

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1982

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Muller, Fassifern) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

STAMP ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Assent reported by Mr Speaker.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Operations of the Stock Routes and Rural Lands Protection Act 1944-1981 and the Barrier Fences Act 1954-1978 for the year ended 30 June 1982

Literature Board of Review for the year ended 30 June 1982

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Orders in Council under—

Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act 1958-1979 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Irrigation Act 1922-1979 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 Water Act 1926-1981

Forestry Act 1959-1982

Queensland Film Industry Development Act 1977-1981

Proclamation under the Forestry Act 1959-1982

Regulations under the Irrigation Act 1922-1979

By-laws under the Water Act 1926-1981

Report of the Queensland Coal Board of its financial accounts for the ended 30 June 1982.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Olympic Productions and Publications**

Hon. Sir WILLIAM KNOX (Nundah—Minister for Employment and Labour Relations) (11.5 a.m.): I am aware of the activities of Olympic Productions and Publications, who claim to be producing a book entitled "Queensland Trade Apprenticeship Manual". The principals of the company sought the co-operation of the Industry and Commerce Training Commission in the production of the manual.

Since the original approach to my department, a number of complaints have been received which have been the basis for concern at the activities being conducted by this company.

I would ask that any organisation not satisfied with its dealings with Olympic Productions and Publications contact the Police Fraud Squad in Brisbane as it is investigating the matter.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice by members were answered as follows:—

1. **Booking of Ministers' Air Travel Through Private Travel Agencies.**

Mr Wright asked the Premier—

(1) On what date was Cabinet approval granted for Ministers' air travel to be booked through private travel agencies?

(2) Since that date, and for each Cabinet Minister (a) how many airline trips for interstate, intrastate, and overseas purposes have been booked through private travel agencies, (b) which private travel agencies have been used and what

amounts have been paid to these agencies, (c) how much revenue has the Tourist Bureau lost through forgone commission, (d) has the accounting procedure for the bookings through private agencies involved what is known as the bank settlement plan, (e) has this method been used for the bookings of Messrs. Bjelke-Petersen, Edwards, Schubert, Crooke and Walsh for their current ten-day overseas trip and (f) do the official guide-lines for members' travel—"Except where facilities are not available, members are required to use the services provided by the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau when travel is being arranged"—still stand as official Government practice?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Special circumstances have existed in those few instances where airline bookings for overseas travel have been made through avenues other than the Queensland Government Tourist Bureau.

The information requested by the honourable member is not readily available and, in my opinion, the cost in staff time and salaries in researching the records of all departments is not warranted.

In accordance with Government policy, almost all Government airline travel bookings are made through the Tourist Bureau. The existing guide-lines are still applicable in relation to travel by members of the Legislative Assembly.

2. Means Test for Free Dental Treatment

Mr Casey asked the Minister for Health—

With reference to the means test which is applied at all State dental clinics throughout Queensland—

(1) Does the Health Department still use the old and out-dated structure of the basic wage for a single adult male, and the guaranteed adult minimum wage for a married person, as its base for the means test for entitlement to free dental treatment?

(2) Is this practice uniform throughout Queensland?

(3) Are the following items the only allowable additions: (a) \$20 per week for a wife, provided she is not working; (b) \$9 per week for each child; and (c) \$33 per week for rent or home payments?

(4) If not, what are the correct figures?

(5) As the Government itself pays district allowances of up to \$56.35 per week in various areas of Queensland to its wage and salary employees, including those working in dental clinics, why does it not use the reverse principle when determining a fair means test for the ordinary citizens in all communities?

(6) What criteria does his department use to assess that anyone can keep a wife for \$20 per week, food, clothe and educate a child for \$9 per week, or rent a house for \$33 per week?

(7) As the basis of dental care is prevention rather than costly care or replacement, will he take immediate steps to upgrade the niggardly means test at the State's dental clinics, so that more people in the community will receive regular and proper dental care?

Answer:—

(1) In establishing eligibility for treatment in dental clinics controlled by hospitals boards, the guaranteed adult minimum wage is used as the basis when assessing married persons, widowers, and single supporting parents. For other persons the basis is the single adult male basic wage.

(2) Yes.

(3 & 4) Additions to the adult minimum wage and adult male basic wage are allowed, in assessing eligible income levels, for wife, dependent children and rent or home payments. These allowances are regularly reviewed. For obvious reasons the amounts involved are not made public.

(5 & 6) It has never been suggested that the amounts approved as allowances in regard to wife, dependent children and rent or home repayments when determining eligibility, represent costs involved under these headings. The allowances serve a purpose in determining those most in need of the service.

(7) The dental clinic means test is regularly reviewed with a view to providing a service to those most in need in the community, bearing in mind the availability of material resources and trained personnel.

3. Acts out of Print

Mr Prentice asked the Minister for Environment, Valuation and Administrative Services—

With reference to his answer to my question of 21 October—

- (1) How many of the Acts of this Parliament are currently out of print or otherwise unavailable to the public of Queensland?
- (2) What are the short titles of those unavailable Acts?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) The honourable member's question does not lend itself to a simple answer.

If the words "this Parliament" used by the honourable member in his question refer to the Forty-third Parliament, the answer is one: the Traffic Acts Amendment Act of 1982 (No. 52), which was assented to on 8 November 1982, and is expected to be available at the Government Printing Office later today.

If the question refers to legislation enacted by the Queensland Parliament since 1859, a response is much more difficult. In my previous answer, I indicated that all Acts of common usage are available for immediate purchase. I further indicated Acts presently being reprinted that should now be available.

However, there are a great number of obscure Acts in little demand that are not kept in stock. When a request is received for a copy of one of these, the Government Printer makes one available as quickly as is possible, if necessary by photocopy procedures. Additional to that, a number of Acts are in need of, or are, in the process of consolidation. The initiative for consolidation must be taken by an appropriate department and not by the Government Printer.

A definite statement of all of the Acts would need a close scrutiny of Queensland Statutes Annotations, which would demand a good deal of time and effort. If the honourable member is insistent that he needs this information, I will give the necessary instruction for its collation. However, I would ask for some sympathy in understanding the huge task that would be involved.

4. Advertisement of Queensland Properties for Sale to German Buyers

Mr Hansen asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General—

- (1) Has the notice of the Consumer Affairs Bureau been drawn to advertisements listing a Brisbane phone number and the name of a Mr Claus Backwinkel of Herderstrasse 23, Dusseldorf, which seeks a listing of Queensland properties for sale to German buyers?
- (2) If the advertisement has been investigated, does any breach of the Auctioneers and Agents Act exist in relation to the proposed fees charged to prospective vendors?

Answer:—

(1) My attention has been drawn to an advertisement which appeared in the "Maryborough-Hervey Bay Chronicle" on 22 October 1982. This advertisement is headed "Sell your Property in West Germany". The advertisement makes no reference to Mr Claus Backwinkel of Herderstrasse 23, Dusseldorf.

(2) This advertisement is currently under investigation, and I will advise the honourable member further in due course. If the honourable member has any further information on this matter, I would be pleased to receive it.

5. Bicycle Racks, Kuraby Station

Mr Gygar asked the Minister for Transport—

With reference to the trial installation of 10 bicycle storage racks at the Kuraby Railway Station by the Metropolitan Transit Authority—

- (1) What was the cost of this installation?
- (2) What has been the result of this trial?
- (3) Does the MTA intend to install bicycle racks at other stations?

Answer:—

(1) The installation cost was \$1,266.

(2) This trial was carried out in order to test a new type of bicycle rack recommended by the president of the Bicycle Institute. The trial has not been successful, because the racks are subject to vandalism and can damage the bicycle in the event of vandalism. Despite a sign carrying explicit instructions, users do not operate the racks correctly. As a result, the racks have not proved popular with bicycle users.

(3) It is the policy of the Metropolitan Transit Authority to install bicycle racks at the same time as car-parks are provided. The policy to install conventional bicycle racks will continue unless some improved design becomes available.

6. Driver's Licence Fees for Diabetics

Mr Gygar asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Is he aware that diabetics are required to renew their driving licences annually and are liable for an \$8 fee each time, meaning that a driver's licence costs a diabetic \$40 over a five-year period whereas most drivers pay only \$8 for a five-year licence?

(2) Is he also aware that diabetics must have an annual medical examination in association with their licence applications, which further increases the cost?

(3) In view of the obvious injustice of this high cost, will he take action to reduce the annual licence fee paid by diabetics to a more equitable level, such as \$2?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) Although diabetics are required to renew their licences annually, the fee for this renewal is \$2 per annum or part thereof and this is the same for all drivers. A usual 5-year licence is \$10.00, so diabetics and other persons who are required to renew that licence annually are not at a disadvantage in relation to fees paid.

I am aware that diabetics must produce an annual medical certificate. However, these certificates can be obtained at any time during that year and, as I am informed that most diabetics would normally visit their medical practitioners at least once during a year, I do not consider that this is an unreasonable requirement. I have arranged to hold further discussions with my departmental officers on this matter and will take on board the suggestions of the honourable member when deciding whether anything needs to be done.

7. Remedial Classes and Special Schools

Mr Gygar asked the Minister for Education—

(1) How many programs, such as remedial classes and special schools, exist within the State education system to assist under-achievers?

(2) What was the cost of each program in 1981-82?

(3) How many programs or special schools exist within the State education system to assist exceptionally bright children, and what was the cost of each in 1981-82?

Answer:—

(1) Remedial classes in primary schools and classes in special schools cater for different populations. In general terms, under-achieving children in primary schools evidence learning difficulties in particular areas of the school curricula. Children in special schools present more substantial disabilities, but may be working up to their ability levels and hence are not under-achieving. As at 30 June 1982, there were 282 remedial teachers working in State schools and providing services to children from non-State schools. These teachers provided services in 878 schools and catered for an estimated 15 500 children.

(2) Separate costings for each remedial class throughout the State are not kept. It is estimated, however, that last financial year almost \$7m was expended on salaries and more than \$160,000 on equipment and materials for remedial classes.

(3) There are no departmentally organised special classes for exceptionally gifted and talented children, but a number of schools, within the resources available to them, make additional provisions for these children. A departmental committee is at present reviewing provisions in this area.

8. School-leavers

Dr Scott-Young asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

(1) How many of the 1982 school-leavers are expected to be seeking work and not going on to some other form of education, or training?

(2) How many apprenticeships will be available to school-leavers between now and 31 March 1983?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) On the information available to my officers, there are 74 888 students presently enrolled in Years 10, 11 and 12 in Queensland and, of these, it is anticipated that approximately 33 000 will be leaving school with a view to entering the work-force. It is also anticipated that there will be some students presently in lower grades who will be leaving school and seeking employment, but it would not be possible to provide an estimate of the numbers involved. However, it is anticipated that this number will be small in comparison to the overall number of school-leavers. Of the 33 000 mentioned above, it is expected that approximately 20 per cent (or 6 600) will gain apprenticeships. Consequently, approximately 26 400 will be available for other forms of employment.

As to the question of how many apprenticeships will be available between now and 31 March next year—it is pointed out that past records indicate that between 40 per cent and 45 per cent of each year's total apprenticeship intake is recorded between 1 December and 31 March. Applying these figures, it is estimated that approximately 2 800 apprentices will be allotted in the period to which the question refers.

9. Traffic Lights, Ross River Road/Herveys Range Road Intersection

Dr Scott-Young asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

With reference to the very well-designed road junction at the intersection of Ross River Road and Herveys Range Road in the electorate of Townsville, which was completed during the last twelve months—

When will traffic lights be installed at this intersection to control the increased traffic flow?

Answer:—

The Ross River Road/Herveys Range Road intersection, along with other major intersections in the Townsville area, are continually monitored to ensure that they satisfactorily cope with traffic flows and are adequately safe.

The installation of traffic signals is carried out on a priority basis when such installation can be shown to improve overall traffic flow. Premature installation of signals results in increased delays for the majority of the day. With reference to my reply to the honourable member's question of 25 November 1981—traffic volumes at this intersection are still not sufficiently high to warrant signalisation at present. However, monitoring of traffic flows will continue.

10. Racing Service for Mid-week Race Meetings, North Queensland

Dr Scott-Young asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

Why do the citizens of North Queensland not receive a racing service covering scratchings and race results for mid-week race meetings?

Answer:—

The services to which the honourable member refers are available in all TAB offices in Queensland. However, despite strenuous efforts by the TAB to have local media outlets provide these services, certain areas of the State, including North Queensland, are denied these facilities. I urge local residents to continue to submit representations to the media in these areas in support of the endeavours by the TAB and me to make these services available throughout the State.

11. Male/Female Teacher Numbers

Mr Akers asked the Minister for Education—

(1) What were the numbers of teachers employed in Queensland schools in (a) 1960, (b) 1970, (c) 1975, (d) 1980, (e) 1981 and (f) 1982 set out in the following groupings (i) State pre-school, male/female, (ii) State primary schools, male/female, (iii) State secondary schools, male/female and (iv) other State bodies, male/female?

(2) What are the relevant figures for non-Government schools for the above years and categories?

(3) Do these figures indicate a trend towards an imbalance of male/female numbers and, if so, has his department considered the effect of that change on education in Queensland?

Answer:—

(1) The numbers of male and female teachers employed by my department in pre-school, primary, secondary and special schools and technical colleges in each of the years 1960, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1981 and 1982 are shown in Table 1, together with the total number of teachers employed in each of those years.

(2) The numbers of male and female teachers employed in non-Government primary, primary and secondary combined, and secondary schools in each of the years 1960, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1981 and 1982 are shown in Table 2, together with the total number of teachers employed in non-Government schools in each of those years.

(3) With the exception of the pre-school level, there has been an increase in the proportion of female teachers employed by my department at all levels of education. The largest increase in the proportion of female teachers has occurred at the primary level.

In the non-Government sector, the trend has been in the opposite direction, with a decrease in the proportion of female teachers employed.

Experience in Queensland, and elsewhere, would suggest that an increase in the proportion of female teachers can have repercussive effects for the work-force. These effects can include a greater turnover of staff, a less mobile work-force, limitations on the offering of certain after-school activities (particularly, for example, in certain sports) and a limited range of appropriate adult models for children in certain school settings.

Table 1: Distribution of Full-Time Teachers in Department of Education Institutions

Type of Education Institution	1960 ¹			1970 ²			1975			1980			1981			1982		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Pre-School	No.s	..	..	..	..	..	8	279	287	31	744	775	34	770	804	41	805	846
	%	3	97	100	4	96	100	4	96	100	4	96	100	5	95	100
Primary	No.s	3 234	3 014	5 248	3 235	4 249	7 484	3 744	5 789	4 031	6 807	10 838	4 070	6 815	10 885	4 080	7 068	11 148
	%	52	48	100	43	57	100	39	61	100	37	63	100	37	63	100	37	63	100
Secondary	No.s	889	618	1 507	2 262	2 150	4 412	3 544	3 280	6 824	4 084	7 578	4 114	3 554	7 668	4 196	3 802	7 998
	%	59	41	100	51	49	100	52	48	100	54	46	100	54	46	100	53	47	100
Special	No.s	55	129	184	105	171	276	258	511	769	319	743	1 062	332	789	350	896	1 246
	%	30	70	100	38	62	100	34	66	100	30	70	100	30	70	28	72	100
Technical ³	No.s	207	30	237	389	52	441	734	97	831	1 023	1 248	1 085	268	1 353	1 170	295	1 465 ⁴
	%	87	13	100	88	12	100	90	10	100	82	18	100	80	20	80	20	100

NOTES: M = Males F = Females T = Total.

^{1, 2} Pre-schools were not operating in these years.³ Technical excludes secondary correspondence and rural training. Secondary correspondence teachers are included in secondary figures.⁴ Technical teacher numbers for 1982 are preliminary figures only.

Table 2: Distribution of Full-Time Teachers in non-Government Education Institutions

Type of Education Institution	1960			1970			1975			1980			1981			1982			
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Primary	No.s	40	1 068	1 108	53	1 529	1 582	144	1 708	1 852	359	1 785	2 144	410	1 803	2 213	442	1 852	2 294
	%	4	96	100	4	96	100	8	92	100	17	83	100	18	82	100	19	81	100
Primary and Secondary	No.s	454	678	1 132	756	722	1 478	837	548	1 385	887	565	1 452	887	589	1 476	976	626	1 602
	%	40	60	100	51	49	100	61	39	100	61	39	100	60	40	100	61	39	100
Secondary	No.s	35	118	153	250	543	793	358	797	1 155	608	977	1 585	688	1 019	1 707	718	1 123	1 841
	%	23	77	100	32	68	100	31	69	100	38	62	100	40	60	100	40	60	100

NOTES: M = Male F = Female T = Total.

12. Samford-Dayboro Road Deviation

Mr Akers asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

(1) Is he aware that the design of the Samford-Dayboro road deviation has been altered to suit the needs of Mr John Needham between Cochrane's property and its connection with the North Pine Dam bypass?

(2) Is he also aware that the excuse given has been that the original \$300,000 cheaper design would disturb Mr Needham's horse track?

(3) Is he further aware that the re-designed road disturbs several much smaller properties and involves two deep cuttings into solid rock and the creation of a dangerous S-bend?

(4) Has his attention been drawn to the fact that Mr Needham has abandoned plans to establish a training complex and the so-called track has fallen into total disrepair?

(5) Will he now take action to save the taxpayers further unnecessary waste of money, relieve the problems caused to many small property owners and possibly save motorists lives by instructing the Main Roads Department to return to the cheaper, straighter, shorter and safer original design?

Answer:—

(1 to 3) I am aware that in 1980 the Main Roads Department acted to preserve an alignment for the Mt Samson Road deviation north of Closeburn and, on the basis of information available at that time, it was decided to acquire land from Mr John Needham and others to preserve such a route.

The alignment chosen was such that it is longer than a possible alternative route and effects some smaller properties but it avoids major severance costs associated with such an alternative. The alignment to be adopted is designed to the same modern geometric standards as the alternative route, which allowed for a minimum design speed of 80 km/h.

(4) I am aware that Mr Needham has abandoned plans for development.

(5) In view of the major severance costs associated with the alternative route, it is not proposed to change from the route along which design is currently being carried out.

13. Roadworthiness of Cars in Used Car Yards

Mr Akers asked the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations—

With reference to my question of 23 September regarding spot checks of vehicles in used car yards by officers of his department and his promise to provide details of future inspections—

(1) Have there been further inspections and, if so, what were the results of those inspections?

(2) Has there been any improvement in the condition of vehicles inspected?

Answer:—

(1 & 2) Since I last responded to a question on this subject by the honourable member on 23 September, inspections have been conducted at 13 used car yards. Ninety-five vehicles have been inspected. Major faults were found in 21 of these vehicles, and minor faults were located in a further 19. The position is much the same as that reported for July and August. The honourable member may be assured that inspections of used car yards by officers of my department will be continued.

14. Levee Banks, Mary River Barrage

Mr Powell asked the Minister for Water Resources and Aboriginal and Island Affairs—

(1) Have all the levee banks required in association with the Mary River barrage been built?

(2) If not, when will they be completed?

(3) If a normal wet season is experienced, will the barrage be able to cope with the anticipated conditions and will the levee banks already built be able to protect all land that may be liable to salt-water inundation?

Answer:—

(1) Earthworks for all of the levee bank system have been completed, as have about two-thirds of the outlet pipes required to allow drainage through the banks.

(2) Work is proceeding on the outlet pipes but, because of fund limitations, and allowing for likely interruptions through the wet season, will not finally be completed until September 1983.

(3) The barrage on the Mary River is complete and is in a position to cope with any river condition which may occur. The extent of the levee system finally provided has been much greater than originally envisaged. Completion of the earthworks for the levee bank system will ensure that all lands considered to be liable to increased inundation as a consequence of the construction of the barrage are protected. In areas where the drainage outlets are not completed, fresh water could pond after rain, and this will be removed by pumping or other means as appropriate.

15. Fishing Marine College, Bundaberg

Mr Powell asked the Minister for Education—

With reference to the proposal for the establishment of a fishing marine college at Bundaberg under the auspices of TAFE—

(1) How successful is the proposition?

(2) Has the State Government applied for TAFE funding under the National Priorities Scheme and, if so, what reaction has been received?

Answer:—

Mr HINZE:

(1) It is far too early to attempt an accurate assessment as to how successful the proposition for the establishment of a fishing and marine training facility as part of the Bundaberg College of TAFE is going to be.

As the honourable member for Isis would know my colleague, Mr Gunn, visited the Bundaberg College of TAFE recently in company with the Commonwealth TAFE Council. At that time the Bundaberg District Development Board and other local interests presented the TAFE Council with a written submission on this matter.

Before such a proposal for Commonwealth Government funding under the National Priorities Scheme would be seriously considered, it is necessary for the State:

(i) to provide comprehensive details regarding the nature and extent of the education and training opportunities to be offered;

(ii) to draw up preliminary building and riverside services plans; and

(iii) to estimate likely construction costs.

The Department of Education is preparing this documentation for submission to the Commonwealth TAFE Council.

(2) The State Government has given written notice to the Technical and Further Education Council regarding our desire to fund this project under the National Priorities Scheme, but has received no official reaction to the proposal so far.

16. Local Authority Staff Retrenchments and Rate Increases

Mr Powell asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police—

(1) How many local authorities have retrenched staff since the change to the subsidy scheme was made?

(2) What is the average increase in rates levied by local authorities for 1982-83 compared with 1981-82?

Answer:—

(1) The Department of Local Government has no information on the matters raised by the honourable member.

(2) The information sought is being extracted and I will advise the honourable member of the results by letter.

17 & 18. Inquiry into Queensland Railways; Australian Railways Research and Development Organisation

Mr Jones asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Have the current excesses of working expenditure over revenue earnings by the Queensland railways of \$67,785,937 for the year ended 30 June 1982, when adjusted to 1979 terms, been reduced by approximately \$4m or 7 per cent?

(2) If so, why has his Government now decided to establish an inquiry into the Queensland railways instead of making that decision three years ago?

Answer:—

(1) The excess of working expenses over revenue for 1981-82 is, when discounted back to 1979 values, approximately \$3.5m less than the excess of working expenses over revenue for 1978-79.

(2) If the honourable member will study the terms of the current inquiry by P A Australia, he will see that they are directed towards specific aspects of the Queensland Railways operations rather than the overall financing of the department.

I concede to the honourable member that Queensland Railways above all others in Australia are reducing the deficits significantly each year and it is hoped that the department may show an operational profit within the next few years.

This has been made possible substantially from the return on the carriage of minerals, particularly coal, and it would be unwise, therefore, to draw the conclusion that all aspects of the railways operation are cost efficient.

I would remind all honourable members that none of this development would have been possible were it not for a deliberate policy decision taken some years ago by this Government to encourage overseas investment in our resources areas which led to the development of coal-mining in Central Queensland, a policy which, I might add, was strenuously opposed by the Labor Party at that time. I well remember the Labor Party's opposition to overseas investment and resources development, and I have no reason to believe that it has become any more enlightened since.

Mr Jones asked the Minister for Transport—

(1) Did his Government consider using the Australian Railways Research and Development Organisation in its current inquiry into the Queensland railways and/or was ARRDO one of the applicants for the conduct of the current rail inquiry and, if not, what was the reason?

(2) What was the Queensland railways contribution to ARRDO for each year since 1975?

(3) Was this contribution direct to ARRDO or through Railways of Australia?

(4) What proportion of Queensland contributions are allocated to the (a) Systems and Planning Development Committee, (b) Land Bridge Operating Committee, (c) Marketing and Operating Committee, (d) Commercial and Marketing Committee, (e) Accounting Officers Committee, (f) Industrial Officers Committee, (g) Passengers Officers Committee, (h) Rating Officers Committee, (i) Management Services and Data Processing Officers Committee, (j) Laboratory Officers Committee, (k) Design Officers Committee, (l) Rolling Stock Sub-Committee, (m) Vehicle/Track Studies Co-Ordinating Committee, (n) Dangerous Goods Sub-Committee and (o) Railway Institute Officers/Ambulance Officers Committee of ARRDO and the various task forces which have existed or are existing?

(5) What benefit has been derived from ARRDO operations by the Queensland railways?

Answer:—

(1) ARRDO was not considered to be a suitable organisation to meet the Government's specific and urgent requirements in respect of this consultancy.

(2) Queensland Railways contribution since 1975, including the half year to date, has totalled \$942,303.65.

(3) Contributions to ARRDO are paid direct to that organisation.

(4) I am advised that the committees mentioned by the honourable member are not committees of ARRDO but are Railways of Australia committees of chief officers of the railways, in other words, the commissioners and general managers of all States. New Zealand Railways also attend some of these committees.

(5) ARRDO is a research and development organisation jointly funded by the Commonwealth and States of Australia to carry out significant long-term research tasks which are of mutual interest to all systems.

A significant area of their interest relates to national funding of railway systems in Australia. They advise on funding, technology and long-term strategy planning and development. Once again, I invite honourable members opposite to put forward any suggestions they wish the consultants to consider during the course of this inquiry. A number of members have not yet put forward any suggestions.

19. **Dengue Fever Epidemic**

Mr Jones asked the Minister for Health—

(1) Is he aware of the criticism in "The Courier-Mail" of 25 October by the Dean of the University of Queensland Medical School, Professor Ralph Doherty, in which he said the mosquito-carried epidemic of dengue fever which spread across North Queensland in 1981 should never have happened, and that its re-emergence in 1981 indicates some gaps in our public health practice?

(2) What action will he take to investigate this serious matter, and what action has he taken to see that these gaps do not appear again?

Answer:—

(1) I am aware of the article in "The Courier-Mail" of 25 October 1982 quoting Professor Ralph Doherty regarding the outbreak of dengue fever, in which he also is quoted as saying that the Department of Health had acted "pretty expeditiously".

It represented the first outbreak of dengue fever in Australia since 1955, although the disease has been widespread in South East Asia and the Western Pacific for 15 years. The responsibility for mosquito control rests with the local authorities, in which the co-operation of the local populace is a major factor, as the vector mosquito breeds largely in and around human habitation in freshwater containers.

(2) Since the first case was reported, the Department of Health has organised, with the local authorities and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, a major program of mosquito control and public education. The Mosquito Prevention and Destruction Regulations have been amended and an ongoing monitoring program instituted.

Government authorities at all levels must be organised and vigilant, but the major responsibility for the control of this mosquito rests with the individual householder.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Freezing of Government Taxes and Charges

Mr WRIGHT: I refer the acting Deputy Premier and Treasurer to statements by his Federal colleagues, Mr Anthony and Mr Howard, on the need for restraint to reverse the dramatic downturn in the Australian economy and I ask: As unemployment in Queensland has exploded by 38 per cent in the last 12 months from 54 000 to 75 700 and as the Minister is no doubt aware that taxes and charges are automatically adjusted annually to keep pace with inflation, will he demonstrate the Government's leadership and responsibility by immediately freezing all Government taxes and charges for 12 months?

Mr DOUMANY: If the Leader of the Opposition were to look at the situation objectively and if he had listened to the comments of the Premier and the Deputy Premier and Treasurer who are presently in Korea, he would realise that Queensland is not about to go blindly into an exercise of freezing anything in one particular sector. What is needed is a package proposal that looks at wages, interest rates and business across the board. Frankly, the Government is not about to run helter-skelter after a particular strategy that is being propounded by Canberra, whatever the political source.

We in Queensland believe not in the psychology of panic but in the psychology of confidence. This State is buoyant. I am not crawling under the carpet to avoid the fact that Queensland has high unemployment or that there are small-business failures. We know that that is happening. However, 994 000 people are in jobs in Queensland. Half of the jobs created in the nation over the past 12 months were created in Queensland. The Leader of the Opposition should line up some of those statistics against his negative statistics.

It is about time that Opposition members recognised that they live in a State that is performing well ahead of the other States. It is about time that they stopped sapping the confidence of the ordinary Queenslanders. Quite frankly, it is about time that all of us stopped doing that. It is about time that we realised that we live in a good nation which is stable and has everything before it. It is about time that we got off this wretched band wagon of panic that is hitting the people in Canberra. I can tell Opposition members that we in Queensland do not intend to panic.

If there is going to be a freeze, we want to see some trade-offs. Before we play around with taxation in Queensland, we must remember what is happening with taxation at the Federal level. Unlike the Wran Government, the Queensland Government does not have any hollow logs. In New South Wales, a person can be a judge or a teacher, or work in any part of the Public Service, and receive three different cheques for one pay period. The Premier of New South Wales is ferreting into the railways, the water board, the sewerage board and other places for all the reserves that he can.

A Government Member: That is done in Victoria, too.

Mr DOUMANY: I understand that they are well on the way in Victoria and that South Australia will be next in line.

The message we want to get over to the people of Australia is that the affairs of this State are run soundly. Queensland has a balanced Budget. There is about \$400m to \$500m between us and those hollow logs. That is the sort of undertaxation that there is in Queensland. We do not have to go about freezing things in our own sector. We want to see a balanced package. There is not way that the Queensland Government will support a unilateral sectional freezing of charges or wages that burdens one segment of the community alone.

Restoration of Bank of New South Wales Building, Maryborough

Mr SIMPSON: I ask the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts: Has his department purchased an old bank in Wharf Street, Maryborough? Is that building considered by the Government to be an important building worthy of preservation? If so, what course does it propose to take? Can the building be used economically?

Mr ELLIOTT: The National Parks and Wildlife Service has purchased the old Bank of New South Wales building in Maryborough. Quite a few members of this Assembly were in Maryborough on Friday when the building was officially reopened. The actions taken by the Government demonstrate a very definite course adopted towards the preservation of historic buildings.

The Bank of New South Wales building was constructed before the turn of the century. It was listed by the National Trust. The building was purchased for \$80,000. Compared with the cost of a modern building that would have had to be built to provide the accommodation that was required, that was a very good buy. It demonstrates very clearly my department's very keen desire to see that that sort of activity takes place. In the future, my department will take similar action when it is economically feasible and realistic to do so.

I thank those people who have been involved in ensuring that this exercise has come to fruition. The building has been only partly restored. However, it had been well looked after in the past. I thank the people in Maryborough who have volunteered their services. They have been prepared to put their efforts and their money where their mouth is.

In that city there is a certain cabinet-maker who did a lot of work on the building for the National Parks and Wildlife Service and, as well, of his own volition he donated the cedar for the front counter and then built it. It is a very big counter and it is the most magnificent piece of restoration work that can be seen.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is all very well for the Opposition member to interject. He makes a lot of noise but he has never put his money where his mouth is to help preserve old buildings. He would pull anything down.

As I was saying, the cabinet-maker's gesture is a very good demonstration of the willingness of certain people to assist in the preservation of old buildings. In Maryborough I threw out an offer to other people who possess similar ability to assist in the restoration of the building.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: Opposition members are screaming and carrying on. While I am on the subject of ALP members—I mention the Wran Government in New South Wales. What sort of activity is going on in that State? What is happening with the Rural Bank building in Martin Place in Sydney? Mr Whitlam's son is the fellow responsible for that exercise. It is a listed building, but it is about to be torn down. Let Opposition members ask Mr Wran what he is doing about his State's heritage. Members of the Australian Labor Party in New South Wales are absolute hypocrites. They come to Queensland and try to tell the Queensland Government how it should conduct its affairs. The Queensland Government has spent a good deal of money on the restoration of old buildings. In fact, as recently as last week my ministerial colleague who was acting for me listed all those buildings into which the Government has put money for restoration work. This building in which we are now sitting is one example.

It ill behoves members of the Opposition to criticise when their colleagues in New South Wales who are in a position to do something to preserve buildings are about to knock down the Rural Bank building.

I thank the member for Cooroora for his question. The Government's action clearly demonstrates that it is fair dinkum about preserving the heritage of Queensland. It will do so whenever it is practicable and economical.

Federal ALP Policy on Education

Mr GREENWOOD: I ask the acting Deputy Premier and Treasurer: Has he seen the report in Monday's "Courier-Mail" that the Federal ALP's policy on education would abolish the Government subsidy for traditional private schools in Queensland? Has he also seen the comments by a Mr Peter O'Brien, who is secretary of the Queensland Association of Teachers in Independent schools, in which he welcomed the policy and said that it has not gone far enough? In view of the fact that Mr O'Brien is a member of the ALP extreme socialist Left faction and for many years has been long associated with other socialist Left ideologues, such as Mr Bill Hartley from Victoria and Mr Peter Duncan from South Australia, can the public of Queensland have faith in statements of a representative of a teachers' association, in view of his underlying commitment to socialist objectives? Can the Minister inform the House what the financial effects will be if this ALP policy is ever implemented?

Mr DOUMANY: This is a very serious question, and I thank the honourable member for it. We all know what the basic philosophy of the Australian Labor Party is relative to religious education. Paragraph 15.1 of the ALP's policy document, under the heading "15. Religious Instruction", states—

"The Australian Labor Party proposes that the Religious Education Curriculum Project will continue its work, and will expand to include religious systems other than Christianity."

We know what sort of a future lies ahead of us there. We know the antagonistic attitude and stance adopted towards the traditional independent schools by the Whitlam Government between 1972 and 1975.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will have order in this Chamber, or I will be removing members from it.

Mr Fouras interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for South Brisbane under the provisions of Standing Order 123A.

Mr DOUMANY: It would be sheer hypocrisy for any Opposition member to deny that there is underlying antagonism in the ALP towards the traditional independent school system.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Rubbish!

Mr DOUMANY: That is true.

What would be the effects of that so-called policy announcement? Prior to his departure overseas, the Treasurer issued a statement on the matter. He made a financial analysis of the impact of that so-called limited policy, which, incidentally, the gentleman by the name of O'Brien has commented is not going far enough. The analysis showed that although 77 per cent of students attend Government schools, such schools receive 89 per cent of total Government funds, State and Federal, and that 23 per cent of students attending non-Government schools attract only 11 per cent of total Government funds. So an inherent imbalance is created by such a philosophy.

What would happen if that policy were implemented? The funds flowing to the independent school system would be reduced. More taxes would have to be paid by the rest of the community into the Government system to absorb those students. As soon as 50 or 100 of the top schools were robbed of their money, even in that first move that has been mooted, there would be an exodus of children out of that system into the State school system. Those students would have to be accommodated, and the cost of providing that accommodation would have to be met.

The State Government upholds the principle of independence, particularly for schools which are religiously based—the Christian schools in our community.

Mr Austin: Freedom of choice.

Mr DOUMANY: We want freedom of choice maintained. That is vital.

It is not just that we have demonstrated it in the primary and secondary stages of education. This is the leading State in the support of the community kindergarten movement. No other State—in fact, no other jurisdiction—supports the community kindergarten movement to the same extent. Again, that is because we believe in freedom of choice. We believe that freedom of choice is imperative for the maintenance of our society and its values.

We are certainly not about to allow the ALP to embark on that course. I know that honourable members on this side of the House are very worried about it and are making the principal of every independent school and every parent and friends society aware of just what is involved in the proposal. Believe you me, it is the thin end of the wedge. If the ALP were given a chance to commence such a policy, within a year or two it would drive that wedge in and destroy the independent school system in Queensland.

Mr Burns interjected.

Mr DOUMANY: The honourable member for Lytton would like nothing more. It is a very drastic step. I am absolutely ashamed and appalled that the person alluded to in the question has chosen to comment in such a way when he represents such a reliable and sound organisation.

"Queensland Trade Apprenticeship Manual"

Mr GREENWOOD: I ask the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations: Could he inform the House if his department has any involvement through the Industry and Commerce Training Commission or otherwise with a publication known as "Queensland Trade Apprenticeship Manual" produced by Olympic Productions and Publications? I am informed that advertising for that manual has been sought in an improper way and that a number of business people have been asked to pay accounts despite the fact that they have no knowledge of any bookings being made.

Mr BURNS: I rise to a point of order. This is a deliberate misuse of question-time. The Minister issued a Press release this morning on this matter. The member for Ashgrove is misusing the time of the House and preventing questions being asked in question-time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am conscious of the observations by the honourable member for Lytton. There is no point of order.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: If the honourable member for Lytton had listened to the question, he would realise that the question was supplementary to the statement I made this morning. The honourable member has asked whether my department was involved in the preparation of the manual that he referred to. That is not the matter I mentioned in my Press release earlier this morning.

The group of people involved in the preparation of that manual approached my department with the request that some sort of imprimatur be placed on it by the department. The Industry and Commerce Training Commission has not given its imprimatur. It did, however, offer to check the accuracy of any material the organisation wanted to publish.

The honourable member for Rockhampton North brought it to my attention last Friday week. He informed my office that these people were operating in his part of the world. I assure the House that my department has not given its approval to the manual, and in no way would it do so. Since then we have come to learn that advertisements for it are being sought in somewhat dubious circumstances. The matter has been referred to the police. If there are any complaints, I ask that they be referred to the police.

Rate of Job Creation in Queensland

Mr NEAL: I ask the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations: What proportion of Australia's new jobs are being created in this State presently and have been created over the past few months? What are the reasons for our success when compared to other States?

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The success that has been achieved in job creation in the State has been achieved as a result of the policies pursued by the Government.

Mr Davis: You are pathetic.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central is wasting time.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: I could not hear the honourable member.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable gentleman was fortunate.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: The policies cultivated by the Government have been designed to encourage private enterprise to get on with the job of development and to make things easier for people generally. The wonderful thing about it is that those efforts are supported by the Government's policies. The Treasurer's Budget, which has been approved by the House, outlined nearly \$1,600m of work that is essential for the community and is also labour intensive.

Mr Warburton: That is only keeping your existing employees.

Sir WILLIAM KNOX: Isn't it wonderful to be able to keep people in employment! Last month in New South Wales 24 000 people lost their jobs under the Wran Government. The Wran Government's inefficient management of that State has caused it to sack people in the railways and the coal-mines.

Employment, Bundaberg Area

Mr BLAKE: I ask the acting Premier: In view of the retrenchment of approximately 300 workers from two cane harvester manufacturing works in Bundaberg in the last year, as well as an increase in local unemployment in industries and enterprises dependent upon a depressed sugar industry economy, will he consider Bundaberg and district as a priority area for consideration for employment programs, if such programs presently being mooted at Commonwealth level eventuate, or, alternatively, consider the letting of some Government engineering contracts to appropriate works in Bundaberg?

Mr SULLIVAN: I am aware of concern about retrenchments from certain manufacturing firms in Bundaberg, which, as the honourable member said, have been fairly directly caused by the downturn in the price of sugar. As I have said on many occasions, the sugar industry is the largest base for manufacturing industry in many areas of the State. The low world sugar price of just under \$100—recently it was approximately \$92 or \$93—is the result of a surplus of sugar in the world caused by the irresponsible policies and attitudes of the EEC, which continues with overproduction when all other countries, as a result of decisions contained in the International Sugar Agreement, have disciplined themselves. Australia reduced its quantity of the product on the world market by 3 per cent.

The honourable member mentioned priorities. The Government is concerned to assist industry wherever it is. Tonight I will be in Bundaberg speaking to people in relation to the problem, but the honourable member has my assurance that wherever the retrenchment of people from manufacturing industries occurs, the Government is very concerned and will do everything possible to assist.

P & O Lease over Wilson Island

Mr HARTWIG: In asking a question of the acting Premier, I might say that I am fairly sure that this Government has legislated or did intend to legislate, anyway, that all islands off the Queensland coast over which no lease was held or which were not occupied were to become national parks. However, over recent years we have seen an erosion of that policy with leases being granted to TAA on Great Keppel Island, Keith Williams on Hamilton Island and now P & O on Wilson Island. I understand that Cabinet has decided to grant P & O a 30-year lease over 50 per cent of Wilson Island at a cost of \$300 a year.

Mr Hooper: Why don't you ask the question?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am waiting for the honourable member's question.

Mr HARTWIG: Wait a minute. I do not think that a lease should be granted. My question is: Why didn't all Queenslanders get the opportunity to tender for the lease over that island—even the disposal of a second-hand school building is put out to public tender or auction—rather than Cabinet's granting the lease to P & O?

Mr SULLIVAN: I am pleased that last Saturday Lord Medes did not take as long to get to the post as the honourable member did in finally getting round to asking his question. If, like the honourable member, he had come down the outside he might not have won.

Wilson Island is not a national park, although part of it is to be declared a national park. The honourable member did say that he thought that all islands off the coast were to be declared national parks, but that is not the case. Provision has been made for parts of island national parks to be excised for tourist development purposes, and I am sure that the honourable member would not want us to do anything that would interfere with the development of the tourist industry. I think the honourable member's concern was that P & O would be given a lease over part of a national park, but that is not the case. About half of Wilson Island will be declared a national park, but it is not a national park at present.

Availability of Drought Relief Forms

Mr HARTWIG: I inform the Minister for Primary Industries that drought relief forms are not readily available in many country areas and that many farmers in my area have been frustrated by delays in receiving drought assistance. I ask: Will the

Minister make sure that an adequate supply of drought relief forms is available for primary producers, and also, because there seems to be a fairly lengthy delay in the payment of these concessions, expedite their payment?

Mr AHERN: I think the honourable member is referring to fodder subsidy claim forms. They have not been available because of a delay in the passage of the necessary legislation through the Federal Parliament and the signing of an agreement between the State Premier and the Prime Minister relating to the administration of the scheme. That has now happened, and I understand that the forms are now available. A new booklet which will detail all of the concessions which can be applied for is being prepared. It will shortly be made available to the offices of stock inspectors throughout the State. I imagine that the problems in this regard will be overcome in the next couple of weeks. They have been occasioned by a very substantial review of the concessions which are available and the coming on line of new concessions. All the problems will be settled within a couple of weeks and the claim forms will be available in the offices of stock inspectors throughout the State.

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—Ninth and Tenth Allotted Days

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair

Estimates-in-Chief, 1982-83

Transport

Department of Transport

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (12.1 p.m.): I move—

“That \$13,246,912 be granted for ‘Department of Transport’.”

An Opposition Member: We can't hear you. Use the microphone.

Mr Prest: He is loud-mouthed; he does not need one.

Mr LANE: It is unfortunate that this debate will begin, as usual, with loudish behaviour from Opposition members.

I have the honour to present the Estimates for the Railway Department and, in accordance with past practice, have to advise honourable members that they will be able to debate the concerns of the Transport Department and related bodies under my portfolio, which takes in the Metropolitan Transit Authority and the Queensland Road Safety Council.

Railways

As is the case with public transport systems throughout the world, railway working expenses continue to outweigh revenue. For the financial year ended June 1982 revenue amounted to \$520,264,727. This is an increase of \$103,469,050 or 24.8 per cent on the revenue for the previous financial year, and 47.5 per cent over that for the year 1979-80.

A total of 43,659,487 tonnes of goods and livestock was carried during the year, an increase of 2 155 842 tonnes or 5.2 per cent over the tonnage for the previous year. Railings of coal and minerals amounted to 34 639 295 tonnes or 79.3 per cent of the total traffic hauled. Coal haulage increased by 330 000 tonnes and minerals increased by 420 000 tonnes.

Country passenger journeys increased by 101 042 and revenue by \$1,783,678. Similarly, suburban passenger journeys increased from 30 329 707 to 32 592 362 this financial year and revenue by \$2,568,461.

Railings of fruit also showed a substantial increase, to reach a level of 236 298 tonnes. Sugar-cane and raw sugar haulages showed gratifying increases with an aggregate volume of 1 599 668 tonnes, as compared to 1 531 282 tonnes the previous year.

General goods traffic again increased this year to 3 211 499 tonnes. The total for the previous year was 2 918 375 tonnes.

Greater usage of containerisation was evident, with haulages in 1981-82 totalling 714 577 tonnes, an increase of 143 310 tonnes over the tonnage for the previous year.

Working expenses amounted to \$588,050,664, an increase of \$101,924,439. Principal reasons for the variation in expenditure compared with that last year can be attributed to basic wage variations which showed an increase of \$21.5m, award variations \$42.2m and stores issues \$15.7m. Smaller increases occurred in retirement payments, superannuation subsidy, and overtime and Sunday-time payments.

Staff employed by the railways as at 27 June 1982 numbered 25 708. This represents an increase of 2.62 per cent on the previous year's figure of 25 051. It is a clear indicator that the unemployment problem presently facing Australia is being tackled constructively in Queensland as the demand for rail services increases.

Speaking of developments in the railway system—an amount of \$51,428,678 was spent on acquiring additional assets, extending or upgrading tracks, communications, sidings and modernising other departmental assets. This is \$642,298 more than the previous year.

Expenditure on rolling-stock totalled \$15,471,319, while \$35,957,359 was spent on construction and other works.

Work continued at Acacia Ridge on the development of the industrial estate shared between the Department of Commercial and Industrial Development and Queensland Railways, at a cost of \$652,689 to the Railway Department. In addition, the development of the Acacia Ridge terminal continued at a cost of \$6.88m. Repayable grants have been provided by the Commonwealth Government for that project.

