energy situation suggests that the railways should be geared to undertake the line-haul portion of the total transport task. I believe that it is essential that adequate facilities be available for the transfer of goods and commodities between road and rail when and if it is needed. I would

hate to think that I was responsible for the planning of the arterial roads, etc., necessary to handle the huge haulage of goods to the new port of Brisbane.

There is no doubt in my mind that a world-wide fossil fuel shortage looms before us and there seems to be no doubt that before the turn of the century we will have to rethink the whole transport situation not only in Queensland but throughout the whole of Australia. This is the present thinking in such advanced countries as the U.S.A., which has very clearly pointed out to the world the inevitable shortage of liquid fuel. Today, Japan is entirely dependent on liquid fuel and it is no wonder that for the future it is looking to nuclear power. The Japanese know what the future involves. Liquid fuel will be in short supply, and Japan has no deposits of energy like those in Australia. Our deposits of coal and other forms of energy are enormous. But we must turn to electrification as quickly as possible in case war erupts again in the Middle East and we lack the necessary oil.

In the few minutes that are left to me, I must turn to a parochial matter—bus transportation in Toowoomba. I am absolutely certain that bus operators in cities such as Toowoomba are sailing very close to the wind. Their viability has nearly gone. Their plight is obvious to the Minister. I feel sure that he will do all that he can to overcome the situation that is fast developing. The only solution seems to be to get bigger or get out, but I do not believe that that will provide improved efficiency. I do not believe that this is the solution.

Solutions have to be found, and I believe that the Minister is quite keen to see that they are found. The Transport Department must not isolate itself from industry, as it has in the past. Round-table discussions are necessary in an endeavour to find solutions, and solutions we must have. At those meetings, an examination must be made of the uses to which combined transport resources can be put. If a solution is not found that will allow efficient bus services to operate in places such as Toowoomba and Townsville, it seems obvious that the 70,000 or 80,000 people in each of those cities will be without public transport. Surely public transport is the right of every citizen.

If approved operators are put out of business through lack of co-operation by the department, the load of providing public transport will fall on the State Government, through local government. If one recalls the enormous loss incurred by the Brisbane transport system—last year it was estimated at something like \$21,000,000—and the subsidies paid to the council by this Government, one realises that this could also be the lot of this Government in a city such as Toowoomba.

I think the decision to remove the trams in Brisbane was taken without an in-depth study. I believe their removal was criticised

by most people in Queensland. Anybody from the country who came down to Brisbane knows how good the trams were. I therefore believe it is imperative to have an in-depth study of the bus services operating at present in Toowoomba. I do not want the Minister to think that everything I say is a criticism of his department, because I know that without money we cannot do very much at all. I wish we were not in the position of having to start all over again, but unfortunately that is the case. I believe that we should start in a small way and develop sound, efficient systems that work. Once again, in promoting Toowoomba, I believe that is where we should start.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD** (Ipswich West) (4.7 p.m.): In speaking on the Estimates for the Department of Transport, I would like to concentrate on how they affect the railway industry in general, and my area in particular.

It was refreshing to hear Government back-benchers speak about the need to improve railway services throughout the State. However, I am rather dubious about whether they will put their words into action and support the Minister in any moves he might make in this regard because we in Ipswich are paying the price for previous actions of this Government, especially those in 1974 when the political bigotry and banditry of the Bjelke-Petersen National-Liberal Government prevented the commencement of the electrification programme for the railway lines between the Brisbane metropolitan area and Ipswich. It is because of the refusal of the Queensland Government to take part in the programmed electrification of these lines, in conjunction with the A.L.P. Federal Government, which was offering excellent funding terms, that Ipswich still does not know when it will be serviced by electric trains.

In 1974, on behalf of the Government, the then Minister for Transport, Mr. Keith Hooper, could only stall and pour scorn upon the Federal A.L.P. Government for its willingness to fund the electrification project so that it could be completed as quickly as possible. I would like to bring to the attention of the Committee a statement which appeared in "The Courier-Mail" of 28 August 1974. The Minister said that there would be a five-year programme for the electrification of the metropolitan area. His statement was supported by the secretary of the Australian Railways Union, Mr. P. Dunne. However, in 1978 that five-year programme, which promised to complete 80 per cent of the proposed electrification of the metropolitan area, is nowhere near completed.

Let me instance some of the immature and irresponsible reactions of the then Minister in his dealings relative to the electrification project, and, indeed, those of the honourable member for Ipswich, the Deputy Premier. Today he is Acting

Premier in the absence of the Premier, who has once again, at taxpayers' expense, gone to receive a whipping from the people of New South Wales.

In 1974 the Federal Treasurer, Mr. Bill Hayden, offered Queensland an additional \$1,980,000 in cold hard cash so that extra funds could be injected into the electrification project in order to complete it ahead of the five-year schedule. It was rejected by the Minister, who was ably supported by the honourable member for Ipswich with hysterical outbursts and condemnation of the Federal Treasurer for even daring to offer to the people of Queensland additional funds so that the electrification project—phase 1, as I call it—could be completed ahead of schedule. Naturally enough, the additional funds that were offered were never accepted, because they were offered by an A.L.P. Government in the interests of Queenslanders.

In 1974, \$400,000 was due to be spent on the Ipswich-Darra section of the Western Line, as part of what I call phase 1. However, not one cent was released. Only in 1978 was \$197,000 provided for two contracts, according to a Press statement released by the honourable member for Ipswich, pertaining to preliminary works. That was nearly 3½ years late. The honourable member for Ipswich, who was so active in rejecting the Federal A.L.P. Government's offer, nearly paid the supreme political sacrifice for that and other related deeds, when the vote of the A.L.P. candidate for the seat of Ipswich, Mr. J. Sciacca, showed a swing of more than 12 per cent away from the sitting member.

As a consequence of the hatred of the Bjelke-Petersen Government in 1974 of projects promoted and/or funded by the Federal A.L.P. Government, the electrification programme is slowly grinding to a halt. Ample evidence of the Government's attitude is to be found in an answer given by the Minister for Transport to a question asked by me. He said—

"The completion of the Ipswich-Darra section and the other parts of the electrification project which are not completed will depend upon the future availability of funds."

I was very interested to note from the Minister's speech today that the situation has not changed; in fact, it has deteriorated. In case there is any doubt in the minds of those honourable members present in the Chamber, I will remind them that the Minister said—

"The money being made available by the Commonwealth under the five year plan for urban public transport funding is only \$7,000,000 a year. With the State's contribution of \$3,500,000, this is still far short of the amount required to meet commitments. The situation was further complicated by the Commonwealth decision to withhold from the States this year a floating amount of \$20,000,000 which was to have been allocated on the basis of projects under way."

