

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1986

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Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. H. Warner, Toowoomba South) read prayers and took the chair at 11 a.m.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Soil Conservation Bill;

Drugs Misuse Bill;

Adoption of Children Acts and Another Act Amendment Bill.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF REPORTER AND DEPUTY CHIEF REPORTER

Mr SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that Mr Warwick Trotman Foote and Mr Peter Bradshaw Rohl have been appointed Chief Reporter and Deputy Chief Reporter respectively of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff.

PRIVILEGE**Redirection of Question asked by Member for Wolston**

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Windsor (Mr Comben) raised as a matter of privilege a question without notice that related to the Pumicestone Passage National Park and was asked by the honourable member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs) of the Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and The Arts (Mr McKechnie).

Questions already on the Notices of Questions paper may be redirected to another Minister by the member asking the question, if invited to do so by the Minister who first responds to the question, provided the member says, "I redirect the question accordingly." Action can then be taken to have the question or the relevant part of it repeated on the following day's Notices of Questions paper and for the appropriate department to receive a copy and prepare the answer.

However, the question referred to by the honourable member for Windsor was asked without notice. In accordance with the first paragraph of Standing Order No. 69B, the only way for it to be placed on the Notices of Questions paper would have been for the member to submit a written question addressed to the second Minister. No such action was taken, so the written version of the question could not be placed on the paper.

With respect to the redirection of questions without notice—these should be asked without notice immediately of the correct Minister, as one of the honourable member's two allowable questions for that day. If it were the honourable member's second question for the day, it should be asked again at the next opportunity. In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon the honourable member concerned to prepare a question and follow the rules to get it on the Notices of Questions paper.

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member may do so at the appropriate time.

PAPERS

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

Reports—

Commissioner of Water Resources for the year ended 30 June 1986

Commissioner for Railways for the year ended 30 June 1986.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Central Queensland Coal Associates Agreement Act 1968-1984

Regulations under the State Housing Act 1945-1986.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Nurse Education

Hon. L. W. POWELL (Isis—Minister for Education) (11.6 a.m.), by leave: This statement concerns recent public discussion about the transfer of basic nurse training from hospital schools to colleges of advanced education.

An attempt has been made by Opposition spokesmen and others, without knowledge or sensitivity, to give the public the impression that this Government has ignored the availability of funds provided in the Commonwealth Budgets for the current and previous years, and that Queensland nurses have therefore been disadvantaged by the Queensland Government. I wish to clarify the matter and expose those erroneous half-truths.

It is true that notional amounts of funds have been listed in the Estimates of the Commonwealth Health Department for possible distribution to States and Territories. However, access to those funds may only be obtained by the signing of an agreement between the State and Commonwealth. The proposed agreement is extremely detrimental to the State and quite unacceptable to this Government, as it treats nursing as a second-class profession. The acceptance of those funds would result in Queensland tax-payers being required to pay their tax allocation for nurse education on three occasions: firstly, through the very exorbitant income tax, sales tax, fringe benefits tax and many other Government levies; secondly, through the payment of the Medicare tax, which seriously disadvantages this State; and, thirdly, by adding State funds to make up the difference between the \$1,500 per student that is offered by the Commonwealth and the \$6,500 average cost to educate a tertiary student.

Mr McElligott: Have you made a counter-offer?

Mr POWELL: If the honourable member for Townsville listens, he will learn what the offer is.

I have said repeatedly that partial funding of an advanced education course is a breach of the Commonwealth's self-inflicted undertaking to totally fund higher education. It is also an insult to the nursing profession insofar as it is seen as fit and proper for nurse education to be funded at lower levels than other professions. The draconian nature of the agreement that the Government has been expected to sign is signified by the fact that not one cent of the funds earmarked for the 1985-86 financial year was claimed by any State or Territory.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: I will repeat that for the benefit of the honourable member for Brisbane Central, who makes a lot of noise and does not listen.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Brisbane Central under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr POWELL: I emphasise that the Government has been expected to sign an agreement although not one cent of the funds earmarked for the 1985-86 financial year was claimed by any State or Territory—not even those States that were induced to make the transfer in whole or in part. My authority for that statement is the Federal Budget paper itself.

This Government makes no apology for refusing to sign an agreement on the funding of higher education that would throw the major burden for both recurrent and capital expenditure for a tertiary education course onto the State.

Lest the critics of the Government's stance claim that the Government is not ready to implement basic nurse education in the State's colleges, honourable members might like to know that the following is the stated readiness of Queensland's colleges—

QIT: Until the new law/health science building is completed, probably at the end of 1987, the capacity to expand enrolments in basic nursing is limited. If a sudden expansion became necessary, the use of alternative accommodation would have to be considered.

Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education (DDIAE): Planning for the basic course is said to be at an advanced stage. The college has no staff in the nursing area and its capacity would be limited to enrolling 100 students in 1987.

CIAE: Planning for the introduction of the degree in 1987 is well advanced and specialist staff have been appointed. The college could probably enrol 100 students in 1987 in a basic course.

Brisbane College of Advanced Education (BCAE): Planning is not advanced and the college cannot accommodate a large influx of students.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask members to resume their seats while Ministers are on their feet.

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a shame that the retiring member for South Brisbane (Mr Fouras) does not find any interest in this very vexed question of the Commonwealth Government's abnegation of its responsibility to nursing in Queensland.

I repeat that planning at the Brisbane College of Advanced Education is not advanced and the college cannot accommodate a large influx of students. However, the proximity of the Royal Brisbane Hospital would be an advantage if space became available there.

It is understood that planning at the James Cook University in north Queensland is proceeding but that additional accommodation, probably off-campus, would be required for 1987.

I challenge the Federal Government to come clean and be honest about the claimed philosophic basis of the transfer.

Honourable Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is far too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr POWELL: I am challenging the Federal Government; that is why Opposition members are worried.

If, as the Budget paper suggests, an amount of \$620,000 is available to Queensland tertiary education for nurse education in 1987, that means that enough money is available to enrol 100 students.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Cunningham and the member for Ipswich that I have asked for less noise and talk in the Chamber.

Mr POWELL: That amount of money should be put into tertiary education in Queensland so that at least the transfer, which will cater for 100 students in basic nursing training in 1987, can be commenced.

Nurse education is an education issue, not a health issue. The sooner that the Federal Government gets its act together and transfers funds from Dr Blewett's department to Senator Ryan's Education Department, the better.

I trust that the citizens of Queensland, especially the members of the nursing profession, will ignore feeble attempts to manipulate such information and will stand

behind the Queensland Government's attempt to obtain the full measure of funding to which the State is entitled.

Alleged Forgery of Commercial Fishing Vessel Licences

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.13 a.m.), by leave: On 8 September, 11 criminal charges were presented to the Magistrates Court of Queensland against a former employee of the Queensland Fish Management Authority and a master fisherman in relation to allegedly forging and/or uttering documents relative to eight commercial fishing vessel licences. Those licences were issued on 21 February and 28 February 1986. Immediately on detection, the authority placed the matter in the hands of the police early in March, and those charges are a result of their investigations. All relevant licences have been suspended, as the circumstances warrant.

Three master fishermen who allegedly purchased licences have claimed disadvantage because of the suspension and sought sympathetic consideration by the authority. Accordingly, the authority has issued conditional permits to take and sell fish for commercial purposes. Those permits will remain in force until the outcome of the court case or a decision is reached by the Fishing Industry Appeal Tribunal, to which they have appealed.

As the matter is now the subject of court proceedings, no further comments will be made.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Questions submitted on notice were answered as follows—

1. Importation of Processed Fruit Products

Mr SIMPSON asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“As the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, has called for consumers to buy Australian-made products, will he ascertain if the Federal Government is prepared to take action to slow down the importing of orange juice, tinned pineapple, passionfruit pulp and cheese, which are adversely affecting the income and livelihood of hundreds of Queensland primary producers and workers?”

Answer—

In relation to the importation of processed fruit products, my department has made repeated representation to the Federal Government on a number of matters pertaining to this trade. As a result of these representations, together with those from other State Departments of Agriculture, in late August, Senator Button and Mr Kerin jointly announced that the fresh fruit and fruit products industries have been referred to the Industries Assistance Commission for inquiry and report within 18 months.

The IAC will review the assistance accorded the industries and examine their potential for future growth and increased exports. The commission has been specifically requested to identify and report on the significance of factors that may facilitate or impede the development of the industries or in any other way affect their competitiveness and efficiency.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure the House that my department will be participating in this inquiry and that it will be addressing import issues in its submission. In relation to imports of cheese, I understand that the Federal Government is currently negotiating with the EC on the issue of subsidisation of cheese imports into Australia and is reviewing existing mechanisms for defending the industry against unfair competition.

The Queensland Government will continue to press the Commonwealth to take action to ensure that our efficient primary industries are not disadvantaged by the predatory trading activities of other countries. However, as the honourable member well knows, Labor Governments are stronger on talk than action.

Mr PRICE: Mr Speaker, before I direct question No. 2 to the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services, I draw your attention to an obvious printer's error in the third part of that question. On the third line of the third part, the referral is to Mr Katter junior, not Mr Katter senior.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's comments have been noted.

2. Transportation to Camooweal and Dajarra

Mr PRICE asked the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services—

“(1) Did he, following representations by myself in July 1985, approach the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs for dollar for dollar funding assistance to provide transportation to the tiny settlements of Camooweal and Dajarra?

(2) Did the Federal Government make an allocation of \$25,000 (being half the cost of two buses) to accommodate his request?

(3) Did he refuse to contact the Minister in Canberra to match this allocation despite the fact that his father, Mr Bob Katter Snr, the Federal member for Kennedy, assured the Federal Minister that indeed he (Mr Katter Snr) did have the authority to negotiate such a deal?

(4) Will he now re-contact the Federal Minister in a belated attempt to resurrect the grant and this time maintain his word that these small communities can have their transport requirement?”

Answer—

(1 to 4) The various issues that have been raised are dependent upon Federal Government funding. No information has been received in relation to any approaches from the Federal Government. If the honourable member can find any verification of the statements that are made here, I would be only too happy to proceed. However, it would be wrong for me to answer this question or to take up any subjects without drawing the attention of the House to the situation with respect to Federal Government funding.

In all, 28 per cent of the entire Aboriginal population of Australia resides in Queensland. However, only 9.7 per cent of the total Federal Government's Budget allocation in relation to Aboriginal funding was provided to Queensland. People of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent in Queensland should be entitled to \$108m of the Federal Government's Budget allocation.

I refer to Mr Holding's news release on the Budget wherein he stated that Queensland would receive \$31.9m by way of Aboriginal funding. With 28 per cent of the Aboriginal population residing in Queensland, Queensland is entitled to \$108m. However, it will receive only \$32m. The black people of Queensland are being cheated out of \$76m every single year. Because Queensland is on the eve of an election, that shortfall must be emphasised. I repeat that, although the black people of Queensland are entitled to \$108m from the Federal Budget, only \$32m has been allocated. The figures that I am quoting come directly from Mr Holding's press release and from the Federal Budget papers. They are not my figures.

In this current financial year, the black people of Queensland are being short-changed to the tune of \$76m. It is no wonder that the people of the Torres Strait islands have no electricity and that so many areas are without water, roads and adequate housing.

In sharp contrast to the treatment by the Federal Government is the treatment by the Aboriginal Development Corporation, which is providing not 9.7 per cent but 20.2 per cent of the cake. The Housing Minister, who has recognised the need exists, is providing over 30 per cent. It is only the Department of Aboriginal Affairs that is treating Queensland in this enormously shabby manner.

The black people of Queensland should be incensed at the figures that I am releasing publicly today.

3. Audit of Queensland Day Committee's Accounts

Mr PRICE asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“With reference to the article in *The Sunday Mail* Exit Line column of 9 June 1985 which said:

‘Well didn’t Queensland Day go off with a flourish? Which brought some relief to those in the public service bureaucracy responsible for approving expenses. Seems they retrospectively approved a swag of expenditure incurred earlier this year by one public servant on an overseas trip supposedly in relation to this year’s Queensland Day activities. Nice to know it was all worthwhile.’

and the letter to the editor by Sir David Longland published on 30 June 1985 which said:

‘The Queensland Day Committee’s attention has been drawn to an item in Marion Smith’s column of Sunday, June 9. The committee is most concerned with the unfounded innuendos in this item. No public servant has incurred expenditure on an overseas trip supposedly in relation to this year’s Queensland Day activities.

All staff of the committee are on contract. The executive director, Mrs Judith Callaghan, is a consultant. If the item purports to refer to her travel overseas in February, this was at her own expense, accompanying her husband who was on official business. Mrs Callaghan did not seek, or receive, expenses from the committee even though she could have. In her own time and at her own expense she held discussions on a possible showing in London of the Haig Collection of historic Queensland photographs in conjunction with BP Australia and met Queensland’s representatives in London and Bahrain to discuss possible Queensland Day activities. No expenses of any kind were incurred by the Queensland Day Committee for “retrospective approval”. If the item purports to refer to unforeseen expenditure, the committee’s accounts are audited by the Auditor-General, in accordance with normal public service procedures and relate to the committee’s overall activities throughout Queensland. The committee’s program and budget are approved annually by Cabinet. The Queensland Day Committee seeks a retraction of this item which reflects adversely on it and its hard-working staff.’—

What audit investigations, if any, were carried out as a result of these two publications in *The Sunday Mail*?”

Answer—

I cannot speak for the Auditor-General or to presume to know what particular significance he may or may not have attached to the unsubstantiated media articles, but, to my knowledge, the auditing of the books and accounts of the various Government departments at that time was proceeding in a normal way.

4. Fruit and Vegetable Industry

Mr STEPHAN asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the fact that in recent years fruit and vegetable growers have suffered from almost continually low prices, from high interest rates, which are still increasing, and the heavy drain of ever-increasing costs, for example, fuel, fertilizer and pest and disease control, as a consequence of which they have complained that they are making no advance in improving their financial position—

What action is being taken by himself and his department to help Queensland’s fruit and vegetable industry and, in particular, growers to improve their profitability?”

Answer—

The Government is well aware of the problems facing fruit and vegetable growers in this State. My department has addressed a range of issues and has undertaken a number of studies with the aim of improving the financial situation of horticultural growers.

In response to low prices received for a wide range of vegetable crops over recent years, my department conducted an economic survey of 13 major crops. The study identified developments and trends, including real price trends, in the industry. It also described developments in industry practices such as crop selection and techniques employed in growing, harvesting, transporting, handling and marketing.

A major impediment to horticultural export development in Queensland has been the lack of suitable freight services from Queensland to overseas markets. Officers of my department, with a view to improving these services, are working closely with the Port of Brisbane Authority, the Townsville Harbour Board and shipping and airline companies operating in and out of Queensland.

High interest rates and farm finance are another area of grave concern to many horticultural growers. My department has been conducting rural finance seminars throughout Queensland including the horticultural areas. These seminars focus on options for producers to cope with the high costs of borrowed funds.

I can assure honourable members that I and my department will continue to offer every assistance possible to horticultural producers in Queensland during this time of financial difficulty in the industry.

5. Annual Reports and Accounts of Statutory Authorities

Mr LICKISS asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“(1) Of the statutory authorities identified in the Register of Statutory Authorities of December 1984 and any authorities established subsequent to the date of that report, which bodies are required to (a) furnish annual reports and/or audited accounts to the Minister or department, (b) have accounts audited by the Auditor-General and (c) report to Parliament?

(2) In respect of each of these three categories, which authorities have yet to report or have accounts audited for (a) 1984/85 and (b) 1985/86?”

Answer—

(1) On 19 April 1983, the Government decided that all statutory authorities submit an annual report to their Minister for presentation to Parliament, such report to be in a format approved by the Minister and to include an audited statement by the Auditor-General. This arrangement was formalised in 1985 through amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

In summary, the basic accountability and reporting requirements of statutory authorities are as follows—

- Each statutory body is required to prepare and certify proper financial statements within two months of the close of each financial year to ensure that timely information is available on the year's financial operations for each body.
- Provision exists for the Treasurer to extend the two-month period, but only after consultation with the relevant Minister and the Auditor-General.
- Accounts and statements are required to be submitted to the Auditor-General for audit, and for the audited statements to be published.
- Provision is made for the Auditor-General to appoint an authorised person to undertake the audit on his behalf.
- Statutory bodies are required to prepare and furnish to the Minister, within four months of the close of each financial year, an annual report on operations.

- The report is to contain a copy of the audited and certified financial statements. These reports will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.
- Where there are a number of similar bodies and the tabling of individual reports is impractical, a summary report may be tabled.

(2) Insofar as the 1984-85 reports are concerned, I am not aware of any particular difficulties that may have occurred in the lodgement of such reports. However, if the honourable member has any particular report in mind, he could let me know and I will have inquiries made on his behalf. As the honourable member would appreciate, reports do take time to be compiled and a number of those for the 1985-86 financial year would not be finalised at this particular time.

6. Kenmore State School Tuck-shop

Mr LICKISS asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

“With further reference to the deplorable conditions under which tuckshop facilities are conducted at Kenmore State School and to my efforts over many years to have a tuckshop similar to that existing in other comparable schools in Queensland provided at this school—

Is he in a position to indicate to the parents of children at this school when the long-planned tuckshop will be erected?”

Answer—

Planning is presently under way for the replacement tuck-shop. When documentation is completed later in the financial year, further consideration will be given to this matter in the light of available funds.

7. Food Irradiation Plant

Mr KRUGER asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the proposal to set up a food irradiation plant in Queensland, and in view of the widespread concern about possible contamination of such food—

- (1) What are the benefits of such a plant to the fruit and vegetable industry of the State?
- (2) Have all health aspects of such an operation been considered?
- (3) Has his research overseas on irradiation indicated that there is a risk of contamination which could result in danger to health?”

Answer—

(1) On the one hand, because irradiation treatment does not make food radioactive, there is no contamination of the food. On the other hand, irradiation offers immense benefit to Queensland's horticultural industry. The process kills insects and reduces microbial counts, thus producing a safer product with a longer shelf-life.

For Queensland horticultural products, this will help minimise post-harvest losses and increase market penetration both domestically and abroad.

(2) Irradiation is probably the most researched food process ever introduced. All but the most far-fetched health implications have been studied. After 20 years' research, the process has been endorsed by the World Health Organisation. Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration in the United States completed nearly 30 years' evaluation of all health, nutritional and safety factors when it endorsed the process. In Australia, the National Health and Medical Research Council, after its own investigation, has endorsed the process.

(3) Based on my personal overseas investigations, including discussions with several participants in the processes noted above, I can state that irradiation poses no danger

of contamination to the food itself. Over-exposure to irradiation, in common with other food-processing methods, can produce adverse organoleptic effects. Provided that standard operating procedures are followed, irradiation poses no threat to worker safety.

8. Widening of Houghton Highway

Mr KRUGER asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

“With reference to the work currently being carried out on Elizabeth Avenue, Clontarf to provide a four-lane access to the Houghton Highway and to the fact that the Deagon Deviation has been a four-lane access on the other end of the bridge for several years—

When can motorists using that highway expect any relief from the current situation, that is, the three-lane tidal flow bottle-neck on the bridge?”

Answer—

The annual average daily traffic on the Houghton Highway is about 26 000 vehicles per day. That is well within the reasonable operating capacity of this three-lane structure, which is approximately 35 000 vehicles per day.

Accident rates on this bridge are not significantly different from any other arterial road in Redcliffe city, and average traffic speeds in both directions are 65 km/h in peak periods. It is very difficult to see what relief motorists require. There is no bottle-neck on the bridge. The capacity of the bridge is balanced with the capacities of the signalised intersections at either end.

There are no current plans to alter the three-lane, tidal flow arrangements. Most of the so-called problems seem to be expressed in emotive, politically-based statements. It is interesting to note that on 27 August 1986, a regular user wrote to the editor of *The Redcliffe Herald* indicating that he saw no problems with the tidal flow arrangements.

Main Roads Department officers have been reviewing the signing on the Houghton Highway, and I expect to receive a report on possible improvements in the near future.

9. Federal Government's Housing Policies

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Works and Housing—

“How have Federal Government housing policies affected the housing industry?”

Answer—

The Federal Labor Government's housing policies have been characterised by deception and disarray. Their effect has been to cause depression in the housing industry and dismay for the home-seeker.

On a number of occasions the Federal Labor Government has said one thing and done another; and the number of times it has broken promises are too numerous to mention. A good example of that occurred earlier this year.

On 19 March this year, the Prime Minister Mr Hawke said—

“The Government remains committed to the retention of the ceiling housing interest rates.”

The very next day the Federal Housing Minister (Mr West) said the same thing. Also on 20 March the Labor Government's Treasurer (Mr Keating) said—

“I have not and will not be proposing any change in the ceiling.”

Everyone knows what has happened. The Federal Government went on to raise that ceiling on new loans.

That decision, contrary to what Labor had been promising the home-buyer, meant that people taking out an average housing loan of \$40,000 were up for an additional monthly repayment of more than \$60. And for all the promises that interest rates would

drop that this Federal Labor Government has made, the reverse has occurred. How many times has one heard from the Federal Government that interest rates are about to drop?

It was only last month that the Prime Minister (Mr Hawke) once more made such a prediction, which was followed almost immediately by major banks predicting that home loan rates could do the reverse. The Hawke-Keating Government has deliberately relied on high interest rates as an instrument of economic management. The housing industry and the home-seeker have been the ones to suffer.

The lending rate has been pushed from 11.5 per cent in December 1984 to the present level of 15.5 per cent. That means that the borrower of a \$40,000 loan is now paying \$130 a month more than he was paying less than two years ago. That is the burden that has been imposed by this Federal Labor Government on home-buyers, but that is only part of the picture.

The added problem of the anti-investment policies of the Hawke Labor Government has scared investors away from the private rental market. I refer to the quarantining of negative gearing and the introduction of capital gains tax. If there is any doubt about the impact of those moves, the Federal Government's own Australian Bureau of Statistics figures reveal the picture. They show that in the first six months of this year, the number of residential dwellings such as flats and units approved in the private sector throughout Australia was down by almost a third on the same six months last year; 32 per cent down, to be precise.

Those figures show the devastating effect that the Federal Government's policies are having on the building industry and home-seekers. The drop came at a time when the approvals for private sector houses had dropped by 19 per cent when these same two periods were compared.

The Federal Government's housing policies have left home-seekers facing a triple bind: higher interest rates; a contracting private sector rental market; and uncertainty about where the socialist Government's policies will lead.

10. Department of Children's Services Office, Warwick

Mr BOOTH asked the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs—
“When will the Children's Services Office at Warwick be opened?”

Answer—

In responding to the honourable member's question, I wish to acknowledge his on-going interest in this important development for the people of Warwick and the surrounding area.

Action has been taken to appoint the supervisor and other staff of the Warwick area office and accommodation has been found in premises at 79 Fitzroy Street, Warwick. Renovations are expected to be completed within a month and it is anticipated, at this stage, that the office will be open for business on Monday, 13 October 1986.

11. Sugar-mill, Babinda

Mr MENZEL asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“With reference to the Cabinet decision not to proceed with Section 33A of the *Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act*—

Will he give an unqualified assurance that the State Government will guarantee the future of the Babinda Sugar Mill?”

Answer—

Unlike some sections of the Queensland ALP, the State Government is not prepared to stand by and see the town of Babinda die because of the closure of its sugar-mill. The State Government remains committed to that attitude and is convinced that a

strong and successful case can be put forward to secure the viability of the mill for the future.

Naturally, the future of the mill is also dependent on the efficiency of its management and its growers, but I am sure that both are determined to make all necessary adjustments to secure their future. The State Government will provide whatever help is possible to assist in their endeavours to ensure the success of the mill.

There are very sound reasons for the retention of the Babinda mill, namely—

It is strategically located, being half-way between Innisfail and Cairns.

Closure of the mill will have a severe adverse regional impact through the loss of the major employer in Babinda.

The mill has made significant progress over the past two years. It has reduced its work-force by a third, cane yields are increasing and production costs have been substantially reduced. In fact, had it not been for cyclone Winifred, it would have operated profitably this year.

Financial analysis carried out by the mill and the Treasury Department indicates that, with reasonable sugar prices, efficient production, additional throughput and proposed Government assistance, Babinda mill will be viable in the long term.

12. Expenditure of Funds by Johnstone Shire Council

Mr MENZEL asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

“With reference to the Johnstone Shire Council at Innisfail—

(1) Where did the funds come from for the construction of Leichhardt Street, the new sports complex and the council’s parking reserve in Edith Street?

(2) Will he instigate a departmental inquiry into the matter and previous allegations made in State Parliament?

(3) In view of new evidence on the matter in a letter dated 2 September which conflicts with a letter dated 11 August from the Shire Clerk which clearly points to the misuse of funds by the ALP Councillors, will he report the matter to Parliament following an investigation?

(4) Is he aware that Leichhardt Street has been completed but has never been used by the public or ever had cyclone debris carted over it?”

Answer—

(1 & 2) I have been made aware of the concern expressed by the honourable member that natural disaster relief funds may have been expended by Johnstone Shire Council on works that did not meet the approved guide-lines.

(3 & 4) I will undertake further investigations in relation to this matter and advise the honourable member accordingly.

13. Government’s Newspaper Advertisements

Mr SHAW asked the Premier and Treasurer—

“With reference to advertisements placed by his Government in *The Courier-Mail* classifieds carrying a propaganda slogan ‘Queensland—A Stronger State—A Better Life’, which at times takes up more column centimetres than the advertisement in question and the total appearances on a page frequently amount to the equivalent of a full-page column—

(1) What is the total space, in column centimetres, taken up by the inclusion of this slogan in classified advertisements?

(2) What is the total number of column centimetres of classified advertisements placed by the Government in *The Courier-Mail* since arrangements were made to advertise in that newspaper?

(3) What has been the cost to date?” }

Answer—

(1 to 3) The honourable member is obviously not familiar with the structure of the agreement entered into with *The Courier-Mail* for classifieds or a similar agreement previous held with the *Daily Sun*.

Under these agreements, space for the slogan "Queensland—A Stronger State—A Better Life" is provided at no cost.

14. Manly Boat Harbour

Mr SHAW asked the Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services—

"With reference to proposed developments at Manly Boat Harbour and the granting of freehold title of an area of land to the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron—

(1) What costs have been met by the squadron and what compensation is it to pay to the Government for the freehold title?

(2) When will the land be subjected to the provisions of the City of Brisbane Town Plan and what zoning will apply?

(3) What valuation for rating purposes has or will the Valuer-General place on the land?

(4) Is the road to be constructed near the southern harbour wall to be gazetted as public road and will responsibility for the road's maintenance rest with the Brisbane City Council and, if not, who will maintain the road?

(5) Will the promised 20 metre nature strip extend for the entire length of the road and will it be sited on one or both sides of the road?

(6) Under what ownership and control will the nature strip be placed?

(7) Is any consideration being given or has any consideration been given to further developments to the south or east of the existing harbour?"

Answer—

(1) It is estimated that the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron has spent about \$400,000 in developing the land in question. No agreement has yet been reached on a purchase price for the land.

(2) The land becomes part of the city of Brisbane once reclaimed. Zoning is a matter for the Brisbane City Council and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing.

(3) This question should be directed to the Minister for Corrective Services, Administrative Services and Valuation. Information that I have obtained from the Valuer-General has been for the purpose of considering an appropriate sale price, not a rateable value.

(4) It is proposed that an area of land be set aside near the southern wall for road purposes. It is not proposed that the road be gazetted at this stage. Any maintenance required will be carried out by the Port of Brisbane Authority.

(5) No 20-metre nature strip is proposed in conjunction with the road. However, a 20-metre strip fronting the beach and the northern extremity of the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron lease area is proposed. That will allow access for breakwater maintenance.

(6) It is proposed that the 20-metre strip will be under the management and control of the Port of Brisbane Authority.

(7) It is envisaged that further development of the harbour will take place to the south or east of the existing harbour, but no detailed consideration has been given to any such development.

Mr SHAW: I redirect part (3) of the question accordingly.

15. North-west Arterial Road

Mr GYGAR asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

“With reference to the uncertainty surrounding the proposed North-West arterial road which is planned to speed through traffic from Albany Creek to Alderley on the general alignment of Trouts Road—

- (1) When will construction of this road commence?
- (2) When will the project be completed?
- (3) If he is not in a position to answer these questions, when is a final decision likely to be made on this project?”

Answer—

(1 to 3) There are no plans for construction of the north-west freeway, which is now called the Western Arterial Road, from Everton Park to the Gympie Arterial Road at Bald Hills. The Main Roads Department is actively preserving the corridor for a future road by planning and acquiring properties where hardship exists.

No decisions have been made on the timing of construction of the road. The timing of a decision to proceed will be related to such factors as—

- (a) timing and rate of the development of the suburbs of McDowall, Bridgeman Downs and Bald Hills;
- (b) the development and capacity of parallel road systems such as Trouts Road and Beckett Road;
- (c) the capacity of the Gympie arterial road; and
- (d) the availability of funds.

The State Government is about to join the Brisbane City Council in undertaking a study of the road needs of the Brisbane area. That should enable the context of the road to be more clearly defined.

16. Tractor Roll-over Frames

Mr RANDELL asked the Minister for Employment and Industrial Affairs—

“With reference to the requirement of farmers to fit roll-over frames on all tractors—

- (1) Are Queensland implement or machinery manufacturers permitted to construct roll-over protection frames for tractors?
- (2) Are farmers permitted to construct roll-over frames provided they are built to required standard?
- (3) Is a list of tractors requiring frames (listing categories, types, weight and size) available to primary producers?
- (4) If not, will he take steps to have such a list compiled?
- (5) When do the requirements to fit roll-over frames on tractors take effect?
- (6) Will he provide any other information relative to this matter?”

Answer—

(1) Yes, provided a prototype roll-over protective structure (ROPS) tested to the Australian Standard 1636 proves that the frame design is adequate and all subsequent frames are manufactured to the same design procedure.

(2) Yes, provided the frames constructed by primary producers are manufactured to a design procedure equivalent to a standard frame for the same tractor weight and design and construction is checked by Division of Occupational Safety officers. It is

preferable however, where possible, that primary producers purchase standard, off-the-shelf roll-over protective structures.

(3 & 4) No comprehensive list is available. It would be a monumental task to compile such a list, given the wide variety of tractors available. However, a listing comprising most common makes and models of tractors with appropriate frames is being supplied to inspectors of machinery of my department in all districts. Primary producers are advised to contact inspectors of machinery in their local district and seek advice relevant to their tractors.

(5) In 1976, the House passed legislation to require the effective guarding of rural machinery and, in particular, the fitting of a protective metal cab or frame to tractors. Under that legislation, ROPS were required to be fitted to all new tractors from 1 January 1978. A 10-year lead-in time was provided for all existing tractors. Tractors of a type and size designated under the Act are required to be fitted with the frames by 1 January 1987.

(6) My department has produced two publications to alert tractor-owners to the requirements of the legislation.

Mr LESTER: For the benefit of all concerned, I seek leave of the House to table copies of these two brochures.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is leave granted?

Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr LESTER: And to have them incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The first question has been put. The Minister would have to move a separate motion.

Mr LESTER: I will not pursue having the publications incorporated in *Hansard*.

17. Illegal Importation of Aloe Vera Plants

Mr RANDELL asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

“With reference to the ‘Countrywide’ television program on 31 August in which it was alleged that aloe vera plants had been illegally shipped into Australia and consequently found their way on to Queensland farms—

(1) Are these facts as reported correct and have Queensland farmers and investors been affected to their detriment?

(2) Will he take steps to investigate the implications of these allegations?”

Answer—

(1) Plant quarantine is a Federal responsibility vested with the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industry. Officers of my department do, however, undertake quarantine duties acting on behalf of the Commonwealth. Quarantine authorities are aware of the allegations made in the *Countrywide* program of 31 August 1986, and these matters are currently being investigated by both the Australian Customs Service and the Australian Agricultural Health and Quarantine Service. At this stage I have no information on the accuracy or otherwise of allegations made, but I hope that the investigations being undertaken will clarify the matter.

(2) The illegal introduction of plants is always of concern to quarantine because that practice greatly increases the potential for exotic pests and diseases to gain entry to Australia. It should be stressed, however, that not all illegal introductions result in the entry of exotic pests. Although the allegations made on the program *Countrywide* are still the subject of investigation, the Australian Agricultural Health and Quarantine Service is rightly concerned about the possible implications in view of the volume of material alleged to be involved. For that reason it has been decided to assess the “health status” of aloe vera crops being grown in the Bundaberg region. Three scientists from

my department have been given that task and are at present in the area conducting a pest and disease survey.

18. Maryborough TAFE College

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Education—

“With reference to my representations regarding the urgent need to improve facilities at Maryborough TAFE College and to my recent conference with him and Mr Norm Pyle, the Deputy Director, Division of Technical and Further Education—

(1) Is the college to be resited or redeveloped on the existing site and what is the likely time-table of construction?

(2) What courses will be provided for in the new buildings?

(3) Will the funds come from State Government or Federal Government sources?

(4) What Commonwealth funds are provided for TAFE building capital works and other purposes for TAFE as compared with State Government funds?”

Answer—

(1) There is no proposal to resite the Maryborough College of TAFE. It is planned that the existing site, which is very well placed for a college of TAFE, will be redeveloped. The conversion of the Wide Bay marine building will be complete for student occupancy in January 1987, and a business and general studies building is planned for commencement of construction soon afterwards.

(2) The Wide Bay marine building will accommodate all automotive courses currently offered on the main campus as well as provide a facility for plumbing students to participate in live-work projects. The space vacated by the automotive section will allow for an expansion of the metal fabrication facility on the existing campus.

The planned new construction will provide facilities to expand current programs and offer new programs in business studies, computing, catering and hospitality, and brick-laying and plastering trades. The building will also house the external studies centre, resource materials centre, administration offices and the main college store. The existing main building is, of course, listed by the National Trust, and it is expected that it will be developed as an arts centre.

(3) It is expected that a proposal will be put forward for State funding for this project. The success of such a proposal is subject to available funds, which are in turn subject to the tax-sharing formulas devised from time to time by Commonwealth Governments.

(4) The total funds allocated to TAFE from both State and Commonwealth sources for 1986-87 approach \$167m. Of the total amount, the Queensland Government has allocated in its Budget almost \$117.5m. The State Government contribution is 70.5 per cent of the total funds for TAFE, compared with 29.5 per cent by the Commonwealth. In addition, the State has provided \$10m under an initiative to provide education and training for the tourism and hospitality industry. The Commonwealth moneys comprise \$21m and \$28.3m for capital works and recurrent expenditure respectively.

Of the total funds made available for TAFE in Australia in 1984-85, Queensland received only 11.1 per cent. That figure falls far short of the State's 16.5 per cent share of the nation's 15 to 19-year-olds. In essence, in 1984-85, Queensland was short-changed approximately \$35m in grants for the three sectors of tertiary education, and I have no reason to believe that 1986-87 will be any different.

19. Road-building Materials and Techniques

Mr ALISON asked the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing—

“What research work is being carried out at the Queensland Main Roads Department laboratories and through co-operation with universities and industry

to provide improved road-building materials and techniques to meet community and industry demands for more durable, better riding and longer lasting roads?"

Answer—

In the Queensland Main Roads Department, research and development work is undertaken or co-ordinated in the Construction Services Division. That division comprises three specialist technical branches, namely, construction, pavements and materials branches. Some 50 research topics are currently in progress within those branches. The topics include the following major issues—

long-term performance of cement-treated paving materials for use in very heavy trafficked situations;

development of appropriate pavement design methods for new work and for rehabilitation work;

development of new technology testing equipment such as road-roughness measurement equipment, pavement-strength measurement equipment and others;

assessment of polymer rubbers in bitumens; and

the development of computer systems for construction projects and for maintenance management.

Road research in Queensland is not limited to Main Roads Department laboratories. Projects are also being undertaken at the University of Queensland and the James Cook University in conjunction with the Australian Road Research Board. A notable project in that category is the Accelerated Loading Facility, usually referred to as ALF, which is testing to destruction experimental pavements near the Beerburum deviation on the Bruce Highway.

The research budget for work aimed at improving pavement performance and ensuring better service to the motoring public is estimated at \$1.9m for this financial year.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Terrorist Bases in Australia

Mr WARBURTON: My first question without notice is directed to the Premier and Treasurer. In today's *Telegraph* the Premier made allegations that terrorists who are responsible for hijacking, death and destruction around the world are working out of terrorist bases in Australia. Such comments, coming as they do from a head of Government, can only be described as frightening, dangerous and destabilising. I now ask: What evidence can the Premier produce in this House to substantiate his allegations? Is it not correct that the Premier's lunatic Right views and activities have now got the better of him? Does he realise the cross that all Australians will now be forced to bear as a result of his stupid, ill-founded comments? Does he realise that he may put countless Australians in a position of danger?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for asking me that question. It is exactly what I expected him to do. The Leader of the Opposition talks about endangering lives of Australians. He is a hypocrite.

Mr Warburton: You are a lunatic.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would have expected better of the Leader of the Opposition than making comments of that kind in the House.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I could not care less, because everybody knows who the lunatic is.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is a very, very serious situation. I have tried to draw attention to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition and his party support the six or seven terrorist bases here in Australia. The Leader of the Opposition supports them, and even this morning—

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R. J. GIBBS: I rise to a point of order. As a member of the Opposition in this State, I find the statement that I, as an Opposition member and as an individual, support terrorist bases in Australia or anywhere else in the world offensive and grossly untrue. I ask that the remark be withdrawn.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: That is easy enough, but the thing is—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! At the present time some very unfortunate remarks are being made on both sides of the House. The honourable member for Wolston has risen to a point of order and asked for the withdrawal of the Premier's remark. I have to ask the Premier to withdraw it. However, I do not believe that the point of order was valid, particularly under those circumstances.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I withdraw the remark. I seem to have touched a nerve in the honourable member for Wolston; I have touched him on a raw spot.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R. J. Gibbs: You are a madman.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I have not been in gaol yet, have I? The honourable member for Wolston has. He is a gaolbird.

Opposition Members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Port Curtis! The House will come to order, and I mean it.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: Mr Speaker—

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Wolston!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: This is a very serious situation. The Prime Minister of Australia states repeatedly that he deplores terrorist activities round the world.

Mr WARBURTON: I rise to a point of order. The Premier has made the most serious of allegations and I have asked him to prove his allegations today in this Chamber. He has refused to do so. He has a responsibility to prove his point here today.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: After what has happened this morning, the media will have to highlight the fact that in Canberra there is a party and organisation the members of which are all united and have one objective. They are not doing anything about removing terrorist activities from Australia. How hypocritical can the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister be! On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition says that he deplores the committing in Australia of acts that result in loss of life. However, he is helping the people involved in Australia by providing them with offices and facilities and affording protection to them. Six or seven terrorist groups are active in Australia. Opposition members promote them.

Mr Burns: Where's your proof?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member has proved that he is wrong. He should prove to me that these acts are not the activities of one of those groups.

Mr Warburton: You put the lives of thousands of people across the world in danger.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: My word, I have woken the ALP up at last! I bet that it will do something about the matter now.

Why does the Leader of the Opposition allow such people to come into Australia and establish their bases here? The Leader of the Opposition supports them, otherwise he would not allow them to come here.

Mr Mackenroth: Where are they?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The honourable member knows where they are.

The Prime Minister should prove to the people of Australia that the people whom he fosters, supports and protects have nothing to do with any terrorist activities in other parts of the world.

Mr Warburton interjected.

Mr R. J. Gibbs interjected.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for asking me the question; it was very kind of him.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Wolston. I now warn him under Standing Order No. 123A. Constant interjection of a kind will be tolerated, but not of the type that the honourable member is engaging in.

New Right

Mr WARBURTON: My second question is directed to the Premier and Treasurer. I am ashamed to be in the same Chamber as he is.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will ask his question.