Developments continued from the previous year included the extension of line from Lota to Thorneside, which was officially opened for traffic on 25 September 1982. The cost of that project last year was \$1,358,824.

Work has also continued on electrification of Brisbane suburban rail services. The Kingston to Shorncliffe section was opened on 18 September 1982.

The final stage of electrification from Petrie to Thorneside, due to be completed next year, will complete the present program, the cost of which, overall, amounts to some \$260m.

\$805,618 was expended on track construction and rearrangements on the Erakala-Mackay Harbour section. That has improved the carriage of grain and sugar to the Mackay harbour.

Further design costs for an electrified system between Blackwater and Brisbane amounted to \$844,979, which is \$187,575 more than in 1980-81. That design project has now been completed as far as is practicable prior to a firm commitment being made to proceed with construction between Blackwater and Gladstone. The calling of tenders for major contracts can be done within a few weeks of a decision being made to proceed. I invite honourable members to interest themselves in the main line electrification scheme, which is a grand proposal for Queensland.

Expenditure on rolling-stock related to the acquisition of 20 modern, stainless-steel air-conditioned carriages, 10 diesel-electric locomotives, 122 bulk-sugar wagons and 50 container wagons. Twenty modern, air-conditioned carriages are being manufactured by Commonwealth Engineering Pty Ltd, to upgrade the standard of travel for long-distance passengers. These involve 10 first-class roomettes, five first-class sitters and five economy-class sitters. The 10 sitting cars have been delivered and are in traffic, and four first-class roomettes are in use and are proving very popular. The remaining six roomettes are expected to be delivered by May 1983. Orders have been placed for 100 mechanically refrigerated containers to cope with the increase in fruit traffic.

In keeping with the program to improve accommodation for employees, the railways spent \$1,041,566 on the purchase and construction of residences, provision of improved amenities and power, and sites for migratory gangs.

Departmental works associated with the development of airspace over Central Station amounted to \$360,287. This program is due for completion in 1983.

A new seven-storey administration building for the Central Division was completed at a cost of over \$6m. The new complex at Rockhampton was officially opened on 10 November 1982, and replaces the 97-year-old wooden building, which will now be used as a training centre.

Extensions and alterations estimated to cost \$1.5m are planned for the district superintendent's office at Mackay. That will allow for extra space much needed for centralised traffic control operations at that centre.

Centralised traffic control continues to be introduced and the present program brought into operation between Caboolture and Gympie has been commissioned as far north as Nambour. Gympie is expected to be commissioned in March 1983. Expenditure, which is being provided in part by the Commonwealth Government, amounted to \$6m in 1981-82. The program, which will involve a total cost of \$11.5m, will considerably speed up the service on the north coast line.

Tenders, closing on 27 January 1983, have been called for the development of airspace at Toowong Railway Station, and several inquiries have been received. That will afford an excellent opportunity for commercial development and the optimum use of valuable city land in the heart of a prime business area.

In March 1982, a corporate plan was presented to Cabinet and is now in operation in the railways. Briefly explained, the corporate plan is a systematic examination of future opportunities and the development of strategies to enable appropriate action to be taken to exploit those opportunities. That is realistic and essential planning by an organisation as big as the Railway Department. These plans and objectives have been summarised in a booklet distributed throughout Australia titled "Plan for the Railways into the '80s", a publication "Plan for the '80s" and an executive summary of the corporate plan.

At the February 1982 meeting of the Australian Transport Advisory Council, the Australian Railways Research and Development Organisation's report on rail was presented.

Much work has been done in planning for the development of coal projects at Yarrabee, Boundary Hill, Collinsville, German Creek, Curragh, Laleham, Blair Athol, Oaky Creek, Newlands, West Moreton and Rylance, Macalister, Theodore and Baralaba.

Last August, State Cabinet directed that consultants be engaged to investigate savings that could be made in terms of Railway Department resources. P A Australia, consultants, were engaged and are pursuing that task.

The areas being examined include—

The feasibility and cost-effectiveness of private enterprise carrying out maintenance of sections of rolling-stock.

The cost-effectiveness or otherwise of continuing the monopoly of the Railway Department under the Transport Act in carrying certain commodities.

The benefits or otherwise of entering into contracts with private enterprise for the handling and carriage of general goods and parcels now normally carried out by Railway Department employees.

The savings that can be made in resources by the implementation of all or any of these measures.

The consultants will also investigate the management structure of the department and the effects of industrial agreements and arrangements with unions on the operation and efficiency of Queensland Railways. These courses of action are being taken in order to provide a better service for the people of Queensland. An earnest endeavour is being made to reduce costs and thus fend off increased freights and fare charges. The aim is to achieve greater efficiency and provide a better service at less cost. No risk is involved in the job-security of railway employees.

I should like to pay tribute to the Commissioner for Railways (Jim Goldston), who is retiring on 17 December after long and meritorious service extending over 48 years. Jim Goldston is an excellent example of a self-made man. He commenced his service as an apprentice fitter, graduated as a mechanical and electrical engineer, became assistant engineer, then divisional engineer in the Central Division, General Manager, Toowoomba, and General Manager, Rockhampton, before becoming Commissioner in 1976. Mr Goldston's vast and intimate knowledge of the State and, of course, of all aspects of railway

operation, has been applied with vigour and integrity to the service of Queensland and has been made available freely to the Ministers under whom he has served. Whilst occupying the position of Manager, Central Division, Mr Goldston steered the operation of bulk haulage introduced to cope with the massive export coal traffic.

As commissioner, he continued to oversee the boom in coal traffic to the position where in excess of 30 million tonnes are now hauled annually. Mr Goldston was also involved in the almost-completed program for Brisbane suburban electrification, costing \$260m. Centralised traffic control was progressed further during his tenure, as well as improved methods of transport, including refrigerated containers, and centralised freight and parcels accounting. Probably equally noteworthy was his development of a planning and development section and the corporate-planning process in Queensland Railways. A staff-training organisation was introduced by Mr Goldston and this has now been extended throughout the State.

Commissioner Goldston is chairman of the ARRDO and the Railway Commissioners of Australia Conference. Mr Goldston is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport and a member of the Institution of Engineers. He has always been very interested in education and was founding chairman of the College of Advanced Education in Rockhampton. He is a Rotarian, keen golfer and good citizen, and I wish Jim Goldston well in a retirement he has most certainly earned.

Department of Transport

I turn now to the Department of Transport, for which an amount of \$13,246,912 has been appropriated in the Consolidated Revenue Fund this financial year. This represents an increase of \$2,045,889, or 18 per cent over the amount appropriated for 1981-82. An amount of \$6,047,000 is provided for salaries for the 408 staff. Although this staff level represents an increase of 15 on 1981-82, the employees are associated with new tasks and increased responsibilities connected with the computerisation of drivers' licence records (11 persons) and driver licence-testing (four persons).

The benefits of a computerised system for maintaining drivers' licence records will accrue to the public as well as to the department. Two areas which come readily to mind relate to improved internal security of the information held and a faster recall of data from the system.

In line with Government policy of strict stewardship over funds provided from the public purse, no general increase in staff has taken place, despite significant increases in the volume of work and a reorganisation of the department designed to more efficiently meet public needs. The outcome of the reorganisation was that the department was restructured into three separate divisions, namely, the transport division, the traffic division and the administration division.

Assistant commissioner positions were established to head both the transport and traffic divisions and the senior executive officer position was established to head the administration division. In the transport and traffic divisions, each assistant commissioner is now supported by two executive officers.

Other major organisational changes which were recommended by the Public Service Board, and subsequently approved by Executive Council, were the creation of a Transport Policy Planning Unit and a Personnel Branch, and the complete restructuring of the existing Management Services Branch.

These changes have provided the department with an internal development capacity to enable its operations to be improved and also to provide for the development and implementation of short-term and long-term plans.

It is proposed that the Public Service Board will review lower levels of the department in the 1982-83 financial year. This second stage review is considered a necessary follow-up to the important initial organisational changes so that the present improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the department's operations is maintained.

Also, as a result of this reorganisation, the department now has the internal structure capacity to improve its operations and implement medium and long-term planning strategies with the formation of the Transport Policy Planning Unit. This unit was created to complement the administrative roles of the transport, traffic and administration divisions of the department.

By adopting a more total approach to issues within the department's regulatory role, the unit, as well as being able to give advice on current issues, is better able to review, formulate and recommend policy initiatives affecting overall operations in an integrated and co-ordinated manner.

Some of the issues which have been recently addressed include an investigation into the movement of containers around the State by rail and road transport with a view to establishing a more integrated approach. Another was the determination of policies for the regulation of intrastate airlines concerning licensing and requests from operators for addition to and variation of routes.

Because of the delicate state of the airline industry at present, this is a very important area, for decisions taken in isolation without due recourse to their effects throughout the industry generally, can have serious implications for an operator's viability and, in turn, for the community affected.

Another area which has received attention from the policy unit concerns the taxi cab industry. Currently, policies are being developed for the allocation of licences in the capital city and provincial cities and towns throughout the State. As well, innovations within the industry such as multiple hire and share riding are being examined to determine their effect on the industry and their suitability for the needs of the travelling public.

Obviously, when one talks of transport, there are a number of different components which must be considered—rail, road, air, and, to a lesser extent, sea. The impact of initiatives in any one of these modes on the others in a competing market situation can pose very serious problems for operators within the industry. Mindful of these sensitive issues, the policy planning unit is involved in reviewing and recommending policies which strive to create a balance between competing modes so as to result in stability and efficiency within the transport industry and to be of benefit to the community generally.

In the south-east corner of the State, in co-operation with the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Department of Transport, through the policy planning unit, is represented in active planning and co-ordination programs concerning the most effective use of public transportation systems. By centralising the policy recommendation processes within one section of the department, it is felt that more robust policy-making processes will result.

Of the remaining amount of \$7,199,912 provided for contingent expenses, a number of very large and important items highlight the practical contributions the Transport Department is making to the development of Queensland through providing adequate, efficient transport services. The largest single commitment is \$3m in subsidies to the operators of privately owned bus services. These services cover the areas of—

A general subsidy to enable the operators to maintain services and vehicle fleets of a standard satisfactory to the department and adequate for the needs of the travelling public;

Funding by the Government of concession fares for pensioners; and

A contribution to interest payments on moneys borrowed for the purchase of new or near-new buses.

This financial assistance has been of major benefit to the industry and it is one of the department's tasks to regularly monitor and reassess it to ensure that the assistance given is in the best interests of operators and travelling public.

Since 1 May 1982, the State has matched the Federal Government dollar for dollar in assisting Trans Australia Airlines to maintain air services of at least Fokker Friendship standard to isolated areas of the West and North. This will ensure the continuance of the Townsville-Mt. Isa, Brisbane-Birdsville and Brisbane-Winton services until 1984, in which year the situation will be reviewed by the department. This support is essential to those services which are vital to so many communities suffering hardships of distance and isolation. For the 1982-83 year an amount of \$1m has been provided to the Transport Department for this purpose. In addition, in conjunction with the South Australian Government, a subsidy is being provided to Trans Regional Airlines for the continuation of an air service to the north-east of South Australia and the channel country of Queensland, as far north as Boulia. This year, this will amount to \$9,600.

An amount of \$175,000 has been provided for developmental and public information activities. Of this amount, a significant proportion will be committed to educating the public in the initiatives the Government has taken through amendments to the Traffic Act and Regulations in the area of road safety. I refer particularly, of course, to the lowering of the prescribed blood alcohol concentration to .05 per cent, which will become law before Christmas. Further allocations will be made from these funds to continue research into articulated and heavy vehicle accidents. Valuable information has already been derived from preliminary work in this area.

Funding of other research relevant to road safety and industry improvement will also be provided during the financial year. The department is also committed to continuing, improving and extending a range of publications being developed for the benefit of transport operators and users. An amount of \$80,000 is provided to revise and update traffic codes and guides for learner drivers. Planning is well advanced for the establishment of a network of regional offices and driver-licence-testing centres to provide improved departmental services.

Funds are provided for the transport police to continue their highway patrol role, supplementing the police presence and supervision on country roads and highways which have been the scene of so much tragedy associated with heavy vehicle accidents. I firmly believe that the visible presence of this type of law enforcement on our main arterial highways will do much to curb needless waste of human life.

Another major project being continued is a modern computerised records system for drivers' licences and traffic histories. Planning and preliminary work has been completed and, as equipment is installed, conversion of records to computer storage will proceed. Funds allocated for this financial year amount to \$229,100.

The Department of Transport made its contribution to the success of the Commonwealth Games. Officers were involved at all stages in public transport planning and in supervision of transport modes as required before, during and after the Games. In addition to staff resources provided by the department, \$26,000 was allocated in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Queensland Railways and Brisbane City Council funding to promote public transport in the Games context.

The grant of \$759,912, an increase of 20.3 per cent on the previous year, to the Queensland Road Safety Council, together with a grant of \$167,074 from the Liquor Act Trust Fund, represent the major sources of funding for the council's program for 1982-83. These State grants, as well as revenue derived from council's own activities, and a grant of \$27,750 from the Commonwealth, make up a total budget for the council of \$1,173,241, an increase of \$160,312 or 15.8 per cent on the previous year.

The council maintains a high profile in the area of public education courses and public awareness campaigns. All classes of road users of all ages have been repeatedly reminded of their obligations towards their own safety and to other road users. Four committees function within the council's framework and bring expertise to the areas of: education and training, publicity, motor-cycle training, and research.

Honourable members will see a comprehensive outline of the work of the Queensland Road Safety Council committees during the 1982-83 year detailed in the annual report of the Commissioner for Transport. It includes a package of measures designed to reduce the involvement of heavy vehicles in road accidents and a \$20,000 accident research project shared by the RACQ and the Government.

The Treasurer (Dr Edwards) when delivering the Budget Speech on 23 September, expressed the Government's concern about the mounting road toll. The Budget provided special funding for five specific road safety projects.

The first is directed towards heavy vehicle road safety. There has been an increase in serious incidents involving articulated vehicles in Queensland. In the first six months of this calendar year, the number of persons killed in accidents involving semi-trailers increased by 30 per cent, accounting for 12 per cent of fatalities during this period. This is particularly disturbing as vehicles of this type represent only 6 per cent of vehicles on register. Naturally, this increase reflects the greater use being made of road transport, and recent amendments have been made to the Traffic Regulations relating to the speed of articulated vehicles and the experience of drivers of heavy commercial goods vehicles. Nevertheless, there is a need to complement these amendments to the regulations by producing teaching

aids to facilitate the training of heavy vehicle drivers, to create an awareness of the importance of roadworthiness and to inform other drivers of the special problems associated with driving heavy and long vehicles.

The second is directed towards community responsibility in road safety. Despite legislative initiatives, many motorists are ignoring the fact that they have a personal responsibility. A publicity campaign designed to elicit individual commitment to road safety has been developed. This project has as its theme "Road Safety—Finally it's up to you!" Already billboard advertising is being used in addition to bumper stickers and information leaflets on road safety subjects. Favourable public reaction is evident and it is imperative that mass community support be gained in relation to road accident countermeasures.

The third is directed towards the role of parents in road safety education for children. It is proposed to develop an educational program to remind parents of their responsibility in correct road safety education. This program will reinforce the extensive work presently being undertaken by the Queensland Road Safety Council, police and teachers within the formal education system.

The fourth is directed towards an enlarged volunteer defensive driving program. Funds are to be allocated to enable the rapid training and equipping of volunteer instructor groups. Three groups of this type are already operating on the Darling Downs, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast and the program will be expanded to cover most of the State in due course. Groups of this type, who give of their own time in the cause of road safety education, contribute greatly to making available defensive driving courses to drivers away from the capital city region. Courts may soon order persons convicted of dangerous or careless driving to attend these defensive driving courses.

The fifth project is an enhanced schools advisory service. Funds are allocated to provide resource materials to every kindergarten, pre-school, primary and secondary school within the State. Nevertheless, there is a need for additional funds to accelerate introduction of the secondary school driver education program developed by the council and which is on trial by the Education Department. Expenditure of these funds represents a wise investment in our future citizens.

I should like to record the long service to the Department of Transport, Mr. Kevin Seeney, who recently was seconded to the Co-ordinator-General as special adviser on transport.

In April this year Mr Seeney was appointed to head an inquiry into the long-term planning of Queensland's road, air and sea transport industries. He has furnished a progress report to me and his final report to Cabinet is due in October next year. In view of the breadth of his investigations, his value to the Co-ordinator-General as special adviser is apparent.

Mr Seeney is highly qualified for the role. He has been Commissioner for Transport for 11 years, is an associate accountant, Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Economics and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport. Mr Seeney's recent study included the long-term economic implications associated with the transport of goods and passengers, the demand for road freight haulage, having regard to likely developments in rail and sea carriage, and the special demands placed on the existing road system by the movement of bulk commodities such as coal, grain and motor spirits, and the most desirable method of carrying them safely and economically.

Clearly, he will take to the Co-ordinator-General knowledge of considerable importance. I wish him well in his new post.

Metropolitan Transit Authority

Finally, I will deal with the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The authority is constituted under the Metropolitan Transit Authority Act 1976-79 to provide an efficient, co-ordinated system of public passenger transport in a region encompassing the city of Brisbane and adjacent areas from Noosa to the southern border and west to Ipswich.

On 30 October 1979 my predecessor, the Honourable K. B. Tomkins, tabled in this Assembly the authority's five year development plan. The plan covers the period July 1979 to June 1984 and provides the policies and programs proposed by the authority to achieve its primary objective of integration.

The strategy of the development plan is based on the progressive reorganisation of the public transport network using the "trunk-feeder" principle. The core of this system is the provision of new, fast and comfortable electric trains in order to reach the best possible standard of service, and to use the combined resources of the bus and rail systems. To complement this a uniform, integrated fare system for any journey both on rail and council bus is being planned.

Co-ordinated bus/rail services already exist, with private bus operators at Oxley, Darra, Sandgate and Wacol. However, the first wholly co-ordinated project involving the Brisbane City Council's bus fleet was the opening of the Enoggera public transport interchange on 27 April 1981, at a cost of \$1,204,000. This represented a major example of co-ordination and co-operation between the two largest transport operators—Queensland Railways and the Brisbane City Council. Both have worked closely together and the service has been very well received by the public. Its success augurs well for future co-ordination.

The scheme has many benefits such as faster trips to the city through access to the electrification system, better feeder bus services in the outer suburban catchment areas, clock-face services during off-peak hours which are easily memorised and a wide range of interconnecting services to other destinations. Over 1 000 passengers now transfer between council buses and the trains at Enoggera daily. Enoggera services were further extended on 8 February this year when Brisbane Bus Lines Pty Ltd commenced trial services between Albany Creek and the new interchange. Through tickets for co-ordinated trips with Queensland railways are available to the commuters.

The development plan includes a major capital works program aimed at upgrading public transport infrastructure and equipment. The electrification of the Brisbane suburban rail system was the major component. On 17 November 1979 the first stage of the scheme—electrified services between Ferny Grove and Darra completed at a cost of \$28,832,000—was commissioned.

Electrification has involved the complete modernisation of the suburban rail system with new track, structures and signalling suited to the highest standards of suburban rail services. It includes a new control centre for the signalling system at Mayne which permits maximum safety and flexibility of operation. A modern "train describer", costing \$3,200,000 which shows train progression through the system, was commissioned in August. This is a significant contribution to efficiency as the position of all trains may be seen at a glance.

On 20 September 1980 electric train services were extended from Darra to Ipswich at a cost of \$9,144,000, and a further 90 km of electrified track was added to the network on 18 September this year when the Roma Street to Kingston and Mayne to Shorncliffe sections were commissioned at a cost of \$19,761,000 and \$10,502,000 respectively. Now all-electric off-peak services operate on half-hour clock-face timetables, Monday to Friday.

Work is well under way on the final stage of the current program—Northgate to Petrie and Park Road to Lota and Thorneside. City to Petrie is expected to be open for off-peak electric traffic by March next year, and Park Road to Thorneside by October next.

Suburban electrification construction has been one of the most dramatic accomplishments in Queensland rail history. The Metropolitan Transit Authority's Development Plan states that all the wooden suburban carriages should be replaced by 1984. All told, 180 electric cars are on order, and already 96 are in service. All have been, or are being, manufactured in Queensland by Walkers ASEA Pty Ltd of Maryborough at a cost to 30 June 1982 of \$72,402,000. These electric cars are adjudged to be equal to the world's best in performance and comfort. The public obviously agrees, because suburban rail patronage has increased by 26 per cent over the last three years. Obviously, this means more cars are needed.

Since the opening of the cross-river bridge in 1978, there has been an increase of 54 per cent in patronage on the southside rail system. With the Kingston to Shorncliffe section recently electrified, it is confidently expected that patronage figures will continue to increase.

To 30 June 1982, \$193,257,000 has been spent on the electrification of the suburban rail network and other improvements.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority has built, to date, over 5 000 car-parking bays at 58 stations and is continuing to try to meet a demand that is growing at about 20 per cent per annum. That program encourages the use of public transport and alleviates the congestion and nuisance caused by drivers parking in residential streets and at shopping centres. Undoubtedly, the improved car-parks have backed up the electric trains in bringing dramatic increases in rail patronage. As at 30 June, \$6,498,000 had been expended on park and ride construction at railway stations.

The authority's development plan also recommends that car-parks should be provided adjacent to trunk bus corridors and bus interchanges where demand exists. The authority has commenced construction of Stage 1 of a three-stage car-park at Northey Street, Windsor, which will initially provide 244 car spaces in close proximity to city-bound bus services. The contract price of that car/bus facility is \$156,299.

The provision of similar facilities at The Gap, Carseldine and Toowong is being investigated and detailed planning and design are in progress. Construction will commence on some of those projects this financial year.

Detailed discussions are in progress with the proprietors of the Garden City Shopping Centre and with the Brisbane City Council with a view to providing an improved bus interchange linking southern suburban bus services with the council's Cityxpress service.

The development plan saw a need to ensure that the bus fleet operated by the Brisbane City Council is kept up to the high standards expected by the public. The Brisbane City Council is presently receiving 120 new MAN buses under a leverage lease arrangement approved by the Government. The Government is waiving \$19,950 a year in stamp duties for the 14 years of the arrangement—a considerable saving to the council.

In addition, Treasury Department funds totalling \$32m in the last five financial years, and including \$7,936,026 last year, have been applied to ease transport deficits incurred by Brisbane City Council.

Private bus operators have acquired over 40 new buses since July 1979, and have taken advantage of the bus purchase subsidy scheme that pays portion of the interest on bus purchase loans. The authority has been helping private bus operators in reviewing, rationalising and improving bus services in their areas.

New timetables and bus routes have been implemented in conjunction with the following operators: Inala Bus Service, Inala; Greenline Transit, Woodridge; Bayside Bus Services, Wynnum/Manly and Redlands; Brisbane Bus Lines, Albany Creek; and Goodna Bus Services, Redbank Plains. As new services start, marketing campaigns have been conducted, including distribution of timetables to local households.

The authority recently printed and distributed a revised timetable for Hornibrook Bus Lines for the co-ordinated bus/train service to Redcliffe Peninsula connecting with the electric trains at Sandgate.

Mr Davis: Who paid for that?

Mr LANE: The taxpayers of Queensland.

The development plan called for extension of ferry services and improvements to ferry terminals. The up and down river ferry operated by Golden Mile Ferry Services has been extended to Hawthorne and Bulimba, where new ferry terminals have been constructed by the MTA at a cost of \$111,500. The service is now carrying an additional 500 patrons daily as a result of the extension.

New ferry facilities have also been constructed at Sydney Street, New Farm; East Brisbane; Dutton Park; and Customs House, Queen Street. They have been the subject of many favourable comments from users.

The authority carries out an extensive program of planning and research. The objectives are to assist in the planning of improvements to the public transport system and to formulate a blueprint for long-term developments.

The authority's research program has assisted in the identification and implementation of a number of significant system improvements. These include the Enoggera bus/rail interchange, bus priority measures in several parts of the city and extended and improved ferry services on the Brisbane River.

Work has started on the production of a second development plan to cover the period 1984-89, and this will set out a program of capital works and operational and policy initiatives for the next five-year period.

Members will recall that I made a statement to the House recently concerning the success of the Commonwealth Games public transport "lift". The Games bus/train service was an example of co-ordination at its best. The Games Public Transport Co-ordinating Committee was led by former army logistics chief and Colonel Ron Sherman. I would like to pay tribute to Mr Sherman, police, staff of the Main Roads Department, Transport Department and MTA and Brisbane City Council and private operators who worked so hard and for so long to ensure success in a most vital area. Mr Sherman's vast experience was a major factor. The system was planned by the Metropolitan Transit Authority together with Queensland Railways, the Department of Transport, Main Roads Department, Brisbane City Council and private operators.

A total of 192 670 people were carried on the bus-rail shuttle via Banoon and Sunnybank. The interchanges at Banoon and Sunnybank were constructed under the MTA interchange program. Other Games visitors used private bus services from the Gold Coast or shuttle buses from Garden City and Salisbury. These arrangements, coupled with the provision of ample car-parks and road traffic control, demonstrated to many new patrons the comfort and efficiency of Brisbane's public transport system.

Honourable members will be aware that a Federal levy of 1c per litre was imposed on petrol and distillate from 17 August 1982 and 2c per litre from 1 July 1983. That money is to be paid into a trust fund, and there is provision for part of the urban arterial roads allocation to be used for urban public transport. Following Cabinet agreement, I have written to the Federal Minister proposing that rail electrification from Kingston to Beenleigh and Petrie to Caboolture be included. There could also be a substantial sum available for bus, rail and ferry interchanges.

The total sum involved for public transport is \$37.9m, made up of \$2.9m in 1982-83 and \$7m in each of the succeeding years up to the bicentennial year 1988-89.

Honourable members will be aware that after some assistance from the Federal Government in the early stage of the current urban transport improvement program, the State has had to bear the whole cost in recent times. It is encouraging to know that additional funds will now be available from this new Federal Government source to boost a program which all will agree is greatly appreciated by the travelling public.

In concluding my statement concerning the work of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, I would emphasise that the funds now being sought for 1982-83 provide for:—

Payment of interest and redemption charges on loans raised by the authority to meet the State share of the costs of capital works—\$28,500,000;

other administrative expenses, staff salaries and contingency items incurred by the authority—\$1,091,195.

Total expenditure anticipated is \$29,591,195.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all of the Minister's departmental Estimates (Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds, and Loan Fund Account).

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

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (12.47 p.m.): I am very pleased to be afforded an opportunity to speak to the Estimates of the Transport Department, which is playing a very important role in the working and efficiency of the State.

All sections of the transport industry are going through a crisis. Many changes are occurring. A true assessment is that in some sections of the industry supply far outweighs demand. That situation is more evident in some areas than in others.

In the taxi industry, the costs of licences are exorbitant. The cost of setting up a taxi in business is prohibitive. The cost of a licence alone could range from \$30,000 to \$90,000. In my own small area of Gladstone, where tenders are called for taxi licences, the fixed price is \$30,000. In Brisbane when tenders were called for 50 licences the response was poor. Only 22 applications were received. That was due in part to the fact that holders of existing licences were not permitted to apply for new licences, which would have cost \$30,000 each. Yet, by comparison with taxi licence costs generally, \$30,000 is cheap, particularly when compared with the cost of a taxi licence on the Gold Coast.

After a licence is purchased the intending taxi operator has to buy his car and his two-way radio before he can be engaged by a company. For that he needs another wad of notes amounting to several thousand dollars. If he has to obtain a loan to enter the taxi industry he finds that the interest charges are very high. They really kill the small person, the one who would be a great asset to the industry.

The day-to-day operational costs incurred in maintaining a taxi necessitate working at least double shifts. The unnecessary high licence fees are a real killer. What is more, they are a rip-off by the Government.

Turning to the road transport industry—the costs of obtaining a suitable truck are high and, on top of that, far too many operators are engaged in the industry. Unlike the taxi industry, in which charges are set and apply to all operators, in the road transport industry, which is overcrowded, a price war exists, with the result that many operators reduce freight rates.

Freight rates have been cut to such an extent that the operators are flat out making a living. If they operated to the rules and regulations in the industry, they would go broke. So the operators of those trucks must drive hard and work long hours. We know the conditions under which they work. The road system in Queensland does not make a truckie's life a pleasure. In some areas the roads are real hazards.

I am pleased that the Minister has arranged for Mr Seeney to carry out an investigation into all forms of transport in Queensland—road, rail and sea transport. It is also pleasing that Mr Seeney was chosen for the job, as he has been Transport Commissioner for 11 years. I only hope that his recommendations, when they are implemented, will overcome some of the problems in the heavy transport industry.

Each and every day we hear of the problems in the air transport industry in Australia, and particularly in Queensland. The cost of travel has a marked effect on the number of people who are choosing to fly today. We are told that the operational costs at present have been the main reason for the reduction in air services, or even their curtailment, particularly in country areas. Country people and country airports await with great anticipation what might come out of this investigation.

It was a pity that the same Minister did not see fit to appoint a person with those qualifications and practical experience to head the investigation into the Queensland Railways. The Minister referred to the wonderful qualifications and experience of the present Commissioner for Railways. We all recognise the work that Mr Goldston has done. It is a pity that the investigation into the Queensland Railways was not conducted by him or by one of his officers.

If such an investigation is necessary—I personally do not think that it is—I do not think that there is any need to bring in an outside firm of consultants and pay them \$400,000. Within the Government's own departments there are officers who possess excellent credentials and have a great deal of experience in transport operations, industrial relations and administration. If they have a failing I suppose it is that they are too knowledgeable and too honest and would not be yes-men to the Minister. Anyone who possesses those credentials cannot be part of the system—not under this Government.

An article in the Press of 20 April 1982, under the heading "Railways to 'end deficit by 1985'", stated—

"Queensland Railways has released plans to wipe out its running deficit within three years.

The Transport Minister, Mr Lane, and the Railways Commissioner, Mr Goldston, released the plan yesterday.

The Railways Department had been instructed by State Cabinet to prepare the corporate plan, listing objectives and identifying areas to which major funding should be directed."

I was very pleased to receive a booklet entitled "Queensland Railways—Plan for the 80's", which was submitted by Mr Goldston. It has great merit. It was accepted by Cabinet. I would have liked to incorporate the whole booklet in "Hansard", but it is too

lengthy. Mr Miller, this morning I showed the booklet to Mr Speaker, and I seek leave to incorporate in "Hansard" the recommendations on pages 18 and 19 and the conclusion on page 20.

(Leave granted.)

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that:—

1. The Government note Queensland Railways PLAN FOR THE 80's.

2. Upgrading

Upgrading of the Queensland Railways' System be accepted in principle. The PLAN specifies to Government those major areas towards which available funding will be directed. The following listing of these major areas is not necessarily in priority order:—

(a) Further extensions of Centralised Traffic Control.

(b) The extension and provision of additional crossing loops in critical areas.

(c) Track relaying and upgrading, including the introduction of a canted rail/coned wheel configuration progressively on defined routes throughout the system.

(d) The extension of flood protection of the Permanent Way.

(e) A program for the replacement and acquisition of rollingstock.

(f) A program for upgrading housing, trainmen's quarters and track, bridge and signal and communications staff gang accommodation.

(g) The extension of mechanised track, bridge, communications, signals and building maintenance.

(h) The phasing out of timber bridges and replacement of ageing steel bridges.

(i) Rationalisation and upgrading of terminals.

(j) Upgrading of staff working conditions and training facilities.

(k) Upgrading of workshops and facilities.

(l) Improved communications and computerised systems.

3. Main Line Electrification

The proposed initial program for Main Line Electrification be approved in principle, subject to the availability of special funding.

4. Rail Pricing

The policy with respect to rail pricing continue to be aimed at achieving sufficient revenue from each sector to meet or exceed the cost of operating that sector, whilst maintaining flexibility in pricing according to the needs of the marketplace.

5. Manpower

Recognition be given to the need to recruit and train operational, skilled, supervisory and managerial staff to meet the increase in establishment shown as necessary to handle the anticipated 200 per cent increase in traffic task over the period to 1990.

6. Conclusion

Queensland Railways has commenced a process of Corporate Strategic Planning. Through this process, it has obtained new insights and perspectives on its future direction and the major beneficial thrusts required. This includes a review of management and training techniques, industrial relations and personnel development procedures.

It has projected and confirmed traffic increases in the order of 100 per cent over 5 years, and expects 200 per cent over 10 years. This will permit the system to eliminate the \$69 million operating loss by 1984/85 and the additional \$73 million capital charge cost by 1986/87. It has identified and recognised a number of deferred system and service investment needs where technology, equipment, and facilities upgrading is becoming increasingly important.

The projections have naturally embraced revenues and costs emanating from the increased traffic task and from the upgrading projects required. Options have been evaluated. The probable and possible levels of volume, expenditures, and revenues, have been modelled together with investment cost inflation to arrive at the most likely scenarios and to determine the preferred strategies.

The preferred strategies chosen are inter-dependent. They are expressed in Queensland Railways PLAN FOR THE 80's, as an on-going dynamic process rather than as a fixed and inflexible document.

The PLAN FOR THE 80's and its Recommendations are submitted.

Mr PREST: I would like to know why it was necessary to bring in outside consultants to carry out this investigation into the Queensland Railways. I shall refer to some of the achievements of the members of the firm of P A Australia.

In response to a question about the firm's experience in the rail area, Mr Faulkner said that P A was currently working for the State Rail Authority of New South Wales, Victoria Rail and had recently completed work for West Rail in Western Australia. But what does one find? In an article appearing in the Press on 15 March this year, under the heading "Millions Return to Rail Travel", it was reported that—

"Freshly painted train stations, cleaner faster trains and more punctual services are drawing Australians back to train travel. In all States except Western Australia

That is the State in which P A Australia had completed a report. Consequently its recommendations there do not appear to have been much chop. My knowledge of the firm indicates that its advice in the past has not been any better.

I agree with what Les Crofton, the acting branch secretary of the Australian Railways Union, said in a letter urging that the railway inquiry be public—

"Sir,—Regarding the Telegraph report (1-11), on the investigation being conducted into the railways by P. A. Management Consultants:

The Australian Railways Union is as concerned about the safety, economics and service of the railways as any other section of the community.

If, however, the government believes there should be an investigation, it should take the form of a public inquiry and not a privately commissioned investigation. A public inquiry would allow the community to know the nature, relevance and accuracy of all evidence given.

The terms of reference for the investigation are, in our view, restrictive and structured in such a way that they almost pre-empt the outcome. Further, conveniently, they omit any mention of the secret freight deals which have been made by the railways.

In any case, it does the Transport Minister, Mr Lane, no credit that he should attempt to denigrate railwaymen by inferring that they are recipients of 'perks'. Mr Lane should know that, in the real industrial relations world, many problems are solved, and confrontation avoided, by discussion and conciliation. At best, such talks lead to agreement, which is not a dirty word.

Mr Lane's knowledge and practice of good industrial relations may be judged by that fact that, to the time of writing, he has not directly informed rail unions of the investigation which he commissioned."

Mr Davis: Why the secrecy?

Mr PREST: That I could not understand.

On 30 September this year, the following article appeared in the Press—

"An inquiry should be held into the Queensland Railway freighting system instead of an investigation into ways of passing off more areas to private enterprise, the Combined Rail Union state president, Mr Pat Dunne, said.

He said the existing freight system allowed the bulk contractors to skim the cream from the system.

'Their railway rates are secretive and there is no longer any strict adherence to the railway regulations, such as checking the weight of goods in the wagons. But the small man still is thoroughly regulated by the department.'

These bulk contract operators took the goods from the warehouses and loaded the railway wagons on sidings for the operators' exclusive use. They unloaded the wagons and delivered the goods to their destinations. The railway only hauled the wagons to the town of destination.

'The unions have reason to believe this type of operation receives special consideration as far as rail freight is concerned and in some cases only a quarter of the normal freight rate is applied.

'The end result is the road transport operators receive the major portion of the freight charge incurred, leaving the railway department with only a small residue.'

Honourable members should be concerned about the secret agreements that are entered into. Recently, in relation to QRX, the member for Woodridge asked the Minister why the practice of weighing all wagons had been discontinued. He asked further—

"Given the new weighing technology, is there any plan to recommence the weighing of all wagons? Has there been any estimate of the loss in revenue to the Railway Department from not weighing these wagons?"

The Minister answered that there was some advantage, because the Railway Department was making something out of it. However, he admitted that QRX was getting its share of the turkey. Practices that have been going on for far too long should be stopped.

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

Mr PREST: Before the luncheon recess I was speaking about the overloading of railway freight wagons. I now wish to quote from a question without notice that the member for Woodridge (Mr D'Arcy) directed to the Minister for Transport—

"... I refer him to the widespread practice of the gross overloading of rail freight wagons, and specifically to the reported practice of overloading by operators such as QRX. I ask: Why was the practice of weighing all wagons discontinued?"

Not only does overloading result in a loss of revenue to the department but also it causes other problems. Because diesel-electric locos have a limited capacity and trains are mostly made up to the maximum load, as shown in the working timetable of the various sections of the routes, so overloading causes delays in train movement. Any delay or loss of time on a particular section not only delays that train but also delays trains coming in the opposite direction and following trains. So overloading has a very disruptive effect on the whole control system and the efficient working of the Queensland Railways. The secret agreements should be investigated by P A Australia if it is to provide a true and accurate assessment of the railway system, its workings and its finances.

Some sections of the business world receive very generous freight rate concessions. A letter signed by the Deputy Commissioner for Railways sets out the concessions granted from 1 November 1982 to a company on the cartage of goods from Brisbane to Bundaberg. That company is charged \$34.20 per tonne whereas the ordinary rate for such goods is \$119.60 for the same distance. That company pays only 30 per cent of the ordinary rate. The distance between Brisbane and Bundaberg is approximately 350 km, and the distance to Gladstone is a little longer. The price in the special agreement with that company on the cartage of goods from Brisbane to Gladstone is \$81.20 per tonne whereas the normal rate is \$159.30. Gladstone is only 177 km further than Bundaberg but the freight charge is more than double. However, my point is that that company receives very generous concessions yet it can probably afford to pay the proper rate. On the cartage of 10 tonnes of goods to Bundaberg, instead of paying \$1,196 that company pays only \$342, which is quite a reduction. If the same goods were transported to Gladstone, instead of paying \$1,593 the company would pay \$812.

We are often told that the problem of the high cost of goods and services in the community is partially caused by high freight rates. If it is good enough for some companies to be able to enter into agreements, then it should be good enough for others. P A Australia should investigate that so that the public can learn exactly what is happening. P A Australia

should also investigate and issue a proper public report on the secret agreements between the Government and the coal-exporting companies. I am certain such an investigation would truly show why the Railway Department has a huge annual deficit.

However, P A Australia has acted under instructions and has produced to Cabinet a very provocative interim report. The most provocative Minister for Transport—especially as he relates to the Railway Department—that this State has ever had used that interim report and issued a false statement headed: “Perks to Rail Men Cost Queensland Millions” That statement, which was issued from Beaudesert, contained the following—

“... Mr Lane emphasised the information was contained in a progress report only.

He said he did not want to pre-empt the final findings expected in June next year.”

In other words he virtually jumped the gun in an endeavour to provoke railway workers and railway unions. This is not the first occasion on which the Minister has made a statement to give the public the wrong impression.

At the time of the 38-hour week dispute, the Minister said in answer to a question—

“Drivers employed at Mayne depot average \$1,014 per fortnight; drivers employed at Coppabella average \$1,334. Firemen at Mayne depot, while they are training to be upgraded to the driver's classification, average \$844 per fortnight; those at Coppabella average \$1,069. A guard averages \$780 at Mayne depot and, for watching the coal trains from the guard's van, \$1,279 per fortnight.”

A driver's wage rate is \$7.10 an hour and a guard's rate is \$6.82 an hour, so the drivers at Mayne to whom the Minister was referring, who were averaging \$1,014 per fortnight, would have been working not 80 hours a fortnight but 142 hours a fortnight. The drivers at Coppabella who were receiving \$1,334 a fortnight on average would have been working 188 hours a fortnight. The guards at Coppabella who received \$1,279 a fortnight would have been working 187 hours a fortnight, and the guards at Mayne who were receiving an average of \$780 a fortnight would have been working 114 hours a fortnight.

The Minister was complaining about the workers wanting a 38-hour week and saying that they were receiving those sorts of sums for a 40-hour week. Many allowances would have been included in those wages, and those are what P A Australia is referring to as lurks and perks. Those allowances have been granted by the Industrial Commission, and I am sure that honourable members do not want to take away the right of the commission to use sound judgment and give the workers of this State their just entitlements.

The Minister was recently asked a question about the use of taxis by the Railway Department over the past three years. He said that the expenditure was incurred mainly in the relief of train crews as required by award provisions—in other words, for driving railway men to work. It had been suggested that taxis were used by railwaymen at work, but this is not so. They were used to transport railwaymen to their home depots after the completion of a 10-hour shift.

(Time expired.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Akers): Order! Before calling the member for Windsor, I wish to make a statement. Last Thursday, during the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Mines and Energy, I ruled on a point of order raised by the honourable member for Flinders during a speech by the honourable member for Port Curtis on the basis that the member for Port Curtis had not mentioned any member of the Committee in particular. On checking the “Hansard” report, I find that the honourable member for Port Curtis did mention the honourable member for Flinders. Therefore, my ruling should have been to uphold the point of order.

Mr MOORE (Windsor) (2.33 p.m.): I thank the Minister for the assistance he has given to my constituents when I have called upon him. If he was able to provide assistance, he did. Members make many requests of Ministers, and the Minister for Transport has been more than kind to me and to my constituents.

The Minister will not like what I say next, because I intend, once again, to speak about the road toll. Although this Assembly recently passed legislation to reduce the permitted blood alcohol level of a driver to .05, that legislation has not yet received Royal Assent. The road toll is continually increasing, and last week-end another eight people were killed on

the roads. The problem of the road toll will not be solved by the passing of legislation in relation to the blood alcohol level alone, because that will not stop the heavy-footed driver, drunk or sober, from exceeding the speed limit.

The ordinary person has no knowledge of physics or science. He does not realise that his motor vehicle, which weighs a tonne or more, is travelling at 100 km/h with only four sections of rubber, each the size of his hand, keeping him on smooth bitumen. His vehicle is a missile, heading in one direction. To change that direction, a considerable amount of force has to be applied to the tyres.

Motor cars are well sprung, are well sound-proofed and have many other comfort features. People sitting in them imagine that they are sitting in a lounge room with all of the safety that is built into a lounge room. The comfort is similar, but the conditions are different in the extreme.

Most drivers imagine that, if they turn the steering-wheel, the vehicle will automatically change direction. If they were driving on ice and turned the wheel, the vehicle would continue in the same direction. A vehicle changes direction only because of the grip on the road of four pieces of rubber, each the size of my hand.

It is remarkable how good steering systems are, but they are simply not good enough to cover all situations. They are not good enough to cope with erratic driving or cornering at high speed when, as quite often happens, cars get into what is commonly called a four-wheel drift. Police officers are taught to handle vehicles in situations of that type.

In television advertising, one make of car speeds along and goes through a stream at about 80 km/h with horses trying to catch it, and so on. Virtually all motor car advertisements are based on speed.

Mr Davis: You can't go anywhere without the black cat.

Mr MOORE: Which black cat?

Mr Davis: The black cat that pulls you up.

Mr MOORE: I cannot afford tyres of that brand. I use ordinary tyres.

Mr Davis: Ordinary old retreads?

Mr MOORE: Yes, \$10 retreads; they are very good. I use cross-ply tyres. I am joking, of course.

Mr Simpson: They are only meant to go straight ahead.

Mr MOORE: They are, as the honourable member for Cooroora says.

I have said before that I will niggle my hobby-horse until someone listens to my suggestion that the speed of motor vehicles be governed, and I will still be doing it in the next Parliament.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr MOORE: Yes. All I need do is take a photocopy of my previous speeches and have them included in "Hansard"

Mr Jones: It would save time if you did.

Mr MOORE: Yes, but if I did that, what I am saying would not get through the solid piece of muscle between the honourable member's ears.

Although seat-belts may not have reduced the number of accidents, they have undoubtedly reduced the number of people killed by being thrown through windscreens. Of course, on odd occasions, it may have been better had victims been thrown through windscreens because that would have resulted in their receiving a more minor type of injury.

A wide variety of injuries occur as a result of motor vehicle accidents. Paraplegics are a burden on society. Some people say that the answer is to carry out more patrols and to place more policemen on the road. A policeman could be stationed alongside the road every five miles. That would be admirable if he was given the means to apprehend fast and dangerous drivers. Undoubtedly, that would reduce the road toll.

We live in an age of electronics. It is possible for us to put astronauts onto the moon and for them to walk in space. People can fly model aeroplanes and race small cars by remote control. Remote control by electronics does not create any problems. We must adopt the technology that exists. Instead of putting a policeman every five miles along the road, we should put policemen in the form of a electronic governor into motor vehicles. In that way, the policeman would be the governor.