The initial electrification programme had to be scrapped, and what is now called the electrification programme—I call it phase 2—had to be devised so that the electrification of the Ipswich line could be broken into two stages. The Minister stated that stage 1, under which electric trains will terminate at Darra, would be completed in May 1979. On 1 March 1978 the Minister issued a statement in which he said the electrification of rail services would come to Ipswich in “the near future”. However, when I pointed out the fallacy of that, he had to retreat and rephrase his statement. He then said that electrification of rail services to Ipswich was at least five years away. Instead of electrification extended to Ipswich in 1979, as would have been the case under phase 1 of the initial programme, it is now, because of the actions of the State Government in 1974, part of what might be described as a never-never programme.

An analysis of the departmental and authority reports and the Minister’s speech today suggests that electrification of rail services to Ipswich will not eventuate till the late 1980’s, at the earliest.

At this point, I must object to the fact that the report of the Commissioner for Railways—conveniently for the Government—will not be ready for our perusal for another day or two. A similar situation arose when the Estimates for the Department of Primary Industries were being discussed. I suppose that is one trick that we have learned and can use when we are in Government after the next State election. Departmental reports are important in a debate such as this. They enable honourable members to be fully informed and have the latest information available.

What has been done in the Ipswich area so far, such as the provision of interchange car parks and the S.G.I.O. railway station building complex, is appreciated. However, there is little use in buying an egg if it turns out to be an empty shell. From day to day people of Ipswich see in their city silent monuments to the electrification programme of the 1950s that was abandoned by the National-Liberal Government. I instance the empty marshalling yards at Wulkuraka, and the idle skeletons of sheds and materials at Redbank. Is it any wonder that the people of Ipswich are suspicious of and disturbed by the continuing delays to and cut-backs in the electrification programme?

It is noteworthy that in a recent article in a railways magazine that I saw in the Parliamentary Library, and also in the Minister’s speech, blame is heaped on the present Federal Government—the Government for which the Queensland Government campaigned so earnestly between 1972 and 1975. The National-Liberal Government now tries to put the blame on the Federal Government, which honourable members opposite were instrumental in putting into office because they said that it would be

good for the people of Queensland and Australia. As I said earlier, in 1974 the Queensland Government rejected the funds offered to it by the Federal A.L.P. Government.

The Railway Department is a major employer in Ipswich. It is surpassed only by the R.A.A.F. base at Amberley, where over 2,700 people are employed. At the Ipswich Railway Workshops alone, approximately 1,800 persons are currently employed. Those figures are not as healthy as they sound; in fact, they are very unhealthy. They reflect the serious unemployment situation in the Ipswich area.

Lack of employment opportunities in the Railway Department is partly responsible for the magnitude of unemployment, particularly of young people, in Ipswich. The gravity of the problem is shown by the statistics issued by the Commonwealth Employment Service in Ipswich. In September 1978, which was written up as a good month, 2,964 persons were registered as unemployed, of whom 1,178 were under 21 years of age. In the same month in 1977 there were 2,694 registered unemployed. In September 1976 the figure was 2,209, and in September 1975 it was 1,614. Looking at those four years, one can see the dramatic increase in unemployment in the Ipswich area. We can relate those figures to the activities of the Railway Department over the length and breadth of Queensland, and particularly in the Ipswich area, and to those of private enterprise dealing with the railways or the railway workshops at Ipswich and Redbank. The number of people registered as being out of work increased by almost 270 on the 1977 figure. That clearly demonstrates the worsening of the already serious unemployment situation in the Ipswich area, which need not exist.

One of the keys to solving the serious problem of unemployment is the railway industries of the city of Ipswich. One cannot be blamed for surmising that job prospects decreased with the Government’s planned run-down of the railways in Ipswich. Confirmation of this is to be found in the statistics given by the Minister in answer to a question that I asked earlier in the year. He informed the Assembly that in 1960 3,004 persons were employed at the Ipswich Railway Workshops, whereas in 1969 the number had dropped to 2,037. By 1978 the number had dropped further to 1,883. There was a slight increase in the figures at one stage between 1970 and 1977, but there was a further decrease this year. When asked the reason for the decrease the Minister gave the simple answer—“A number of functions previously carried out at Ipswich workshops have been transferred to Redbank.”

A combination of factors has caused the decrease. To mention only a few, there is the siphoning-off to private enterprise of profitable ventures such as Q.R.X., which delivers goods and maintains a courier service; there is the subsidising of the Central

Queensland coal-mining companies by transporting their coal to the coast and not charging them the freight rates we should; there is the driving away of custom by allowing passenger services and facilities to degenerate to such an extent that only those who have no alternative means of transport or those who have an affinity with rail travel by train.

**Mr. Bourke:** Do you travel by train?

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** I do travel by train.

**Mr. Bourke:** Do you come down to the House by train?

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** Yes. I walk down here from Roma Street Railway Station.

The number of railway employees has decreased because the Government has let contracts to companies overseas and in other States. I have asked the Minister to give both detailed and simple answers to my questions concerning contracts let by the Railway Department. On all occasions he has refused to give me the answers that I required, saying that it would be too costly to obtain the detailed information for which I asked. I suggest that he and the Government would be embarrassed if he released the information. I am sure that, if no contracts had been let interstate and overseas, the Minister would have been quick to tell me so. He would have told me and the railway workers that the Government was keeping the contracts within Queensland so that the railways could "Buy Queensland made", thereby providing jobs for Queenslanders. I suggest that a large number of contracts are let interstate and that, as a result, many jobs are lost to Queensland workers.

This year, of a total of 1,248 apprentices taken on in the South-eastern Division, only 24 were taken on at the Ipswich Railway Workshops. The workshops employ 72 second-year apprentices, 81 third-year apprentices and 80 fourth-year apprentices. Those numbers indicate a higher intake of apprentices in previous years. The report of the Anderson commission states that too few apprentices are being indentured to meet future demands. It also indicates that more than 10 per cent of tradesmen leave their trades.

I conclude by suggesting some ways in which the operations of the Railway Department could be made more profitable, thus creating more jobs. One need only look at New South Wales, which, by lowering fares and providing better services, has attracted a large number of people back to the commuter services. One need only look at America, where airline fares have been drastically reduced and, as a result, airlines that once were running at a loss are now making high profits.