Mr WARBURTON: In directing my question to the Premier and Treasurer, I refer to his connection with the so-called New Right movement, and in particular to his public support for people such as the right-wing political activist, Katharine West; Andrew Hay; the failed Treasury head, Stone, with whom he shared the National Party stage at the Gold Coast—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will not repeat for the benefit of the honourable member for Lockyer the reminder that I have already given Opposition members.

Mr WARBURTON: I refer also to the head of Peko-Wallsend, who defied the Western Australian Industrial Commission recently, a person whom the Premier acclaimed, and I now ask: As the Premier has given conflicting stories about his association with the New Right and members of the H. R. Nicholls Society, will he now tell Queenslanders before the State election just where he stands? Quite simply, is he for that lunatic Right or is he against it?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: It is very easy to see the softer spot and how members of the Labor Party are on the run on a few issues. My word, they are on the run! And no doubt they have justification for that. The people referred to by the Leader of the Opposition are good people, and I respect them. I am blowed if I would support terrorist groups, as the Leader of the Opposition does, that threaten people's lives and are part and parcel of a world-wide organisation determined to kill people. The Leader of the Opposition and the Federal Government support such activity.

Mr Warburton: If any Australians get killed, it will be your fault.

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: The Leader of the Opposition admits that he knows about it. He says that we should father these groups, love them, look after them and let them further their activities in Australia or other parts of the world. Members of the Opposition stand condemned for their attitude towards terrorist groups.

To return to the other group referred to in the honourable member's question—people support me. I do not care what they are called, whether they are called the New Right, or whatever; the Queensland Government supports 100 per cent the right of people to invest in a business and to run their business. I will continue to fight with those people to ensure that the people of this nation are returned to employment so that once again there is confidence in this nation. Because of the policies of the Leader of the Opposition's colleagues who are in government in Canberra, the unemployed certainly do not have any confidence at the moment.

Proposed Federal Budget Tax Cuts

Mr NEAL: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Does the call by a senior Minister in the Federal Labor Government for a mini-Budget and further expenditure cuts represent an admission that the Federal Budget has already failed and that the Federal Treasurer has failed in his assessment of the needs of the Australian economy? If the Federal Minister for Industry, Technology and Commerce (Senator Button) is correct, does that further jeopardise the chance of the promised tax cuts, and could the Hawke Government be forced to look for increased taxation?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: On the night that the Federal Budget was brought down, everybody knew that it would fail. Evidence now exists to show that it has failed. Already the Federal Government is talking about another Budget—and another one, and another one, and another one. That demonstrates that the Federal Government does not know where it is going.

Will people still receive the tax cuts that were promised for 1 December? The Federal Government is talking about further cuts. All honourable members are aware of the frightful mess that the Federal Government is in. Members of the Labor Party believe that they have a chance of governing Queensland. There is no way that they could achieve that with their policies. I am sure that all Australians are aware of the Federal Government's policies and are awake to them.

Queensland Industry Development Corporation

Mr BURNS: I ask the Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology: Is he aware that farmers who borrowed less than \$100,000 for carry-on finance and equipment purchases such as tractors under the old PIBA scheme are now faced with a substantial increase in interest rates under the new Queensland Industry Development Corporation?

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen: That is not correct.

Mr BURNS: A circular has been sent out by the corporation.

Why, when the PIBA was charging interest of 13½ per cent on any loan up to \$100,000 is the QIDC charging 16¾ per cent for carry-on finance and restricting loans at the 13½ per cent interest rate to those farmers who are purchasing property? How will that policy help hard-pressed farmers such as those in the tobacco industry?

Mr AHERN: The QIDC does not come within my purview.

Comments by Federal Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation about Queensland's Development

Mr McPHIE: I ask the Premier and Treasurer: Is he aware of comments that have been made by the Federal Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation (Mr Brown) that Queensland is Australia's fastest growing State, and does he find that that comment is

in stark contrast to the gloomy declaration by the Queensland Leader of the Opposition and his ALP colleagues?

Sir JOH BJELKE-PETERSEN: I believe that all Australians are aware of Mr Brown's statement that Queensland is the fastest growing State in the nation.

Recently I addressed the Local Government Association in Toowoomba. When I mentioned that the southern visitors were here in the fastest growing State of Australia, they laughed uproariously because they too had heard and seen that the Labor Minister supported that belief.

It is interesting that the Minister has been attacked to such an extent that there has been talk of his wishing to join the National Party.

Mr Brown is an honest man and he told his story correctly and truthfully. He stated what was in his heart and what he believed and felt. I was amazed at the way in which his so-called colleagues nearly tore him apart and claimed that he did not know what he was talking about. They claimed that he was too busy and had not had time to ascertain what was occurring in Queensland.

I now quote from a newspaper article that was handed to me by accident this morning. It relates to comments made by Dr Harry Schultz. The article stated that—

“Australia's living standards will drop 25 per cent in the next five years, but Queensland will suffer the least, according to the world's highest-paid investment consultant, Dr Harry Schultz.

The outside world saw Queensland as a free-enterprise State in a non-free enterprise continent, the American millionaire said on the Gold Coast yesterday.” The article further stated—

“He praised the Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's belief in free enterprise, control of unions . . .”

He stated that Queensland's is the type of Government that gets results because its low taxes encourage investment. That is why job opportunities are being created in Queensland. Mr Schultz did not take very long to sum up the position.

At 12 noon,

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

STATEMENT OF UNFORESEEN EXPENDITURE, 1985-86

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor transmitting the *Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated* for the year 1985-86.

Statement ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the House that the paper *Statement of Unforeseen Expenditure to be Appropriated 1985-86*, to which I have just referred, is the paper formerly titled *Supplementary Estimates*.

SUPPLY

Resumption of Committee—Estimates—First and Second Allotted Days

Estimates-in-Chief, 1986-87

Transport

Department of Transport

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

“That \$79,331,800 be granted for ‘Department of Transport’.”

Much is said in this Chamber and outside on the matter of public accountability and this Estimates debate on the activities of my portfolio in fact represents one of the

most exhaustive processes of accountability which could ever be applied. It is my honour to give members full opportunity to closely examine and question the Estimates for both the Railway Department and the various arms of the Transport Department that fall under my responsibility.

In summary, the Railway Department, which employs approximately 26 000 people, operates a highly efficient passenger and freight operation over a huge area involving 10 000 km of track. I am pleased to report that in the financial year ended 30 June 1986 the Railway Department earned a record profit for the second year in a row—\$118m. This difference between our receipts and the cost of operating such a huge network represents one of the most outstanding success stories in modern railway history.

During the period in which that profitability has been generated, the Railway Department has grappled with a number of major projects, particularly the main line electrification program, which is designed to take Queensland's rail system into the twenty-first century. That \$1050m project, when completed, will result in massive savings in diesel fuel costs—savings of the order of at least \$500,000 a week. Considerable savings also will be made in locomotive maintenance. The effect of the electrification scheme on the Railway Department's capacity to quickly and efficiently move huge quantities of freight, in addition to providing fast intercity passenger services, will have a major impact on the State's overall economy for many years to come. I will elaborate on that scheme later in this speech.

The Transport Department is an area in which Government policies have been geared to deal with a dynamic industry that is constantly adjusting to new developments. The department is responsible for a wide range of transport activities—from private bus and ferry operations to licensing functions and the operation of the Queensland Road Safety Council.

The year under review has been one of growth and consolidation within the department, which has now embarked on initiatives aimed at a regionalisation program that will extend services of the department to areas of public demand throughout the State. It is that type of vision and initiative that has marked this Government's progress over the past three years. The main danger to these enlightened policies clearly comes from the activities of the Labor Government in Canberra, from where the nation is currently being directed by Hawke and Keating—the Deen brothers of economic management.

In the financial year ended June 1985, for the first time, the railway system in Queensland achieved a record profit of receipts over expenditure in the order of \$107m. In the financial year completed in June 1986, that figure was exceeded by more than \$10m.

A total of 73.6 million tonnes of freight was carried compared to 75.4 million tonnes projected for 1986-87. The increase of 1.8 million tonnes, or 2.4 per cent, is relatively modest when compared to the record gains in recent years, which were achieved when new mining ventures came into production progressively. Coal, mainly from central Queensland, was the principal freight commodity carried by rail. During 1985-86, almost 59 million tonnes were carried. This is an increase of 6 million tonnes on the previous year.

Public support for the suburban rail system has reached a new peak. More than 40.2 million passengers used the Citytrain network in 1985-86—an increase of nearly 3 million on the previous year. Patronage on Brisbane trains has grown by approximately 60 percent since electric services were introduced in 1979. Following the recent extensions of electrification to Caboolture and Wellington Point, and the phasing out of wooden carriages, passenger numbers on the Citytrain network are expected to grow substantially this year and in the foreseeable future.

These excellent results highlight the efficiency of Queensland railways in comparison with other rail systems in Australia, most of which are struggling with massive operating

deficits. Staff numbers for 1986-87 are predicted to be comparable with those of 1985-86, which averaged 25 674 throughout the year. Consequently, the index of freight tonnes per employee is expected to be higher than ever before. Reductions in staff numbers through natural wastage will become evident when the effects of those elements are registered.

Revenue receipts for 1986-87 are estimated to reach \$1,008,729,000—the Railway Department's first billion-dollar budget. This is \$38m higher than the record figure of \$965m recorded in 1985-86. The excess of revenue receipts over expenditure in 1985-86 was \$117.8m. In 1986-87, expenditure is estimated to reach a total of \$968m, resulting in a net surplus of \$35.7m. Although that result is not as dramatic as those of the previous two years, there are factors affecting expenditure—which is to increase by \$120m over the previous year, compared to receipts, which are to increase by \$38m—which have to be taken into account such as—

- repayments of main line electrification loans;
- the need to operate the diesel-electric locomotive fleet at full strength pending electric locomotives' coming into service; and
- the employment of specialised staff to service and repair the electrified system, prior to wastages in trades associated with these locomotives.

Prospects in the longer term future are good, with increased productivity being expected as a result of—

- rationalisation of depot strengths;
- expansion of the principle of two-man crewing;
- reduced requirement of staff to maintain and repair diesel-electric locomotives;
- reduced staff and capital expenditure concerned with wagon repair, when the rolling-stock information control system is able to identify rolling-stock requirements more accurately; and
- electric locomotives' taking over the haulage of central division coal trains, with resultant fuel savings of about 93ML per year.

Among notable items of revenue expenditure this year are—

- \$9.3m on re-laying with heavier rails, including the section from Tolmies to Emerald (main line electrification stage 3) and the Springsure branch;
- \$896,000 on purchase of fork-lifts, pallet jacks, freightainers and associated equipment;
- \$750,000 for provision of an improved radio communication system between Cairns and Mareeba;
- \$380,000 for a special corrosion protection program for bulk wagons in the northern division and central division;
- \$1,283,000 for upgrading computer facilities and \$1,215,000 for the CADD system; and
- \$200,000 for the installation of reflectorised logos on wagons, thus increasing safety at level crossings.

Main line electrification continues to play a very significant part in the Government's earnest endeavours to reduce costs and provide a more efficient service. The \$1 billion program is proceeding according to plan, as is evidenced by the official commissioning of the first section of Stage 1 between Gladstone and Rockhampton on Saturday, 6 September 1986. Next year the first electrically hauled coal trains will be operating from Blackwater mines to the port at Gladstone. The first of the electric locomotives are already being trialled in the central division.

The year 1987 will also see the opening of a new rail line from Wellington Point to Cleveland and completion of the \$100m Toowong village complex. As the Government presses further ahead electric train services will be operating between Caboolture and

Nambour in 1988. That will provide a quick and efficient service for the Sunshine Coast commuters wishing to visit Expo 88.

Mr Row, I am pleased to report to the Committee that the railway system in Queensland is in good shape, but that is not a reason to be complacent with what has been achieved. Rather, it provides a stimulus to achieve further goals as the twenty-first century is approached.

The Queensland Government, through careful planning and foresight, has steered the railways of this State back into the right direction. It is an enterprise of which everyone should be very proud. In saying that, I must pay full tribute to the role played in this success story by the Railways Commissioner, Mr Ralph Sheehy, and all railway staff.

Department of Transport

I now wish to comment on the activities of the Department of Transport, for which an amount of \$94.6m has been provided in the Budget Estimates. The budget for the department has been allocated as follows—

- Consolidated Revenue Fund—an amount of \$79.3m has been provided for the operational cost of the Department of Transport. Significant functions funded from the Consolidated Revenue Fund include passenger and goods transport, surveillance of heavy vehicle transport, the control of the carriage of dangerous goods, drivers' licensing and traffic legislation administration, the school-crossing supervisor scheme, the servicing of urban public transport capital works loans and the administrative costs of the department.
- Trust and Special Funds—an amount of \$1.9m has been allocated for the operations of the Queensland Road Safety Council, whilst a further \$13.4m has been allocated for urban public transport capital works projects.

The transport industry is a dynamic one which is constantly adjusting to new developments. I am pleased to say that the Department of Transport has developed a structure through which industry demands can be appropriately met. Further, the department, in its development of policy, seeks input from both industry and the public. The consultative process has been welcomed by both the transport industry and the public. The department has met the challenge of providing effective administration of transport in Queensland. That is, without doubt, due to the enthusiasm of the staff, which in turn reflects the very positive management capacity of the Commissioner for Transport, Mr Neal Kent. I pay tribute to Mr Kent and his staff for their loyal and efficient service.

I shall now discuss in detail the functions that the Department of Transport budget for 1986-87 will fund. I will start with passenger and goods transport operations provided for by the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of passenger and goods licensing. The department also provides assistance to transport operators in the form of financial and operational advice.

Advisory and consultancy function

To assist transport operators to manage their business more effectively, the department has appointed a number of transport analysts, who possess professional qualifications in accountancy, commerce and marketing and act in an advisory and consultancy capacity to industry. Provision is being made progressively for those analysts to be stationed at the department's regional offices. Those officers not only provide local operators with professional advice but also contribute significantly to the provision of efficient metropolitan and regional transport services. Apart from a core group located in Brisbane, transport analysts are stationed at Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast. Provision is being made for the appointment of transport analysts to new regional offices as they are opened.

Subsidies to private bus and ferry-operators

Subsidies to private bus operators are expected to increase by \$360,000 to \$5,024,000 during 1986-87.

These subsidies, which are paid mainly as a percentage of gross fare revenue, are provided to ensure that urban bus services continue to be maintained and improved to meet public demand whilst holding fare costs at a reasonable level. The subsidy and licensing scheme is directed at improvements in the services available, including the standard of buses in Queensland. It is a major area of Government subsidy that is substantially overlooked by, and unknown to, the public in this State. At present, 82 bus-operators and three ferry-operators benefit from the scheme.

Licensing function

The transport-licensing function is divided into two main areas, namely, goods-carrying vehicles and passenger-carrying vehicles. It is the aim of the licensing system to control standards of vehicles at every level, to ensure that satisfactory standards of service and safety are maintained for the benefit of the public.

Taxi-meter cabs

Apart from maintaining control over the licensing of cabs and drivers, surveillance of taxi services by departmental officers will be increased to ensure an adequate supply of taxis and to maintain safety and comfort levels.

In the last 12 months, additional cab licences have been issued at Brisbane, Cairns and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts.

In addition to monitoring the number of taxi licences, a close watch on the economics of the industry is maintained to ensure that requests from the industry for fare increases can be effectively analysed.

A major review of policies affecting the taxi industry has been carried out and new policies affecting the taxi industry introduced to promote efficiency in the industry and to meet the needs of the travelling public now and in the years ahead.

Vehicles for hire

Vehicles offered to the public for hire on a drive-yourself basis are also licensed to ensure that satisfactory safety and service standards are maintained. Strict conditions relating to mechanical condition and insurance are also required.

Bus services

Reviews are continuing of the policies affecting bus and coach operations, particularly in view of the growth of long-distance coach and tourist services. Policies recently formulated will ensure a progressive upgrading of vehicles for the comfort and safety of the travelling public. The three additional licences on the Brisbane to Cairns route issued in the previous financial year have been monitored. This monitoring has indicated a considerable increase in travel on this route following the introduction of these services, with an attendant boost to Queensland's tourist industry.

The analysis and provision of local and urban passenger services continue to be a major focus of departmental operations to ensure that adequate services are available for commuters, shoppers and schoolchildren. Co-ordination with rail services, where possible, ensures that adequate, fast and safe transport can be provided to the travelling public.

Driving school instruction

During 1986-87 a program continued to ensure that standards of driving schools are maintained at a high level. Scrutiny of applicants and testing procedures are fully enforced along with the retesting of existing instructors.

Air services

The department is continuing to assume a greater role in the provision of air services within Queensland. It deals with a growing number of applications to license air services for charter, aerial work, flying training and regular route operations.

Tourism is increasing rapidly in line with the growth in the number and frequency of air services approved by the department. The approval in January this year for East-West Airlines to operate between the State's major trunk centres will lead to benefits for the public, the business community and the tourist industry.

Air services in remote areas where air transport is vital are given special attention. As has happened in previous years, the department will provide a subsidy in 1986-87 for a weekly mail, passenger and goods air service in the Channel Country in the State's remote far-west region.

Enforcement

Much of the surveillance of heavy vehicles within the State is undertaken by the Commercial Vehicle Section (Highway Patrol). A proposal presently under review is to station officers of the section at the department's northern regional office at Townsville on completion of a new Townsville office at the end of this month.

That will allow a constant police presence on the roads of north Queensland to monitor heavy vehicles and road safety generally.

The transportation of materials associated with major projects such as the Gateway Arterial Road and various port developmental projects on the eastern seaboard, along with the movement of bulk commodities generally, will continue to be monitored by the Commercial Vehicle Section. In addition, checking of the weight of the vehicle and its loading, driving hours and compliance with loading and licensing requirements are monitored. The upgrading of all weighbridges to modern electronic load cell operation has been completed through the co-operation of my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Main Roads (Mr Hinze). This allows for vehicle and load weights to be calculated electronically and for the weights to be clearly displayed.

Information on goods movement through each weighbridge is being used by the Department of Transport as an aid to transport-planning.

During the year consideration will be given to the direct computer input of information at weighbridges. That will allow the daily analysis of goods movements and early detection of changes in the distribution of goods. The funds available for enforcement have been increased accordingly.

Driver licensing and traffic legislation administration

Driver-licensing and traffic legislation administration are important functions within the Department of Transport.

The department maintains the records for Queensland's 1.6 million drivers, together with the records of all traffic accidents investigated by police officers.

To permit the microfilming of the four million documents held by the department, a microfilming unit has been purchased and filming of records has commenced. This will permit substantial savings in storage space and increase efficiency of the records system.

Driver-licensing

A total of 58 driving-examiners administer driving tests and associated functions in 16 centres throughout the State.

In areas where the department does not have a regional office, driving-examiners operate from local police stations.

To maintain a high standard of testing of licence candidates, driving-examiners from all parts of the State undergo regular in-service training to ensure consistent assessment and to improve their efficiency and communication skills.

Photographic driver's licences

On 1 July this year, in Queensland, a totally new concept of driver-licensing was introduced in Brisbane and Toowoomba. The photographic concept provides drivers with a more durable, easily carried document, which will substantially reduce the incidence of fraudulent use.

The new licence format enables the holder to indicate whether he or she wishes to donate organs in the event of his or her death.

Progressive expansion of the system State-wide has commenced and will be completed in the current financial year.

Mr Davis: Next year I won't have my photograph on the licence. I will just have an ordinary one at a cheaper price.

Mr LANE: That will overcome the problem of trying to work out which of the honourable member's organs would be worth donating.

Computerisation of driver's licence records

The development of an on-line computerised system of driver's licence details and traffic histories is at an advanced stage and should be operational by mid-1987.

Important benefits to the driving public of Queensland from that initiative include—

- the dispatch of a reminder notice of impending licence expiry to each and every licence-holder, which the honourable member for Brisbane Central would not want;
- a faster and more efficient licence-recording and renewal process; and
- ready identification of persons such as unlicensed drivers who put the law-abiding driving community at risk.

School-crossing supervisors

The school-crossing supervisor scheme is designed to afford schoolchildren a safer passage to and from schools throughout the State and has expanded rapidly since its introduction in January 1984. As I introduced that scheme, I take a great deal of personal pride in it.

There are now more than 1 000 supervisors operating at 560 school crossings and servicing 421 schools throughout the State. Funds allocated this year have been increased by \$180,000 to \$1.5m, which will help to meet the demand of an average of one new school joining the scheme each week.

Driver-training

The Department of Transport has recognised the need for further training for particular categories of road-users. The Driver Training Section of the department provides training courses in various aspects of driving and driving instruction and utilises the facilities at the Driving Training Centre at Mount Cotton. Instruction at the centre includes courses for Department of Transport driving-examiners, members of the transport industry, QATB officers, Government employees, driving-instructors and caravan care and control courses for the general public.

Honourable members would be aware that auctions of specialised number-plates have been held to raise funds for the further development of the Mount Cotton complex. The Government has recently announced the letting of a \$1.8m contract for this purpose.

Commercial motor vehicle inspection

The department is extensively involved in an inspection scheme in relation to heavy transport and other commercial vehicles through its Engineering Services Division. This important function plays a major part in this Government's determination to improve road safety in this State. To assist in ensuring that commercial vehicle owners comply with the requirements of the department, action has been taken to increase road patrols

for the purpose of making snap inspections of those vehicles. A concentrated effort is made by increasing patrols of major trucking routes in regional areas.

Because of the size of Queensland and the diversity of the transport industry, honourable members would no doubt agree that this is a very involved and extensive task. For the information of honourable members, I point out that a total of 1 750 vehicles were inspected during road patrols throughout 1985-86. Of these inspections, 166 vehicles, or 9.5 per cent, were ordered off the road and a further 414 were issued with repair orders. These figures indicate the value of this important task. The department has 54 transport inspectors located throughout the State. These inspectors are responsible for the administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-1985. Transport inspectors operate from four Brisbane metropolitan centres and 18 country centres.

New legislation (commercial motor vehicles)

The Motor Vehicles Safety Act and Other Acts Amendment Act 1985 came into operation on 1 March this year. The purpose of the legislation is to provide a further upgrading of Queensland's motor vehicle inspection system and to assist in improving and maintaining the safe condition of commercial motor vehicles. The legislation is also assisting in overcoming the problem of unscrupulous operators. Owners of commercial motor vehicles with a gross vehicle mass in excess of 4 tonnes must now provide the Main Roads Department with a current certificate of inspection before the vehicle's registration will be renewed.

Inspection facilities

To provide for the effective inspection of motor vehicles, it is essential that suitable and up-to-date equipment and inspection facilities are made available to inspectors. The department's policy is to progressively update existing inspection centres and provide additional centres as determined necessary. Modern brake-testing machines have already been installed at Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Logan city centres, and a machine is being installed at Townsville. To facilitate the inspection and testing of taxis in the Brisbane metropolitan area, the department's taxi-meter testing establishment has been upgraded by the installation of a hydraulic hoist and a brake-testing machine.

Certificates of roadworthiness

Another function of the department is the enforcement of legislation involving the issue of certificates of roadworthiness for second-hand motor vehicles before they are sold. The inspection of vehicles for the purpose of issuing certificates of roadworthiness is carried out by 1 900 approved inspection stations that employ 7 460 examiners. During the year 1985-86, these inspection stations examined 229 699 vehicles, 4 596 of which were refused certificates because they did not comply with the required standards.

The department has now substantially increased its activities regarding the monitoring of these inspection stations to assist in the maintenance of uniform high professional standards for the inspection of motor vehicles.

Other inspection activities

In addition to the compulsory inspection scheme for commercial motor vehicles and certificates of roadworthiness, the department's inspectors are involved in snap inspections of used car dealers' premises, inspection of vehicles ordered for inspection by police officers, and the inspection of any vehicle observed in use on a road in an unsafe condition and which may be ordered for inspection by the department under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-85.

Transport Department inspectors are also involved in the inspection of vehicles involved in road accidents.

Monitoring of modifications to motor vehicles

Amendments to the Motor Vehicles Safety Act 1980-85 also provided for control over alterations to new and second-hand commercial motor vehicles.

New vehicles are initially manufactured in compliance with Australian Design Rules for motor vehicle safety and it is important that any proposed alterations do not conflict with the intent of those design rules. This is an important provision in the Act and essential to maintain safety in motor vehicle design and construction.

Also, the amendments provide for the Transport Department to be now responsible for the certification of A grade and B grade motor mechanics, which was previously the responsibility of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs under the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Act 1951-82.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that it was common sense for this responsibility to be vested in the Department of Transport, which is now responsible for the control of all motor vehicle safety standards and inspections.

Carriage of dangerous goods

In recognising the need for the safe transport of dangerous goods, the department prepared and introduced legislation to monitor, advise and regulate this section of the transport industry. The relevant legislation, the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1984, came into force on 1 May 1985. Specialised staff have been engaged to administer and control that legislation and those officers have been involved primarily in acquainting the transport industry with the requirements of the legislation. Enforcement of the Act by the Dangerous Goods Branch commenced in earnest on 1 November last year when the major provisions of the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road Act 1984 came into effect.

Decentralisation of services

The Department of Transport has actively pursued the Government's policy of decentralisation. Regional offices have been established in Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Logan city and the Gold Coast. Those offices provide total departmental services, including driver-licensing, motor vehicle inspection and safety education facilities.

Planning is well under way, with the co-operation of the Honourable the Minister for Works and Housing, for the construction of new regional offices at Cairns and on the Sunshine Coast, as well as the upgrading of facilities at Townsville, Bundaberg and Maryborough.

In addition, shopfront offices were opened on 1 July 1986 at Mount Gravatt, Sherwood and Everton Park in conjunction with the new photographic licence issue. A further shopfront office is planned to be opened in the Palm Beach area, Gold Coast, in December 1986. The establishment of regional offices is considered to be a positive step towards the successful implementation of transport policies and objectives throughout the State.

Training and development

Following a detailed needs analysis, the department has introduced a comprehensive training and personal development program designed to ensure that an efficient service to the public and the transport industry generally is provided. That activity will be further expanded during the forthcoming year, with particular emphasis being placed on job-related knowledge and public counter skills.

Computerisation

In recognition of the need to continually improve financial reporting, the department is implementing the new computerised Government expenditure accounting package, which will greatly enhance financial management. As I have already pointed out, further use of computers is to be made with the upgrading of the driver records system to an on-line computer system.

Transport Policy Planning Unit

Honourable members would be aware that, following the 1983 investigation of Queensland Railways, a recommendation was accepted by the Government to establish a Policy Planning Unit within the Transport Department. The purpose of the unit was to provide a research basis for transport planning and policy development. The unit has now completed its third year of operation and is, I am pleased to say, going from strength to strength.

Apart from having Transport Department policy planning officers, the unit also has two Railway Department officers seconded for a two-year period. This combination of skills and experience has proved extremely successful. Although the range of issues investigated by that group is too extensive to cover here, I will mention a few projects to illustrate the importance of their role in giving the Government a better insight into improving efficiency and productivity in the transport sector.

Last year the unit commenced a study into the freight and passenger movements and charges in the far northern and Cape York areas of the State. The area under examination is larger than the size of Victoria, but has a population of only 25 000, which includes 12 Aboriginal communities. Until now, very little has been known about the transport industry in that remote part of the State—for example, how many people are employed; what are the infrastructure costs; what component of costs is due to freight charges; and what alternatives exist for the transport of freight and passengers.

The study will provide not only those basic answers but also an insight into what has to be done to improve transport to the region. This study is a forerunner of other regional studies to be done throughout the State. Overall the aim is to have a complete profile of the transport industry for the whole of Queensland and to ensure that adequate transport facilities are in operation.

A major task for the unit has been to co-ordinate the Government's response to the recommendations of the Federal Government's national road freight industry inquiry. As honourable members would know, the inquiry was established to improve the efficiency and safety of the road transport sector in the community. The unit has been involved in negotiations with the Federal Government to ensure that the necessary Federal Government regulations are in place for the implementation of reforms planned to commence next year.

A major new development for the Policy Planning Unit has been the establishment of a Specialist Road Safety Research Group. That group aims to monitor and examine all road accidents in Queensland; to undertake research to reduce the road toll; and to monitor and evaluate measures taken to date. The research group has now developed a comprehensive research program for 1986-87, and the coming year will see some significant reports produced by that group.

Overall, the Policy Planning Unit has been a valuable and much-needed asset within the Transport portfolio, and its work to date has already resulted in many benefits to the community.

Trust and Special Funds

Within the Trust and Special Funds, allocations were made for road safety and urban public transport capital works.

The Queensland Government's commitment to road safety is reflected in its annual review of funding of the Queensland Road Safety Council.

This year, grants to the council have been increased by 14 per cent to enable it to continue with its wide range of road accident countermeasures and educational programs.

The council will receive over 87 per cent of its total budget of \$1.87m from the State Government through grants from consolidated revenue and the Liquor Act Trust Fund.

The balance is derived from several other areas, such as sponsorship from Suncorp; sale of special items such as printed material sales; and revenue from training programs and driving award nomination fees.

The Queensland Road Safety Council has a range of educational programs unmatched by other States, and increased funding this year by the Government will ensure the continued expansion and penetration of these programs into all areas of the State. The Queensland Road Safety Council consists of members from all facets of the transport industry and traffic accident management areas. The council has four special committees which oversee the specialist areas of research, education and training, publicity and motor cycle safety.

This year, additional field staff will be appointed to Logan city, Ipswich and Maryborough. That will bring the total staff strength of the Road Safety Council to 32. All staff come under the administrative control of the Commissioner for Transport and are also located at Brisbane, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Rockhampton and Townsville.

Driver education

The Road Safety Council provides a range of public education programs for all classes of road-user in all age groups. The most comprehensive and successful program is the Defensive Driving Course, which is conducted by full-time staff and volunteer instructor groups.

Volunteer groups have now been established at Aspley, Indooroopilly, Coorparoo, MacGregor, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Nambour, Noosa, Gympie, Bundaberg, Dalby, Maryborough, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Warwick, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Townsville, Cairns, Mount Isa and Julia Creek.

Over 100 000 Queenslanders have now completed that highly successful program. Funds will be used this year to upgrade the course to incorporate the latest instructional techniques and reflect changes in the driving task.

Mr Elliott: Money well spent, too.

Mr LANE: I thank the honourable member for Cunningham for that comment.

Another of the council's public education initiatives that is much in demand is the Motorcycle Training Program. Research has indicated a need for specialised training of motor-cyclists and the Motorcycle Training Program fulfills that role. The program has been conducted for some time at Lutwyche in Brisbane and in Rockhampton and Townsville. It has been expanded to Carindale, Mackay and the Gold Coast and will commence shortly at Bundaberg. Special motor cycle courses are also conducted for organisations such as Australia Post, Telecom, the RAAF and the army at various centres throughout the State.

Since 1976, persons living in the Brisbane area who have accumulated five or more demerit points against their driver's licence have been invited to attend a driver education lecture. The lecture covers important aspects of road safety and is designed to effect a change of attitude and responsibility in drivers. The program has now been extended to Toowoomba, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Rockhampton and Townsville.

Another form of road-user training is the safe cycling course for young cyclists. Earlier this year, the Queensland Road Safety Council, with the assistance of the Community Employment Program, set about establishing a network of cycling centres throughout the State manned by suitably trained instructors. A total of 240 instructors have now been trained, and centres are being established progressively throughout the State. The concept will provide formalised training on a regular basis for young bicycle-riders.

Road safety education for schoolchildren

The Road Safety Council offers a wide range of educational programs and resources to assist in the road safety education of our young. Being ever mindful of the problems

teachers have in covering non-curriculum subjects, the Road Safety Council has developed a range of programs that can be integrated into the school curriculum. The programs and the accompanying resource material are provided free of charge to every teacher at every pre-school, primary and secondary school throughout the State. The programs are supported by frequent visits to schools by Queensland Road Safety Council officers. This year, council staff will visit over 1 000 schools and speak to more than 2 500 teachers. In addition, every school will receive supplies of new road safety resource material.

This financial year, the Student Driver Education Program is experiencing major expansion with the co-operation of the Education Department. The council developed the program for Year 11 and 12 high school students to try to combat the over-representation of 17 to 25-year-olds in road accidents. To date a total of 275 teachers from 161 schools throughout the State are accredited to conduct the Student Driver Education Program. That represents about 70 per cent of all Queensland high schools, a percentage that will be substantially increased in the coming year.

I wish to record the Government's appreciation of Suncorp, which has sponsored the program since its inception and made it possible for the Road Safety Council to provide the course and associated resource materials free of charge to all participating schools.

Road safety public awareness programs

An important method of achieving higher public awareness about road safety is through promotions and advertising. Comprehensive media campaigns are being mounted on specific aspects of road safety such as drinking and driving, seat-belts, child restraints and defensive driving.

Supporting that activity will be specific campaigns at periods considered crucial to the road toll, such as long week-ends, prior to the beginning of the school year, Christmas and school holidays. Campaigns, displays and other promotional and education activities will also be held during the year for specific categories of road-users, including bicycle-riders, with particular emphasis on bicycle helmets, young drivers, motor-cyclists, drivers in rural areas and pedestrians.

Urban public transport

Honourable members will be aware that, as a result of a study commissioned by the Government into the operation of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the MTA was abolished and the responsibility for the very important function of co-ordination and integration of urban public transport services throughout Queensland was vested in the Commissioner for Transport.

Legislation

The Urban Public Passenger Transport Act 1984, which defines the responsibilities of the department in relation to urban public transport, came into operation on 1 July 1985. The Act establishes the Commissioner for Transport as a corporation sole and defines the functions and duties of the commissioner in relation to urban public passenger transport matters. Generally speaking, the Commissioner for Transport is responsible for the development and promotion of a properly integrated and co-ordinated system of urban passenger services and is vested with the appropriate authority to undertake capital works, improvement programs such as passenger interchanges, and so on, together with appropriate planning and research programs.

Funding

The programs are funded through the Transport Department's Planning and Construction Fund and are in addition to the appropriations previously mentioned as being contained in the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Overall advice on public transport matters is provided through a planning and advisory committee, and regional advisory committees have been established in Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Ipswich and the Gold Coast to further advise on public transport matters.

The 1986-87 appropriation for the Transport Department Planning and Construction Fund for urban public transport works totals \$13.34m, and is allocated as follows—

	\$
• Suburban electrification	3,240,000
• Electric rail cars	3,510,000
• Brisbane City Council bus purchases	3,160,000
• Interchange construction and design	3,228,000
• Planning and research	200,000
Total	13,338,000

Suburban electrification

The year 1985-86 saw the practical completion of the Petrie-Caboolture rail electrification project, with electric train services commencing on 28 June 1986. A total of \$3.24m will be expended on the Petrie-Caboolture electrification project in 1986-87, with funds being made available through the Australian Bicentennial Road Development program. This expenditure is in addition to funds being made available under the Railway Department Estimates for this project.

Electric rail cars

Expenditure during 1985-86 on electric rail vehicles amounted to \$28.9m, bringing the total expenditure to date on electric rail vehicles to \$193.9m. A total of 252 electric vehicles, out of a total order for 264, were in regular service at 30 June 1986.

The upgrading of passenger rolling-stock will continue during 1986-87 with the delivery of 12 additional electric rail vehicles at a cost of \$3.51m. Delivery of all 264 vehicles is expected by November 1986.

Brisbane City Council bus purchases

Interchange design and construction continued in 1985-86 with total expenditure of \$4.17m, including funds made available through the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Trust Fund and the Community Employment Program.

In total, a further 1 765 new car-parking bays were constructed at 35 locations, bringing the total number of car-parking spaces available at 30 June 1986 to 9 098, including 8 299 at suburban railway stations, which is a very impressive number. During the year, the department's first multi-level car-park was successfully completed at Albion. The construction of this car-park, containing 174 car-parking spaces, was funded through the Australian Bicentennial Road Development program at a total cost of \$715,000. It is situated in the electorate of Merthyr.

In 1986-87 it is proposed to expend a total of \$3,228,000 on interchange design and construction works. Bus/rail and car/rail facilities have already been completed this financial year at Wellington Point, Bray Park and Carseldine, and new or extended facilities are proposed at Toombul, Graceville, Sunshine, Eagle Junction, Fruitgrove, Kuraby, Lindum, Morayfield, Banoon and Northgate. Work is continuing on projects commenced in 1985-86 at Deagon, Park Road, Goodna, Gailes and Sandgate.

In conjunction with the Railway Department's work is continuing on the construction of new station and interchange facilities at Boondall to service the Boondall sports and entertainment complex. Investigations are under way into the extension of ferry commuter parking facilities at Dutton Park and the provision of bus interchange facilities at Toowoomba.

A major study into the transport needs of the Gold Coast has commenced and will be completed this financial year. This study is examining the effect of urban expansion and traffic congestion on the operation of bus services, and will identify the need for any amendments to the public transport system on the Gold Coast.

Planning and research will continue this year into the upgrading of local and co-ordinated bus services in the south-east corridor of Brisbane. The work follows the successful implementation of new co-ordinated services serving Loganholme, Shailer Park, Springwood, Rochedale South, Park Ridge, Browns Plains, Inala and Durack.

Major studies into the rationalisation and improvement of urban bus services in Cairns and Mackay will also commence this year. The planning and co-ordination of public transport services for Expo 88 will continue. Planning is well advanced for the transport operation in respect of the visit of Pope John Paul to Brisbane on 25 November this year.

Provision has been made in the Transport Department Planning and Construction Fund budget for 1986-87 for the expenditure of \$200,000 on account of these planning and research studies.

In conclusion, I reiterate that both the Department of Transport and the Railway Department represent efficient operations which have ensured the provision of a very effective transport system in Queensland. I take this opportunity to thank the members of my parliamentary transport committee for their valuable support and assistance. I also express thanks to my personal staff who make themselves available to assist me, most efficiently, at all times.

I recommend to the Committee the allocation of \$94.6m for the Department of Transport in 1986-87 and \$1,424m for the Railway Department for this year.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I desire to 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 MILLINER (Everton) (12.51 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Estimates for the Department of Transport, I first express my disappointment that the annual report of the Commissioner for Railways was tabled after 11 o'clock this morning, less than one hour prior to this debate's commencing.

Every year Ministers table an annual report on the day on which the Estimates of the department are to be debated. Quite frankly, Mr Row, that is not good enough. It is an insult to this Committee and to every honourable member that one hour is given in which to peruse such a very important document as the annual report of a department.

Mr Prest: They don't want to discuss it.

Mr MILLINER: I can quite understand that. The Ministers do not want scrutinised the number of things that they are in fact doing.

The Minister, when presenting his Estimates, made mention of the profit that the Railway Department is making. Over recent months the Minister has been making quite a thing out of the profit of the Railway Department. He has been running round the State saying what a tremendous profit is being made. I have no doubt that a profit is being made from the Railway Department, but I suggest——

Mr Vaughan: An operating profit.

Mr MILLINER: I suggest that the operating profit, as the honourable member for Nudgee points out, is in fact the taxing agent that this Government uses to raise its revenue from the mining companies.

Unfortunately, the profit that is being generated by the Railway Department is not being passed on to the travelling public on the suburban rail network. Every year an increase in fares is announced by the Government. The Government speaks about Queensland's being a low-tax State, but the increases in fares reveal that the Government's claim is not in fact true. Recently the Minister announced a rise in rail fares in line

with the CPI increase that had occurred. A dramatic increase has occurred in the costs of suburban passengers' rail fares.

Recently, I took out the figures for the Ferny Grove line, which terminates in my electorate. The increases in fares that have taken place since 1976 are quite interesting. In 1976 the cost of a single economy adult fare from Ferny Grove to Central was 45c. In 1978 it increased to 50c, in 1979 to 55c, in 1980 to 60c, in 1981 to 70c, in 1982 to 80, in 1983 to 90c, in 1984 to \$1, in 1985 to \$1.20 and in 1986 to \$1.30. In the last two years, a dramatic percentage increase has occurred. A fare that was \$1 in 1984 has been increased this year to \$1.30.