I have never spoken about governing engine speed under all circumstances, such as governing engine speed in low gear, but I have spoken about governing engine speed in top gear. The maximum road speed of all vehicles for every situation could be governed. The speed limit in the suburbs could be governed to no more than 50 km/h, and the speed in outer areas could be governed to no more than 100 km/h. It would be possible to limit the speed to 80 km/h in other areas. The installation of a simple device would be required. All that would be needed would be a few wires placed under the road that would emit a signal that would change the governor. Alternatively, a device could be fitted to a car radio.

The argument that is always put forward, against my suggestion, is that someone might want additional speed to get out of trouble. That means that they must be allowed to break the law to get out of trouble. If the only way that they can get out of trouble is by breaking the law, the law should be amended to increase the speed limit. However, that is not desirable. Until a system such as the one that I have outlined is developed, the road toll will never be reduced.

I have said in the past—I will repeat it now—that many old model cars just cannot travel at high speed. I have seen persons driving Land Rovers at 55 mph. They do not try to pass another car at 60 mph. They say, "This is a Land Rover; it just won't do more than 55 wound up." They just pull in behind the other vehicle and stay out of trouble. They get into trouble only if they drive off the side of the road or do something stupid. The suspension of vehicles of that type does not allow them to travel at 55 mph in all circumstances.

However, speed is the problem. Members from country areas will say, "We need to cover the ground faster than 60 mph."

Dr Lockwood: You will roll them over.

Mr MOORE: I am not speaking about a four-wheel drive vehicle; I am speaking about any vehicle.

I do not mind if members of the community are given a licence to drive faster. In the first instance, I would be quite happy if every Tom, Dick and Harry who applied for a licence to drive faster were given a licence to drive faster. If a comparison could be made between accidents involving vehicles to which governors had been fitted and accidents involving vehicles to which governors were not fitted, it would be seen that governors should be fitted to reduce the road toll.

I have asked the Minister and his predecessors to do something about that. Last time I received the reply, "I will govern your car." Govern my car! It is about 20 years old. It is capable of doing the speed limit, but fitting a governor to it would not prove anything under modern conditions. I would be happy for a governor to be fitted to it, but it would not prove anything. The Government is prepared to introduce legislation to lower the blood alcohol level from .08 to .05. It will throw the book at people and gaol them. The Government should carry out an exercise on about 10 or 12 of its own vehicles. If the Government feels that it would be unsafe to carry out that exercise, volunteers should be recruited.

I am sure that it would not be unsafe. These days, everything can be done on a fail-safe principle. At the present time, if the spring on the throttle breaks, or the linkage breaks, it could mean that the throttle will remain open. It is no more unsafe to have a car governed than to have a faulty fitting on the car itself. Once again I make this plea to the Minister. I realise that what I am suggesting will not be implemented until I am appointed Minister for Transport. And I guess that I have to wait a little while before that happens. First I have to form my own party and get back into Parliament.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Do you reckon a governor should have been put on the Liberal Party last week-end?

Mr MOORE: I am not going to debate that here. On another occasion I will have a word or two to say about that matter.

The Minister is concerned about road safety. As yet he does not go along with my suggestion about governing, but the day will come. He is thinking, and in conjunction with the Minister for Police he has introduced the "yellow monsters" in the Highway Patrol. They will have some useful effect, so long as the Minister does not put hoods behind the wheel. Just like anywhere else, the Police Force has hoods in it. I hope that the Minister for Police, in conjunction with the Minister for Transport, ensures that the Highway Patrol officers are seen by the public as being helpful to people. They are there to help people, not to pinch them.

Better signposting in areas of confused traffic is called for. A stranger driving into Brisbane or any other city has no hope of picking out a signpost in an area of confused traffic and then interpreting it. All the signposting on the freeways and elsewhere in Brisbane is based upon the presumption that John Citizen has a sound local knowledge of the area. The signs simply show "Elizabeth Street", "PA Hospital" or something similar. They do not state a destination. A stranger to Brisbane simply has no idea where to go. He is confronted by confused traffic and badly designed signs.

Again I ask the Minister to embark upon the exercise of asking a stranger to Brisbane to drive into the city from an outlying area, such as Southport, and of watching his confusion closely. If he suggests that a sign should be erected in a certain location, a sign should be erected there. Signs are erected by persons with too much local knowledge. The lack of understanding on the part of motorists who are strangers to the city contributes to the high accident rate.

In the time remaining, I turn to the Railway Department, which the Minister administers very well. Like every other department, in the Railway Department efficiency should start at the top. If my understanding is correct, when Mr Goldston retires the new commissioner will be appointed from outside the Railway Department. Unless the fellow is an absolute genius, he will not be able to head a department that has as many employees as the Railway Department. The man best fitted to take up the position of commissioner is either a man within the Queensland Railway Department or one from a Railway Department in another State or even British Railways. The appointee certainly should not be some world-beater from outside industry. The man who is appointed to the position should know the railways and railway matters. The Railway Department is a specialised business. I worked in the railways for 21 years.

Mr Powell: Would you take the job?

Mr MOORE: I will be back in this Assembly. I might have been "disendorsed", but I am still the member for Windsor.

There is always a tendency for people to believe that the grass is always greener on the other side; but no man is a prophet in his own country or a hero to his butler. A person does not appoint to positions people whom he knows very well because he knows all their weaknesses. I say to the Minister that the person to be appointed as Commissioner for Railways on this occasion should not come from outside the service. I ask the Minister to give due consideration to that matter when he is making the appointment.

I pay a tribute to the employees in the Railway Department. They are rubbished to some extent, but I know them well. The odd railway employee who has a chip on his shoulder or is discontented should resign. Although some employees may play up a little bit on some occasions, generally speaking, they are dedicated and excellent workers.

The Minister is pushing forward with electrification to save the cost of diesel fuel and to benefit the State. I have no objection to that, but it would be a sad day if the Railway Department, in electrifying the railways, did not maintain a strong fleet of diesel engines to use at times of natural disasters and breakdowns. Electric trains and, in some instances, diesel engines cannot travel through flooded areas. Steam engines are the only ones able to operate safely in flooded areas.

The Minister should be selective in appointing the staff who deal with the public.

(Time expired.)

Mr POWELL (Isis) (2.43 p.m.): The Estimates before us today interest many members. Most of us are involved in transport. Very few members do not have some contact with the Transport Department or the Railway Department. Consequently, every member is interested in this area of responsibility. So I think that we all should be concerned about the administration of the departments under the Minister's control.

Of course, the largest department is the Railway Department. The Minister keeps us up to date with what he has planned for the department. I believe that most members would support the Minister in his attempt to make the Railway Department more efficient and more capable of meeting the needs of Queensland today. There are areas of inefficiency as well as areas of efficiency in the Railway Department. Of course, what needs to be done is to use the areas of efficiency as examples to get rid of some of the areas of inefficiency.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the railway system is a transport system, and it must serve the people. The emphasis must be on "serve the people", because if it does not serve the people it is not doing as the Government would want it to. It must be recognised also that the railway system, in serving people, would not always make a profit. In particular, it should be used to give a service to those who live in isolated parts of the State.

I would always support the proposition that the railway system should be used for the carriage of large and dangerous goods, firstly, to take them off the road and, secondly, to serve those who are having such items shifted. It annoys me greatly—I think it annoys every other road user—that there is such a multiplicity of large and wide loads on the Bruce Highway, in particular, but also on other highways throughout the State, forcing motorists to stop to allow them to pass. That is not so bad for those meeting such a loaded vehicle coming from the opposite direction, but when a motorist catches up to one going in the same direction he can be held up for an hour, as has happened to me on a number of occasions. Most of those loads are far too wide to be carried by rail transport, but surely there needs to be a rethink about the way our roads are used.

An investigation into the Railway Department has my support, and I look forward to positive results from the investigation. Once some of the recommendations of the report become public, there will be those who will go into a frenzy about them. A similar response is evident to the Davidson report into telecommunications in Australia. Just because the report to the Federal Government has some parts that people regard as adverse, public meetings are being called and people are being worked up into a great frenzy about something that is merely a report to the Government. Every time a report is made to a Government, the feeling of some people is that the Government should accept the report in toto. I would like to see the community move away from such a stance. It makes it very difficult for Governments to investigate matters if people get all excited when the recommendations are made public. There is no reason for excitement.

I note that the Commissioner for Railways is to retire. I, too, congratulate him for the work that he has done for Queensland through the Railway Department. I am deeply grateful to him, as I think every Queenslanders should be.

Mr Moore: I omitted to say that. Will you make mention that I think so also?

Mr POWELL: I am sure that that will be recorded.

The job of commissioner is not an easy one. Mr Goldston has carried the job through with a great deal of ability and to the benefit of the State, which is what we are really all employed to do. When a new person is appointed to the task, he will have no easy job. Running such a mammoth network of transport is far from easy.

I find it rather incongruous that the Minister's responsibilities include road safety and the licensing of drivers. The continuing road toll worries us all. We all look for ways to reduce the road toll. All sorts of ideas bob up. Probably the first thing we should be looking at is the quality of the teaching of drivers. Many high schools include driver-training programs in their curricula. Many private driving schools are allegedly training drivers. However, if the teachers do not have correct driving habits themselves, they will never be able to teach young persons to adopt positive driving techniques.

Mr Simpson interjected.

Mr POWELL: The other thing, as the honourable member for Cooroora said, is the right facilities.

I am heartened by some of the driver-training programs at schools in my electorate, as well as other schools throughout the State. Usually those schools use cars that have been given to them by one of the major manufacturers. The cars have dual controls and are set up for driver-training, so a good program is provided. I wonder if any figures have ever been taken out to indicate how many people who have been trained at high school have ultimately been involved in a serious road accident. Perhaps I should put it the more positive way: How many have not been involved in an accident? However, whatever the statistics reveal, it is important for that sort of follow-up to be done because it is part of the evaluation of such courses. Too often the course is evaluated by merely noting the number who obtain a licence. I do not think that is the real test. The real test is the worth of the driver once he gets behind the wheel.

I ask the Minister to consider very carefully the way in which licences are issued and what happens after they are issued. I wonder how many people my age or older, who have been driving for 30 or 40 years, would be able to pass a test today, if that test was set accurately? How many of us who think we are good drivers and drive a great deal really know the road rules and really obey them? That must be the first criterion for road safety: knowing the rules and obeying them. Road safety authorities need to take much more notice of the actions of existing drivers and existing licensing procedures. It is important that new drivers be given correct attitudes towards driving.

Mr Moore: Do you think the high school teachers should give them an examination on the road rules as part of their Senior examination?

Mr POWELL: I certainly see nothing wrong with that. It should also be done at Year 10, the Junior level. Those children are 16 years of age and are using the roads—hopefully they are not driving on them—and it will not be too long before they commence driving. It is most important that they be able to recognise the dangers of driving.

If I am pulled up and asked to produce my licence, I cannot produce it because I seldom carry it with me. It is such a flimsy document that if I carried it every day it would soon disintegrate. I see no reason why laminated licences cannot be introduced. These days that is a fairly cheap process. Quite frankly, I would like to see the holder's photograph on the document as well as his signature.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: If I were the member for Brisbane Central I would not want my photograph on it, either, but undoubtedly the majority of people would like their photograph on their licences because that would be a positive means of identification. The document could be kept reasonably small. It would be a means of identification that could not be falsified.

Mr Moore: Certainly not easily.

Mr POWELL: That is right.

Very shortly in Queensland legislation will come into effect to lower the amount of alcohol that one can have in his blood and legally drive. I use the word "legally" because that is an important word. I am certain that anybody who drinks should not drive. That has been borne out by a number of experiences—not personal experiences of my own driving but from observations made while I have been on the road. Like most members of this Parliament who represent fairly large country electorates, I am on the road a great deal, especially at night-time.

At this stage, I should like to refer to some very interesting tables that relate to the days of the week and times of the day when it is dangerous to drive. The thread of the argument in the tables ties the accident rate to alcohol. There are those who do not believe that that is so, but the tables prove them wrong. I seek leave to have the first table incorporated in "Hansard"

(Leave granted.)

H. Significant days—Queensland—1979-80

Points to note:

Friday, Saturday and Sunday accounted for 64.6% of all positive breathalyser or blood alcohol test results performed on road accident victims in Queensland, 1979-80;

There is a similar trend in other States.

Table 9: Results of Breathalyser or Blood Alcohol Tests of Road Users by Day on which Accident Occurred (Including Persons Killed), Queensland, 1979-80

Breathalyser or blood analysis (a)	Day accident occurred							Total
	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	
Negative	31	24	37	35	36	40	41	244
Positive								
0.01 to 0.04	6	4	5	10	12	14	15	66
0.05	2	3	3	1	10	6	7	32
0.06	1	3	1	4	6	6	10	31
0.07	8	9	6	8	15	11	11	68
0.08	3	4	3	4	4	13	6	37
0.09	2	4	3	5	17	10	18	59
0.10	5	2	9	7	14	19	12	68
0.11	5	4	10	9	21	13	10	72
0.12	11	7	6	8	15	21	17	85
0.13	6	4	10	13	23	14	15	85
0.14	7	10	7	2	27	41	20	114
0.15 and above ..	85	68	93	120	236	301	220	1 123
Total Positive ..	141	122	156	191	400	469	361	1 840
All Tests	172	146	193	226	436	509	402	2 084
Number of Days ..	53	52	52	52	52	52	53	366

(a) Grams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

(11) Road Traffic Accidents, 1979-80 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 9404.3).

Mr POWELL: The table shows positive readings from .01 to .15 and then relates those readings to each day of the week. It is interesting to note that Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays accounted for 64.6 per cent of all positive breathalyser or blood alcohol tests performed on road accident victims in Queensland in 1979-80. There is a similar trend in other States. The difference is marked. Over that period, 400 people were killed on Fridays, 469 on Saturdays and 361 on Sundays. The other days run from 141 killed on Mondays, 122 on Tuesdays—the safest day—156 on Wednesdays and 191 on Thursdays. That is fairly conclusive evidence that the week-end is the worst time for alcohol related accidents and alcohol affected drivers.

Mr Vaughan: What about the number of vehicles on the road at the particular time?

Mr POWELL: The honourable member for Nudgee raises an interesting point, and I will come back to it in a few moments, if I have time. What he said is certainly pertinent to the argument.

The next table I seek leave to have incorporated in "Hansard" relates to the time of day at which accidents occurred.

(Leave granted.)

I. Significant Times of Day—Queensland—1979-80

Points to note:

The total number of positive results for the year was 1 840. Of these 1,557 (84.6%) were from accidents that occurred between 4.00 p.m. and 2.00 a.m. There is a similar trend in other States.

Table 10: Results of Breathalyser or Blood Alcohol Tests of Road Users by Time of Day at which Accident Occurred (Including Persons Killed), Queensland, 1979-80.

Breathalyser or blood analysis (a)	Time of day accident occurred												Total
	After mid-night to 2 am	After 2 am to 4 am	After 4 am to 6 am	After 6 am to 8 am	After 8 am to 10 am	After 10 am to noon	After noon to 2 pm	After 2 pm to 4 pm	After 4 pm to 6 pm	After 6 pm to 8 pm	After 8 pm to 10 pm	After 10 pm to mid-night	
Negative	10	4	10	15	11	11	24	25	49	33	21	31	244
Positive													
0-01 to 0-04	8	3	..	..	..	2	6	7	9	13	6	12	66
0-05	6	..	1	..	..	..	2	3	4	7	3	6	32
0-06	1	1	..	1	..	1	2	2	5	7	3	8	31
0-07	9	4	1	2	..	2	2	7	7	11	9	14	68
0-08	5	3	..	..	..	1	..	1	7	5	8	7	37
0-09	9	5	2	2	..	..	1	3	4	18	5	10	59
0-10	10	9	..	..	..	..	..	4	11	12	4	18	68
0-11	7	4	1	..	..	..	..	5	10	15	13	17	72
0-12	17	6	4	1	1	..	1	5	12	18	6	14	85
0-13	12	4	..	1	..	..	2	3	14	17	13	19	85
0-14	14	7	..	..	..	..	4	7	12	25	19	26	114
0-15 and above	131	46	11	4	2	4	22	58	133	277	190	245	1 123
Total Positive	229	92	20	11	3	10	42	105	228	425	279	396	1 840
All tests	239	96	30	26	14	21	66	130	277	458	300	427	2 084

(a) Grams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

(12) Road Traffic Accidents, 1979-80 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 9404.3).

Mr POWELL: The table lists a number of categories. It is interesting to note that the total number of positive breathalyser tests was 1 840, and that 1 557, or 84.6 per cent, of those related to accidents that occurred between 4 p.m. and 2 a.m. When "Hansard" is printed, members will be able to see the grouping.

Let me go back to the time of day at which accidents occur. The table shows that the majority of fatal accidents occur at the week-end. The other table shows that the worst time of day for such accidents is between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The honourable member for Nudgee suggested that the number of vehicles on the road is relevant. But the point is that, generally speaking, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and much of Friday the people who use the roads are professional drivers—taxi drivers, truck drivers and others—who are used to driving and who drive often. At the week-end one sees on the roads many more people who drive rarely but who are prepared to drink and then drive. They have much less appreciation than the professional driver of the difference that alcohol makes to their driving. That is an important point in road safety that should be considered.

The other point that should be made—I believe it is often missed—is that people ignore the tedium of driving. Many accidents occur on country roads, sometimes on completely straight stretches, and one wonders how on earth a driver has had an accident. The simple answer is that the driver has gone to sleep or has gone off the road because of inattention or because he has been looking at something other than the road. It is clear that there is tedium attached to driving long distances. Many people who live in Brisbane, for example, just do not understand that if they drive their cars for three or four hours, they become tired. What is more, they become bored because they are just sitting there driving. They do not recognise the tedium that is involved. If they pull into a wayside hotel and have a few drinks and then take off again, the tedium is multiplied by tiredness caused by the relaxing effect of the alcohol. There is a multiplier effect.

Mr Vaughan: What is your solution?

Mr POWELL: I outlined my solution at the beginning of my speech. People who drink ought not drive. It is as simple as that.

The only other solution is for people to recognise the problems, so that what is required is an education program. That gets back to what I said before, that is, driving instruction at school. Children should be taught to recognise that it is not wise to drive for eight hours straight and that to do so will result in a driver suffering tedium or losing concentration.

The Queensland Road Safety Council produced a small sticker reading, "Road safety begins with you."

Mr Booth: A good one, too.

Mr POWELL: I do not think so, because I think that road safety "begins with me." In saying, "Road safety begins with you", the sticker refers to the other fellow. It does not recognise that road safety "begins with me." Not one honourable member believes that he is likely to have an accident when next he enters his car. People are always of the opinion that it is somebody else who will have an accident. The slogan, "Road safety begins with you" shifts the onus from the person who is most responsible for recognising the problem. It is important to tell the person behind the wheel that road safety begins with him. It is those who are driving who must begin the process. There are many good rules that we should obey, but we do not obey them.

One of the best innovations is the introduction of a highway patrol. Nothing will have a greater effect in steadying traffic than drivers seeing a police car.

Mr Vaughan: You get tired if you drive too slowly for too long.

Mr POWELL: I do not get the honourable member's point.

Mr Vaughan: Bob Katter said that if you drive too slowly for too long you get tired.

Mr POWELL: I agree completely; but certain matters must be recognised, and they will be recognised only if people are educated to recognise them. People who do not drive regularly often do not realise that driving over long distances can be tiring. They think that there is nothing to it, whereas there is a lot to it. A driver must remain alert at all times. He cannot do so if his senses are dulled by driving for a long time, particularly in hot weather, or by alcohol. It is as clear as that. More police cars should be put onto the roads and drivers should be educated to understand the workings of their vehicles and what can happen on a road. People should be made to understand that road safety begins with every single one of us—not "you", but "me".

(Time expired.)

Mr JONES (Cairns) (3.4 p.m.): The Minister for Transport gave the Committee a resume of events in the railways under the headings of tenders, construction, planning, summaries, volumes, haulages, tonnages, developments, assets, rolling-stock and electrification, but he did not give us an insight into the workings of the Railway Department. He adopted an attitude of, "Theirs not to reason why." Nothing much was said about the expenditure of \$677.3m or the revenue of \$520.3m. He did not comment on the net deficit of \$157m. Credits were limited for the overall increases in goods and passenger traffic.

I think it is a very important aspect of railway administration that there was increased goods and passenger transport this year. The Minister has advised us of the working expenses. He said that \$588,050,664 was an increase of \$101,924,439. The Minister continued to emphasise that those expenditure increases resulted largely from salary and wages costs. On 28 September 1982, in "The Courier-Mail", it is reported that the Minister stated that, compared with last year, the expenditure resulting largely from wages was increased by \$44.5m to a total of \$435m. Today, he reiterated that in his speech as the principal reason for the variation in expenditure, compared with last year. He stated that, specifically, it could be attributed to basic wage variations, which showed an increase of \$21.5m, and award variations of \$42.2m. Actually, expenditure on wages and salaries was \$43,141,799 over the Budget. On the surface, it could be and has been claimed that those increases resulted from excessive union demands. In reality, the Government under-allocated that section, I would suggest, to cook the books.

This year the Government has budgeted for an increase of a mere \$20,722,312, or 5.1 per cent—less than half of the expected inflation rate for wage and salary increases. Therefore, the Government will either have a blow-out in its wage and salary expenditure or undertake real cuts in the railway work-force. That is the way in which I interpret the Minister's figures. The Opposition believes that the Government has chosen the latter more insidious option.

The decision by the Government to use P A Australia to inquire into the operation of the railways is a smoke-screen. The holding of the inquiry is an attempt to blame railway management for the deficit.

The Minister and the Government are trying to absolve themselves from any responsibility for mistakes and problems in the railways which Opposition members maintain arise from Government mistakes of great magnitude. For example, the Railway Department is not permitted to determine its own pricing policy. For every tonne/kilometre of traffic carried by rail in 1981-82, the cost was 3.7c. Under the Government's pricing policy, the revenue was 3.2c per tonne/kilometre. That is an average loss of 0.5c tonne/kilometre. That has been caused by Government policy and not by bad management or administration by the Railway Department. Last Thursday, I gave notice of a question to the Minister in which I pointed out that when the operating deficit of \$67,785,937 for the year ended 30 June 1982 was adjusted to 1979 figures, it would be discovered that the figure would be reduced by approximately \$4m, or 7 per cent.

The significant components in the Railway Department's deficit were the loan fund interest and redemption payments, which are beyond the control of the Railway Department's administration, given that loan decisions are Government decisions and not administrative or Railway Department decisions.

The Opposition understands the corporate objective of the Railway Department as enunciated in its corporate plan for the provision of a balanced budget and transport services. Opposition members believe in that type of document. However, we believe that it under-stresses the Railway Department's community service obligations.

Such is the Government's misunderstanding of the department's community service obligations, that it casts a reflection on the Government's policy. It simply does not understand its role in public transport. It certainly does not understand its obligations in railway community service.

The following is the fundamental principle of transportation and, in particular, railway transportation: the railways are a public utility and they provide a service to many areas. It is not possible to give that service and to have it utilised in line with the private enterprise axiom, "The user pays". The railways must provide a service sometimes at a loss and always at a loss in the very remote areas of the State that are not able to support a particular line but nevertheless need the service provided by the railways. The provision of such services is a community obligation. The very reason for the existence of the railways as a public utility is that they provide a public service. The Railway Department is not a private profit-making company; it was never seen to be. Transportation is not seen to be. Railways were not laid for the purpose of making a profit as a private company does.

An Honourable Member: Does the Police Force make a profit?

Mr JONES: No, the Police Force does not make a profit; nor do the Main Roads Department and many other Government instrumentalities make a profit. They are all utilised by the public and they are not private profit-making concerns.

Mr Lane: That is a defeatist attitude, though.

Mr JONES: Not entirely. The Minister's attitude underscores my comments; he does not understand the community service obligation of the Railway Department. The current inquiry into the Railway Department appears to be nothing more than a \$360,000 smoke-screen.

Mr FitzGerald: Don't you think there are some areas that could be turned to profitability?

Mr JONES: If the honourable member reads the Railway Department's annual report, he will learn where the profitability is. However, the overall obligation of the Railway Department is to provide a community service; it is not to provide a profit-making service. If the honourable member likes to blame wages, he should at least be honest about it.

Mr Lane: The "Sunlander" is a community service operation.

Mr JONES: I shall talk about that in a moment.

Mr Lane: We are meeting our obligation there, aren't we, at a loss for the benefit of Cairns?

Mr JONES: Wait a moment! If the Minister is arguing about losses in the Railway Department, he should look at electrification and the metropolitan services. Let him compare the losses incurred in Brisbane with the earnings in the Northern Division. For years the Northern Division has earned a profit, in contrast with the losses incurred in the Minister's beloved metropolitan area.

Mr Lane: That is another community service obligation that we are meeting, in Brisbane.

Mr JONES: Well, there we are! The Minister is admitting that the Railway Department has a community service obligation in the metropolitan area and he is saying that it does not have a community service obligation to the people of Cairns and to those of the remote areas in the Gulf country and the West.

Mr Lane: You referred to the "Sunlander".

Mr JONES: Of course the "Sunlander" has to be run, together with many other services.

Mr Lane: Where is the basis of your complaint?

Mr JONES: I am only asking why the Minister is conducting this inquiry. I shall return to the report and discuss it in detail.

Mr Lane: We are not running an inquiry into passenger services.

Mr JONES: I know what the Minister is conducting the inquiry into, and I shall come onto that if he will allow me. However, he is missing the point about community obligations.

Mr Lane: Passenger services are not mentioned in that inquiry.

Mr JONES: I shall return to that later.

After the Ford, Bacon and Davis report was presented, the Government reduced all the passenger services in the country, and what a mess that was. I believe that after the report of this present inquiry is presented, the Government will abandon the key factor of meeting its community obligations. It will hand over some aspects of the railways to private enterprise.

The mere fact that these people are conducting the inquiry gives rise to our suspicions. The R. Travers Morgan rail cost model is being used as an excuse in the other States for not meeting community service obligations. Last week, when the Opposition asked the Minister questions about whether the Government would require the consultants to examine the concepts of private, social and community costs in drawing up their recommendations, the Minister could not, or would not, answer those questions. Questions of some detail asked of the Minister on this important subject were treated with a degree of contempt. That is peculiar to some Ministers, but certainly it would not be a matter of ignorance with this Minister. Because of that, our suspicions are aroused.

Is the Minister trying to hide the fact that retrenchments will take place in the railways, that lucrative rolling-stock repair business will be transferred to companies that politically patronise this Government, or that there will be a reduction in country passenger and freight services? Those are the matters about which we are concerned. What is the real message behind the 5.1 per cent increase in the Budget allocation for railway wages and salaries when the inflation rate is more than double that percentage? Why has the Minister not budgeted to keep pace with the inflation rate? Or is this just an example of the incompetence for which this Government is well known? Will it try to blame the railway management again?

I was pleased to hear the Minister say today that there is no risk to the job security of railwaymen. But is that the legal position or just a lot of jargon? The Minister has not specifically said that he will not attack the job security of railwaymen. He has created doubts and has not dispelled them. When confronted with questions, he seems to give hesitant and furtive assurances.

The presentation of the Ford, Bacon and Davis report of the early 1960s was one of the reasons why I entered politics. When referring to the inquiry being conducted by P A Australia, the Minister said that its aim is to achieve greater efficiency and to provide a better service at less cost. That is what the Government said in the '60s; and it tore up railway lines willy-nilly. It tore up the Mt Garnet line. A few years later it was looking at the possibility of building a railway line to Greenvale, which is just over the hill from Mt Garnet. The Government tore up the line to the Gold Coast and the lines to the north and west of Mareeba. It did not provide a community service.

Mr Lane: The Forsayth line is still there.

Mr JONES: Yes, but that was the next one to go. It was only when the graziers in the then Country Party took action that that line was saved. The Government destroyed

the morale of the railwaymen in the '60s, and it is doing the same thing today. It has also destroyed the confidence that the people had in the railways. In some areas, when the Government tore up the railway lines, it destroyed the towns as well.

It is surprising to me that the consultants will go even further and investigate the effects of industrial agreements. That is not helpful in fostering morale amongst railway employees, who want an assurance that they will not suffer. They are concerned, and the community is concerned. I invite the Minister to read some of the Press reports back in the '60s, after the release of the Ford, Bacon and Davis report, and suggest that he sharpen up his public relations. The report should not be private.

Perhaps what is needed is an overall public inquiry into every aspect of transportation, not just the railways, in Queensland. There should be an investigation into a multiplicity of problems in the transport industry and the difficulties confronting transportation in Queensland today. It would show that problems exist not only in the railways but also in the transport industry generally. That ought to be done instead of award conditions being attacked. Untold harm has been done and confidence has been eroded. It will take a long time to repair the damage that has been done.

The Minister accuses the Opposition of not being constructive and not responding to a request for suggestions. Let me respond. There is a need to enlarge the marketing section and to monitor increases or decreases in demand. There is a need to define the Public Service obligation. The Minister has one interpretation; I have another. The Government should define that obligation. This is an ideal time to upgrade the permanent way. Being labour intensive, such work would reduce unemployment. I am pleased that \$1m has been set aside to improve the accommodation of employees. However, there is a great back-log in that avenue of effort and a need for much greater improvement.

The public's use of the railways ought to be encouraged. If it were, expenditure on roads would be reduced, as would traffic accidents, traffic congestion, police expenditure and hospital and ambulance expenditure. There is a need to increase the range and quality of service in many areas of the railways. For example, I can see no reason why the railways should not be involved in door-to-door delivery—fast and more frequent service programs—instead of leaving that to private enterprise. Not enough marketing research has been done within the Railway Department or the transport industry in general. If the railway were upgraded, the number of semi-trailers on the highway would be reduced.

I do not want to proceed further without paying a tribute to the retiring commissioner, Jim Goldston, for whom I have a great deal of admiration. I also pay a tribute to Jack Neeson, an honourable officer whom I knew when Jack Duggan was the Minister.

(Time expired.)

Mr BERTONI (Mt Isa) (3.24 p.m.): The Minister has assumed a mantle of responsibility that reaches out and touches almost every aspect of life in our modern community. Expansion in Queensland today, in all its aspects, has placed a heavy strain on anyone with such a responsibility. I thank the Minister for Transport for the way in which he has handled his portfolio. I will briefly run through the major aspects of that portfolio, dealing firstly with road transport.

The progress and development of this State is a matter of record. It is progressing faster than any other State. New industries are continually being established. Senator Flo Bjelke-Petersen and the Premier have recently stated in meaningful terms the expansion we are witnessing in this State under the title "Queensland 2000". That is the Government's thrust to improve the lives and standards of all Queenslanders so that by the year 2000 the State will surpass not only the rest of Australia but also the rest of the world as a place in which to live and to bring up a family.

I will now consider some of the facts and mention the major projects that have been established in Queensland. Queensland now has 45 per cent of the nation's major projects, and last year 19 000 new businesses opened in the State. Queensland attracts 40 per cent of all foreign investment into Australia, and during the last 25 years, under the coalition Government, the population has increased by 63 per cent and the work-force has expanded by 79 per cent. Those figures indicate that similar increases will occur, despite the prophets of gloom and doom on the other side of the Chamber.

The State's roads now carry much more traffic, particularly heavy trucks. The inadequacies of the State's roads, despite the valiant efforts of the Minister for Main

Roads (Mr Hinze) within his funding limitations, have become apparent, as too has the rising road toll. That, of course, falls squarely in the lap of the Minister for Transport.

In recent times everybody has heard a great deal about the rising road toll. Strong moves by the Minister's department to institute checks on the roadworthiness of big trucks have revealed the inherent dangers to the public, particularly from big trucks from interstate. The Minister's action has had a very real effect on the reduction of the accident rate and the effect of the introduction of the lower blood alcohol limit has yet to be felt. However, one must be optimistic that these measures will be effective. If only one life is saved as a result, the moves will have been worth while.

From an answer to a question that I asked of the Minister in relation to trucks, I note that 7000 operators have been charged with overloading, most of them being from interstate. A great deal of dodging of weight scales goes on, and that is assisted by the snide use of CB radios, which is something the Minister should investigate. Code words are being used by truck drivers to warn others about the location of inspectors. Although it is difficult to stop that type of thing happening, unless something is done a large number of big trucks will still be overloaded on our roads, with the attendant risk to life and limb. Fortunately, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Police have now instituted the Highway Patrol, which will pose quite a headache to those truck drivers who overload as well as to motorists who do not obey the rules of the road. I place on record my personal appreciation for their efforts.

I suggest to the Minister one other safety measure that should be implemented as soon as possible. I believe that the fitting of mud-flaps should be compulsory on all vehicles. One of the first things that motorists visiting Mt Isa do is replace shattered windscreens on their vehicles. Most of us have experienced vehicles travelling in the opposite direction throwing up stones from their wheels. They virtually become lethal weapons and hit the windscreen with the impact of a bullet. The very least that can happen is a shattered windscreen, but there is a reasonable chance that pedestrians will be struck and suffer serious injury. Motor-cyclists are especially vulnerable. The lack of adequate mud-flaps is a serious road hazard. I have noted that although many vehicles have a form of mud-flap fitted, it is inadequate because it is too short. Apart from the danger of flying stones, a shower of mud may obliterate a driver's view so that he is temporarily out of control of his vehicle. I wonder how many accidents have been caused in that way.

I see no possible objection to the compulsory fitting of mud-flaps. I am sure that insurance companies would support the move and perhaps reduce premiums if mud-flaps were fitted. It would be yet another positive move in keeping down the road toll. I know of at least two motor-cyclists who were involved in accidents that were caused by stones hitting them while they were travelling along a bush road or on a road that had only recently been resurfaced. I urge the Minister to give very serious and earnest consideration to this matter. I should add that vehicles travelling well within legal speed limits often throw up stones.

I now turn to the Queensland Railways. Allied with the enormous expansion of this State and the establishment of satellite townships which must arise as the result of mining development, we constantly find problems with rail transport. It takes a lot of money and activity to expand our rail services. The recent upgrading of our rail communication has been commendable. Funds for this development are a constant headache, and we now find that this headache will probably get worse as a result of excessive demands for shorter working weeks and the resultant increased cost to the public. We have, on the one hand, a constant demand for the expansion of our rail services, and on the other, an almost daily increase in the cost of that expansion. At the same time the daily operation of rail services must be continued to enable the community to get to and from work and to ensure the delivery of materials to various industries. Then there is the need to take primary and secondary industry production to various destinations. Without an efficient rail service industries such as Mount Isa Mines would find it very difficult to carry on because its operations are directed towards supplying the needs of home industries and export markets.

The Minister and his department, despite the sort of overwhelming odds we have seen recently, are doing a good job, but there are a few areas I would like to see looked at. Our standards for passenger travel are improving all the time. Incidentally, that is not the case in New South Wales, where the present objective is to reduce standards with

the recent announcement of a \$500m loss in railway revenue and the cutting out of many of the luxuries one expects in rail travel. But that is what one would expect in a State run, or should I say mismanaged, by a broke Labor Government.

There are just a few suggestions I want to make to the Minister for Transport and the Minister in charge of police. Vandalism on our trains is reaching alarming proportions. There is a Police Railway Squad which, like most parts of the Police Force, is undermanned. One again that comes back to a lack of funds necessary to provide more police. However, the cost of railway vandalism is going through the roof. A look at vandalised carriages reveals a shocking story of ripped seats, damaged windows and doors, handles ripped off and general mayhem. The tragedy is that much of this damage, which costs millions of dollars and many hours of labour to repair—which should be devoted to maintenance—is caused by irresponsible schoolchildren and straight-out hoons. Many of the children come from good homes and go to good schools, but they are no different to roughnecks who get their kicks from vandalism. Many of these children are caught only after the expenditure of a lot of time and effort but, regrettably, they get off with a light fine and so are able to go out and do the same thing again. Some of these destructive idiots have been caught damaging compartments in which the public travel, but they still receive only a light punishment—that is if they are punished at all. We will not see any diminution in vandalism until more severe punishment is imposed. We would be better off if some members of the judiciary imposed the full penalties that are presently available. Far less sympathy and more harshness is needed.

It has been suggested elsewhere that parents should be made responsible for the damage caused by their children. That might not be practicable, but it is certainly worth thinking about. It would be wonderful if a rule could be introduced that anyone caught damaging public transport would be banned from using it in the future. I urge both Ministers to look at that idea in an attempt to prevent taxpayers' money being wasted.

What I am about to say might upset some smokers. I am not a smoker, but I am not a wowsler. More attention must be given to the provision of non-smoking compartments in trains, particularly those from country centres to the coast. At present smokers on those trains seem to have virtually an open go. There are simply no non-smoking compartments on country trains. However, I believe that all electric trains and all but the first and last carriages on all other passengers services in the Brisbane area are designated as non-smoking areas.

I have received many complaints in my electorate about that matter. I urge the Minister to look into it. The world is moving towards a non-smoking situation and public utilities must keep pace. The people who want to smoke may do so to their heart's content but compartments must be provided for their use. There is plenty of evidence to indicate that non-smokers do suffer from inhaling their smoke. Their wishes must be respected. It boils down to country travellers being given a fair go. There is no great difficulty in properly policing the use of smoking and non-smoking compartments.

I turn now to air services. I know that this matter does not necessarily come within the Minister's province but the people of my electorate are very upset about current developments in this area. It is essential that I acquaint the Minister with their thinking.

I refer particularly to Queensland Air. Some time ago western Queensland was informed of the plans of Queensland Air, formerly BPA, to take over the inland air services involving Townsville, Mt Isa, Longreach and Charleville, with connections to Brisbane. We heard much about the Metroliners. It boiled down to a scaled-down service with one pilot, no cabin services, no toilet facilities and so on. The main thrust of Queensland Air was to use country people to get a leg in on the major routes along the coast. TAA received subsidies to provide that service but, since Queensland Air appeared in the skies, its services have deteriorated.

It has cast off a lot of its work and given it to the small, local operators who are doing what Queensland Air should be doing. It will not be easy for the local operators who, whether they like it or not, have to take the rough with the smooth. In fact, it is doubtful whether they will be able to keep going when they fall on hard times. They deserve a lot more back-up.

We are still in a mess with western air services. It is high time that the needs of country people were adequately and positively met. Country people feel that they have been used by Queensland Air. Once again I urge the Minister to take a real look into

this matter before it is too late and the people in the western and north-western country areas are thrown onto the scrap-heap. I am sorry for being blunt but I feel very strongly about that issue.

I express my appreciation to the acting commissioner, Mr Neal Kent, and the staff of the Transport Department for their courteous and efficient service over the years. I am sorry to hear of the retirement of the Commissioner for Railways, Mr Jim Goldston. We are losing an excellent administrator with the ability to listen to and understand the needs of railway workers. We have heard a lot of criticism of railway workers but let me assure the Committee that much of it has been unwarranted. I have found them to be obliging, courteous and dedicated workers. They join with me and the other people in the Mt Isa electorate in wishing Mr Goldston a very happy retirement, and thanking him for a job well done.

I have read the ALP transport policy. I place on record that, in my opinion, it is another pie-in-the-sky exercise which promises everything under the sun without giving any indication of how it will be paid for. Many of the things the ALP says that it will do are already being done by the Government. Most of the things it says it will do call for more and more bureaucratic control. There is not one mention of private enterprise involvement. If Labor gets into power we can look forward to more and more taxes. The public must be warned. In the meantime, we can enjoy a Government that is doing things, which is much more positive than simply talking about them.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (3.40 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I support the Minister in the presentation of his Estimates. He holds a very important portfolio in terms of communication, transportation and the economics of commerce within this State. The efficiency of transport is a barometer that can be used to determine whether a community or a country is cohesive, efficient and effective, and whether it has a high standard of living. That can be observed in other parts of the world. Because Queensland has diverse areas and a large population, the transportation of passengers and parcel goods is not very profitable, especially where parcels are loaded and unloaded by railway employees.

Economies of scale are evident in the transport of grain and ore. When somebody else loads and unloads the goods and the railways looks after the trains, substantial profits are made. The revenue derived in that way is used to offset the cost of transporting passengers in the metropolitan area.

I commend the Government and the Minister for pressing ahead with the electrification of the railway system within the metropolitan area. The Government plans to extend electrification to the northern line, through my electorate, to Central Queensland and to other places where it is economical to do so. The Government has encouraged the marriage of road and rail activities in the interests of the community, the railways and road users.

Transport vehicles can be kept off the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast by encouraging road operators to send goods by rail and then to transport them from the railway depots on the Sunshine Coast. At present everything is loaded onto road transport vehicles, which travel along the highway. That adds to the congestion on the inadequate two-lane sections of the highway, and causes many deaths and injuries on them.

Unfortunately, I must criticise the Minister for reducing the speed of transports and other vehicles. That causes inexperienced and impatient drivers to take greater risks than they would normally take, with the result that further accidents take place. Arrangements should be made with the many transport operators who carry goods between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast so that the railways can earn more revenue. Some of the present arrangements with road and rail operators have reduced the number of transport vehicles on the Bruce Highway.

When the member for Mt Isa spoke about people smoking on public transport, he referred mainly to the railways. The time has come when smoking should be banned in public transport, such as taxis, buses and trains. It seems that the number of heavy smokers on trains must have increased recently, because I have received a spate of complaints about the incidence of smoking on the "Sunlander" and the "Capricornia". It spoils the trip of some passengers.

That is a shame. I am not too sure that smoking shortens anyone's life—it certainly does not prolong it—but it is annoying to other people. People can restrain themselves, as is shown in this Chamber. Here we see an excellent example of how people can go for lengthy periods without smoking.

Perhaps as an interim measure the Minister could look at providing a type of "sin bin" on trains—a small room measuring 6 ft by 6 ft set aside for smokers. They could go there and smoke to their hearts' content without annoying other passengers. Such a scheme would not be feasible on buses. Short journeys, particularly in the metropolitan area, would not warrant it.

In providing facilities at railway stations, greater consideration should be given to the needs of local industries, particularly the small manufacturers. Often they are not provided with adequate loading facilities. I know that, as the result of submissions by local members, this matter is being looked at. I thank the Railway Department for the consideration it has shown to date.

I thank the Minister for having come to my electorate as recently as a week ago and assisting in the matter of the leasing of railway property for shops and other purposes, such as for the historical society at Eumundi.

The Minister also looked at the passage of high-clearance vehicles in the Palmwoods area, where the present railway bridge over the road does not cope with high-clearance road transports. They are forced to make a detour involving a journey of an additional 13 km. Frequently, drivers of high transport vehicles get to the bridge only to find that their vehicles cannot get under it, so they are forced to drive back to the detour, and that involves an even greater distance. I hope that the Minister will try to find a solution to the problem. Perhaps the local council will have to be involved in making a contribution towards the erection of boom gates at a level crossing in Palmwoods. That would provide a satisfactory solution. I again thank the Minister for having come to the area to see the nature of the problem at first hand.

One of the Minister's important tasks is to oversee the transportation of schoolchildren, which is a very big business involving thousands of children and millions of dollars. The best arrangement has to be found so that children are not away from home for longer than is necessary. In Palmwoods, a group of kiddies have to wait for as long as three-quarters of an hour for a school bus. They are put down at the Palmwoods State School and have to wait for a bus to take them to the Nambour High School. In the intervening period they get up to all sorts of mischief such as throwing stones. A better arrangement than the present one has to be found. However, I know the whole matter is married to the payment of subsidies and to the provision of the most economical transport system. It is simply not possible to make an open payment for the provision of as many buses as are needed. Some economical compromise has to be found. The Education Department may have to assume responsibility for the control of the children. If no teacher takes responsibility for the children there is no insurance guarantee. That is a matter for another Minister, but it is something that the Government has to face. A teacher must be appointed, through an arrangement with the Education Department, so that the children are supervised and covered by some sort of insurance.

I appreciate the work that the Minister and his officers have done in meeting the taxi needs on the Sunshine Coast. They are moving towards providing a service for the public—and that is really what it is all about. Not everyone has his own car, and many people who come to the Sunshine Coast on holidays do not have their own cars. The Minister is moving towards providing a better taxi service for people on the Sunshine Coast.

Air transport is often not considered to be a State responsibility, but in fact it is, although airports and the safety aspects of aviation are matters for the Commonwealth Government. Intrastate services are the responsibility of this Government. Many people in this State travel by air. It must be remembered that the pioneer airline company in Australia was established in Queensland. That is another instance of Queensland leading Australia. Problems will always arise in trying to provide the best service for people in a State as large as Queensland.

People who own a private airport can say, "We will close it", or, "We will add an extra amount to the cost before you can use the airport." For the benefit of the people of Queensland, where traffic permits, we have to move to convert private airports to

public airports, or develop other airports that will handle the traffic. Providing service to the public is what counts, particularly in the tourist industry, which is so important in my area.