The railways would benefit from a greater use of the State's potential. No other place in the world has the sunny beaches and the coral reefs that Queensland has to offer. If international air fares and domestic air fares

were decreased, hundreds of thousands of people would be induced to come to Queensland. Once they were here they would use our railways and other public services. The railways would be chock-a-block with customers and would operate profitably, as they did in the good old days when people had no other means of transport.

I was pleased to hear the Minister say that he was disturbed about the competition between road and rail transport, particularly in the light of the drastically increased fuel prices facing this country in the next few years. In this context, it is well to remember that road transport uses five times as much fuel as rail transport. Although some people say that travelling by rail is very unpleasant, I find it quite relaxing; it can also be quite cheap.

The bitumen surfaces of country roads, which will become more expensive to build as fuel prices increase, are literally being destroyed overnight by heavy transports carrying goods that could be carried by rail. One has only to look at the main eastern highway or the western highway through Mt. Isa to Darwin to see the damage done by heavy transports. Much of that cartage could be done by the railways.

Men and women employed in the transport industry could quite easily be phased into the railways gradually. Such a programme needs to be undertaken; in fact, it should be under way now. We must invest in our future and in our young people. We must invest in Queensland so that it progresses without having to pay an exorbitant price for electrification because of inflation over 20 years. In 10 years we must not be faced with crippling fuel prices because we failed to start overcoming transport problems now. We should be giving greater emphasis to getting our railway system back on its feet and out of the scrap yard into which it is quickly and surely falling.

**Mr. KATTER (Flinders) (4.27 p.m.):** I cannot begin my speech without commenting on certain extraordinary statements by the honourable member for Ipswich West. The first one, which brought a roar of delight from Government members, was his reference to the subsidised Central Division of the Railways and the subsidised big mining companies. I refer him to the Railway Estimates for the period from 1966 to 1976. I note that the Southern Division lost \$9,000,000 in 1966, while the Central Division made a profit of \$4,000,000.

**Mr. UNDERWOOD:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Flinders is reflecting on what I said. If he had listened, he would have heard that I said it was relative to the income that could have been made.

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

**Mr. KATTER:** When we examine "Hansard", we will certainly see that the honourable member did not refer to relativity in any way.

I shall try to bring the honourable member up to date. The latest figures I have on the sheet before me disclose a loss in the Southern Division in 1975 of \$63,000,000 and a profit in the Central Division of \$35,000,000. So much for the honourable member's reference to subsidising the Central Division of the railway system!

The next point that I thought was rather amusing illustrates clearly the philosophical differences between Opposition members and Government members. It concerns the honourable member's attack on Q.R.X. As a person who used the railway service very extensively—and I point out that our business has been established in Cloncurry for many years—I know that the greatest inconvenience with the railway system was that it took almost half an hour to pick up goods from the railway and bring them back to our store, which was only about half a mile away. The Cloncurry rail depot was not really a busy centre. With Q.R.X., one does not have to stand around and wait.

**Mr. Underwood** interjected.

**Mr. KATTER:** I will take the honourable member's interjection in a moment.

As I said, one does not have to stand around and wait. The goods are delivered direct from the manufacturer to the door.

**Mr. Underwood:** Why can't the Railway Department be doing that and making a profit?

**Mr. KATTER:** That is an interesting concept. We on this side of the Chamber are in business trying to get as many people as possible working for themselves—doing their own thing in their own time and being their own boss. What this member wants is some great conglomerate, with everyone working for somebody else. That is his concept. That is his philosophy. That is why he is sitting on that side with 20 others and we are sitting over here with just on 60. That was the judgment passed on the Opposition by the people of Queensland. It is economically inefficient to use that type of approach. That is not the sort of philosophy or society that we need. If I could devise some way of having each train driver work for himself and do contract work for the railway, I would most certainly do so. It would be highly desirable, too, to contract that work out. I would bet that every engine driver in the State of Queensland would agree with me, except some who followed the weird, socialist philosophies of members opposite.

Those are two points I picked up from the speech of the honourable member for Ipswich West. His third point, which

intrigued me no end, was the very sad tale that we had not proceeded with rail electrification for the poor people of Ipswich. I would like to take him out to see some of the poor people of Richmond, Hughenden and Julia Creek and compare them with his poor people of Ipswich. We people in the country realise that electrification is a good thing for Brisbane—that it is important for the 1,000,000 people who live down here—and we will live with it. But they should not think for one moment that we do not realise the amount of taxpayers' funds—most of which are generated in the northern and central parts of the State—that is being directed to looking after the commuters of Brisbane. If I might hark back to the figures on profits made in the Central and Northern Divisions and losses made in the Southern Division, honourable members will appreciate that it is a very, very bitter pill for us people in the North to swallow.

While I am on that subject, let me comment briefly on another anomaly that northerners suffer under Queensland's railway system. I will bring this to the attention of the Minister and the commissioner. I have not been able to verify that it is correct. I received the information from a person who showed me his railway receipts. Apparently it costs \$130 a tonne to get food to the north-western section of Queensland, but only \$50 a tonne for alcohol. I can assure the Minister that this does not signify the comparative values we have in the North-west. I would like to give him that assurance unequivocally.

**Mr. Tomkins:** Would you like it reclassified?

**Mr. KATTER:** Yes, I would—although some of my friends might not agree with reversing the figures. I most certainly feel very strongly about this. The figures are very embarrassing. They should be reversed.

On a less humorous note, I would like to bring home to the Minister—I saw the figures compiled by the Chamber of Commerce in Julia Creek—that freight increased the cost of a bag of pumpkins in that town by 100 per cent. Therefore, in the composition of our cost-price index, for food, we are looking at an escalation of almost 100 per cent as a result of the freight costs. Anything that could be done to reduce that figure would be more than appreciated.

Let me switch to another area. Probably the Minister and the Railway Department are getting sick of my talking about this. I am referring to accommodation and working conditions for fettlers in my area. First, however, I congratulate the Railway Department. In the last four years there has been an unprecedented, serious effort to provide decent accommodation for these people, who are, in the main, extremely hard-working. Probably few workers in the State of Queensland work under more appalling and adverse

conditions than fettlers in North-west Queensland. Ground temperatures in the area regularly reach 170° Fahrenheit, and these people work in the sun all day long.

In a sense they have an achievement-oriented job in that they have to lay so many sleepers a day. They have to work hard to do it. Many people employed in the concrete beehives in Brisbane have jobs that are not achievement-oriented and can sit down and do virtually nothing from the start to the finish of their day. The fettlers are not in that class. They work very hard with their hands, they work in the sun, and they deserve the very best accommodation.