Mr Lane: That is in line with inflation.

Mr MILLINER: It is a bit more than the rate of inflation. In 1984 it was \$1; it went to \$1.20 in 1985, which is an increase of 20 per cent. In 1986 the fare increased by a further 10c, which is an increase of 8 per cent. The Minister announced that the increase would be 6 per cent. Over two years the increase has been 28 per cent.

I will now refer to the fares on the Shorncliffe to Central line. In October 1984 the fare was \$1.30. In October 1986 it will be \$1.60—an increase of approximately 20 per cent over the two years. Inflation over the past two years has not been 20 per cent. On the Fairfield to Central line, in 1984 the fare was 80c. In 1986, it is \$1.10—an increase of approximately one third. The Minister cannot tell me that inflation has been running at that rate. On the Runcorn to Central line, in October 1984 the fare was \$1.30. On 1 July 1986, it was \$1.60—an increase of about 20 per cent. The fare from Toowong to Central—this is a good one—was 60c in October 1984 and in July this year it was 90c—an increase of 50 per cent in two years.

The fare for travel between any three consecutive stations has increased from 60c to 90c, which is an increase of 50 per cent. It is not good enough for the Minister to announce an increase of 6 per cent when, from Ferny Grove to Central, Shorncliffe to Central, Fairfield to Central, Runcorn to Central, and Toowong to Central, the increases were substantially higher than that 6 per cent. It is not good enough for the Minister to make statements that increases in fares to the travelling public will be 6 per cent when, in fact, if the new fares are rounded off to the nearest figure, the increases are much higher than those that have been announced.

Mr Scott: No wonder the good people of Merthyr have rejected Mr Lane.

Mr MILLINER: I will come to that later. I feel sure that at the forthcoming State election that will in fact happen.

The operating profit of the Railway Department has resulted from a reduction in the work-force. I was interested to hear the Minister speak in the presentation of his Estimates of the prospect of two-man crewing. I understand a general commitment had been given that central Queensland coal trains would be crewed by three men. I have since been informed that that commitment might be reneged upon and that those coal trains will be crewed by two men. I ask the Minister if that is so. Will coal trains continue to be crewed by three men, or will that be changed to two men?

If the Minister insists upon two-man crewing, that is very serious and will be potentially dangerous. All honourable members know that coal trains are very long. To run them with two-man crews is potentially dangerous, particularly if something goes wrong that requires one of the crew to proceed along the length of the train to locate the fault. Some coal trains exceed 2 km in length. For someone to go off looking for a fault on a train, particularly at night, would be fairly dangerous. If a person were injured while embarking on such a mission, he would have difficulty in obtaining help from the other member of the crew. I certainly hope that, in the interests of safety, three-man crews will be retained on coal trains.

Mr Elliott: One to do the job and one to hold his hand.

Mr MILLINER: It is in the interests of safety.

Of late, some interesting developments have taken place with rail safety but, unfortunately, those have not been in the area that I am concerned about. Approximately 50 metres from my electorate office is the Dawson Parade rail crossing, over which a train passes every 20 minutes. Over the years, vehicular traffic on Dawson Parade has increased substantially. The crossing is a dangerous one, on which a number of motor vehicles have been involved in accidents with trains. Before too long a fatal accident will occur on that crossing. Simply because of the increased amount of vehicular and rail traffic, I encourage the Minister to do something about providing boom gates not only at the Dawson Parade crossing but also at all other crossings in the metropolitan area.

I certainly hope that, in the future, the Minister does something about the Ferny Grove Railway Station.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.15 p.m.

Mr MILLINER: As I was saying before the luncheon recess, the facilities provided for commuters at Ferny Grove Railway Station are a disgrace. The Ferny Grove line was the first line to be electrified, yet the railway facilities provided at Ferny Grove Railway Station date back almost to the turn of the century. That is not good enough. The Minister should do something about them. Obviously, my colleagues will raise others matters regarding the Railway Department.

The Estimates being debated today do not tell the full story of the way in which public money is squandered by the National Party Government.

The lack of information on the spending of tax-payers' money by the State Government is nothing new. It has been the same for years under Liberal and National Party Ministers.

The present Transport Minister has been both a Liberal and a National Party Minister. So, during the debate on these Estimates, the Liberals need not try to gain some cheap, cynical and hypocritical publicity by mouthing off again about public accountability. The Liberal Party had years in which to improve public accountability in this State, and it did absolutely nothing.

One of the areas in which I believe public funds are being wasted in the Transport Department is in its advertising campaigns. In the 1984-85 financial year, the National Party Government spent \$7.9m on advertising. In the preceding two years, the amount of money spent on Government advertising increased by a staggering 120 per cent. Honourable members have not yet been given the return for advertising in the 1985-86 year, but I can guarantee that the money being splurged on advertising by the Government will have sky-rocketed further.

I recognise that all Governments must spend a certain amount of money on legitimate advertising of Government services and programs. However, I cannot find any justification for much of the self-seeking, promotional advertising engaged in by the National Party in what is an election year.

While basic services in this State suffer, the money being wasted on promoting Cabinet Ministers through propaganda disguised very thinly as community service advertisements is scandalous.

The money being spent out of the public purse on promoting the Transport Minister alone could easily run into millions of dollars. That is money that has come out of the pockets of Queenslanders, who have every right to expect their funds to be spent on improving State Government services. Instead, it is wasted by the National Party Government on producing and screening advertisements telling us that Queensland Railways runs trains and that Don Lane is Minister for Transport.

The real purpose behind those ads is an ill-fated attempt to lift the Minister's profile in what will surely be an unsuccessful bid to have him re-elected in his seat of Merthyr.

Those Railway Department advertisements must be the most expensive publicly funded election campaign ever mounted in this nation. It is no wonder that rail fares and freight charges have increased. Someone has to pay for these political ads and, unfortunately, that someone is the average Queenslanders.

In June, Queenslanders witnessed an excellent example of the arrogant approach to government taken by the National Party.

In the shake-up of suburban rail timetables a massive break-down in communications occurred between the Minister's department and the Brisbane City Council. The bungle meant that extra trains had to be scheduled on the Ferny Grove line for the first five weeks of the new timetables to maintain a co-ordinated bus and rail service at the Enoggera interchange. The Minister blamed the council for the problem, saying that the council was given notice of the changes but did not alter its bus timetables for services co-ordinating with trains at Enoggera. My colleague the honourable member for Ashgrove (Mr Veivers) was the person who highlighted that blunder, which cost tax-payers dearly.

A conservative estimate for running the extra 658 trains from Roma Street to Mitchelton was \$332,000. That figure was never denied by the Minister, so honourable members can only accept that it is the minimum cost to tax-payers. All the Minister could do was pass the buck and refuse to answer questions about the way in which his department spends public funds.

More recently, honourable members witnessed an expensive publicly funded ring-in to rival the Fine Cotton scandal. I refer, of course, to the giant railways ring-in at this year's Brisbane RNA Show.

Honourable members will recall that two new electric locomotives were on display at this year's show. One was named after the Premier and the other one was named after the Transport Minister. Although the locomotives at the show carried the nameplates of the Premier and the Minister, the real trains that were christened with the names of those gentlemen were actually in central Queensland undergoing tests.

I am informed that the cost to tax-payers of transporting the two gaint locomotives to Brisbane and staging the display at the show was \$200,000. Again, that figure has not been denied by the Minister.

In July this year, there was yet another example of the way in which the Minister uses publicly funded propaganda to tell only half of any story about his department's operations. He made a big song and dance about the opening of the electric rail line extension from Thorneside to Wellington Point a few months ago. Yet shortcomings in the safety signalling system for the extension made a mockery of the Minister's favourite claims about the "fail safe" nature of the Queensland railways system. The Minister was wringing every ounce of political capital out of the opening of new electric train services from Thorneside to Wellington Point, but in all the fanfare, the Minister did not tell the full story.

The facts were that the safety signalling system operating on the new single line section left much to be desired. There was no automatic system. A manual system based on practices from the steam train era was used. This involved railway officers physically pushing control buttons, and telephoning other stations to advise whether the line was clear. An internal Railway Department memo leaked at the time outlined the procedures to be taken because of the lack of automatic signals. The memo said that at times telephones used between stations to advise of the safety of the section may be engaged, and the memo also admitted that radio contact with trains at Wellington Point may not be possible at all times.

This is the very system that the Minister persists in calling "fail safe". It was obvious that completion of the line was rushed to give him maximum political exposure, even if it meant signalling systems were incomplete. I ask the Minister to say whether the signalling system on that line has changed since the opening.

It is anybody's guess as to how some of the funds allocated in the Budget to the Department of Transport will end up being spent. I notice that there is provision for almost a 50 per cent increase in spending on administration, equipment and incidentals. Spending on these will rise from \$7.2m in 1985-86 to an estimated \$10.5m in the current financial year. It is typical of this Government to increase spending by 50 per cent on such a major item of expenditure and give absolutely no information about why such an increase is necessary.

I know the category "incidentals" can be used to camouflage all sorts of dubious expenditure items. Here I wish to raise one particular item of expenditure incurred by the Minister's department in 1984 that undoubtedly falls under the heading of "Administration, Equipment and Incidentals". I refer to a consignment of liquor and other drinks ordered by the Department of Transport in January 1984. I have a document that shows that this account, with the appropriately named Valley Grog Shoppe, for \$292.38 has been put down—wait for it—to "Research, development and promotion," not to entertainment, ministerial expenses, liquor supplies, or anything faintly resembling what the account is for. It is charged up as spending on research, development and promotion.

I now read the details of this particular account from the Valley Grog Shoppe. It comprised four cartons of Fourx cans, two cartons of large Fourx Lite, followed by various cartons of soda water, ginger-ale, Coca-Cola, mineral water and TAB, and topped off with three bottles of Johnnie Walker Red Label—I do not know what happened to the Black Label—two bottles of Bundaberg rum and two bottles of Baileys Irish Cream. The receipt for this order was signed on behalf of the Senior Executive Officer, R. T. O'Dowd.

I call on the Minister to advise honourable members of the precise reason for which this expenditure was incurred. Is this the way Ministers launder their grog bills through departmental accounts? Or did this supply of grog have nothing whatsoever to do with the Minister? I hope he does not try to suggest it was for a Christmas party. If so, the celebrations certainly begin early in the Minister's department.

How many similar bills are incurred on a regular basis by the Department of Transport? Why was this grog bill listed on the official Government expenditure voucher as being for research, development and promotion? Research, development and promotion of what? For all we know, this grog account may only be the tip of the iceberg, and I suggest it is.

I call on the Minister to table the expenditure voucher and order books for the Department of Transport for the last three financial years. I challenge the Minister to table these official Government accounts. If he and the department have nothing to hide, they will readily accept this challenge. If he refuses, the Queensland public will have even more reason to be alarmed about this Government's lack of accountability.

This Valley Grog Shoppe bill is one example of the waste and extravagance practised by this National Party Government on a grand scale. I will not be satisfied by some fairy story from the Minister in explaining this grog bill away.

Some 12 months ago, an episode amounting to an outrageous scandal occurred. It involved the practice of lawn-mowing at the commissioner's residence. I was disappointed by the excuse that the Minister came up with in this House. He claimed that it was a good Samaritan act by the workmen, who took pity on the poor commissioner because of the length of his lawn. The workmen took it upon themselves to mow the commissioner's grass. The Minister's reply was not good enough, and this Assembly warrants a far better response when such serious allegations have been raised.

One other issue that has caused me grave concern over a number of years is Queensland's mounting road toll. Massive carnage takes place on Queensland's roads.

Mr Lane: You have got onto something worth while.

Mr MILLINER: I am sure that the Minister will agree that my whole speech has been worth while.

The carnage taking place on Queensland's roads is horrific. It is very disappointing that the Government has not bitten the bullet and introduced random breath-testing in the form in which it should be introduced. Every responsible organisation in this State that is interested in road safety has advocated the introduction of random breath-testing rather than the retention of the RID system. Random breath-testing is only one area in which a major assault can be made on Queensland's mounting road toll.

I was very interested to hear the Minister's comments on driver education. That is an area in which a significant impact on the road toll can be made. Recently I visited the south-east Queensland driver education centre in Gympie. I was very impressed with the facilities there. I believe that the facilities at the Mount Cotton driver training complex are also worth while and will make a contribution towards saving lives. The facilities established at Gympie were built by the community. It is obvious that, because of a lack of funds, the centre in Gympie is experiencing difficulties in operation. I noticed in the Budget papers that last year the Government allocated the sum of \$50,000 for the operation of the driver-training centre in Gympie. I hope that the Minister can see his way clear to provide funds to enable the continued operation of that centre this year. As I said, it is making a major contribution towards assisting driver education in south-east Queensland.

Penalties for drink-driving offences need to be reviewed completely. People are frequently dragged into court-rooms on charges of driving motor vehicles while they have blood alcohol levels of 0.15 per cent and more. Those people are fined and let loose.

Time expired.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (2.27 p.m.): I am delighted to take——

Mr Prest: Who wrote this for you?

Mr ELLIOTT: That is the sort of comment that one would expect from the present member for Port Curtis, who is about to be deposed by the mayor.

Mr Borbidge: Retiring.

Mr ELLIOTT: As my colleague says, the retiring member for Port Curtis.

I am delighted to take part in the debate on the Minister's Estimates.

Mr Prest: This is an ex-Minister who could not do a job. Have a look at the dummies over there!

Mr ELLIOTT: If the honourable member listens for a moment, he might learn something.

It is interesting to hear the Opposition's priorities. As has been seen over the last few months, the members of the ALP spend a great deal of their time dropping cans of muck from a great height and trying to drag red herrings across the trail. The Opposition spokesman probably has a brilliant mind. He should spend more time putting that brilliant mind to work in supporting the road safety campaign. He spent about two minutes of his speech on road safety. He spent the rest of his time tipping buckets on people. But that is what honourable members have come to expect from him.

I am pleased that the Estimates provide for an increase of 14 per cent in the amount allocated to road safety. That is more relevant than the garbage to which Opposition members refer. They do not want to come to grips with reality. The Federal Government flies the same flag as members of the Queensland Opposition, instead of flying the good old Southern Cross.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: They sacked you as Minister because you have not got it.

Mr ELLIOTT: Once again, the Opposition is talking rot.

It is important for honourable members to address themselves to the safety issues. If honourable members were to examine what has occurred in this State in the past they would learn that a select committee was appointed to look into the various problems that are associated with the road toll in this State.

Many factors contribute to the increasing road toll. However, honourable members should be aware that the road toll in Queensland has not increased at the same rate as that of New South Wales, despite the arguments in relation to random breath-testing.

Action is being taken to reduce the road toll in Queensland. The select committee that was appointed made recommendations to the Minister and his colleague, the Minister for Education (Mr Powell), that a driver education program be instituted in Queensland schools. That program is now in operation. Since 1975 I have publicly supported the campaign to introduce road safety education into Queensland Schools.

I once attended a car racing meeting at the Gold Coast, where I spoke with a Mr John Bagshaw, who was then employed by GMH. I do not know whether he is still in that employment. Mr Bagshaw offered the assistance of GMH in relation to cars, a dealer team and so on that could be used for the driver education program.

The then Minister for Transport expressed an attitude different from that expressed by the current Minister for Transport (Mr Lane).

Mr Davis: Ken Tomkins?

Mr ELLIOTT: No, it was not Ken Tomkins. The honourable member for Brisbane Central's understanding of history is as good as his interjections—unfortunately, neither is very good.

Mr Borbidge: He is not very bright.

Mr ELLIOTT: No, the poor fellow is not particularly bright, as the honourable member for Surfers Paradise has said.

Honourable members should realise how long the public has been interested in the driver education program. I pay tribute to the incumbent Minister (Don Lane) and the Minister for Education, because they were the first people to come to grips with the problem.

At the time that I took the proposal into the party-room, the incumbent Minister felt that it was impractical. However, I have always believed that it is a practical alternative.

The only way in which Queensland's road toll can be reduced is by introducing practical driver education programs into Queensland schools. Cars should be provided for schoolchildren participating in those programs. The road laws should be explained. In particular, the types of driver attitudes that cause accidents should be fully explained.

The research that has been undertaken has actively involved the Minister and his officials—many of whom are here today. They have done an outstanding job. I believe that it ill behoves anyone to carry on, grandstand and claim that random breath-testing is the answer to reducing the State's road toll. People who make those claims have obviously not done their research. They do not know what they are talking about.

Mr Davis: We went down to Victoria to look at the program.

Mr ELLIOTT: The only thing that the honourable member for Brisbane Central can do is interject. I hear him bleating over there. It is no wonder that he is known as the babbling brook.

The introduction of the driver education program is a tremendous step in the right direction. During 1982-83 pilot programs were instituted. Those programs proved to be very worth while. I believe that the program has been carried on for two years.

Mr Lane: What is that?

Mr ELLIOTT: I am referring to the driver training program that has been introduced in Queensland schools.

Although the program has been operating for approximately two years, 8 000-odd children have taken part in the program. Of that number, 5 300-odd have taken part in the program this year. Things are really starting to pick up. There will be a tremendous increase in the numbers of children taking part in that program within the next year or two.

It is important to realise that the teachers in the driver-training program have to be qualified. If a school wants to institute a program, first of all the teachers have to be accredited as driver-trainers. If the wrong people give instructions to school children, they may well impart the wrong attitudes and the wrong program. The program is a step in the right direction.

A tremendous increase has occurred in the incidence and use of the other very important facet of the road safety program, that is, the Defensive Driving Course. I, as well as many other members of Parliament, have attended and presented certificates to people who have completed the Defensive Driving Course. I have observed the program and I picked up a tremendous number of tips, hints and practical alternative suggestions on how to avoid road accidents. A lot of it is just good common sense, but many people do not think of that.

For example, the course teaches that, if a driver intends turning to the right across oncoming traffic, if he stops with his wheels turned to the traffic—the old taxi-driver, the honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) would do that—and someone runs into him from behind, which is one of the most common of accidents, the vehicle is speared right into the oncoming traffic. That happened to a lady in my area in the vicinity of the Farmfest site. She was sitting in her car with the trafficator operating, waiting to turn into her driveway. Someone ran straight into the back of her vehicle and speared it into the path of an oncoming vehicle. Honourable members will say, “Well, that is very elementary.” It is very elementary. But how many people know not to turn the wheels to the right until they actually begin to turn across the road?

That is one example of how the application of a safety hint from the Defensive Driving Course could save many lives. Because of the force of impact, the occupants of a vehicle that collides head on with an oncoming vehicle are in terrible trouble. The occupant of a vehicle would be much better off if the collision was with a tree or a brick wall rather than head on with a vehicle coming the other way.

All honourable members should join me in paying tribute to the people who give of their time to teach the Defensive Driving Course. A tremendous expansion has occurred in the course. Today it is taught in 23 locations throughout Queensland. A number of groups, together with the permanent Queensland Road Safety Council staff, present these courses at 100 different venues in Queensland. I take this opportunity to publicly thank those people for the tremendous effort that they put in.

The Defensive Driving Course is Australia’s most successful post-licence driving education program. The course has been attended by 100 000 people since it was first introduced in 1969. It should be expanded.

The Minister might enlighten me on one matter. If a person has received eight demerit points and is asked to show cause, I suggest that it should be compulsory that he attend the Defensive Driving Course. It would have an impact on his driving and his attitude.

I frequently travel by road from my electorate to Brisbane. There is never a time when I come to Brisbane that I do not see some clown try to kill someone. They pass at the top of hills and do absolutely everything dangerous and stupid that one could imagine.

Mr Austin: I did not know that the honourable member for Brisbane Central lived up there.

Mr ELLIOTT: He was offered some incentive to stay down in this area or to keep him off the road. It is much safer here. The speed limit in the city is only 60 km/h. The honourable member is not quite as dangerous at that speed as he is on the open road.

The statistics relating to the use of motor cycles are horrendous. Quite frankly, if I had children of an age at which they were able to ride a motor cycle, I would do almost anything to try to keep them from doing so. Statistics show that when a young person rides a motor cycle, particularly those of 1 000 cc or more, the potential likelihood of an accident occurring is compounded. The combined factors of youth and powerful motor cycles make an accident so much more probable that it is unbelievable. It really frightens me, and I would be absolutely horrified to think that any of my children would ride a motor cycle.

I pay tribute to the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the officers of his department for the implementation of driver training programs and research into the use of motor cycles. To be fair, I must also say that the motor cycle industry has been a long-term supporter of research. It is interesting that a change has occurred in the format of the course. Whereas before people had to use motor cycles that were provided to participate in the course, it is now possible for people to use their own motor cycles. That has provided the Department of Transport with an opportunity to expand the course.

The year 1986 was the tenth year of the course's operation. It has been marked by a more rapid expansion of the program, with an additional three venues being established at Cairns, Bundaberg and on the Gold Coast. I understand that plans are in train for the establishment of a course in the area of my electorate, although it is probably more correct to say that it will be established in the electorate of my colleague the honourable member for Toowoomba North (Mr McPhie). I understand that the course will be expanded to include Toowoomba and Ipswich. The honourable member for Toowoomba North and I most definitely welcome such a program in the region of our electorates because we believe that it will bring a great deal of benefit.

I am gravely concerned about the behaviour of children who ride bicycles. I get the heebie-jeebies when I see children riding bicycles in traffic.

Mr Davis: Are you in favour of helmets?

Mr ELLIOTT: Of course I am in favour of helmets. Anyone with any brains would be.

I often travel to Brisbane in the early morning, and I see children on their way to school. They ride their bicycles hell, west and crooked, in and around the cars in the traffic. I have seen them do some incredibly dangerous things. Along with other behavioural problems, that emanates from a lack of supervision being exercised by parents.

Parents are abnegating their responsibility to their children, and much more should be done to keep children from being involved in dangerous situations. Parents should keep their children off the roads and out of harm's way. It would be a far better idea for children to travel to school on buses if the alternative use of bicycles means that they would be placed in a dangerous situation. Some children can cope with the traffic: it all depends on the suburbs in which they live and the volume of traffic that sets conditions that they have to ride through.

Mr Milliner: How do you get over the problem of impressing that upon kids?

Mr ELLIOTT: One of the biggest problems confronting society today applies not only to riding bicycles but also to taking drugs, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol. Influencing the behaviour of children is a problem that must be faced up to. If the problems are not attacked at the source—in the home—and if parents abnegate their

responsibilities by not looking after their children properly, the problem can only become worse.

I pay tribute to the efforts that have been made and what has been achieved in the field of road safety. The increased popularity of cycling and the increase in the number of children riding bikes naturally combine to result in an increase in the number of accidents involving bicycles. The solution to that problem is the provision of bicycle lanes.

I was a strong advocate of the construction of the bike lane that stretches from the university to the city. It has obviously been an important road safety factor and has proved to be of great value. For a long time I have been an advocate of the provision of bike lanes, and the construction of bike lanes, in cities and provincial cities, must prove to be good judgment in terms of being an investment in the future—the future of our children who will use it—and a reflection of a common sense approach. That is an issue that the Minister should urge strongly upon the Government.

The proper design and safety standards of bicycles and accessories such as helmets should be an important goal for any Government. I am sure that there are other pressing matters that I should refer to, but I fear that I will have insufficient time.

In conclusion, I pay tribute to the officers of the department who have attended at Parliament today. It must be said that in many cases their task is a thankless one, especially when one takes into consideration the flak that comes from members of the Opposition who pay no tribute at all to the work that has been carried out. Members of the Opposition can speak only in negative terms. For one, I place on record my appreciation of the efforts of the departmental officers and thank them for the work they have undertaken.

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (2.45 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in a debate on Estimates as important as those of the Transport portfolio. Firstly, I must comment on the honourable member for Cunningham, whom, either fortunately or unfortunately, I seem to follow in debates. I remember that a number of years ago the honourable member for Cunningham——

Mr Prest: Wasn't he a Minister once?

Mr DAVIS: He is former Minister, but I remember him more when he was chairman of either the National Party or Country Party transport committee and responsible for advocating that there be no registration fee or compulsory third-party insurance; that a levy would be imposed at the petrol pump. After about 12 months; that hit the fan when somebody in Canberra made a contrary suggestion. Even though it was National Party policy, it immediately fell in a heap. Does the honourable member for Cunningham remember that?

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr DAVIS: Government members supported that policy. They went to their conference and supported it.

I thank the Transport Commissioner, Mr Kent, for the courtesies that he has always extended to me, particularly when I was shadow Minister for Transport.

Mr Elliott: Before your fall from grace?

Mr DAVIS: No. I have been promoted. Didn't the honourable member for Cunningham know that?

I also thank the Railway Commissioner, Mr Ralph Sheehy, and his offsidiers for the courtesy that they have shown. The Transport Department, which I have had to deal with more than most in my previous occupations, has been improved, especially for the taxi industry.

I will concentrate for a short time on the Railway Department. Last week I referred to the \$120m operating profit. If my memory serves me correctly, the department also

made a \$120m profit the previous year. That is a profit of approximately \$240m. I know that those figures can be a little rubbery, but I am taking the Minister purely and simply at his word that the operating profit was \$120m.

Mr Lane: Are you going to give me a great round of applause now?

Mr DAVIS: Not yet, no. Let's wait. I leave the applause. As long as the Minister keeps saying it is an operating profit of \$120m, the Opposition congratulates him on that operating profit. A squiz at the Railway Department's figures shows that they do not quite work out when the overall finances are taken into account.

As the member for Brisbane Central, I have already started a shopping list of the ways in which I would like some of that \$120m operating profit spent. Last week I referred to the Brunswick Street escalators. As that is in the Minister's electorate, I am sure he has already put that down on his list. This week I will concentrate on what is probably one of the worst crossings in Brisbane, Campbell Street. As long ago as 1954 the Railway Department had a report on that crossing, but nothing has been done about it. Since then the city council has closed off O'Connell Terrace, making Campbell Street one of the worst crossings in existence.

Mr McPhie: Was that the present city council?

Mr DAVIS: No. I think it was the honourable member's friends, through the New Right.

Mr Comben: I reckon we have got the worst crossing.

Mr DAVIS: I am not entering into an argument with the honourable member for Windsor about which is the worst crossing. I know which is the worst crossing. It is in Campbell Street, which is a semi-arterial road.

Mr Lane: How would you solve that?

Mr DAVIS: Very easily. All the Government needs to do is spend a bit of money to resume some of the businesses nearby and to build a tunnel.

Mr Lane: What?

Mr DAVIS: No trouble at all.

Mr Lane: Have you had that checked with the engineers?

Mr DAVIS: As a matter of fact, I would not have even asked for this before; but, as the Railway Department has a \$120m operating profit, the sky is the limit.

Mr Milliner: Didn't the Health Minister, a former civil engineer, advise you on this?

Mr DAVIS: No. I do not know what his qualifications are. After seeing what a dreadful job he has done with the Health Department, I would not even ask him what his previous occupation was.

Mr Lane: So you would go under the line in Campbell Street?

Mr DAVIS: I do not pretend to be a know-all. I do not pretend to have the qualifications.

Mr Lane: That is what you said.

Mr DAVIS: I have great faith in the Commissioner for Railways and his departmental engineers. If the Minister were to give them the necessary money, they would find the answer—no problems at all.

Mr Lane: But you don't have the answer?

Mr DAVIS: I do not pretend to know the answer. I am not an administrator; the Minister is the administrator with the big profit. He is the one who has the operating profit.

As the member for Everton (Mr Milliner) was, I am very much concerned at the great expense incurred by Ministers on official openings. All honourable members know that every Tom, Dick and Harry was at the recent opening of the transit centre in Roma Street. In August an opening was held for the interstate line.

I do not know how many guests were there. I did not go to the function later, but about three trains were lined up to take guests to the Sheraton Hotel. There was another opening of the transit centre, but I did not get an invitation to that.

Mr Lane: It must have got lost in the mail.

Mr DAVIS: That is right.

Now I hear that the entire transit centre is to be opened. That is not bad—three official openings for one project.

The best opening that my investigation has revealed is the one last Saturday at Gladstone and Rockhampton. This is a good one! First of all, the department completely repainted the Gladstone Railway Station and completely resurfaced the platform with concrete to a depth of 100 mm. In June, at a Cabinet meeting in Gladstone, a new station was promised for Gladstone. The Rockhampton Railway Station was completely repainted and seats and pot plants were provided.

Mr Lane: Are you complaining about that?

Mr DAVIS: I ask the Minister to wait. I am simply giving the Committee the background. I do not want the Minister to get too excited until I finish.

In Rockhampton the roadways in the station area were completely resurfaced with premixed bitumen. As well, all relevant line markings were repainted as was the old A signal cabin, which is soon to be replaced by a brand new A signal cabin. That is an example of good financing! I like the next bit. The superseded Port Curtis signal cabin is soon to be demolished; but it was repainted on three sides so that it would look better when viewed from the special train.

The dock area on the northern end of the Rockhampton Railway Station is normally used for loading and unloading box wagons, baggage cars and so on. It has three roads with island platforms, each of which holds about five wagons.

That area was covered with a false floor and carpeted. It is reliably reported that the project cost——

Mr LANE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the Chamber. There was no carpet on the platform at Rockhampton. I ask him to withdraw that comment.

Mr Prest interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Port Curtis should not interject while I am on my feet. There seems to me to be much frivolity in the Chamber. If the debate is to become in any way serious, the member for Brisbane Central will have to stop upsetting the Minister.

Mr DAVIS: I will have to stop upsetting him with facts! That is what they are—facts! I do not see any frivolity whatsoever. This is tax-payers' money.

It was reliably reported that that project cost \$30,000. That is not a bad effort.

Mr Austin: Who sent you that telex?

Mr DAVIS: I will table it if the Minister wishes me to.

The main Rockhampton reception was held to enable guests to have a view of any passing train, including the specially prepared coal train. The Queensland Railway Institute hall, which is less than 300 metres away, is fully equipped with bar and other facilities, and would have adequately catered for the number of guests. The cost of hiring that hall would have been \$35, plus a \$40 cleaning fee. That is slightly different from the cost of what was put on by the Minister.

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr DAVIS: I believe in being frugal, particularly with tax-payers' money.

A specially prepared coal train was made available for display. It was hauled by an electric locomotive. All the wagons used were specially washed. The lead wagon, a VAZ, was sprayed with All Brite, an acidic chemical that effectively removes all dirt and grime. That wagon was restored to as-new condition. All marks were repainted. All Brite is usually used to clean areas that require welding. It is a very, very expensive chemical. The remaining wagons were coated with a degreasing oil and then scrubbed. The whole length of the Rockhampton Railway Station platform roof was strung with bunting. The sum of \$30,000 has been quoted as being the cost of that circus, which was specially organised to promote the Premier and the Minister for Transport.

The local people requested a two-week postponement to enable the electrification project to be completed. When that request was denied, it became necessary for railway staff to work excessive overtime. Most of those people worked seven days a week, 12 hours a day. No figure is available as yet for that overtime bill. For some months, no electric-only trains will be run on that section of line. That circus was a pre-election stunt for political gain for the National Party.

I turn to alterations made to the Rockhampton Railway Station platform awnings. For about 12 months, the Railway Department was aware that the awnings over the platforms would foul the electric locomotives when they passed underneath. It was established that 340 mm of those awnings would have to be removed, but no action was taken until three weeks before the opening ceremony.

From that date, four boiler-makers, four assistants, four plumbers, one labourer and one crane-driver worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, without their usual lunch break, in order to get that work done in time for the party.

Another job that received attention was the replacing of the vinyl floor-coverings in the toilets in the dock area. Although perfectly serviceable, those vinyl floor-coverings were replaced because the colour was wrong. I repeat that those floor-coverings had to be replaced because the colour was wrong. That is shocking.

It was rumoured that the department had four diesel-electric locomotives placed in strategic locations between Gladstone and Rockhampton so that they could be utilised if the electric train carrying the guests failed. How pathetic!

Mr Lane: Table it. You offered to table it, so table it.

Mr DAVIS: Would the Minister like to move such a motion?

Mr Lane: Go on, table it.

Mr DAVIS: If I table this telex——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that the honourable member for Brisbane Central table the telex.

Mr DAVIS: I will do so.

Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.

Now that I have tabled the telex, obviously the Minister will go through it with a fine-tooth comb to ascertain the signature. So that the Minister does not lose any sleep or waste any time, I should tell him that I took the opportunity to remove all names from the telex.

Mr Yewdale: They spent nearly half a million dollars.

Mr DAVIS: Something like that was spent, purely and simply as an election ploy.

Mr Lane: The telex is an election ploy.

Mr DAVIS: Not the telex; the election ploy used by the Minister.

As my colleague the honourable member for Everton (Mr Milliner) said, in view of the amount of money that is being spent by the Minister's department in the lead-up to the election, it is fortunate that the aspiring member for Nicklin has got himself a safe seat out of the redistribution, because he would have been outspending the Minister at the rate of at least 10 to 1.

Mr Lane: Are you conceding defeat in Nicklin?

Mr DAVIS: No. I am saying that the aspiring member for Nicklin has got himself a safer seat than the Minister.

Mr Lane: You have already conceded defeat.

Mr DAVIS: No. If the Minister wants to interpret it that way, that is his right.

When presenting his Estimates, the Minister mentioned taxi licences. This Government bludges off the taxi industry when it comes to licences. I love the way the Minister mentioned that he has checked the trends of the area and established that there are another six taxis here, another six taxis there and another six taxis there.

Mr Lane: What did you sell your licence for?

Mr DAVIS: I sold out at a very reasonable price, because I did not try to make a profit.

Mr Lane: What was it?

Mr DAVIS: That is between myself and the purchaser.

In case Government back-bench members do not know, each time the Minister or the Department of Transport increases these licence fees, the cost of each licence averages about \$80,000, \$90,000 or \$100,000. Where does that money go?

Mr Borbidge: What are they going for on resale?

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for "Sufferers" Paradise has just asked, "Where does it go?" I assure the honourable member that out of the \$110,000 per licence charged in his area, not one skerrick, not one cent, goes back to "Sufferers" Paradise. I can assure him of that.

The money goes into consolidated revenue and the coffers of the Department of Transport. It is a real money-making machine. The cost of 10 licences is \$1 million-odd, but not one skerrick goes back into the taxi industry.

The difference between this Government and a Labor Government when it was in office is that when more taxis were required, the Labor Party put taxi licences up for ballot. That is what it did.

Mr Lane: It put them up for sale.

Mr DAVIS: It did not; no way in the world. I was around at that time. I was in the taxi industry in 1957.

Taxi licences would go up for ballot and the people who were entitled to enter that ballot were drivers with a long history in the taxi industry. In that way the Labor Party was able to give the battler a go. That is not like this hungry crowd here, who charge anything between \$80,000 and \$110,000.

Mr Borbidge: What is the resale?

Mr DAVIS: These are new licences.

Mr Borbidge: What is a taxi licence being sold for on the Gold Coast—resale?

Mr DAVIS: They are selling at the very price I am referring to.

Mr Borbidge: They are not.

Mr DAVIS: They are so. They are about the same price. There is not much difference. For the edification of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, I point out that the Department of Transport costs are based on the ruling price of the day. That is why the licences are put up for tender. The honourable member for Surfers Paradise should get his facts straight. If he wants to talk about taxis, he is talking to the wrong guy.

For the last few moments I will concentrate on random breath-testing. Until the Labor Party's special committee on transport ventured south and had a look at the Victorian and New South Wales systems, I was against random breath-testing because I did not believe it would be a success.

Most of those who knock random breath-testing have not seen the operation in Victoria. On the two nights that the committee was present, most of the drivers who were pulled up for testing were quite happy. The system has been used in Victoria for a number of years and has been a complete success. The very idea of the existence of random breath-testing is that the motorist can see the testing taking place. That acts as a deterrent to motorists, who know that they can be pulled up at any time.

The random breath-testing unit is a mobile one that can go anywhere in Victoria. As a matter of fact, the officer in charge told the committee that the unit went to the Bendigo races one day. The officers in the unit do not advise the local police that they will be visiting the area; they just turn up.

Mr Kaus: A postman's tip.

Mr DAVIS: Postage stamp? What is the honourable member for Mansfield talking about?

The Government jet can travel to Cairns and Longreach in an hour and a half. That is not real bad. It is certainly possible to get around quickly, especially with the facilities, such as helicopters, that exist in this State.

The random breath-testing units in Victoria go into the country areas. That is the main reason why the Government does not want to implement random breath-testing. The Government realises that random breath-testing would go out into the country areas and that, if it did, half of the people in those areas would be pulled up. The Queensland Government knows where the largest number of road deaths occur, and where the hotels are. That is the problem. The Queensland Government does not want the odium of having some of its National Party friends booked in the country. Victoria takes them everywhere. The unit does not tell the local constabulary. It enters an area, sets itself up, and away it goes. That is the way in which it should operate.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise) (3.5 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Estimates presented by the Minister for Transport. It is interesting that the members of the Opposition thus far in this debate appear to be incapable of coming up with even the slightest constructive criticism of the administration of the Transport Department.

Mr McPhie: Totally disorganised.

Mr BORBIDGE: As the honourable member said, they have been totally disorganised.

This has been a year of intense Government activity. The benefits flowing from the initiatives implemented by the Minister on behalf of the Government are clear for all to see. I would even suggest that Opposition members have some grudging respect for the Minister. Certainly, Opposition members have not been very critical of any suggestions of substance before the Committee.

I want to refer particularly to Queensland Railways, which is one of the great success stories of the Queensland Government and of the Minister. The railways have achieved an impressive operating performance, with a record operating profit of \$107.8m in 1984-85 and \$117.8m profit for this year. Prior to that, the Railway Department had not registered an operating profit since 1972-73. In that year, it was, by comparison, a paltry \$4.9m. The truth of the matter is that few railway systems anywhere in the world, and certainly no others in Australia, are recording a profit. That is a great tribute to the Government of this State.

Mr Vaughan: It is either profit or operating profit.

Mr BORBIDGE: One honourable member opposite is interjecting. What is his problem?

Mr Vaughan: It is either a profit or an operating profit. You said "operating profit" one time; now you are talking about "profit". What is it?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member is having some difficulty, so I will certainly be more than pleased to compare the performance of Queensland Railways with that of other railway systems round Australia and, if necessary, round the world. I might be able to enlighten him.

I would think that any responsible member of the Opposition would stand up in this Chamber in such a debate and say to the Minister, "Well done! The railways are in profit." But, of course, it is totally beyond the capability of members of the Labor Party in this Chamber to say even one good word for the Minister and the Government.

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: If the honourable member listens, he might learn something.

There is little doubt that Queensland Railways is operating on a level of efficiency rarely found anywhere in the world. I say to the honourable member for Nudgee: Does he dispute that? He is silent. He cannot dispute that. The fact is that the Queensland railway system is setting a precedent for Australia. In fact, it is performing very well indeed.

If one looks at the examples interstate, one will see that Victorian Rail, or V-Line, as it is now called, is labouring under an operating deficit of more than \$1m a day. I understand that this year Victoria will be down the tube to the extent of \$462m. Figures recently made available in New South Wales indicate that the State Rail Authority there will record an operating deficit of about \$365m this year. South Australia's transport system is losing \$33m a year; Western Australia, \$16m; and the Australian National Railways deficit stands at \$77.6m. No doubt the railway systems in other parts of Australia adhere to the management principles espoused by the Labor Party in this place.

I would like to mention the impressive Roma Street development—the Brisbane Transit Centre. Yesterday afternoon, I had an opportunity to look over that very impressive addition to transport facilities not only to the city of Brisbane but also to Australia. I suggest to the Committee that those facilities would be equal to the best that could be found anywhere in the world. I was somewhat surprised, as I am sure other Government members were, when that project was subjected to some criticism by the Lord Mayor of the city of Brisbane. I understand that the Toowong project also attracted some criticism from the Lord Mayor.