The Queensland Road Safety Council does a tremendous job, but it often does not receive any recognition in this State. Recently, officers of the council visited my area to discuss road safety matters relative to schools, buses and crossings. They have great expertise in that area.

Care on the roads must be kept constantly before the public because it is dangerous to travel on them. We must never let up on trying to get better-trained people on the roads. Basically, people learn to drive on the roads. We must train them to drive before they get onto them. Reference has been made to drink-driving, which is relevant to people's behaviour on the road, but we must move to train people better. People who are well trained will not drink and drive.

People are being trained to become better drivers at the driver-training centres at Mt Cotton and Gympie. I urge the Minister to experiment at those centres with pilot schemes, so that people will learn how to drive in adverse conditions, such as on slippery roads. Young people should be taught to drive before they leave school. When they get on to the road they think they can do anything in the world, and unfortunately they don't live very long.

We must constantly be aware of improving safety on our roads. Although road conditions are a factor, ironically very bad road conditions do not result in road accidents. People are so preoccupied with adverse conditions that they are forced to slow down to such an extent that people are not injured. When twisting, winding and often slow routes become faster thoroughfares with better alignment, for a whole range of reasons, but basically through bad driving habits, people kill themselves. However, with grade separation the road toll is reduced. We are moving slowly towards the completion of a four-lane highway between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. It cannot come quickly enough because many lives will be saved.

Reference has been made to speed. In Japan, where there is grade separation, the speed limit is 120 km/h. However, the additional 20 km/h is allowed only where there is grade separation. Under those circumstances the traffic flows much more freely and economically. Other than in those circumstances, I do not advocate raising the speed limits generally in this State. The roads are not good enough for it.

I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to safety in and around schools and the arrangements for controlling young people going to and coming home from school. More could be done to save the lives of our young people.

I commend the Minister for the work he and his officers are doing. May our Railways Commissioner have a very well-deserved, happy and healthy retirement. I support the Minister's presentation of his Estimates.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (3.58 p.m.): The Estimates debate gives the Opposition the opportunity, usually once every two years, to raise matters with the Minister in the hope that he will reply to them. However, Opposition members prefer the method adopted by most other Parliaments operating under the Westminster system, that is, to have all-party committees in which questions may be directed to the top management of a department to inquire into the nitty-gritty of expenditure.

Mr Shaw: That would be the last thing they would want here.

Mr DAVIS: Secrecy, with a capital "S", is preferred in this State.

I take this opportunity to thank Mr Jim Goldston for the courtesies that he has shown me on the occasions on which I have approached him. He has announced his retirement as commissioner, but during his time in that office he has done a number of things that will be remembered. My thanks go to Jim for what he has done for the Opposition.

I also thank Mr Kevin Seeney for the courtesies that he has shown me when I have raised with him matters dealing with the Transport Department. I believe that when departmental heads show us courtesy, we should express our appreciation. It is another matter entirely, of course, when they do not.

That leads to the very important question of Mr Goldston's replacement. I do not want to appear suspicious, and I hope that nobody in this Chamber thinks that I am always suspicious of the Government's attitude, but I took the opportunity to do a little research.

Mr Lane: Are you looking for the job?

Mr DAVIS: Not yet. Why should I worry about the Commissioner's job when, if I wait only 12 months, I will be a Minister of the Government?

Mr Lane: All the railway blokes think that is very funny.

Mr DAVIS: I said I would be a Minister. Whether I become the Minister for Transport is in the lap of the gods.

I am sure that both the Minister and my colleague the member for Cairns (Mr Jones) will remember the debate on the Railways Act Amendment Bill that took place on 30 March 1982. Members of the Opposition objected to the fact that that Bill established the Minister for Transport as the No. 1 boss cocky of the Railway Department. I am not suspicious, but I think it surprising that within a few weeks the Minister will decide who becomes the next Commissioner for Railways.

Mr Lane: There have been no great tragedies, have there?

Mr DAVIS: No.

I am not very much concerned with rumour and I am certainly not one who spreads rumours, but I think it only fair that I should mention the rumour going around in fairly high circles that it will be a job for the boys; it will be a Liberal.

Mr Prest: Kevin Cairns.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for Port Curtis has taken the words right out of my mouth—Kevin Cairns! If that rumour turns out not to be true, I will apologise to Mr Kevin Cairns and sympathise with him because he missed out.

Mr LANE: I rise to a point of order. So that the honourable member will not continue with any more idle speculation, I must inform him that that is not an option that the Government is considering.

Mr DAVIS: That is fair enough. I appreciate that.

Mr Lane: Now you have nothing left to say, have you?

Mr DAVIS: I accept the Minister's statement.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Row): Order! The Minister took a point of order. I hope that the honourable member has now accepted it.

Mr DAVIS: Yes, about Kevin Cairns, but certainly not that it will not be a job for the boys. If it was to be Kevin Cairns and there has been a change of heart, will the Minister give the assurance that it will not be a top Liberal? The Minister has not given the Committee that assurance, so honourable members will have to wait until the appointment is announced.

In the months since the member for Merthyr became the Minister for Transport, he has used the trick adopted by most of his Liberal Cabinet colleagues and allocated over \$80,000 to glamorise his image. I do not know why the booklet that I have here is titled, "Queensland Railways Digest"; it should be titled "Lane's Digest". In the previous publication the Minister's photograph appeared eight times; it appears five times in the current one. That cost the taxpayer over \$80,000.

Mr Lane: That shows you how active I am.

Mr DAVIS: No, it does not show that at all.

The previous Minister for Transport did not indulge in the same amount of pettiness as the present Minister does. The Minister has become rather petty, particularly in relation to the opening of railway stations or the unveiling of plaques in the electorates of other members. Let us look, for example, at the opening of the electric train service on the Kingston line. The Minister had everybody on the dais except the member in whose electorate the Kingston Railway Station is situated.

Mr Lane: It is in Selwyn Muller's area.

Mr DAVIS: It is not; it is in the electorate of Bill D'Arcy.

Mr Lane: It is not. Go and have a look at the map. It is on the other side of the road.

Mr DAVIS: It is in Bill D'Arcy's electorate.

In the publication to which I referred earlier there are photographs depicting the unveiling of plaques. I see here a photograph showing Mr Goleby and the Minister at Thorneside; but surprise, surprise—in another photograph showing an unveiling of a plaque at the Sandgate Railway Station there is no sign of Mr Warburton, who spoke at that ceremony.

Mr Lane: He spoke.

Mr DAVIS: Yes, but his name is not on the plaque. No matter which way one looks at it, it is petty and small to differentiate between elected members of Parliament. It is a bit below the Minister's standing, and I am very disappointed.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr DAVIS: No way in the world. That is what it boils down to.

Mr Lane: Kingston is in Mr Muller's electorate, and Mr Warburton was on the dais at Sandgate, so you have no reason to complain.

Mr DAVIS: His name was not on the plaque, although the name of the member for Redlands appeared on the plaque at Thorneside Railway Station.

Mr Lane: I did not even notice it. Who is being petty now?

Mr DAVIS: The Minister is being petty. He noticed it all right. What about the people on the dais at Kingston Railway Station? Why did the member for Salisbury speak? It is not her electorate. It is just because she is a Liberal member.

Mr Lane: She adds lustre to the occasion.

Mr DAVIS: It is petty.

I now want to refer to the so-called inquiry mentioned by the Minister.

Mr Gygar interjected.

Mr DAVIS: The member for Stafford has just butted in. It is a pity that he did not help his friend from Windsor the other night instead of dudding him. Someone said to me that the member for Windsor could expect support from the member from Stafford, but I said, "He would be the last one who would give any support to his friends."

Mr Prentice: Will you tell us about the New South Wales Government's decision to eliminate the sleeping cars from the railways in that State?

Mr DAVIS: I am not going to take interjections from fools.

I would support a public inquiry into all forms of transport, one concerned with planning for the future of rail, road and air transport, but not one which is designed to prop up the private sector to the detriment of the Government Railways. One would have thought that after all the money that the Government has paid out to its friends, it would at least have held an inquiry into all forms of transport. The railway unions are concerned—and rightly so—about the basis of this inquiry by P A Australia. One of the persons conducting the inquiry, Rolley Livingstone, has a shocking record as an industrial representative and as a personnel officer. He was involved with the Mt Isa strike and with the dispute over the manning of Utah ships.

Mr Lane: He was never on strike.

Mr DAVIS: No, but he was involved as an industrial advocate.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr DAVIS: He did not do a really bad job, particularly when one looks at how long the Mt Isa strike continued. It was supported all the way by the Government.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr DAVIS: It was supported 100 per cent by the Government. The Minister should not laugh, because he was involved.

On 11 November the Minister refused to answer Opposition questions about the railway industry. He avoided them. I want to ask him some questions about it now, and I hope that he will reply to them. A great many railway workers wonder what the investigation is all about and how it concerns them. If it is a public inquiry into all forms of transport, they will have no objection.

In a letter addressed to all members, the Minister seeks some input. He will get no input from me unless there is a public inquiry. If there is, I will suggest what I consider to be some improvements that can be made in the Railway Department. I do not agree with the secrecy that the Minister likes. Half of the reports that we see are the ones that the Minister has dressed up. He takes out of reports the pieces that he thinks are to his advantage. Half the time we never see the original reports. I instance the report on the electrification of the Gold Coast railway line. It has never hit the table.

Mr Lane: You do not intend to acknowledge my letter?

Mr DAVIS: I will not be making any input. Surely the Minister has received my reply indicating that I will not participate.

Will the P A Australia investigation include the Government's railway pricing policy in such areas as freight rate agreements between the State Government Commissioner for Railways and the mineral companies? Will the consultants inquire into the bulk freight rate agreements, such as the QRX agreement? The Opposition would very much like to have the QRX agreement tabled. We would like to learn the price being charged. I have asked questions on that matter.

Mr Lane: It is private enterprise.

Mr DAVIS: It is not private enterprise. That company has a nice deal and Parliament should know what it is being charged. The Railway Department is financed with taxpayers' money and everything associated with the department, including agreements, should be tabled.

The Opposition would like to know the effects of any amendments to the Transport Act on the provisions of price elasticity. If anybody has favoured road transport over the past two or three years it has been the Premier and the Minister.

Will P A Australia be allowed to investigate and report on all agreements between businesses or firms and the State Government Commissioner for Railways pertaining to the railways, such as agreements on the provision of railways sidings? That is another interesting question that the Opposition would like answered. If not, why are these important financial areas being excluded from this investigation, which is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$400,000?

If the freight-user agreements are not included in these exhaustive investigations, will the Government require to be included in the report an apportionment of the causes of railway deficits such as the proportion of the deficit which could be reasonably allocated as (a) Public Service obligation (b) attributable to Government pricing policies and (c) attributable to bad management practices? The last one is a very important item.

The Minister's bland non-answers, which is the only way they can be described, refer the public to the inquiry's terms of reference. It was another sordid attempt to hide the Government's intention of handing over to private enterprise large slices of the more lucrative areas of the railways.

The Government's plans to hand over the freight and parcels operation of QGR to private enterprise were best indicated by the Minister's answer to a question asked by the member for Woodridge on 16 September 1982. The honourable member asked questions related to the practice of overloading wagons operated by QRX. Inter alia, the Minister said—

“... the Government and I are interested in extending the concept (of private operators using the railways for freight line haul at favourable contract rates) and that is one of the reasons why, in the next week or so, we will be engaging consultants to examine just how the freight-forwarding concept can be extended.”

Clearly the Government intends to hand over the freight and parcel operations of the QGR to the private sector and that had been determined prior to the appointment of the consultants. Actually, all that the consultants are doing is legitimising the Minister's intentions. It is another way of saying, "It is not our fault. It is the report of the consultants."

When such a policy was introduced recently in Western Australia, the results were disastrous for State employment. Ten per cent of the jobs in Westrail were abolished when the Western Australian Government carried out what the Minister and this Government wish to do.

In Queensland, that would mean the abolition of more than 2 500 jobs in the name of this Government's extremist ideology. It is this Government which sets unbelievably low contract carrying prices for companies such as QRX, which results in revenue for each tonne/kilometre of freight being 0.5c lower than the expenses associated with such haulage.

QRX and other private companies are hardly part of the railways community service obligation, yet the Minister has told the Committee that the Government wants to extend the practice.

When the rural communities of this State are faced with an oligopoly of freighting companies with no public competition, freight service costs will rise to lift profits. The only way this Government will be able to insulate country communities from the effect of rapid price escalation will be from ever-growing subsidies or cheaper rail line haul contracts. The so-called country supporters should bear that in mind. The economic effects on Queensland of such a situation will be diabolical—effectively, the freighting oligopoly in Queensland would totally dictate its own level of subsidy or cheaper, line haul contracts with the threat of ending services to country areas if its demands were not met.

The community service obligation of the railways in servicing country communities for freight and passenger traffic is a major part of the State's economic infrastructure and, as such, prevents monopoly trade practices from occurring. This view of the Opposition—committed to a mixed economy—is not anti-free enterprise but anti-private monopoly or oligopoly. We will not sell out rural communities like the Government is attempting to do under the smoke-screen of the railways inquiry. In the same vein, the Opposition opposes the selling off of railway workshop operations, which is currently being aided by the Government's deliberate program of undercapitalisation of the workshops.

The Opposition is in favour of a joint inquiry involving all sectors, including road transport. Mr Row, you are a person who has supported rail/road transport over the years. I would like to know why the Government with its lack of road permit fees and with its lack of contribution to Main Roads Department taxes, which at the same time encourages road transport, wonders why there has been an increase in the road toll caused by heavy vehicles. The trucks are increasing in size and the roads are getting smaller, but the Government does nothing about it. When the Government conducts an inquiry into all forms of transportation, if the Minister writes to me he can rest assured that I will furnish him with a reply. I will be the first person to state my views and my recommendations to any inquiry that will benefit road, rail or sea transport in this State.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (4.18 p.m.): Yet again we have heard an interesting diatribe from the Opposition. In this day and age, I did not think that we would hear the attack on the Queensland Government that has just been made because it does not have high enough taxes. What a fascinating experience it is for the Opposition to come into this Assembly and call on the Government to increase taxes! I hope that the people involved in the transport industry, whom the honourable member for Brisbane Central purports to support, take note of his remarks. He wants them to be taxed further into the ground.

The Opposition launched a concerted and consistent attack on the present inquiry into the railways. Why? Surely honourable members opposite do not question that the railways should be efficient. Do they want to tell us that they do not want an efficient railway service? The railways is a large organisation. It has been operating for a number of years in this State. Surely it can stand one outside investigation into only a few aspects of its operations. The terms of the inquiry do not include passenger services, the maintenance of tracks or buildings; in fact, the scope is very limited. Judging from the

items that were shown up in the recent industrial dispute, I would say that an outside examination into the railways is perhaps long overdue. Until now the taxpayers of Queensland have been contributing approximately \$150m a year towards the upkeep, maintenance and operation of the Queensland railways. Surely they are entitled to know that they receive value for money and that the railways are accountable.

Mr Davis: I will make sure that this is circulated in your electorate.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member seems to think that I would object to the circulation in my electorate of copies of my speech. I have more respect for my constituents than to think that they are bums and bludgers who do not want the efficiency of the organisation for which they work questioned.

I happen to believe that the majority of people who work for the railways want to see an efficient railway service. Obviously the honourable member for Brisbane Central does not. I have no compunction whatever about supporting efficiency in the railways or in any other area. I am quite sure that the majority of my constituents agree with me. They are not bludgers, they do not want to see a system under which they can feather-bed and do no work all day. The honourable member, by his attitude, seems to think that that is what workers want. I do not believe they do. They want to do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, and they are quite prepared to see people come around, look at the system and show how the work can be done more efficiently. The honourable member for Brisbane Central seems to have lost sight of the fact that there is dignity in work and that most workers want to do a good job in a good and efficient organisation.

The trouble with the honourable member for Brisbane Central is that he has been hanging around with the slugs and no-hopers up at the Trades Hall for so long that he thinks everyone has the same approach to hard work as they have. He is wrong. I would be happy to have him circulate copies of this speech or any other speech of mine in my electorate. I would get good free publicity that would do me a lot of good in the next election.

What Opposition members are trying to do, of course, is turn the whole investigation into the Railway Department into a political football. Why aren't they waiting to have a look at what comes out of it, to see what recommendations are made? Why are they screaming like stuck pigs just because someone wants to have a look at the system? Usually, the only people who make complaints of that type are those who have something to hide. That makes me wonder whether perhaps Opposition members' union masters who pull the puppet strings up in the Trades Hall—the bosses who control their every movement in this Chamber—have something to hide.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Brisbane Central thinks that is laughable. Perhaps he would like to take a point of order and tell the Committee when was the last time that he voted against the directions of the Trades Hall. I think Vince Gair was the boy who last did that. And look what happened to him in 1957. The puppet masters up in the Trades Hall are pulling the strings, and their puppets in this Chamber are dancing to the tune. Why, I do not know. One can only speculate that they are doing it for some motive, because they are not totally mindless, no matter how they might display themselves in this Chamber from time to time.

Another matter that is worthy of attention is the recent introduction of the Highway Patrol. Its introduction has been advocated publicly and privately by the Minister for months.

Mr Vaughan: Years.

Mr GYGAR: Years? I applaud him for that. Obviously he is a man of vision and one who has been able to look forward to see that something is needed.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member must have the whingeing button stuck down. He complains if nothing happens and he complains if something happens. He seems to think that, because he is in the Opposition, he must oppose everything. He opposes if some-

thing does not happen and he opposes if something does happen. He opposes for the sake of opposing. That is why he and his colleagues will remain in the Opposition.

As I was saying, the Minister has been advocating the establishment of the Highway Patrol for months. It has come about because of two things: firstly, his perspicacity in being able to perceive that approximately 80 per cent of the road toll in Queensland occurs on country roads and that it is on country roads that the Highway Patrol needs to establish its presence firmly to remind drivers of their responsibilities; and, secondly, Liberal policy, which, for some years, has called for the establishment of the Highway Patrol. As always, I am delighted to see a Liberal Minister implement Liberal policy. I hope that the Highway Patrol will have a significant impact on the road toll and will be a force for good right across the community.

Its ancillary benefits of being able to combat such things as the movement of interstate criminals and of criminals intrastate will be welcomed, as will be its potential in combating the drug traffic.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority is under the Minister's control. Public transport, which is the great concern of the MTA, causes worry to my electors. A recent survey disclosed that the aspect of public administration that concerns them most is public transport. I do not blame them. Any families in my area, particularly in the north-western area, who are not two-car families had better have good walking shoes because the standard of service provided by the Brisbane City Council is nothing short of being absolutely abysmal.

Mr Davis: Rubbish!

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Brisbane Central says "Rubbish". Perhaps he would like that statement circulated. If he thinks that the transport service that runs with monotonous infrequency and does not even service well over one-third of the geographical area of my electorate is any good, then he has obviously got an idea of public transport that is very different from mine. Maybe he would like to come out to my area, stand on a few street corners and tell the pensioners as they haul themselves up the third hill between the last bus stop and their home, carrying their parcels, that he thinks they have a good road transport system. I suppose that that would be one certain way of getting a by-election in the electorate of Brisbane Central, because the people would hang him from the nearest tree.

The public transport system in my area is hopeless, so I am happy to say that the MTA has responded to the Minister's invitation to carry out an investigation, on a pilot basis, of the public transport services in the North Brisbane area to see what can be done to improve them for those who want to travel by public transport but who do not do so because the services are just no good. I hope that when this investigation does get under way, after the terms of reference are sorted out, the BCC will co-operate with the MTA. Unfortunately, it has not got a very good record in that regard. On occasions, the BCC has come in with the MTA to come up with excellent schemes that have been of vast benefit. A great example of that is the Enoggera interchange, which has been a massive addition to the utility and facility of transport in the North Brisbane area. The bus/rail interchange is first class. There ought to be more of them. That is the sort of forward thinking, planning and development for which I hope the MTA will become even better known in the years ahead.

Of course, the MTA is only an initiator; it is not an operator. It cannot run the systems. All it can do is co-ordinate such services as local government buses, railways and private buses to provide the best possible service for the people in the area. The example of the Enoggera interchange obviously shows that a great deal can be done in that sphere, and I hope that the MTA carries on with it.

Everyone should support public transport. Already, there are too many cars on our roads, and there is too much pollution. It is costing too much in resources—in petrol and all the rest—for great hordes of private cars to be streaming in and out of the city and going to and from the shopping centres day after day, when public transport could do it far more economically.

Mr Vaughan: How do you travel?

Mr GYGAR: Like the honourable member, I usually travel by car, for the plain and simple reason that public transport in my area is so bad that, if I did not leave home at about 6 o'clock in the morning, I could not travel on it to get here by 9.

Mr Vaughan: That is a lame excuse.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member might care to stand up in this Chamber and explain to us how he comes to work every day when Parliament is sitting.

Mr Vaughan: You are advocating it.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member admits that he is not advocating that people ought to be using public transport. Obviously, what he is saying is that we all should sit on our bums, one person to a car, and drive round town. That has to be about the most irresponsible statement that has been made in this Chamber today. The honourable member is urging people not to use public transport. I suppose that if one listens for long enough in this Chamber one will hear all sorts of people making all sorts of fools of themselves. Far be it from me to restrain the honourable member for Nudgee.

Public transport should be supported by Governments for economy, safety and on a cost basis; and, hopefully, the MTA, by carrying on with the good work that it has started, will be able to make an impact in that area. I am sure that people would prefer to travel by public transport if it was fast, safe and convenient. At present, unfortunately it is not.

In a booming State such as Queensland, there is a great necessity that a viable public transport system be available. If we do not build a public transport system, we will be stuck with finding millions of dollars to lay down new roads, repair existing roads and providing traffic-control devices. There is also the cost to the community that is caused by traffic accidents and the injuries that result from them.

On that note, I would like to spend a few moments talking about road safety and, in particular, about drunken drivers. I am overwhelmingly, totally and thoroughly in favour of the Government's new move to reduce the limit of allowable blood alcohol content in drivers. Over 50 per cent of the fatalities that occur in this State have an alcohol connection. Booze is tied up in them in some way or another. Of course that does not mean that over 50 per cent of the drivers in this State who step into their cars are under the influence of alcohol. The vast majority of those accidents are caused by a minority of irresponsible persons who cannot control themselves enough to know that when they have had a few beers, or whatever, they should not go out on the road thinking they have a licence to kill and to maim. For my money, a person who gets into a vehicle under the influence of alcohol and kills someone else is no better than a murderer and should be treated as such—and so should the thugs, hoons and thoughtless cretins who get into cars and crash into innocent motorists or run down innocent pedestrians who either lose their lives, become paraplegics, or spend some time in hospital. They should be treated in exactly the same way as a person who worked someone over in a dark alley with an iron bar and did him the same injury. Those individuals couldn't care less about the lives and safety of their fellow citizens. The worse they are treated, the better it is for me.

Drivers who kill someone else while under the influence of alcohol should never be allowed to drive again. They have shown that they are not entitled to the privilege of a licence. They have shown that they have a total disregard for the lives, safety and welfare of their fellow citizens. If that is the way they feel about it, they should be kept out of cars. I am anxious to hear anybody in the Chamber stand up and explain to me why it should not happen. Why should those irresponsible morons be allowed to roam the roads of this State killing and injuring at whim, thinking that their few beers are more important than the lives of their fellow citizens? I am anxious to hear anybody in this Chamber explain that away.

In the vast majority of instances a person who is caught driving while his licence is under suspension should go to gaol, and go to gaol for a long time. This State used to have a mandatory gaol sentence for that offence, until it was found that in a very small number of instances a gaol sentence was not warranted. Such circumstances as family emergencies and people having to be taken for medical care proved that a mandatory gaol sentence was not just. However, somehow or other the Legislature—the Government—has to make up its mind that these drunken murderers are not to be allowed on the streets. Once they have proven that they do not deserve a licence, they have to be gaoled if they still think

they can thumb their noses at society and drive on regardless. Something has to be done. How, I do not know. How do we get the message through to the judiciary that, when the Legislature says that a gaol sentence shall be 10 years, it means 10 years and not a slap across the wrist and two years of useless probation? These hoons just walk out of the courts with a laugh all over their faces, jump back into a car and go off again. These characters have to be driven off the roads.

Mr Vaughan: Where does that happen?

Mr GYGAR: If the honourable member cared to take some slight notice of the court cases conducted in this city, he would find that persons apprehended whilst driving under suspension are being released onto the streets again day after day.

Mr Vaughan: What are you doing about it?

Mr GYGAR: I am telling the Legislature, the Minister and the Government that it is not good enough and that the law must be changed.

Mr Vaughan: It's your Government.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member needs a lesson in civics. If he thinks that I am a member of the Government of this State, perhaps he had better go back to school. I knew that members of the Opposition in this place were thick, but I really did not think they had thought back-benchers were members of the Government. If the honourable member is at such a low level, perhaps he is beyond redemption.

Something has to be done about those individuals. I assure the Minister that if he comes in here with legislation or regulations that will do it, he will have my complete support.

One thing that should be examined for a few moments is taxis. I am glad to see that the honourable member for Brisbane Central is in the Chamber, because he is an expert on them. The State's present system of the regulation of taxi licences is in no way warranted. It is one of the historical accidents that have grown up over the years but which should now be thoroughly and completely re-examined.

If one person wants to hire his vehicle to another for reward at a negotiated price, why shouldn't he be allowed to do so? If I want to drive to town and my neighbour comes up to me and says, "I will give you \$2 to drive me into town," why shouldn't I be able to take it? If he and three or four of his mates get together and say they will hire somebody to do it everyday, why shouldn't they? The Government turns a blind eye to some arrangements of that type and calls them car pooling; but I would be fascinated to know where car pooling ends and plying for hire begins.

I cannot see why the taxi system as it presently exists, with extortionate prices being charged for licences, should continue. Places such as Manila, with Jeepneys and similar forms of transport, seem to be able to supply the whole public transport system in those places fairly easily and readily. Why cannot that be done here?

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr GYGAR: The honourable gentlemen laugh because that sort of free enterprise spirit of people being able to do what they want to do when they want to do it has no place in their ideology. They are members of a party that wants to drive all the private operators out of business.

The people to whom I referred can run their service efficiently, but the Brisbane City Council cannot even determine how much money it loses. Perhaps when the honourable gentlemen opposite rise in this Chamber, with their great advocacy for the public ownership of transport, they might be able to tell the Committee what the most cost-effective Brisbane public transport route is. If they can tell us that, they will have done a job that nobody else in the State can do. The good old socialist system as run by the Brisbane City Council does not care if public transport loses money. The city council could not give two hoots about which routes are efficient and which are inefficient. The poor old mug ratepayer will pick up the tab, so there is no need to worry. The council will put on a few more buses here and take another few off in another place; it does not care about economy. That is the sort of system that the honourable gentlemen propose.

I do not suggest that tomorrow Jeepneys should be allowed to run up and down the streets of Brisbane, but I believe there is a need for a further look at transport of that type. The day of the large bus and the day of the huge train have passed; the day of flexible

public transport has arrived. If the Government wants to be flexible, it has a responsibility and a duty to take the blinkers off its eyes and consider systems all over the world that might be adapted to our purposes. In the Brisbane context, the Jeepney idea could very well be carried out by minibuses that go around suburban areas to feeder routes on main lines, which perhaps, in turn, could feed the railway system. Public transport offers many alternatives and it is time for the Government to take off its blinkers, consider all the alternatives and arrive at a scheme that works in Queensland.

(Time expired.)

Mr GOLEBY (Redlands) (4.38 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to take part in the debate on the Estimates for the Minister's portfolio. As a member of his parliamentary committee, I have been very interested in public transport and transport generally in Queensland.

Some might say that roads are the greatest community asset. Closely following is transport, and the two go hand in hand. Since the advent of the wheel, the steam engine, followed by the internal combustion engine, public transport and transport generally have gone ahead in leaps and bounds over the last century and a half.

In a State the size of Queensland public transport is of great importance. The State has road, rail and air transport, but nothing moves people and freight quicker than rail transport. The recent Commonwealth Games was an example of how efficient Queensland rail transport is. I give full marks to those who co-ordinated the bus and rail services to provide the efficient transport system for the Games. The electric trains really came to the fore and the trains, which ran at four-minute intervals, shifted a great number of people in a very short time.

That brings me to the cost of public transport. Nowhere in the world is public transport looked upon as a paying proposition, but it is a necessary service to the community and must continually be upgraded. There has already been an upgrading in parts of Brisbane with the advent of the electric trains, which provide a tremendously efficient service. Anyone who has had the privilege of using them can only be impressed by their smoothness. Everything has been thought of in the air-conditioned carriages, and Brisbane can now claim to have one of the finest public transport systems in the world.

I turn now to my local bus service and the problems facing Bayside Bus Services. It is very difficult for a private operator to survive in the public transport field today, and it has been necessary for the Government to increase its subsidy to private bus operators over recent years to ensure that their businesses stay afloat. Bayside Bus Services has been no exception. What once was a very viable enterprise is now battling to stay in business. It has been found necessary to curtail services in some areas. On some routes there were fewer than three passengers per service, and it stands to reason that no company could continue to operate with such poor patronage. It is desirable to have a public transport service when one needs it, but unless people patronise public transport better services cannot be provided.

I mention also the extension of the rail service to Thorneside in my electorate. \$2.8m was spent on 3.2 km of line, and what an asset it has proved to be. On behalf of the people of Redlands, I publicly thank the Minister for Transport, the Commissioner for Railways (Mr Goldston) and other members of the Metropolitan Transit Authority who combined to ensure that that efficient service was extended into my fast-growing electorate.

The extension of the rail service has probably been my main goal over the years that I have been in Parliament, and Stage 1 of what will eventually be an extension to Cleveland has been very well received by the public. Patronage has exceeded expectations, with a daily average of over 300 people boarding the train at Thorneside. On one occasion during the peak period of the Commonwealth Games, there were 180 cars in the car park. There is an average of 100 cars using the existing parking area and adjoining land.

That brings me to the urgent need for an additional car park to be provided before the onset of the wet season. Anyone who knows the locality realises that it can become so wet following heavy rain as to make construction work impossible. Therefore, I appeal to the MTA to get on with the job of providing additional parking space. I do not believe that the additional areas have to be bitumen surfaced; all that is required is

a compacted gravel surface that will serve the area until the line is extended to the next port of call, which obviously will be Birkdale, before it continues to Cleveland. I hope that that will not be too long in coming.

As I said, the rail extension has been tremendously well accepted by the community and has been welcomed by those people in the area who work in the meat-processing and allied industries in the Cannon Hill area. There are usually a lot of people waiting to board the first train every morning. Unfortunately, the station is not manned at all times when trains are running. People have come to me and said that it is impossible to buy a ticket for the early trains, and when they alight at some of the smaller stations along the route it is not possible to buy a ticket there, either. A few people have admitted to me that they have not paid their way.

That problem must be looked at. Perhaps it is cheaper to let a few people travel for nothing than to provide a full service at the station, but a genuine person does not want something for nothing. Upgrading the station, providing full parcel facilities and servicing the station whenever trains are running would result in increased revenue.

An anomaly has been created in the running of the service. For some unknown reason, from time to time an announcement is made that the train will not proceed past Lota. The passengers alight at Lota station, only to find that the train has to go to Thorneside to turn round. The reason given is that the guard has not travelled that route before and is not prepared to take the train with passengers over a line that is new to him. That has happened to me and it has happened to other people. It is absurd in this day and age. The engine-driver, not the guard, is responsible for driving the train. The guard is responsible for making sure that everything operates in accordance with the system. I repeat that that has happened from time to time and I hope that the anomaly can be removed.

Road fatalities worry everybody. Anybody with any sense of responsibility is concerned about the rising road toll. The main reason for accidents is the driver of the motor vehicle. According to statistics, the main cause of accidents is the excessive intake of alcohol. The policy should be, "If you drink, don't drive." Alcohol is responsible for many fatalities. In fact, the problems in many areas of society are related to the excessive use of alcohol.

Even so, I do not favour random breath testing. Honourable members may wonder why. I certainly support the blood alcohol level of .05 per cent, but I do not believe that random breath testing will prove anything. The police have sufficient scope to apprehend anyone who they suspect is driving under the influence. According to the figures for 1981, the number of casualties in Queensland, per 10 000 of population, caused by road accidents is the lowest in Australia.

The policy of the Queensland Government on drink driving is clearly reflected by the provisions of the Traffic Act. Section 16A (2) (a) empowers a member of the Police Force to request a specimen of breath from any person who he suspects on reasonable grounds has alcohol or any drug in his body and has during the preceding two hours driven or attempted to drive or was in charge of a motor vehicle. The reasonable grounds of that suspicion may arise as follows: Where the conduct of the driver attracts police attention; where the progress of the vehicle on the road is irregular; in the event of an accident or in the event of the commission of a traffic breach. The method of enforcement is best referred to as specific enforcement as the emphasis of enforcement is directed to specific individuals who may for any reason be suspected of having committed an offence.

The decentralised nature of this State creates considerable difficulty in determining enforcement policies. In Queensland last year, 21 445 breathalyser tests were administered resulting in 18 150 charges being laid under the drink-driving legislation. In other words, 87.4 per cent of the tests resulted in prosecution action being taken.

Mr Borbidge: The efforts are being directed towards the offenders, not innocent people.

Mr GOLEBY: The honourable member should listen to the figures.

Relate the figures I have given to those in Victoria, where 84 915 people were apprehended under the random breath-test provisions with only 15 344 convictions resulting. What a difference!

Let us go one step further. Victoria has 8 000 police. In Queensland, there are approximately 4 500 police officers. When we relate the area of this State to the comparatively small area of Victoria, it will be seen that Queensland has 1.3 persons per square kilometre

compared with 16.84 persons per square kilometre in Victoria. What does that tell us? It tells us that the Queensland police are very efficient in their job. Those figures clearly portray an 87.4 per cent "kill rate", if I can put it that way, of those persons apprehended and suspected of being under the influence of liquor.

Where do we start with road safety? Road safety should begin in a very positive way within the education system in the State schools of Queensland. I have said that before and I will repeat it. We will not make any impression on our younger people until we make road safety an examinable subject within the school system. I have discussed that with principals of schools. Of course, some persons in the hierarchy of the Education Department think that there is insufficient room within the syllabus of the schools to include another subject. What rot! School principals have clearly indicated to me that there are various areas within the school curricula in which road safety could be taught and brought into the examination system. How many members have noticed that almost 50 per cent of young schoolchildren ride their push bikes on the incorrect side of the road? At 3 o'clock in the afternoon outside some of our primary and secondary schools members can see for themselves that road safety lectures could have been conducted in those schools. It more or less becomes a free period. Unless children are forced to study and to remember the road safety rules that are put before them—and the only way that can be done is by making it an examinable subject—we will not make any impression on the young people within our schools. How many of us have seen young children riding bikes at night on the incorrect side of the road, with no lights or reflectors on their bicycles to indicate their presence? I ask the Minister, in conjunction with the Minister for Education, to take that matter further. I am sure that with one or two simple modifications road safety could become an examinable subject. It would then have some effect on the young people within our schools. We should educate those young people because they are the road users and the drivers of the motor cars of the future.

The Minister and his staff and I have spent considerable time in trying to provide a solution to the problem of the ferries of Moreton Bay, particularly those that travel to the bay islands. At one stage we thought that we could introduce legislation to provide a franchise to make sure that the residents on those islands had a regular communication by way of water ferry or water taxi. That was not possible because of complications in the preparation of legislation—the need for mirror legislation in the Federal sphere and something to do with the House of Commons and British legislation dealing with the freedom of water-ways. However, that problem was overcome by the local shire council introducing a by-law which gave it control over those persons using the jetties for ferry purposes. That has solved one problem.

I have made representations to the Minister and he has been very sympathetic towards me. I understand that progress has been made. An interest subsidy is provided for those proprietors and co-operatives that provide water transport to those somewhat isolated areas in Moreton Bay. I thank the Minister for that. I understand that at the present time a subsidy on interest is paid to enable those services to be provided. I also understand that it will be continued on a regular basis.

The bay islands are developing very rapidly. A considerable number of people have established homes in the area. An increasing number of people must travel to the mainland because of the shortage of work on the bay islands. It is necessary for them to have a reliable public transport system. A considerable number of senior citizens have settled on the islands. When they settled there, boat fares to the mainland were relatively cheap. The proprietors were able to give pensioner concessions. However, the rises in fuel costs increased the operators' total costs, with the result that some operators have been forced out of business. It is difficult for an operator to provide a service when 50 per cent of his passengers are senior citizens who believe that they are entitled to some concession by way of subsidised fares. I have made representations on the pensioners' behalf and will continue to do so.

As a pensioner subsidy is available to pensioners who travel on public transport on the mainland, surely a subsidy can be granted to those senior citizens who are forced to use the only mode of public transport that is available to them—that is, the water ferry or the water taxi—for travel between the Moreton Bay islands and Redland Bay. The Government should make the same concession available to them. I understand that the

Government would like to do so but faces problems in the Federal sphere. I hope that the State Government and the Federal Government can get together to remove the anomaly, because senior citizens on the bay islands are being seriously disadvantaged.

Mr Hooper: Your representations will be much stronger at the end of the year when you are in Cabinet.

Mr GOLEBY: I think I have done a pretty good job, and I will continue to do a good job. The people in my electorate are the judges of that, and they make sure that I am returned at every election.

The Commissioner for Railways, Mr Goldston, is approaching retirement. I express my thanks and those of my electors for the co-operation and help that we have received from him. He was of great help in bringing about the Thorneside railway link. My electors and I received many courtesies and a great deal of help from him. On behalf of the people of Redlands and myself, I wish him a very long and pleasant retirement. I hope that he can do the many things that he desires to do as he relaxes and enjoys his retirement.

Mr WILSON (Townsville South) (4.57 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates, I record my angry and total disagreement and that of the people of North Queensland with the Government's recommendation to the Federal Government that the electrification of the Caboolture and Kingston/Beenleigh rail links be included in the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program. The people of North Queensland see that as another example of the Government's treating them as second-class citizens. They have to put up with poor roads, narrow roads, narrow bridges, low-level bridges and bad causeways, whereas the people in the metropolitan area travel on good wide roads with high-level bridges and on freeways with underpasses and overpasses.

Although a number of dangerous narrow and low-level bridges will be eliminated with the opening of the new section of the Bruce Highway between Marlborough and Sarina, the people of North Queensland are very mindful of the 33 very narrow bridges and the narrow sections of road between Mackay and Townsville and the 30 narrow bridges and narrow sections of road between Townsville and Cairns.

Although the Government talks about the potential of the North and its importance to the tourist industry, it is seen to be doing nothing about improving the roads in the North to assist the tourist industry. The upgrading of the roads in the North will not only assist the tourist industry but also benefit the people of North Queensland, who contribute large amounts by way of petrol tax for the construction of roads and get very little in return. They are already contributing a great deal, without paying the extra 1c per litre imposed by the Federal Government for its Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program. The people of the North will view that as another blatant rip-off by the Federal Government for which they will receive little or no benefit.

I now turn to rail transport. Firstly, as rail freights have increased by 15 per cent since 1 November, and as people in the North and the North-west are forced to pay the extra freight charges and sales tax imposed on those freight charges, will the Government increase the area allowance paid to railwaymen and other Government employees by 15 per cent? Will the Government legislate to bring the northern parity and the western allowance received by other workers into line with the area allowance received by Government employees, so that people who live outside the metropolitan area are able to maintain their living standard?

Over the last few years the number of rail passengers has increased substantially, making it necessary to book seats up to six months ahead. As air fares continue to rise, more people will turn to rail travel; yet we see no improvement in the rail services. The Government gives no indication that it is making any effort to capture more of the market.

In the area of freight, the Government enters into secret agreements with large private companies, which I believe would not stand investigation and can be regarded only as a blatant rip-off of the public purse. Big firms are able to get large concessions, although the ordinary people have to pay full rates that continue to rise as the concessions to big firms increase.

What happened when the railwaymen set about to rectify this rip-off of the public purse and ensure that the Railway Department got the full pound of flesh to which it was entitled? Special instructions were issued through the general manager's office that QRX wagons were not to be weighed. I shall now look at QRX and the concessions,

other than freight concessions, that it receives. Firstly, railwaymen are not allowed to weigh the firm's wagons and have to accept the weight shown on the label made out by QRX.

Mr Hooper: You are not suggesting that there is any dishonesty there?

Mr WILSON: One could hardly suggest that.

In the past, when railwaymen were weighing the wagons that QRX loaded, they found that according to the labels wagons were loaded with 8 to 10 tonnes, when in fact they weighed between 20 and 26 tonnes. Further, QRX will accept only loading that can be palletised so that all available space in the wagon can be used. The Railway Department has made special wagons to carry pallets, and QRX has the use of all of them. In fact, this firm will not accept any loading that is bulky, that takes up a lot of cubic space and does not weigh much. In fact, it will not accept prefabricated steel, polythene pipes, aluminium, etc., that take up space but do not weigh much. For instance, the railways had to supply a 56ft wagon to carry one piece of aluminium 53 feet long and weighing only a few hundredweight. Not only was the railways obliged to load the wagon, but it was also responsible for any damage that might have been caused to the aluminium in transit.

QRX should be the holder of a common carrier's licence and be forced to carry all items, not only the most profitable ones. It should also pay the same freight as anyone else. Why should a firm be allowed to receive special rates and be able to choose the goods that it will handle from the Railway Department, a public utility, and use that utility to transport goods?

When it comes to goods that need refrigeration, we find that QRX has the bulk of the new refrigerated wagons available to it, while the Railway Department has to be content with the old CMSS wagon. Each wagon has to be iced down by the use of up to 80 bags of ice at more than \$1 a bag. That places the Railway Department at a great disadvantage.

Further, I understand that prior to the 15 per cent rise in freight rates that came into effect on 1 July 1978, the Premier had the rail freight rates to Kingaroy reduced, and the then new freight rate rise not applied to goods carted to Kingaroy. Perhaps the Minister, when he replies to the debate, will tell us if that was a fact and, if so, what was the reason.

Perhaps he will also tell us why freight rates have risen by 110 per cent since the 1974 election campaign when the Government promised to peg the charges. We are told that, because of the huge losses that have occurred in the running of the railways, an inquiry is to be held. Is it any wonder that the Railway Department has losses when we consider the hand-outs to private enterprise?

I will now turn to the workshops. The Government has deliberately let workshops run down and has failed to install modern equipment in its deliberate attempt to show the railway workshops in a poor light, giving it an excuse to hand plums to private enterprise. There is no reason why with modern equipment and proper management railway wagons cannot be built in the railways own workshops. There is no reason why diesel locomotives cannot be assembled in the workshops. There is no reason why railway workshops in Townsville cannot be updated and modernised to enable diesel locomotives to be repaired there, instead of having to travel 900 miles or more to Redbank. There is no reason why the workshops in Townsville should not be enlarged to meet the needs of repairing the extra wagons to be used to carry coal to Abbot Point and to the Yabulu nickel refinery, the new sugar wagons, the wagons used on the Mount Isa mines traffic, the phosphate wagons, the wagons used to carry nickel ore from Greenvale to Yabulu, the coal and sugar wagons used in the Mackay area, as well as wagons used in the transport of general goods. There is no reason why a modern workshop should not be built in Townsville. We built steam locomotives, coaches and wagons in the past. Given the opportunity, we could do it again.

There has to be something wrong with the Government's administration of the railways. We all remember how the present Government said, "We are going to make the railways pay". The then Minister for Transport, Sir Gordon Chalk, said he would make the railways pay. The present Minister, the member for Merthyr (Don Lane), made a statement recently that the railways would be making a profit by 1985.

Let me deal with the history of the Railway Department since the Government took office. It pulled up rail lines which, though they were not paying, were providing a service to the community. First was the rail link to the Gold Coast. No sooner had the line been taken up than the Government realised that it had made a mistake. Now it wants to use road money to rebuild it to Beenleigh and electrify it. Passenger traffic was not paying, so again Sir Gordon Chalk did his best to get rid of it, in favour of buses. He took away the dining-car and the right of priority that passenger trains had in transit. He got rid of cattle trains as we knew them. Cattle wagons were attached to goods trains so that the cattle were at one end and the drover was at the other. Sir Gordon Chalk took away the authority of the drover in charge of the cattle, who had no say as to when and for how long he would inspect the cattle. Consequently, cattle were arriving at the meatworks in a very bruised state. Some were lame and some were dead. That caused the graziers to turn to road transport, which delivered cattle to the meatworks in a much worse state because of the bad roads over which they had to travel.

The Government could not dispose of the steam locomotives quickly enough, selling them to scrap-metal dealers for a song. They got rid of stores and stock in bulk, only to discover that much of the material they got rid of had to be replaced. I have already told the Parliament how the "Inlander" to Mount Isa was delayed in Charters Towers while an oil agent was brought in from the bowling green one Saturday afternoon to supply a drum of oil.