I am not condemning the Australian Railways Union or any of the other unions whose members work for the railways. Their job is to look after their members as they see fit and as they want to look after them. Regrettably, because of the structure of their union, the fettlers cannot play an important or significant role in it, and the result is that their union looks after the members who attend meetings and not those who are out of sight, and they are the fettlers.

I pay great tribute to the department for what has been achieved during the past three to four years, but I remind the department that permanent fettlers' camps and accommodation are still to be seen along the Great Northern Railway. Two that leap readily to my mind are at Torrens Creek and Pentland where the fettlers are living virtually on dirt floors. A fair proportion of the floor has collapsed. In two cases there is no running water. No electricity is connected to the accommodation. I might point out that these are permanent camps. That is a very sad reflection on the department. I urge it to continue with its present works programme to improve the accommodation of these people. As long as their accommodation standard remains as it is, it is an indictment of the department and of the Government. The problem should be rectified immediately.

**Mr. Vaughan:** It has been that way for a long time.

**Mr. KATTER:** That is all the more reason why it should be changed now.

**Mr. Vaughan:** What have you done about it?

**Mr. KATTER:** If I may say so, my achievements in this area have been not inconsiderable, and the honourable member can quote me.

The next subject I wish to raise is regarded as pie in the sky, but it is not. It is about time that we as a Government started to come to grips with the fact that Australia is running out of petrol. We will reach the stage when we are in the hands

and at the tender mercies of four or five foreign countries for our supplies of petrol. That is not a very happy prospect.

We can achieve something at this stage by manufacturing hydrogen-powered cars. I suggest that honourable members read a number of works on this subject that are available in the Parliamentary Library. One excellent work by the South Australian University contains a cost study indicating that, at this moment, hydrogen-powered cars can be run as cheaply as petrol-powered cars. I throw in the fact that hydrogen can be produced by electrolysis using off-peak power, so that we could achieve cheap motoring costs. If it is claimed that hydrogen is dangerous, I point out that petrol is extremely dangerous. Consider only the taxis in Brisbane. Look at that one area as a starting point for the use of hydrogen in cars. Some small cadre of people in the State of Queensland should be looking seriously into the future and proposing realistic alternatives for the next decade. That is what I urge the Minister to do at this stage.

One minor matter that I should like to raise concerns taxi licences. For 90 per cent of the time, taxis transport only one passenger. A small car uses half the petrol used by a large car. I suggest that some taxi licences be made available for small cars. This would be a giant step forward in fuel economy. Also it would make a vast difference to the incomes of taxi drivers, who are extremely hard-working members of our community in Brisbane and in the remainder of the State.

I want to again bring the Minister's mind back to the Northern and Central Divisions of the railway system, which are making the profits and subsidising the southern commuter division. I urge him to look at a most embarrassing situation where it costs \$130 a tonne to transport food to North-west Queensland while alcohol costs only \$50 a tonne. I plead with the Minister to add to the tremendous results he has achieved in the area of fletcher accommodation and, finally, I ask him to look into the future and come to grips with the fact that we are running out of the energy source upon which Queensland is transported—petrol.

**Mr. LANE (Merthyr) (4.41 p.m.):** My contribution to the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Transport and its various subdepartments will be a very brief one, but I could not let this opportunity pass without saying something about one of my favourite subjects, and that is the greater use of the Brisbane River as a freeway or passenger artery in this city. Before doing so, I pay a compliment to the present incumbent of the Transport Ministry, the Honourable Ken Tomkins, for the way he has sought to grapple with the problems of this department in the short time he has

held his new portfolio. I do not suppose there are many of us in this Chamber who, several months ago, would have pretended that Mr. Tomkins was one who had had great experience with urban transport problems, particularly those which confront metropolitan members, yet with a great deal of hard work, goodwill and sincerity this man has proved himself to the satisfaction of most members. As one who has always recognised his ability, I hope that at some time in the future, when the present incumbent finds it is time to retire, Mr. Tomkins may have a loftier position in this place, because he has acquitted himself so well in the Ministry up till now.

Reverting to the subject on which I want to make some in-depth comment, that is, the ferry system in this city, I go back several years to when I first became a member of this Parliament representing the electorate of Merthyr and discovered that the ferry service running from the end of Sydney Street, New Farm, to the Customs House in the city was being inhibited by the policies of a very backward and retrograde administration in the Brisbane City Council, as it would still be today but for the initiatives of this Government.

The proprietors of Golden Swan Ferry Service Pty. Ltd., Charlie Newitt and his partner, Lyle White, have operated ferries for several years from Sydney Street, New Farm, and the Mowbray Park, East Brisbane, to the Customs House. From when I began trying in 1971, it took me, I think, three years to persuade the various authorities to allow Mr. Newitt and his company to establish a pontoon at the bottom end of Creek Street so that passengers could be unloaded nearer to the city and the elderly people of the dense residential suburbs of New Farm and East Brisbane would not have the burden of climbing up the steep stairway at the rear of the Customs House, at the bottom end of Queen Street, and of then making the long walk down Queen Street to the central city shopping area.

As a result of my representations in those years, they can now alight at the bottom end of Creek Street, cross Elizabeth Street, walk through the G.P.O. lane and find themselves right in the heart of the city. I had to fight—and fight hard—the Department of Harbours and Marine under its then director, the Lands Department and the Brisbane City Council, with which I had probably the greatest difficulty. The council seemed to have some very definite and clear attachment to the other ferry operators in this city, particularly the Brisbane Ferry Service Pty. Ltd., which operates the cross-river ferries.

The proprietors, the senior share-holders in that company, are well known in this Parliament and around this town as people of substantial influence in many ways; certainly, substantial and considerable influence with officials in the Brisbane City Council.

They have such substantial influence that some years ago they managed to persuade the Brisbane Council to pay them an amount of subsidy well in excess of \$100,000 per annum. It was calculated on a per-passenger basis. While this neat arrangement existed between the Brisbane City Council and these ferry operators, the two partners in the Golden Swan Ferry Service had to operate without assistance.

To continue with the tale—after the company established the pontoon at the bottom end of Creek Street several years ago, it then fell to my task to find some way to persuade the Government—the Labor city council would not take the initiative—to assist the company to extend its ferry service up and down the Brisbane River. Of course, the section in which I was interested was that from New Farm to Hamilton. I think that everyone in this Chamber—even the rather dull member who represents Brisbane Central—would readily concede that it would be a great thing if the Golden Swan ferries could run from the centre of the city down to the Hamilton game-fishing wharf and back again, carrying people along that picturesque water-way in the centre of the city, and so letting them avoid the pollution and fumes from the city council Tiger buses travelling congested roadways, such as Kingsford Smith Drive and Breakfast Creek Road, which are administered by the city council.