I am very surprised that the project has attracted criticism, because I believe it is a project that the people of Queensland can be satisfied with. The transport industry is closely linked with tourism, which is now consolidating its rightful position as Queensland's number one industry.

I turn now to the Brisbane airport redevelopment. Although it is not strictly covered by the Estimates of the Minister for Transport, I wish to express absolute disgust at the decision that has been made by the Federal Government to reject a proposal by a private

enterprise consortium to construct a new international terminal at the Brisbane Airport. I believe that it is extraordinary that the Federal Government should spend hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars in building new runways, tarmacs and domestic terminals that are equal to the best in the world when it does not seem prepared to incorporate an international terminal in its development plans.

The international terminal, which presently sits like an old tin shed in a paddock many kilometres from the new airport, will service an increasing number of international visitors who will be arriving through Brisbane airport between now, through the period of Expo 88, into the 1990s and beyond.

When a private consortium accepts the rationale of the Commonwealth Government and says, "OK, we understand that there are some financial problems involved in building a new international terminal. However, we will build it for you at no cost to the tax-payers of Australia.", I believe it is absolutely disgraceful that the Government sees fit to reject such a proposal.

The appalling international terminal will have to service the needs of Brisbane for many years to come, and probably into the next century. There can be little doubt that the Federal Government is desperate in its bid to preserve Sydney and Melbourne as the major east coast international ports of entry for overseas arrivals. Of course, the Labor Governments of New South Wales and Victoria have a vested interest in preserving Sydney and Melbourne as the major east coast international ports because those cities are their traditional power bases.

That the Commonwealth Government has seen fit to make a decision not to construct a new international terminal as part of the Brisbane airport redevelopment plan, and to reject a proposal from a local consortium—which would provide facilities equal to the domestic facilities at no cost to the Australian tax-payer—is a massive insult to the people of Queensland and the tourist industry of this State.

Earlier this year Queensland Railways launched the Queenslander as our primary long-distance train. Like many honourable members on both sides of this Chamber, I have had the pleasure of travelling on the Queenslander. I commend the management and staff of that train for what, in time, will establish itself as a train journey of world significance.

Some time ago I emphasised the need for air services between the Gold Coast and north Queensland. For too long, tourists who have commuted between the two centres have had to fight their way to and from Brisbane airport. That situation has been eased considerably since the completion of the Gateway Bridge. It will be further eased when the arterial road system comes on stream.

In the past, when one wanted to travel to the Barrier Reef or the Gold Coast, no direct services existed between Brisbane and those centres. Largely as a result of the policies of the Queensland Government, that situation has now changed. Direct air services to both centres are now provided. The first airline to introduce such services was East-West Airlines. A similar service has recently been provided by Australian Airlines, linking the Gold Coast with north Queensland Barrier Reef destinations.

It is important that as the number of international flights into Cairns increases, the Gold Coast will be able to link in with those air services in order that people can split their holidays between those two very important regions of our great State of Queensland. It will make packaging of destinations in the far north of the State and the Gold Coast a far more practical proposition.

The Gold Coast regional office of the Department of Transport continues to play an increasingly important role in local affairs. It is a key Government department. It caters for a resident population of some 230 000 people and an annual visitor population of some two million. In any one month the population is no less than 316 000 and can be as high as half a million.

Mr Davis: It would have the worst public transport anywhere in Australia.

Mr BORBRIDGE: I will take the inane interjection from the honourable member for Brisbane Central. I do not know how long it is since he has been to the Gold Coast. He stands up in this Chamber and acts as if he is some sort of expert. I can only say to the honourable member that most parts of the Gold Coast have a public transport system far superior to the one he is providing for the people in his electorate. The Gold Coast has a very good bus service, which is constantly under review.

Mr Davis: You cannot move at Christmas-time.

Mr BORBRIDGE: If the honourable member would dry up for a minute, I might tell him something. In the past, a problem existed on the Gold Coast relative to the number of taxis required to provide a better service. The honourable member hopped up here and whinged about the price of taxi licences, yet he admits that the price of those licences is determined by the market. Too often, the honourable member is a hypocrite. Most people residing on the Gold Coast have a standard of public transportation better than that provided in the honourable member's electorate. If he stays in this place, I extend an invitation to him to come down to the Gold Coast. I am sure that my other colleagues and I would be more than pleased to show him some of the dramatic improvements that have occurred there recently.

The Gold Coast has an ongoing program, of which the people are proud, to improve public transportation. In places in which it is viable, public transportation is extended. The honourable member is speaking from a position of ignorance.

Despite the incredible difficulties that I have outlined with the large floating population and the number of people coming through the city during a 12-month period, massive improvements have occurred in the transport system. Bus-operators have increased and upgraded their vehicles and additional taxis have been placed on the road. New services have been introduced and the frequency of service on major urban routes has been increased.

Significantly, 37 000 driver's licences were issued by the Gold Coast regional office last financial year, a 150 per cent increase since 1980, and examiners conducted 4 800 driving-tests during the year.

I ask the Minister, within the limitations of the policy of nil growth in the public service, to ensure that the staffing levels at the Bundall office of the Department of Transport be kept under review. The office is extremely busy. The people working there do a great job. They are constantly under pressure. It is vital that they have the ability to carry out the task that has been given to them.

The Road Safety Council has also been very active. I particularly commend Mr Ross Perrett and his staff for their assistance and co-operation. As the local member, I am almost in weekly contact with them.

I await with interest the outcome of a feasibility study being conducted, at no cost to the Queensland tax-payer, on the West German Siemens H-bahn monorail system, which I understand is scheduled for completion soon. In the long term, it has the potential to overcome many of the traffic congestion problems that the Gold Coast experiences from time to time. The H-bahn system is in successful commercial operation overseas. If the feasibility study is positive, that system can be pursued by the Government and perhaps by private enterprise, following full and proper consultation with the community.

I also note that land resumption is proceeding for the Gold Coast rail link, a project of immense significance to the future of the Gold Coast. That project was before the Parliament late last year when the plans, sections and book of reference were approved. I look forward to the day when trains will be running on that new line. Immense population growth will occur in the years to come.

Mr Davis: You will be waiting a long time.

Mr BORBIDGE: I welcome the support given by the honourable member for Brisbane Central for the Gold Coast rail link. It is about time he and his party contributed something to the Gold Coast. I have the expectation that in years to come, the honourable member—if he is still a member of Parliament—will continue to support the provision of improved facilities in that area.

Mr Davis: Your party pulled the line up; we didn't.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member shows his ignorance. The honourable member is trying to say the Government pulled up the line to the Gold Coast. If he were to look at where the old track was laid, it would be obvious to him that that railway route would not service the Gold Coast as will the proposed rail link. It would not have taken people to densely populated areas and would have required massive maintenance. I suggest that the honourable member knows that, and I further suggest that his remarks are born out of incredible ignorance.

As an indication of the tremendous improvements that have been made to the railways in Queensland, I would like to read to the Committee a letter that was addressed to the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) from a constituent. I believe that it is important—

Mr Davis: Did he give you a letter to read?

Mr BORBIDGE: No, he did not.

Mr Davis: You are a bit weak now.

Mr BORBIDGE: Well, he did not.

Mr Davis: Where did you get it from?

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member for Brisbane Central can become unbearable. I am not reading a rigged telex dragged in by the honourable member from somewhere: this is a genuine letter that I would be quite happy to have tabled. It reads—

“Dear Sir:

My husband & I would like to express our appreciation for the quite unexpected assistance given us by Staff of the Railways Department on Friday night, 5th September.

Travelling in ‘The Sunlander’ Car 2, Berths 7 & 8, from Cairns to Brisbane we were dismayed to find the train running approx. 1½ hours late and knowing we would miss the bus connection to the Coast.

We cannot speak highly enough of the courtesy of the Conductor and those who knew of our dilemma.

Repeatedly the Conductor came to our compartment telling us what was trying to be organized.

To our amazement & great relief, information was ascertained that another bus line had an 8.30 pm bus & we were assisted off the train by the Conductor at Caboolture; a very courteous taxi driver met us & drove us to the Valley terminal with 10 minutes to spare.

If possible we would like our thanks conveyed to those concerned. The whole trip, up & back, was most enjoyable.

We moved to the Gold Coast permanently 18 months ago from Victoria and now call Queensland home.

Thank you from two happy Queenslanders.

Yours sincerely.”

No doubt honourable members opposite do not like to hear a bit of good news.

Mr Davis: Will you table the document?

Mr BORBIDGE: I make the point that if I were to tell the honourable member who signed the letter, he would probably go round to their house and break their windows. That is about the standard of vindictiveness adopted by the Australian Labor Party and members of the Opposition.

I think it is a great tragedy that a member of Parliament cannot rise in the Chamber and read a letter from a constituent that congratulates a Government Department and the people who work in it without attracting stupid, inane and snickering remarks that come from the fool who calls himself the Opposition Whip in this Parliament.

Mr DAVIS: I am not going to cop that. Mr Fouras, I resent the outlandish outburst made by the honourable member for "Sufferers" Paradise. He has called me a fool. I have purely and simply asked him to table a letter that I suspect he wrote himself. That is all I asked, yet I have to cop this senseless outburst from this member. I cannot understand it. I want the remark withdrawn.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Fouras): Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central has asked that the remark be withdrawn.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Fouras, I have to insist that the honourable member refer to my electorate by its proper name. If he is not prepared to do that, then I am not prepared to withdraw anything.

Mr DAVIS: I will withdraw "Sufferers" Paradise if he withdraws his outlandish outburst in which he used language that I do not wish to repeat.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Brisbane Central requests that that remark be withdrawn.

Mr BORBIDGE: I withdraw the remark I made—that the honourable member is a fool. Let me say, however, that much of his contribution to debates in the Parliament would certainly indicate that he is foolish.

For the benefit of the honourable member, I would be more than happy to table the letter. It is genuine, and it shows that many people in the community are very happy indeed with the services that are being provided by the Railway Department, by the Government, and by the Minister.

In conclusion, I thank the Commissioner for Transport, the Commissioner for Railways and their senior officers for the co-operation and courtesy that has been extended to me in recent times. They are very good departments to deal with, and I take pleasure in supporting the Estimates that have been presented to the Committee.

Mr PREST (Port Curtis) (3.25 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to speak in the debate on the Transport Estimates. First of all, I comment on a point that was made about the honourable member for Everton (Mr Milliner) by the Minister, who said that the member never spoke about road safety. I remind the Committee that only 800 minutes have been allowed for the debate on Estimates. In total, there are 18 Estimates. That would mean about 44 minutes for each Estimate. The Transport Minister himself, who has unlimited time, took 50 minutes of those 44 when he presented his Estimates. That leaves very little time for a member to debate Estimates if all of the Estimates were to be discussed. It would be about 5 seconds per member. This place is a joke, and there is a mob of clowns on the other side.

One of the things that I would like to speak about is the transport section. Of course, cries come from the Government and from the grain-growers and others about the costs of transporting their goods. It has always been maintained that the principal cost is petrol. The Government continually blames the Federal Government for that. Let me remind honourable members that on 18 May 1978 the honourable member for Flinders (Mr Katter), now the Minister for Northern Development and Community Services, said that he would like to reply to some of the comments made by the honourable member for Brisbane Central when attacking the Anthony policy on petrol

pricing. He said that it was very interesting to observe the way in which the member for Brisbane Central interpreted the policy, adding that, if he had any working knowledge whatever of the world energy crisis or of its economics, he would realise that the Anthony policy was the only logical one to adopt. He said that the only way in which to conserve that rapidly dwindling resource was to somehow encourage people to cut back on consumption. He said that the way to do that was to increase the price of the product. He invited the suggestion of an alternative. Mr Katter was saying that the price of petrol should be put beyond the user's capacity to pay. Of course, that is just what happened during the period when a Liberal-National Party Government was in the Federal sphere. Today petrol is cheaper than it was at the time when the Liberal and National Parties lost Government.

On 28 August, the Premier of this State (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), after addressing the grain-growers in Rockhampton, appeared on Channel 7 news stating that he had told the grain-growers in Rockhampton to revolt against the Federal Government. Could you imagine, Mr Fouras, any responsible person—especially a leader of a Government: the Premier of a State—urging people to revolt and to virtually take to the streets, take on the police, take on the army, kill, destroy, burn, bomb and terrorise, as happens in other countries when the people want to overthrow the Government? Could it be believed that any responsible person would advocate such a move?

Let me remind honourable members what the word “revolt” means, because I know some of the people on the Government side of the Chamber would not quite understand. The dictionary defines “revolt” as—

“Rise or fall away or go over in rebellion (against or from ruler etc., to rival power); feel revulsion, rise or turn in repugnance”.

A Premier of this State urged that type of activity—the overthrow of a Government—to take place in Queensland—in Australia. It is no wonder that in today's *Telegraph* there appears a report in which the Premier of this State is again saying that that sort of thing could be, or is, happening under the protection of a Labor Government. It is not under the protection of a Labor Government. In fact, he is the only Premier in Australia who is asking the people, and directing members of his party, to take action, to revolt, to rise against the Federal Government. Of course, the Premier had nothing to hang his hat on when he made those accusations in today's *Telegraph*. The ALP believes that the Premier's stupid and ill-founded comments have endangered the lives of Australians overseas and throughout Australia. Terrorist groups around the world, upon learning of the Premier's remarks, could decide to turn their attention to Australia and Australians travelling overseas.

When a Premier of a State urges the grain-growers of Queensland and the rest of Australia to revolt, surely he is not advocating the type of activities that occur in countries of the world in which Governments are overthrown. If that is to happen in Australia, I sincerely hope that, when the first trouble arises, the Premier is in the front line. However, he will be as far back as he was in World War II.

Earlier today honourable members heard much about the electrification of the railways in Queensland. In itself, that is a development with which the Opposition is pleased, although it does not totally agree with the reduction in the work-force. Last Saturday the Premier switched on the power for the electrification of the rail link between Gladstone and Rockhampton, and unveiled a plaque to commemorate the event. I attended the unveiling—or, should I say, the National Party propaganda function. When the Minister for Transport addressed the gathering, he said that 600 invitations had been sent out and that anybody who did not get an invitation did not rate very highly. Unfortunately I was present to hear such a remark. It has brought a strong reaction from the people who live in the area I represent. Because Gladstone is a city of about 25 000 people and the surrounding area of Calliope has a population of 8 000, I represent people from all parties. Approximately 500 visitors and 100 local people were at that function. They were astounded that such a remark would have been made. Today's press contains a statement from a spokesman for the Minister, who said that no offence was

intended by the remark and that the off-the-cuff remark was made because it appeared from the Minister's position on the platform that the whole town—he did not say “city”—was present.

When the Minister made that remark, I looked at him. I suppose he could be forgiven for such a remark because the official party on the stage looked like Gerry Connolly, a Mickey Mouse look-alike and Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer. The Minister's nose glows like an electrically operated signal at night and his eyes looked as though they were in a deep fog or like those of an owl in daylight. It is little wonder that he could see about 33 000 people in the distance. It is also little wonder that at that function the Minister was presented with a foghorn—and not just because he likes to blow his own trumpet.

That function was a complete waste of public money. The people should be told its cost. The member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) really did not exaggerate in any shape or form when he spoke about the amount of money that was wasted on that function. Planes, trains and every other form of transport were used to bring National Party members and candidates to that function.

Fortunately the National Party Government received very little coverage from what the media said contained a *Who's Who* of the National Party and its candidates at the next election. The Opposition honestly believes that the money that was spent could have been far better used on such public utilities as new railway stations, which are so badly needed in the area. Of course, since 1981, the Minister has stated that Gladstone is to receive a new railway station. Unfortunately, that has still not eventuated, even though as early as about March this year honourable members were told that the planning for the station is under way, and that it will be built just south of the existing one.

As indicated previously, the timing of the construction is dependent upon the availability of funds. As Queensland Railways will make approximately \$118m working profit this year, Opposition members believe that the time has now arrived for the Minister to honour not only his promise that the station would be built but also state his intention to do so now.

I will not be repetitious and continue to talk about the way in which money was spent on the function referred to by the honourable member for Brisbane Central. However, from the stories that I have been told, many of those 25 000 Gladstone residents—people who do not vote for the Australian Labor Party but support the National Party—are disgruntled.

A list was drawn up of who should be invited to the function. That list was sent to Brisbane, and some names were deleted. Only three railway officers, that is, the chief station master—and not his wife—the district superintendent and the area manager, were invited to the function.

In presenting his Estimates, the Minister said that the schools are doing a wonderful job with their programs on road safety, the training of children in defensive driving and so on.

Although Gladstone has thousands of schoolchildren being taught by approximately 1 000 teachers, not one representative of the Education Department was invited to that function to which I have referred. The Minister can rest assured that the National Party will be sorry for its handling of that function.

In this afternoon's edition of the *Telegraph* it is reported that in the annual report of the Queensland Railways for June 1986 the Commissioner for Railways (Mr Sheehy) said that rationalisation would require a considerable reduction in staff numbers. He stated—

“The department must address its attention unremittingly to reduce operating costs through improved productivity and the discontinuation of cost inefficiencies.”

Surely nothing more is being sought. The wages section now has fewer employees, yet increased tonnages of freight and passengers are being carted by the metropolitan

service. Increased productivity is being sought, but at the same time honourable members learn that there will be two-man crewing, that there will be a reduction of approximately 600 men in the locomotive section in the next three years and that PA Management Consultants have recommended that the jobs of 1 500 maintenance men be dispensed with and their jobs mechanised.

I will examine the annual reports of the Commissioner for Railways in past years in regard to decreases in the number of staff.

I will deal with the office of the deputy commissioner and secretary. In 1976, that office had 150 salaried persons and 43 wages persons, a total of 193. In June 1986 that office had 311 salaried persons—an increase of more than 100 per cent—and 43 wages persons, the same as in 1976. That is an increase from 193 to 354.

I turn to the office of the chief accountant. In 1976, that office had 101 salaried persons and one person on wages, a total of 102. In 1986, it had 199 persons on salary and one on wages, a total of 200.

I will now deal with the office of the chief auditor, as it was then. That office had 132 salaried persons and one person on wages, a total of 133. Of course, that office was discontinued as at 1980, so I do not know where the personnel finished up.

I turn to the stores section, which has remained virtually the same. In 1976 that section had 99 salaried persons and 185 on wages, a total of 284. In 1986, it had 100 salaried persons and 182 on wages, a total of 282.

I turn now to the staff generally. In 1976 the number of wages staff was 19 946 and the salaried staff numbered 4 057. In 1983, when PA Management Consultants came onto the scene, wages staff numbered 21 684 and salaried staff 4 259. In 1981 there had been a decrease of some 461 persons. In 1986 the number of wages staff was 21 223, and the salaried staff numbers had risen in that time by 300 to 4 523.

PA Management Consultants started its investigation into the wages staff in June 1983, after which the numbers dropped from 21 684 to 21 223 today. The number of salaried staff rose over the same period from 4 259 to 4 523, which is quite an increase in salaried staff, considering the modern equipment that is used today.

I turn now to those people who have applied to join the Queensland Railways. The number of trade apprentices who nominated to sit for the examination in 1976 was 1 683, but only 154 jobs were made available. In 1978-79, 2 380 trade apprentices sat for the examination and only 82 jobs were available. In 1980-81, 2 232 sat for the examination and only 78 jobs were available. PA Management Consultants then showed how many trade apprentices were nominated, how many sat for the exam, how many failed it and how many jobs were made available.

In 1982-83, 2 623 trade apprentices were nominated to sit for the examination, 2 232 sat, 830 failed and there were only 172 jobs. In 1983-84, 2 871 sat, 1 275 failed and 142 apprentices were given a job. In 1984-85, 2 449 apprentices were nominated, 2 066 sat, 675 failed and only 104 were employed. Last year, 1985-86, 2 202 were nominated, 1 821 sat, 1 280 failed—which means only 541 passed the examination—and only 107 jobs were made available.

A very low percentage of candidates are doing the entrance examination, and the number who pass is also very low. What is the reason for so many failures? Is it the education system, or is the examination too hard? I do not think that would be the case. I think Queensland Railways is very selective in choosing whom it employs.

I now refer to the electrification of the railways and the loss of jobs. The headlines read “Railway job loss ‘blow to Gladstone’”, “Railway union officials warn on possible action” and “Railway workers to decide on action”. Last week the railway unions addressed their members in the area and talked about the award that would put them back into the Dark Ages. That is not very good. It has been stated that the Commissioner for Railways is turning back the clock and that he is instructed to do so by the Minister. Because of the increase in productivity and tonnage that is being carted, the railway

workers are paying with their jobs and working conditions for the profits that are being made today by the Queensland Railways. Not only does that loss affect the railwaymen themselves; it also affects their families and their way of life.

A reduction in the work-force in any town or city has a very bad effect on the community and on small-business people. Everyone is feeling the pinch and believes that the economy is not going well. When a Government continues to take money out of the economy, the economy must get worse.

Time expired.

Mr INNES (Sherwood) (3.45 p.m.): Today I want to deal at some length with the Minister's responsibilities that relate to railways. I preface my remarks by saying that I am grateful that my electorate has acquired the services of a licence-issuing station, albeit for only a couple of years' duration until something more permanent is found. I was grateful to learn of the proposal to quadruple the electrification of railway lines from Corinda to the city. The suburban electrical railway services are very busy and popular. The inbound and outbound are very well patronised by people in my electorate.

This is a time of major economic concern for Australia and for Queensland. Therefore, one must look at the total railway operation, because it is a massive operation. As has been pointed out by the Minister and by at least one Government member, the railway systems round Australia are capable of involving Governments in multimillion-dollar losses. They are billion-dollar industries.

The report of the Commissioner for Railways was released only today. Next year, the receipts and expenditures of the Railway Department will involve almost a billion dollars. Honourable members know from the report of the Commissioner for Railways that indebtedness is in excess of \$1 billion. The capital that had to be provided in the last three years for the electrification project amounted to many hundreds of millions of dollars. Because of the enormous impact that such major Government ventures have on the State and national economies, it behoves honourable members at this time to examine the bigger issues. Large sums of money have to be borrowed and serviced by interest charges.

The four matters that I would like to highlight this afternoon are the broad costs of electrification, the true reasons for the profitability of the railways, the lost Queensland industry resulting from the method adopted to achieve electrification, and some worrying aspects of the cost-effectiveness of the manner in which electrification has been implemented.

It is relatively easy to be wise after the event, but when one is talking about an amount that has blown out to probably \$800m, one is entitled to ask these questions, because mistakes in such areas have a massive impact upon the revenue of the State.

Let me examine the overall profitability of the railways. The Minister, supported by members of the Government, contends that it is on his administration that the almost unique profitability of the Queensland railway system lies; that it is the efficiencies set in train by himself that have converted the railway system from one suffering from lack of profitability or a loss into one enjoying profitability. That is incorrect. It is unfair to those people who have other responsibilities, and it is misleading.

The enormous contribution that has been made by the coal industry has boosted the profitability of the Queensland Railways. That contribution was set in train before Mr Lane became the Minister for Transport.

The coal industry development within the coal provinces of Queensland, had its origin during the fuel crisis of the early 1970s. The industry has prospered because of the venture capital that has been risked by the companies and consortia which have been involved in the expansion of the massive coal provinces that Queensland is fortunate to have. It has also prospered through the efficiencies that have been achieved within the coal industry, and through the shrewdness and, in latter days—

the coal companies and their share-holders might claim—the meanness of Queensland Treasury, which was responsible for setting the coal freight rates factor.

Queensland Railways has been a vital part of the development of the Queensland coal provinces. The enormous product of central Queensland, and even the modest product of southern Queensland, is transported to the loading points by Queensland Railways. However, the coal industry and the profit factor that is involved in the coal freight rate—which is clearly a tax of hundreds of per cent in some sectors, and at least 100 per cent more than the actual cost to the railway system—are the reason why the Minister can assert that the railways are profitable.

That is not to suggest that the Minister cannot claim total responsibility for implementing the report of PA Management Consultants, in which it was asserted that \$20m would be saved.

I give the Minister and his department credit for saving \$20m. If the Minister continues down that same track, I will commend him for saving several million dollars more. Except for the jaundiced eyes of the former railway employee, Mr Prest, nobody could assert that there is a need to keep a constant eye on Queensland Railways and that Queensland Railways has become a place of extraordinary antiquated work practices.

Mr Davis: Notice the union-bashing again.

Mr INNES: Yes, the other unions will get another touch-up. I do not resil from the statement that I have made in the past—that where I stand in the political spectrum is certainly not where the honourable member for Brisbane Central stands.

I support totally the removal of antiquated work practices. The astonishing and outrageous practice that occurred in the past when railway drivers, railway guardsmen or firemen were transported by cab from the middle of nowhere to somewhere, should never have occurred.

Mr Casey: What do you think they should do—push their bikes?

Mr INNES: No. Those people should do their jobs. When the jobs change, and steam trains are converted to diesel trains, the nature of the jobs also changes, as should the conditions.

I do not criticise the Minister for this. My party and I support the steps that have been taken to modernise the operations of Queensland Railways. I do not rubbish all railway workers.

I heard an honourable member commend the railways. I know that the Minister has received commendation for acts of courtesy and assistance that have been given by loyal and faithful employees of the Queensland Railways. I am not lumping all railway employees into the same basket. However, once the unions get involved in their crazy dictation of outmoded practices, criticism can then be sheeted home.

However, it is unfair for people to claim the credit for something for which they are not responsible or to divert the credit away from the real source of that credit. Were it not for the profit factor on coal rail freights, the reality is that Queensland Railways were in an operating loss situation and would have continued in that situation. It would have been in a quarter of a billion dollar loss situation had it not been for the development of the coal mines and the presence of the rail tax.

The tax was set by the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer of this State. My own party accepts responsibility for the setting of those rail freight rates. Rather than saying that it was outrageous, not appropriate or should be condemned, the Liberal Party would say that, because of the change in the international market position, so the amount of take by the Queensland Government should be modified to maximise the development of new mines or the expansion of existing mines and so the export of coal from Queensland, because what you lose on the roundabout you make up on the swings. One might get less per kilometre/tonne but might sell more tonnes and therefore, in the end

result get pretty much the same revenue; but in terms of jobs and the development of new coal towns and other facilities one might be a mile in front. That is really the argument. In the 1980-81 financial year the total railway operating loss was \$78.4m. The amount of coal carried at that time was 29.7 million tonnes. The contribution to railway revenue was \$216m, being 51.9 per cent of total railway revenue.

In 1981-82, the loss incurred by the railways increased to \$97.3m. The tonnages carried had increased by a modest 1 million tonnes, which is 1 per cent. Revenue to Queensland Railways had increased considerably to \$274m, which is 26 per cent above the previous year. So, because of the coal freight rate formulas, an increase in revenue occurred, with a very modest increase in tonnage and a greater loss. That is the pattern.

In 1982-83, a further increase of \$103.4m in operating loss occurred, with again a modest increase in coal carried of 32 million tonnes as opposed to 30 million the previous year. The increase to revenue was again significant, increasing from \$274m to \$314m, 14.7 per cent. But, despite the increase in revenue and a modest increase in tonnes carried, there was an increasing loss situation.

1983-84 was an interesting year, because that was the year that four or five major new coal mines came into production. It was not a full year of production, but they did begin production. That was reflected in the tonnage of coal carried. It went from 32 million tonnes to 41 million tonnes, an increase of 28 per cent. In that year, a \$34.9m loss occurred. The loss was reduced to about one-third of previous years. The revenue to railways from coal carriage at that very much boosted level was \$442m, an increase of 40.7 per cent on the previous year.

In 1984-85, the year of the full production of the major new coal mines, there was another dramatic increase of 26.9 per cent, and for the first time the railways moved into the black with a profit of \$97.6m. The contribution of coal carriage to railway revenue was \$582m, an increase of 31.5 per cent from the previous year. The proportion that the coal revenue bore to total railway revenue was 66 per cent, up from 51 per cent in 1980, the first year that I chose. It was not the first year of losses; it was just the latest in a whole series of years of losses.

The Queensland Chamber of Mines Ltd produced a report on last year's operations that was published in 1986. It analysed the profit factor involved in rail freight. My contention, and the contention of everybody who is informed about rail freight charges, is that whereas different rail freight formulae apply to each different mine, an average charge can be extracted and an average unit cost can be estimated. I base that assertion on information I have acquired from many sources. It is accepted that most of the coal transportation routes are standard: it is approximately a 300 km route to the coast. Comparisons can be made between different lines. Most of the operators in the coal-mining industry are very well versed in cost assessments on the building of railway lines based on international comparisons. The kinds of people who analyse this data are coal-mining company managers, financial analysts and others concerned in operating coal mines.

A major report was furnished by consultants in New South Wales that concentrated on analysing the coal freight charges issue. The people who make use of the analyses know that the average cost for the transportation of coal is \$5 per tonne. The average charge made by the Queensland Government is \$12 to \$13 per tonne, as most of the coal-mine operators would know; and some of the newer mines—an example of which would be the Newlands mine—are charged something of the order of \$18 or \$19 per tonne for a \$5 per tonne service. It must be pointed out that the coal companies pay for the lines, the rolling-stock, the locomotives and the building of the railway employees' accommodation. They pay for the full operating costs—the whole box and dice.

The figures I have supplied are the up-to-date figures supplied by the Chamber of Mines in a review that assessed the tax component in rail freights at \$156m for 1982-83. Other profits derived from coal royalties and other charges amounted to \$96m, which resulted in a total coal contribution to Queensland's revenue of \$252m. That contribution

is over and above the services that were provided that I mentioned earlier. Pay-roll tax was \$394m.

The pure profit factor in coal freight was \$256m at a time when the railways made a loss of \$103m. That clearly indicates that, without the support of the profit from coal, in 1984 the net operating loss for the railways would have been a quarter of a billion dollars. In other words, if the coal had been transported at cost, as is the case for many other commodities, or at a loss, in 1984 the net operating loss incurred by the Railway Department would have been \$250m. For 1983-84, the Chamber of Mines estimated that the profit factor in coal rail freight charges was \$231m. The net operating loss sustained by the railways that year was \$34.9m. If the operating loss were added to the profit factor in coal rail freights, the net loss would have amounted to \$260m approximately.

In 1984-85, the Railway Department's profit was \$97.6m, in spite of the fact that the tax factor involved in coal freight rate charges amounted to \$352m; therefore, the net operating loss for railway operations would still be a quarter of a billion dollars. This year the profit was \$115m, which represents a modest but welcome increase in the apparent profitability in rail freight revenue. It must be remembered, however, that rail freight charges increased to \$292m.

The reality is that if the tax component were to be left out of the calculations, all of the other factors combined would result in a loss in railway operations. The danger is that the massive tax contribution from the collection of coal freight charges masks the true loss situation. It must be remembered that coal freight charges cannot go on for ever. At the moment, they are being used to support the expansion of the railways system generally, and in the rail electrification projects, to an enormous extent.

The time that remains for my speech is very limited, so I simply state that the coal-mining companies for whom the first two stages of the main line electrification have taken place do not believe that one cent of benefit will result or that there will be a reduction in the freight charges paid to Queensland Railways associated with the cost of transporting coal.

The coal-miners do not believe that this massive electrification project that is targeted at their areas will provide any benefit to them in terms of a reduction in costs. In fact, I call upon the Minister—and this has not happened before—to provide to this Committee the cost and feasibility studies that were carried out before electrification so that it can be understood where the true savings occurred.

Time expired.

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (4.5 p.m.): The first matter in the Estimates of the Minister's department to which I draw attention, which may perhaps be a very small matter to some, is the hypocrisy of the present Government. On the one hand the Government claims that it is a great family Government, which looks after the family, is interested in family welfare and is interested in everything of benefit to the families of Queensland. It claims—and projects it claim—that it is a very Christian Government and that it is interested in the Christian way of life. Yet, right at this very moment, this Government, through the Railway Department, is taking action of detriment to Christian organisations in the community. Although that may be a very small matter indeed, it is a very important matter to those organisations affected. I refer to the new charges that the Government has placed on various Christian bodies for placing literature in racks on railway stations throughout Queensland. My main reason for raising this matter is to show clearly that the Government is concerned about money at any price, regardless of from whom the Government takes it. The Government treats the Christian family in a very adverse way.

I presume all honourable members have been on railway platforms and have seen the literature racks that I am referring to. They are only about three feet long and two feet thick, screwed to the wall of the signal cabin. In fact, in many stations, they give a little bit of brightness to, or take away from the dullness of, the railway paintwork. In the railway station in my electorate of Mackay is an example of one of those literature

racks. It belongs to an organisation called the Legion of Mary. I do not know whether honourable members know anything about that organisation, which is from the Catholic Church and is very much involved in looking after families, their needs and their requirements.

It is a small group of very dedicated people who have no money. They look after people's health and welfare and any problems that they might have.

When there is a bereavement in a family, the Legion of Mary people will be the first on the doorstep to give solace.

Mr Davis: They are a very compassionate group.

Mr CASEY: They are a very compassionate group. The very basis of the Legion of Mary is its dedication and devotion to Mary, the mother of Christ, the founder of our Christian faith.

Mr Lane: A wonderful organisation.

Mr CASEY: Yes. I am glad that the Minister agrees with me, because I want him to take my comments aboard. He should act on the matter immediately.

In 1981, the Railway Department charged \$7.20 for the hire of the literature racks. That was a nominal figure. Certainly, I suppose that the department has to make a charge when something is placed on the walls of railway stations. Religious organisations paid a nominal figure of \$7.20 a year. It was not only the Legion of Mary but other organisations such as the Christian Science Monitor, the Salvation Army and many others that used that type of dispenser to provide literature for lonely people who were on railway platforms and moving through. Gradually the cost has increased. In 1986 the organisations were sent a bill for \$114.40—something like a 1 600 per cent rise in a charge by this so-called low-tax Government.

Mr Lane: Tell us about it.

Mr CASEY: I am telling the Minister about it right here and now. That is what this Government has done.

From 1981 the cost gradually increased. In 1985 the Government was charging \$10 a year. In 1986 a bill for \$114.40 was sent out.

Mr Lane: Who sent out the Bill?

Mr CASEY: The Queensland Railway Department sent out the bill. That is who sent out the bill.

When the organisation wrote back and queried the contents of the letter with the property section of the Minister's department, it received quite a terse reply, to the effect that the department was in the process of implementing a new policy on outdoor advertising.

Mr Lane: Who signed it?

Mr CASEY: The Minister should talk to his property section or to the commissioner, who is in the lobby.

The Legion of Mary spreads goodwill to all people, but what sort of treatment does it receive from the Railway Department? Is there any goodwill from the Railway Department? No jolly fear! It socks people to leg and rips the money off them. That is another way of paying for the Bjelke-Petersen plane or another way of paying for the Transport Department's bill at the Valley Grog Shoppe, which was raised earlier by the member for Everton (Mr Milliner). It does not matter what types of organisation the money is coming from; the department just hooks it off them.

The main piece of literature that is placed on railway platforms by the Legion of Mary is a beautiful little booklet called the *Magellan*, which is a family booklet telling stories of young families and little children. It is a delightful little publication that I

regularly read at home. After reading some of the stuff contained in departmental reports, it brings back some sanity.

That family organisation wishes to place on railway platforms a little family booklet for travellers and lonely people moving backwards and forwards between Queensland cities and towns. At Mackay and various other centres throughout the State, trains arrive and depart at all hours of the day and night.

What does the department say in the letter? It says, "Our current type of advertising is being terminated." For a start, I object to the fact that, in addition to making a high charge, the department calls the dispensing of this type of literature advertising. In other words, the department wants to dispense with the people's free access to family literature. Because of the department's high charges, organisations such as the Legion of Mary will have to remove their literature from railway platforms.

Mr Lane: Produce the letter.

Mr CASEY: I do not have to produce the letter. As a member of Parliament, I am telling the Minister I have a letter in my possession from the property section of the Minister's department. I will even give the reference number, which is C85 1415 24 (6). The Minister can look it up in his own departmental files. I do not intend to produce his files for him.

Mr Lane: Tell us who signed it.

Mr CASEY: It is signed on behalf of an Acting Deputy Commissioner for Railways. That is good enough for me. It is not simply signed by Joe Bloggs, the third clerk in the fourth row down on the 16th floor of one of the department's buildings.

All that the Railway Department is interested in is money and profit. It will not help even religious bodies in this State. That is utterly disgraceful. I ask the Minister to take immediate action to have that rectified. I notice that the Minister already has a dispatch on its way to his department to try to dig out the file number. Some poor coot in the department will be castigated tonight over it all, but all he was doing was following the policy of the State Government.

Mr Mackenroth: That will be what they call natural wastage.

Mr CASEY: Yes, it might be, too. At election-time the first natural wastage will be that of the Minister.

The issue that I have just raised is relevant to all of Queensland, but now I wish to raise an issue that is relevant only to Mackay. It is the hottest controversy that has struck the Mackay area in years and relates to the relocation of the railway line through the city. This has been a controversial issue for a long period. I recall that, in the campaign leading up to the 1969 election, after which I entered Parliament, a heated debate took place about the location of the railway. When the railway line through Mackay was first built in 1915, or whenever it was, it went through what were then the outer suburbs of the city and then through to the northern part of the State. The old goods yard and station were together right down on the south-eastern side of the city. Mackay has grown and progressed, and at an accelerated rate since 1969 as a result of the good representation that it has received.

The railway line now winds through the whole of urban west Mackay, south Mackay and the central suburbs of Mackay, with the result that over a number of years many accidents have occurred. There has been a need for flashing lights at crossings. There has been a great deal of controversy and emotion about the problem. I do not blame people who have moved into the area for being concerned and saying that there must be a better place in which to locate a railway line.

I know that many other provincial cities in Queensland, such as Townsville and Rockhampton, experience that problem. However, I again draw the Minister's attention to the latest annual report of the Commissioner for Railways. It cannot be argued that

the railways' profitability at the moment is not in the Mackay region, from the haulage of coal, which is now moving out through the ports of Dalrymple Bay and Hay Point, just south of Mackay. The energy and drive of many people in Mackay have helped to make the railways profitable in that region.

I claim that the region that provides that resource is entitled to a share of the profits. The Railway Department continues to say that it has no money available or that it cannot get any money to carry out work such as the relocation of the railway line in Mackay. I say that the Railway Department should consider the profit it is making from that region and put a bit back into it. The Railway Department should start helping the people who contribute towards its large profits.

Mr Davis: It had a \$120m operating profit.

Mr CASEY: Because of a few things that happened in the early days, the Railway Department had pressing planning needs in Mackay. For example, a bridge across the river in the heart of the city, for a line leading to the harbour, had problems and had to be replaced. In the mid-1970s a comprehensive report was compiled. That proposal became known as the multimodal corridor to link Bakers Creek, Erakala and Mackay harbour. A new plan was brought into being, which involved the concept of a completely new spur line to Mackay harbour. Even though it would cut across different, new areas in the North Mackay region, which is rapidly developing, it became accepted by the people. It was properly planned. The consulting engineers did a good job.

Mr Lane: You were at the opening.

Mr CASEY: Yes. I attended the opening of the Mackay Harbour to Erakala section of the branch line.

Mr Lane: You also shared the luncheon.

Mr CASEY: On behalf of my constituents, I have to do such things from time to time, just as the Minister has to undertake public engagements in his role as a Minister of this State.

Once that line was opened, half the plan for the relocation of the railway line in the Mackay area was completed. The other half, of course, comprised the relocation of the line from Bakers Creek through to Erakala. What has happened about that? A Cabinet decision of 29 November 1977 accepted that relocation. That has been borne in mind in every piece of planning in the Mackay region since that time. That includes the planning of the railway to the port, of residential subdivisions in the area, of industrial subdivisions, and of new work that is currently being carried out at Racecourse Mill to relocate the carrier for the mill across the Peak Downs Highway and the railway. Everything that is done is as a result of the adoption by Cabinet of the multimodal corridor concept, which would result in the eventual complete relocation of the railway line in Mackay.