The method of determining which wooden wagons should be destroyed would be humorous if it was not so serious. It was done by the book, not by the condition of the wagons. As a result, some wagons in first-class condition, newly repaired and painted, were burnt, while others in a condemned state were not.

Mr Vaughan: Did all that actually happen?

Mr WILSON: In Townsville it happened in the hundreds.

When the Government first came into office one of its first actions was to halt the electrification of the Brisbane suburban rail system. The Government's history on railways is one of destruction, not one of construction. The Government came into office and said that it would make the railways pay; 25 years later with the same Government in office the railways are losing more money than ever. The Minister's statement that the railways will pay by 1985 sounds very hollow; if one takes past performances into account, it is laughable.

The Government has now commissioned another inquiry into the Railway Department, supposedly to find out what is wrong and to put matters right. One can only wonder why it is necessary to undertake such an expensive inquiry when obviously it is the Government's policy that is the problem. No doubt the inquiry is designed to see how many men can be put off, how many jobs can be done away with and what plums can be handed to private enterprise. If the cutting down of services, especially to people in country areas, the secret freight rate concessions to big firms, the selling out of the railway passenger and freight business to road transport and the cutting down of staff and jobs within the Railway Department are considered, I fail to see how any person in the country areas, any person in small business or any railwayman could possibly vote for the present Government.

It is quite obvious that if the Government intended to improve the railways it would commence by exploring the avenues in which it could improve the service provided. A door-to-door service by way of a pick-up and delivery of goods could be implemented. The Government should have a good look at freight charges and make sure that one charge applies to all. The same price should be charged to send a parcel from country areas as is charged to send a parcel to country areas. The workshops in Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich and Redbank should be modernised and those at Cairns, Mackay, Gladstone, Maryborough, Toowoomba and Cloncurry should be updated. When the Government has done those things, it can say that it has done something to improve the railway service.

Mr PRENTICE (Toowong) (5.13 p.m.): I rise to support the Minister's Estimates. After listening to some of the discussion in the Chamber I must put a few things right. Because the member for Townsville South uttered the words written for him by his speech writer, some matters should be put before the Chamber. He accused the Government of commissioning an inquiry which, in his words, was designed to see how many men could

be put off and so on. It is misleading the Parliament and the people of Queensland to suggest such a thing when there is no evidence on which to base it. I should have thought that even the Australian Labor Party would be prepared to accept that, at times, it is important in any enterprise—and more particularly in Government establishments—to engage somebody to have a good, hard, objective look at the operation. The findings of that investigation can be used as the basis for honest and responsible decision-making. When that is considered, even the member for Townsville South should be prepared to accept that benefit can be gained from such an inquiry.

In looking at this proposal, members of the Australian Labor Party are doing nothing other than attempting to play politics. They are misrepresenting the situation. They are seeking only to promote their own cause. On looking at the Labor Party's approach to this sort of thing, the first thing one should ask is, "What has the Labor Party done when it has been in power to affect these issues?" New South Wales provides a classic example. If ever I have seen a system of destruction rather than construction, it is evident in New South Wales.

The members of the Labor Party in this Assembly must be getting a bit sick and tired of hearing about New South Wales and Victoria, but the reality is that the people of Queensland should be aware that the New South Wales experience shows what can happen when a Labor Government is allowed to run amok with the transport system. It is gradually closing down. I am told that money is being taken from the ferry turnstiles to pay salaries. What sort of a cowboy operation is that?

When people look at the figures relating to railways they should be aware of the huge component involved in carrying non-paying passengers—in particular those pensioners who get two free trips a year. When the charges are recorded, they should be charged against the Department of Welfare Services and not the Railway Department, because the figures can be very misleading. While those concessions are worth while, they are really part of the Government's welfare operation. I understand that similar charges are recorded in the same way in other places, but we should be prepared to look at changing that practice to ensure an accurate reflection of the operating costs and so on of the railways. This matter may be covered by the inquiry.

I will deal now with some other aspects of transport, particularly those relating to my electorate. In looking at the Metropolitan Transit Authority's development plan for 1979-84, I noticed some reference to ferry services. A study has been commissioned, and I understand that some work has been done. Last year, I asked the Minister about the possibility of establishing a ferry service from the city to the University of Queensland, and perhaps beyond. At the time, the Minister advised that it would be necessary to wait and see how the Bulimba service was operating, and, if that was successful, consideration would be given to extending it. In view of the Minister's comments today about the increased patronage of that service, I hope that the Government will have a close, serious look at assisting in the establishment of a service to the university. Some parts of the Brisbane River are used for commercial operations. I believe that a service to the university would attract a great deal of custom. This additional form of transport would take some of the pressure off Coronation Drive, and would help to relieve the parking and associated problems in the inner city. It would provide an effective and, I should think, cost-effective, alternative transport system. I hope that the Minister will be prepared to look at that proposal again to see if a service can be instituted. I know from speaking to people in my electorate that if the service is initiated it will be well patronised.

Some time ago I asked a question about whether anything could be done to stamp out the practice engaged in by the many motor-cyclists who drive their motor bikes between lanes of moving traffic. Any morning, people who drive to the city in the inbound lanes of a four-lane road see time after time motor-cyclists driving between cars. It needs only one car to deviate slightly to cause a major tragedy. I have seen it happen on Sandgate Road. It is a very easy practice to stop, given that most of the traffic is moving very slowly. The police could ensure—

Mr Vaughan: Some of the police motor-cyclists should stop that practice, too.

Mr PRENTICE: I have not noticed that. If they do, I agree with the honourable member.

In my view the practice is extremely dangerous and should be stamped out. The Minister should look at it in terms of the regulations if it is not already covered—I would

have thought it was—and, hopefully, the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Police might be prepared to do something about its enforcement.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr PRENTICE: I accept that point from the honourable member. While motor cycles provide a great system of transport, they represent one of the most dangerous aspects of transportation on the roads today. That cannot be ignored.

Earlier today, among the Minister's advisers, I saw Mr Alan Graham from the Queensland Road Safety Council. On Saturday mornings, Mr Graham, together with Constable Dave Moore, has been appearing on a children's show to assist in the cause of road safety. The reaction has been excellent. I understand that Mr Graham does this work on a voluntary basis. I congratulate him and the Queensland Road Safety Council for engaging in this effort. Road safety will be improved only by a complete public relations approach.

People in Victoria say that random breath testing, by itself, made very little initial impact. However, when it was advertised and people visited the open display of roadside breath-testing units, the impact on road traffic accidents, particularly injuries and deaths, was noticeable. Those appearances on children's television are certainly worth while. They are part of what has to be an overall approach. I congratulate both the council and Mr Graham.

The Government has a responsibility in one other aspect of road safety. When travelling to the city of a morning, I notice the extensive use of Coronation Drive by people riding bicycles. Good on them. To remove bicycles from the roadway, the Brisbane City Council should provide a greater number of bikeways within the city. Bicycle riding will become an increasing leisure-time activity and will create an ever-increasing hazard unless something can be done to separate bicycles from other road traffic.

That area is important not only for local government but also for the Main Roads Department in the planning of bridges. Provision can be made in planning to ensure that paths for cyclists are provided on each bridge. It was once said that, when one spoke about bicycle riding and a need for bikeways, one was speaking about something esoteric because nobody really rode bicycles, but in this day and age more and more people are riding bicycles. So the matter is important, and effective planning at this stage will save lives in the future. I suggest that the Government, the Brisbane City Council and the MTA should look into it.

Returning to the railways—the other aspect I would mention is the need for the Government to realise that the railways can play an even greater role in the tourist industry. I instance two areas. Firstly, the Government should consider the extension of the railway line near Brisbane Airport so that it can be used in concert with the new airport. People should be able to travel from the airport, have their luggage automatically transferred to a train and move to other destinations. A number of people who enjoy rail travel would be prepared to do that either for a short haul from the airport to the city or to other destinations within Queensland.

The important thing about tourism is that once people come into the capital city by air, they should be encouraged to move on to other parts of Queensland. As I am based in Brisbane, I know that Brisbane receives a fair share of tourism. The Government must make sure that the tourists' next destination is not a place outside Queensland. It should encourage them to go to other places in Queensland, particularly in the North. The railway system could be used effectively to take them there. I hope that some consideration can be given to that. Unless a person is prepared to make bookings some time ahead, there is a difficulty in obtaining a reservation on the "Sunlander". Given the amount of travel that the Government provides to various community groups, perhaps it is no wonder. If use were made of the costing arrangement that I mentioned earlier, the "Sunlander" and other trains could operate on a more cost-effective basis and, where necessary, more carriages could be provided to ensure that rail travel becomes an integral part of the State's tourist industry.

The Minister has been prepared to investigate various sections of his department to ensure that they work efficiently. He has been prepared to have a consultancy firm investigate some operations of the Railway Department. I would say "Congratulations". It is time that more independent investigations of Government authorities were carried out. The more investigations that are carried out, the better off the State will be.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (5.27 p.m.): In speaking to the Estimates of the Minister for Transport, I first acknowledge the ready assistance of the Minister, the acting Commissioner for Transport, Mr Neal Kent, and the officers of the Department of Transport with the many representations that I have made in relation to my electorate. Secondly, I extend to Mr Goldston, the retiring Commissioner for Railways, my best wishes for a long and happy retirement. He has given outstanding service to the State of Queensland, and I join with colleagues on both sides of the House in wishing him well.

The regional officer of the Gold Coast office of the Department of Transport, Mr Ross Perrott, and his staff maintain a very close liaison with the local members of Parliament and the community. The annual report of the Department of Transport shows that the Gold Coast regional office is staffed by a regional officer, four civilian testing officers, one clerk, one stenographer, two clerk-typists and one clerical assistant. The report further states that during the year 5 616 people undertook driving tests. The centre issued 2 453 provisional licences and 4 871 learner's permits. There were 14 791 open licences issued, and 5 683 interstate and overseas licences were converted to Queensland licences. The revenue collected from the various Acts through the Gold Coast office totalled \$486,799.77. The Gold Coast office is a very busy office and plays a very important role in the life of the Gold Coast. I pay a tribute to the staff, who have readily given me assistance.

Over the past several months, quite a few new bus services have been introduced on the Gold Coast in line with the Government's policy of extending public transport services when and where it is viable to do so. I particularly mention the new service between the Gold Coast airport at Coolangatta and Surfers Paradise, with set-downs along the way at selected accommodation houses as required. That type of service is of absolutely vital importance in an area dependent upon tourism. It demonstrates the capacity of the department to contribute in a positive manner to the local tourist industry and to the convenience of both visitors and residents alike.

I make the point that the department's decision to issue such licences pre-empted the decision by both Ansett and TAA to discontinue their coach services from the airport to the Surfers Paradise terminals. That was a matter in which foresight was shown. Despite the withdrawal of the domestic airline coach services, people using the Gold Coast airport now have a better service than ever before.

I would also mention the new school bus services from Burleigh Park to the Miami High School and from the canal estates to the Surfers Paradise State School, together with one that was introduced some time ago to Broadbeach State School. All requests to the department for additional bus services and, in some instances, new bus services have been met. I thank the Minister and his officers for their co-operation.

It should be noted that so far this year the Government has contributed more than \$617,456 by way of subsidies to the Gold Coast bus transport system—\$457,618 to Surfside Bus Services, \$159,837 to Smekels Buses Pty Ltd, and smaller subsidies to two other operators.

Early in the new year, work will begin on the \$160m Jupiter's casino complex that is to be built on Broadbeach Island. In view of the impact that that project will have not only on the economy of the Gold Coast but also ultimately on the economy of Queensland, there is a need for a re-examination of airline schedules and services to and from the Gold Coast. I acknowledge that the Minister's responsibility is limited to the issuing of intrastate licences; nevertheless I believe that he can assist in maximising the benefits of the casino to the Gold Coast in two ways.

Firstly, there is a need for a Gold Coast—Barrier Reef direct air service connecting Queensland's two casino cities. Such a service would provide direct and easy access to the Gold Coast from North Queensland to people including those who in increasing numbers as the years go by use Townsville as their international port of entry into Australia. It would also work in reverse, permitting the promotion of Townsville as a port of exit via the Gold Coast for those people who may enter Australia through some of the other international gateways.

For too long the Federal Government has adopted aviation policies that have discriminated against Queensland and Queensland tourism. Here is an opportunity for the Queensland Government to increase the demand for international services in this

State by the issuing of one intrastate licence. It would be a catalyst. People would be able to fly north from the Gold Coast and leave for home out of Townsville by way of a quick, direct air service. As well, benefits can be expected from having people attending conventions and from others following the casino circuit.

Following a question asked on 19 August last year, the Minister for Tourism had a report prepared by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation on the viability of a Gold Coast—North Queensland air link. The report was compiled by the then research and development officer for the corporation, Mr Ross Woods.

His report said—

“It is recommended that the Queensland Tourist & Travel Corporation and the Domestic Airlines monitor traffic growth on this route segment so as to determine whether a direct link between the Gold Coast and North Queensland is economically viable in the future.

Therefore in summary it appears that at this time insufficient demand exists for a direct link between Coolangatta and North Queensland. However, the development of a Casino or some other development in either region may provide a boost for traffic on this route.”

However, earlier in his report Mr Woods admitted—

“This analysis has been unable to determine the number of potential passengers for a direct flight, who are travelling to Brisbane from the Gold Coast by road and who eventually fly to North Queensland from Brisbane.”

Again I make the point that anyone going to the north of this State from the Gold Coast virtually—

Mr Tenni: Two wonderful parts of the State.

Mr BORBIDGE: They are wonderful parts of the State and should be connected by an air service, and I hope that there will be such a service before very long. The time is right for the Minister and the department to pursue that matter.

The casino projects are about to begin, and there is enormous potential in both Townsville and the Gold Coast for such a service. But that potential will not be realised if we are lethargic and expect that people who wish to fly further north in this State, and vice versa, will be quite happy to drive 100 km along strange roads to an airport in Brisbane that is difficult to get to. Maximising the State's tourist potential means taking a great deal of the hassle out of travel, and I ask the Minister to take up that matter with both TAA and Ansett.

Whilst I am speaking on the matter of air services, I suggest that there is a great potential in this country for introducing an unlimited air travel ticket on domestic carriers for set periods. That facility is available in countries such as the United States of America and South Africa, and a competitively priced ticket would give a considerable boost to travel within Australia. It should be noted that last year, 8 per cent of Australians travelled overseas, compared with 3.2 per cent of people in both Japan and the United States who travelled overseas. So we have no captive domestic market, and we should be looking at what we can do to ensure that every possible incentive is provided for Australians to holiday in Australia, and preferably in Queensland. I would like to see that facility, which is available in many other countries, provided in Australia. If the Federal Government has not got the imagination to provide such a facility, perhaps there is room for discussions at a State level. People could buy a ticket for a set period and travel anywhere within Queensland.

The second way in which the Minister can assist the casino project and tourism is by using his influence on his Federal counterpart to secure a trans-Tasman air service between New Zealand and the Gold Coast. In 1981, 601 345 New Zealand visitors came to Australia, with some 103 806 arriving through Brisbane. Qantas has indicated that it is prepared to divert one 747SP flight to the Gold Coast each week, but the Federal Government is not prepared to support that proposal at present. I urge the Minister to exert his influence on Canberra in this matter. The Federal Government's decision is simply not logical, particularly following the upgrading of the runway on the Gold Coast to take wide-bodied aircraft.

Reciprocal rail concessions for Queensland pensioners have been of concern for some time, and I welcome the announcement in the Treasurer's Budget Speech that the matter is now being discussed with other State Governments. I ask the Minister, in his reply, to give some indication of what stage negotiations have reached.

I believe that travel concessions for World War I veterans are also under scrutiny. Those concessions have already been introduced in some other States, and the Government of this State has an obligation to act in that regard.

The issue of taxi licences on the Gold Coast has presented difficulty, partly because of the seasonal nature of the area and partly because of the size and shape of the area to be serviced. In reply to a question by me, the Minister advised on 11 November that in the past two years, eight additional taxi licences had been issued on the Gold Coast compared with none in Townsville. It is significant that the Gold Coast still has fewer taxis, 72, than in Townsville, which has 99, and Toowoomba, which has 104, although the purchase price of \$79,000, on the Gold Coast is considerably higher than the \$51,000 in Townsville and the \$34,000 in Toowoomba.

Earlier in the day the honourable member for Port Curtis was somewhat critical of those charges. However, we have to accept that some taxi licences have been sold on the Gold Coast for substantially more than the present Government asking price for a licence. Regent Taxis have also undertaken an extensive program to increase their level of service, including a new headquarters and communication system. The position has improved substantially in that time and I commend Regent Taxis for their effort. However, it is an area of Government policy that must be kept under review.

I take this opportunity to mention the fine work being carried out by the Road Safety Council, particularly that relating to the defensive driving course. That concept was originally developed in the United States of America at the request of the National Safety Council of the USA following approaches from the road transport industry. It was first introduced into Australia by the Queensland Road Safety Council in 1969. Since then, 75 000 Queenslanders have graduated, making it the single most successful post-licence driver education program in Australia. That is significant. Recently, to expand the impact of the effectiveness of the program, volunteer instructors have been recruited and have been operating on the Gold Coast under the direction of Sgt Scotty McJannett. It has been a dedicated, hard-working and very effective group of individuals. Recently the entire staff of Queensland Medical Laboratories undertook the course. That attitude is to be commended. I would like to see other companies follow that example. It is important, however, that the closest possible liaison be maintained between the Minister and the Road Safety Council, as well as the volunteer instructors, to ensure the continued effectiveness of the defensive driving course and its potential for expansion. It is my opinion that in that scheme rests the potential to effectively tackle the road toll problem. Perhaps it can do it more effectively than any other single measure. Last year some 3 500 people died on Australian roads and some 30 000 Australians were injured. As well as the tragic personal grief embodied in those figures, the impact to the national economy was estimated to be in excess of \$50m. A key factor in tackling the road toll, as honourable members before me today have stated, relates to effective driver education programs.

Much has been said about the effectiveness or otherwise of random breath-testing. Earlier this afternoon the honourable member for Redlands gave figures that are pertinent. The random breath-testing stations I have seen in Victoria, contrary to what has been said by some honourable members, have been neither open nor clearly visible. I give two examples of where I have personally been stopped in Victoria over the past 12 months. On one occasion the random breath-testing station was hidden behind trees and on another it was down a side street. I make the point that we need to be very careful, particularly taking into account the figures quoted by the member for Redlands, before we impose the sort of random breath-testing that is in operation in Victoria. It is interesting to note our per capita casualty rate is 38.5 per 10 000 motor vehicles, whereas Victoria's is 40.07, despite Victoria's smaller area, larger police force and better roads. It should be noted that Queensland's population density is 1.33 persons per square kilometre, compared with 16.84 in Victoria. The total police strength in Victoria is double that of Queensland.

In conclusion, I welcome the report prepared by Mr Seeney on transport services in this State. It will be a valuable asset to the Government in maximising the potential of what we should be doing to plan for the year 2000 and beyond in what is the growth State of the nation. I look forward to the completion of that report.

I commend one of my constituents, Mr Jack Howship, who has had lengthy discussions with Mr Peter Welding of the Metropolitan Transit Authority about his experience in Victoria and his proposals for a modal interchange at Beenleigh so that as the rail service to Beenleigh is upgraded in the due process of time, the Government can maximise the potential that that upgraded rail service presents to the people of the Gold Coast.

I support the Estimates before the Committee. I thank the Minister and the officers of the department for the co-operation and assistance that has been extended to me.

Mr HOOPER (Archerfield) (5.46 p.m.): Inala, Brisbane's largest suburb, is poorly served by public transport. In these days of job shortages it makes life very difficult for the unemployed seeking work.

Mr Prentice: Are you looking after your endorsement?

Mr HOOPER: No, I have no trouble with my endorsement.

I point out that Inala has no industry and is a dormitory suburb; it is as if a town like Maryborough had absolutely no industry.

Some years back the staff of the Commonwealth Employment Service at Inala could not understand why Inala residents were not keen on early starts at the Wacol Industrial Estate. After all, they could see the estate from their office windows in the civic centre, but no-one had bothered to find out how one got there without a car. The normal means of public transport is by bus to Oxley or Darra Railway Station, then by train to Wacol and Gailes and then by Shanks's pony. That is possible for a 7 a.m. or 7.30 a.m. start but for an earlier start the only way is to walk for an hour and a half along a road that has no footpath and few lights. That is certainly not a very inviting prospect on a dark winter's morning.

People who wish to attend a hospital are similarly disadvantaged. A trip from Inala to the Princess Alexandra Hospital can take 20 minutes by car but it can take up to two hours by public transport. If a person is sick or is taking sick children, that can be a nightmare.

Mr Borbidge: What have you been doing to improve services?

Mr HOOPER: For the last 11 years I have been trying to get it through the thick heads of some of the Cabinet Ministers that Inala needs a rail link, a matter which I will come to shortly. Despite Ministers' agreeing with me, nothing has been done. All the Government is interested in is big business. It is certainly not interested in people. It puts minerals and sheep and cattle before people.

Mr Katter: They bring in a little money that gets you some bread.

Mr HOOPER: Every time I listen to the honourable member for Flinders in this place I am reminded of the old adage that empty vessels make the most sound.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority is presently undertaking a survey to ascertain transport needs to hospitals, and I hope something positive comes of that. In all fairness to the Minister I should say that some time ago I led a deputation that consisted of three clergymen from the Inala area. The Minister received them very courteously and very fairly, and he has given an indication that a study will be undertaken, and if it proves feasible a bus service to the hospital will be provided.

Mr Prentice: This must be the first time you have spoken about your electorate in this Chamber for some time.

Mr HOOPER: At some time or another one has to make a parochial speech.

Not only is a rail link important to Inala, but it is important to the State because it would remove some of the overloading from the Roma Street to Ipswich rail corridor and provide a much-needed service to the residents of the south-western suburbs of Brisbane.

Mr Borbidge: You have not raised it in here before, have you?

Mr HOOPER: With due respect, I think it is about the 23rd time I have raised the matter.

The Government cannot have it both ways. It refuses to update the Inala Community Health Centre, where it is necessary to make an appointment three weeks ahead, yet, because of the inadequate and antiquated transport system, it denies the residents of Inala the means

of getting to a hospital for treatment. As I have pointed out on numerous occasions in this Chamber, the white elephant—the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital—at Coopers Plains would have been better located to serve the western suburbs. I have spoken to some of the more erudite members of the Liberal Party, not the political assassins who stab their colleagues in the back at preselection councils, and they have agreed with me that that hospital should have been located in the south-western suburbs.

Mr Greenwood: At Keperra.

Mr HOOPER: I agree with the honourable member for Ashgrove that a hospital should be built at Keperra, but I think he would also agree with me that Inala has a prior claim to a hospital. It would serve a much larger area. I would also point out to the honourable member—he is a QC and I should not have to bother—that Inala is the largest suburb in Brisbane. It has a population of some 25 000—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Jones): Order! I also point out to the honourable member that I would like him to come back to the Transport Estimates.

Mr HOOPER: Thank you, Mr Jones, I will. I have spoken to you privately in your capacity as the honourable member for Cairns, and you have also agreed with me that a hospital should be located at Inala.

As I was saying, the obvious answer is a rail link to Inala. This has been mooted for many years. Everyone agrees with me, including the present Minister, that it would be a huge success. Various Ministers have inspected the area, including the late Mr Keith Hooper and the Minister's immediate predecessor, Mr Ken Tomkins, and they have agreed that Inala should have a rail link. The Metropolitan Transit Authority has carried out studies and prepared maps, but still we get nowhere. As a highly-placed Government officer once said to me facetiously, "Discover coal at Inala, and you will have a rail link in six months." I might add that he was spot on.

Mr Prest: Maybe if they get some Japanese to live there it might come.

Mr HOOPER: There are some Japanese in my electorate, but I point out that I could not care less whether people are Japanese or Chinese. I am certainly no racist, and I could not care less what their nationality is.

Mr Eaton: You look after your constituents all the time.

Mr HOOPER: I look after all my constituents, irrespective of colour, class or creed. Even the 30 per cent of Liberals in my electorate get the same treatment as the 70 per cent who vote Labor. We will probably have to wait until Millmerran coal and beef from the south-west can be marketed before we get a railway line through Inala linking up with the Beenleigh line and possibly on to Fisherman Islands. As I said earlier in answer to an interjection, such a line will have to be built as the Brisbane-Ipswich line is already very congested, particularly from Oxley to Darra.

I would also point out that now is the time to resume the land for the rail corridor because most of the land through which the proposed line would pass to Inala is virgin land, and most of it is owned by Hancock Bros. If my memory serves me correctly, it is the biggest parcel of private land left in the metropolitan area. I am sure that if the Minister gave Hancock Bros an undertaking that the Government would eventually establish a rail line through to Inala, Hancock Bros would donate the land because it would be in their financial interest to do so. It would certainly open the land right up. The Minister has agreed with me privately, and he probably will again in his summing-up. I want to see some action, not just high-falutin words written for the Minister by his Press' agent.

Mr Milliner: By Mr Goebel?

Mr HOOPER: I have heard that name before. Is the honourable member referring to the Minister for Propaganda in the Hitler Government or that gentleman who just stabbed the honourable member for Mansfield in the back over preselection?

Mr Milliner: The one who did the stabbing in the back.

Mr HOOPER: I suggest that the honourable member talk to the honourable member for Stafford and the Minister for Transport.

I now want to deal briefly with vehicles parked in bus stops. The present campaign being undertaken by Brisbane City Council bus drivers is understandable. However, I feel that it is not the answer. Brisbane City Council bus drivers are using a sledge-hammer to swat a fly. It is not fair to the elderly, and even the ordinary bus traveller, to see their bus sail past them because there is a car parked in the bus stop. After all, it is not a situation of their making. In my opinion the only answer is to manipulate the old hip pocket nerve. A fine, and a heavy one at that, will soon discourage illegal parking in bus stops.

I have heard various speakers this afternoon refer to the Highway Patrol. They are only getting on to my bandwagon, because for many years in this Assembly I have been advocating the establishment of a highway patrol. I am pleased to see that the Government has finally seen reason and that my plan has come to fruition.

Mr Greenwood: All your fault.

Mr HOOPER: Over the past 12 months the honourable member for Ashgrove and I have had a rather friendly relationship, but if he persists in his inane interjections he might not like what he gets in return.

The establishment of a highway patrol has finally come to fruition. The suggestion has been made quite often that a highway patrol be under the control of the Transport Department. The present Minister is a former policeman. He has been doing some empire-building. He tried very hard to have the Highway Patrol placed under the auspices of the Transport Department. However, other members of Cabinet were much more realistic, and the Highway Patrol is under the control of the Queensland Police Force, where it should be. With the ever-increasing road toll, most honourable members would agree that the Police Department is the more realistic department to handle the Highway Patrol. We would all hope for close liaison between the Transport Department officers and the Highway Patrol to stamp out such road hazards as grossly overloaded trucks.

Mr Lane: Hear, hear!

Mr HOOPER: I thank the Honourable the Minister. He is more erudite than I thought he was.

Brisbane is a hilly city and one has only to drive round the suburbs to see dozens of obviously overloaded trucks grinding up even the smallest hills. I hope that, before Christmas, the Highway Patrol gets its remaining 35 vehicles on the roads from Brisbane to the North and South Coast and to Toowoomba and Warwick, and issues summonses on companies whose trucks are found to be grossly overloaded.

Heavy articulated vehicles will have to be brought under greater Government scrutiny. Following the construction of the City Mall they cannot drive along Queen Street, but they are travelling along Ann Street and Elizabeth Street like the Charge of the Light Brigade.

The dangers of a tanker turning over in the Valley have been canvassed many times in this Chamber. The answer has always been that, when the Gateway Bridge is completed, the trucks will use it and the danger will pass.

Mr Vaughan: They will come through my electorate.

Mr HOOPER: I certainly hope they do not. I do not want to see the honourable member's constituents disadvantaged.

Mr Vaughan: No preparation has been made for them, either.

Mr HOOPER: I know that the honourable member will make representations to the Minister on behalf of his constituents, and I hope that he wins the case.

Mr Eaton: They will take a short-cut across the airport.

Mr HOOPER: That would not surprise me.

The toll for a truck using Gateway Bridge will be about \$6 per trip. Controls will have to be introduced to force heavy vehicles to use the bridge and so keep out of the Valley and city streets. The time is not too far distant when heavy vehicles making deliveries in the city and Valley will have to do so outside peak hours. That is not a popular suggestion, but it has to come. After all, adequate penalty rates are paid to people for working outside the 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. period. Persons following many other occupations are required to work outside office hours to service the general community. I am sure that some members of the Transport Workers Union, the Shop Assistants Union and the Storemen and Packers Union will understand.

Another serious traffic hazard that has been mentioned often is the habit of heavily laden semi-trailers grinding up Ipswich Road, Annerley, in the vicinity of Chardons Hotel. They are driven in each lane with lines of frustrated motorists following them. I have no doubt that many other motorists and I have taken enormous risks because of sheer frustration in that situation.

Mr Milliner: I would hate anything to happen to you.

Mr HOOPER: If anything happened to me, the honourable member for Everton might have more trouble with his preselection than he had last time.

It is pretty common knowledge that transport operators are avoiding the Gailes weighbridge. They travel through the back of Gailes, Redbank Plains and Inala. The Transport Department should be having a hard look at that.

I hope that the Minister will take cognisance of the matters I have raised and will take action to have them rectified.

I pay a tribute to the retiring Commissioner for Railways, Mr Jim Goldston. He has carried out his very onerous duties with dignity, fairness and decorum. He is a credit to the Public Service. I wish him a long and happy retirement.

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

Mr WARNER (Toowoomba South) (7.15 p.m.): From the beginning I have wholeheartedly supported the decision by the Minister and the Government to reduce the permissible prescribed blood alcohol level from .08 to .05, which will come into force in the near future. As has been said in this Chamber and elsewhere, that decision was not taken lightly. A great deal of research was devoted to that area of concern. During the year, the Minister brought that research to the committee's attention on many occasions. Nobody can say that research was not carried out long before this.

The decision has caused a great deal of debate in the community on whether the Government will be successful in its attempt to reduce the road toll. The debate will, no doubt, go on for some time, but that is only to be expected with such a decision.

Action must be taken to reduce the road toll, and the Government has been active in its endeavours at all times. The Government has a responsibility to introduce measures to reduce the road toll. It is irresponsible for anybody in this Chamber or elsewhere to say that the measures will not work. They are apparently working in other States. Statistics prove that they are certainly helping to reduce the number of accidents.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Do you say that what is being done in the other States is a good idea?

Mr WARNER: We have to try something in Queensland—and we are trying.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: I am curious, because you were referring to Labor States.

Mr WARNER: They were not all Labor States at one stage of the game. I do not think that this matter is a party decision for Labor or the Liberal and National Parties.

I repeat that we must face up to the horrific road toll and demand that firm action be taken against drink drivers. It must be remembered that of the 322 drivers killed in the year ended June 1981, blood alcohol tests which were performed on 243 persons proved 59 per cent positive. That is only part of the grim picture. That is a very high figure. Approximately 90 per cent of drivers involved in road accidents who were tested on a breathalyser showed a positive result. That should not be tolerated.

Mr Vaughan: Do you think that .05 will stop it?

Mr WARNER: I have said that we must do something to try to stop it. The measure was introduced in an effort to reduce the road toll.

In recent years, the road toll has been declining in relation to distance travelled and population. However, the road toll, which is caused mainly by drink drivers, will be far too high if it continues in the same way. I sincerely hope and pray that the measures taken will provide increased safety on our roads. I am sure that Opposition members share in those thoughts.

I commend the Minister for the action that he has taken. It is to be noted that, as usual, the Minister is taking the lead, in his portfolio, by adopting a long-term plan for the eventual reduction in the lead content of petrol in this State. Some apprehension has been voiced to me and, I am sure, to other members in this Assembly, about the future availability of leaded petrol after 1986. That is the approximate date given to car manufacturers from which they will have to build cars suitable for lead-free petrol in this State. Although the Minister has assured Queenslanders that leaded petrol will not be withdrawn from sale for 14 years, apprehension still remains about what will happen after that date.

Fears have been expressed that, apart from any decision taken in Queensland, a national decision could force current owners to adapt their cars to lead-free petrol long before that date and before their cars are very old.

Mr Burns: Don't you think that lead is a danger to health?

Mr WARNER: Of course it is.

Mr Burns: Then why do you want to keep it in petrol?

Mr WARNER: I am not saying that.

Mr Burns: Yes you are.

Mr WARNER: No I am not. What I am saying is that lead-free petrol will be phased in over a fairly lengthy period.

Mr Burns: 14 years. People will die from lead-poisoning in those 14 years.

Mr WARNER: The honourable member is only having me on. I am sure the understanding is that lead-free petrol will be phased in over a lengthy period. All I am asking is that those present-day cars that are left in the State at that stage have access to leaded petrol. To adapt a car of any great age would not be economically practicable. There would be many cars that could still be in use when leaded petrol is banned in Queensland, as it should be. I feel sure that the Minister is aware of the problem and will do everything he can to ensure that leaded petrol is available in Queensland for a reasonable period after that date.

The establishment of a regional office of the Department of Transport in Toowoomba is a big step forward. The proposed building, to be constructed in my electorate, will provide an up-to-date centre for the testing of drivers, for the Queensland Road Safety Council and for the testing of heavy vehicles.

Most importantly, the Road Safety Council will have its headquarters in the building, and that will undoubtedly help the council to expand the already thriving defensive driving course in Toowoomba. The course is of great importance to the community.

Already the Queensland Road Safety Council has introduced a voluntary system of defensive driving courses with great success. That is clearly indicated by the large number in Toowoomba who are willing to undertake the course, thereby doing something positive about promoting road safety. That is to their credit. The course is the most successful post-licence driver-education program of its type in Australia. Many transport companies and commercial operators have their drivers complete the course. That speaks for itself. The course would be recognised as one of the best in Queensland and Australia.

Road safety is paramount in today's world. The road toll is a community problem, and it is only through community and individual action that road safety will be achieved. That is quite apparent from what is occurring on the roads today. Very few people take reasonable care when they are driving.

In the Minister's words, no Government can legislate for patience, courtesy, understanding and common sense. Each of those attributes is an essential ingredient for a safe road user and the safety of others. I commend the Minister for his promotion of the road safety courses.

A small but important matter is the implementation of a concessional parking scheme in all areas of Queensland and elsewhere for vehicles used by disabled persons. In many areas, concessional parking is already in operation, but there is no arrangement by which a disabled person who has a permit for himself or his vehicle entitling him to concessions in one local authority area can have a reciprocal right granted to him in another local authority area in Queensland or in any other State. The problem is a real one. If a reciprocal rights scheme could be implemented to allow disabled persons using vehicles to enjoy the privilege of concessional parking throughout the country, it would constitute an enormous benefit to the physically disabled. I have taken the matter up with the Minister and he has promised to look at it with a view to amending the Act. Such a move is essential, and I commend it to the Minister.

Once again, I bring to the attention of honourable members the fact that unfortunately the quite successful co-ordinated service between Toowoomba and the Ipswich Railway Station has quite a serious defect. McCafferty's bus service, which operates between Toowoomba and Ipswich, has to disembark its passengers some distance from the Ipswich Railway Station. It is nearly impossible for aged people to carry heavy luggage from the point at which they leave the bus to the railway platform, from which they can get a train to Brisbane. I am quite certain that in the first place, the Minister did not envisage that that would happen.

At one time the co-ordinated service operated from Toowoomba to Helidon, which is not very far below the range. The passengers were let down at the Helidon Railway Station and there was no hassle with luggage. I wonder why the position was allowed to develop where pensioners and aged people have to carry their luggage from the bus to the platform at Ipswich.

Mr Davis: You didn't support me when I raised it.

Mr WARNER: I am so sorry.

As I have said, the co-ordinated service from Toowoomba to Ipswich is very good, but there is that one hitch. Unfortunately, the Ipswich City Council made the extraordinary decision that McCafferty's bus service could not pick up or let down passengers at the Ipswich Railway Station. As I have said, that disadvantages many people; and the member for Brisbane Central did not tell me that in the first place. The change in the co-ordinated service was supposed to upgrade the service between Toowoomba and Brisbane but, because of that decision by the Ipswich City Council, that aim is being somewhat defeated. I ask the Minister to look into this matter, as the representations that I have made to the Ipswich City Council have brought no reply.

I am disappointed that the rail link between Toowoomba and Ipswich has not been electrified yet. I believe that the Minister is looking into the matter. The Estimates do not contain any provision for such a rail link, but I hope that provision will be made for it in the future.

My proposal to put a tunnel through the range to Toowoomba has received quite a deal of opposition in this Chamber. That proposal has become a fact on paper, if nothing else.

Like many other honourable members, I am conscious of the work that the Minister and his officers have done this year to increase the efficiency of the transport system in Queensland. I commend both the Minister and his staff for the work that they have done. Queensland is a very big State, and transport is one of the biggest problems facing the Government and the Minister.

Mr Davis: Are you going to support the inquiry that the Minister is having carried out?

Mr WARNER: Yes.

As I say, I commend the Minister and his staff for the efficient job that they have done this year.

Mr AKERS (Pine Rivers) (7.29 p.m.): I support the Government and the Minister for Transport in the debate on the Transport Estimates. I must express surprise at the statements that the honourable member for Cairns made earlier today. I suppose that I really should not be surprised about statements that come from members of the ALP; but it is still a shock to find that they have a total lack of knowledge of how things work.

The honourable member for Cairns said that the railways should not be allowed to make a profit. That reveals the vast difference in thinking between the ALP in Queensland and the Liberal and National Parties. We believe that the railways should provide a service to the community in the most economical way possible, which means giving deep consideration to cost/benefit. However, the ALP obviously believes that expenditure is totally irrelevant; that any amount of money may be spent as long as a railway line runs to a community, regardless of how few it may serve.

Mr Vaughan: They are your words and they are untrue.

Mr AKERS: That is what the member for Cairns said.

In the eight years that I have been in the Parliament, the three members who have held the position of Transport Minister—the late Mr K. W. Hooper, Mr Tomkins and the present incumbent, Mr Lane—have tried to provide a service as comprehensive as possible within the sensible economies necessary for Queensland. The electrification of the Brisbane area lines, which was commenced by Mr Hooper, is perhaps the greatest example of the positive action taken by the Government. Very little work is still to be done on that \$260m project. The last of the suburban lines will be electrified by early next year, and within four months some electric trains will be running on the Strathpine-Petrie line. That service is desperately needed. These excellent trains are providing a quiet, rapid service equal to any urban service in the world. Probably a more comprehensive and more frequent service is provided by the Tube in London, with lines criss-crossed at various levels. The BART system in San Francisco is very quick. However, no system I have seen provides such a comfortable method of travel, with such high quality interiors and high quality mechanical specifications. Brisbane people are flocking back to the trains at the same time as the BART system in San Francisco is floundering for want of customers.

Mr Vaughan: Why?

Mr AKERS: People are not using those other systems because they feel uncomfortable in them and are cramped. They shake a lot and are not nearly as comfortable as what we have. The people of Brisbane want to travel in comfort. They want something that is at least as comfortable as their own cars. That is what they have. The growth in patronage, in my opinion, is due entirely to the fact that the trains are at least equal in comfort to motor vehicles and, obviously, they can travel at a much cheaper cost, much more quickly and conveniently, especially in peak hours. For the same reason, I congratulate both the MTA and the Brisbane City Council on the introduction of the express bus services around Brisbane for their comfort and the use of imagination.

People are able to drive in the comfort of their own cars to an area in which they can park easily. They board one of the express buses and are in the city very quickly. People will use that type of facility. Very few people will voluntarily place themselves in an environment in which they are shaken about, almost deafened and dirtied, as happens with some of the old buses still in use in Brisbane. However, they will use modern services.

That brings me to the matter of other suburban services. I have spoken many times to all three of the Ministers for Transport I mentioned about the provision of bus services to the outer suburban areas of Brisbane, especially those not serviced by the Brisbane City Council but by private bus owners.

One excellent example is Albany Creek. Recently the Minister, through the MTA, provided a subsidy for additional bus services to be run to Albany Creek. Despite publicity that included pamphlets and timetables being put in every letter-box in Albany Creek by the Albany Creek Progress Association, those new services have failed and have had to be cut back. When trains are gaining increased patronage, why should those bus services fail? Simply because the same old rattletrap buses were used on the service. In addition, the vast majority of Albany Creek families already had two cars.

That brings out two points. One is the need for the Government to ensure that suburban bus services are of equal comfort to the electric trains so people will want to get into those buses and travel in them. They must be comfortable and fast, and the rattletaps that are run around Brisbane by most of the private services are far from that. People have been put off by them.

Several times I have raised the point that there must be some sort of development of bus services in places such as Albany Creek. That entire suburb has grown virtually in the last eight or 10 years, but it has sadly lacked public transport, with only one bus in and out per day. People have slowly developed the habit of buying a second car and they have used those second cars. The husband or the wife takes one car to work; the partner who remains at home uses the second car for private use in the area. Therefore, very few people now need public transport. When people are not encouraged to use public transport, they will continue to use their own cars.

Positive action is needed early in the development of places such as Albany Creek to encourage people to use buses right from the beginning. That means running them at a loss for some time; but that loss would be written off to development and is not the type of loss that was spoken about by the member for Cairns when he was discussing railways. It is an investment in the service so that people become used to using buses in those areas, so they do not buy a second car and do not get used to using one.

Mr Davis: What is the difference in the losses?

Mr AKERS: There is a big difference. If the honourable member had been listening, he might have understood. The difference is that one is an investment in a developing business.

Mr Davis: Is it all right to incur a loss on buses but not on trains?

Mr AKERS: No. I am saying that it is an investment in the future, not just a total loss.

Mr Vaughan: You are talking about a private bus company aren't you?

Mr AKERS: Yes, I am talking about a private company. I have already said that. Once again, the Opposition is not listening.

The Government needs to take very positive action in both those regards. If some funds are injected and some real imagination is used, services of that type will develop and people will use them, which is the critical factor.

Although I have spoken about increased patronage caused by electrification of the railways, I must mention the loss of a great opportunity by the Railway Department, that is, the enormous gain in patronage that would have resulted if a new station had been constructed at Bray Park. I hear the Commissioner for Railways groaning; he has heard that a number of times before. If that station had been constructed at the time of electrification of the railway line, there would have been a vast increase in the patronage from that area. Thousands of potential train users in that area are deterred from using trains by the great difficulty of access to the two existing stations at Lawnton and Strathpine.

The survey carried out by the Metropolitan Transit Authority is totally useless. I understand that all that was done was to ask passengers at existing stations whether they would use a station at Bray Park. Such a question would not determine whether there is any potential for new patronage because those people who were questioned are already using the service, even though it is under difficult circumstances. Only some of them would use a new station that was easy to get to. Of course, the studies showed that there were insufficient people to justify the construction of a new station. At present a person living at Bray Park and travelling to Brisbane has to drive away from his destination to get to Lawnton or negotiate a tortuous route through heavy traffic to get to Strathpine station. A proper survey is needed to really establish the need, and I know that such a survey would show that there are sufficient people in Bray Park to warrant a new railway station.

Mr Davis: A station is needed between Zillmere and Bald Hills.

Mr AKERS: The need for that station is obvious also. I am talking about people living in the Strathpine/Bray Park area now. The need is already there. If a station is built it should be built slightly further north of the site originally proposed and on the Four Mile Creek Bridge. That would provide proper access via Sovereign Avenue,

Brahms Street, Railway Avenue and Old Gympie Road. There would then be good access from both sides of Four Mile Creek and no concentrated traffic from any direction. Such a plan would work. The need will be obvious if the correct questions are asked in a survey. I warn the Minister that I will shortly be bringing to him a deputation from the Pine Rivers Shire Council and the Strathpine Chamber of Commerce, so he should be prepared for that.

In his Budget Speech the Treasurer (Dr Edwards) mentioned the provision of reciprocal interstate travel for pensioners. That has been an embarrassing item for a very long time. I am told that there is a sign at Circular Quay in Sydney that makes a laughing-stock of Queensland. It says, in effect, "Everyone else can travel free except people from Queensland." I cringe every time that that is mentioned. I hope that some positive step is taken and that reciprocal arrangements are quickly introduced.

While on the subject of pensioners, I want to raise another problem facing age and perhaps invalid pensioners on the subject of drivers' licences. At present the average person has to apply for a new licence only once every five years and pays only one fee, whereas I understand that age and invalid pensioners have to apply every year. Besides the expense of having to supply a medical certificate a pensioner must pay a fee every year, which means that he must pay five times the amount that the average person pays for a driver's licence. I think that it totally unfair, and I ask the Minister to have a look at what can be done to relieve pensioners of that imposition.