I took this matter up with the previous Minister for Transport (Hon. K. W. Hooper), and he, working through the Metropolitan Transit Authority—which is headed, I might say, by a very progressive and forward-thinking gentleman, Mr. Peter Welding, who was recruited from an overseas post and placed in a position in our city here—commissioned some consultants to prepare a report on this subject. We all know that this report, which was eventually entitled "The Existing and Potential Use of the Brisbane River for Passenger Transport", was prepared by the engineering department of the University of Queensland. It took those gentlemen only two years to put together this document, which is the greatest conglomeration of differential calculus that I have ever seen. It is probably the most useless and expensive document that has ever been commissioned by this Government—with the exception, of course, of the one pertaining to the Brisbane Abattoirs.

It took me about a week to read this document. I am only a simple soul, but I could not decide what conclusion they meant to come to. It certainly was not a helpful one. The emphasis of this report was placed on providing a service from Victoria Bridge, where the Golden Swan Ferry Service had no jetty, to the University of Queensland, where the people who wrote the report had their residences and place of employment. One could talk about self-interest in regard to travel here, but if ever there was self-interest, it was in that report.

They also explored the use of several types of water vehicles. They sought advice throughout Australia and also overseas, and they came up with some of the most imaginative, way-out and, in fact, never-constructed vessels that one could imagine. There were hydrofoils. I cannot even pronounce the names of some of the other vessels, although I have them listed here. They were not the ones that were available to the Brisbane public or to the existing ferry service, which had a record of providing a good service on the Brisbane River. They were, I suppose, vessels that might stir the imagination of young people who live on cloud 9 at that place in St. Lucia and who want to write a glamorous report to justify their existence.

Of course, there was another feature of these hydrofoils and hovercraft. Only one of these fast vehicles could reasonably carry passengers to and from their places of residence and employment. The authors were not interested in conventional vehicles. In fact, in a document of several hundred pages, they dismissed them in a page or two. As I said, they used calculus to do it. So we had this document which was useless. It has been put to one side. I don't think it will ever be of any use to the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Queensland Government or the Queensland taxpayer.

We came to the point where we had to get a little bit of practical know-how and common sense. Several months ago these very stout-hearted gentlemen operating the Golden Swan Ferry Service came to me and said, "Could you get the Metropolitan Transit Authority people and the Minister to come for a ride on our vessel and have a look at what sort of a service we do provide and could provide on an extended service to Hamilton?" Those gentlemen came along. It didn't take the commonsense gentlemen of the Metropolitan Transit Authority or the Minister very long to see the great benefits. They didn't need a 500-page document to convince them.

As a result of that, a submission was made to Cabinet several weeks ago. After many years of representations by me, this is the first time a form of assistance has been given, which will go part of the way to satisfying their requirements. At least it might give proprietors of the Golden Swan Ferry Service, who work a 16-hour day to keep their vessels on the river, a reasonable wage and perhaps a fair return on their capital investment. On the recommendation made by the authority and by the Minister to Cabinet, a decision was made under the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act 1975-1977, which was assented to only about 12 months ago, to provide assistance to ferry services.

Beho'd the blank look on the face of the honourable member for Brisbane Central. Some of the progressive things that the State Government does are news to him. He is completely amazed and dumbfounded at this decision. No-one has told him about it. Of

course they wouldn't tell him about it. Now he is going to have to go back to his friends at the City Hall and tell them that we have stolen a march on them, and that this Government now provides a small subsidy to the Golden Swan Ferry Service so that it can continue to operate up and down the river. It is a tremendous disappointment to him. He needs to be very careful or we will get them to run up Breakfast Creek into his electorate, and then he will be in real trouble.

That assistance was provided under the Act by way of a subsidy calculated on the basis of a reasonable return on capital investment. The Act, which was assented to on 7 October last year, gave effect to an improved subsidy scheme. The new scheme provides for a general subsidy of 15 per cent of fare collections in respect of urban bus passenger services that provide approved concession travel. In addition, a further subsidy of up to 10 per cent of fare collections may be made when necessary to maintain the viability of the operator.

On that basis for private bus operators, the ferries now get a subsidy. I hope that will lift these partners to the economic position where they can perhaps extend their services—against the wishes of the Brisbane City Council, of course—down to Hamilton and in the future, I hope, up the river, perhaps even to Hill End and West End and the University of Queensland. The people of Brisbane will then be able to make much greater use of this great arterial water-way, which winds its way past picturesque New Farm Park and Newstead Park to the overlooking, beautiful suburbs of Hamilton and others, with their dense populations. It would allow the people of those suburbs to come to the city without all the nuisance of pollution, noise and congestion in peak hours.

I remind the Committee that this decision was taken despite the wishes of the Labor city council. In fact we had to deliberately push it to one side in order to achieve this aim. Under the legislation the council has the responsibility of attending to ferry services. I discussed this matter with Alderman Walsh when he was Lord Mayor and he told me, "As far as the council is concerned, ferry services are services crossing the river, not services up and down the river." I do not know where Alderman Walsh got his legal advice, but that was his interpretation of the Act. Perhaps that is why the Labor Brisbane City Council is not interested in the Brisbane River. The State Government, however, is interested in it and I think it very much for its contribution.

**Mr. Tomkins:** It was well justified, too.

**Mr. LANE:** It was justified. The Golden Swan Ferry Service is deeply appreciative of the Government's action. I thank the Metropolitan Transit Authority for all the good work that it did over the years.

Mr. VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (4.56 p.m.): In speaking to the debate on the Transport Estimates for 1978-79, I want to refer first to the financial position of the Railway Department. Although I appreciate that most of the earlier speakers today dealt with the Railway Department Estimates, I want to have my say on them also.

An analysis of the Estimates reveals that for 1977-78 the income of the Railway Department was \$279,300,000, which represented an increase of \$18,500,000, or 7 per cent, on the 1976-77 figure of \$260,800,000, and a drop of \$815,000 below the estimate for 1977-78. On the other hand, expenditure totalled \$361,700,000, which represented an increase of \$38,000,000 over expenditure in 1976-77 and \$12,500,000 in excess of the estimate for 1977-78. Expenditure exceeded income by \$82,400,000. According to the Treasurer's Financial Statement, expenditure was estimated to exceed income by \$69,100,000. Therefore, the actual loss incurred by the Railway Department exceeded its estimated loss by \$13,300,000. The Government's decision in 1977 not to increase fares and freights contributed almost totally to the Railway Department's additional loss of \$13,300,000 over and above the estimated loss of \$69,100,000.