On 28 January this year the Minister, in a submission to Cabinet out of the blue, suggested a reconsideration. He wants to start changing things. His submission was based on false premises, in the first instance, because he indicated that it was because Main Roads Department planning had changed and had not followed the multimodal corridor concept. That is completely incorrect. The Main Roads planning referred to—that is, the crossing at Rockleigh and the bridge known as the Ron Camm Bridge in the heart of the city over the Pioneer River—was already under way when the multimodal corridor study was carried out. In fact, work was under way when the report was presented to and accepted by Cabinet. That cannot be used as an excuse. In the new Cabinet submission, number 43296, the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) said he wanted a change. I managed to get hold of this information locally and, as usual, when the balloon went up, the Minister went for cover. He wanted to form a committee so that the matter would be put on the back burner for a considerable period.

I warn the Minister that the people of Mackay will accept nothing short of what was promised to them in November 1977—the concept of the multimodal corridor. Despite the protestations over a number of years of some people in the Railway Department, the initial proposal of a bypass through Paget is feasible. I do not expect the Queensland Railways to devote all of its moneys immediately to implementing the multimodal corridor from Bakers Creek to Erakala. What Queensland Railways can certainly do—because there is money in this Budget for the Bakers Creek and Sandy Creek bridges—is start reorganising itself. The Queensland Railways has to immediately put into effect the plan that was adopted in 1977 for a bypass through Paget, round Racecourse Mill, and over a new bridge to be built across the river at Foulden, behind Racecourse Mill. That is the only plan that is really acceptable to the people of Mackay. Any new proposal for a route through West Mackay is totally unacceptable. It will make a very good election issue for the ALP in Mackay, if that is what the Minister wants.

The honourable member for Carnarvon (Mr McKechnie) trips up there every now and again. I have a letter from him as acting Minister, dated 20 February 1984, confirming that the bypass was a feasible proposal and should be constructed. The Minister should not worry about his silly-looking plan for the routes to pass through West Mackay. He should forget all about it and the committee he set up. Instead, he should build the new bridge across the Pioneer River at Foulden.

I raise a few other matters. One may not be the Minister's responsibility directly, as the actual administration is in the hands of the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze). I am concerned at the comparison being drawn between various transport operators in Queensland by the Main Roads Department in the use of weighbridges, portable scales and the treatment of those operators for overloading on Queensland's highways. It is accepted that overloading causes considerable damage to highways, particularly in the wetter parts of the State where there is moisture under the roads. Before I came into Parliament, I was involved in that type of work myself. I know and understand it fully. Because of pressures from the grain-growers in this State, who are carting upwards of 50 per cent and 60 per cent overweight in trucks to depots—some were caught carting over 70 per cent overweight to depots—the Queensland Government——

Mr Simpson: They travel on back roads.

Mr CASEY: Back roads are even worse, because they are not formed and do not have a proper gravel depth. Because they have no sub-base, those roads are cut up and made more dangerous for the vehicles that follow. The honourable member for Cooroora should not talk about back roads. More damage is caused on a back road by overloading than is caused on a good highway.

Mr Simpson: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr CASEY: I do on this one.

Official approval has been given for grain trucks to be 15 per cent overweight. Every time they take a load to a silo, they have to go over a weighbridge, because the grain-grower is paid by the tonnage. The carriers have approval for a 15 per cent overload. Under certain circumstances, they can go up to 20 per cent.

Double-deck cattle trucks are completely exempt, but the poor old gravel truck bloke is victimised. A bloke who is carting for the Main Roads Department, for the shire council or privately, is the only one who must obey the weight requirements. Grain is not off-loaded—neither is cattle—but, if the gravel truck operator is found to be overloaded, he is made to off-load on the side of the road, no matter where he is. He has no access to a weighbridge if he is somewhere on a road construction job. The viscosity and texture of the rock can change from one pit to another. It can change within the same pit. The truck might be caught in a shower of rain. The amount of water that is soaked up by the gravel can make the truck overweight; so the truck can finish up with a load that is much heavier than when it started.

Everyone should be treated equally. The persons to whom I have referred are all transport operators licensed under the Department of Transport, yet they are not receiving equal treatment from the Queensland Government. Every licensed operator in this State should be treated equally as far as weighbridge loading is concerned.

Mr Lane: That's not really this department.

Mr CASEY: It is the Minister's department in that he licenses them. Their licences to operate are obtained from his department. They are licensed to hire, they are licensed to drive and they are licensed to operate. The Minister's department inspects them and controls them as transport operators in this State, yet another department is crucifying a section of licensed transport operators in this State. That is a matter about which the Minister should be concerned.

Time expired.

Mr SIMPSON (Cooroora) (4.25 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I support the Transport Estimates before the Committee. This debate provides an opportunity for the Parliament to scrutinise the transport section of the Government's operations. The Opposition cannot find anything to criticise; it can only hang its head in shame. I have tried to obtain from the Parliamentary Library some accurate figures on the losses incurred by railways interstate. However, those States try to hide their losses. Because of that, there may be a variation in the figures that are provided to the Committee by honourable members.

In Queensland last year, the operating profit of the railways was about \$118m. Victoria lost \$295m. Additional losses should be added to that sum. However, the figure provided as the official operating loss was \$295m. That loss was incurred following the close-down of many services in that State. That is a very serious matter.

The loss in New South Wales was \$330m. The member for Sherwood made what sounded like the profound statement that parts of the operation run at a profit and parts of it run at a loss. That is rather obvious.

A general rule of thumb is that those goods not loaded or unloaded by the railways, and in the area of bulk goods, run at a profit. Hence it is that grains and coal——

Mr Innes interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: There is great laughter from the member for Sherwood. I refer to grain, coal and other goods. Those goods are also carried by the other States, which continue to make very substantial losses. It is obvious that the operation in Queensland is being well managed. I have not referred to the areas that run at a loss, such as suburban railways and the transport of smallgoods. However, Queensland continues to operate those services and does not intend to cut them out. The other States have cut out many of those services.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr SIMPSON: It is the socialist ethic not to service the people. Socialists worry only about the people who live in the big cities. They close down the country lines and withdraw services, as has occurred in other States with the delivery of parcels.

Queensland has a very efficient railway operation, and it must be continually examined to make it even more efficient. That involves the upgrading of the lines. That is an issue on which the Minister has been very helpful in my electorate. A problem has existed ever since the railways were first laid in Queensland. A steep grade separates Eumundi and Cooroy. Some people refer to it as the Eumundi bank; others call it the range.

Originally, the construction of the railway was delayed for several years by the Eumundi-Cooroy connection. The upgrading of the lines then moved south from Maryborough and north from Brisbane, some 80 years ago, leaving the only section that

remained to be upgraded the section between Cooroy and Eumundi. The gradient of the land over that section has been reduced in order to allow locomotives to pull from one and a half to two times the present loading. It will mean faster operation and will fit in very well with the electrification program.

Electrification of the railways is obviously the way to go, particularly in view of high fossil-fuel costs and major operating costs of diesel locomotives. Electrification is the absence of pollution. Pollution is confined to the areas in which the power stations are located, and they can handle the pollution problems that arise.

The electrification of the line between Eumundi and Cooroy involves an initial contract of \$7m. On top of that, track-laying between those centres will be undertaken by employees of the Railway Department. Resulting from the contracts that will be awarded will be an influx of people and their families into the area. That influx and the services that will be needed for those people will give a boost to the area.

Of course, local people will experience traumatic effects when the realignment of the railway line is carried out through properties that did not previously need the railway line. That procedure has been accepted in the past when roads have been re-routed to cut through properties. People have realised the advantages to be gained from such changes.

The realignment of railway lines is not an easy task in areas of difficult terrain and scored escarpment. Of course, many people will build their little houses on hillsides and think they are quite secure—until something like this comes along out of the blue.

I commend the Minister and his staff for the sympathetic way in which they have listened to the concern of the people and for their genuine effort to alleviate that concern. That attitude must be continued until the electrification program is completed. No doubt, in the future some minor matters will have to be attended to, and I trust that the Minister will give special consideration to such matters, as he has done in the past.

The electrification of the railway lines in central Queensland has contributed a great deal to the operating profit of Queensland Railways. The overall operation is moving towards becoming one that is far more efficient, modern and up to date.

I turn now to the railway systems on the Continent and in Japan. Japan has several different systems of railways. People often hear about the Bullet Train, but there are many other railway systems in Japan. I believe that in time Australia will achieve a similar railway system to that of Japan. Of course, Japan has a greater population than Queensland, but the distances involved are equal to those in Queensland.

In the future, with increases in the Australian population, a high-speed rail service will be warranted between Adelaide and Cairns. I believe that such a service will come to fruition through the efforts of people like the Minister and of the Railway Department.

Electrification of the rail line between Brisbane and Nambour will be completed in time for Expo 88. I look forward to jumping on an electric train in Nambour and travelling on it to Expo. That will really be something. By that time, with the increased number of cars, the roads will be even more congested than they are now.

Mr Davis: Last Sunday you couldn't move on that road.

Mr SIMPSON: That road should be further upgraded.

Travel by rail is also much safer. As I have mentioned previously in this Chamber, the only thing safer than rail travel is transport by lift. I am not sure whether lift transport is the responsibility of the Minister for Transport. He indicates that it is not. The Minister should include it in his portfolio, because it is the safest form of transport in the world. It is surprising how many kilometres are covered in a year by persons in lifts.

I commend the Minister for the intergration of private enterprise with the railway system in ventures such as the Sheraton Hotel over Central Station, which is centrally

located. The Roma Street development is something to behold and a worthy development for Queensland.

The Toowong shopping centre is another fine example of development in Queensland. It will attract more traffic, although some will be by rail. More people will travel by rail to developments such as the Toowong shopping centre, and people will use rail to travel to the Queensland Cultural Centre when it is completed. The Queensland Museum will re-open next month and the State Library will open at South Brisbane in about 18 months. Those projects will be well serviced by rail.

The Minister is responsible for bus services. Assistance to rural areas is appreciated because it provides a service for pensioners and people in regional areas.

The Minister is involved in the control of air transport within the State. The Maroochy Airport is booming at the moment. The passenger figures are escalating at such a rate that the terminal is completely inadequate to service them, especially at week-ends and on holidays. The volume of air traffic will continue to rise as larger jets are able to land at the airport. No doubt, the Minister will be involved in the administration of services that operate to other parts of the State.

The topic of road safety is dear to everyone. The road safety campaigns have achieved a great reduction in the incidence of injury and loss of life on roads. Over the past 14 years, Queensland has been in line with overseas countries in halving the accident rate. The rate in all States of Australia is about the same as it is in other parts of the world. Queensland is one of the leading States in awareness of road safety.

The Defensive Driving Course is an important step. For many years in Japan, a similar defensive driving course was compulsory before a person could renew his driver's licence. The Queensland Government should investigate such a system. In Japan, if people did not complete a defensive driving course over five years, they were not allowed to renew their licence. Because of that, 10 per cent of the people did not renew their licences. Those people were elderly people or others who did not feel they could pass the test, so they did not bother to apply to renew the licence.

The school-crossing lollypop lady scheme is working very well. The demand on the Minister's resources to provide more school-crossing supervisors is an indication of that. In Canada, the lollypop-type service is drummed up into a pageant. Before the opening of the National Parliament in Ottawa, there is an annual parade or collection of people who are actively engaged in getting people safely across roads to school. They come from all the different Provinces of Canada.

Quite by chance, I was able to take part in that ceremony. The procession took four and a half hours to pass by the Parliament. Numerous teams of young people in uniform were part of the procession because they, too, were involved in assisting younger schoolchildren to cross roads and streets in safety. Many vehicles were used as a means of educating children about road safety. Scale models that could talk were presented as animal characters, and similar devices are available in Queensland. I saw little robots that could talk and scale models of police motor cycles that were also able to talk. I saw all kinds of devices operating there.

Mr Davis: Did you say robots?

Mr SIMPSON: I saw a robot dressed up as a policeman that used to walk around and answer questions. The children did not know that the voice of the character was provided by someone with a microphone who was out of sight but could see what was happening. That kind of promotion could be a form of education that is of benefit in road safety instruction, although it may be some time in the future before that can be introduced. It would be one way of recognising the contribution made by volunteer groups in promoting road safety in schools, and it would be a way of highlighting the whole road safety message.

I inform the Committee that at the annual meeting of the Cooroy branch of the Country Women's Association, the State vice-president commended the Minister for

accepting the suggestion that reflective tape should be used on railway wagons. Members of the association are delighted that the Minister has implemented a scheme to make the reflectorised labelling of wagons effective and that \$200,000 has been set aside for that purpose. I convey to the Minister the praise of the members for taking that action.

The Minister is also responsible for transportation of passengers by boats and ferries. The use of waterways will play a large part in transportation in this State in the future. Queensland is blessed with an extensive system of waterways, and I would be interested to know what the feasibility study of the area between Brisbane and the Gold Coast has recommended in terms of the services that can be provided.

I believe that more flexibility could be introduced into regulations that apply to licensed tour-operators who are endeavouring to provide innovative services for tourists. At the moment, their activities tend to be overly regulated because they are confined to a set route. If the tour operators were able to operate within certain guide-lines rather than being confined to a set route, they could be more receptive to the needs of tourists. In keeping with the philosophy that underpins the administration by the Minister of his portfolio, I believe that a similar framework could be applied to the operation of tour vessels owned by operators who are interested in providing a variety of services for people wishing to enjoy a holiday with a difference. I think it is important for tour-operators to be able to keep up with the latest trends, and I commend the Minister for the attitude he has adopted in the past.

I pay tribute to the Minister for his use of computer technology and up-to-date equipment. The Minister is most responsive to the problems brought to him by members of Parliament. Officers of the Railway Department and the Department of Transport—particularly the section that provides bus services for schools that require constant adjustment to meet the ever-changing demands of an area as diversified as the Sunshine Coast—for the helpfulness and constant support provided to honourable members.

In conclusion, I take pleasure in supporting the Estimates presented to the Committee by the Minister. They reflect management and performance principles of a free enterprise Government in this State that are no doubt the envy of the other States.

Mr MACKENROTH (Chatsworth) (4.45 p.m.): Today, I wish to speak about the unnecessary traumas and hardships being placed on residents of my electorate by the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the Railway Department.

The proposal to build a railway line from the Darling Downs to the port of Brisbane first came to public attention in early 1984. However, investigation by the Gumdale-Chandler Railway Protest Committee indicates that the proposal had been around for a considerable period before that time. In fact, costings and planning by the Railway Department had been carried out long before the proposal was leaked to the media. Therefore, the question that needs to be asked is: Why does the Minister and his department refuse to make public any information about the proposal?

Let us be honest. The Minister for Transport is not backward when it comes to seeking publicity. The Minister has ensured that he has appeared in every advertisement the Railway Department places on television.

The Minister, to ensure that he kept himself in the public eye, had the Railway Department transport two electric locomotives by road to the Exhibition so the public could see his name on the front of one of them. Unfortunately, he was embarrassed when it was disclosed that the train that was named after him was in central Queensland and he had ordered the Department to take his name off that train and place it on the one at the Exhibition.

The Minister has attended many official openings, particularly in this election year. I almost thought he was having an official opening for every new sleeper placed on the Lota to Cleveland extension. I think so far there have been four official functions for 10 km of line. The point I am trying to make is that the Transport Minister tries to convey an impression that he is working and getting on with the job. But when it comes

to talking to people who will be affected by his department, the Minister is nowhere to be seen.

The Gumdale-Chandler Railway Protest Committee wrote to Mr Lane in July 1984 seeking a meeting. It was not until July 1986, two years later, that the Minister agreed to meet members of the committee. Perhaps the Minister moves as fast as some of his trains. During the two-year period the committee endeavoured to obtain as much information as possible. At first the Minister tried to say the proposal was only a concept. I will now quote a letter from the Minister to the committee written in July 1984.

It states—

“I have received your letter of 19th July, 1984, regarding a proposed railway line from Acacia Ridge to the port of Brisbane at Fisherman Islands.

This matter is at present in a very preliminary stage. What exists is the concept for an alternative route to the port of Brisbane should goods traffic on the existing railway reach a stage where it interfered with the running of the suburban passenger services.

Should a decision be made to construct an alternative rail link to the port, it would be necessary for detailed surveys to be undertaken. During the course of these surveys, consideration would be given to the effect on local properties. Furthermore, before any new railway may be constructed, it must be approved by Parliament.

All these procedures permit ample opportunity for the lodging of objections.”

The Minister stated in his letter that the railway line was in a very preliminary stage and detailed surveys would have to be taken. However, the story in the *Sunday Sun* on 24 June 1984, one month before the Minister's letter, should be considered.

It states—

“Brisbane City Council aldermen last week studied one of several routes proposed for a rail line connecting the city's southern suburbs with port facilities at Fisherman Islands.

The plan was given to the council by officers of the Transport Policy Committee, made up of representatives from the State Transport, Railways and Main Roads Departments.

The route outlines a corridor stretching from the northern boundaries of Parkinson through to the port of Brisbane.

The proposed line passes through the suburbs of Calamvale, Stretton, Kuraby, Eight Mile Plains, Rochedale, Mackenzie, Burbank, Chandler, Belmont, Gumdale, Tingalpa, Wynnum West, Hemmant and Lytton.”

I also refer to a later statement by the Premier in *The Courier-Mail* on 9 October 1984. That statement says—

“Sir Joh said the line would run direct to Gatton and south around Brisbane city to a new port at the mouth of the Brisbane River.

He would not outline the suburbs affected by the Brisbane diversion but said they were properly planned.”

Those statements clearly show that the railway line was more advanced than being in a very preliminary stage. In fact my information is that surveys had already been completed by the Railway Department.

The Minister also stated in his letter that there would be ample opportunity for the lodging of objections. What opportunity? There exists no opportunity whatsoever in State law for someone to object to the building of a railway line. Certainly the mechanism exists to object to the amount of compensation offered if a property is resumed, but there is no opportunity to object or receive compensation if a property is situated beside the railway line.

Mr Lane: Are you objecting now?

Mr MACKENROTH: Yes, I am.

Mr Lane: There you are. There is an opportunity. Their representatives object in Parliament.

Mr MACKENROTH: Is the Minister suggesting that that is the only opportunity those people have?

Mr Lane: One of the opportunities.

Mr MACKENROTH: What opportunity do they have to object outright to your proposal?

Mr Lane: They have been to see me about it.

Mr MACKENROTH: I know they have. I said that earlier.

Mr Lane: And they objected.

Mr MACKENROTH: Can they take the Minister to court?

Mr Lane: Of course they can.

Mr MACKENROTH: They cannot, and the Minister knows they cannot.

The Minister further stated that before any new railway line is constructed it must be approved by Parliament. The Minister knows as well as I do that if Cabinet approves this railway line, the National Party members in this Parliament will simply rubber stamp the proposal as they do with every proposal or piece of legislation brought before the Parliament.

While the Minister was informing the protest committee that surveys would have to be undertaken, the committee was asking local residents to contact the Railway Department and ask if their properties would be affected. Through the information obtained by this method, the committee was able to fairly accurately plot the proposed route. Once the Railway Department realised what the committee was doing, it refused to give any further information.

As I have shown, the Minister attempted to convey to the committee in July 1984 that planning for a new railway line had not proceeded very far. How far from the truth could that be?

I will quote from a letter, which I will table, written on 21 September 1982 from a Mr A. J. Shaw, Assistant Director, Financial Assessment Branch, Federal Department of Transport to Mr G. L. Boyd, Director, Planning and Development, Queensland Railways. The letter relates to a study undertaken by the Federal department into the provision of a standard gauge line to the new port of Brisbane. The letter in part states—

“As we understand it, you will provide the following information to us as soon as it is available.

The time profiles of actual track maintenance resource costs incurred (e.g. excluding any interest charges) for the following options:

- a new standard gauge track with traffic of 0.4.M.T.P.A.
- a new dual gauge single track with 0.4.M.T.P.A. freight and 5.M.T.P.A. coal and a new narrow gauge single track with only 5.M.T.P.A. coal.
- additional maintenance costs incurred through dual gauging both existing suburban lines to Lytton junction.”

I will also table a letter written on 7 July 1981 from Mr A. J. Shaw to Mr B. H. Kane, Senior Planning Officer, Queensland Railways. This letter requested the Queensland Railways to supply certain information relating to standard gauge access to the port of Brisbane.

I will quote part of that letter. Question 1 states—

“1. Railway Construction Costs

Standard gauge access alternatives under consideration are:—

- (a) via the existing narrow gauge alignment from Park Road to Fisherman Islands
- (b) on a new alignment running through ‘open’ country connecting with the existing standard gauge line south of Acacia Ridge.

We propose to assess these alternatives against the ‘base’ case of transshipping cargo between gauges at Acacia Ridge and using existing narrow gauge track to transport cargo between Acacia Ridge and Fisherman Islands.

Assessment of the alternative routes and the main options within them against the base case requires cost estimates for the following work:—

- (a) construction of a single, standard gauge track next to the existing narrow gauge alignment
 - (i) Park Road to Lytton Junction
 - (ii) Lytton Junction to Fisherman Islands.
- (b) provision of standard gauge access to Fisherman Islands by converting existing narrow gauge tracks to dual gauge
 - (i) Park Road to Lytton Junction
 - (ii) Lytton Junction to Fisherman Islands (please advise if it would be feasible to operate passenger/cargo trains on the Park Road-Lytton Junction line if only one track were converted to dual gauge).
- (c) construction of a new standard gauge track on a new alignment from Fisherman Islands connecting with the existing standard gauge line south of Acacia Ridge
- (d) the additional cost of dual gauging the track on the alignment in (c) should a narrow gauge track be constructed on this alignment
- (e) any capital expenditure that might be saved on the existing narrow gauge tracks between Park Road and Fisherman Islands should a dual gauge or separate standard gauge track be provided (on either alignment).”

In question 9, which related to maps, the following request was made—

“As discussed, please provide maps showing the major features of the standard gauge routes.”

So, in 1981 the Federal Department of Transport, as discussed with officers of the Railway Department, was asking the Railway Department to supply it with the maps that it had. Yet, in 1984 the Minister was saying to people who live in the Gumdale/Chandler area that the proposed route was only a concept and was at a very preliminary stage.

This letter proves that three years earlier, maps had already been produced for this railway line and that those maps were supplied to the Federal Department of Transport.

When the Gumdale-Chandler Railway Protest Committee asked that those maps be supplied to it under the Freedom of Information Act, the Federal Department of Transport refused to supply them because the Railway Department would not allow those maps to be made public.

If the Minister has any maps at all outlining the route of this proposed railway line, he should make them public immediately so that the people who live in the Gumdale/Chandler area and the other areas that will be affected by it can see exactly where this National Party Government intends to put a coal rail line and whether their properties will be affected. Those people will then be able to make up their minds as to who they intend to vote for in the election later this year.

The covering letter asking for that information stated the following—

“Thank you for giving us a good understanding of the implications of extending standard gauge rail into the Fisherman Islands complex. We now have a much better idea of the important areas of focus, and the reality of different options.”

These letters that I will table clearly show that the Queensland Railway Department was planning as early as July 1981 a new railway line to the port of Brisbane. Surely, if that is the case, people who are to be affected deserve to know what is going on.

There are two main reasons why this National Party Government is intent on proceeding with this railway line. Firstly, the Government wants to use the port of Brisbane to export coal from the Surat Basin. Secondly, the Government wants the coal project to subsidise the cost of building the line to enable primary producers on the Darling Downs to more readily get their produce to the port.

Subject to overseas markets, the projected possible tonnage of coal that could be transported on the new railway line is 11.9 million tonnes per annum. The total tonnage that can be transported over the present system is one million tonnes per annum.

Allowing for empty trains returning to the coal-fields, it is estimated that the transport of 12 million tonnes per annum is equal to 13 hours of train traffic passing any given point within a 24-hour period. To achieve that, it will be necessary to close crossroads and to build viaducts over main roads.

Already the Tingalpa/Belmont area in my electorate has been split in two by the building of the new Gateway Arterial Road. Now the Government plans to split it even further by building a railway line approximately one kilometre away through the Gumdale/Chandler area.

I state now quite clearly that I am opposed to that railway line, and that the Labor Party is opposed to it. In fact, the Labor Party spokesman on transport has made it clear that a future Labor Government will not proceed with that project. It is not as if no other alternative is available. In fact, in 1981 costings were done of transporting coal from the Surat Basin.

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* a table relating to these costings.

Leave granted.

TABLE 2.1

JULY 1981 BRIGALOW JOINT VENTURE
 CSR LIMITED, ENERGY DIVISION
 SUMMARY COST TABLE
 PORT AND RAILWAY WORKS
 STUDY OF POTENTIAL PORT SITES
 BRISBANE TO GLADSTONE

ITEM	Port	Red Rocks		Wreck Rocks		Elliott Heads		Wide Bay		North Bribie		Fisherman Islands	
		334 km		327 km		356 km		356 km		436 km		476 km	
	Route Length	10	25	10	25	10	25	10	25	10	25	10	25
	Mt/a												
Land Purchase, Earth-works, Bridges, Track-work, Signalling, Etc.		240.62	271.77	237.17	267.99	220.43	245.64	241.76	267.29	294.84	324.71	362.31	403.99
Rolling Stock, Locomotives, Wagons, Locotrol		107.87	278.87	105.71	272.78	115.96	296.68	125.63	321.73	142.42	362.87	149.44	380.50
Rolling Stock, Maintenance, Locomotives and Wagons		4.23	10.93	4.14	10.69	4.55	11.26	4.92	12.60	5.58	14.22	5.85	14.91
Tracking Maintenance Equipment		6.88	17.20	6.74	16.84	7.33	18.33	7.99	19.98	9.02	22.56	9.48	23.69
Staff Accommodation, Housing and Barracks		12.21	27.50	12.21	27.50	9.43	22.52	9.20	22.30	11.28	28.40	12.22	29.89
SUB-TOTAL RAILWAYS		371.81	606.27	355.97	595.80	357.70	594.43	389.52	643.90	463.14	752.76	539.30	852.98
Stockyard Civil Works		18.54	29.15	13.45	24.06	16.09	26.70	22.90	33.52	23.16	33.78	15.72	24.69
Materials Handling Stacking Reclamation		48.93	82.13	46.42	79.61	46.95	80.14	47.35	80.54	46.95	80.14	48.54	74.85
Services & Buildings		10.18	12.37	10.18	12.37	10.18	12.37	10.18	12.37	10.18	12.37	8.73	11.37
Vessel Loading Facilities		38.19	71.60	44.92	79.77	72.17	112.41	42.50	76.94	56.30	94.05	19.35	44.70
Dredging		..	..	..	..	31.10	32.11	16.33	18.74	15.55	18.08	92.02	95.39
Tug Harbour		12.50	12.50	12.50	12.50	2.50	2.50	12.50	12.50	2.50	2.50	..	..
SUB-TOTAL PORT		128.34	207.75	127.47	208.31	178.99	266.23	151.76	234.61	154.64	240.92	184.36	251.00
GRAND TOTAL		500.15	814.02	493.44	804.11	536.69	860.66	541.28	876.51	617.78	993.68	123.66	1103.98

Mr MACKENROTH: It can clearly be seen from the table that the proposal in 1981 to build a line to Wreck Rock near Bundaberg would be \$230m cheaper than the Fisherman Islands proposal. All members should ask why the Government would proceed with its proposal when it is clear that it will cost \$230m more. However, if that figure is inflated to 1986 dollars, the extra cost would be more in the vicinity of \$330m. That railway line would then be a bigger scandal than the Tarong Power Station, which cost the Queensland tax-payers an extra \$259m—an extra cost that all Queenslanders are now paying for with higher electricity charges.

The time for the Government to scrap that line is now. It would save \$330m and allow the people living in my electorate to get on with living their lives in peace.

Whereupon the honourable member laid on the table the documents referred to.

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (5 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Transport Estimates for the financial year 1986-87. I shall confine myself to a discussion of the railways.

Let it be firmly and clearly stated that the Queensland National Party Government has modernised Queensland's rail system to such an extent that it is now the envy of almost every other State. Not only has the system been modernised, but also it has been brought to a stage of efficiency not dreamed of when Opposition members occupied the Treasury benches in Queensland. That was three decades ago and the Opposition members are still thinking in the frame of mind of members at that time. They seem to think that time has stood still for 30 years.

Mr Menzel: Neil Brown thinks otherwise though.

Mr HENDERSON: Yes, I know that. He thinks things are going great in the Sunshine State.

The Queensland Government has placed the Railway Department on a sound footing and steered it in the right direction. I have no hesitation in stating that the present Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) has put his total effort into making the system self-reliant. He has pursued the operations of the railway system with a dedication not displayed very often in any walk of public life anywhere or at any time. His success in the economic management of Queensland Railways compares starkly with the economic mismanagement of the whole of Australia by Hawke, Keating and Walsh.

It has been pointed out that the rail system of Queensland ended the 1985 financial year with an operating profit of \$107m. That in itself was a tremendous achievement. Queensland must be one of the very few places on this planet where railways run at a profit. The first operating profit to be made occurred in the financial year 1972-73 when cash receipts exceeded expenditure by a comparatively small \$4.9m. For the financial year ended June this year, the operating profit increased to \$117.8m. That figure must be compared with what is happening in other States.

According to *The Railways of Australia Committee Yearbook*, the Victorian railway system recorded a deficit of \$462m in the 1985-85 financial year. The New South Wales State Rail Authority had a gross revenue of \$938m, but its working expenditure was \$1.030 billion, thus giving an operating loss of \$365m. South Australia, which is another Labor-controlled State, vests responsibility for bus and tram services, as well as railways in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, in its Department of Transport. It operated at a loss of more than \$33m. It must be remembered that the Commonwealth Government now runs part of the South Australian rail system.

Mr Menzel: Why is it that the Liberal Party always attacks Queensland? Why didn't Mr Innes mention that when he was comparing the operations?

Mr HENDERSON: The answer to that is that there is a coalition in this Parliament, but it is a coalition in Opposition.

The West Australian Government Railway recorded a loss of some \$16m. Queensland railways is a long way out in front in Australian rail systems and full credit must

go to this Government, and especially to the Minister, for this outstanding performance. The Brisbane suburban rail services have been electrified and there has been a massive increase in patronage of 60 per cent since the new services were introduced in 1979. That figure illustrates how well the public has accepted the electric railway system in Brisbane. It is significant that a public transport system can record such a massive increase in patronage—that is 60 per cent since 1979—because most people today feel that public transport systems do not have a great deal to offer.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr HENDERSON: That is just not a true statement. The southern boundary of my electorate contains Banoon, Altandi and Sunnybank Railway Stations, and there are 40 steps more at those railway stations than there are at Brunswick Street Railway Station.

It was as a consequence of the initiatives of the Queensland Government and, in particular, the Minister for Transport that the whole rail system was revamped and modernised. As we look further ahead and into the future, we can see the day when Queensland Railways will probably be the only enterprise in the world operating as a viable transport business without subsidy from the tax-payers. Record freight haulages are presently being maintained and future requirements have been very, very carefully planned.

Every member of this Assembly would be well aware of the \$1 billion main line electrification program presently being carried out in this State. It is the world's largest railway electrification project.

Mr Davis: I think you have to be fair. A Liberal Transport Minister had a lot to do with it.

Mr HENDERSON: Recently, on television I saw an advertisement in which the Liberal Party claimed credit for the Gateway Bridge. The only link-up in that credit was that Queensland had a Liberal Treasurer at the time. Of course, the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) was delighted to learn that the Liberals were claiming credit for his bridge.

Mr Davis: In all fairness, wouldn't you say that the Liberal Transport Minister would have started this off?

Mr HENDERSON: Mr Lane was a former Liberal Minister; but, boy, has he flowered since he joined the National Party! He has blossomed forth in all his glory.

The electrification project will provide a further update in Queensland's rail services and add to the State's economy as a whole. It was only last Saturday that the Premier officially commissioned the first section of Stage 1 of the recently electrified railway system between Gladstone and Rockhampton. With that section completed and the Government's decision to electrify the system between Caboolture and Gladstone, Queensland Railways will have an all-electric railway system between Brisbane and Rockhampton.

I strongly endorse the Minister's remarks in his presentation of the Estimates that he would be horrified to see the railways handed over to the Labor Party. I would add that any fair-minded Queenslanders would shudder at the very thought of that happening. Looking on the positive side, I say here and now that that will not happen. That will be confirmed in the latest Gallup poll that will be published tomorrow.

Finally, I thank the Commissioner for Railways and all his staff for the efforts they have put into making the rail system a more viable and efficient enterprise and an integral part of Queensland's sound and solid economic performance under this National Party Government. I commend the Minister. I commend the department.

Mr Milliner: What about random breath-testing?

Mr HENDERSON: I am rather pleased that the honourable member has mentioned that. I would like to comment on random breath-testing, particularly in view of the considerable amount of criticism levelled by Opposition members.

A number of members of the Opposition and the media seem to be totally convinced that the single, outstanding characteristic of a random breath-testing program is the use of "booze buses". In other words, if a "booze bus" is located in a street and traffic on a main highway is stopped, with a squad of police testing everyone, it is suggested that that is random breath-testing. In fact, that is just not true. Random breath-testing means that police can stop anyone, anywhere, at any time, and that they have the power to test him for alcohol. That is precisely the situation that exists in Queensland. I am delighted to say that that system is working.

It is interesting to record that in New South Wales recently, as I mentioned in this Chamber during the Budget debate, a massive increase has occurred in road fatalities. That State had the highest increase in the nation, despite the existence of random breath-testing. With the "booze bus" random breath-testing technique, people use devices such as CB radios to circumvent the whole system and therefore avoid being picked up in police nets. In fact, in Sydney it is almost a game because people tell all their mates where the "booze buses" are located and therefore avoid them altogether.

I did not really want to speak about random breath-testing in Queensland; I wanted to speak about the railways. I conclude again by saying that I sincerely commend the Minister for excellent performance and leadership in his department.

I come back to the comment I made earlier that since Mr Lane joined the Government as a member of the National Party, he has shown what a brilliant and capable administrator he is. That is probably because he has been given direction and because he has been able to exercise his obvious competency and leadership ability. I also commend the State Transport Department. I am certain that Queenslanders appreciate the work being done by it.

Finally, I wish to make an off-the-cuff comment on electric trains. Last year in Sydney, I attended a seminar on town-planning and its problems. A number of problems, such as schools in metropolitan areas, were examined.

We particularly analysed the public transport system and took a train from Central Railway Station in Sydney to Campbelltown. We travelled on Sydney's electric train system. I have never seen a more dilapidated, run-down, filthy and dirty rail system anywhere in Australia. The metropolitan electric train system in Sydney is an utter disgrace not only to the people of Sydney but also to Australia. When one compares the Queensland system with the Sydney rail system, one will realise that every point that I made in my speech is true. Queenslanders can feel very proud of their electric train system. It is the finest in Australia, and it is certainly the most efficient and best run.

Once again I commend the Minister and his department.

Mr KRUGER (Murrumbidgee) (5.10 p.m.): I must take umbrage at the statements made by the honourable member for Mount Gravatt in relation to the run-down condition of the electric trains in Sydney. He boasted about the electrification system within Brisbane and its surrounds.

Obviously, the new trains and the electrification system are up-to-date and efficient. However, when one researches the history of this matter and reads *Hansard*, one will find that many years ago electrification was almost introduced in Brisbane. If electrification had gone ahead at that time, our railways would possibly be in the same run-down condition as those in Sydney. The Minister is basically saying that, although suburban lines in Brisbane are electrified, Queensland is a long way behind what would have been achieved if electrification had been introduced many years ago.

The electrification of the railway lines has resulted in an excellent rail service. I have travelled in trains several times since electrification. That is not because I am a snob or a toff and would not ride in the old-type trains. It is simply that those old-type

trains were not attractive to the paying customers. The speed with which distances can now be covered makes the railways more attractive. I am pleased to be one of the few people who were able to attend the opening ceremony of the extension of the electrification program from Petrie to Caboolture. At least half of that distance of rail line is situated in the electorate of Murrumba—or the old electorate of Murrumba, because the position will change after the State election with the extension of the gerrymander into that area. Although the trip from Petrie to Caboolture was slow on that day, because it was opened a couple of days before it was fully on line——

Mr Lane: Whom do you predict will be the member?

Mr KRUGER: I will certainly be the member, but I will be a little closer to Brisbane.

I was pleased to be associated with the extension from Petrie to Caboolture because I represent so much of that area. In fact, if it had not been for my efforts, that extension may not have been carried out. However, I am pleased that the Minister accepted my role in that regard.

As I was saying, even though the trip between Petrie and Caboolture took a little longer than the normal run, it was a very enjoyable trip. The advantages of the electrification of that line can be seen when one examines the development areas of Morayfield and Burpengary.

The electrification of that line means that those people who live 20 or 30 miles further out from Petrie are still arriving in Brisbane within the same time as it used to take to travel from Petrie to Brisbane.

I do not believe that any great credit can be afforded to the Minister in relation to electrification. I believe it is just a sign of the times. However, it certainly does make the transport system work.

I now wish to refer to a book that I read recently in relation to a Miss Petrie. Honourable members speak about the Petrie line and the connection to Petrie, and the subsequent extension from Petrie. I wanted to read the story of Miss Petrie that was told in *Before the Turn of the Century* in relation to the rail line to Redcliffe. No doubt the Minister will be surprised that I have raised the question of the rail line to Redcliffe. That matter has been discussed for almost 100 years. However, there is still no rail service to Redcliffe.

Many honourable members may not realise that one-third of Redcliffe city is located within my electorate. I have represented the people of my electorate well over the years, but no result has been achieved in relation to the provision of a rail service to Redcliffe.

For the benefit of those honourable members who have not seen the booklet that was put out by the Metropolitan Transit Authority in about 1977, I remind them that the publication of the booklet was hurried through. The study that was undertaken was done quickly, for obvious reasons, and I will outline those reasons in more detail in a moment.

I will not repeat items that I have raised previously. Honourable members need only read *Hansard* to realise that I have been pushing this barrow for some time.

Page 8-4 of that book, reads—

“8.2.1 PETRIE CONNECTION

Market value of land was generalised as follows:

\$2,000—\$2,500/Ha. east of the Bald Hills Burpengary Motorway

\$4,500—\$7,500/Ha. west of the Motorway except for land between Petrie Station and Dohles Rock Road which is presently zoned industrial and the market value of which was assessed as \$30,000—\$50,000/Ha.”

The reason why that was valued at that amount is that APM owned the property. I am not complaining about APM digging in, because the proposal would have affected some of its land close to its mill. I point out, as I have in the past, that the APM land close

to its mill has been a buffer zone and has been considered by the Pine Rivers Shire Council and everybody else as a buffer zone. I am not quite sure how those values were arrived at, and I do not think that anybody will ever be sure about that.

I want to point out again the delays that have occurred since Miss Petrie's book referred to the railway line to Redcliffe. I want to refer to a couple of articles in the local papers.

In *The Redcliffe Herald* of 25 July 1979, an article stated—

“Ratepayers may have to foot some of the bill for the immediate construction of a Redcliffe rail link, according to the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen.

At the National Party Conference in Bundaberg last week, the Premier said Local Government support would be sought for the funding of electrified rail services to Redcliffe, Redlands and the Gold Coast.”

Of course, at that stage, there was no talk about electrification of the railway line to Redcliffe, anyway. The article continued—

“The Treasurer, Dr. L. Edwards, Transport Minister, Mr. K. Tomkins, and the Local Government Minister, Mr. R. Hinze, will be requested to explore all avenues of a joint funding arrangement with the councils concerned.

‘I will request the Ministers to treat the scheme as a matter of urgency with a view to immediate implementation,’ said Mr. Bjelke-Petersen.”

That was in 1979. If that is an immediate result, I would hate to see a slow result. It seems to be a long delay.