Mr Booth: Are you sure that is right?

Mr AKERS: I understand that it is. If it is not true, I will be very happy.

I want to protest at the action of the ALP Wran Government in removing the sleeping carriages from the "Brisbane Limited". Having heard about that, it is no wonder that such an unimaginative Government refused to join with me and the Minister for Transport is choosing some more exotic and interesting name for that train, because its obvious intention is just to destroy the service. Many pensioners regularly use that interstate service. They are entitled to a free train trip, but they have to sit up all the way. Many pensioners or their relatives have been paying the difference for the use of a sleeper so that these aged people do not have to sit up in the cramped conditions of the economy-class carriages or even the first-class sitting carriages for long periods. The Wran Government has decided that those people are unimportant and the privilege is to be removed.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr AKERS: It is surprising how ALP members scream whenever Mr Wran is shown as being less than a hero.

Mr Lane: And he is their federal president.

Mr AKERS: Federal president of the Australian Labor Party. I am told that ALP members hope that he will enter the Federal Government and become Prime Minister if Mr Hayden and the curly-headed bloke with the eyebrows, Mr Hawke, do not knife him before he gets there.

Mr Prest: Don't talk about knifing. You want to talk to Bill Kaus and Bob Moore about knifing.

Mr AKERS: Opposition members should consider what happened to Vi Jordan. The Labor Party took disgusting action, yet Opposition members, during the condolence motion moved following her death, said marvellous things about her. They made me sick.

Those pensioners are being deprived by the ALP Government in New South Wales and the federal president of the ALP.

Mr DAVIS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Pine Rivers is misleading the Committee. He knows that pensioners do not get a free trip to Sydney.

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

Mr AKERS: There was no point of order, Mr Row, and what the honourable member said was wrong.

The alternatives facing these people are paying for very expensive air travel and sitting up in uncomfortable train seats for 14 hours. That shows how much the ALP cares for people.

On behalf of the people of Strathpine and Bray Park I thank the Minister and the Railway Department for the method used in building the Samsonvale Road bridge at Strathpine. It is a credit to both the Minister and the department that they had sufficient understanding of the problems to alter the method of construction, expend a little more money and save the residents and business people of Strathpine from the tremendous difficulties that would have arisen under the original proposal. Some residents would have been faced with the problem of heavy traffic using narrow streets for six months; business people would have been cut off from their customers for six months and some people would have been held up every day for six months by having to use the alternative means of travel proposed originally. The scheme eventually adopted was excellent.

I raise a problem that is confronted in many places with level crossings. Boom gates, such as those in Telegraph Road and South Pine Road, create tremendous problems. The bitumen on each side of the railway line breaks up regularly. Extensive work needs to be done. There must be a better way of handling the problem, such as setting the lines in concrete, so that people can travel over the crossing safely. Boom gates, especially those in Beams Road, go berserk. They open and close at their own will. They seem to have their own mind. Like the ALP, they go up and down, sideways and all over the place. They are totally unsafe.

(Time expired.)

Mr KRUGER (Murrumba) (7.49 p.m.): I rise to make a few points on these very important Estimates.

Mr Lane: How about speaking into the microphone for a start?

A Government Member: We cannot hear you.

Mr KRUGER: That is no problem. I will do what Government members want me to do and hopefully they will do what I want them to do about the matters I will raise.

Mr Lane: Now try to speak without mumbling.

Mr KRUGER: I do not intend to shout and rave as the Minister does and adopt his unparliamentary attitude at question-time.

I shall briefly refer to the rail link proposed for Redcliffe, which is something that the Minister knows a great deal about. He knows about it because it is brought up at election-time. That is the only reason why he knows about it. In the by-election for the seat of Redcliffe, in which Mr Terry White was successful, there was a promise that the railway would be built within a few years. Every now and then when it is convenient, the Minister issues a Press release through the member for Redcliffe.

When the rail link is constructed, it will be in the electorate of Murrumba, which is represented by me. It is a very needy cause. The Minister agrees with me on that. All that he has to worry about now is the timing. At long last the survey has been completed. Resumptions will soon take place. Notices of resumption have been issued. I am grateful to the Minister for that because people have been in a quandary for three or four years as to what was going to happen. It will not be too long before the people in the area will know what will happen to their properties. I compliment the surveyors and railway officers to the extent that, where possible, they have taken off the back section of a property or they have gone very close to boundary lines. Unfortunately, a number of properties have been split in half. I am mainly concerned about those people. In some instances there has been a clean-cut resumption and the balance of the area is not restricted, and no problems are experienced. That is progress. However, if a property is split in half, there is an inconvenience to those people. I do not complain that that must be done. There is a need to finalise the resumptions so that the people know what they can do with their properties.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr KRUGER: I think that will be OK. The Minister is well aware of that because I keep bringing to his attention the fact that the Petrie Railway Station and the railway link is in the electorate of Murrumba. I think he will do the right thing by me when the opening takes place. Of course, there is a possibility that the present Minister will not be the Minister for Transport at that time. However, if he is, I think he will look after me and everything will be all right.

A number of people along the proposed route graze a few cattle. They will be inconvenienced because they will have a block of land on each side of the railway line. I have raised that matter with the department and everybody is looking at it with the best of intentions. Hopefully, some results will be achieved there.

Today I spoke to the Minister about the condition of the Petrie Railway Station. Because of questions I have asked previously, it has always been understood that it would be upgraded at the time that electrification of the line reached Petrie, or at least by the time it approached Caboolture. I am hopeful that that will be carried out in the near future. Admittedly, it can be used in its present state. However, upgrading is needed and it is time that increased traffic went through that station. Because of the spur line connections to Petrie, it is possibly the busiest railway connection on the north side.

Mr Lane: Mr Akers has been speaking about that.

Mr KRUGER: He would not really know much about Petrie because he is much closer to Brisbane, in the Bald Hills/Zillmere area.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: He certainly spends most of his time in the electorate of Salisbury.

Mr KRUGER: I would not know what he does with his spare time.

The member for Pine Rivers proposed a railway station between Lawnton and Strathpine. That would serve many people in the Murrumba electorate.

Mr Lane: We don't assign railways on the basis of electors.

Mr KRUGER: That is obvious, because if the Minister did so, he would be quite confused. The electorate of Murrumba is the fastest growing electorate of all Labor-held seats. The Minister has been trying to get the line constructed. Obviously he has not been worried about the electoral boundaries. The Minister is well aware of the needs; I do not have to tell him about them. The Government has made promises at each election. In 12 months' time the member for Redcliffe will be dangling the carrot in front of his electors. The member for Redcliffe (Hon. Terry White) will be making a big song and dance and playing politics. I am sick and tired of it.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers claimed that the Australian Labor Party does not worry about people. That is incorrect. The Labor Party is concerned for the working-class people at Redcliffe.

During the Commonwealth Games, the feeder bus services and the railways co-ordinated to provide the best public transport service that Brisbane has seen for a long time. If that could be done during the Games, when a huge number of people had to be shifted and when Brisbane wanted to show off to visitors, it can be done for the workers every day of the week, every week of the year. The Government should make sure that such a service is made available to them.

Admittedly, the public transport service in Brisbane is improving, but electrification is many years behind schedule and is now more costly than it would have been when the Labor Government went out of office. At that time electrification was ready to roll, but it was stopped by a National-Liberal Government.

On the southside, many railway lines were pulled up. The one to Cleveland is a good example. The Government is now beginning to re-lay these lines, which shows that it was wrong in pulling them up in the first place.

I make a call for improved feeder bus services. I have talked to officers of the Metropolitan Transit Authority and found that many areas are without feeder bus services. In many instances, the bus proprietors are given a franchise to operate but they do not provide a service. When I suggested to a particular bus company that other buses be brought in to provide a service, the personnel in that company jumped up and down. They

simply do not bother about providing a service. It is time that the Government looked at some of the franchise agreements to ascertain whether bus proprietors are giving the service that they should be providing. If they are not, they should be given a bit of a shake-up.

Many people live just too far from the station to walk to the train and not far enough to warrant the purchase of a second car. Some of them, of course, have a second family vehicle. Such people would benefit greatly from the provision of a feeder bus service. A husband and wife who both work would derive great benefit from a feeder bus service to a railway station. The fast and efficient way of moving people is by rail. If people can be given confidence in the railway service, they will make a habit of using it. The first thing they will think of when they are going out is catching a fast, clean, comfortable train. Over the years, the use of broken-down, rattling carriages has deterred many people from using trains. It is only with the introduction of electrification that a better service has been provided. I hope that electrification is extended very quickly.

There is a move to extend electrification to Caboolture. Not much of the Caboolture area is in my electorate, but there is a great need for electrification to service the growing area of Burpengary and nearby areas. I predict that with the advent of a speedy and reliable service there will be a great increase in the number of railway users. I hope that electrification can be provided to Caboolture in the not-too-distant future. The time to convert people to use rail is when they build a home in an area. Good results can be achieved from a large influx of people into a new area.

I want to lodge a complaint about the number of breakdowns on the North Coast line. I have a couple of daughters who travel by rail from Petrie to Brisbane and return. Regularly, short breakdowns occur but some reasonably lengthy ones of half an hour or three-quarters of an hour also occur. It would be nice to think that the service could be upgraded to such an extent that the problems could be overcome.

I turn now to the problems that arise in other areas. The Government, in spite of its public relations exercise and attempts to put up a good front, cannot hide the contempt that it shows for railway employees and passengers in country areas.

Apart from residences provided under mining agreements, the Budget provides no expenditure to meet the need for new Railway Department housing. The Government treats employees and their families who require such housing with complete and utter contempt. Over the years, several requests have been made to upgrade the houses and cottages of railway workers, but very little improvement has occurred, and I think it is high time that some improvement did occur. Those people are not getting a fair go.

Many railway houses have been listed for replacement with the Railway Department since the 1970s, and most of those houses are still waiting to be replaced. That is a period of 12 years, and those houses should have been upgraded much more quickly.

The story is even worse for major repairs and upgrading. For example, I was told today that the assistant station-master's house at Tiaro is without a septic toilet, power points in the bedrooms, a laundry area and a hot-water service. It must be remembered that this is 1982. If my information is correct, that is down right disgraceful. That house has a 19th century wood stove in a corrugated iron alcove and an outside toilet of similar vintage. Is that the immaculate image of the Queensland Railways under this Government?

Mr Moore: You were doing better when you were speaking without notes.

Mr KRUGER: That is correct, but these points were made to me and I think they are worth mentioning. I did not travel through all the areas to get the information. It was provided to me, I read it and I thought that it should be brought to the attention of honourable members.

Tiaro is not an isolated example. Railway houses in non-mining areas are screaming out for replacement or repair. Not even Brisbane is immune from the problem. For example, the station-mistress's house at Fairfield is collapsing around her ears and, despite union representations, nothing has been done. Earlier this year, the station-mistress's residence at Salisbury was about to collapse after a major storm. No railway resources were available to undertake the required repairs. It took the threat of industrial action by the station officers union for the necessary resources to be made available, and that was despite the fact that the lives of the station-mistress and her family were at risk.

In the northern part of Queensland, funding for railway housing facilities is even worse. By way of example, the occupier of the Wilmington station house has been asking for a generator to meet basic electricity requirements. None has been provided. At Inkerman station, the house has no hot-water system. At Cloncurry, the assistant station-master's house is so run down that the windows will not shut, there are no fly-screens, the rise and fall of the floor reminds one of the ocean, and there are two-inch gaps between the floor boards. It seems a bit exaggerated to say that there are two-inch gaps between the floor boards; however, it illustrates the problems that exists.

Mr Katter: If it comes from Cloncurry, it would be pretty accurate.

Mr KRUGER: Here we have a Government member saying that it would be pretty accurate to say that there are two-inch gaps between the floor boards in that house. If that is so, it is shocking.

In Townsville, passengers have to queue on the street to purchase a ticket at the main railway station. Townsville is a fairly big city, and one would think that better facilities for selling tickets could be provided. The situation is a joke.

At the railway workshops, most machinery is of World War II vintage. In my travels throughout the State I have visited some railway workshops, and I thought that things looked pretty reasonable; but, then again, I am not a diesel mechanic, and I would not be 100 per cent certain that my view was correct. The people concerned say that they do not have the best equipment. If that is so, they should be provided with it.

Mr Davis: It is junk.

Mr KRUGER: The honourable member for Brisbane Central has been connected with transport for many years, and if he says that it is junk, then it is junk.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: That is one of the principal reasons why Government workshops cannot compete with private enterprise.

Mr KRUGER: That is true. I understand that the work done in the railway workshops at Ipswich has been exceptionally good. Carriages have been built there for many years.

The Government boasts about a higher percentage of people being employed here than in any other State, but I doubt that. Why is the Government employing people to continue the trade of building railway rolling-stock in Queensland? Why does it not employ people in that field and provide opportunities for apprentices? I hold the Minister fully responsible. He has continually been told about those needs. His predecessor, Mr Tomkins, possibly tried. However, after some of the blunders he has made recently, I am not quite sure whether his attempts to do something would have been effective. He did not match up to the performance required and was removed from the position.

Road transport has been mentioned during the debate, as has the blood alcohol level of .05 per cent. However, my main concern has been to mention rail services for Redcliffe and some of the areas on the near North Coast. One problem that I did wish to raise—I have spoken about it before—is the incidence of road accidents in which heavy vehicles are involved. There do not seem to have been as many recently, or it may be that they have not been brought to our attention by the media. However, it is up to the people, the police and the Government of Queensland to make sure that as many problems as possible are overcome. Both the Main Roads Department and councils are involved in road-works, and I point out to them that some corners at intersections are too sharp and create problems for transport.

We have to consider people who require public transport; we have to consider those who are affected because transport is not up to standard. We ought to upgrade our systems of transportation. If we do not provide the funds to do that in a realistic way, we will not get anywhere. I ask the Government to pay full attention to the transport needs of the State of Queensland.

Mr KAUS: Mr Row—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Row): I call the member for Mansfield.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr KAUS (Mansfield) (8.7 p.m.): I will not answer any comments from the Opposition. I have a few comments of my own to make.

It gives me great pleasure to take part in the debate on the Estimates presented by the Minister for Transport. This is his first Estimates debate, and I congratulate him on the work he has done. I have been very interested in the Transport Department. I was on the committee of the late Keith Hooper when he was Minister for Transport; so I can speak with some authority on this subject. I was on the Minister's committee for a number of years and enjoyed being on it.

I congratulate the Commissioner for Railways, Jimmy Goldston, on his retirement. I met him quite a few years ago when he was the manager in Rockhampton. He has done a marvellous job as Commissioner for Railways. I only hope that in the very near future, when Jim retires and has time to reflect on the wonderful work that he has done for the Queensland Government and for the Railway Department, I might be able to play golf with him, because I understand that he is not a bad golfer.

The Minister's portfolio affects many Queenslanders. I have travelled around the world and seen many different transport systems and I believe that the Government, on its present Budget, is doing a magnificent job for the people of Queensland in providing transportation systems.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr KAUS: I will not accept any interjections.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Row): Order! Persistent interjections will not be tolerated. The practice must cease.

Mr KAUS: Although I have not read the complete departmental report, part of it reveals that the department is in the throes of upgrading the Great Northern Railway. I have used railways all over Australia. I have been on the Indian Pacific, which is magnificent; I have travelled on Victorian, South Australian and New South Wales railways—I have been around a bit. Many years ago I heard stories about the need to upgrade Queensland's railways; they were not the best. But I know that the present Minister has endeavoured to upgrade facilities to attract more train travellers. That is about time because even when I have travelled overseas I have heard comments about Queensland railways. International tourists who do not have the money to travel by air like to use the best method possible to see the country, and that is either by car or by train. In that way they can stop off for a few days to see the sights in an area and then rejoin the train to continue on their way. However, trains must have good facilities to attract travellers, particularly long-distance travellers. Electric trains in Brisbane have overcome some problems.

I now wish to speak of some things I have seen on my travels overseas. Prior to my departure there were many accidents involving semi-trailers. At that time one of my constituents said to me that on a week-end she had travelled from Brisbane to Caloundra and passed 87 semi-trailers on the way, which she thought was awful. Perhaps she was not a good driver. During my travels in Europe when I was sitting in the bus I had nothing to do so I decided to take a survey of the number of semi-trailers that were travelling in the opposite direction on the six-lane highway. I counted only semi-trailers, not buses or ordinary trucks.

Mr Jones: What time was it?

Mr KAUS: During the middle of the day. In the first hour I counted 620 semi-trailers. One of my constituents complained about counting 87 semi-trailers in an 80-mile trip, but in a 450 km trip I counted an average of 620 semi-trailers an hour. On the next leg the figure was the same, and on the next leg from Lyon to Paris travelling on a six-lane highway I counted an average of 720 semi-trailers an hour. Members opposite would not know what traffic is. No-one does until he goes overseas. Members opposite would not even know what the people are like—they are like ants.

Australians travelling overseas think that Australia is a great country—it is the best country in the world—but unfortunately 90 per cent of the world's population do not even know it exists. We have a big ego because we live in a large country.

After attending a parliamentary conference in the Bahamas I travelled to Canada and met some very nice people. I also inspected the magnificent Canadian transport systems. Canada has a larger population than does Queensland, but I think that we in Queensland—although

we are only one State of Australia—can match the Canadians in relation to the amount of money allocated to our transport system. I congratulate the Minister for Transport and the departmental officers who plan for the future, because we can match the Canadian transport system.

While I was in Vancouver I inspected a magnificent new regional rapid transit system through which it is hoped to transport 100 000 people an hour by 1986. It is not much different to our electric system, although Opposition members would not like it because it employs no drivers. It is run by computer. I travelled on the system, and it is absolutely magnificent. It is also much cheaper to run than our system. I was amazed that, with a cheaper system than we have, more people could be carried in a short period. I should like the Minister and the department, instead of considering expansion of the railway system, to introduce a rapid transport system in the newly developing areas where there are no hills and consequently would be no need for tunnels.

Sea buses travel across the little inlet from Vancouver to the north side. For 75c a person can travel for 2½ hours not only on the railway or the sea bus, but on any bus. That leaves our system for dead.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr KAUS: It is not subsidised by the Government.

A person can travel for 2½ hours anywhere in Vancouver for 75c. That is very good. It is time that the Transport Department had a look at that system. The sea bus operation is absolutely magnificent. The buses come in and the landings are extended to them. Persons have to pass through the exits before others are allowed to board. The system is run by compressed air. The sea buses run every quarter of an hour. That system leaves the systems in Sydney and Melbourne for dead. Queensland could have a sea bus service running from Hawthorne to the university and return. The sea buses in Vancouver carry 400 people. Of course, our buses could be smaller.

Instead of having railways in the outer urban areas, consideration should be given to providing something lighter. I think that Mr Hooper mentioned that at one stage.

An Opposition Member: He wants a rail link to Inala.

Mr KAUS: What I am suggesting could be provided to service the people there.

I shall give the pamphlets I have here to the department. Opposition members can look at them if they so desire. The system is amazing. It can carry so many people in such a short time over a 26-mile journey. That system could be used in Queensland provincial cities. Certainly the matter should be investigated.

I do not profess to be an expert on road safety. The Government could reduce the legal blood alcohol level to .01 per cent, but it would make no difference because the problem is the idiots on the road. Millions of dollars could be spent on trying to educate people, and an effort must be made to do that.

In one of the marvellous hotels I visited overseas I watched a certain television program, and I mention it in the hope that Mr Neal Kent will look into it. It was a soft sell. Little Red Robin Hood wanted to visit his Grandma. The big bad wolf was a policeman. Little Red Robin Hood drives out of his property but forgets to put his flicker on, so the cop picks him up and he is fined \$10. He goes down the road and he says, "Will I get my meal in time for Grandma before it goes cold? I hope I do because she is sick." He runs through the first red light, and another cop picks him up. He goes down the road, after the second ticket, and he forgets to put his flicker on when he is changing lanes. So a third cop picks him up. He takes all this. He is like me—very calm in the difficulties that I have at present—and away he goes. Sure enough, when he pulls into Grandma's lane he forgets to put his flicker on again. So he receives four tickets. What happens? He cannot drive after that because he has lost all his points. That sort of soft sell should be investigated by the Minister. It goes over well. It captured my interest in relation to road safety.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr KAUS: The Minister does not know that most movies are made in Canada; they are not made in America. The Canadians are far more advanced in road safety than the Americans. We must teach young people how to handle cars and the rules of the road.

Many young persons are killed on country roads because of their inexperience. Young persons must be trained in road safety by the Department of Transport. When they were very young I taught my children how to drive.

Mr Prest: The purpose of your trip overseas was to look at road safety.

Mr KAUS: I did not look only at road safety; I looked at many other things. The Government was wrong in sending one person to a CPA conference; it should send one member from each party. It is a great experience. A great deal can be learned. A member does not only attend the conference; he goes for the benefit of his constituents and the State. We can always learn something from other people. Of course, we are 25 years behind, anyway.

I commend the Minister on his Estimates. I thank the Minister and his officers for the assistance they have rendered to me.

Mr KATTER (Flinders) (8.27 p.m.): Reference has been made to the recent report of the Commissioner for Railways. At least three ALP speakers have spoken about the need for increased commuter rail services in Brisbane. \$360m has been spent on electrification of the railway system in Brisbane. Obviously, if railway lines are to be built to places such as Inala and Redcliffe, an enormous extra amount of money will be involved. There is a limit to the additional weight that can be pulled by the team of bullocks that are already pulling the weight of the State.

In 1981, the Commissioner's report recorded a profit of \$73m for the Northern and Central Divisions of the Queensland Railways. In the Southern Division, a loss of \$141m was recorded.

Mr Davis: You are being parochial.

Mr KATTER: I am being parochial. As so many Opposition members have asked that railway lines be built to almost every suburb in Brisbane and outlying centres, I think that I am entitled to put in a small plug for North Queensland. I am only reiterating what at least one member of the Opposition from North Queensland, namely, the member for Cairns, has said already.

In a public relations exercise, the department has been very wise in removing the page that discloses the losses of the Southern Division and the profits of the Northern and Central Divisions of the railways. A \$141m loss in one part of the State and a \$73m profit in another leaves a rather horrific gap. To me, that looks like a subsidy of about \$200m a year for the Brisbane commuter system. Perhaps my calculations are wrong. I am told by officers in the costing section of the Railway Department that the western section of the Southern Division makes a profit because of the huge grain trains. What I am talking about is an absolutely staggering subsidy for the Brisbane commuter system. When I hear honourable members from Brisbane electorates requesting more and more railway lines in the metropolitan area, all I can think of is a greater loss on the Brisbane system.

Mr Davis: That is the talk of a typical National Party fool.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Powell): Order!

Mr KATTER: Obviously, Mr Powell, I am receiving strong interjections from at least one member of the Labor Party. I do not think his interjections would go over very well outside Brisbane.

The northern and western members have not said a great deal about electrification. Let us not run away from the fact that the Government has embarked upon tremendous capitalisation in Brisbane when much could be done to improve the efficiency of other parts of the railway system.

I put to the Minister the illustration of the new railway line from Newlands, via Collinsville, to Abbot Point. It will go past a 200 MW power-station, which at present has very little power coming from it and is being used virtually as a switch station. I can see no reason why the generators should lie idle and why they cannot be utilised to provide power for electric trains running from Newlands to Abbot Point.

I forcefully put to the Minister that some major capital works should be undertaken in the North. No doubt the Minister will tell me that things are being done in Brisbane to improve the efficiency of the railways here. That is true, but it is still capitalisation. It is still a small pool of Government borrowings, and all of the money is being spent inside the inner-city area. It is not being recirculated in North Queensland or Western Queensland, whose economies are languishing because the Government money is not being spent in those areas. I bring to the Minister's attention one small aspect of electrification that could improve the efficiency of the railway system outside the Brisbane corner.

The reason for such strong feelings on the part of people in the North and in the western part of the State is that there is a tremendous difference between the cost of living in Brisbane and that in those areas of Queensland. I am quoting from studies undertaken by the James Cook University, the Queensland Teachers Union and an independent team of public servants in Richmond. Each of those studies came up with an identical figure for food commodities. They found that there is a difference of 26 per cent between the cost of living in Brisbane and that of the inland towns of North Queensland and Central Queensland. I refer specifically to the mid-western towns of Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry and Winton.

Firstly, the cost of railing cement from Townsville to Richmond is 85 per cent of the cost of cement in that town. It is not difficult to realise what that freight charge does to increase the cost of building a house in Richmond. The freight rate on a bag of pumpkins is 105 per cent of the cost of the pumpkins. In other words, the cost of getting the pumpkins to Julia Creek is more than the cost of the bag of pumpkins. The freight rate on a drum of flour consigned to Richmond is 40 per cent of the cost of the flour.

Cement, pumpkins and flour are fairly basic commodities. When freight represents 85, 105 and 40 per cent, respectively, of their cost it is no wonder that there is a difference of 26 per cent between the cost of living in those towns and that in Brisbane. That difference in the cost of living is created by railway charges.

There should be some sort of fairness in the system. Railwaymen in the North are living in isolation, in great heat and under great hardship. They should be given some concessions. So should the rest of the community in those areas. Surely the last people who should be feather-bedded are the commuters in Brisbane, and the first people who should be feather-bedded are those in the Western Queensland towns in which the cost of living is 26 per cent higher than that in Brisbane.

The system works in exactly the opposite way with the cost of the basic commodities that we need to feed our children to keep them alive. The cost of food items is between 40 and 105 per cent above the cost in Brisbane. The railway costing system is working completely opposite to the way in which it should be working to provide a fair and justifiable costing system in Queensland.

Mr Vaughan: How do those charges compare with road transport charges?

Mr KATTER: In many cases, road transport charges are lower than the rail charges and, unless the railways do something about the situation, on present trends, they will carry no freight at all. I do not know whether that is a good thing or a bad thing, but that is what is happening. The railways will not be carting those food items because they cannot compete with road transport.

I move now to a very minor point but I put it very forcefully to the Minister because it is extremely irritating to the people concerned. At the four pensioners' meetings that I attended in Collinsville and Charters Towers, reference was made to the inability of people to secure pensioner rail concessions. They submit an application and it has to be sent to Brisbane. It is two months before the tickets are sent back to Charters Towers, Collinsville or Julia Creek. By that time, the date on which the people wanted to travel has long since passed. In most cases it is a sad fact that the people simply travel without receiving the pensioner concession. They pay the extra money because they have made arrangements to visit relatives at a particular time—at Christmas or Easter or during the school holidays. If the concession tickets do not arrive before they depart, there is nothing that they can do but pay the full fare.

Again I stress the point that people in Brisbane are at a tremendous advantage. They simply come into the office in the city here, get a ticket and go home. People in Charters Towers have to submit an application to the local railway station, which

then sends the application to Brisbane. The application has to be processed in Brisbane, and the tickets are sent to Charters Towers. That is ridiculous. That does not happen in any other State. I have discussed this matter with the Minister for Welfare Services and he made a valid point about it, but I do not think that that point is as important as the need to streamline the provision of these concessions.

Mr Vaughan: They can subsequently get a refund on those tickets.

Mr KATTER: I am pleased that the honourable member mentioned that point. I shall pass it on to anyone who experiences that problem. These people are old and they cannot afford to be chasing around for months on end to get these concessions. They suffer the hardship of paying the full fare to go on their annual holidays.

Last year, during the height of the cattle season, I asked that some extra K-wagons be provided in my area. I was informed by the North Queensland general manager, Mr Fraser, that the railways were not particularly keen on providing any extra wagons because a great loss was being incurred on the cartage of cattle. I was surprised to hear that. I thought that cattle transportation would have been a fairly profitable enterprise for the railways. As I say, I was informed that the railways were making a loss on that operation, and that the greater the number of cattle carried, the greater the loss incurred.

I was rather intrigued to find that, because of the present concessions that are being provided by the railways for the cartage of cattle, a great upheaval has occurred in the livestock haulage industry. If, according to the North Queensland general manager, the railways were making a loss on the cartage of cattle last year, I am rather intrigued about how they can provide a greater concession now and make an even greater loss on the cartage of cattle.

I suspect that the position was oversimplified last year when I was told that the railways were incurring losses on the cartage of cattle. Obviously that was not the case; otherwise, the granting of further concessions at present would be an act of incredible stupidity. So, there is either an act of incredible stupidity now or fairly misleading information was provided to me last year.

Even if I accept that cattle are not being carried at a loss, as I was told last year, I have been informed that only meat-processing interests are entitled to the concession. I would like the Minister to answer that. If it is true, it is a most unfortunate and unfair attitude by the Railway Department, and one that does not reflect a great deal of prestige on the Government. Secondly, although the concession is a generous one, running to 25 and 30 per cent, it is available only to the meat-processing interests if they do not use any road transport for livestock haulage. Many stations transport cattle up the back roads from Charters Towers to the Mareeba meatworks. It is much shorter that way. If they were forced to cart the cattle by road transport down to Charters Towers and then by rail all the way up the coast, the increase in the cost would be tremendous. However, it appears that that is being forced upon the meat processors in order to have their cattle carted at a very cheap rate. A number of aspects in the new proposal are extremely worrying.

Finally, I impress upon the Minister that he is the Minister for Transport and should not be seen to be dealing a death blow to the livestock hauliers of Queensland. I do not have many cattle, but I have sufficient to know that the cost of carting them by rail is a hell of a lot cheaper than the cost of carting them by road transport. Road transport carts cattle to the railhead, from where they are transported to the market by rail. That is the way the industry works.

I emphasise these points because they are a source of worry to the livestock haulage industry in Queensland at the moment. Many hauliers will go to the wall. The others will have to charge a vastly increased rate because of the loss of work resulting from these concessions. I repeat that that loss will not be occasioned by their working in competition with the railway system, but because they are carting from a station to a meatworks where the alternative rail route is very much longer. Stations north of Charters Towers normally transport their cattle by road transport to the Mareeba meatworks. The classic example is those who transport from the Gulf country across to the Mareeba meatworks. That highlights the absurdity of transporting cattle down to the Great Northern Railway, over to Townsville, up to Cairns and then to the Mareeba works.

Another very important point has been brought to my attention. It has relevance to the whole railway set-up in Queensland. Recently I made application to have freight carried up to Greenvale by rail. The commissioner will recall that, when we wanted cattle carted out of Greenvale, for a long time we were told that it would not be economical. Eventually the matter came to the attention of Mr Walton, the manager for North Queensland at the time. It was his considered opinion that there were considerable profits to be made in railing cattle from Greenvale. As I understand it, significant profits have been made on carting cattle from there. However, we seem to be in a similar position with the cartage of freight to Greenvale. At present it is carted by road transport from Townsville to Charters Towers and then to Greenvale, a distance of approximately 210 road miles. The rail journey, on the other hand, is about 70 or 80 miles. A railmotor travels up there every fortnight, so it would appear to me that we should be able to get our freight up there very cheaply.

The argument put up against us by the management committee of the rail system in North Queensland is that a goods shed would have to be constructed and staff appointed to man it, and that the throughput would be minimal. With all due respect, that is really a stone-age attitude. It is the sort of attitude that has resulted in the horrific losses that the railways record year after year.

Obviously when freight arrives at Greenvale a contractor should be there to take delivery of all of it. He should accept the headaches of warehousing, delivery and everything else. He would simply take 90 per cent of it off the carriage, put it into the back of his truck and deliver it straight to the person in Greenvale, which is a tiny town. The idea of recording the freight into the goods shed, recording it back out again and handling it three or four times is absolutely ridiculous. There is no way in the world that the freight should not come straight out of the wagon onto the back of the truck and be delivered immediately.

The freight destined for graziers and others who live out of town who may not be able to pick it up for a while should be stored by the private contractor. The Railway Department is the last organisation that is efficient enough and has the required ability to look after those goods for any length of time. A local contractor should be engaged to handle the warehousing and storage of those goods, and he should have to put in the very expensive and high man-management hours needed for that sort of work.

Mr McKechnie: The railmotor could then be run twice a week.

Mr KATTER: That is an excellent point.

The problem is that even when these arguments are put up to the North Queensland management of the Railway Department, no step forward is made. That is most unfortunate because the railway system can make money. That service is a very valuable one that is desperately needed in that area. The average cost in the supermarket at Greenvale is 8c per item higher than in Townsville. Whether it is a tiny tube of hair shampoo or whatever, the average price is 8c dearer than in Townsville, which in many cases is 20 to 30 per cent of the cost of the item. Greenvale is only 60 or 70 miles from Townsville as the crow flies. I very strongly urge the Railway Department to consider what I have suggested. Probably many other centres could institute the same thing.

At present there is much talk about rationalisation of the railway system. I am greatly worried about that because obviously no Government, whatever its political view, can continue to afford to sustain the losses that the railway system presently sustains. Obviously, future Governments will have to do as the Treasurer did in this Budget: impose horrific increases in railway freight charges. I would be the first to admit that probably he had little alternative. However, increased charges will have a catastrophic effect because fewer people will use the rail system for the cartage of freight and more people will rely on road transport, so next year the Railway Department will incur even greater losses than it did last year.

(Time expired.)

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (8.48 p.m.): In rising to speak to the debate I acknowledge that the annual report was made available to the Parliament last week, which is certainly of some assistance. I have said before in previous Estimates debates that I will continue to draw attention to those Ministers who use the tactic of not presenting their departmental reports before the day the Estimates are to be debated in an effort

to minimise the opportunity of members of the Opposition and a few of the Government back-benchers to thoroughly scrutinise the performance of the department over the previous year.

It is appropriate that the Parliament should take a keen interest in the debate on transport because the cost of its operations is second only to the cost of education. It is the second of the big three. The only other Estimates that involve anything like the expenditure on education and transport are the Health Estimates. All elements of transport are of vital importance to the community for one reason or another.

For those who live in the metropolitan area or, to a large extent, in the south-east corner of the State, transport may be seen and judged in terms of convenience, but to those members who represent country areas and more remote locations such as in the North and the North-west it takes on an importance akin to one of the arteries of life, because its effect can be so wide ranging and dramatic. For that reason, and for that reason alone, a number of my parliamentary colleagues on this side of the Chamber were astounded at the suggestion of the Minister that funds becoming available under the bicentennial program should be channelled into the further electrification of the Brisbane rail network.

Electrification is a very desirable goal; but although at present the trend line with respect to road trauma has taken a very encouraging downturn in the metropolitan area and the south-east corner, it has taken quite the opposite turn in country areas. To a very large extent that is attributable to the totally inadequate roads and bridges in country areas, and for that reason I could not support any proposition that would take funds away from the vitally important projects aimed at upgrading country roads, particularly the main coastal and inland highways.

I accept the proposition of the member for Flinders that country areas subsidise the metropolitan area to the extent of \$200m a year. It is very clear that the only people who take much interest in this subject are members of the ALP and the National Party. There is not one Liberal member in the Chamber at present to take part in the debate. That shows how much the Liberals are interested in transport in this State.

Mr Prest: Not even the Minister is here.

Mr SMITH: That is right.

In the Budget, one of the biggest shocks for the non-metropolitan communities was the 15 per cent increase in rail freights.

Mr Jones: There might be another coup on.

Mr SMITH: The Minister was one of the plotters. He arranged to get Bill Kaus knocked off, and he is probably looking for somebody else now.

That 15 per cent increase is inflationary, and by the time it flows on, it transforms into considerably higher costs for all sorts of commodities. The cost of living in North Queensland is certainly very much higher than the cost of living in the south-east corner of the State.

North Queenslanders, in particular, continue to find it very irritating that some organisations are clearly able to escape the full weight of freight charges, and I refer particularly to the freight forwarders who, as the member for Mackay has pointed out, are guilty of gross overloading. If they were paying the proper cost for the weight of the goods forwarded, perhaps the full 15 per cent increase may have been avoided, or at least have been reduced.

Mr Vaughan: They don't even get the full 15 per cent applied to them.

Mr SMITH: I would not doubt that for one moment, but I do not have access to secret agreements so I cannot speak authoritatively on the subject. In making those remarks, however, I would not in any way want to be seen as being against the principle of containerisation; in fact, I would like to see it developed. I have spoken on the subject previously.

There is great scope for a proper integrated rail/road network. It seems to me that it is inevitable that there will be a return to passenger use of the railways because of the high cost of air fares and the fact that today many people look to rail transport as a leisurely and relaxing way of reaching their holiday destination rather than taking the risk of being killed on the totally inadequate roads of Central and North Queensland, in particular.

Unfortunately, the Townsville Railway Station is very old. It should be renovated—not knocked down in the night by the Deen Brothers, but renovated—because it is an historic building. It should be extended and given modern facilities including such a basic thing as a passenger lounge. At present, passengers have to wait on the footpath outside the ticket window and duck down and look through a very small aperture to deal with the staff behind the window.

In addition, Townsville Railway Station can handle only one passenger train at a time at present, and there are frequent delays. It is not unusual for the "Sunlander" to be held up for an hour at either Oonoonba or Garbutt because two trains cannot be handled simultaneously at the station servicing the second biggest city in Queensland, and certainly the biggest northern city. That is a disgrace. I have mentioned before the very poor facilities at the Townsville domestic airport. By comparison with the airport, however, the facilities at the Townsville Railway Station are infinitely worse. It is clearly the responsibility of the Government to do something about the railway station. Improvements are long overdue, and I hope that the Minister in summing-up will give some indication of when the station will receive attention.

I have brought to the attention of the Chamber previously the fact that, with some imagination, the economy of North Queensland could be assisted. Some of the beef produced in Central Queensland—something like 45 000 tonnes—could be forwarded to Townsville at an appropriate rate. That would make the port of Townsville much more viable. But all of the beef goes to Brisbane. That seems to be the way the Government wants to run the show.

One of the few Liberals who has had anything to say in this debate spoke about pensioner facilities. In Sydney, reciprocal arrangements are available for pensioners—unless they come from Queensland. Good old Queensland does not have reciprocal arrangements for pensioners from other States. It is no wonder people say that Queensland is different.

For many years a problem has existed along the railway line in Townsville, particularly in West End and near the showgrounds. There is no indication of the clearance required each side of the railway line, which runs parallel with Ingham Road. It is not unusual for vehicles to park so close to the railway line that the train has to stop while the driver of the vehicle is found to remove it so that the train can pass. That has been going on for years. Each and every year the Minister or somebody else promises that something will be done. However, the years go by and the same conditions prevail.

It is heartening that a lot more discussion on road safety is taking place. It is clear that, although discussion itself does nothing much, it focuses attention on this serious problem and I hope that, in the long term, enough people will become interested to have an effect in reducing the tragic loss of life on the roads.

I was very interested in the suggestion by a visiting American surgeon who is a road trauma specialist. He said that Australia needs special centres to prevent road deaths. Dr Trunkey, who is chief surgeon at the San Francisco General Hospital, said that Australia needed trauma centres with surgeons available 24 hours a day to cope with accident victims. I am sure that he is right. He said that about 30 per cent of people who died in hospital from road accidents could have been saved if trauma treatment had been provided. The United States has quite a number of such centres. In fact, he likened them to fire stations, which is not a bad analogy.

Boom gates represent a fairly large capital expenditure with ongoing maintenance costs. However, the cost is entirely justified in areas that carry fairly heavy traffic and in which there has been loss of life. It is somewhat surprising to find that boom gates are situated near Railway Avenue or near the racecourse in Townsville but not on the causeway, which has very heavy traffic density, or on Kings Road and Hugh Street. Recently a child was killed on the causeway. The child's father had an unblemished driving record. Clearly he had driven safely for many years. The circumstances were such that, because of the lighting conditions at the time, he did not see the flashing lights and his child was killed. It was a particularly tragic occurrence. I am told that boom gates are installed only where there are double sets of lines. I have not investigated that, but it seems to be a rather remarkable requirement.

I shall now deal with the lack of public transport in Townsville. It has been a matter of great concern in a growing city of over 100 000 people. Unfortunately it is a sprawling city with some outlying suburbs 14 or 15 miles from the centre. Many people do not realise that. That has the effect of reducing services. Clearly, people in some of those areas have insufficient funds to provide their own transport and, with the ever-increasing cost of operating a private vehicle, more and more people will look to public transport.

It is interesting to note that in some of those outlying areas the Housing Commission has chosen to build houses and that many of those people who live in them are in particularly poor circumstances and virtually in a situation of isolation. Fortunately, anyone who lives in the North learns to look after himself. For some time in Townsville there has been a public transport committee that acts as an advisory committee to a very progressive Townsville City Council. Of course, all local parliamentarians are members of that committee. The council has set about the establishment of a North Queensland transport authority which hopefully will be funded by contributions from the State Government via Federal Government funds. We know quite well that nothing would come directly from the State Government. I hope that it will pass on some of the money that is received from the Federal area. It is proposed that there would be representation from the council, bus proprietors and the State Government to promote public transport and to plan improvements in the urban public transport for Townsville and North Queensland. The Council will call on the State Government to allocate funds from the Bicentennial Road Development Program. That is a far more reasonable proposition than spending more on electric trains in Brisbane at the present time.

To date it is very clear that Townsville has missed out on Federal funds channelled through the State Government. They have been syphoned off in Brisbane. That was spelt out quite clearly by the previous Federal Transport Minister (Mr Ralph Hunt). He said that the funds that the Commonwealth Government makes available to the urban public transport program are allocated in accordance with State Government priorities. Clearly, the State Government has identified where those priorities lie. They certainly do not lie very far from the south-east corner of the State. Today, the Queensland Government's commitment to electrify the Brisbane rail systems—

Mr Hartwig: You reckon that they are a bit Queen Street minded?

Mr SMITH: I rather have that impression.

The Queensland Government's commitment to electrify the Brisbane rail systems meant that the available Commonwealth Government's funds have been directed totally to that city, and now, of course, we have to go back to 1980, when Ken Tomkins was the Minister. He was a rather more agreeable Minister. He made a commitment that Townsville would be declared an urban area under the Act. Of course, the Government got out of that by sacking Ken Tomkins and allocating the portfolio to another Minister. That was very neatly done.

The last statement that we had from the Minister on this matter was that there would be no funds available for Townsville until 1984. Even then, that was not a solid commitment. The lack of an adequate system of public transport in Townsville has been an area of great concern in the community for several years. At various times the National-Liberal Parties have made promises. As I have said before, they have been subsequently withdrawn or put aside.

The Public Transport Committee was formed by the city council in 1980. That was considered necessary because of growing concern about the non-release of the State Government public passenger transport study in the Townsville urban area, which was prepared in 1976. We have been waiting for a long time. The principal concern of the community then was to overcome the lack of action of the State Government in recognising the urgent transport needs of major provincial centres, not only Townsville but also Rockhampton and Cairns. While all that was going on, the heavily subsidised public transport facilities were being provided in the Brisbane area.

From the North Queensland point of view, it is totally unacceptable that the State should direct all the Federal funds for public transport into the Brisbane area. The Minister has told us that funds will not be available until 1984. The State could have made the Metropolitan Transit Authority charter to include provisional representation from the various regions of Queensland.

Secondly, a statutory instrumentality could be established by the States so that organisation and planning for public transport in the various regions could be done effectively and perhaps with some co-ordination.

Thirdly, and more importantly, an equitable mechanism must be developed for the allocation and distribution of funds for urban public transport from the tax-sharing entitlements. The favouritism shown by the State Government towards Brisbane at the expense of non-Brisbane residents is unacceptable and will not be allowed to continue for ever.

To date, the State Government has done very little towards assisting local bus operators to maintain existing services apart from granting subsidies. Those operators need access to low-cost capital for fleet replacement. There is a need to review or remove road tax on their operations, particularly for the charter people, so that they can make their businesses viable. The Government could at least provide for a low-cost flat-rate registration fee for all buses, and it could also make stronger representation to the Federal Government to ensure that sales tax is not charged on tyres and other major components used in the bus fleet. Sales tax is a very heavy burden on regional operators.

At the present time, the Government is moving away totally from the problems of public transport in the non-metropolitan area. The only way to give that area the attention it deserves is to establish a public transport commission to plan public transport systems where they are needed.

During the year, the West End Bus Service in Townsville surrendered its licence, and the new operator is a man named Campbell. One of the problems in Townsville is that the Government failed to implement a recommendation in the 1977 report that there was a need for a statutory body to co-ordinate a plan for public transport in Townsville. It is certainly high time that the operations were reviewed with an idea of reallocating particular runs. The Government has attempted to pass the buck by suggesting that the council become involved. That is the usual catchcry, but there is no reason why it should become involved, particularly while Government funds are being poured into the city of Brisbane.