It is clear from the Financial Statement that, despite a 15 per cent increase in fares and freights, which will apply for the whole of the 1978-79 financial year, expenditure is estimated to exceed income in 1978-79 by \$81,000,000.

I am intrigued by this comment in the Treasurer's Financial Statement—

"The Government is firmly resolved to cope with the situation by expenditure restraints rather than increasing taxes, charges, fares and freights. No such increases have been provided for in this Budget and this position will be sustained throughout the financial year if it is at all possible."

The sting is in the tail—"if it is at all possible". This time last year, the Treasurer promised that there would be no increase in fares, rates, taxes and charges before the end of 1977. However, we saw a shrewd 15 per cent increase that applied from 1 July this year.

The estimated expenditure for 1978-79 is \$375,900,000, compared with \$349,200,000 for 1977-78. That represents an increase of \$26,700,000, but only \$14,200,000 above actual expenditure in 1977-78. In comparison, in 1977-78 estimated expenditure was \$349,200,000 and the actual expenditure totalled \$323,700,000, making a difference of \$25,500,000. I can only deduce that, by increasing estimated expenditure for 1978-79 by only \$14,200,000 above actual expenditure in 1977-78, the Government wants this to appear as expenditure restraint. However, as the estimated loss for 1977-78 is

\$81,000,000—even though fares and freights have been increased by 15 per cent from 1 July—I cannot see how an increase in fares and freights can be avoided in 1978-79.

It is wrong that last year the Railway Department showed a loss of \$82,500,000 and this financial year plans for a loss in excess of \$81,000,000. If interest rates are added to that, it is clear that the actual loss that will be incurred amounts to \$115,000,000.

There has always been a lot of criticism of the Railway Department for running at a loss. However, I believe that the Government does not give the department any real chance to improve its position. While every endeavour should be made to keep fares and freights at a competitive level, and while I fully appreciate that the mining industries, particularly the coal-mining industry, contribute significantly to the income of the railways, I believe that the railways would be in a better position to reduce their ever-increasing losses if they were able to negotiate freight rates for coal and other minerals directly with the mining companies instead of being tied in, as I understand it, with package deals covering the whole mining operation.

I also believe that it is time, particularly in view of the deteriorating fuel situation, that the Government looked more to rail transport than to road transport. As the member for Rockhampton said, it is time that the railways were allowed to share in some of the cream rather than have to accept some of the crumbs.

My attention has been drawn to comments by the Commissioner for Transport in his 1978 annual report on the necessity to conserve fuel. The commissioner drew attention to the fuel problems that will face the nation in the next 10 years. He referred particularly to increased competition for limited supplies and increasing fuel import bills, the 10 per cent annual growth rate in the road freight transport industry and the relative decline in rail and sea transport, particularly in the long-distance movement of goods. We should all be concerned about this. It is time that the Government was concerned about those matters that the commissioner drew to our attention, namely, the annual growth rate in the road freight transport industry and the relative decline in rail and sea transport, particularly in the long-distance movement of goods.

I was impressed when I read recently that by 1985 we can expect to be paying about 41c a litre retail for petrol. It is time that we did something about it. The commissioner said that attention must be directed to the most efficient use of each transport mode and the most effective use of the overall transport system. I cannot over-emphasise that; I could not agree more with what the commissioner had to say.

Because we have substantial steaming coal resources, we must concentrate on electric traction. Much has been said by earlier speakers about the need to concentrate on it. While the diesel-electric locomotive has served the State well, I believe it was a grave mistake not to proceed with electrification of our suburban lines back in the late 1950s, as planned. Had we done so, we certainly would have been in a better position than we are today. I urge the Government to press ahead with the electrification of the whole suburban system and to concentrate on the park-and-ride scheme. I certainly would like to see car-parking facilities at the Banyo and Nudgee railway stations in my electorate. I ask the Minister to note that the Banyo Railway Station has a real problem in the provision of parking.

When speaking of suburban electrification, I must confess that I have some reservations about the carpeted floors and wool-fabric-covered seats proposed for the new electric train cars. While it is very nice to have such elegant fittings, having regard to the use that the trains will get I feel that such features may prove unserviceable.

In addition, considering that funds for electrification are limited—we all know how the Federal Fraser Government has restricted funds, that was shown clearly in the Treasurer's Financial Statement—it could be argued that the additional feature of air-conditioning could have been excluded. I foresee some problems in summer with air-conditioning if there should be a power failure (which is a common occurrence in Queensland) and an electric train stops between stations. Because the windows will be sealed, it could become very hot in a crowded car with 80 passengers seated and a similar number standing.

Those are only the observations of a layman. I have no doubt that they have been given due consideration by the Railway Department. I certainly hope that they have been, because I really believe that a power failure could give rise to serious problems in air-conditioned carriages.

**An Opposition Member:** It happened in London.

**Mr. VAUGHAN:** I believe it did. I sincerely hope that the Railway Department has considered that point, particularly in the light of the power failures we experience.

In concluding my comments about the railways, I want to refer to the announcement made in September last year about the Government's plans to extend electrification to Toowoomba and Rockhampton. I must say that I was somewhat surprised when I read of the Government's plans. I particularly emphasise the word "plans", having regard to the shortage of funds for the suburban railway electrification scheme.

On the one hand, we have not sufficient funds to extend the line beyond Ferny Grove-Darra, yet on the other hand plans are announced for the electrification of the lines to Toowoomba and Rockhampton.

**Mr. K. J. Hooper** interjected.

**Mr. VAUGHAN:** \$283,000 has been transferred from my area to the south side. I suppose the unfortunate people on the north side must suffer.

A plan was announced in April last year for the expenditure of \$600,000,000 to upgrade the State's railway system. That was a pretty good gimmick. Of course, it has become a regular feature of this Government to announce grandiose plans to spend so many millions of dollars and then to come back with the catchcry, "We would do all this, provided we get money from that lousy Federal Government down in Canberra." The only problem with these plans is that they cost money—lots of it. As can be seen from the Railways Estimates, we just do not have it.

However, I am aware that the Government has commissioned a \$500,000 feasibility study of railway electrification to Toowoomba and Rockhampton. That provision is contained in the Budget. As a layman, I would have thought that, having regard to the tonnages carried, the Goonyella-Peak Downs-Saraji-Hay Point line was the logical one to be considered first for electrification, especially as the Gladstone Power Station will have an excess capacity. It does not look as though the Comalco smelter will be built for quite a few years. That excess capacity could very well have been used for electrification of the Hay Point line.