Then the by-election was announced, and I have to quote this particular article—

“Joh woos votes with a railway

The National Party-led Queensland Government yesterday denied it was trying to buy votes in Saturday's Redcliffe by-election with promises of a \$20 million rail link.

But comments by the Minister for Transport, Mr Tomkins, and the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, make it clear prospects of the rail link's going ahead hinge heavily on the way the people of Redcliffe vote.”

Honourable members have witnessed that stunt from the Premier before. He did it in Mount Isa and he has done it in other places. He says, “You will get your rail link, depending on how you vote.” At that time, the result of the by-election was that young John Houghton did not get up, but Terry White did. It would appear to me that, because of the rift in the ranks of the National Party and the Liberal Party at the time, the proposal was held back because Terry White was a Liberal Party man and not a National Party man. That is not the way that government should operate.

I want to point out some more exciting parts of that story. It continued—

“Mr Tomkins and Mr Bjelke-Petersen yesterday unveiled proposals for the new rail spur to link the peninsula suburbs of Redcliffe, north of Brisbane, with the existing line to Petrie.

Mr Bjelke-Petersen said he expected that a brief by engineering consultants engaged by the Government would be taken to Cabinet for approval in about four weeks.

Mr Tomkins said ‘I think you will find that it will go ahead. It is a proposal that the Redcliffe electorate will accept very well indeed.’

Mr Tomkins predicted that the National Party would retain Redcliffe, vacated by the former Speaker of Parliament, Mr Jim Houghton.

He said he thought Redcliffe voters had a ‘very good chance’ of seeing the rail link being built.”

There again, the Premier is saying, “If you vote for John Houghton, then you will get a rail link.” That was the attitude of the Government at the time.

I will not go into details, but the rest of the article goes into things that I said at the time. However, the article did state—

“Mr Joe Kruger (A.L.P., Murrumba) said yesterday the Government’s proposal for the rail link was nothing more than an election gimmick.”

In 1986, another election is approaching and I would not be surprised if something else was said about the rail link and some promises made.

Money for resumption of land has been made available in the Estimates. I would like the Minister to inform me how much land is still to be resumed. There cannot be much. According to last year’s Budget, only one or two pieces of land were still to be resumed. I would have thought that those resumptions would have been finalised. If they are not, I would like to be informed. Perhaps at a later date the Minister could advise me which pieces of land are being disputed. Although I complained bitterly about the fact that the railway line to Redcliffe that has been promised over the years has not come to fruition, I am very pleased that the corridor is basically surveyed and land available. Somewhere, sometime, a Government will have to construct that rail link.

I wish to outline the reasons why I believe that the rail link is important. The Petrie Railway Station caters for many of the people who live on the north side. Development is occurring in French’s Forest, and people who live in the Kallangur area park their cars at the Petrie Railway Station. It will be obvious to anyone who wishes to inspect the facilities that the space provided for car-parking is inadequate. I give credit where it is due: it is not very long ago that the available car-parking space was increased considerably. In spite of that, the very day that the new facility was opened, it was overcrowded. Anyone who arrived after half past seven in the morning was not able to obtain a parking space.

One of two things will have to happen. Either the Minister will have to construct a major car-parking station at the Petrie Railway Station or the rail link will have to be extended to Kippa-Ring. One alternative is that the construction of a major car-parking facility at the Petrie Railway Station will accommodate passengers from the French’s Forest, Dakabin and Kallangur areas. I have had correspondence from the Railway Department about the Dakabin Railway Station that services the Dakabin High School and various other activities that take place in the area. The other alternative involves a serious examination of the built-up area to the north of the bridge that crosses the Narangba Road. Taking into account the development that will occur in French’s Forest and to the north of Kallangur, it may be sensible to plan for an additional railway station to be constructed. If that were to happen, the overflow of vehicles requiring car-parking space at the Petrie Railway Station could be accommodated because land is available for the construction of a car-park.

The second alternative involves continuing the rail link to Kippa-Ring. Land is available for the construction of railway stations and car-parking facilities at Kallangur, Mango Hill and Rothwell. There is also a good deal of land available at Kippa-Ring. Parking problems could be overcome by the construction of railway stations at the places I have mentioned and the continuation of the spur line. If the Minister were to take into consideration the costs of extending the spur line and the costs of providing adequate car-parking facilities at railway stations such as Petrie, he would realise that the cost structure is a little more attractive than an examination at face value would indicate. The Minister ought to give serious consideration to the alternatives I have suggested.

I mention briefly that for some time the Kallangur bypass road has been proposed. Because of the bottle-neck that occurs, the commercial sector would be one of the few places in which the shop-owners of any district have accepted that a bypass road would be advantageous. Transport and traffic problems in the area are increasing. Although it would be a fairly costly construction, the people who own shops in the shopping centre realise that the area is becoming overcrowded and believe that the solution is a bypass road. You, Mr Menzel, would be aware from your personal experience in the Babinda area that when there is talk of a bypass road, people say that it will kill the prosperity of shopping centres and commercial enterprises. In contrast to that, the people in

Kallangur believe that the provision of a bypass road will boost commercial activity and overcome many of the problems that are now being experienced.

In the past I have mentioned problems associated with the construction of ramps on the road to Dohles Rocks. I understand that the Minister for Welfare Services, Youth and Ethnic Affairs (Mrs Chapman) has been very keen, for fairly obvious reasons, to have them constructed. In spite of that, the fact is that any of the suggestions I have mentioned could ease the problems being experienced in Kallangur.

I believe that construction of the bypass road should be mentioned today on behalf of the people who trade at the shopping centre and people generally in the area. Traffic lights have been installed, but that has not prevented accident after accident from occurring. Fortunately, the situation is not yet serious because the accidents have been of a minor nature; however, the stage has been reached at which something must be done. I ask the Minister to give careful consideration to the problems that I have outlined.

I turn my attention to the problems caused by the Houghton Highway. This morning, the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing (Mr Hinze) said that there were no problems because, on average, 26 000 vehicles a day cross the highway, although the optimum capacity of the highway is 35 000 vehicles a day. I point out that 20 000 vehicles cross the bridge every day in approximately an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. The remaining 6 000 that use the highway for the rest of the day create no problems at all.

I make the point that although the Houghton Highway is catering reasonably well, it is being linked with Redcliffe and Brighton in such a way that from both sides a four-lane highway will feed into what will be a three-lane bottle-neck on the Houghton Highway. Even though the Houghton Highway is the responsibility of the Minister for Local Government, it must also concern the Minister for Transport, as transport problems will have to be overcome. I believe that in the not-too-distant future the four-lane highway on both sides will have to be linked by four lanes across the water. I do not know when that will need to occur. I will not come out and madly say, "Look, the Houghton Highway is not doing fairly well today."

I know for a fact that one of my ex-colleagues, the Labor Party's transport spokesman, has had a look at this particular matter and he believes, and has stated quite clearly in the local papers, that the Labor Party, upon being elected, would open the old highway. Something has to be done in the near future. I am not saying that that is the answer or whether upgrading the new highway is the answer because facts and figures will have to be looked at.

Mr Milliner: It would be relatively inexpensive to reopen the old one because it is structurally quite sound. It would cost about \$2m and you would get 20 years' life out of it.

Mr KRUGER: For some time I have said that, too. I certainly cannot disagree with the honourable member for Everton. What I am saying is that, during my role as an Independent, I have not updated the figures.

Something has to be done about the connection between Redcliffe and Brighton. People will not be able to sit back for too much longer and tolerate four lanes on the north side, four lanes on the south side and three lanes connecting them. As honourable members would be aware, when traffic travels along a main road on which there is a narrow bridge, a bottle-neck occurs. At the Caloundra turnoff, where two lanes converged into one, problems arose. Those problems had to be overcome. One can talk about economics and whatever one likes. The present problems associated with the Houghton Highway will not be able to be tolerated for much longer.

I ask the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Local Government, Main Roads and Racing to get their heads together and make sure that the people of Redcliffe are considered because the connection has to be upgraded.

Mr HAMILL (Ipswich) (5.27 p.m.): Estimates debates are a very important part of the budgetary process of the Parliament. Unfortunately, what passes as an Estimates debate in this place does not do justice to the importance of the task which members of Parliament are asked to undertake.

I know that the Premier has spoken frequently of his view that every member of Parliament should be his own public accounts committee. Obviously, all members would realise that, given the constraints placed upon individual members in a debate such as this, such a proposition is totally ludicrous. In terms of these Estimates, I believe that a number of aspects ought properly be the subject of investigation by a public accounts committee. The sooner such a committee is established in this Parliament, the better.

Estimates are important as part of the process of accountability which this Parliament has to exercise in the scrutiny of the expenditure and raising of public funds. Members of Parliament have a duty to the public to properly and responsibly exercise their role. In this context I join with the criticism levelled at the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) by the honourable member for Everton (Mr Milliner), the Opposition spokesperson on transport, when he stated today—and quite correctly—that insufficient time has been given to honourable members to consider the full import of the Estimates of the Railway Department, the report only coming into the hands of members this morning shortly before the commencement of this debate.

When one considers that the Railway Department will be contributing to the revenue of this State to the tune of over \$1,000m this year, surely it is nothing short of scandalous that the Parliament should give such little consideration to such an important component of the overall budgetary allocations of the State.

Initially, I wish to deal with the Railway Department and I wish to concentrate particularly on the receipt side of the ledger. For the year 1985-86, receipts for the Railway Department grew at the rate of some 10.5 per cent to \$963.4m—quite a considerable sum. For 1986-87 the Estimates reveal that the estimated receipts shall be \$1,008.7m. Of course, one can see that the rate of growth experienced in 1985-86 is not expected to be carried forward into the current year. Actually, the rate of growth in receipts would appear to be less than 5 per cent.

Certainly, honourable members opposite have made great play of the fact that the Queensland Railways are operating in the black and that the Minister claimed a profit of \$117.8m. However, the report of the Railway Department reveals that the expectation for the current year is much lower. If one takes the claim of a profit at face value, it is quite an outstanding result for Queensland Railways, and no-one can take that away from the Railway Department.

The report of the department reveals a significant growth in metropolitan passenger journeys and in freight. Certainly the extension of metropolitan lines will facilitate continuing growth in passenger journeys in the metropolitan area. The report pointed out also that such an outstanding result did not carry forward in the number of long-distance passenger journeys, which actually suffered a significant decline of approximately 200 000 journeys over the last year. That seems to be a fact that ought to be of some concern to the department. Certainly in the context of developing tourism in our State, the department has put in place certain initiatives over the last year, with the development of the Queenslander service; but obviously that is not sufficient to arrest the continuing decline in the use of the State's railways for long-distance passenger journeys. In the context of Queensland, when one talks about long-distance passenger journeys, basically one is talking about tourism.

If one looks at the overall result of a profit of \$117.8m, one cannot get away from the fact that much of that profit has been derived from a direct contribution to the freights carried by Queensland Railways. The report of the department reveals that, in 1985-86, 73 598 622 tonnes of freight were carried by Queensland Railways. The breakdown of that figure is most instructive—80 per cent came from coal and coke freight and 9 per cent from the freighting of agricultural products and stock. That is an enormous gap. Other minerals accounted for 6.5 per cent, and general merchandise for 4 per cent.

The total contribution of the mining industry to freight tonnages of the Queensland Railways was almost 87 per cent. Coal is by far the greatest contributor to those tonnages.

The large profit that has led the Queensland Government to boast about its administration of the railways is really the result of heavy freighting of coal in what can only be described as a sort of a surcharge tax being placed upon the mining industry. That imposition is being used for general accounting purposes to show the remarkable result in revenue for Queensland Railways.

In 1984-85, according to the Australian Mining Industry Council estimate, Queensland Railways received \$352m in revenues over and above the costs that the State's railway system sustained through the transport of coal. In 1985-86, as tonnages increased, one would expect the figure to be higher. However, I might make the point—one that mining companies have repeatedly made to this Government—that, although increased tonnages will increase the amount of freight paid, the freight rates bear no relationship whatsoever to the profitability of those mining enterprises. So the mining industry has an additional burden—an additional tax—placed on it by this Government in an endeavour to balance its books—or at least to put the books of the Railway Department in the black.

I cite, as an example, Utah. In the year to May 1986, Utah paid Queensland Railways a total of \$259m in rail freights. That company has estimated the operating costs of the department for the freighting of its output at \$86m. That means that the Queensland Government profited by, or shall I say raked in revenue to the order of, \$142m from that operation alone. That is not a profit in the ordinary sense of the word. What it is, of course, is a super profit. It has an element of profit, certainly, but it is really a surcharge that cannot be properly called profit. In fact, it can only be called a tax—a tax upon the mining industry by a Government that prides itself as a low-tax Government.

That is an issue, of course, which affects the mining industry in my own area. The West Moreton coal-fields have also suffered because of the impost placed on their operations by a Government that seeks to tax the community stealthily—through rail freights, for example. Although it can be said that tonnages have increased, certainly expansion of the industry has halted. That can be seen quite clearly from the Estimates for the Railway Mineral Projects Fund.

Over a number of years the Railway Mineral Projects Fund has been used as a source for boosting the Capital Works Program of the Government. Of course, one has to realise that the moneys in that fund come from the mining industry. Those funds are used to pay for new lines and rolling-stock. That is another contribution of the industry to the revenue of the State which is then expended in the name of the Government. But, of course, the funds do not come from the Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The projections for the Railway Mineral Projects Fund for this year are a really sad story indeed. There is a major downturn in capital investment from the mining industry, which is indicative of the parlous state of the mining industry and the economy of the State as a whole.

In 1985-86 that fund had an appropriation of \$164.3. In the same year the sum of \$159m, or \$5.3m less than the amount appropriated, was expended. In 1986-87, this siphon from the mining industry will require \$51m. That is a significant drop. It is a clear barometer of new development in the mining industry in this State. It is no wonder that Queensland, with its narrow economic base of mining and agriculture, has been regarded throughout mainland Australia as the economically sick State of Australia.

I turn to other lucrative revenue-raising aspects revealed by the Estimates of the Transport Department. One could well ask, "When is revenue for services not a tax?" The answer has to be, "When it does not exceed the cost of providing the service." The Estimates reveal that this year the Transport Department will make significant contributions to consolidated revenue. Those Estimates contain a number of components such as fines for minor traffic breaches, licensing fees—not least of all, driver's licence renewals—and,

of course, licences for taxis which, in themselves, make a not insignificant contribution to the overall revenue-raising of the department.

In 1985-86 an item in the Consolidated Revenue Fund called "Licences and Permits—State Transport" showed a revenue of \$7,200,435. The projection for the coming year, 1986-87, is \$7,537,000. That is a small but handy increase for the Government.

The "Licences and Permits—Traffic Section" reflects quite a significant increase in the impost on the Queensland community, rising from receipts for last year of \$20,919,356 to projected income of \$25,790,000. That is an increase of approximately 25 per cent in taxes and charges levied upon the Queensland community by the Transport Department.

A clear example of that percentage increase can be seen in the increase in the fee for a driver's licence. A short time ago I compared notes with my colleagues about our licence renewals. The comparison is that in August 1985 the charge for a five-year licence renewal was \$12.50. One month later, it was \$13.50. Now, whether one does or does not have the photograph, the charge for a driver's licence renewal is \$23.50. People are not asking for a family portrait for their driver's licence. However, that cost escalation would indicate that people are paying much more than the cost of providing the photograph on the licence. Once again, the figures reveal a surcharge—a taxing component.

Page 9 of the Transport Department report contains a further illustration of the revenue. The report indicates that in 1985-86 the department's total contribution to the Consolidated Revenue Fund was a little over \$46m, almost \$2.5m of which came from the issue of new taxi licences. Perhaps, when the Minister replies, he could advise on the total number of new taxi licences issued last year and how those licences were issued across the State. In presenting his Estimates, the Minister mentioned Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and a couple of other centres. \$2.5m from new taxi licences is not a bad contribution to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The fees and charges reaped by the Department of Transport from the Queensland community under the Traffic Act increased by \$5.7m last year. That was an increase of 16 per cent, which is well ahead of the rate of inflation and further evidence of the significant rake-off this Government is receiving through what looks like the imposition of taxes and charges allegedly to cover the costs attendant in providing services.

I address the remainder of my remarks to the other side of the ledger—the expenditure side. The Department of Transport report has a number of items relating to the provision of transport interchanges, and one can only welcome these developments. I noted particularly the use of Australian Bicentennial Road Development funds and CEP funds, with State funding, to provide those much-needed and very welcome services. The table on page 41 illustrates the contributions. In 1984-85, State funds constituted \$1,378,000 and the Commonwealth fund constituted \$1,393,000. In 1985-86, the State provided \$2,393,000 and the Commonwealth provided \$1,777,000. That illustrates co-operation at two levels of Government, and there needs to be more of it.

On the matter of transport interchanges, I refer to an item on page 19 of the Queensland Railways report, which states—

"A projected shopping plaza over four city blocks at Ipswich involves the development of air space over Departmental land. Negotiations are proceeding regarding this \$120 million project."

I presume the figure quoted there was the figure that Kern Corporation Ltd was contributing to the overall redevelopment of the city of Ipswich. The Queensland Railways will be required to provide some works. All honourable members will be interested to find out the actual cost entailed in those works. Certainly the people of Ipswich would be most curious to find out. I am aware that bridgeworks will need to be undertaken in Nicholas Street, Ellenborough Street and Bremer Parade, the first one requiring the level of the bridge to be raised and provision to be made for the extra number of tracks to enable potential electrification further west. Ellenborough Street requires the replacement

of a bridge, the original bridge having been knocked down many years ago. A new bridge has to be provided in order to effect traffic flow.

Of principal interest to the people of Ipswich is the \$1.7m earmarked by the Commonwealth for a transit centre in the city of Ipswich. That is another example of co-operation between State and Federal Governments. There will be buses, both interstate and local, interchanging with trains, and there will be taxi ranks in association with the overall project. It will be of major significance in terms of the current redevelopment project that is occurring in central Ipswich and to which I referred to this Chamber last week when discussing the Ipswich Trades Hall Bill. The people of Ipswich would like to have firm guarantees from the Department of Transport that that \$1.7m will be allocated with dispatch in order for the transit system to be developed at the same time as the commercial rebirth of Ipswich is being effected by the Kern Corporation redevelopment of the central city area. I would welcome the Minister's comments on these matters when he replies to the debate.

The other item I wish to refer to is one which many people would find interesting and some might even find rather disturbing. It relates to the advertising budget that has been well remarked upon in the community. The advertising has featured the Minister for Transport prominently, and one might suggest that the intensity of the campaign seems to be increasing as the polling date approaches.

In the *Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure*, an item under the Department of Transport reads "Contingencies—Administration, Equipment and Incidentals". In 1985-86, \$6,816,200 was earmarked for that item. The expenditure in that year exceeded the appropriation by almost \$350m, to bring it up to \$7,169,986. It is interesting to note that in 1986-87 that same item will have an expenditure of \$10,542,700, or a 50 per cent increase on the expenditure of the previous year.

When one is talking about an increase of approximately \$3.5m, surely the people of Queensland are entitled to know where that money is going. Is it going to promotion of the Minister, or is it going to promotion of the Minister as part of the promotion of some departmental services? The people of Queensland are entitled to know. I would expect the Minister to address that item when he replies to this debate. If he does that, we may be coming some little way towards achieving the goal that all members must surely take to heart in an Estimates debate, that is, to scrutinise properly and to make accountable to those people who return us to this Assembly the Ministers and their departments in their revenue-raising and the expenditure of not ministerial funds, not departmental funds, but public funds—the funds of the people of Queensland.

Mr McPHIE (Toowoomba North) (5.47 p.m.): I have examined the reports of the Transport Department and the Railway Department that have been issued for the 1985-86 year. I have gone carefully through the Estimates for the Transport Department for the coming year. I offer my sincere congratulations to the Minister and his departmental head not only on an excellent record that goes back for a number of years but also on what is contained in the Estimates and on the way that they are keeping up the tempo, the work and the development that is so necessary for this State.

One issue that has been highlighted by many members who have spoken during this debate is the railways, which is a magnificent organisation in Queensland and one that is part of a very large network in Australia. All the other States are undertaking big development programs to update their railway services. The record and service of Australian railways would compare very favourably with that of any other railway system in the world. There is no doubt that the Queensland railway system is the best in Australia and that it has achieved a tremendous record.

The electrification program that is being undertaken has attracted great publicity. A very big electrification program in the coal-fields is well established and under way. The electrification of the Brisbane urban links is almost complete. A move is being made to electrify the railway system to Townsville. The first part of that is well under way. The Minister should be congratulated on his foresight. It is a credit to the commissioner

and his predecessor, who showed initiative and provided excellent management in getting this tremendous undertaking under way so successfully.

I was very disappointed to hear the member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) criticise the opening program for the Gladstone to Rockhampton service. He seemed to treat that with a certain amount of frivolity. It is a key link in the upgrading of the railway service. I was not very impressed by his raising such matters in this Chamber when a serious part of the development of this State is being debated.

Coupled with the electrification of the overall railway system are two very important aspects. One of those involves the development and construction of new rolling-stock and locomotives, some of which have already been delivered. That is a big undertaking, and a big help to the industry, because it provides employment. The other important aspect relates to the electricity supply industry, because large amounts of electricity must be provided for the electrification program to be successful in the concluding stages.

Four more substations are to be built this year in an attempt to take up the slack in the provision of electricity along the Queensland coast and into the coal-fields. In fact, \$26.7m has been allocated for the program, which is now largely completed. Therefore, electricity will be available as soon as the wires are hung and the rolling-stock has arrived.

Last year the Railway Department recorded a record profit. Not only were the records of 1984-85 eclipsed, but also they were significantly improved upon. Freight was up by 4.5 per cent; passengers were up by 6.7 per cent; all revenue was increased by 9.4 per cent; and the operating profit was up by \$10.05m to a record total of \$117.8m. That is a credit to the Railway Department.

The engagement of PA Management Consultants was a major contributing factor to the operating profit of Queensland Railways. Those consultants examined the operation of the railways in an endeavour to ascertain what could be done in relation to cost-saving and the production of cost-effective programs that would ensure that the operation of the Railway Department continue. I am pleased that they will continue. Millions of dollars have already been saved through the introduction of those programs. I congratulate the Minister on the foresight that he has shown in the introduction of such programs.

Why should the Department of Transport be the only area in which management consultants are engaged? Why not take the introduction of people such as PA Management Consultants further afield and into other departments where so many savings could be made by reassigning staff into effective areas and cutting out those areas that are neither cost-effective nor productive. I believe that all Ministers could take a leaf out of the Minister for Transport's book and have a serious look at implementing such a scheme.

I was pleased that no reduction in staff resulted from the work that PA Management Consultants did in the Railway Department. Many modifications are taking place in workshop areas, including those in my own electorate. Although there has been no loss of jobs, there has been reassignment; but that is the way to go. It demonstrates that undertakings can be efficiently upgraded and that staff can be kept satisfied.

In the Toowoomba area, \$100,000 has been provided in the Estimates for the construction of a new amenities building at Willowburn. It would be wrong for people to fear that staff will be put off at the Willowburn workshops, because the Government would not be spending that kind of money if it were looking at closing them down or significantly reducing staff numbers.

I was pleased that the honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) commended the very fine effort made by the Railway Department. I join with the honourable member for Ipswich and other honourable members in offering my congratulations.

The record of the Government is now behind it, and the future looks just as good. Electrification work will continue further up the coast. Not only will the electrification of the rail lines to the coal-fields take place, but also new lines will be taken into that area. That will occur as a result of legislation that was passed last week. A new mine

will be opened at a cost of approximately \$17m. A rail line will be provided north of Clermont to enable the export through Hay Point of coal from that new mine.

The development that is occurring in Queensland gives one a good feeling. There is no doubt that the Federal Tourism Minister (Mr Brown) was correct when he said that the Queensland economy was good and that Queensland is the fastest-growing State in Australia.

Mr Milliner: He didn't say that at all.

Mr McPHIE: There is no doubt about that at all. He might have been trying to get out of it today by saying that he was talking about tourism. That is only part of it. Tourism is part of the whole thing. The whole State is going ahead and it is developing. I agree with Mr Brown's statements on that point.

There are the continuation and probable completion of the electrification program in the city area and the railway link to the south coast, of which the honourable member for Surfers Paradise (Mr Borbidge) spoke. I, too, would like to see consideration given to the construction of a monorail service on the Gold Coast.

In the construction field, the figures in the Estimates are significant. The allocation for major track and signalling improvements is up to over \$23m, or almost double the expenditure last year. The amount spent on bridge construction will be over \$4.3m, which is more than double last year's figure. The amount spent on new stations and building will be over \$6.9m in the present year. Again, that is well over double. The Estimates provide for a further \$2.1 for marshalling and station yards in 1986-87, which is six times the amount spent last year. \$3.9m is allocated for workshops, which is over a 50 per cent increase from the sum spent in that area in the previous year.

Well provided for in the Estimates is continuation of the electrification program, the large program to build new rolling-stock and locos, and the completion of 88 three-car multiple electric units to be used on the suburban rail link in Brisbane.

I would like to speak about urban public transport, because the Minister has indicated a number of major items of expenditure proposed for the coming year in that area. Honourable members will be aware of major improvements to public transport, because they have been brought about in recent years by the Government. The continuation of this program is very much in evidence in the 1986-87 Estimates.

The importance of high-quality public transport in major cities cannot be denied. A massive total of 97 000 000 passenger journeys by regular urban public transport services throughout the State each year is testament to the reliance that the community places on this mode of transport. The success of the suburban rail electrification program in Brisbane in particular is evidenced by the massive resurgence in suburban rail travel since the introduction of the first electrified service in 1979. Almost 13 000 000 additional passenger journeys are now being made each year by Brisbane commuters on this world-class system.

The 1985-86 year saw the practical completion of this system as far as Caboolture and the integration of all passenger services, local buses, taxis, long-distance buses and private vehicles at the new Caboolture Railway Station and interchanges. The construction of such interchanges has played a major role in supporting the capital investment in railway electrification in Brisbane. I note that 21 per cent of 8 299 parking spaces at suburban railway stations were constructed in 1985-86 alone, demonstrating again the commitment of the Minister and the Government to high-standard public transport facilities and the promotion of an integrated public transport system.

Integration and co-ordination of Brisbane's public transport services has been a major thrust of the Government's program in the last year, with new services introduced in the southern suburbs between Rochedale and Loganholme, Park Ridge and Browns Plains, in the northern suburb of Bracken Ridge, and in Redland shire. Vast improvements in the extensive services in the Inala-Durack area have been brought about through careful planning and investigation of the needs of local residents.

Of course, all major cities are concerned with the provision of efficient public transport services. The present study into the operation of bus services on the Gold Coast is a worthy initiative by the Government. Similarly, studies are to be commenced this year into the operation of services in both Cairns and Mackay to provide a framework for the continuing development of viable services in those areas.

In my own area in Toowoomba, a most comprehensive network of bus services is provided. The situation is continually reviewed to meet changing needs as that city expands. The city has benefited significantly from the establishment of a transport office with enterprising and hard-working staff.

A high-standard urban bus fleet is an essential component of high-quality bus services. This Government has been instrumental in providing funds to the Brisbane City Council for new urban buses. In the recommendation of the State Minister for Transport funds are being provided from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development Fund for the purchases of 34 Cityxpress and six articulated buses, at a total cost of \$6.72m in the coming year.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr McPHIE: Prior to the dinner recess, I mentioned that the Government had provided buses for the urban transport system in Brisbane. Thirty-four Cityxpress and six articulated buses were provided at a total cost of \$6.72m. In 1984-85, 22 were provided. In 1985-86, a further 18 buses will be delivered before the end of the financial accounting period. Assistance has also been provided to private urban passenger transport services, and the amount of that allocation in the Estimates has been increased by 9 per cent to a sum of \$5m.

Residents of Brisbane and the surrounding shires have been able to share the benefits of significant capital investment undertaken by this Government by the provision of new facilities. Over the last 12 months, four new railway stations have been constructed in the metropolitan area at Bray Park and Carseldine on the north side and at Birkdale and Wellington Point on the south side. The latter two stations are part of an extension of the suburban rail network to Cleveland. Each of those stations has been provided with modern facilities under the urban public transport interchange construction program. Design is being undertaken for further new stations and interchanges at Ormiston and Cleveland. Construction of a further new station at Boondall is nearing completion. That station has been designed especially to cater for capacity audiences attending the Brisbane Entertainment Centre at Boondall. Areas have been set aside for the operation of shuttle bus services and commuter car-parking and set-down areas. The station is due for completion in October, and will be the first of its kind in Brisbane that serves a major entertainment venue.

The 1986-87 Estimates presented for the Department of Transport provide for continuing expenditure on suburban electrification projects, bus purchases, interchange construction, and planning and research into the improvement of public transport facilities. The results of these ongoing projects provide visible evidence of the Government's commitment to the highest possible standard of urban amenities through the provision of safe, comfortable and efficient public transport. The Government's commitment does not stop there, because new proposals for river transportation in Brisbane that have been developed by the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) have been presented. The honourable member for Greenslopes (Mrs Harvey) is also interested in beautification and development of the riverside area, which will be an asset for the city of Brisbane.

The Brisbane Transit Centre has been mentioned previously, along with its associated commercial development in Roma Street. It is a massive development, as is the new commercial construction at Toowong. Another major development project is scheduled to commence in Edward Street on the site where the Canberra Hotel stands, and I am reminded that a new development will be undertaken in Ipswich. Those projects represent an ongoing program of development that is a credit to the Minister.

The Minister is responsible for other aspects of the Transport portfolio, and the Estimates that have been presented reflect the extent of matters that can be categorised as relating to transport. In the few minutes that remain available to me, I will touch briefly on air navigation matters. The Minister, as the State Government's representative, is responsible for liaison with the Department of Aviation and the Federal Minister for Transport and Minister for Aviation (Mr Morris). I am one of those who condemned air navigation charges that have been increased under the recent program implemented by the Federal Government. I have condemned increases in Federal charges, such as the increased cost of fuel that will affect air charter and airline operators. I also condemn the obligation placed on shires to take over maintenance of country aerodromes that would otherwise be allowed to deteriorate and result in the loss of an asset. I do not in any way support the user-pays principle adopted by the Federal Government in instances that involve national infrastructure that can be regarded as an asset belonging to the nation. I believe that maintenance of an asset should be partly funded by the user and partly funded by the nation as a whole.

While I am on the subject of air navigation matters, I will take a Federal member of Parliament to task over recent statements. I refer to the Federal member for Ryan (Mr John Moore), who also doubles as the State President of the Liberal Party in Queensland. The comments made by Mr Moore demonstrate that he does not know what he is talking about when it comes to the dreadful disaster that recently occurred in Cairns. Government members know that Mr Moore is suspect in that he is not an expert, and that he has demonstrated a lack of ability to work in partnership with other people. Moreover, he has also shown that his personal ethics are questionable because he was sacked by a previous Federal Government for bringing in goods that had not been declared to the customs authorities. In spite of all that, he has the temerity to make statements about the propriety of actions taken by other people. What Mr Moore has said is simply not acceptable.

Mr Moore maintains that the disaster that occurred in Cairns could have been averted by the provision of radar facilities at the Cairns airport control tower. What absolute nonsense! Mr Moore does not know what he is talking about because there is no way in the world that the provision of radar facilities would have been of any assistance to the poor people who were travelling in that aircraft under those circumstances. He demonstrates a total lack of knowledge of how radar is used.

Mr Menzel: He is making capital out of a dead body.

Mr McPHIE: He is. He is trying to make political capital out of a dreadful disaster in the north.

Let me just explain that an aircraft departing from Cairns would do so under one of two systems. It would depart either under a visual system, where the pilot is solely responsible for separation on his outbound track, or under instrument conditions where the pilot would have certain instrument procedures to follow. Irrespective of which type of procedure the pilot was following or flying by, radar would not have had a bit to do with the disaster that happened. I am dreadfully disappointed that a man of the standing, or alleged standing, in the community of the Federal member for Ryan should be making statements like that. He is just airing his lack of knowledge on that subject.

I would also like to comment briefly on another air-related matter that has also been mentioned by a couple of the other speakers. It is in relation to the HS125 800 operated by the Queensland Government. Recently I noticed that that aircraft has been cleared for operation on dirt air-fields out in the west and it does not have to operate on sealed airstrips, as is usually the case with jet aircraft. The utilisation that this aeroplane will receive enhances the previous service provided to the people of this State. In my opinion, that aeroplane would be one of the best buys that the Premier or this State has ever made. In that aircraft, Ministers or the Premier can fly to anywhere in this State and return within the same day. That cannot be done with regular public transport, and honourable members opposite know that.

I also congratulate the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) on his endorsement and support for the Road Safety Council work that is so very necessary in this State. I see that the grant has been increased by 21 per cent this year. Definite initiatives such as the lollipop ladies and the Defensive Drivers Course have been introduced. The Minister is also to be congratulated for his participation in the RID scheme. I extend to the Minister and members of his staff congratulations for a job well done and for looking well ahead into the future.

Mr PRICE (Mount Isa) (7.22 p.m.): I would like to comment on a few comments that were made by the honourable member for Toowoomba North, particularly in relation to the Government's aircraft. I also saw the article about the jet being tested for dirt strips. To me it seemed strange that that is only now being announced in the daily press when in actual fact it was shortly after the purchase of that jet that at great expense it was taken to Alexandria Downs in the Gulf country and tested. If I recall, at the time——

Mr McPhie: The Department of Civil Aviation has just approved it now. The tests were done a long time ago.

Mr PRICE: That is right. The clearance has only just come through.

The cost of flying up there and back for that test just to see if the plane would land on a dirt strip or not was somewhere in the vicinity of \$7,000, if I remember correctly. Anyway, that is by the by.

This evening, my concern revolves particularly around the role of the railways in Queensland and the corporate planning structure that has been put into the railway organisation in recent years. Today, the Minister was very forward in mentioning how he had been party to the whole structure. I did see a recent TV interview in which the Minister indicated that part of the reason why he made the decision to join the National Party was that he had commenced a lot of his work with the Railway Department and that in effect he wanted to stay on to see it completed, or he wanted to be in the vanguard of the changes that were being brought in.

Strangely enough, for once Queensland was not the first State in Australia to introduce corporate planning into railway structures. In Queensland the original introduction of that planning occurred in 1981, but prior to that Westrail had introduced corporate planning as far back as 1972, and the Australian National Railways, of course, had come into being in 1978, after Gough Whitlam, in the Federal Parliament, had attempted to take over the Australian railway system.

Queensland picked up the idea of corporate planning in 1981 and ran with it for a couple of years. Unfortunately, it was not a great success until PA Australia, management consultants, presented its report in 1983. Then the system really started to take off.

My concern is for the social implications of that corporate planning. I see a psychological impact, particularly on those areas west of the Great Divide. I see a psychological impact on those who have to be moved or even dismissed by the Railway Department in order for it to fully introduce the profit-and-loss line, if I can use that term, by the application of corporate planning—I do not know that it can be termed privatisation—to the Queensland railway system itself.

Over the years Australia has had private railway lines. North America is a prime example of private railway lines. The United States of America has many of them and Canada has some. Unfortunately, over the past 200 years since the introduction of railways, history has shown that private railways never really worked. In Australia that has probably been because of the high cost of the infrastructure, the long distances involved and the high cost of technology to introduce railways to any specific spot on this continent.

To introduce corporate planning at this late stage, after really running the railways over the period of at least half a century on a cost-plus basis, or at least on the basis

of public good rather than as an object for profitability, must be a major undertaking and certainly something that cannot be accomplished in the short term.

I believe the corporate plan that has been introduced is the five-yearly one. To introduce it on such a short-term basis brings with it certain responsibilities and certain sudden-death decisions, if I can use that term, that cause concern to the people whom I have previously mentioned. To me, bringing in corporate planning implies competition and the introduction of the profit-and-loss motive.

Competition with the railways in the State of Queensland probably implies competition with another railway, but the railways do not have another railway with which to compete. So, to my mind, the only real competition the railways have is that from the road-transport industry. Unfortunately, it is not a proper competition, in that each is free to go its own way. Queensland Railways has certain rules that impose upon its competitors regulations that do not allow them to compete freely in the market-place.

Queensland Railways has a monopoly on bulk products. Queensland is the last State in Australia to retain such a monopolistic attitude. Additionally, the Government brings upon road transport in Queensland taxes, licensing schemes and a lack of expenditure on a road network—and I admit the last is presided over by another department. Those regulations imposed upon the road-transport industry not only choke it as any sort of a decent competitor but also, to my mind, impose upon the rest of Queensland constraints that do not allow road transport to really spread its fingers into areas where rail has no presence.

My electorate, which stretches from the Gulf of Carpentaria to south of Mount Isa, has the problem of one finger of a railway line that actually feeds the coastal regions and the south-east corner of the State but does not really do anything for the far-flung regions of the north west—areas that really count in the production of wealth for this State.

When the Government actually takes control of a body such as the Railway Department, it implies to my mind some sort of social responsibility. It has to consider the communities that it serves.

For generations, small communities throughout Queensland have depended entirely upon the railways to provide a living, to provide a sufficient base, for instance, for a small western town to exist. Some of the workers who settled in those places in the early days of rail have provided generations of workers for the railways. With the application of corporate planning, many of those small communities will disappear off the map of western Queensland.

I noted earlier that the Minister mentioned that he was decentralising his department and placing transport officers in as many areas of Queensland as possible. I noted also that not one of the places that he listed is west of the Great Divide. It is in those areas that I feel a railway has such a heavy social impact.

I question the five-year plan. I am concerned not about the speed of introducing the corporate planning but rather the social implications. Because of the social implications, I think that the five years should have been stretched perhaps even to 10 years.

I cannot imagine that in a five-year period people can be pressured to implement all of these changes. I believe that it takes as much as one generation, and perhaps two generations, to allow the social implications to spread, if you like, the effect of the introduction of corporate planning. As I have said, I question that five-year period.

I believe also that even if it is a five-year period, it should be on a roll-over basis. If it were a 10-year period, and basically in every single one of those 10 years it rolled over and the 10-year plan was then reassessed, that would be most practical. If one is reassessing, surely one is reassessing the availability of funds, and that implies the State Budget. If it is rolled over on that basis, at least there is a fresh plan virtually every year. However, the important point is the 10 years rather than a five-year roll-over.

With the social implications come the rights of the railway workers. Unfortunately, with this type of corporate planning, this Government tends to consider the expediency of making profits quickly rather than the rights of the workers and, as I have said, the social implications for small communities and western areas.

For instance, it is the right of the workers to be informed of exactly what is going on. The worker should be brought into the decision-making process much more so than at present. It is not a new idea. Most private enterprise corporate bodies today are introducing this concept, even to the point of profit-sharing. Of course, that is not expected of the Government in this instance, but certainly some form of better communication with the railway workers themselves is expected.

Precedent exists for that, of course. The Labor Government has introduced between the ACTU and itself an economic agreement that acknowledges consultation as a key factor in bringing about changes in industry. As a major employer, the Federal Government, in 1984, introduced the Public Service Reform Act. That Act makes it a legislative requirement for each Government department to develop an industrial democracy plan in conjunction with relevant unions.

In relation to the private sector, in 1984 the Arbitration Commission made a decision on the job protection case. That decision meant that employees and their unions are entitled to notification and consultation regarding technological and other changes, as well as expected job losses.

In addition there are the National Labor Consultative Council's guide-lines on information-sharing, which encourage employers to provide information that is of interest and concern to workers. Railway managers are under great pressure to consult with railway unions and to give the unions a greater say in management. Although responses of rail management have differed, a number of them have attempted to limit consultation by placing their own narrow definition on it, while others have attempted to avoid real changes by introducing their own sham version of railway worker involvement. That is another question.