In the time remaining, I want to touch on a couple of aspects of the annual report. I noticed that recently approval was given to license such vehicles as the Datsun Bluebird, the Mazda 929 and the Sigma as taxis. Although the report makes the point that less than 5 per cent of taxi vehicles are four-cylinder cars, I stress that, particularly in the northern parts of the State, the larger car is a far more comfortable vehicle, firstly, because it is able to operate on roads where the surfaces are certainly not as good as they are in the metropolitan area and, secondly, because they are cooler. If three or four passengers are being carried in a vehicle, it is certainly a much more pleasant trip in a larger car in which the passengers are not pushed so close together. I do not want to knock the Bluebird, but one of its features makes conditions uncomfortable for passengers.

(Time expired.)

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (9.8 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to this debate on the Railway Department's Estimates.

Mr Davis interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Powell): Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central will keep quiet.

Mr RANDELL: I am not worried about him, Mr Powell, but I promised to go as quickly as I can so that other members can make a contribution to the debate, so, as much as I like interjections, I will not take any.

In my electorate, real progress is being made with new railway lines being built, particularly in the coal-mining areas. Upgrading of railway facilities for the benefit of all employees in that area was certainly overdue. The Minister has visited my electorate on quite a few occasions, and he has always been co-operative and helpful in trying to solve any problems that I have. He is always aware of the problems confronting the ordinary man and is trying to help him. He helps him through me.

I note that the Minister, in his speech, stated that for the financial year ended June 1982 revenue amounted to more than \$520m, which represents an increase of 24.8 per cent on the previous financial year and an increase of 47.5 per cent on the 1979-80

financial year. A total of 43 659 000 tonnes of goods and livestock was carried during the year, which represents an increase of 5.2 per cent over the previous year. The carriage of coal and minerals amounted to more than 34 million tonnes, or 79.3 per cent of the total traffic hauled. Coal haulage increased by 333 000 tonnes and minerals by 430 000 tonnes. A substantial portion of those goods carried comes from the Bowen Basin in my electorate.

I note that sugar-cane and raw sugar haulages showed gratifying increases, with an aggregate volume of 1 599 668 tonnes, as compared with approximately 1.5 million tonnes the previous year. Once again, my area has made a substantial contribution to that trade, and will continue to do so.

Mr Davis: Have you the figures for your own area?

Mr RANDELL: Yes, I have. If the honourable member likes to meet me outside later, I will give them to him.

As at 27 June 1982, the staff employed by the railways numbered 25 708, which represents an increase of 2.62 per cent on the previous year's figure. Of course, the Railway Department is one of the largest, if not the largest, employer in the State and provides a major source of training for apprentices. That is very good in this day and age when so much trouble is being experienced in placing young people leaving school.

In keeping with the program to improve accommodation for employees, the Railway Department spent over \$1m on the purchase and construction of residences and on the provision of improved amenities for migratory gangs. Of course, that was long overdue. Time and time again I have made representations to get those facilities improved. Even though they have been improved, so much more needs to be done. At least a start has been made, and we are moving in the right direction.

Men working in fairly remote areas under arduous conditions are entitled to decent living conditions. It is pleasing to see that the Minister has recognised that and is taking steps to upgrade their conditions. At the beginning the conditions at the railway township of Coppabella were dreadful. I was asked by the unionists and other people in the area to go and meet them and to see the conditions. I remember going to Coppabella and meeting about 150 men, women and children on an old tennis court. They outlined their problems. I went and inspected their conditions and recognised them. There is no doubt that those people lived under quite arduous conditions.

I arranged for the Minister and the Commissioner for Railways (Mr Goldston) to go and meet the people and inspect the problems at first hand, and that is what they did. The Minister promised to try to do something to raise the living conditions to an acceptable standard. Today, the proof of that is apparent. Improvements have been made. Certain little things have been done to the houses to make them more acceptable. They have been enclosed and concreted underneath. A \$1.5m amenity block, comprising a swimming-pool, a tennis court and a basketball court, is being constructed.

Approval has been given to upgrade the electricity supply at a cost in excess of \$50,000. Street lighting will be upgraded. The sewerage system will be improved. An improved water supply will be connected to the township early next year. The water is to be tapped from the Braeside-Moranbah pipeline. When we look back at what the citizens of that township endured in the past, we realise how much those improved facilities will be appreciated. As I stated before, the Minister and the commissioner faced up to their responsibilities, and I know that the people appreciate that.

Mr Davis: It should have been done before they went up there.

Mr RANDELL: Come on! Let us get the progress going. The Government began the progress in that area and it is facing up to its responsibilities.

Mr Vaughan: Is that at Coppabella?

Mr RANDELL: Yes.

Mr Vaughan: That was established in 1971.

Mr RANDELL: Has the honourable member ever been up there? He should go up there and have a look around. He would not know. He has not been up there.

I shall not take any more interjections. I have to allow another Government member to speak, and I think that a Labor member would like to say a few words.

Mr Prest: Be truthful.

Mr RANDELL: Don't come at that! I know that the people in that township appreciate what has to be done for them. It will be a great day when all those facilities are officially opened. I hope that will be next year. I look forward to welcoming the Minister to Coppabella, and I know that the people will do so, too. Unlike Opposition members, the Minister is keeping in touch with the people. They know what the Government is doing for them. They are not getting promises; something is being done for them. We have got things done for them, and we are not ashamed of it.

One area of concern in my electorate, which I bring to the attention of the Minister, relates to a problem in the rail transport of cane and the number of wagons out of service for repairs of one kind or another. That is happening in the southern part of my electorate. Wagons are examined after every return journey to the various sidings for the collection of cane. There is a maximum distance of approximately 75 km to Flaggy Rock, which is the southernmost point. I am told that there is a need for regular examinations, but that is questionable for a seasonal operation, such as the transportation of cane.

Nevertheless, the wagons are in constant use. No doubt a system of periodic inspection is justified. However, when the wagons are taken out of service at Sarina, they are taken to Mackay, whether for repairs or routine inspection. Often the wagon is out of service for three days—one day in transit to the shop, one day in the shop for repairs and one day in transit back to the depot. Consequently, there seems to be a constant shortage of cane wagons for the grower. To me it would seem to be highly desirable to have a local engineering works or mill workshop licensed to carry out certain inspections and minor repairs to the wagons in use in the immediate area. Such a practice would reduce delays that presently occur when wagons are out of service in transit to and from the workshop for repairs.

Instead of the daily examination of trains, it is suggested that an equal or better result would be obtained from weekly or fortnightly inspections during the season, preferably timed for a Friday, so that any necessary repair could be effected over the week-end. The cost of the alternative proposed would not appear to exceed the cost of the existing practice, but a better effect would be the certain gain to the department, as well as making sure that the crushing seasons proceed smoothly without some of the problems we now experience. Farmers in my area—and probably those in most other areas—are on a roster system and have to wait until late in the day to get their allotment, because of shortage of wagons. It certainly does not do much for harmonious relations between the Railway Department and the farmers. Of course, the overtime incurred is excessive.

There is a clear need for the extension of passing loops within the Sarina-Carmila section and an urgent need for additional holding capacity at the Sarina yard. The operation of the rail transport system for the 1982 crushing season was not satisfactory for the servicing of the requirements of the cane-growing industry. There were reasons for some of the shortcomings, which I have outlined. The provision of a bigger holding yard at Sarina, more passing loops on the Sarina to Carmila section and an increased number of wagons in service would be a move in the right direction towards providing the service that is required.

As users of the section of the Bruce Highway between Mackay and Rockhampton, our growers daily witness the very heavy pressures placed on our main road system by semi-trailers. We question why an efficient rail transport system could not compete with road transport for much of the cargo hauled by road. However, it is equally clear to me that if a greater number of trains was introduced to the main north coast line, traffic delays with the existing inadequate track facilities would be intolerable for many potential users. We should be making greater use of the Queensland Railway system. If the main line could be duplicated, what a transformation would occur, particularly with the transport of heavy cargo. The pressure would certainly be taken off our road system.

We will probably never receive the funds to put my suggestions into effect. However, perhaps the Minister could consider constructing a good many more passing loop lines at suitable distances, as an alternative—loops of a size to cater for the extremely long trains

that haul loads in this modern age. In my own area I have seen trains broken to accommodate the present system of passing. Honourable members would realise the amount of time that that takes. How much quicker and how much more efficient would the link between North and South Queensland be if there were longer passing loops at more frequent intervals. With a faster turnover of trains carrying goods, particularly heavy cargo, more people would turn to the railways as a fast and reliable transport system. A side benefit would be to alleviate the present undue stress that is placed on our highway system. Once again I stress that we have to provide a fast and efficient service. My suggestion, if adopted, would be a start in providing that.

On Friday the official opening of the missing link between German Creek and Norwich Park will take place. It is pleasing that the Minister will perform that ceremony in my electorate.

Mr Davis: You will have your name on the plaque.

Mr RANDELL: That would not be out of place, because I have had quite a bit to do with it.

The missing link will have cost \$11m, and it completes a rail link from Gladstone right out through the rich Bowen Basin and back to the coast again at Hay Point. I have been told that the trains on that line will consist of five engines, hauling 120 wagons with a payload of 6 600 tonnes. It would be very pleasing for me to be involved in the opening ceremony, having had some involvement in the planning and requirements of the railway line as previous chairman of the Broadsound Shire Council. The line has opened up a previously remote area for the cartage of coal and has provided jobs for thousands of people who live and work in the new towns in that area.

I know that there will be an additional spin-off from that line. It will tap one of the areas with the most potential in Queensland for grain growing and, of course, it probably contains the major beef area of the State. So, all in all, that area which serves as a source of energy and food requirements for the whole world, is being tapped and brought to life by this rail link. The Minister's involvement in the project, as well as that of so many other people, particularly the workers in the field, must be commended. The importance of the project will be realised only in years to come. The railway line and the area will play an important role in the economy of the State and, indeed, of Australia.

Another area of concern to me is the duplication of the line from Hay Point to Goonyella and the effect that that will have on landholders in the area. I realise that the State has to progress and that it would be unreasonable to try to stop that. I certainly believe that nobody wants to do that. In the interests of the economy of Queensland, the line must be built. But at all times the Government must never overlook the importance and rights of individuals. I firmly believe that the project must involve the minimum of inconvenience to landholders.

The construction of the original line meant that two brothers, who were farmers, lost 10 per cent of their land. They have been on the property for 60 years and have sons and grandsons, but they have no other land available. They have a deep love for that property that is now divided. The cane rows have had to be shortened, which has made it uneconomic to work with modern harvesting equipment. In future they will have to cross six sets of railway lines when they cart cane. Long trains hold up the carting of sugar cane. Now those brothers have been told that more land is required. I hope that the Railway Department will take the minimum required.

A property owner whose land is on the bend of the river has a railway line cutting across his property. When trains stop on that part of the line, he is completely isolated. Recently he told me that for some reason or other a train stopped on that line for in excess of one hour and cut off his two front entrances. Because of the tidal creek at the back of his property, he was completely isolated. He has family responsibilities and, obviously, was concerned. It is not unreasonable that he be given an underpass. I know that will cost money, but the Government must think of the individual.

A gully on another man's property will be diverted and there is no guarantee that that will not cause erosion of his farm. The history of the construction of the original line is one of erosion on the range, fences left down probably by subcontractors, valuable cattle straying and valuable pastures trampled. I could go on and on. Inconvenience such as that should not be the price of progress.

I know that the people concerned received commitments from Railway Department officials in Sarina, and they were satisfied with those. The relationship seemed to be completely harmonious. However, stories now abound that the original intention may be changed. It is not unreasonable that those commitments be met.

Before I conclude, I pay a tribute to the commissioner, Jim Goldston, who retires on 17 December after long and distinguished service extending over 48 years. Anybody who has worked in any job for that length of time must be extremely proud. I know that he is well respected and the sugar industry in the North thinks very highly of him. Representatives of that industry recently met with Jim Goldston and it was only through his efforts that their requests were granted. I give him my personal thanks, and I know that all those in the sugar industry wish him the very best for a happy retirement.

I thank the Minister and the departmental heads for all the courtesies and help extended to me. I hope that the job of upgrading the railways continues, and I support the Estimates.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (9.24 p.m.): I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Transport, the Railway Department and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Each honourable member made a contribution that he believed in his own mind to be sincere, although the motives of members varied both because of the geographical differences in the electorates and their philosophical and political differences. Unfortunately, a touch too much politics entered the debate.

The first member to speak was the Opposition spokesman on Transport (Mr Prest), and after listening to him for about 20 minutes, I must say that I could not find anything in his contribution coherent enough to reply to, so I will pass on to the next speaker, the honourable member for Windsor.

Mr PREST: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is so dumb that he did not understand what I was talking about.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Powell): Order! The honourable member will use parliamentary language. There is no valid point of order.

Mr LANE: The honourable member for Windsor, who I think voiced best of all the thoughts of railway rank-and-file people, raised a number of interesting matters. The one that interested me most was his comment about maintaining the flexibility of a diesel fleet within the railway service. He would know, as do many other honourable members, that it is the ambition of the Government, of which I am part, and, of course, of the Commissioner for Railways, to eventually electrify the main lines, starting with the Blackwater-Gladstone and Brisbane-Gladstone lines in order to use the electricity derived from the very plentiful coal resource in Central Queensland. It is an ambition which I would have hoped members on both sides would embrace and press for on a non-partisan basis.

Electrification is one of the great initiatives that this State could take to really achieve something in the 1980s. It would make a contribution to employment, and increased technology would effect a number of savings in the railway system. The honourable member for Windsor made the very positive suggestion that, despite what may be done, it was necessary to maintain a good and viable fleet of diesel engines because of their flexibility of use in the system. I quite readily acknowledge that fact.

The honourable member for Isis spoke about providing a new type of laminated driver's licence in a credit-card format with a photograph contained therein. I know that the Government has had some reservations about such a system in the past, but I must let the honourable member know that we are re-examining our attitude to such licences, and it may well be that when finance is available and it can be organised administratively we will embark on the issue of such licences. They do have a number of practical advantages, many of which were outlined by the honourable member.

I think the most worthwhile contribution made by an Opposition member in this debate today was that of the honourable member for Cairns, who had obviously applied himself to the subject. I have no doubt that he spoke with a great degree of sincerity on the various aspects of railway administration. I know that he is part of a Labor Party joint liaison committee with the railway unions which was formed to keep an eye on what the Government

has in mind following its current examination of railway efficiency, and that is quite a good thing. I hope that as the story unfolds on this investigation some of his suspicions will be removed, and that he may even join with us on this side of the Chamber in trying to implement some of the recommendations of the consultants aimed at achieving greater efficiencies in those selected areas of railway administration that they are examining.

I would like to point out to honourable members opposite that it is in the long-term interests of railwaymen to have increased efficiency within the system.

Mr Prest: What about getting a bit of competence in the ministry—someone who knows something about transport? What do they do? Draw the names out of a hat?

Mr LANE: It has always been a great disappointment to me that a fine town like Gladstone would elect the honourable member for Port Curtis to represent it in this place. I have never known him to conduct himself remotely like a gentleman or as a dignified representative of such a fine town. He is again displaying that tonight.

Mr Prest: The people of Gladstone would not elect a copper or some of the Liberals—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am not prepared to allow personal attacks across the Chamber. I ask the honourable member for Port Curtis to withdraw that remark.

Mr Prest: Will you be asking the Minister to withdraw—

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

Mr PREST: I do so.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw his remark about the honourable member for Port Curtis.

Mr LANE: I withdraw the remark that he is not a gentleman.

Mr Prest: I have my ideas about you, too, Lane.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr LANE: The longer he goes on the more he demonstrates the type of person that he is. Some people in his home town read "Hansard" and will see how he conducts himself when he is down here far from home. It is very different from when people meet him in Gladstone. He walks round that town in a meek and mild manner and tries to side up to Government members in the hope that some of their support will rub off onto him. I have noticed that repeatedly. He is a Jekyll and Hyde character.

Mr Prest: I dissociate myself from him. I would be up for consorting.

Mr LANE: I should like to get on with the debate and, if he will stop provoking me, perhaps I can.

The honourable member for Cairns mentioned the obligation of the Railway Department to provide a community service. It is an obligation that the department and the Government obviously accept. Were it not so, they would not have embarked on the scheme to electrify the Brisbane suburban rail service at a cost of many millions of dollars. It runs at a substantial loss. On the average, the subsidy is about 80c in the dollar. If that is not accepting an obligation to provide a community service, I do not know what is.

The service to the honourable member's home town runs at a considerable loss. I am told that it is about \$5,000 per round trip. Again the Government accepts its obligation to keep that service running despite its not being a viable operation. There is no suggestion of the Government cutting back on any of its obligations to provide a community service.

If honourable members look at the terms of the consultancy, they will see that the areas under examination are quite specific. They do not attack passenger services or the maintenance of lines and buildings. They are quite deliberately framed. If members are patient they will find nothing much to worry about.

How an examination could be made of rail economics without employing assistance such as is being used by Travers Morgan on this exercise, I do not know. Perhaps Opposition members would have 500 men sitting at desks, with quills in their hands, poring

over ledgers and adding up figures for six months. That would be an old-fashioned approach. The Government's approach involves the most modern data-processing methods.

The honourable member for Mt Isa raised the subject of Queensland Airlines meeting some sort of obligation that he feels it has to the remote areas. I appreciate his concern, and on several occasions I have told him that there is no way that the Government can require people to conduct their businesses at a loss. I can only repeat that tonight. To continue operating the routes in the Gulf country north of Mt Isa would result in Queensland Airlines running at a loss. Neither by law nor by any moral code could the Government impose such a requirement on a private enterprise operation.

The only alternative would be to provide a subsidy of some sort, as is given jointly by the State and Federal Governments. \$2m is provided to TAA to continue its western services. A subsidy of that nature would be the only answer to the honourable member's problem if the services were to continue in the way that he would wish. In the current financial circumstances, I do not think that that would be possible.

The honourable member for Cooroora raised the question of electrification being extended farther north than is currently in detail planning, namely, to Petrie. I have already announced to this Assembly that the Government has proposed to the Commonwealth Government that some of the Bicentennial Road Development Program funds that have been set aside for urban public transport should be used to extend the electrification as far north as Caboolture. I have great hopes that the Federal Government will accept that submission and approve it so that we will be able to spend a substantial part of that money on the extension of electrification.

The task of the extension of electrification is a very big one. It takes a long time; it is not something that can be done overnight. Every kilometre north that we go is a step towards the honourable member's electorate of Cooroora and the town of Cooroy, just as it is a further step towards Townsville and the cities of the North. Whilst we are waiting for some financial approval and backing for the larger concept of main line electrification, I see no harm in extending the line to Caboolture as a very tiny step in that direction. I would have hoped that most honourable members would have seen the merit in that.

The honourable member and I visited Eumundi. It has a particular problem of leases on railway land. I think that they have been resolved.

He raised also the matter of the rail crossing in the centre of the town of Palmwoods, where the railway line effectively cuts the town in half and prevents the passage of high commercial trucks or tourist buses from one side of the town to the other. Expenditure would be required on the crossing in the centre of the town. In due course, the Government, in conjunction with the local authorities, will have to find some way of obtaining money for that work.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central is a man with vast experience in the transport industry. I know that a person learns a lot sitting behind the wheel of a taxi.

Mr Davis: You don't.

Mr LANE: You don't?

Mr Davis: A little bit.

Mr Shaw: You learn how much the Railway Department is spending on cabs.

Mr LANE: That is right. The honourable member for Wynnum advocates that perhaps it should not be spent on cabs. I might find a few allies here tonight.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central spoke about the inquiry by consultants into some aspects of rail management. His emphasis was on railway workshops, in particular. In that context, he referred to what he described as the undercapitalisation of railway workshops throughout the State. That is the first seven-syllable word that I have ever heard him use. That alone impressed me. Nevertheless, I also share his concern. There has been an undercapitalisation on railway workshops in Queensland. I would like to see a great modernisation take place. If I could find the money to do it, the program would start tomorrow. The only thing that is lacking is the money. In the meantime, in my humble way, as Minister, I have tried to do something about industrial

safety in workshops. As a result of my initiatives since I have held the Transport portfolio, several full-time industrial safety officers have been appointed in workshops throughout the State.

Currently a survey is taking place into industrial safety in all railway workshops. It is being undertaken by the Department of Occupational Safety at the direction of Cabinet on my recommendation. It has been going for several weeks and I have the preliminary report. I hope to be able to do something to make the environment in railway workshops a little more pleasant and a little safer for those who work in them.

I must say that I have been rather surprised by the lack of interest in industrial safety on the part of the railway unions. I have taken the opportunity on three occasions when I have met with large delegations to ask them what their ideas were on industrial safety. They displayed a total lack of interest in the subject.

Mr Davis: I don't believe that.

Mr LANE: It happens to be a fact. I can only say that perhaps the workers are used to the environment in which they work, have grown to accept it and are more interested in other things.

Mr Davis: I don't believe that.

Mr LANE: They seem to be more interested in hours, pay, conditions, where they can park their cars and other external matters than in industrial safety.

Mr Vaughan: There are State laws.

Mr LANE: No matter what the laws say, there is still an obligation on the Government to set an example. I am prepared to accept that obligation and to give a lead in that regard. That is why I am doing something about it.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr LANE: Something is being done and an improvement will be made, despite the negative attitude of Opposition members.

The honourable member for Stafford, Mr Gygar, spoke of taxi licensing, which is a rather novel approach, a laissez faire approach, to taxi operations. It is something that I could not countenance and it is certainly not the policy of either of the parties on this side of the Chamber or of the Government. Nevertheless, the proposal is an interesting one.

The honourable member made some praiseworthy comments about the Enoggera interchange and its effectiveness in the western and north-western suburbs. It certainly is a huge success.

The honourable member for Redlands spoke of an extension of the railway line to Cleveland and made the point that land is still available for that purpose. He knows very well that the Government has that matter in mind but that, having given top priority to the Thorneside extension and electrification through to that area—which we believe will be completed well before time, in October next year—it has to move on to some other priorities. After those, perhaps the Government will look at Cleveland. All these matters have to take their place in the queue and the available resources have to be shared equitably around the State. So I cannot see an immediate move on Cleveland.

The honourable member for Townsville South, Mr Wilson, commented on the application of bicentennial road funds. I realise that he has to play to his northern audience, and I took his remarks in the spirit in which they were made, namely, political and parochial. Townsville has certainly not been excluded from consideration for expenditure of some of the bicentennial road funds. The Government is currently looking at what it can do to help in that area.

The Townsville City Council has established a transport committee, which can only be described as a political front organisation for the council. The association that I have had with it has not been of a very constructive nature. The council seems to want to criticise without making constructive suggestions. I sincerely hope that, in the interests of northern people, it will change its attitude in due course.

The honourable member also raised the matter of the relationship between the railways and some of its contract carriers, in particular QRX, which is an associate company of TNT. That company has made a sizeable contribution in terms of rolling-stock, containers and on-the-ground facilities at railway centres, which I think in return entitles it to some concessional rates from the Railway Department. For example, QRX paid for 50 CLO wagons that are used for palletised loading, and which speed up the loading of bulk goods that can be carried quite easily and efficiently in open-sided wagons. The Railway Department has a line-haul task, and if goods can be palletised, perhaps shrink-wrapped or handled in bulk and loaded and unloaded in a fast, efficient way by private enterprise, then that is the best way to operate. That is the sort of thing that is happening with QRX.

Mention was made of the weight of QRX wagons. The wagons are test-weighed regularly, and the discrepancies in weight that have been revealed have been very small.

Whilst on the subject of contract carriers, honourable members might be interested to know that contract carriers, including those from the major Brisbane centres, handled 638 308 tonnes of general merchandise for a total revenue of \$27,792,771. Were the merchandise not handled that way, it would have been carried by road transport. The road permit system does not impose restrictions on the cartage on many of those goods. The railways have been able to attract more customers through the freight-forwarded or contract-carrier arrangements. To do so, of course, it has offered a concessional rate to persons who operate that freight-forwarding service. That will probably be one of the areas of boom in the Railway Department in the future.

About 90 wagons are loaded each day in North Queensland, which means that about 150 fewer semi-trailers are on the roads each day. But for that arrangement, that additional number of vehicles would be on the roads. In addition, about 25 containers are carried by rail interstate each day. If there was not that arrangement, they also would be carried over the State's roads. There are a number of benefits, both direct and indirect, from our being involved in the contract-carrying system.

The member for Surfers Paradise sought clarification of the rail concessions that are available at present. He was particularly interested in the concessions available to World War I veterans. I think most members would know that the Treasurer announced in the Budget that rail concessions would be extended to World War I veterans.

Mr Davis: How generous can you get! There are only a handful left.

Mr LANE: Is the honourable member saying that he does not want the concessions extended?

In his Budget Speech, the Treasurer also announced that rail concessions would be extended to war widows. A number of war widows have enjoyed those concessions on a means-tested basis, but now the concessions will apply to all war widows. Currently, we are investigating the extension of full concessions on a reciprocal basis with the other States, and, as soon as the paperwork is completed, those concessions will come into effect.

The honourable member for Archerfield spoke about a rail link for Inala. I can see his attraction to such a suggestion. The suburb is isolated to some extent, although the Transport Department has done its best to encourage the maintenance of a viable and regular bus service to the suburb. Some studies have taken place into a rail link to Inala. I assure the honourable member that they have not been dismissed out of hand. It is an option that the Government may well consider in the future.

The member for Toowoomba South spoke about McCafferty's co-ordinated bus service and the set-down point near the Ipswich Railway Station. He drew to my attention something I had been unaware of. I assure him that I will have the matter investigated as soon as possible to see what better arrangements we can come to so that people are not required to hump their luggage into the railway station from some distance away, now that the co-ordination point has been changed from Helidon to Ipswich.

The honourable member for Pine Rivers spoke about the Albany Creek bus service trial. It was a genuine trial subsidised by the taxpayer through the Metropolitan Transit Authority. The trial proved that the service at this stage is not economically viable. The department and the MTA still have an open mind on it. If at a future date there is a

greater inclination by the people to travel on public transport, another trial will be conducted to ascertain whether a bus service into the area would be viable. The plain fact of the matter is that the bus operator cannot be expected to operate his service into that area at a loss. Until it is viable, nothing can be done.

The honourable member for Murrumba spoke about electrification of a line to Redcliffe. He pointed out that resumptions will take place in his electorate. I am very pleased to hear of the co-operation we will receive from him when we engage in that exercise. The resumption of people's property for public use is not a popular task, but tonight he pledged himself to support the Government in it. I appreciate his comments very much. It is very broad minded of him. If we have any difficulties with the local residents, we will send them round to see him.

Mr Frawley: I have heard that he owns a fair bit of land along the route and that he will make some money out of it.

Mr LANE: I do not think he will make a profit on this.

The member for Mansfield spoke about greater comforts in trains. I am sure that when he tries our sleeperette trains that run up north he will be most impressed by them. I appreciate his suggestions.

The member for Flinders spoke about the local availability of pensioner concessions. That is a problem that has to be grappled with. It is difficult not only in country areas but also in Brisbane. We may well have to do something to make it easier for pensioners to take advantage of the concession in the near future.

He raised a very serious matter of concern—the future of the livestock road haulage industry—since the commissioner was able, by Government decision, to offer contract carrying rates for beef to meat processors, exporters or meat-works on the same basis as it has offered it to individual graziers in the past, namely, at a concessional rate. It is implicit in the contract-carrying arrangements with the department that there be an exclusivity clause written into the contract. It is that clause which requires the meat processors or exporters to exclusively ship cattle to their works by rail once they enjoy the concessional rate. It is a problem that the Government will grapple with in the next few weeks. There will have to be some resolution of the problem.

The honourable member for Townsville West spoke about the condition of the Townsville Railway Station. I think that it is a rather charming building.

Mr Smith: I did not say it wasn't.

Mr LANE: What do you want us to do with it?

Mr Smith: I want you to upgrade it inside.

Mr LANE: For the record, I think it is rather charming as it is.

The honourable member also spoke about the setting up of road trauma centres throughout the State. I would have appreciated his comments more if he had mentioned that, as a result of my submissions to ATAC, it is probable that a national road trauma committee, which will have representatives from all States, will be established.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 21 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Transport.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

Transport—

Department of Transport	\$ 13,246,912
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	1,114,013,064

Progress reported.

FARM PRODUCE AGENTS ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Primary Industries), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Farm Produce Agents Act 1964-1974 and the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act 1923-1980 each in certain particulars.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Primary Industries) (9.58 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Farm Produce Agents Act provides for the licensing of wholesalers who handle fruit and vegetables and other farm produce on behalf of growers. The Act also sets out the procedures governing their operations. It has not been substantially amended since 1964.

This Bill is designed to update the Act in line with changes which have occurred in fruit and vegetable marketing in Queensland and to provide solutions for problems which have arisen. I might add that New South Wales and Victoria have experienced similar problems and reviews of the legislation in those States are under way. The proposed amendments have been drafted following discussions and negotiations with the various industry bodies representing growers, wholesalers and heavy produce merchants and I would like to record my appreciation of their input.

One of the main changes in fruit and vegetable marketing over recent years has been the growth in merchant transactions between growers and wholesalers as opposed to agency transactions. The essential difference between these two forms of trading is that a merchant transaction involves the wholesaler buying the produce of the grower. The wholesaler then sells the produce on his own behalf. Agency transactions require the wholesaler to dispose of the produce on a commission basis.

The mixing of these two types of transaction has resulted in some confusion and given rise to some problems. The main problems identified have been associated with—

- (1) Failure by both wholesalers and growers adequately to distinguish between merchant and agency transactions;
- (2) Sales of produce to firms or companies with which the agent has an association;
- (3) Sales to an agent's employees;
- (4) Out of date provisions regarding modern computerised accounting;
- (5) Inadequate fidelity bond arrangements; and
- (6) The allocation of costs in the event of condemnation or downgrading of produce.

In order to overcome some of these problems, it is intended to provide for the licensing of farm produce commercial sellers instead of farm produce agents. Such licences will enable a wholesaler to operate as an agent on commission, a merchant or a broker.

The Bill provides for documentation for different types of sales in order to distinguish whether a wholesaler is handling produce on any agency or merchant basis. The documentation would provide prima facie evidence in the event of a dispute. In addition, it is intended that provision be made for prescribing, by regulation, a form of consignment note to be used by growers. This would not be compulsory but, where it is used, it would serve as evidence in the event of a dispute.

The Bill proposes to extend the existing requirement relating to merchant transactions that a price must be agreed before delivery, to situations where, although no firm price is agreed, a pricing basis is agreed. Some of the existing provisions concerning an agent selling a grower's produce to a firm or company in which the agent is involved are

considered too restrictive. Such transactions presently require the prior consent of the grower in writing and no commission is payable to the agent. This is often impracticable in today's trading environment where large quantities of produce are moved rapidly between various centres.

The Bill proposes that—

(1) A farm produce commercial seller acting as an agent who wishes to sell to an associated firm or company must register with the registrar the names of such firms or companies before any agency sales are made;

(2) A grower may direct that an agent may not sell produce to an associated company;

(3) No other person or firm may carry on a business at the place of business of the licensee, unless with the approval of the registrar;

(4) All sales of a grower's produce by an agent must be made to a person, firm or company, separate from that of the holder of the commercial seller's licence; and

(5) A licensed wholesaler must ensure traceability of all sales, including sales to associated firms or companies.

In common with all producers, fruit and vegetable growers like to be paid for their produce at the earliest opportunity. At times, slow-selling consignments cause delay in payment to growers through no fault of the wholesaler. In order to facilitate prompt payment to growers for that part of consignment produce which is readily sold, provision has been made to specify by regulation the conditions under which wholesalers may buy in "tail-ends" of slow-moving agency consignments. A similar provision has been made to allow a farm produce commercial seller acting as an agent to buy in large and unannounced consignments, on prescribed conditions, where market disruption might otherwise occur.

At present, if an employee of an agent wishes to purchase produce for his personal use, prior approval in writing of the grower is required. The amendments proposed will permit sales to employees for their own use without prior approval provided the appropriate documentation is maintained.

It is proposed that the provision for fidelity bonds be extended to cover licensed farm produce commercial sellers acting as agents. It is also proposed to allow more flexibility in this area by permitting the use of bank guarantees or subscriptions to approved guarantee funds as alternatives. The industry itself is currently examining the possibility of a central guarantee scheme.

Experience has shown that the present provisions relating to the operation of trust accounts are impractical. Because of this, it is proposed to replace the present provisions with procedures which permit the holding of funds derived from both agency and merchant sales in a general account which will be a farm produce trust account. It will be a requirement for a licensed wholesaler to ensure that funds held in this trust account and in approved investments are such as to cover the amounts due and owing to growers who have consigned produce on an agency basis.

The Bill, however, provides that a licensee will be required to notify the registrar whenever his trust account is not in a position to meet all payments owing to growers in accordance with the conditions and time limitations imposed under the Act.

An important amendment will permit short-term investment of trust funds in investments approved by the Treasurer.

It will be a continuing requirement for licensees' books to be audited and the registrar will be empowered, as he now is, to obtain from the licensee whatever information is necessary to satisfy himself that proper procedures are being observed.

Requirements on wholesalers in relation to payments and advices to growers, commission rates and allowable deductions will continue to be prescribed by regulation. However, it is proposed that the Minister be empowered to appoint an appropriate person or persons to recommend on matters such as commission rates.

I mentioned earlier that problems are being experienced with the allocation of costs and returns when produce is downgraded or condemned. The Bill proposes that in any case where a wholesaler, acting as an agent, wishes to make any deduction from a grower's return because of dumped produce, upon request from the grower, the wholesaler must supply a certificate by an appropriate officer. This certificate will specify the nature and extent of downgrading or condemnation.

Because of the significance of the volume of produce handled by the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, it is considered that relevant provisions of the legislation should also apply to that organisation. However, because of the special circumstances involved and the statutory obligations imposed on the COD, it was considered preferable to amend the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act under which the COD is constituted. The Bill, therefore, will also amend the Fruit Marketing Organisation Act to provide for automatic registration of the COD as a farm produce commercial seller and to reflect other relevant provisions of the Bill relating to the Farm Produce Agents Act.

Other matters contained in the Bill include updating of penalties for breaches and for regulation-making powers relating to the deductions which a farm produce commercial seller acting as an agent can make from growers' returns and for a grower consignment note.

The Bill is by no means a simple one and it has involved considerable consultation and negotiation with the industry. Views have been put forward by all sectors and it is a tribute to all concerned that we have reached the measure of agreement which is reflected in the document before us. I am confident that the Bill will go a long way towards resolving many of the issues involved in the marketing of fruit and vegetables in this State.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Kruger, adjourned.

FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Primary Industries), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Fisheries Act 1976-1982 in certain particulars and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.9 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Honourable members will recall that the Fisheries Act was amended in 1981 and again earlier this year by way of the introduction of the Marine Parks Act 1982 and the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982. While the Marine Parks Act deals with a different aspect of some areas of the fisheries question, the Fisheries Act and the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act are the two Acts which form the new basis for the overall management of the fishing industry in Queensland.

These presently proposed amendments are a further part of the process of reorganisation of the fishing industry, and these amendments should complete the changes necessary to the Fisheries Act for the foreseeable future. Further changes are proposed to the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act, and it is hoped to introduce these later in the session.

The Bill deals with matters in three main categories. Firstly, there are changes of an administrative nature, dealing with areas of responsibility set out in the legislation. Secondly, there are changes related to fisheries management, particularly conservation; and, thirdly, there is the aspect of regulation dealing with the day-to-day administration of the Act.

One important aspect of this Bill is that it defines the administrative areas of responsibility between the Fish Management Authority and the Department of Primary Industries. It is proposed that all licensing powers, with the exception of licensing for oyster-farming and pearling activities, be vested in the authority, and consequently reference to them is removed from the Fisheries Act.

In a similar manner, there is an allocation of responsibility between the Director, Division of Dairying and Fisheries, and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. Under the proposed amendments, the Director of Dairying and Fisheries will be responsible for the

research aspects of the fishing industry, together with those licensing aspects of the fishing industry, together with those licensing matters related to pearling and oysters, while the Chief Inspector of Fisheries will be vested with the authority to administer the Fisheries Act.

Also proposed are some changes dealing with the payment of moneys received under the Fisheries Act. The amendments propose that these will now be paid to the authority. These administrative changes were previously foreshadowed, and it is desirable that they proceed at this time before the appointment of members to the authority.

On the conservation aspects, the Bill proposes a number of significant changes. As I mentioned in my speech to the House when introducing the Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act, the fishing resources of Queensland are not as abundant as those of many other countries. Consequently, management and conservation of the resources we have is essential.

The Bill proposes to raise the status of fish habitat reserves to that presently applying to marine parks. This means that once a fish habitat reserve is declared, its status can be altered only by resolution of the Parliament.

A provision has also been inserted in the Bill to enable the establishment of wet land reserves. It is envisaged that these will be, in the main, the areas at the head of the fish habitat reserves. They are an essential part of the breeding areas and, as such, should be offered some protection.

Further measures relating to conservation concern the protection of some species of fish after they have passed a commercially saleable size. The Act presently allows for the protection of barramundi after they have grown to a certain size, and it is intended to extend this protection to groper. Once groper reach a certain size they are of little commercial value and should be protected from senseless destruction. Apart from this, they are a fish which, at this advanced stage of their lives, tend to confine themselves to a particular locality and, as such, are easy prey for trophy hunters.

A further protective measure deals with the taking of fish from Government-stocked water storage areas. Where governmental or semi-governmental water storage areas are the subject of a fish-stocking program, the taking of fish from that area can be prohibited totally or allowed only by way of a permit. A permit may restrict the number, weight or size of fish taken and will allow for the controlled harvest of the fish.

The final issue in this regard relates to crabbers using mangrove leaves for the packing of mud crabs. At present there is a general prohibition against the destruction of mangroves by fishermen, but it is felt that an exception should be made to enable people catching crabs to take mangrove leaves to keep their crabs alive.

In addition to those matters already mentioned, it has been found necessary to amend the regulatory aspects of the Act to allow for a more reasonable and practical control of the industry. It is proposed that a specific penalty be included for the assault of fishing inspectors. At the discretion of a magistrate, a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months may be imposed. Inspectors are quite often expected to work in isolated and hostile environments and it is felt that the additional penalty for physical assaults is justified.

Also increased is the penalty to be imposed for the taking of commercial quantities of female or undersized mud crabs. Once again, offences at the top of the scale will attract the possibility of a term of imprisonment.

Honourable members will be aware that large gains are to be made by the illegal taking of crabs for interstate trade, and this, combined with the difficulty of detecting such offences, warrants the increased penalties.

A further area where penalties have been increased involves the offence of keeping, rearing, selling and like action relating to noxious and non-indigenous fish. The exotic fish could cause untold damage if released into Queensland waters and it is believed that a strong deterrent should apply. The higher maximum penalty of \$2000 is applicable to those fish considered to be noxious fish, while the lesser penalty is for the non-indigenous species.

The Bill also provides for special permission to be given for the breeding of fish for stocking purposes. This activity, referred to as aquaculture, is increasing in importance and it is considered necessary at this stage to introduce controls. The keeping or rearing of fish for aquaculture purposes without a permit will constitute an offence against the Act.

Also included in the Bill are provisions to clarify the rights of persons having dealings with fishing inspectors. The Act presently requires persons to answer questions put by inspectors but also states that a person is not required to answer a question that may incriminate him. This procedure has now been clarified in that a person still need not answer a question that tends to incriminate him, but if he is required by an inspector to answer the question, the answer cannot be used in evidence. This should clear the uncertainty associated with being required on the one hand to answer a question and, on the other hand, being excused on the grounds of self-incrimination.

Another regulatory area which has been relaxed is that dealing with the return of seized property. As the Act presently stands, the Minister may, where hardship can be shown, return only nets that have been seized. The amendments extend this concession to cover not only nets but all other types of equipment, vessels and vehicles. It is also the case that such property may now be returned to the owner when it was initially seized from, say, an employee or partner.

A further move to protect property is the insertion in the Act of a provision which will permit an inspector to require a person to stay in charge of a vessel and take it to a designated place. Because of the increasing sophistication of equipment used in the fishing industry and the associated increase in value, it is essential that vessels and the like be protected subsequent to seizure. For this reason, they should be handled by people familiar with their operation. Quite often the person in charge of a vessel at the time of seizure is not the owner and it is desirable that the seized vessel be given every protection.

The proposed amendments, as I mentioned earlier, will complete the changes to the Fisheries Act necessary to permit the reorganisation of the fishing industry. The changes are in accordance with previously stated intentions, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Kruger, adjourned.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 10 November (see p. 2153) on Mr Austin's motion—
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (10.19 p.m.): I have pleasure in speaking to this Bill, which provides for some important changes to be made to the Health Act. The Opposition agrees to the amendments and to the changes relating to the notification of certain diseases.

One aspect that concerns me is the existing provision relating to prostitutes submitting themselves for medical examination.

The provision relating to the certificate of apparent freedom from venereal disease is to be omitted in view of the fact that the section of the Act dealing with prostitutes was repealed some years ago. We are kidding ourselves if we believe that there is no such thing as prostitution at present.

We all know that prostitution still takes place, but it occurs under a different name. The word "prostitute" should be changed to "escort" or "massage attendant". It is the same old game but with a different name. The same sort of protection should be afforded to people who work in escort or massage agencies, and that provision should remain in the Act.

The Health Department is showing some concern about the chemical dieldrin, which is used by pest control operators. Some time ago a pest control firm, which was based in Rockhampton, was using dieldrin. An operator who refused to use the chemical was sacked. Not only was he sacked, but he also had to leave the company house in which he was living.

The chemical was used to spray a storage shed belonging to the Queensland Water Resources Commission in Theodore. The employee refused to use the chemical because he would be spraying it in an enclosed area and it could affect his health. He also realised that the residue of the chemical would remain in the shed and that it could have an effect on persons who spent some time in the shed in storing materials or in removing materials. It is pleasing to note that tighter control will be exercised over the use of that chemical. Whether it is dieldrin or some other chemical that is used, a notice should be placed outside a shed informing people that a spray has been used in the shed.

I do not believe that there is enough control over the chemicals that are being used in the pest control field or even in the field of agricultural spraying. Not very long ago, I saw on Channel 7 in Rockhampton a program called "Insight". It concerned a farmer in the Central Highlands area, I think in the Dingo area, who lost some 50-odd head of cattle. Although they went to some lengths, the people concerned were not able to discover the cause of death of the animals. It was known that the farmer next door had sprayed his cotton with a certain chemical. Although everyone denied that that chemical would have caused the death of the cattle, the cattle all died on the side of the paddock near where the cotton had been sprayed. It is obvious that the prevailing wind carried some of the spray onto the grasses that the cattle ate. We should be concerned about chemicals that are used by pest control operators and chemicals that are used for agricultural spraying.

Over a period I have spoken to the Minister about ambulance charges made on public patients conveyed from one hospital to another because of lack of facilities or for specialist attention. This State is supposed to have free hospitalisation, so the department should meet the cost for public patients, especially as it is subsidising the ambulance dollar for dollar, to the tune of approximately \$14m last year. The charges concern me. In my own area the flagfall is \$40. The charge for every kilometre is an additional dollar. If a person has to be transported by ambulance from the Gladstone Base Hospital to the Rockhampton Hospital, the cost is \$282. We are told, of course, that people should join the QATB, but many people cannot afford the \$30 required to do that. If we have to insure ourselves against medical costs, hospitalisation and transportation costs, the Government should cease its claim that Queensland has free health care and hospitalisation.

In last week-end's "Sunday Sun", this article appeared—

"If you reckon Queensland taxi charges are steep then never hail a Cairns ambulance by mistake. According to our State gazette, the new flagfall for ambulances in the far north city is a minimum \$50, a 25 per cent rise, up to the first 24 km with an extra \$1.25 a kilometre after that. And the same \$50 minimum applies if the ambulanceman decides after treatment that you don't need transport."

The ambulance has to get its money from somewhere. However, the Government claims to provide free hospitalisation in Queensland. Therefore, for people using the public hospital system, transport should be provided also. A private patient going from a private doctor to a private hospital or to another private doctor should have to pay for the ambulance service.

The Health Department should be taking a serious look at the blood bank. Not so long ago a public appeal was launched for \$15,000 to finance the removal of a geriatric ward that was to be used on a temporary basis as a blood bank. We are now told by the hospital manager that it will be there for quite some time. When a new hospital is built, the Health Department should do everything in its power to provide the necessary facilities for the benefit of those people who are giving their blood voluntarily and those who are working for the Red Cross by taking blood voluntarily. Every facility should be made available to them.

Although the present blood bank has been relocated at a cost of \$13,925, it still has no ventilation and the building is in a very bad state. That should never have been allowed to happen. It should have been part of the new hospital. I ask the officers of the Health Department to take a more serious look at that very important section of medical care.

Dr SCOTT-YOUNG (Townsville) (10.30 p.m.): I have great pleasure in speaking to this Bill. Certain facets of it have been extremely well debated.