In my humble assessment as a layman, I would really have thought that, rather than have a \$500,000 feasibility study into the electrification of the lines from Brisbane to Toowoomba and Brisbane to Rockhampton, that money could have been better spent on the electrification of the Hay Point line, and even perhaps the central coal lines from Blackwater to Gladstone or Moura to Gladstone. I would have thought that they would have been the natural selections for electrification before the Rockhampton and Toowoomba lines. However, as I say, I am only a layman. Perhaps there is some reason for looking first at Toowoomba and Rockhampton.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, it is time we looked more to rail transport, particularly electric rail transport. However, it is no use paying \$500,000 for a study if it is to be pigeon-holed like so many other Government studies and inquiries. I repeat that it is not good enough for the railways to show a loss of \$82,500,000 last year and to budget for a loss of \$81,000,000 this year when there is an urgent need for so much to be done but such a paucity of funds to do it with.

In concluding my remarks about the Railway Department, I make the following suggestion. I would like to see the railway line through the Banyo shopping centre lowered to eliminate the railway crossing. I consider that to be a real hazard. I am concerned about the express train that goes through the crossing at peak hours. I think it goes through at about 5.20 p.m. There have been some very near misses. The railway line runs straight through the shopping centre; in fact, it splits it. Something should be done about that. I believe that the railway line could be lowered. When the department is looking at the northern railway line and channelling back some of that \$283,000 that it has taken from us, it might consider lowering that railway line in the interests of both safety and convenience. Although there are boom gates, I am fearful that one day there will be a serious accident at that level crossing.

The second thing I wish to refer to is the point raised by the member for Rockhampton about employees who have been dismissed for minor offences not committed directly against the Railway Department. As an official of the Electrical Trades Union, I am aware of numerous instances of people being convicted of minor offences committed outside the Railway Department and then being punished again by dismissal from the railway service. All of us in this Chamber advocate the rehabilitation of those who have committed misdemeanours; yet the Government itself will not employ them. The Government advocates rehabilitation—that people should be given a second chance—but the fact is that railway employees do not get a second opportunity. They do not get any chance; they are dismissed. In my opinion, that is a result of antiquated thinking. The sooner the Railway Acts and by-laws are altered, the better.

I should like to refer to the Minister's remarks about a feasibility study of a railway line to the Gold Coast. In my opinion, the line should never have been pulled up. I believe that it was done by this Government in collaboration with certain road transport operators. The sooner the line is rebuilt and electrified, the better. Many suburbs are developing along its route and it would be a very lucrative proposition for the Railway Department.

**Mr. Warburton:** It was an act of vandalism.

**Mr. VAUGHAN:** It certainly was.

I note that \$2,000,000 is to be spent on railway housing. This is certainly not before time. In reply to the remarks of some Government members, I point out that the unions can take credit for it in the same way that they can take credit for the improvements provided for migratory gangs.

In conclusion—I should like to deal with the Traffic Act. Section 57 of that Act should be amended. I emphasise that I am genuinely concerned that the confrontations

between police and demonstrators are escalating to the extent that I fear someone, either a policeman or a demonstrator, will be seriously injured or killed. The sooner the Act is amended, the better.

I want to emphasise how shocked I was to learn that the street march issue had cost the people of Queensland \$6,360 each day since September last year. I repeat my call for the legislation to be repealed before it is too late. I want to see a cooling off on the issue. For Queensland's sake, I want to see the heat taken out of the march issue.

For the benefit of those honourable members who are blinded by prejudice, I say here and now that I believe Senator George Georges, even though he may think he is doing the right thing, is very foolish and is in fact playing right into the Premier's hands.

I learnt a long while ago that it was easier to get in through the back door than to try to kick in through the front door. Head-on confrontation is not the answer to the problem that confronts this State. I say to the people of this State who are concerned about the situation—use your brains, not your brawn. To the Premier I say, "Stop playing politics with people. If you really are concerned about the future of this State, stop these senseless confrontations between the police and the people before it is too late."

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER** (Archerfield) (5.12 p.m.): In speaking to these Estimates this afternoon, I should like to take the opportunity of bringing to the Minister's attention the serious disadvantages that the residents of Inala are suffering through the lack of a night bus service. I do not know if the Minister is aware that, after 7 o'clock of an evening, no buses run from the Darra or Oxley Railway Stations to Inala. As a result, many people in the Inala area, particularly young people and shift workers who rely on public transport to get to and from their places of employment, are being disadvantaged.

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** They have to use taxis at the moment; that is true.

**Mr. Frawley:** What is the average distance from the stations to Inala?

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** I would not like to be dragged by the hair of the head from the Darra Railway Station to Inala.

I realise the problems that have arisen on the Inala buses. There have been some incidents of hooliganism on the buses. At present there are no night buses, so that the bus proprietor is saving money by not running an uneconomic service. I think we would all agree that the bus proprietor should take the good with the bad. He should put up with a few uneconomic night

services because the good services during the morning and the afternoon would more than compensate him.

As I said, there have been some acts of hooliganism on the buses. I have made numerous approaches to the Transport Department to provide police on the buses. I have also pointed out to the bus proprietor and his drivers that they cannot expect the Queensland Police Force to ride shot-gun on the buses all of the time. But I think that it suits the bus proprietor and his drivers not to provide this service at night. Meanwhile, the residents of Inala are being extremely disadvantaged. I hope that the Minister will have a look at this matter and provide me with a report at a later date.

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** I will come to the rail link in due course.

I should like to refer to the Metropolitan Transit Authority. There were good reasons for setting it up, and it was established with great promise. It was going to achieve wonders in solving the transport problems in Brisbane. As yet, it has not achieved anything. It is a paper tiger; it has no teeth. At the moment, the transport industry in Brisbane is a shambles. It is virtually impossible to travel from point A to point B in Brisbane. I cite as an example Acacia Ridge and Inala, which are virtually twin suburbs about three miles apart. Yet if one wanted to travel from Inala to Acacia Ridge and had to use public transport, one would have to catch a bus from Inala into either the Oxley or Darra Railway Stations, travel by train to the city, and then take a council bus from the city out to Acacia Ridge. It is a rather ludicrous situation.

**Mr. Frawley:** It would be quicker to walk and better for you, too.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** No doubt it would take the honourable member for Caboolture a shorter time to throw a javelin than it would take some of the residents of Inala to walk to Acacia Ridge. It would have to be a veteran's walk for the honourable member, of course, because one has only to look at the silver thatch on the top of his head to realise that he is past competing in first-class events.