This Government has tended to put restrictions on the involvement of railway workers themselves. Generally those restrictions revolve around allowing them to participate in discussions on minor issues within the department. Surely the railways exist for the public good. They are not an authority or a corporation which is to be run strictly along private enterprise lines. There has to be a social justice, and certainly the involvement in the future of the workers in other than minor issues, such as financial matters or new machinery that is to be introduced into the railways, needs to come about. Management should not just say, "OK, we have got the machinery. Where are we going to place it? Let's ask the workers where we are going to put the thing." The workers would probably tell management very quickly where to put the machinery.

The railway workers in Queensland certainly are not fools. Most of them have been involved in the railways for a lengthy period. The role of the railway worker is a traditional one. These men know what they are talking about and are capable of saying more regarding management than the management gives them credit for.

The future of the railways must be concerned with both social justice and financial matters. These are the bases upon which the railways must proceed if any plan is to become relevant. The term "corporate" conjures up images of an organisation that, in the course of setting its goals and strategic directions, looks no further than its own boundaries. The term fits the capitalist corporation, in the sense that it is competing against other corporations.

My concern lies in the psychological affect of the corporate planning change-over that the Government is phasing in in Queensland. My concern is about the short-term effect of the roll-over of the consultancy plan and the effect on the workers who eventually must be wasted in order to put the consultancy recommendations into effect. My concern is for the small communities, particularly those west of the Great Divide that have relied on the railways for generations for their livelihood, and for those communities in their

role in the total fabric of the western society, if you like, in which they form a basis and a social centre for their surrounding areas. My concern is for the competitors with the railways in Queensland, and the work that the competitors can do if they are given a free hand in regions west of the Great Divide where distances are vast.

The role played by the railways in recent years has been strictly in regard to bulk cartage. The railways have even got rid of the nuisance value of working the railway, such as having to handle and manipulate labour in goods sheds and the parcel delivery section. The railways have given that aspect away completely to outside organisations.

The Government is taking the pick of the crop. By sticking to a monopoly and only going in for bulk cartage and not allowing any competition, it is taking money from the Queensland producer. That non-allowance of competition affects the areas that railways should be serving the best—the western areas and remote places such as Mount Isa and places that are served by Mount Isa.

With better competition, more movement and more activity between road transport and rail transport, a better service is provided in western areas because more trucks and other vehicles operate in the region. The owners of those vehicles then probe into the region looking for more work. They compete against one another and provide a better and cheaper service. That allows the provision of a service that is deserved and needed in order to fully decentralise this great State. That decentralisation is at risk. By tightening and constricting the very fabric of transport in Queensland itself, the rail monopoly does not help in reducing that risk. No other State in Australia does that. Queensland can post marvellous results, as is shown in the report released today by the Commissioner for Railways.

In the few minutes remaining to me, I would like to address the issue of rail freights. I know that it is a matter on which I harp. Rail freights are one of the excesses imposed on the city of Mount Isa. Rail freights are imposed on the Mount Isa line and on the coal lines to which reference has been made today. I add my voice to the protest about the effect of rail freights on western areas. In Mount Isa last year, rail freight charges totalling \$150m were creamed off Mount Isa Mines, the principal producer in my electorate. That \$150m probably contained a component of \$75m sheer profit.

Time expired.

Mr ALISON (Maryborough) (7.42 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure and pride that I speak on the Estimates of the Department of Transport. One reason for my rising is to support the Minister for Transport (Mr Don Lane). He is doing and has done a wonderful job in administering his departments. I place particular emphasis on the Railway Department. He has overseen the tremendous job of the electrification of the Brisbane suburban lines and, of course, the electrification program involving part of the coal-field lines and the introduction of the electrification of the main line from Caboolture to Gladstone.

My other reason for speaking is to comment on the very important role played by the Railway Department in the economy of Maryborough. A number of reasons exist for that. Firstly, for a number of years Maryborough has been a railway administrative centre, with workshops and ancillary services. The wages of the railway workers who carry out the subcontracting work play a very important role in the economy of Maryborough. The work involves a fairly hefty complement of staff.

The old established firm of Walkers was established in Maryborough more than 100 years ago. During that time it has been making locomotives for Queensland railways.

When steam locomotives were in vogue, Walkers made many of them for the Queensland Railway Department. The firm then made diesel hydraulics for the shunters. During the last few years Walkers has been building electric trains in conjunction with ASEA and Clyde Engineering in Brisbane.

The greatest single leap forward by the Railway Department was the introduction of the electrification of the railway system. All of Brisbane's suburban lines have been

electrified. All of the carriages used on the city lines were built by ASEA-Walkers. When the ASEA-Walkers contract is concluded later this year, 268 carriages will have been built by ASEA-Walkers at a cost of \$210m. That contract has created a great deal of work for many people in the Maryborough district, not only those employed by ASEA-Walkers but also the subcontractors and the back-up staff. It has created a multiplying effect throughout Maryborough.

I turn now to the main line electrification. The total cost of that program is \$821.5m, at December 1983 prices, or \$1,050m excluding the interest during construction. It is a massive undertaking.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Judging by that brief-case, I think you are moonlighting in another job.

Mr ALISON: It might interest the honourable member for Wolston—and here I refer to ALP policy—that the ALP would knock ASEA-Walkers and other contractors about and would build railway rolling-stock in railway workshops. That is what I want to tell the people of Maryborough, and I will continue to tell them that right up to the date of the forthcoming election.

Work on the major project of main line electrification in central Queensland is proceeding in four stages. Stage 1 involves the electrification of 720 single-track kilometres between Gladstone and Blackwater.

Mr Prest: We have heard all that.

Mr ALISON: I am aware that the honourable member for Port Curtis is not interested in this matter. That is OK, because the National Party candidate for the Port Curtis area is interested. I am quite sure that that candidate will be telling the people of Gladstone and the surrounding districts how important all this will be to the city of Gladstone. In fact, I do not think that the honourable member for Port Curtis even understands what it is all about.

Stage 2 involves the electrification of rail lines from a number of mines to Hay Point and Dalrymple Bay. Stage 3 involves the electrification of 72 single-track kilometres between Tolmies and Emerald, and the construction of a new non-electrified railway linking the Clermont branch with the Blair Athol-Wotonga mineral railway.

Stage 4 involves the electrification of 530 single-track kilometres of the North Coast line between Caboolture and Gladstone, which will link the Brisbane suburban electrified lines with the main line electrification Stage 1, 2 and 3 areas.

Maryborough has benefited tremendously by the electrification program, which began with the electrification of the Brisbane city rail line. As I mentioned previously, ASEA-Walkers won the initial contract to build 252 electric rail cars for the Brisbane rail line at a total cost of almost \$200m.

Following the winding down of the contract during 1984 and to assist the work availability in Maryborough, I approached the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) and the Premier and Treasurer (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) in an endeavour to ascertain whether further passenger carriages were required. During the course of a visit to Maryborough on 12 June 1984, the Premier and Mr Lane announced a \$20m contract to ASEA-Walkers that would save the jobs of at least 100 workers. That contract was let for the construction of an additional 24 rail cars for the Brisbane railway electrification scheme. It also provided additional work for the subcontracting firms. That contract was very much appreciated by companies and their employees generally in the city of Maryborough.

On Monday, 23 July 1984, Mr Lane was again in Maryborough. At that time he announced that Clyde/ASEA-Walkers would share in the biggest railway contract in the world. Mr Lane also announced that Cabinet had that morning decided that the joint venture partnership of Clyde and ASEA-Walkers would build 70 of the 146 electric locomotives that were required for the central Queensland electrification scheme to service the coal industry. The overall contract for the supply and construction of the

146 electric locomotives was worth \$189m, of which \$90.9m would go to Clyde/ASEA-Walkers. Commonwealth Engineering obtained a contract to supply the balance of 76 locomotives at a cost of \$97.8m.

It is very significant to mention at this point that the only response from Opposition members to that tremendous project and contract, and to the fact that Clyde/ASEA-Walkers participated in the largest railway contract in the world, was a declaration by the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr Keith Wright) that there was something a bit smelly about the whole thing. The only thing smelly was some of the fandangling going on between the different factions of the ALP. Mr Wright never did have a good sense of direction. I think that he was getting the wind from the wrong direction.

Mr Lane handled the matter quite well. I refer to some of his comments in the *Telegraph* of 22 August 1984, in which it was reported—

“Mr Lane said the awarding of two contracts for the building of 146 electric locomotives was aimed at getting the best possible commercial deal, while helping the local economy.

‘The Queensland Government deliberately decided to award two contracts—one in Brisbane and one in the provincial city of Maryborough,’ he said.

Speaking during the Matters of Public Interest debate, Mr Lane said the method was the best way to spread employment.”

Mr Wright’s comments and the general support that he seemed to get from his colleagues from the Opposition went over like a lead balloon in Maryborough. I was not backward in letting the people in Maryborough know just what Mr Wright said, in case they did not hear him the first time. As a matter of fact, his comments were not appreciated anywhere—from the unions, from the manager of ASEA-Walkers or from the people of Maryborough.

Mr Smith: What happened to the general manager at Walkers?

Mr ALISON: That is typical of the honourable member for Townsville West. He gets onto something irrelevant. That is like some of his questions in the House—irrelevant, but good stuff for the Ministers to answer.

After my further representations in 1985, ASEA-Walkers was successful in obtaining an extension of its original contract, for the construction of a further 12 electric carriages at a contract price of \$11.2m. That was announced by Mr Lane on 12 June 1985.

After the decision to proceed with Stage 4 of the electrification of the main line had been made, ASEA-Walkers was again successful in winning a contract from the State Government for \$23.5m to build the 120 km/h interurban train scheduled to run between Brisbane and Rockhampton by September 1989. The contract comprised 16 long-distance multiple electric units based on the highly successful passenger carriages constructed by ASEA-Walkers for Brisbane electrification, modified substantially for long-distance travel at high speeds. The contract was a tremendous boost to the morale of the work-force at ASEA-Walkers. It will be seen from this that, as a result of the electrification scheme, over the last two years and three months ASEA-Walkers has won contracts with the Railway Department totalling \$145.6m. Some of that work will go to Clyde Engineering (Qld) Pty Ltd in Brisbane, but the great bulk of it will be carried out by Maryborough workers at the two companies Walkers and ASEA, together with the subcontracting firms. It has been an absolutely marvellous boost to employment in my city and electorate.

The benefits to Maryborough from the electrification scheme do not end there, however. On 8 August, Mr Ross Dunning, the Deputy Commissioner for Railways, announced that Maryborough would become the major train depot between Brisbane and Gladstone following a major reshuffling of train crews as a result of the further implementation of the two-man crewing and the electrification program. That will result in the train crew depot at Maryborough being increased by 40. On top of that, the overhead maintenance gang for the reticulation line, amounting to 17 men, will also be stationed at Maryborough. By 1989, Maryborough will be the only train crew depot between Brisbane and Gladstone.

Mr Campbell: Ha, ha!

Mr ALISON: I note that the member for Bundaberg has a bit of a giggle. I saw the president of the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce on TV. Did he give the member for Bundaberg a right old going-over! He let the people in the Wide Bay TV area know that he warned the member for Bundaberg 12 months ago what might happen with the Bundaberg train crew depot. But of course, the member for Bundaberg, too slothful, too lazy, too indolent and too interested in matters in other people's electorates did not do anything about it. So much for the member for Bundaberg! I do not mind if he laughs right throughout my speech. I hope that he campaigns in my electorate. I would be very pleased if he did.

The electrification program will increase the population of Maryborough over the period by 57 families, which is very much appreciated by the city. It will certainly be appreciated by the railway crewmen who came from Maryborough and who have been endeavouring to return to the Maryborough depot. All things considered, Maryborough has fared very well out of the electrification program implemented by Queensland Railways. The Minister for Transport (Mr Don Lane) has done a tremendous job in improving the efficiency and general performance of the Railway Department, as well as promoting railways transportation and effecting improvements to the service offered to the people of Queensland. I would go so far as to say that Mr Lane has been the best Minister for Transport this State has had for many a long day.

I also congratulate the senior officers of the Railway Department, such as the present Commissioner, Mr Ralph Sheehy and the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Ross Dunning, as well as all the senior officers. Mr Lane has had the necessary foresight and good common sense to recruit a good team, and the Railway Department will go from strength to strength as a result.

Testimony to this fact is that the Queensland Railways' operating profit and freight haulage total for 1985-86 were all-time records for an Australian railway system. The operating profit of almost \$118m was more than \$10m more than the previous record established in 1984-85.

Mr Davis: Don't forget to tell us about the interest on that.

Mr ALISON: The trouble with the honourable member for Brisbane Central is that he is unable to read financial statements properly. If I were to put the figures on a blackboard in front of him, he would still misquote them.

The Railway Department carried 73.6 million tonnes of freight, which was an increase of more than eight million tonnes over the previous year. Passenger numbers for 1985-86 were 41.5 million and represented the highest figure ever recorded for Queensland. The Railway Department's revenue soared to a record of \$966m in 1985-86 and was expected to break the billion dollar mark this financial year. Such a very excellent result highlights the efficiency of the Queensland Railways system compared to other railway systems, most of which were struggling against massive operating deficits.

Public support for the suburban railway system in Brisbane has reached a new peak. More than 40.2 million passengers used the Citytrain network in 1985-86, which represents an increase of 3 million over the previous year. Patronage of Brisbane trains has grown by 60 per cent since electric train services were introduced in November 1979. Passenger numbers involved in the use of the Citytrain network are expected to increase substantially again this year, bearing in mind the recent extension of the electrification project to Caboolture and Wellington Point and the phasing out of wooden carriages.

The Minister has presided over two very important milestones that have been reached in the history of Queensland's railway system. He has introduced electrification of the system, and has implemented recommendations made by a team of management consultants in terms of meeting efficiency levels and providing a service to the public. Implementation of the recommendations made by the management consultants, following a review undertaken in 1983, have contributed considerably to the rapidly improving

financial position of the department. It must be remembered that as recently as 1982-83, the department had incurred an operating loss of almost \$150m.

The overall deficit for 1985-86, after interest and redemption payments had been met, was \$37m compared to nearly \$81m in 1984-85. I have heard many compliments from people who have travelled the world and are familiar with railway systems that operate throughout the world. They say that the carriages used on the Brisbane electric rail system, built by Walkers-ASEA, are of world standard. I believe them. I realise that the honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) would not agree with them, but then I would not be sure if he has travelled further than Bribie Island.

Mr Davis interjected.

Mr ALISON: In response to the honourable member, I will turn my attention to something that is of great importance, and that is the policy espoused by the Australian Labor Party. Unlike the policy adopted by the National Party Government that encourages free enterprise and the creation of appropriate incentives as well as an environment in which private enterprise can get on with the job, the Australian Labor Party has forgotten nothing but has not learned anything either. In world terms, socialism is as dead as a dodo. It has not worked anywhere in the world, and it is interesting to note that the socialist Government in France is backing away from it because it has not worked in France either.

Mr Campbell: It is not a socialist Government.

Mr ALISON: The honourable member should listen to what I have to say. The Labor Party in Queensland is still tied to its socialist philosophy of having the public sector take over anything that is progressive. I would like to quote an extract of Australian Labor Party policy that has been a plank in its platform for years. I quote a paragraph from the transport and communications policy espoused by the Australian Labor Party. It is the ALP policy. It is what it would do. Walkers-ASEA and Clyde Engineering would not get too much work out of it and the Maryborough workers would be done out of a job. The only way they would get a job would be to try to get in the queue for work in the railway workshops. I will now quote the ALP policy—

“Modernise railway workshops to enable the manufacture of locomotives, rail-motors and rolling stock.”

Of course, I will be reminding the people of Maryborough about the policy in the run-up to this election, and particularly I will be reminding the workers at Walkers-ASEA.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Premier (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen), who has been a tower of strength to me in my efforts to get work for my area. I also thank the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane). The Premier and the Minister have done everything that they can to get work for decentralised areas. I also thank all the railway staff for the tremendous assistance they have given to me in my efforts to carry out my parliamentary work, particularly the Commissioner, Mr Ralph Sheehy, whom I have already mentioned, the Deputy Commissioner, Ross Dunning, and other senior staff. I also mention the district superintendent in Maryborough, Ray Macoun, who arrived from Mackay something like six months ago.

Mr Randell: He is a very good man.

Mr ALISON: He is a very good man. I agree with my colleague the honourable member for Mirani. I find Mr Macoun most co-operative. I only have to walk through his door and ask for some assistance and it is readily forthcoming. I would like that to go on the record.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr ALISON: Yes, he has. He understands the system very well.

I know that my speech has concentrated on railway activities, but I would also like to place on record my appreciation of Mr Neal Kent, the Commissioner for Transport, and his staff. They have always been most helpful to me in my efforts to carry out my electorate work.

Mr SMITH (Townsville West) (8.2 p.m.): I do not really believe that the previous speaker contributed much to the debate. As far as I can see, the only thing he achieved is that he drove the Minister out of the Chamber. I would like to mention a couple of matters. It is all very well to be optimistic—and I am pleased to see work go to provincial cities such as Maryborough and Townsville—but I wish the previous speaker had told the full story. It is my understanding that quite recently the general manager of Walkers was dismissed at very short notice because it was found that he was responsible for underquoting massively on a contract. It is all very well to get work, but if in fact it finishes up that that work is performed at a loss, it does not really do much for the whole show.

As a matter of fact, I want to take issue with the Government on a couple of points related to transport matters. First of all, in Townsville before the 1983 election the Premier (Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen) was backing the Goninan's venture for diesel locomotives with great fanfare. Of course, that firm, like many other firms, committed a great deal of money to that project in the full expectation that it would receive further follow-on work. That was a very reasonable and fair assumption, considering the assurances that were given by the Government. Anyway, everyone knows what happened. After the first contract, there were no more. After spending a great deal of money—some millions of dollars—Goninan Pty Ltd in fact was forced to move away from the city, at least for the time being.

I will refer to a similar instance. In 1982 the Government called tenders for rail sleepers. In fact, Humes set up a plant in Mackay. The same sort of thing happened. Humes were given one contract. In 1984 a further tender was let and this time it went not to people that the Government had encouraged to set up in Mackay but to some people based in Western Australia who had strong connections with a South African group. Of course, the Humes business shut down.

That is the sort of thing that this Government does. It does not think things through. Organisations take the Government on trust and they find that in fact they are the heavy losers because of it. The same thing would apply to air transport in Queensland. Because it did not hand over that responsibility to the Federal Government, that area is still the responsibility of the State Government. It was found that after the subsidy for the western air services was in fact withdrawn—I think it was in April last year—both the State and Federal Governments decided that they wanted those services to continue.

Because the Queensland Government had control over those coastal services, an arrangement was entered into with Australian Airlines under which something like \$20m would be committed to the purchase of new aircraft to maintain that service without subsidies. To further back that up, because of the support the Government was supposed to render by giving the company a fair go in Queensland, it spent another \$57m on ATR 42 aircraft. If that is tallied up, it is something like \$77m. No sooner was it committed than the Queensland Government threw open the skies to East-West Airlines (Queensland) Pty Limited because a mate of this Government, Sir Edward Lyons, had been invited onto the board. All honourable members know the story of that company's involvement with Lindeman Island, but that is getting a little away from transport. That is an example of the breaking of trust with organisations by this Government. It would hardly be surprising if major organisations demand commitments from this Government in black and white before they enter this State.

Mr Davis: If you have Lyons on the board, they say it is a key to Bethany.

Mr SMITH: "Top drawer Ted", they call him.

In rail freights, north and central Queensland have never been supported by this Government. The freight rates applied to fabricated steel have effectively put people in the north out of business. It has further disadvantaged people in far-away places by charging exorbitant freight rates for items of basic domestic consumption, which certainly increases the cost of living.

The Queensland Government received a bonanza from the drop in the cost of fuel, but that has not been reflected in reduced freight rates or passenger fares, nor has there so far been any statement by the Government on what the effect of the projected savings from electrification will be. Clearly, if the cost-effectiveness of the project was based on the savings calculated on the pre-existing price of diesel and its projected increases, those Estimates will have been flung to the four winds by the present cost of fuel. Quite apart from that, I am yet to be convinced of the economics of the electrification scheme. In fact, to my knowledge it is the only scheme anywhere in the world of main line electrification for services as infrequent as they are along the coast of Queensland. It might well be a different kettle of fish for the coal lines, but I tend to think the project is a headline-grabber. It might look good and might sound like progress, but it might also be something like the waste of capital on the power stations round the State. Sooner or later the public of Queensland will have to pay in higher costs. That remains to be seen.

Mr Scott: For how long will they be paying?

Mr SMITH: It will virtually be forever. The cost of that equipment means at least a 20-year life.

I shall now speak about bus services in Townsville, which deserve an airing. Most people in Townsville are clearly dissatisfied with the city's bus services. It is a major provincial city and is entitled to a service equivalent to that which prevails in Brisbane. I certainly do not find any fault with the local operators. What they need is Government assistance. The bus services in the Brisbane metropolitan area are heavily subsidised. There is no reason why provincial cities such as Townsville should not be entitled to the same sort of treatment.

The West End bus company ceased operation a couple of years ago. At that time there was certainly a need for the restructuring of bus services in Townsville. The Government had the opportunity then to rationalise services, to come up with new ideas and to design new routes. That was not done. A new organisation—people by the name of Campbell who were operating in Mount Isa—came in and virtually took up the West End service. That company's main interest was to provide a base for tour operations. That is fine, but it did nothing at all for bus services in the area.

What is not needed in Townsville—and, I am sure, in other major cities—is buses running into the city with passengers who want to go in another direction. The city might be 90 degrees out of their way. Restructuring needs to occur in which the Government takes account of demographic changes and arranges for interchanges in those areas. That does not require a great deal of imagination, but for years it has been ignored.

Townsville is a university city, with thousands of students on campus. Very often those students are impoverished. Really, no bus service whatsoever is provided for them. The Government has not done much for students; nor has it done much for disadvantaged people. For instance, time and time again the Government has been asked to provide concessions for the unemployed. Government members talk about dole bludgers. Every day honourable members hear about dole bludgers from Government members. However, not much practical assistance is given by the Government.

The Government is even stingy to war widows. Although most widows are entitled to a concession, the poor old war widow, because she gets a few extra bob, is not provided concessional transport by this lousy Government. The previous Labor city council in Brisbane and the present Liberal city council have, however, provided that concession. Of course, the National Party is not interested.

While I am on the subject of buses—I notice in the press that the rule introduced last July requiring motorists to give way to buses, which have to carry a specified sign, is coming under increasing criticism from the Cities and Towns Association. In fact, a resolution was passed basically to knock it on the head. Clearly, the problems that exist in Brisbane do not exist in provincial towns.

Mr Lane: It happens everywhere else in Australia. Townsville would be different, would it?

Mr SMITH: I am not talking about Townsville. I am talking about a resolution that was passed by the Cities and Towns Association. The whole crowd is against the Government.

Mr Lane: Sponsored by Reynolds, I suppose.

Mr SMITH: Well, he must have been fairly persuasive if he was able to convince the whole group.

Mr Lane: Isn't it a matter of numbers?

Mr SMITH: I suggest that, instead of imposing an unnecessary regulation on the public, the Minister should be paying more attention to school buses.

Mr Lane: What's that got to do with the give-way-to-buses rule?

Mr SMITH: I will come to that.

When school buses stop and their stop lights are activated, it ought to be a requirement that motorists travelling in either direction stop. How many accidents have occurred in which children walking out from either the front or the back of a bus have been knocked over?

Mr Lane: On highways, too?

Mr SMITH: The Minister will have all the time in the world in which to reply. He should allow me to make my point.

I am talking about set-down areas where buses stop. At present the lights on school buses are 2 inches in diameter. They are not nearly big enough. The Minister ought to be bringing buses up to a reasonable standard—to a standard that applies in the rest of the world. The lenses of the lights on school buses should be larger and they should be painted a high-visibility uniform orange colour so that everyone knows what they are.

Mr Lane: Never mind generalising. You won't get away with it with me. What is your proposition? That is what I want to know.

Mr SMITH: I am convinced that the Minister is not interested in the safety of schoolchildren. All the Minister is interested in is allowing drunks to drive on the roads. He does not want to introduce random breath-testing. The Minister is prepared to let schoolchildren be knocked over——

Mr Lane interjected.

Mr SMITH: I know that the Minister has been on the booze for the last half-hour, but I think that it is about time he pulled his head in.

Mr Prest: Someone bought him a cheapie.

Mr SMITH: That would be right.

By and large, buses travel far too quickly. Clearly not enough attention is being paid to this matter. Recently a bus travelling from Townsville to Mount Isa was intercepted by the police on two occasions before it arrived at Mount Isa. It had been travelling at over 130 km/h. It is clear that it is an open go on the road. I suppose the Minister condones that kind of thing.

If the regulations were more thoroughly policed, drivers and operators would not be tempted to break the rules. From my observations, the road transport people have little respect for the regulations pertaining to the industry. That is not to say that companies and drivers are irresponsible. It is a tough and competitive industry. The frequent breaches are quite deliberate, because those who flout the rules know there is very little likelihood of apprehension and the odds are favourable.

There is altogether too much laxity. There is load-slippage, exceeding the speed limit and overloading in a massive way. If a person is unfortunate enough to be driving on the highway in a light car, he will be blown off the road by large vehicles travelling at excessive speed. Log books are ignored. As a recent example, a fellow drove up from Melbourne to Townsville and, when he arrived in Townsville, his boss told him that he would have to go back to Brisbane. That driver would have been high on those little yellow pills that they take: but, because there is little chance of apprehension, they take the risk.

Mr Lane: What company was that?

Mr SMITH: I will not nominate the company, but I will tell the Minister privately.

Far too many trucks are registered, but there is no way of overcoming that. The problem in North Queensland is that little back-loading is available and very often the company is flat out making the cost of fuel. Therefore it overloads to recoup its costs. Frequently escorts are not used. The companies take the chance and run at midnight. That is a major problem.

If the regulations could be policed, there is probably an argument for lifting the maximum all-up weight of the rigs from 38 to 41 tonnes. Although that would have the effect of significantly reducing costs and the number of trucks, it would result in greater damage to roads. Unless the Government was prepared to put those savings back into roads,—

Mr Davis: The Government repealed the Roads (Contribution to Maintenance) Act.

Mr SMITH: It did, too.

Mr Prest: Did you see the news tonight of the coupling on a semi-trailer breaking?

Mr SMITH: Yes. That is a good example. That also happened only a few months ago, and there was to be a major investigation. Several more fatalities have occurred since that time. How well are semi-trailers made? How often do their large wheels come off? If a person happens to be driving in the other direction and is hit by a rolling wheel from a semi-trailer, it is curtains for him.

Mr Price: It happened tonight.

Mr SMITH: I had an experience when a spare wheel from under a semi-trailer dropped onto the road when I was driving right behind it. The wheel ripped the suspension right out of my car.

If the regulations were more stringent and inspections more frequent, most of those incidents would not occur. It is a question of what value this Government puts on life.

Mr Price interjected.

Mr SMITH: I do not know.

I am not going to hand out brickbats all the way. The officers from the Department of Transport in Townsville are responsible people and do a good job. I am delighted that later this year there will be a new office in Garbutt. It should be noted that at the present time the Department of Transport in Townsville is housed in what was previously the Supreme Court building, which has quite a history. It was built in timber in 1877 as a concert hall—the School of Arts—and it became the Supreme Court in 1890. It is the earliest example of that type of construction in Australia and is the only remaining structure of the early settlement in Townsville.

Although it is only peripheral to the debate on the Transport Estimates, it is of interest to the National Trust, it is of interest to north Queensland and it ought to be of interest to the Queensland Government. That site has been very inconvenient for people obliged to renew their licences. Although the new office will be excellent for a significant percentage of the people, a strong need remains to maintain an outlet in the city or somewhere at which the business community and the people living in areas such as south Townsville, Railway Estate and North Ward can renew their licences. The proposed location of the office will be inconvenient for a significant section of the population of Townsville. I ask the Minister to give serious thought to that matter.

I am pleased that photographic drivers' licences are being introduced. I hope that they will be introduced into Townsville fairly soon. That will do a great deal to alleviate some of the problems relating to ownership or financial interest in motor vehicles.

Mr Prest: What will pensioners have to pay?

Mr SMITH: I understand that pensioners will be required to pay the full amount.

Mr Prest: That is an increase of about \$8.40. It is \$20-odd.

Mr SMITH: The honourable member is right.

I understand that only today the Townsville City Council approved a site on which it is proposed to establish a driver-training centre such as the one that has been established in Gympie. At present, all the funds from the sale of personalised number-plates are going to finance the operation at Mount Cotton. That is another example of how the provincial cities are disadvantaged when compared with the metropolitan area. The member for Gympie (Mr Stephan) is not in the Chamber. I understand that the Government provided \$50,000 to establish the driver-training centre at Gympie. I understand that the operation is very successful and that the centre is now looking for extra funds because of its great success. I call on the Government to do something similar in Townsville.

Time expired.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (8.22 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Minister in his presentation of the Transport Estimates.

Mr Prest: Final speech.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: What do you want—a few more?

Mr RANDELL: From the comments made by the members on the opposite side of the Chamber, it is apparent that they do not appreciate what is being done for the State of Queensland.

Firstly, one must recognise the outstanding job done by the Minister with the railways in this State. Even Opposition members recognise that. Although I do not want to mention names, Opposition members have told me privately what a good job the Minister has done. They certainly will not admit it in this Chamber. That matter was mentioned to me recently outside this Chamber by the member for Wolston (Mr R. J. Gibbs).

The Minister has done a marvellous job. He picked a team, and they worked together to get the railways into the enviable position that they are in today. Earlier, the member for Mount Gravatt (Mr Henderson) said that the positions in Queensland and other States are as different as chalk and cheese. Queensland never wants to go down the track as the other States have done. Queensland Railways is making profits. One can see the difference in this State because of its go-ahead Government. That is surely epitomised in the Minister.

The electrification scheme is something of which Queensland is very proud. The main line electrification project could well appear in the history books.

Mr Price: Are you a member of the New Right?

Mr RANDELL: I do not know about the New Right. I know where the honourable member will be at the end; he will be right at the bottom. He will be wondering what is right and what is wrong. He will find that he is one of the wrongs.

The electrification scheme will appear in the history books as one of the major transport achievements of this century. It is reaching over \$1 billion in value and creating 14 800 man-years of employment. That is what it is all about—employment for the people of Queensland. It will be capable of transporting Queensland's huge stocks of export coal freight well into the twenty-first century.

Mr Yewdale: That's a departmental brief.

Mr RANDELL: It is not a departmental brief. It is just something that the honourable member hates to hear. He is like a monkey; he puts his hands over his ears and closes his eyes. The only thing that he does not do like a monkey is keep his mouth shut. If the honourable member listened, he might learn something.

Stage 3 comprises 1 517 km of track. A four-stage project is taking place in central Queensland. That is something that the honourable member should be supporting. Whatever the Government does, the honourable member knocks and knocks.

Central Queensland is Australia's largest coal-producing area. Stage 4 will link the electrified central Queensland lines with the Brisbane suburban network. Opposition members should be interested in that, but they are interested only in Brisbane. They do not worry about country areas. Even the member for Rockhampton North is supporting Brisbane. I think that he should offer some support for central Queensland.

Stage 1 represents the electrification of the main line from Gladstone north to Rockhampton and west to the Blackwater Coal mines area.

Stage 2, which involves my electorate, will eventually link the ports of Dalrymple Bay and Hay Point to the Goonyella coal mine system, with the Blair Athol and Oaky Creek branches joining up with Stage 1 at Gregory.

Stage 3 will be going to Emerald. Stage 4 involves the electrification of the main northern line between Caboolture, 50 km north of Brisbane, and Gladstone, thereby linking the electrified suburban system with the main line electrification.

The first section of Stage 1 of the project between Gladstone and Rockhampton was commissioned either last week or the week before.

Mr R. J. Gibbs: Why don't you go and have elocution lessons? Nobody can understand you.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Wolston is obviously not listening.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out to the honourable member for Wolston that the reason why he cannot understand what the honourable member for Mirani is saying is that there is too much noise in the Chamber.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Row, I am pleased that you have brought those Opposition members into line.

Almost all of the new installations, upgrading and improvement contracts are being carried out by Queensland-based companies. Without doubt, the biggest improvement will be the building of 166 electric locomotives. Those electric giants will weigh almost 110 tonnes. The work on those locomotives has been carried out by two Queensland firms. Comeng (Qld), based at Salisbury in Brisbane, is manufacturing 86 locomotives and Clyde/ASEA-Walkers at Maryborough is building another 80 units. The estimated final total cost of the locomotives is in excess of \$300m.

When awarding those contracts, the Minister for Transport (Don Lane) stressed that the work on locomotives would be shared across the industry in many areas of the

State, thus creating employment through extensive subcontracting. As I said, the contracts will result in almost 108 000 man-weeks of employment. However, the honourable member for Port Curtis is not interested.

All railway personnel have been kept fully informed of the progress and future plans for the progress of the railways. That is fully appreciated by all the people involved.

In fact, I only have to refer to some of the facts sheets that are distributed from time to time. I have one here from the Commissioner for Railways (Mr Sheehy) to all railway employees. One of the facts sheets issued in 1985 was titled "We're off and running!". Those facts sheets are available to all railway employees.

Opposition members claim that the Government does not confide in the workers. It certainly does. We are telling them stage by stage what is occurring. The workers are aware of what is occurring and they appreciate the fact that the Government takes them into its confidence.

Electrification is something new to Queensland. People must be made aware of the dangers of electrification and of the accidents that can occur if due care and normal precautions are not taken. I do not wish to alarm people about the electrification of railways, but normal precautions must be taken.

Farmers and graziers have expressed apprehension about the electrification of the rail lines, because they are required to cross those lines with their cattle floats and cane-harvesters.

Early in the piece, I arranged for Mr Dunning to visit my area. Meetings were held at Nebo with the graziers and at Sarina and other areas with farmers. Mr Dunning made those people aware of what is happening and of how they will be considered. That was very much appreciated. Queensland Railways has also distributed some brochures that are available to the public. Videos that show what can be done are available to the general public. I recommend those videos to all people.

Problems have been experienced because the railway line between Hay Point and Goonyella goes through farming areas. Most of those problems have been solved. However, there are still a few problems that are outstanding and we are working to solve them. I will be speaking later to the Minister about that matter.

It is pleasing to note that \$6m has been allocated to upgrade housing for workers. By the end of this year, 74 houses will be completed. That program is part of a commitment to the raising of living standards for railway workers throughout the State. The Government intends to implement an ongoing program to further meet the needs of Queensland's railway workers.

The town of Coppabella, an entirely new town in my area, has been built to accommodate the railwaymen—and their families—who man the trains engaged mainly on hauling coal from the Bowen Basin. After I drew his attention to early unsatisfactory conditions, the present Minister was instrumental in improving conditions at Coppabella. Families in that town now have a completely modern town with modern schools, housing, amenity blocks, tennis courts, swimming-pools, halls for functions and a bar where men and women can have a drink in comfort. The amenities are the envy of other towns. That is something that the people are entitled to and they fully appreciate it. They know what happened under the previous Labor Government.

In the small town of Carmila, new double-storey houses have been built for the railway workers, and they are appreciated and maintained by their occupants. The list goes on.

Contrast that with what the ALP did in this State when it was in power. I can recall that when I was a small boy, the railway workers, the fettlers, were living in tents. They put two tents together just far enough apart so that they could put up a fly over the space in between. If they were lucky enough to obtain a table, they would put it under that fly. They did not have chairs; they would sit on an old kerosene drum. Now Opposition members are quiet.

Of course, the railway workers did not have any flooring; it was bare earth. Some would obtain cinders from the old coal trains and put them on the floor to keep themselves out of the mud. They also had an old open fire for cooking. I remember as a small boy visiting the tents and seeing the open fires. The honourable member for Rockhampton North (Mr Yewdale) would remember this, but he is not saying too much. The men had old hurricane lamps for lights and carbide lights, no flooring, no refrigeration. I can recall that at that particular time, my father, who was on the farm, had to provide a refrigerator for farm-workers. The Government brought in laws requiring the farmers to do that, yet it allowed its own workers to live under those conditions. Instead of refrigeration, they had the old drip-water safes in which they had a bit of corned beef.

Mr Yewdale interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member would know that that is bad enough; but just imagine the conditions when the weather was hot or when it was raining, with damp clothing and blankets and clouds of mosquitos to make conditions untenable.

Honourable members should contrast that to the conditions today. The Government will continue to upgrade those conditions and ensure that the railway workers enjoy the conditions to which they are entitled.

Mr Yewdale: You don't give the unions any credit.

Mr RANDELL: The union-leaders did not do one thing for the railway workers. They have not changed nowadays. They are still the same. They look after themselves and could not care less about the workers themselves. Honourable members opposite do not give credit to the Government for the new housing it has provided.

Mr Menzel: Most of the railway workers vote National Party now, anyway.

Mr RANDELL: That is right. They know what is happening.

I would like to say a few words about the transport of cattle by rail. Honourable members know that, as the country has become more populated and developed, the droving of cattle has disappeared. A lot of the trucking yards at the railway yards are going out of fashion. People do not use them enough. They are costly to maintain. In the old days, the drover would drive a big mob of cattle in, hold them in the yard, the cattle train would pull in and the cattle would be loaded systematically. A whole train would be loaded.

Of course, the yards are gradually disappearing. Nowadays, stock are carted by road transport and are loaded direct onto rail wagons. The trucks back up to the open doors of the wagons, and the workers open the gates and just load the cattle. The cattle simply walk on. Honourable members opposite would not realise this, but that is where the trouble starts.

The railway wagons have very heavy doors, which are divided into two. The bottom flap comes out and down, and the top flap goes sideways. The worker has to get away from that wagon to close the doors. It takes two men to lift up the bottom door, and then the cattle can jump out. I have loaded cattle and had big bullocks jump out and nearly kill me. The only way to do it is to put a tarpaulin across until the truck is driven away. It is not so bad if the workers have a K wagon and a standard transport truck. They put the cattle in, put a tarpaulin over, and get away and close the doors.

Mr Prest: They should get a subsidy for that. They should receive danger money.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Port Curtis has no sympathy at all for the man on the land, and that is why he will not be re-elected.

With a K wagon that can accommodate 28 head of cattle, it is sometimes the case that when 10 head of cattle are loaded at the one time, the truck-driver has to back up, load the cattle in, close the doors and then repeat the process so that the rest of the cattle can be loaded without the others escaping. I suggest that the Minister might

consider the provision of a sliding, steel-mesh door that would be strong enough to hold the cattle in the wagon during the transitory phase of the loading process.

Mr Scott: Couldn't you put that in a letter addressed to the Minister and save the time of the Committee?

Mr RANDELL: I am making suggestions, as I should be, because that is the purpose of my speaking in the debate.

I ask the Minister to take heed of my suggestion because I think that benefit could flow if the Minister decided to implement it. Time is short, and I use the remainder of my time to congratulate the staff employed by the Railway Department in my region; people who have worked so hard in the transportation of coal to the coast and in production of revenue for the State, and the people who take the cane to the mills. During such difficult economic conditions, I hope that freight costs can be contained.

Mr Davis: You are going to knock off the 17½ per cent holiday loading.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member for Brisbane Central does not know what he is talking about. He sits in the Chamber and thinks only about union-leaders. He never thinks about doing anything for the hard workers who toil in the heat. He has never supported workers in the past; his track record is abysmal. I am certain that railway employees will never have enough confidence to re-elect a Labor Government. They remember what happened the last time a Labor Government was elected, and they know that as soon as a Labor Government took office, all the revenue produced by the State would be spent in Brisbane. No expenditure would be engaged in to improve conditions in rural areas.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central does not know the prevailing attitude in the community, especially the rural community. I have commented many times that if the honourable member found himself in an area outside Brisbane, he would need a white cane so that he could stay on the bitumen road. He would be lost if he ever moved off the bitumen road, and he would be looking for a taxi to bring him back to Brisbane.