The honourable member for Toowoomba North spoke at length on the incidence of various types of venereal disease. Actually, venereal disease has not changed; it has been with the human race since time immemorial. It may be becoming more prominent these days for the very simple reason that people think that there is now only one type of venereal disease, that is, herpes.

Although the honourable member for Toowoomba North spoke at great length about the complications, he omitted to mention that in women herpes is also associated with a high incidence of cancer of the cervix. Therefore, in the long term it is as deadly a disease as syphilis. Syphilis will kill people, will create problems in offspring and is an inheritable disease. Because it can cause cancer in females in the long term it has the same effect as syphilis.

I have noticed that recently the incidence of venereal disease has not fallen. Many years ago it was a notifiable disease in the true sense. Special forms had to be filled in and people who contracted venereal disease were sent to hospital clinics where the fact was recorded. Recently the medical profession has adopted an attitude of so-called confidentiality with their patients and many people with venereal disease are not reported to health authorities, with the result that the statistics are false. That may be good, because the reporting of the disease can cause a great deal of trouble. For many years while I was at the Townsville General Hospital, the registered prostitutes used to attend my clinic. When I first joined that hospital, they went to an ordinary VD clinic, which was a crude affair that was attended by a mixture of male and female patients on a designated night. I arranged for those people to be treated as human beings, and they attended my special surgical clinic along with other patients. That resulted in my clinic being notified of people who were suspected of having venereal disease, which enabled many cases to be traced that would never have been traced if the people had been treated other than as individuals.

An interesting point about the history of many of those women is that they were not unintelligent and they were not of poor physique. A considerable number of them were very handsome and intelligent women who had been either misled or waylaid somewhere along the path of their early life.

In times of economic depression, girls who cannot get a job will often take the easy way out or listen to the smooth spiel of others. Before they know where they are, they find themselves on the road to prostitution. That can happen to anybody's daughter, so I suggest that all honourable members think deeply and with concern about what is happening in the community today. The problem is not only one of unemployment; young women are also exposed to considerable risks.

I notice that in "The Townsville Daily Bulletin", which used to be the epitome of conservatism, there has been an encroachment in the personal column of advertisements for so-called escorts. Because recently I have seen several people with venereal disease who have come to me because they knew that I ran the clinic many years ago, I have become rather disturbed about such advertisements. Some of the girls are concerned about herpes. They have heard about the disease, but they do not know very much about it and have not even been educated about it.

I believe that the Department of Health, as it did many years ago, should conduct a very broadly-based program of education about venereal disease. As another member said, it should not be left to the lady's toilet. Schoolchildren should be educated. Adults should be educated through flash advertisements in cinemas and on television screens. People should know what is going on. It is no good hiding one's head underneath the carpet and saying, "What's that funny thing happening?" It happens; it is here, so we might as well know something about it and how to cure it.

Getting back to "The Townsville Daily Bulletin"—I wondered why it suddenly changed from an ultra-conservative newspaper to one that is not only promoting escort agencies in large print advertisements but also male escorts—

Mr Burns: Filthy lucre.

Dr SCOTT-YOUNG: Well, we certainly have prostitution and homosexuality advertised in a newspaper that was once conservative. I thought that I had better make a few inquiries about who now runs that newspaper. I was very interested to find that some of our denominational churches have large shareholdings in it. What is happening

to our so-called Christian church standards? Are they willingly allowing this to happen to make money? A lot of people should hang their heads in shame when it comes to talking about the sins of youth. Sometimes the sins of avarice and greed among the older members of our community have to be condemned.

I also notice that two of the hotels in Townsville which are supposed to be in the running for an international standard rating have the names of call girls over their telephones. In other words, they are aiding and abetting prostitution; they are part of a racket. The police do nothing about it, so they must therefore be hand in hand in condoning this wholesale prostitution of Australian women.

Australia is a signatory to the United Nations war against white slavery. Most members would probably not know what that is all about, but international prostitution was once called white slavery. Australia is a signatory to treaties and agreements condemning this practice, yet we in this House condone wholesale prostitution. This Government stands condemned because of it. The white slave traffic is more rampant in Queensland than in any other place in Australia. We hear about Kings Cross, but it is a pup compared to what goes on in Brisbane, and Townsville is heading towards the same situation.

So the Health Department has a problem regarding that part of the Bill relating to VD. It is about time Health Department officers woke out of their daydream and did something about it. The department will have to begin an education program and improve hospital clinics. I do not blame any man or woman avoiding a hospital clinic because they are so brutally and crudely run. The patients are treated as if they are animals instead of people with infections. The staff adopt the attitude of, "But for luck, there goes me." These days treatment is adequate, if given in time, but there is no cure for herpes. I recently read an interesting article in which some fellow said, "You can give them an electric shock." I bet that when a patient gets the disease he gets a shock all right.

I now want to deal with private hospitals, which worry me. The Queensland hospital service is excellent, probably the best in Australia, and I hope that its standards do not deteriorate. I willingly came to Queensland after serving in many hospitals in the United Kingdom and America. I found that the Queensland hospital service was excellent. It is extremely well administered and, I must admit, run very economically, much better than any other hospital I have served in or any other hospital system I have seen. I would hate to see it disappear because of the loss of control from the top. I will add to that comment in a moment.

One facet that is creating loss of function is the attitude of the nursing profession as a whole. The Nightingale Pledge reads—

"I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly:
To pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully.

I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug.

I will do all in my power to elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my profession.

With loyalty will I endeavour to aid the physician in his work, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care."

Recently I obtained a letter from the Royal Australian Nursing Federation, Queensland Branch, setting out its attitude to treating patients. It reads—

"Nurses, as a professional group, recognize that they are accountable to the community for the standard of professional nursing practice and for the standard of nursing care being given to the consumer."

So the patient has become a consumer; no longer is he a human individual endowed with the same spirit, pride and hope that the administrator of medical care has. He is considered as a consumer. The letter refers time and time again to adequate care for the consumer. The nursing standard is dropping and the sooner nurses get back to the basic principles of the Nightingale Pledge the better it will be for Queensland hospitals.

A move is afoot to hand over the control of the nursing profession to the Under Secretary of the Department of Health. That would be a retrograde step. The nursing profession is too big and noble for that. It should be controlled by and responsible to the Director-General of Health. If I were a member of the nursing profession I would certainly hang onto that principle.

The control of camping grounds is essential. Up to date, they have been administered very carefully by health officers under the direction and control of the Department of Health. A fear exists among health surveyors and inspectors, as we used to know them, that they will be subject to the control of a local authority—the Health Department will forgo its control and hand it over to the local authority. I would hate to see that happen because those men have done a marvellous job over the years. They have not been subject to the whims and wishes of a shire chairman or a shire developer. Those officers have done their job extremely well, and it would be a shame to take away the strength that they have at present. In handling health matters at camping grounds, they give good advice based on sound principles and altogether do a very good job.

An important principle of the Bill is that which allows the Queensland Radium Institute certain autonomy. The QRI is the best institute that I know of in the treatment of malignant diseases. The first director was Dr Cooper. He was succeeded by Dr Mowatt. The institute has become world famous. I do not know of any organisation with better efficiency. I am pleased that, under the Bill, it can raise its own money, subject to the Auditor-General. It still has to report to Parliament and to the Minister. It has its general fund, trust fund, loan fund and special purpose fund. It is allowed to borrow money and advance as science allows it to.

Recently, the treatment of malignancy has become much more complex. The technological changes have been very great and very rapidly developed over the last few years. The cost of instruments and machines is astronomical. If the institute can control its own destiny financially, it will provide a much better service to the people of Queensland, if that is possible.

I congratulate the Minister for allowing this to happen. I feel sure that many thousands of patients will be thankful to the Department of Health for this great move. I give my great pleasure to support the Bill.

Mrs NELSON (Aspley) (10.46 p.m.): I would like to endorse some of the comments that have already been made in the House in the past week. In opening my remarks I would like to add to the comments made by the member for Townsville (Dr Scott-Young) about advertisements for prostitution both in the daily publications in the metropolitan region and, undoubtedly, in the city of Townsville. Bulletins are published at various holiday resorts purporting to advertise the delights and attractions of those regions. This is particularly relevant to the Gold Coast. Almost 25 per cent of one bulletin is confined to advertisements for escort agencies with quite extraordinary titles. During my last Christmas holiday one of my children was reading a bulletin and asked what was done by escort agencies. I said that when people were holidaying alone they could ring some of those agencies to obtain someone to escort them out or, if they were on business, they might like an escort for an evening. Her comment, at a fairly young age, was, "Wouldn't that be rather dangerous? They might get robbed." I was not quite sure how to answer that. I said, "Yes, they might." I wondered how many people are robbed. Queensland women and Australian women in general are being robbed of dignity and status in society when they are relegated to that sort of role. I wonder how much of the income that they earn through that industry is received by them. I wonder how much of it finds its way into the hands of criminals.

The Government has a responsibility to ensure that bulletins that are put out in areas such as the Gold Coast are not allowed to blatantly advertise those sorts of agencies which are simply a service for prostitution. They are being put in the same category as Sea World, Dreamland, restaurants and other tourist attractions on the Gold Coast. They are therefore being equated with recreational pursuits that are family oriented and innocent in their content. That degrades our women and diminishes our men.

I strongly endorse the comments made by the member for Townsville about newspaper advertisements that are nothing short of lascivious. Reading Saturday's "Courier-Mail" might be light entertainment to those of us who would not indulge in the practice, but I wonder how many young women are involved in the drug industry as a result of that profession. I wonder how many young boys are caught up in the homosexual side of prostitution these days. I wonder what sort of lives they lead and what sort of hopelessness and despair is really their daily companion. Any Government that takes no action on that matter practises double standards when it purports to be Christian and when it purports to be protecting the family unit.

I wish to comment on the speech made last week by the member for Toowoomba North (Dr Lockwood). I have taken the opportunity to obtain from him some copies of his comments about herpes II. I have circulated it to the senior mistresses and to the principals in the high schools in my electorate. I am hopeful that they will circulate it to certain groups of students within their schools. I believe that it might be the best invention in terms of contraception since the pill. Any young person of adolescent years reading those notes would certainly be warned very clearly about the significant long-term risks to health from indulging in promiscuous sexual relations.

I wish to comment briefly on nursing homes and to add to the comments made by the member for Townsville about the nursing profession.

One of the significant problems in nursing homes and private hospitals is the large number of totally unqualified persons who work in them in uniforms. As a colleague of mine who is in the nursing profession said, young dolly girls 16 or 17 years of age, who are barely out of school, have been taken off the street. Some of them can type but they have absolutely no first-aid skills. They are put in uniform, they have a cap put on their head and they are termed nursing aides.

A lot of relatives who have people in those institutions believe that those girls are nurses. Many of them would not know how to take a pulse or how to treat a patient for shock. They certainly do not know how to give tender loving care, which is the matter to which the previous speaker referred. The Government ought to be taking immediate steps to ensure that the number of required registered nurses and qualified staff in such institutions is increased dramatically and is very strictly policed.

There are several such institutions, one of which I have intimate knowledge, in which at any time there is only one qualified person on the premises. The quality of care offered in the particular place to which I refer is horrendous. On the occasions that I have had to visit it, it made me cringe when I thought that possibly I would have to spend the last years of my life in the hands of those people as a resident in that place.

The regulations recently promulgated by the Minister and this Bill will go a long way towards tightening up the situation concerning ownership and management. However, no Government in Australia, either State or Federal, has addressed itself adequately to the problems that will arise in the next 25 years concerning the ageing population.

Queensland has made a more significant effort than many other States, and its reputation in the public nursing home field is very good. "Eventide" at Sandgate has been rebuilt and new centres have been established at Wynnum, Redcliffe and other places. Queensland's institutions are excellent. They are well run and are adequately staffed. However, giving a person a bed and giving that person's relatives peace of mind does not allow that person to grow old with dignity and to die with dignity. The Government should be looking closely at employing recreation and welfare officers in many institutions so that the people residing in them are able to have some quality of life.

Australia is in grave danger of rejecting all that is old. Some of the greatest treasures in our society are the ideas, the memories, the experience and the wisdom of our older people. We condemn ourselves as a whole nation and as a younger generation when we allow the ageing population to be treated with such contempt and when we allow some private operators to literally get away with murder.

Finally, I speak on the problem of science and technology versus care. That is really what the honourable member for Townsville was speaking about, but he was a little discriminatory in his comments in that he confined them to the nursing profession.

There is no doubt that the whole of health care service delivery has become science oriented over the past decade and quality of care has given way to the technological equipment that is available today for the treatment of disease and trauma. The Government ought to be addressing the quality of patient care that is available in hospitals for in-patients and out-patients. Not only should nurses be brought to book for the attitudes that are creeping in but so, too, should the medical profession. It has become an industry. Doctors have set themselves up as corporate bodies. How many of us have received medical bills over the past 12 months with "So-and-so Pty Ltd" or "Inc." after the doctor's name? I find that morally offensive. I know that all of us have agreed to that practice, but I wonder when the whole medical and health service will go back to putting the patient first and the bill last.

I draw the Minister's attention to two areas of concern that I have. The first one relates to clause 31, which amends section 100. Subclause (a) refers to omitting the word "executed." and substituting the word "executed;" I think that a printing error may have occurred. I should like to know which word is being substituted.

Proposed new section 131KB refers to regulated pesticide. I should like to know why the Executive is being given the power to decide what will be a regulated pesticide, when the Orders in Council will be laid on the table and what opportunity members of Parliament will have to discuss any orders that may be made.

I know that the preparation of the Bill involved many months of hard work. I support the Minister in his introduction of the proposed amendments to the Act.

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (10.55 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the amendments to the Health Act. I have always thought that, in Government, there are two departments that, because of a maze of regulations and bureaucracy, would be very difficult to administer. They are the Health Department and the Education Department.

A number of important matters have been taken into consideration in the proposed amendments. The member for Aspley said that steps must be taken to police the regulations applying to institutions that cater for older people, and that there is a tendency to treat older people with contempt. I am sure that none of us wants that. Many matters relative to nursing homes have been taken into consideration fairly promptly, and I compliment the Minister and the staff of his department for introducing some of the amendments now proposed.

In July, I raised a number of problems concerning a particular nursing home in my electorate. I made a statement about that matter in the Parliament. I am pleased to say that, as a result of that statement and the actions that the Minister took at the time, I have received letters from people who raised those problems with me who are very happy with the treatment that patients at that nursing home are receiving at present. Therefore, I do not wish to focus further attention on that home.

At that time I received letters from many people, including staff, doctors and patients in that home, and the complaints that they made were very serious. I contacted the Minister and officers of his department. The Minister explained the problems to the members of the staff of that home and they took action to ensure that the problems would not recur.

The Minister did a number of things that I think are worth mentioning. He shortened the time within which nursing homes had to show cause. He required a licensee to provide an adequate number of registered nurses on the premises, having regard to the number of patients accommodated. The member for Aspley referred to that. He moved to increase the maximum penalty for breaches of the Act from \$200 to \$500, and from \$10 to \$100. He stipulated the terms and conditions necessary for efficient patient care when licences were renewed. He also set out the circumstances under which a licence could be suspended. In addition, he reduced the time within which a licensee must show cause why his licence should not be suspended. All of those modifications have had the practical effect of tightening up the regulations.

In most cases, the staff in nursing homes are genuine in their desire to help older people. The problem in the nursing home in my electorate related basically to bad management and a desire not to give the loving care to patients that the member for Aspley and all other honourable members want to see provided.

I think, too, that each one of us agrees that it would be better if it was not necessary to have nursing homes and older people could be cared for by their own families in their homes. However, that is not always possible, and when one goes to a nursing home, one sees people who are well looked after. There are magnificent examples of that on the Gold Coast and in other areas as well. One sees kindness and people taking a pride in their own rooms and in what is happening. Therefore, the points raised by members who spoke previously are quite relevant.

Nursing is one of the most important sections of health care. Every one of us hopes to grow old. We trust that we will be well looked after in the future if we are not able to look after ourselves. When it is considered that the problems arose only in July, swift action has been taken by the amending Bill. There are strong measures in the Bill to cater for all of the problems that I struck in my electorate. I compliment the Minister

and the departmental staff for their co-operation and help and the fact that there have been practical results in that persons who were concerned about problems some few months ago are now receiving proper care.

Hon. B. D. AUSTIN (Wavell—Minister for Health) (11.1 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate, both last week and tonight. The debate covered many topics, but most honourable members confined themselves to the provisions of the Bill. Therefore, I do not propose to deal with honourable members individually. Instead, I will deal in general with comments raised. If during my summary I do not deal with some of the items raised by honourable members, I will do so by correspondence, because I feel that members are entitled to a reply in some way or other to the matters they have raised here.

The changes to the Act and the new nursing home regulations which were tabled in the House last week give the necessary powers to supervise and advise operators of private nursing homes. The Private Hospitals Regulations of 1978 control the operation of these facilities. The new regulations will permit a much more rapid response from the Department of Health when problems become apparent in any one area. The department has maintained close supervision of nursing homes and been available for consultation on specific problems, particularly in relation to the development of new projects. Prompt remedial action was taken with regard to the Gold Coast nursing home. The amendments to the Act shorten the time for a show-cause notice to be effected from 30 days to 14 days.

The facility at "Moonyah" conducted by the Salvation Army is neither a nursing home nor a private hospital, but rather a residential hostel, in which certain immediate care is given. As certain aspects will be the subject of a coronial inquiry, further comment at this stage is not appropriate. It could be that certain recommendations will be forthcoming in the future.

Many honourable members referred to the use of pesticides. Like most honourable members, I am concerned with the indiscriminate use of some pesticides. However, the organochloride pesticides such as dieldrin still have a special use in the control of termites underground, around stumps and posts, where their persistence is an asset rather than a problem. The changes in the Act will permit regulations to be made for the approval of pesticides for specified purposes, and thus permit appropriate use and prevent their use in hazardous situations. I point out that all the regulations and legislation in the world will not stop the indiscriminate use of anything, whether it is a pesticide, herbicide or any other substance which could be dangerous to humans.

Many members dwelt on the problem of venereal disease. It is well known that venereal disease is a world-wide problem, involving a significant number of people. It has its own special problems which make comparison with other diseases extremely difficult and unrewarding. Although it is admitted that notification of diseases is by no means complete, the changes from year to year give information on trends. I list the following table for the four years from 1978-79 to 1981-82—

Year	Notifications			
	Males	Females	Total	Rate/100 000
1978-79	1 912	1 461	3 373	154.7
1979-80	1 855	1 231	3 086	139.35
1980-81	1 638	943	2 581	114.82
1981-82	1 413	647	2 060	89.3

The table shows a decrease in the number of notifications. The number of attendances to male and female clinics has increased from 5 261 in 1980-81 to 5 830 in 1981-82, and the number of cases detected fell from 960 to 805. That is an indication that people are becoming more aware of the problem and at present the measures are having a degree of success in dealing with traditional venereal diseases.

There is co-ordination of venereal disease campaigns between the States and consultations at the national level. Programs that are undertaken by my Division of Health Promotion have, in the department's opinion, been extremely successful.

On 11 August 1982 a telephone answering service was instituted. For the information of all honourable members, I point out that the Brisbane telephone number 52 2404 gives, in a one minute recorded message, basic information on symptoms, the means of infection and treatment facilities. In the initial three months' trial period, 3 310 calls were made. An evaluation of the number of recordings at the clinic as a response to this service will be done and an assessment is being made of the best publicity methods.

For some years an information pamphlet for the public has been available and, in 1981-82, 2 200 were distributed. A booklet for medical practitioners has been prepared and 1 100 were distributed in the same period. Two types of posters are available and stickers suitable for toilets are also used and available. These are widely used by local authorities and in the past 12 months 6 900 have been distributed and about 700 posters are distributed annually.

A total of 11 different films are available for use by schools, the general public and any community group. In the nine months' period from January to September 1982, there have been 359 screenings to an audience of approximately 7 142 persons.

Mr Underwood: How many of those screenings were in schools?

Mr AUSTIN: Many of them were in schools and many are combined in the Aboriginal health program.

Four videotronic 8 mm machines are available to Aboriginal health teams and three additional films are also in this format.

In Cairns, the Aboriginal health services provide a special Aboriginal health program team of five persons covering Cape York and Gulf of Carpentaria, educating the population and staff in the medical centres, as well as contact tracing and follow-up surveillance. Other specialised staff based in Brisbane also help in this program. A similar team operates on Thursday Island and the Torres Strait islands.

Special clinics are co-ordinated at Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville Base Hospitals. Other public hospitals deal with the problem in the context of their normal work. The new Brisbane clinic provides accommodation for both male and female venereal disease clinics, the former of which is located at the Mission to Seamen building and the latter is at 8 Butterfield Street, Herston, in the grounds of the Royal Brisbane Hospital. For the information of honourable members and perhaps their constituents, I point out that the new address is 484 Adelaide Street, Brisbane. The upper level of accommodation provides separate examination, waiting and toilet areas for both males and females and associated officers and reception area, laboratory, sterilising bay and central store. The lower level of accommodation provides car-parking for four cars, a conference/lecture room, laboratory, staff lunch-room and toilet facilities. To date the cost of building work for this development has been \$240,034 and the cost of furniture has been \$13,520, a total of \$253,554. The staff will include three male and two female registered nurses, one pathology technician and one receptionist. The above measures indicate the considerable effort, with some new initiatives, that is being expended. The figures in the 1981-82 report of the Director-General will show comparable figures in that financial year to those in previous years.

As I have already said, it is very difficult to compare programs for different types of diseases. Comparisons of expenses in the fields of tuberculosis and venereal disease are not valid. A person with tuberculosis will require intensive treatment for at least two years, whereas the cost of treatment of venereal disease per case may be quite small. Also, the treatment of venereal disease is incorporated into the public hospital expenditures as well as those of many private medical facilities.

I believe that the debate on herpes was an extremely interesting and beneficial one, not only to members of this House but to the community in general.

Herpes simplex type 2 is a problem of herpes infection that is increasing worldwide, and it is hoped that the amendments will be part of the solution.

I agree with the comments made by Dr Lockwood concerning genital herpes. This condition is herpes simplex involving the genitals of both sexes. It was first described as a sexually transmitted clinical entity in 1736. The infection is usually caused by herpes simplex virus type 2, but occasionally herpes simplex type 1, the cold-sore virus, can be involved.

Genital herpes has a world-wide distribution although its prevalence can vary from country to country. Based on antibody surveys in healthy women over 40 years of age, 9 per cent had been infected in one United States community and 77 per cent in one community in Uganda. The peak age for detecting genital herpes in both sexes is between 20 and 29 years. The frequency of infection is usually associated with sexual activity and sexual promiscuity. Prostitutes are at high risk of acquiring genital herpes and an antibody survey has shown that about 70 per cent of them have been infected with the virus.

Genital herpes is often asymptomatic and is marked by latency and repeated occurrences which can be precipitated by emotional and physical stress, sexual intercourse, and intercurrent infections. These recurrences are often physically and psychologically distressing. Clinical disease usually develops four to five days after exposure to infection, whether it be symptomatic or asymptomatic. Man is the only known reservoir. Epidemics have not been described because infections are very often asymptomatic.

At present methods for the prevention and control of this infection are disappointing since many cases are asymptomatic, no vaccine is as yet available and no curative therapy is currently known. The use of condoms will not interrupt transmission in situations where they fail to cover infected areas which may or may not show lesions. The application of a 5 per cent acyclovir ointment to all lesions every three hours, six times a day for seven days, does reduce the shedding of virus and the duration of the infection, if applied within six days of onset. However, it will not prevent recurrences.

The honourable member for Townsville raised the question of radiotherapy services in North Queensland. The Department of Health has received a report on the development of radiotherapy services, which includes North Queensland. It is agreed that the needs of North Queensland are considerable and growing and that, in the foreseeable future, a radiotherapy service should be established at Townsville. This would be part of any redevelopment on the existing hospital site.

When such a proposal goes ahead, the department has recommended that a cobalt radiotherapy centre be established and that such a centre be adequately staffed but have links with the major centre in Brisbane so that replacements and backup resources are available.

The reasons given for the establishment of the centre in North Queensland are as follows:

- (a) Presence of resident radiotherapists would permit consultation with surgeons and medical oncologists to plan treatment of cases. The present tendency is for cases to be referred for radiotherapy when other treatment has been completed.
- (b) Presence of resident radiotherapists would permit detailed follow-up and assessment. The present occasional visits from the main centre are less satisfactory and time-consuming for the limited number of radiotherapists.
- (c) Patients could be treated close to home and visits by relatives and friends would be usual. Treatment in Brisbane necessitates separation from family and friends. It is noted that many of these patients are very ill, and often with a terminal illness.
- (d) Patients at present assessed as too ill to make the journey to Brisbane could receive therapy—though this may be only palliative, or for relief of pain. It was assessed by surgeons in Townsville that as many as 10 per cent of patients refuse to travel to Brisbane for treatment.

I again thank honourable members for their contribution to the debate. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion (Mr Austin) agreed to.

Committee

The Chairman of Committees (Mr Miller, Ithaca) in the chair; Hon. B. D. Austin (Wavell—Minister for Health) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—New s. 131KB; Regulated pesticide—

Mrs NELSON (11.16 p.m.): I seek clarification from the Minister concerning the requirements for an Order in Council which may declare a pesticide to be a regulated pesticide, therefore making the operator subject to conditions and regulations. How can the Parliament have any involvement in that decision-making since it is an Order in Council made by Executive Council?

Mr AUSTIN: The clause simply seeks to give power to Executive Council to stipulate and regulate the use of certain pesticides by pest control operators. The honourable member, in her speech at the second-reading stage, was perhaps suggesting that, as each product comes onto the market, the matter should come before Parliament for consideration. However, because so many products are coming onto the market it is easier for an Order in Council to be issued. The honourable member has a right to move at any time for the disallowance of an Order in Council tabled in this Parliament.

Clause 33, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 34 and 35, as read, agreed to.

Clause 36—Repeal of and new s. 154K; Funds of Institute—

Mr UNDERWOOD (11.18 p.m.): Why does the annual report to Parliament not tabulate the various investments by the institute?

Mr AUSTIN: I am not sure of the information sought by the honourable member. Is he anxious to find out what the board is doing with its money or who is investing on the board?

Mr UNDERWOOD: The investment made by the institute. I should like to know where it is investing its money. It is in the public interest that we know that to ensure that the right thing is being done with the money.

Mr AUSTIN: The accounts of all statutory authorities, particularly this one, are audited or supervised by the Auditor-General. I do not think that the honourable member is suggesting that there is a misappropriation of funds. I am not sure why the details are not published. However, I cannot see any good reason why they should be. If the board is operating under the control of the Auditor-General I can see no real need to publish the details. I shall certainly make inquiries and if the honourable member is anxious to know where any hospital board is investing its money, I will try to give him that information.

Clause 36, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 37 and 38, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Austin, by leave, read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—
“That the House do now adjourn.”

Annexation of Oyster Parade, Tin Can Bay, Within a Marina Complex

Mr HANSEN (Maryborough) (11.21 p.m.): In recent times we have heard much about retrospective action. I wish to refer to a situation in which approval is being sought for something that has been carried out in defiance of the Government's own regulations. I express concern at the annexation by the Department of Harbours and Marine of public roadway in Oyster Parade, Tin Can Bay, and the incorporation of that roadway in land within a marina complex.

In November 1979 a marina was first proposed. Plans were released in conjunction with the tender documents indicating that Oyster Parade was reduced from 28,345 metres to 20 metres in width. That land already comprising part of the roadway was to be incorporated within the marina. The plan was available only to those people who were interested in tendering for the marina.

Eventually, on 19 June 1981, the lease for the marina development was approved. On 10 October 1981, the developers erected a 2-metre high chain-wire fence along the roadway enclosing 8,345 metres of the roadway. Approval for the erection of the fence was issued by the Widgee Shire Council on 11 December 1981. On 12 December 1981, a number of residents raised the matter of annexation with the ombudsman. On 13 August 1982, the Land Administration Commission, in Government Gazette number 147, advertised the application for the permanent closure of strips both in Oyster Parade and in Emperor Street. Obviously, the Land Administration Commission was unaware of the proposed annexation back in 1979.

There had been no consultation with the people. I understand that since the advertising of the proposed closure, a number of objections have been lodged with the Land Administration Commission. One owner of a number of pieces of land in that vicinity complained that he was unable to find any particular plan showing what land was proposed to be closed. It would appear that there must be good reasons for the closure of any public thoroughfare. It is important that the regulations and laws of the State be upheld, especially by Government departments. I express the hope that the Land Administration Commission will not be influenced by the fact that people have taken for granted or have been led to believe through the Department of Harbours and Marine that the roadway has been closed. I would hope that the Lands Administration Commission will not be influenced by what has happened in the past and that it will look after the interests of those persons who have raised objections.

Funding under Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act

Mr BOUTH (Warwick) (11.25 p.m.) I bring to the notice of the House the matter of funding under the Farm Water Supplies Assistance Act. From letters that have been circulated to farmers already, I gather that the funds under the Act have been fully committed. Therefore, anyone who applies between now and June next year can expect at best to be placed on a waiting-list.

The money used under the Act over the past three years is not a very large amount. Some people would think that because of the amount that has been used it could not be of much benefit. I doubt whether any funding that has been made available by the Government over the years has been put to better use than the money advanced under that Act.

In 1979-80, the amount approved was almost \$2m. and the total paid out was \$1,162,725. In 1980-81, the total approved again was almost \$2m, and the amount paid out was \$1.5m. In 1981-82, the amount approved stood at \$2.5m and the amount paid was \$1,870,000. This year I think the allocation is approximately \$1,620,000 and, as I say, the funds are totally committed.

Certain people have either received a letter or are about to receive a letter saying that no funding is available. Some of those people have already sunk bores at a cost of anything from \$4,000 to \$10,000. Now they are awaiting money in order to equip their bores. However, they have received letters saying either, "Try elsewhere", or "Wait until this time next year."

Surely some emergency fund is available from which the amount can be bolstered. Probably it would need another million dollars, which is not a huge amount of money. It is all fully secured, and I see no reason why all funds should be committed at this time of the year.

To give an idea of the effect that this can have on a farmer—some farmers have constructed a bore and are awaiting extra finance to equip it. One man told me that over the past two or three months, since the onset of warmer weather, he has had to buy 4,000 bales of hay. If his bore had been equipped, he would not have had to buy that hay. Its cost would have almost paid the total cost of sinking and equipping the bore. That situation might not arise on all farms, nevertheless, it is a serious one. Everything should be done to bolster the funds under the Act to some extent.

I think a similar situation developed some years ago and was overcome. This year, however, the situation is much worse because many farmers are hit by a very serious drought. Provided they had underground water, they could cope with the drought more readily if they could go ahead and order irrigation equipment. An enterprise that is just

starting off could go to the wall because of the absence of funding. That could happen with a small crop grower or a lucerne grower. The farmers with whom I am involved are intending to grow lucerne or hay of some description. In 90 per cent of instances it would be lucerne.

This matter is not a political party one; all members would like to see something done to overcome the situation. I am somewhat surprised that the letters stating that the funds are totally committed have gone out so soon. However, I guess that those people whose job it is to allocate funds have no other alternative once the money is fully committed. Once again I say that I am unable to think of any fund that has been put to better use than this fund.

I hope that the situation will be reached when farmers will not have to seek funds elsewhere. In most instances, they find it difficult to acquire funds.

(Time expired.)

Mr Gary Neat; ALP Religious Education Policy

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (11.30 p.m.): There is a very unethical fellow, or to be more descriptive, a nasty little grub, operating from an office at 263 Gregory Terrace, Brisbane, which happens to be the headquarters of the Liberal Party. The name of that grub is Gary Neat. He is a man who does not seem to have the intestinal fortitude to make a public statement about the policy of the Australian Labor Party with which he disagrees. Instead, he sends out letters to priests in the various parishes, misrepresenting the Labor Party and, in particular, its religious education policy. He attempts to suggest that in fact the ALP opposes Christianity.

That matter was drawn to the attention of the Opposition because, quite clearly, a number of Catholic churches support the Labor Party.

Mr Underwood interjected.

Mr SMITH: The member for Ipswich West informs me that the letter was sent to a number of Church of England ministers as well.

Mr Neat was talking about the Religious Education Curriculum Project. That is a sensible project, designed not to promote anti-Christian beliefs but to develop a curriculum for religious teaching. It should also help students in Queensland to understand the religions of our Asian neighbours. Of course, at present a great deal of attention is given to understanding culture, customs and habits. Clearly, it is sensible that the children in Queensland schools today should understand the religion of our Asian neighbours.

People can decide whether Australia is an isolated outpost of Western society or accept that it is a part of Asia, and that is what it is all about. This country has accepted people from all parts of the world. What are we to do? Is our education system to exclude or ignore their religions? I do not think so.

I find the actions of the ponderous Mike Evans more acceptable than those of the very slimy fellow who sneaks round and reminds me of a school pimp. If the ALP disagrees with the policies of other political parties, it says so publicly.

Mr Mackenroth: It does not use sly tactics.

Mr SMITH: The ALP does not use sly tactics. If Mr Gary Neat disagrees with our policies, let him say so. He should not tell blatant lies. If he wants to openly debate the policy, Mr Beattie or Dr Murphy will debate it with him.

Mr Hansen: You would.

Mr SMITH: I would debate it with him, but perhaps I will not have that opportunity. He is an organisational man, and the people from our organisation will debate the question with him.

Let him get away from sneaking around corners. To see how good a fellow he is, one only has to look at the way in which he has cut the heads off Bob Moore and Bill Kaus, who are two members who command the respect of the great majority of members of this Assembly. That is what the director of the Liberal Party does.

This morning, Ministers were asked Dorothy Dixier questions in an attempt to blatantly misrepresent the policy of the ALP. We can probably wear that. However, that misrepresentation causes concern in the minds of the members of the community, and that concern ought not to be there. An article in yesterday's "Telegraph", under the heading "No cuts for Queensland private schools: ALP", spelt out very clearly the Federal Labor Party's policy on education. It stated—

"All Queensland private schools would qualify for Commonwealth subsidies under the new Labor Party education policy, the Federal Opposition Education spokesman, Mr John Dawkins, said today.

He said only about 50 non-government schools throughout Australia would risk losing their government subsidies, and most of these were in Sydney and Melbourne.

There were not any in Queensland."

He stated clearly that only 50 schools in the whole of Australia were likely to be affected.

I seek leave to have incorporated in "Hansard" a document that I have here. It sets out very clearly that a few protected schools have received a 259 per cent increase, whilst the most needy schools have had only a 165 per cent increase. On the other hand, Government schools have gone back 12 per cent during the period that the Fraser Government has been in power.

(Leave granted.)

Increases in Commonwealth General Recurrent Grants to Schools 1976 to 1982

	Non-Government Schools (Secondary) (a)		Government Schools (Combined Primary and Secondary) (b)
	Most Wealthy Category	Most Needy Category	
1976 Grant (adjusted to 1982 Prices) (c)	\$189 per pupil	\$591 per pupil	\$140 per pupil
1982 Grant	\$509 per pupil	\$967 per pupil	\$123 per pupil
% Increase	259%	165%	-12%

(a) Primary grants increased in proportion

(b) Government schools did not receive separate primary and secondary grants

(c) Schools Commission's Schools Price Index used to adjust figures.

(Time expired.)

Housing Commission Rental Accommodation

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (11.35 p.m.): Last Tuesday, during the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Works and Housing, I spoke about the Housing Commission's home purchase scheme. The Minister and some Government members criticised me for not mentioning the Housing Commission rental accommodation. I explained in my speech that in the 20 minutes available to me I did not have the time to speak about that matter and that other members of my committee would do so. I now take the opportunity to talk briefly about the changes that have been made to the proposed rental system.

When the Minister gave notice of a system earlier this year, the Opposition in this Parliament and throughout the State raised objections to it. As a result of our opposition—and regardless of what the Minister says, it was as a result of our opposition—the Minister changed the scheme. It was not until the debate on the scheme that the Minister promised to reassess it. Some people will benefit from that reassessment.

The changes to the scheme are not as good as Opposition members would wish. We certainly do not agree with a ceiling rent of \$120. No Housing Commission house in Queensland is worth \$120 a week. Indeed, the Housing Commission assesses rent for private companies to which it rents houses at about \$62 a week. That is the average rent charged to mining companies in Queensland. Although the people living in those houses are earning a great deal of money, the Housing Commission charges \$60 to \$62 a week. On the other hand, the Housing Commission says that tenants who, in its opinion, are earning too much money will be charged the maximum of \$120. The Housing Commission ceiling rent should be reduced to market levels. We should not be asking anybody in Queensland to pay more than the market rent.

The Housing Commission introduced the scheme because Queensland has huge waiting-lists of people unable to get Housing Commission accommodation. The blame for that falls squarely on the Government, which has not directed sufficient money towards rental housing. The Minister claimed that housing expenditure this year increased by 33 per cent, but the true facts are that only 22 per cent of the money available for homes through the Housing Commission this year will go into rental projects. That will not even supply 1 000 new units for people on the waiting-list. The Government has to come to grips with the problem and realise that it has to build more than 1 000 houses. It has to think in terms of 2 000 houses a year until it overcomes the problem of the waiting-lists of people unable to find accommodation.

One needs only to tour Queensland to discover that every caravan park in the State is full. They have waiting-lists because the rental market in Queensland is completely swamped by people unable to find accommodation. The only solution to the problem lies in the Queensland Government doing something positive. It has not taken positive steps.

Last week I outlined the steps that the Government is taking under its home purchase scheme. The criticism that was then directed at me, mainly by the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, was stupid. It did not answer one of the claims that I made. Because immediately after he made his ministerial statement he boarded a plane and went to Japan, I have not been able to debate the subject with him. The truth of the matter is that all of his objections to matters raised in my speech had no relation whatever to the facts that I put before Parliament.

(Time expired.)

Private Enterprise Pressure on Government Decision-making

Mr EATON (Mourilyan) (11.40 p.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House my concern about the fact that Government decisions are being either influenced or directed by the boards of big multinational companies, both inside and outside Australia.

To illustrate my point, I state that less than 18 months ago BHP, an Australian company, announced a net profit of over \$200m, but within 12 months it asked for a Government subsidy for the industry. In this financial year that company has paid off 6 250 workers in the steel industry. Those figures are in "The Bulletin" of 16 November, and the article also mentions that a total of 8 500 workers could be paid off by the end of the year, which is very serious.

Because of the seriousness of unemployment in Australia, big companies can bring pressure to bear on the Government. The public has to be made aware of the pressure that is brought to bear upon Governments that will induce them to make decisions that, in turn, have to be paid for by the taxpayer. Any subsidy paid to companies that can, and should, stand on their own feet will come out of the workers' pay packets in the form of subsidies to industry.

Pressure is also being exerted on Governments by foreign banks, which, in a few years, will enter the Australian banking system. Because of their past record and the way in which they are heading, I have no love for Australian banks. I have mentioned in the House before that when people in various callings in society, whether they be workers, businessmen or big companies, go to banks in an effort to obtain a loan, they are told that the bank has no money available at the bank interest rate. If they go to one of the hire-purchase companies or obtain a personal loan through the bank, they will be able to obtain the money at a rate that usually is at least 5 per cent higher than normal bank

interest. When the people who borrow money at that high interest rate get into trouble, the banks are the first ones to let them down. Letters are sent to place companies in receivership or the banks want to foreclose on their debtors.

Let me emphasise my point about the entry of foreign banks into the Australian system. Last year, the president of the Chase Manhattan Bank, one of the directors, Mr Rockefeller, and one of the bank's advisers, Mr Henry Kissinger, visited Australia. Those three men would not have visited Australia, particularly the back country where mining is taking place, unless they were interested in the value of the Australian mining industry. Those men would not waste a trip such as that. They were looking for investment opportunities in this country. Despite assurances given by the Government and the Australian banks that foreign banks will not be allowed to enter the Australian system, it will not be very long before the Government and the banks will be put under pressure and will have to yield to the requests of foreign banking companies.

State Government Subsidies to Local Authorities

Mr AKERS (Pine Rivers) (11.44 p.m.): Many comments have been made by local authorities, especially by the Brisbane City Council, about the effects of the reductions in State Government subsidies to local authorities. In the very short time that I have available to me in this debate, I shall try to correct some of the misinformation that has been spread.

It is very difficult to compare the local authorities in the different States, but I think it is worth a try. In 1981-82, Queensland paid a total of \$51.5m in subsidies to local authorities. New South Wales paid \$43.5m, Victoria, \$27.2m, and South Australia, \$6.7m. The figure for Western Australia is difficult to calculate and the figures that I have are not worth including.

Mr Borbidge: What are the figures per head?

Mr AKERS: The Tasmanian figure is again difficult to determine, but it works out at about \$2.3m. In answer to the honourable member's question, the expenditure per head is also interesting because it is obviously much more relevant. When a comparison is made on a per capita basis it shows that Queensland is even further ahead. The figures are as follows:—

	\$
Queensland	21.58
New South Wales	8.25
Victoria	6.85
South Australia	5.05
Tasmania	5.37

Again I have left out Western Australia because, as I say, the figure is difficult to calculate. The reduced subsidies will come into full effect only in 1982-83, and even then the Queensland Government is still far ahead of other State Governments in its assistance to local authorities. The total figure this year will be \$42m and the per capita figure \$17.60. Those figures are lower than last year's, but still far ahead of the relevant figures in other States.

Mr Borbidge: Do you think some of the criticism has been politically motivated?

Mr AKERS: I am sure that some of it has, because the Lord Mayor of Brisbane has suddenly been kicked into becoming a political person. He has not been terribly political up till now, but I think Mr Beattie has got to him and told him to do something. He is now trying to kick the Government as much as he can in an attempt to play party politics.

Mr Mackenroth: The Premier of Queensland would never do that.

Mr AKERS: He is known to be a political person: the Lord Mayor tried not to be.

There are further points that we should probably keep in mind. The Queensland scheme has an effect on virtually every local authority, whereas in States such as New South Wales local authorities are very much more limited in the assistance they receive. Local authorities in Queensland are told that they will receive the subsidy on the work they decide they want to do. Local authorities in New South Wales go on a waiting-list, the priorities of which are decided by Government and not by the local authorities themselves. I believe

that the assistance given to Queensland local authorities in that form is much more sensible. We also give a much broader range of subsidies for capital works carried out by local authorities. So the few points I have been able to raise, and all the others that are available, show that the argument that local authorities have been severely disadvantaged is totally wrong. As I showed from the figures, there will be a \$9.5m reduction.

(Time expired.)

Liberal Party Preselection Procedures

Mr UNDERWOOD (Ipswich West) (11.49 p.m.): I rise this evening to draw to the attention of the House the growing concern of the community, particularly in the Brisbane area, over the destruction of democracy. I refer in particular to the mushrooming of \$2 shelf branches within the Liberal Party organisation, which has seen, over the last week, the administration Mafia, namely the jackbooted Young Liberals' old guard marching over the graves of two respected members of the State Parliament. This quite clearly indicates that the electoral prospects of the Liberal Party are coming apart at the seams. No longer do the rank and file members of the Liberal Party in certain electorates have any say at all in the administration of the affairs of their party, a totally undemocratic situation which is deplored not only by the rank-and-file members but also by the community in general.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Mr Gygar is definitely one of the knife men. He stabbed one of his own supporters in this Parliament in the back by scabbing on him. I refer to the honourable member for Windsor. This action is really a plot by the legal back-bench clique within the State Parliament to ensure that the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General does not become leader after the defeat of the current leader at the next State election.

Mr AKERS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member knows full well that he knifed Mrs Jordan in the back when she had been endorsed by the party.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr UNDERWOOD: A shocking, undemocratic state of affairs occurred recently in the Liberal Party preselection for Mansfield. The Minister for Transport lined up numbers in the parliamentary wing of the Liberal Party in his own push towards the leadership. They knifed Bill Kaus. That will do great damage to the Liberal Party because he is well respected on the southside by the ordinary knockabout people. Frankly, the Opposition hopes that the Liberals continue to do that because the people who voted for Bill Kaus will vote for the Labor Party. They deplore the Goebel type of person getting up. Goebel by name and Goebel by nature. It is an indication of the attitude and tactics employed by the young, jackbooted, totally undemocratic trendies in the Liberal Party that we have been hearing about.

We will witness the demise of the Liberal Party at the coming election, particularly its leader, the honourable member for Ipswich, who is on the run in Ipswich because of the shocking way in which it treated the blue-collar workers and their families in Ipswich. The leader of the Liberal Party knows that. He has been looking very grey round the gills recently in Ipswich. He is doing and saying all sorts of funny things.

Mr Burns: He is getting those blokes in here to bolster his numbers.

Mr UNDERWOOD: That is right.

Mr Burns: And get rid of Doumany.

Mr UNDERWOOD: Lane is out to get rid of Edwards and Doumany. There is a real knifing match on in the Liberal Party.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 August the time allotted for the Adjournment debate has now expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.51 p.m.