This afternoon I was interested to hear the speech of the honourable member for Cunningham. As usual, he spoke off the top of his head. He has about as much knowledge of transport as he has of daggy sheep. He extolled the benefits of private enterprise public transport, but what he said is, I feel, a lot of hogwash. It has been proved that private enterprise cannot cope with public transport in the city, and I would point out that public transport is a public utility and not

a political football. The only way the people of Queensland will get adequate public transport is for the transport system to be controlled by the State Government as it is in every other State.

Just to prove my point, let us consider the Sandgate bus service. Without warning, the proprietors decided that running buses from Sandgate to Brisbane was not an economic proposition, and they withdrew their services overnight. In so doing, they placed a tremendous load on the Brisbane City Council, which had to provide a service to the suburbs. I would point out that the ratepayers of Brisbane are the only ratepayers in any capital city in Australia who subsidise their city's bus services. The Government should be providing the bus service.

**Mr. Warburton:** Do you realise that the Commonwealth Grants Commission gave the city council a lot of money as a result of the council's submissions, and do you realise that Mr. Knox filched about \$23,000,000 of it?

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** That is common knowledge. That was another underhanded trick perpetrated on the Brisbane City Council by this incompetent, inept and corrupt Tory Government.

I come back to Acacia Ridge, which is a lot closer to home. Here we have the same problem. Together with the ladies of the Acacia Ridge Transport Action Group, I tried for some two years to have the Brisbane City Council provide a bus service to Acacia Ridge. I led numerous deputations to the Minister's predecessor, the late Mr. Keith Hooper, and, whilst he was very sympathetic to us, nothing was done. Then, all of a sudden, the proprietor of the Acacia Ridge bus service, Mr. Wally Poggoli, suddenly decided it was not an economic proposition and withdrew overnight. The Government allowed Mr. Poggoli to withdraw his services overnight, but when we went in and met the late Mr. Keith Hooper and senior members of the Transport Department, they said he had a franchise and they would have to wait until his franchise expired. However, when he decided to withdraw the service they allowed him to do so overnight.

**Mr. Davis** interjected.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** They do prefer charter work, because it is more profitable. While I am on my feet, let me pay tribute to the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Frank Sleeman, and the Brisbane City Council. As soon as the private bus proprietor withdrew his service, to their credit the Lord Mayor and the Brisbane City Council agreed to provide a council bus service to Acacia Ridge. As a result, the residents of the suburbs of Acacia Ridge, Algester and Calamvale at last have a very efficient bus service.

**Mr. Warburton:** At reasonable cost, too.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** Yes, they are certainly travelling from Acacia Ridge and Algester into the city at a much lower cost than they were when they were using private bus transport. I might say, too, that at the moment there is a direct service from Acacia Ridge and Algester into the city. Previously, under the private bus service, we had the ludicrous situation of Sunnybank buses running from Acacia Ridge to Moorooka and city council buses running from Moorooka into the city.

One of the ways to solve a lot of the present transport difficulties in the south-western suburbs of Brisbane would be to establish a rail link from Wacol through Inala, linking up with either Acacia Ridge or Salisbury. That, together with the proposed linking of the South Brisbane and Roma Street Railway Stations via the Merivale Street Bridge, would virtually mean that the whole of the south-west of Brisbane would be linked by rail.

When I raised this matter some two years ago, the Minister's predecessor (Hon. K. W. Hooper) said, by way of interjection, that he thought it was a good idea and that he would look into it. Some two years have elapsed and nothing has been done. If the Minister were to listen to me and not to his colleague the Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation, I am sure he would find that what I am saying would be of some benefit to the people of Brisbane, particularly those in the outer south-western suburbs.

**Mr. Tomkins:** It sounds a good idea.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** It is a good idea; and I believe that it is feasible.

I have spoken to officers of the Minister's department, and they agree that it is feasible. When it was first mooted that a rail link was to be put into Inala, the powers that be said that it could not be done. As soon as big business in the Wacol Industrial Estate got off the ground, the rail link was constructed virtually overnight. It was put under Ipswich Road and into the Wacol Industrial Estate. I am told on good authority that this rail link, this spur line, is used for only a few hours a week. The construction of the rail link that I have suggested is feasible. I hazard a guess that if coal were discovered at Pallara or at the back of The Blunder, we would have a rail link overnight. There is plenty of room at the moment to establish a corridor, because the area at the back of Inala is virtually virgin land. If a feasibility study of the proposal were undertaken now, something could be done. If we wait another 10 or 12 years before doing anything, the land probably will be built on, and, if such a rail link were constructed then, there would be the consequent displacement of

some of the residents of the houses built there. I suggest to the Minister that he have a look at the matter. Such a rail link is long overdue.

Finally, I make a plea for the placing of restrictions on heavy road transport in the city during peak hours. I think that this is something that is long overdue. Many people have been complaining, saying that something has to be done about this matter; but nobody does anything about it. In a lot of other capital cities throughout the world that have this problem, heavy vehicles above a certain tonnage are restricted from entering those cities during certain peak hours. As I say, I think that such a restriction is long overdue here.

A number of accidents are caused by semi-trailers. I am not saying that the truck driver is always in the wrong. If there is a collision between a semi-trailer and a small car, it is always the occupants and driver of the small car who get hurt, or killed.

**Mr. Newbery:** It would be like you bluffing the member for Cairns.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** That is a good analogy. There might be something in it.

This is the problem that is caused by heavy transports coming into the city. One has only to travel along Ipswich Road to see this problem. There are three lanes on the road up the long hill near Chardon's Hotel, and some days one sees heavy trucks lumbering along in the three lanes. They hold up all the traffic and cause a lot of accidents. People who are travelling to work and have to meet a deadline become impatient and pull out from the line of traffic, and an accident occurs.

**Mr. Davis:** What time is this?

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** There is no need for me to explain that to my colleague the honourable member for Brisbane Central, who is certainly one of the most erudite spokesmen on transport that the Opposition has ever had.

**Mr. Frawley** interjected.

**Mr. K. J. HOOPER:** Even the honourable member for Caboolture, who is not regarded as an intellectual in this Chamber, knows the peak hours to which I am referring—between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., and 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. I think that we should make a stand. I know that it will not be popular with some people. Some of my union colleagues and some employers will not like it. Nevertheless, as a matter of common sense, it should be done.

*At 5.25 p.m., under Standing Order No. 307 and the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 11 October, progress was reported.*

The House adjourned at 5.26 p.m.