As I was saying, I congratulate the members of the railways staff who have provided assistance in the area of my electorate. I refer in particular to the railway station-masters and porters of Sarina, Julatten and Coppabella who have done a marvelous job. A previous speaker paid tribute to Ray Macoun, who listened to our problems and endeavoured to solve them for us. He always demonstrated a willingness to work with railway employees, and he was a wonderful person.

Mr Alison: He was a very dedicated railway man.

Mr RANDELL: Indeed he was. I am fortunate in that I have a man in the office in Mackay who is equally dedicated, Mr Frank Simmonds. Frank is doing a tremendous job. He thinks deeply about the railways and about the best interests of Queensland, and works toward achieving as much as he can.

I congratulate the Commissioner for Railways, Mr Ralph Sheehy and his deputy, Mr Ross Dunning, who have visited the Mackay area in an endeavour to solve problems and improve the system. There are so many people in the department who have been of assistance that I find it impossible to mention them all individually. I conclude by offering my support for the Estimates presented by the Minister.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (8.38 p.m.): Probably the most fascist and totalitarian statements made throughout the debate on the Estimates for the Department of Transport have been made by the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison), who gloated over jobs being given to Maryborough men at the expense of jobs being lost throughout Queensland. Over 600 jobs will disappear as a result of two-man crewing over the next three years. Moreover, the Commissioner for Railways stated in the *Telegraph* today that rationalisation would require considerable reduction in staff numbers.

The honourable member for Maryborough has been gloating over workers being employed at Maryborough at the expense of employment for men who live in Gympie, Gladstone, Rockhampton and Bundaberg. The honourable member has gloated over the fact that the National Party has made pawns of railway employees and their families.

Mr ALISON: I rise to a point of order. I find the remark made by the honourable member for Bundaberg about me quite offensive. I ask him to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Bundaberg will withdraw the remark.

Mr CAMPBELL: I will withdraw whatever remarks the honourable member finds offensive. However, I find it difficult to accept that railway employees and their families, who are placed in a very insecure and uncertain position, are being taken advantage of by the honourable member for Maryborough. The honourable member quoted the president of the Bundaberg Chamber of Commerce, who has had a few words to say about me. Do honourable members know the man referred to? He is the National Party candidate who was defeated by me at the last election. I believe he has a chip on his shoulder.

The real problem I wish to point out to the Committee is the way in which the present administration in the Railway Department abandoned the intentions expressed by the former Commissioner for Railways, Mr Mendoza. When he visited Bundaberg in September 1985, he gave an undertaking not only to the Chamber of Commerce, the Bundaberg City Council and me, but he was also quoted as saying that there would be no loss of jobs in Bundaberg to other areas such as Maryborough. Then within 12 months that happened.

I feel very disappointed that that could happen and that politics should be played with railwaymen and their families. I suppose it could be said, "Is that hard enough?" People such as the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison) are the same people who want to be members of the New Right, or are very strong supporters of it. They are members of the same party that has pledged to abolish the 17½ per cent holiday loading and penalty rates. I will expose that to the people and the workers of Maryborough.

However, I would like to refer to another aspect of the Government's uncaring attitude towards the ordinary people and bring it to this Committee's attention. I am concerned that many driving schools do not have full comprehensive insurance cover for their students who are undergoing instruction or testing. In Bundaberg, a Filipino lady, who was undergoing a driving test in a driving school car, had a misunderstanding with the testing officer and an accident occurred. As a result of that accident, that driving school will now sue, through the civil courts, that learner-driver for damage to that driving school car. The Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act does not cover learner-drivers. In actual fact, I would expect that many members here tonight have sent their children to driving schools because they believed that that was the safest place for their children to learn to drive. People believe that if their children learn to drive in a driving school car they are fully protected. But, that is not necessarily the case. I have raised that matter with the Minister and also with the commissioner and they will take action to investigate the matter.

However, urgent action is required because court action could result from an accident. I believe many Queensland families believe that their children, the learner-drivers, are fully protected when they are not. Urgent action should be taken to amend the Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act to ensure that learner-drivers, when undergoing instruction or driving tests, are protected from civil action by driving schools. That action should be taken immediately.

While I have been a member of Parliament, I have taken a very strong stand on road safety and I believe that the Minister could take stronger action as regards road safety. Under the present Budget less than \$1.5m is budgeted for the Queensland Road Safety Council. That amount is less than 6 per cent of the total traffic fines that will be

collected—that is \$25m—this year from people who do not obey the road rules. A greater commitment should be made to road safety by increasing the allocation to the Queensland Road Safety Council. In fact, road safety should even go further and ensure that compulsory road safety education is provided for all Queensland children. At present, courses are conducted only on a voluntary and piecemeal basis. If a long-term solution is to be found to the carnage on Queensland roads, it will come about only by compulsory road safety education. The Queensland Road Safety Council has good programs. The Education Department has also developed good curriculums. Until such programs become compulsory and until every Queensland schoolchild participates in those programs, the Government will fail, and I believe the Queensland Government is failing if it allows 500 Queenslanders to kill themselves every year without taking stronger action. Stronger action is needed in terms of compulsory road safety education in our schools.

I also congratulate the Minister for introducing traffic wardens—the lollipop people.

Mr Davis: Part of our policy.

Mr CAMPBELL: It was part of the Labor Party's policy. In fact, they have operated in New South Wales for 15 years. I am proud to say that every school in Bundaberg does have traffic wardens, or lollipop people.

As well as that scheme providing safe road crossings for schoolchildren, it ensures that responsible people are near schools to ensure that children maintain their awareness of stranger danger, which often lurks around Queensland schools.

For the last financial year the Railway Department had an operating profit of \$120m. The year before it also had an operating profit. In fact, the Minister boasted that last year the railways had a record operating profit. What seems strange to me is that in 1985 Mr Mendoza gave an undertaking that, funds permitting, this financial year the Bundaberg Railway Station would be upgraded and modernised. The Minister wrote a letter which said that, funds permitting, the Bundaberg Railway Station would be upgraded. How can the Railway Department have a record profit of \$120m but have no funds? That is hypocrisy. It is being double-faced for a department to make a record profit and say that, funds permitting, it will upgrade the Bundaberg Railway Station.

The people of Bundaberg do not necessarily want a brand new station. What they would like is for the station to be upgraded in such a manner that it keeps its old charm. It could be made a tourist attraction, but the old, shabby facilities such as the smelly toilets would have to be got rid of. Also, the level of the platform would have to be raised because at present an excessively high step has to be taken to alight from the new trains such as the Queenslander and the Capricornia. That makes it very difficult for tourists and other paying passengers to embark on and alight from trains at that station.

The member for Chatsworth (Mr Mackenroth) raised the possibility of a new coal port for the export from the Darling Downs of coal, which would be taken down the Toowoomba Range and transported through Brisbane. That would create a great deal of noise pollution in the area through which it travels. He also raised the very important point that if the department and the Government continue with that line of thinking to export coal and wheat through expanded port facilities in Brisbane instead of selecting a site near Bundaberg, as the CSR report showed, to undertake this grandiose idea would cost the tax-payers of Queensland more than \$200m extra. How can the department sack 600 or 1 500 men to rationalise its work-force and yet be prepared to go along with a grandiose idea from the Premier that will perhaps cost Queensland tax-payers an extra \$200m? Those figures come from the CSR report that looks into the development of future coal ports in south-east Queensland.

With the present markets, I do not think south-east Queensland will have a new coal port for the next five or 10 years, but perhaps by the year 2000 the State will be looking at the development of a coal port, which should be, on purely economic terms, in the Bundaberg region.

When one turns to the Auditor-General's report to study in detail the costings of the Transport Department, one has to acknowledge that its officers run the department

in a very effective way. From the other financial information provided by the Auditor-General on the Department of Transport, losses or deficiencies amount to only \$15,780. That shows that it is a fairly tight ship that is well organised and well run. If one contrasts that with the Lands Department, which had losses or deficiencies of more than \$500,000 through the non-collection of rent, with criminal charges against officers of the Queensland Government for misappropriation of funds, that is stealing, with charges against the former chairman of the former Film Industry Development Fund, with the fact that the former secretary is also on criminal charges, with the fact that action is being taken to recover money from the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, and with the proven criminal charges of stealing against the executive officer of the Queensland Day Committee, one sees that the Transport Department has run a very tight ship.

Even the Forestry Department has shown losses and deficiencies of more than \$220,000.

Again, in contrast, the Railway Department has losses or deficiencies of almost \$1m. It is interesting to note the source of those deficiencies. Loss of discount accounted for \$103,000; devaluation of emergency stock accounted for more than half a million dollars, and \$616,000 has been written off. That all shows that in many ways there has been the tight control exercised by the Transport Department but rather very sloppy control of the funds of Queensland tax-payers.

I am a bit concerned about one aspect of the Railway Department accounts. Queensland does now have the most modern electric railway system in Australia. That is probably because Queensland has been decades behind other States. However, that system is being provided at a very great cost to the Queensland tax-payer.

If one considers the financial liabilities of the Railway Department—and this is from the Railway Department Notes to the Accounts, Note Ref. 5—it is found that the gross debt of the Railway Department has increased from \$130m as at 1 July 1985 to a net debt one year later, as at 30 June 1986, of \$388m.

The debt of the Queensland tax-payer is being increased. That is demonstrated by the accounts. Because of the sloppy accounting of the Treasurer, it is not easy to find out the total debt of Queensland tax-payers, not only in relation to the departments but also all the statutory authorities. In fact, it is now estimated that Queensland has the highest debt per person of any State in Australia.

The other method by which the full debt of departments is not revealed is the way departments are using leasing agreements to pay for capital expenditure. Note Ref. 3.2 and Note Ref. 6.5 show that quite substantial debts were incurred in lease-back arrangements for the purchase of electric passenger cars. Note Ref. 6.5 states—

“A sale and lease back of 180 electric passenger cars has been arranged for an amount of \$128.3 million subject to variations in rates of exchange and rollover costs relating to offshore borrowings. Payments amounting to \$23.9 million were made in 1985-1986. . . . Liability at 30th June, 1986, was \$124 million.”

So, in effect, of the repayments of \$23.9m, the debt of the lease-back of those 180 electric passenger cars has been reduced by only \$4.3m. Note Ref. 6.5 states further—

“Similar arrangements have been made in relation to an additional 48 electric passenger cars which were constructed for a cost of \$44.5 million. Lease payments totalling \$7.8 million were made in 1985-1986.”

Yet, the liability as at June 1986 was still \$44.5m. That shows a very high interest rate or very large losses on the rates of exchange by the Railway Department.

Another \$33.8m has been paid out for further electric passenger cars. In effect, that means that well over \$200m has been paid out in lease-back arrangements for the purchase of those capital items. That illustrates the fact that that payment does not show up in the total debt of the tax-payers of Queensland. It is shown as a liability. It

is very important to have new equipment, but it has to be remembered that the money has to be paid back.

Looking at the debt of the Federal Government—66 per cent, or two-thirds, of that total debt is private sector debt. That is something that should be remembered by the honourable member for Maryborough (Mr Alison), who believes in free enterprise, hatred of the worker and taking away the workers' conditions, such as the 17½ per cent loading and penalty rates.

Mr ALISON: Mr Booth, I find that remark about the 17½ per cent loading quite offensive. I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr CAMPBELL: I will withdraw that remark. I advise this Chamber that the Leader of the National Party of Australia (Ian Sinclair) was prepared to put in a letter to every farmer and small businessman in Australia the fact that the National Party will abolish the 17½ per cent loading and penalty rates. Is that the same National Party as the National Party here in Queensland? Of course it is. That illustrates the two-faced attitude of the National Party that operates behind the backs of the workers in Queensland, and is not prepared to stand up and say it is going to do away with the 17½ per cent loading and penalty rates. Yet in a letter to the public of Australia and all farmers, the National Party has said it will abolish the 17½ per cent loading and penalty rates.

Mr De Lacy: Do you think they are getting a bit two-faced over there because it is getting close to an election?

Mr CAMPBELL: I think it is very two-faced. The National Party will say anything to remain in power.

There are two other matters I want to raise. Firstly, I ask that urgent amendments be made to the Motor Vehicle Driving Instruction School Act to ensure that learner-drivers are protected when they receive instruction from driving schools. It is very important that all learner-drivers are protected.

Secondly, I would like the Department of Transport to make a greater allocation of funds to the Queensland Road Safety Council for the improvement of road safety measures in Queensland. The road carnage in Queensland must not continue.

Mr GYGAR (Stafford) (8.58 p.m.): Mr Booth——

Mr Henderson: This will be very good.

Mr GYGAR: I can assure the honourable member for "kissing toads", or whatever the name of his electorate is, that my statement will not be the kind of drivel that he has been reading for the last three years in this Chamber. It has consisted of prepared briefs supplied by Ministers, because he lacks the intelligence to write his own material.

The Estimates under discussion this evening relate to transport and, as has been correctly stated by honourable members from all parties, transport is one of the essential elements of good government in Queensland. In a State as diverse and far-flung as Queensland, it is crucial to the development, stability and prosperity of this State that the transport facilities and infrastructure run efficiently.

The Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) would be well aware that I am keen on some of his attributes, but I think some credit must be given to the Department of Transport for the way in which it has addressed itself to the problems relating to road freight and transportation of goods over long distances. The department has talked to the people involved in the industry and listened to them. That, being such a rarity in this Government, is something that must be the cause of remark and congratulation. However, the Government should take on board some of the criticisms that are being voiced throughout the transport industry about the direction of its policies. Although it might seem compassionate and appropriate to adjust weight limitations and load limits in certain circumstances, as with live cattle and the new grain arrangements, I suggest to the Minister that that is a very, very dangerous precedent.

Part of the rule of law is that all are equal under it. One must look to the reasons why the axle-load limits were introduced. They were not introduced because the Government thought that it was a good idea that people ought to carry a maximum load. The load limits were placed on vehicles to ensure that Queensland's road system was not destroyed by excessively heavy weights running over it. It is an undeniable fact that is accepted by everyone that overloaded vehicles can cause disproportionate damage to roads. They can tear them up in a very short time. Vehicles that are not overloaded can run over the same road for years without causing any real detriment. It reeks of injustice to book one person for driving a truck loaded at a certain weight limit and to say, "He is a terrible person. He is tearing up the roads.", and have him literally stand there and watch a cattle truck weighing tonnes more, with far higher axle loadings roar past and be told, "That's all right. He is carrying cattle."

Mr Simpson: How much higher?

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member should be sensible about this matter. It does not matter whether the truck is carrying cows, coal or gravel; it is either wrecking the road by being overloaded, or it is not. If the trucks loaded with cattle are not causing any detriment to the road, why cannot trucks carrying gravel or general goods be treated in the same way? I can appreciate the difficulties involved. Volumetric loading and overloading to prevent bruising of cattle have their good points. However, at one point or another the line must be drawn. I suggest to honourable members that as grain has now been added to the list of items that can be overloaded, the Government has opened up a Pandora's box. It is not a healthy precedent in this State.

This afternoon, honourable members advanced arguments about the cartage of gravel. They said, "Why not do the same thing with gravel, because, after all, it is pretty hard to judge how much gravel weighs. If it gets wet from the rain, the truck might be overloaded, too." Those are valid points. Once the principle that there is a safe and appropriate load that does not destroy the highways is departed from and an exception is made, the possibility for all sorts of other exceptions is opened up. That is an extremely dangerous precedent. If it is good enough for the goose, it has to be good enough for the gander. I suggest to the Minister that as a long-term policy the Government needs to make very clear where it stands on this issue right across the board. It should make very plain whether or not there will be any more exceptions and what actions will be taken to upgrade the highways or to adjust the volumetric loading tables, or whatever, so that the long-term position is known clearly.

At the moment I suggest that there is a feeling abroad that if a person can get a word in the right ear, he might also be able to obtain an exception for his industry and his method of operation. It is not good enough for a Government to operate in that way.

Mr Scott: Are you saying that they are corrupt?

Mr GYGAR: I am not saying that they are corrupt. Again we are having a little bit of trouble with odour problems. If exceptions are made, the word will get around that if a person can twist arms hard enough, he will also get an exception. It is not good for that to be even on the horizon. The principle is that overloaded vehicles destroy highways. The Government needs a very clear policy on overloading. I suggest to honourable members that at the moment that policy is not clear enough and that there is a possibility left open for further exceptions. I do not believe that enough has been said about the long term and how the present exceptions will be wound back.

I applaud the Minister for the introduction of photographic drivers' licences. They are a significant advance and something that he has advocated for some years. I am glad that at last they have been introduced. Regrettably, problems are encountered with the administration of the scheme.

As has been drawn to the Minister's attention in the past, insufficient convenient centres are available for the issue of licences. I draw the Minister's attention to the

situation on the north side of Brisbane. Only two police stations remain at which drivers' licences will be issued. They are the only two places at which a person can have a driver's licence issued or renewed on Saturday mornings or outside of normal working hours. The facts are that people cannot obtain time off work to call into a drivers' licence centre to be photographed or to have their licences renewed.

The Government should not demand that of people. People cannot say, "All right, I will take half a day off to go into the driver's licence issuing centre." I believe it would be far more appropriate and, in the long term, more economical if the Government rostered police stations, if necessary, so that one or more of them in each area would be open on a Thursday night, for example—if it was late night shopping—or a Friday night or on a Saturday morning. In that way people would have a real prospect of being able to renew their licences or obtain them outside of the hours that they are required to be at work.

Much has been said about urging workers to turn up for work and not to take sickies—to be serious about their jobs. However, in this case we have a Government instrumentality that, through a mere oversight, I believe, is not providing those workers with the facilities to carry out their civic duties.

The Government jumps up and down on people who do not renew their licences. Therefore, there is an obligation on the part of the Government to provide those people with ample opportunity to renew driver's licences. It is not sufficient for the Government to claim that those people can attend at the two police stations on the north side of Brisbane when they wish to renew their licences. The information obtained from the police is quite specific. They claim, "We will renew your licences at those two stations on Saturday mornings if the manpower is available." All honourable members would be aware of the situation in relation to the staffing levels within the police force. It is overstrained and undermanned. I am advised that it is rare—in fact, it is the exception rather than the rule—that police will be able to issue driver's licences on Saturday mornings. That inability to issue licences leads to frustration on the part of the community. They say, "OK, I will go to the police station on Saturday morning." However, when they arrive there they are told that they cannot get their licences renewed because the police are too busy out on patrol or responding to calls—in other words, "Go away and come back another time." That only has to occur once or twice and people will say, "To hell with the system. If they do not want me to renew my licence, they can go and jump in the lake." As a result, there will be another unlicensed driver on the road, not through any fault of his own but because the system has not been sensitive enough to adjust to the real needs of the people.

I am in favour of the new licences. I think they are a terrific idea, but they must be made available. That is not the case at the moment.

Mr Davis: What about the price?

Mr GYGAR: I believe that the price is also a little high. However, the State Government is notorious for raising taxes by inflating charges. That is nothing new in the Department of Transport. It is the overall position.

Another point that I would like to mention in relation to the Minister's portfolio is that vexing matter of rail freights from Queensland mines. There is no doubt about the system. It is a disguised rent resource tax and is another way of lifting a few dollars off the mines and getting that money back into the Government's coffers. That is the reason why Queensland Railways does not suffer the staggering losses that are suffered elsewhere. It is not good enough for the Minister to say, "Are we not wonderfully efficient? We do not make huge losses." The reason why the Queensland Railways do not make huge losses is because they rip off extortionate amounts of money from the miners who transport their minerals from the mines to the coast where they are loaded.

The situation prevailing in Australia at the moment is ridiculous, because our miners are paying two, three and four times as much in rail freights as miners in comparable countries. That was a fair enough system when times were good. Everyone

shared the wealth. Prices were high, as were market demands. The mines were able to make a profit. The railways—and via them, the Government and the people of Queensland—took their slice, too. However, times have changed. The markets are very tight and prices are depressed.

Statements have been made right across the board that workers have to tighten their belts. The mines have been told that they have to be satisfied with less profitability and that they must become leaner and meaner. The only organisation that has not had to become leaner and meaner is the Queensland Railways. It has continued to impose high profit charges on the mines.

When the mines are paying approximately 60, 70 or more per cent of their income to the Government by way of taxes, the very grave risk is taken of killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

I remind the Minister and his Government that five half loaves are better than one loaf that you do not get again tomorrow. The Government can screw those people too hard, and that is what is occurring at the present time. One only needs to talk to any of the mining companies about the cost comparisons that they make with their competitors. The mining industry is exceptionally efficient. That has enabled them to get involved in deals with the unions which result in dragline-operators making as much money as the Prime Minister of Australia. The efficiency of the Australian mines can only stretch so far if they are being beaten down on every corner.

It behoves the Government to take a little bit of the rough with the smooth. When things were going well and everyone was riding high, no-one—neither the miners nor the citizens—had any argument with the Queensland Government and the Queensland people getting their slice of the action; but times are no longer good. The Queensland Government has to accept that its slice of the cake, like everyone else's, has to get a little smaller; otherwise it runs the great danger of making its mines non-competitive. It is only if the mines are able to compete on the world market that they will get anything at all. They are being strangled at the moment. The trade-unionists are causing enough trouble at the moment by portraying Australia to the world market as being an unreliable supplier. While Australia was economical, it could afford to be a little unreliable; but any business that is unreliable or uneconomic is out of business in a year or two. Queensland cannot rely on its mines to continue to pour money into the Queensland Government as if they are an endless horn of plenty.

Everyone else is cutting back and being forced to reconsider and review the way in which business is done. The Queensland Government should have enough common sense to do so, too.

Why is it that the mining boom has come to an end? Why is it that more projects are not coming on stream to provide the employment in their start-up phases and continuing employment during their operation? Because Queensland is just no longer in the market-place. Regrettably, the biggest single impost on the mining industry is the money that the Government takes off it.

Mr Scott: That is nonsense.

Mr Henderson interjected.

Mr GYGAR: I am delighted to be caught in a cross-fire. I know that I must be getting pretty close when the ratbag Right and the ratbag Left are both starting to kick me to death. As the honourable members would be aware——

Mr Henderson interjected.

Mr GYGAR: Speaking of ratbags—the honourable member for somewhere or other has something to say.

Mr Henderson: We are talking to the nothing middle, aren't we?

Mr GYGAR: The honourable member for Mount Gravatt should be aware that I am not giving my valedictory this week or next week, and that is more than I can say about him.

Mr Henderson: Don't bet on it.

Mr GYGAR: I take on board the sort of lunacy that roves round the Chamber sometimes.

In order to demonstrate the total detachment from reality of certain elements in this Chamber, I point out that they say that Queensland's mines are not being damaged, that their competitiveness is not being damaged and that they are not being in the slightest bit affected by the rail freights policy of the Queensland Government. That merely reflects their total detachment from reality. I do not know to whom they have been talking, but they have not been talking to anyone who is involved in mining in this State.

Mr Scott: You are trying to blame the workers; that is what you are trying to do.

Mr GYGAR: I regret that the honourable member for Cook has been asleep for about the last 10 or 15 minutes. Certainly, the workers got their slice of the action.

Mr Scott: You are talking about the cost of production.

Mr GYGAR: Would the honourable member deny that the workers in the mines are well paid and well looked after?

Mr Scott: Not too well paid, no.

Mr GYGAR: I suggest that any member of this House would be happy to swap pay packets with them on any day of the week, but that is just one element. The proposition that I put to the honourable member, if he could remove his union blinkers for five minutes, is that all of these elements cannot remain high and the industry survive. One of the areas in which an adjustment can and should reasonably be made is in the rail freights policy of the Queensland Government. The Government cannot continue with this good-time, boom-time mentality when the times are no longer good and the boom is over. The position needs a rethink, a renegotiation and a review of the way the freights are set so that they do not act as a burden upon prosperity or as a brake upon growth.

Queensland has led the way in the development of its mineral potential and in penetrating the world markets. Now, or any time, is not the time to have the brakes on that development. The admission made by the Minister for Transport (Mr Lane) about the Queensland rail system's not being as unprofitable as other railway systems in Australia is a blatant acknowledgement that that is because rail freight charges on the transportation of minerals are far higher than the cost of providing the service. It is a type of taxation or a resource rent. The Queensland Government cannot continue to impose charges at the present level. The Queensland Government cannot afford to take the risk of killing the goose that has laid the golden egg.

I do not suggest that the Queensland Railways should be turned into a kind of benevolent society for coal-mining companies or that the Government should provide coal-mining companies with a free ride; but I do suggest that the Government ought to recognise the problems being faced by the coal-mining industry, take them on board and be prepared to take a slightly smaller slice of the cake, if necessary. I suggest that, if Queensland's coal sales were to fall by half because of the adverse effect of freight costs on the price of Queensland's coal, economics would suggest that a small adjustment in rail freight charges in order to maintain the market share would result in Queensland's receiving as much revenue if not more.

The Minister must have at his disposal economists who spend half the day working out those figures. The time has come for those economists and the Queensland Government to sit down with those involved in the coal-mining industry to ensure that the mines

will continue to be viable. In that way, the Minister will be able to continue to stand up for his department before the Committee and remark on the way in which the Queensland Railway Department assists in revenue-collection for the State. If an adjustment to freight rates is not made, I fear that that position will not remain true in the future. Queensland's competitiveness may decline, our market share may decline and, as a result, the Government will not be able to utilise fully the revenue resource associated with the operation of Queensland's railway system.

Hon. D. F. LANE (Merthyr—Minister for Transport) (9.17 p.m.): Before I address some of the matters that have been posed during the debate this evening, I wish to make some observations about the performance of members of the Opposition in the Committee today. When I presented the Estimates, I pointed out that the debate offered all members the opportunity to exhaustively examine and question the operation of those departments that fall within the scope of my portfolio. I mentioned that the Estimates debate represented accountability at the highest level.

I am rather disappointed that Opposition members did not avail themselves of the opportunity to question in greater detail the figures that were presented in the Budget Speech made by the Premier and Treasurer in the Chamber a fortnight ago; those in the annual report of the Commissioner for Railways, presented to the House by me this morning; those in the annual report of the Commissioner for Transport, presented a few days ago; or, indeed, those contained in the masses of information that have been available to honourable members in reports tabled by me during the last three years on the subject-matter of railway systems development and railway finance.

The opportunity was shirked by all. Instead, the Committee was provided with evidence of little research, much posturing and plenty of political rhetoric from members of the Opposition. The Committee was subjected to parish-pump nonsense from members of the Opposition who hold positions that call for comments of greater stature and observations of greater moment on an occasion as important as today. Because honourable members are but a few weeks away from a very important election, my comments are particularly pertinent as the people of Queensland will choose between those who sit on the Opposition benches in this Chamber and those who, together with me, occupy the Government benches.

Although an opportunity was provided, it was not availed of. I express my disappointment to all of the people who advocate the extension of the principle of public accountability whenever they have the ear of a friendly newspaper commentator. The principle of ensuring public accountability was not in evidence as an important consideration in the contribution made by honourable members today.

I turn now to address my remarks to some of the questions that were raised by honourable members during the debate. I take up the questions posed by the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) and the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) about rail freight profits that result from the transportation of coal by Queensland Railways and the level of rail freight charges imposed by the Queensland Government on the coal-mining industry in this State. It may be of interest to honourable members to refer to the time when some of the rail freight charges were set. Recently, I had some research carried out because it was a pain in the neck for me to hear some honourable members opposite—particularly a couple of members of the Liberal Party—continually complaining about rail freights that are set and imposed on the coal-mining companies that operate in this State. I might suggest that, by making rather superficial statements and comments in this debate, they are trying to curry favour with people in the mining-fields.

It happens to be the fact that in respect of the mine at Oaky Creek, which is one of the State's leading and largest mines, the rail freights were set by Cabinet during the time that the Honourable Sir William Knox, who then was and still is the member for Nundah, was this State's Treasurer. In fact, in a letter dated 21 June 1978 and signed by W. E. Knox, the Oaky Creek company was advised of the rail freights that would apply. Similarly, German Creek, which is a very efficient mine of which this State is

very proud, and is another major mine that exports coal to Europe, Britain and a great consortium that includes the British Coal Board and a number of other major overseas interests, was advised by the same gentleman, Mr W. E. Knox, in a letter dated 5 July 1978, of the rail freight that would apply to the haulage of coal. As I said, that letter was signed by Mr W. E. Knox, at that time the Treasurer, now Sir William Knox, the leader of the Liberal Party in this place.

Similarly, in a decision taken on 7 July 1978, the Central Queensland Coal Associates triple-header train agreement was drawn up, decided upon and recommended to the Government. It was applied by the Government during Sir William Knox's time as Treasurer.

The company QCL and the company operating Norwich Park were also advised of rail freights during Sir William Knox's time as Treasurer, as a result of a decision made on 4 April 1977 following his submission to Cabinet.

Similarly, as a result of a submission that was made to Cabinet on 24 April 1978 by Mr W. E. Knox, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer at that time, a decision was made on the rail freights that would apply to the Gregory mine.

I have no arguments with those rail freights or with any of the submissions or decisions taken at that time. I do not stand in this place in any hypocritical way and now condemn them. They were rail freights that were based on good economic research and a testing of what the market would bear.

I make no apology for saying here and now that on behalf of the people of Queensland the Government is entitled to charge the mining companies what the market will bear. The resource—the coal that lies in the ground in this State—belongs to the people of Queensland, and as the custodians of the citizens' interests, the Government is entitled to derive from the exploitation of that great resource what the market will stand. That is what is done when the rail freights are applied in the way that they are applied.

It has been stated that circumstances have since changed. Circumstances certainly have changed. There are more competitors around the world, but I have yet to see any of the coal contracts cancelled. In fact, higher tonnages are being railed. They are increasing on a regular basis. Since the dollar has fallen in relation to the yen and other overseas currencies that are relevant in this context, increasing railage of coal has occurred, increasing spot sales around the world. The market is bearing the rail freights that the Government, on behalf of the people of Queensland, charges. Let that be said and be the final word on the matter.

A proposition that was put by the honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) and a couple of other members—as it seems to be a popular topic tonight, I think I should make some comments on it in the same context—is that I claim some great personal credit for the fact that the profit of the railway system in this State—a unique profit in Australia; in fact, probably unique in the world—is derived totally from my personal efforts.

Such is not the case, and to suggest otherwise is to misrepresent me. I have never claimed that Queensland Railways now runs at an operational profit because of my personal efforts. What I have suggested is that it is the one system in Australia that has an operational profit and that that has been due to increased tonnages of coal, to the rail freights that the coal miners are charged and to the increased haulage of grain from round the State, which amounts to about \$70m of the new profit that the department now makes.

I claim some personal input in a direct way for the other \$36m, which was derived from reforms that have been made and the modernisation that has taken place as a result of the reforms introduced by me following the PA Australia report of about three years ago. By the way, that is an audited figure which has been reviewed and reported upon. It is public knowledge. It appeared in a review carried out by PA Australia, management consultants, over the last few months. That report is available so that

people can see quite clearly that railway reform has resulted in savings of about \$36m per year over the last two and a half years.

That is not a bad claim to be able to make, to save money in the administration of a public service. I would like to challenge honourable members of the Labor Party to see whether they can make a claim of such reforms in any of the railway systems in the States in which their brother, or sister, parties happen to hold power. They cannot do so.

In fact, in the report of the Commissioner for Railways, which was tabled here this morning, the figures clearly show that the excess of revenue earnings over working expenses for the last 12 months is \$117.8m. The New South Wales system, which is slightly smaller than Queensland's but is reasonably comparable, showed a loss of \$394.9m for the same 12-month period. So the comparisons are clear. In the State of Victoria the excess of working expenses over revenue—the loss—was \$515.4m in the last 12 months. I repeat that in this State the Railway Department had an operational profit of \$117.8m.

I have already said that I do not claim personal credit for that. That was due to extra sales of coal, extra rail haulage carried out efficiently under the administration of the Railway Department—I take responsibility to see that that happens—and other reforms implemented following the PA Australia report. So let me put that one to rest.

I know that some of those members opposite do not particularly like to give any credit to me, to the Railway Department or to anyone on this side of the Chamber, but I think that on occasions sometimes in politics there are matters upon which people can be gracious. When the facts are as clear as they are in this case, honourable members opposite could admit them and even acknowledge them—no-one expects compliments in politics.

A number of other members spoke to the Estimates. First of all it was the Opposition spokesman, the member for Everton (Mr Milliner). My God, I hope he remains the Opposition spokesman on transport for ever! He is a wonderful opposite number to have. The superficiality of his contributions on matters affecting this portfolio are legend.

In the last 12 months, with all the mammoth things that have taken place in my portfolio, with railways, project developments, the electrification of the rail lines and other things that are happening, his great contribution to the debate was his announcement of the discovery of a requisition for the purchase of some liquor by the Transport Department, which he told the Committee was paid for out of the research, development and promotion Vote. It was a bill for the amount of \$292 and covered some spirits, some beer and some soft drink. Apparently he believes that there is something abnormal or unusual about that. In fact, the promotional activities of the Department of Transport involve such functions as seminars for the bus industry, driving instruction school industry seminars, tow truck industry seminars, taxi industry seminars, heavy vehicle operator seminars and motor vehicle inspection seminars. Those seminars provide an extremely valuable forum for industry and the Department of Transport to maintain a close and effective liaison.

It happens to be a characteristic of the Australian way of life that one way to have a talk with people, to liaise with people, to get on with people and to get to know them, is to have a beer, or even a soft drink, with them on occasions. That is no great sin. For the honourable member for Everton to raise in such a scurrilous way the matter of a lousy bill of \$292 for liquor for a big department such as the Transport Department, and to cast aspersions on the department, is nonsense.

If the honourable member for Everton had bothered to listen to me when I was presenting the Estimates of my department, he would be aware that I remarked on the close working relationship that exists between the industry and the department and the fact that that has been welcomed by the transport industry. It has been welcomed.

Morale in the Transport Department and in the transport industry is extremely high because of the liaison and the close working relationship between them right round

the State. Occasionally, that liaison involves officers of the Transport Department buying a few cartons of stubbies and having a beer with some of the fellows involved in the transport industry, and that is that.

Mr Davis: Don't forget the Johnnie Walker.

Mr LANE: Yes, and a couple of bottles of Johnnie Walker. The honourable member for Brisbane Central has been known to have a beer or a Johnnie Walker on occasions when liaising with people. I have seen him do so many times.

The honourable member for Ipswich (Mr Hamill) criticised the increased cost of drivers' licences, even though licences with photographs can be obtained, in Brisbane, only at the Department of Transport offices.

The honourable member for Ipswich should have been astute enough to comprehend that the increase in the driver's licence fee from \$2.70 to \$4.70 per year—an increase of \$2 per year—is well justified. It is to pay for the computerisation of the department, the driver's licence records system, the on-line computer system and the photographic equipment necessary to provide photographic licences.

Photographic licences are available also at the Department of Transport offices at Ipswich, Logan city, the Gold Coast, Rockhampton, Townsville and Toowoomba, and in March next year all Department of Transport offices and 200 police stations will be equipped to produce photographic licences.

I remind honourable members that the increase in driver's licence fees is still in accordance with the Government's policy of being the low-tax State. The Labor State of New South Wales charges \$100 for a five-year driver's licence, compared with the Queensland fee of \$23.50. Victoria and South Australia charge \$75, and Western Australia charges \$60. So, Queensland still has the cheapest drivers' licences in Australia. It is a document that people flock to pay for and have issued to them because it is a higher standard of licence than that issued in the past.

The honourable member for Brisbane Central (Mr Davis) complained about the fees charged for new taxi licences. He said that that money was not put back into the industry. I wonder where the honourable member thinks the enormous amount of money that is spent by the department in the supervision of the taxi industry comes from—supervision that is warranted and well deserved and, I might say, very, very necessary.

Relations between the taxi industry, me, the Commissioner for Transport and the department are excellent. The Queensland taxi industry is generally regarded as the best in Australia. I might say that it has shown a remarkable improvement since the honourable member for Brisbane Central sold his taxi licence and left the industry.

The honourable member for Everton, as spokesman for the Australian Labor Party, suggested that fares on trains, buses and public transport generally are too high. He referred in particular to rail fares on the suburban system in Brisbane. It happens to be a fact that the fares for all of these services are low by world standards and, in many cases, lower than fares throughout Australia.

Compare the fares on London Transport, the Paris Metro and the United States mass transit systems with the fares charged by Queensland Railways. The fares charged by Queensland Railways are comparable with those other fares and are lower than them. Queensland Railways fares are equal to or less than the fares charged by the Brisbane City Council for the same kind of service over the same distance on the buses. Those fares were established by the Australian Labor Party in the Brisbane City Council and are maintained by the Liberal Party in that council. Those fares are quite proper and are approved by my department. I offer no criticism of them, and merely acknowledge that equity exists.

In regard to two-man crewing, which was a matter raised by honourable members today—those honourable members who listen will know that, because of the problems with braking, the previous commissioner, Doug Mendoza, agreed not to implement two-man crewing on long coal trains. Firstly, two men were needed to pin the brakes if the

brakes failed on a range, such as the Drummond Range; secondly, it was considered that the communications were inadequate at the time; and, thirdly, there was a combination of both those matters when a worker had to get down off the engine and walk back along the track. I hasten to add that all of these things have been remedied by electrification. The "B" braking is being fitted to all wagons, and that will alleviate the problem.

New UHF train-to-base control radios provide complete communication between train and control at all times. Communication is no longer a problem. Although some difficulty could be experienced when walking the length of the train, a portable radio with full communication between the two crew members is available in the event of that happening.

Circumstances have changed since Mr Mendoza visited that area, and I am not sure that he was not misquoted in this Chamber by Opposition members today.

Mention was made of the Dawson Parade level crossing. A study has been carried out by Mr Chris Thompson, a signal engineer from British Rail. Opposition members might show some interest in that excellent report provided by Mr Chris Thompson, who was brought out here at my instigation to carry out an investigation of the signalling system in the railways. As soon as the Queensland Government arranged this, Opposition members immediately lost interest. They have not raised the matter since and have not demonstrated any interest in the results or recommendations set out in his report. It was obviously a superficial political attack with no basis.

As a result of his report, the Dawson Parade level crossing signalling has been rearranged to ensure that outbound trains must stop prior to crossing the level crossing. The matter is already in hand. In addition, boom gates may be installed to further assist if investigations show that gates are warranted. I believe they will be installed. It is a minor problem, but the department is facing up to it by bringing in the experts. Opposition members should not waste the time of this Chamber any further on this matter.

I mention the matter raised by the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) regarding the Christian-liturgical racks of the Legion of Mary and the Seventh-Day Adventists that have been removed from some railway stations on the northern line. It is a matter of which I was unaware. I was not consulted regarding a policy direction on the matter, otherwise I would not have permitted it. It has been carried out by the manager of the property department, Ian Douglas, who has implemented a policy of his own making.

Mr Davis: He ran against Manfred Cross.

Mr LANE: The honourable member for Brisbane Central should keep politics out of it. There is no need to mention that.

Mr Douglas implemented this policy, and tomorrow he will be directed to abandon it. I can assure honourable members that the Legion of Mary will have its racks back in the Mackay Railway Station, and so will the Rugby clubs and all the other clubs down the coast.

Mr Casey: Bless you.

Mr LANE: That is the first time in 15 years that the honourable member for Mackay has said anything pleasant about me. I must have touched his heart, or somewhere.

A number of other matters were raised in the debate. The honourable member for Everton referred to the Ferny Grove Railway Station. That was another parish pump matter raised by the Opposition spokesman. He must feel rather insecure in his seat because he spoke about nothing outside the electorate of Everton when he should have been speaking for the whole of the Opposition. The honourable member finds his own level in these debates.

Research has shown that 70 per cent of entraining passengers arrive at a railway station in the suburban area within two minutes of the departure time of a train. That is an interesting fact. Almost 100 per cent of detraining passengers leave immediately on arrival. As Ferny Grove is the terminus on that line, trains are almost always at the station. Entraining passengers are free to board and to wait in the train. Development proposals are constantly being suggested. A new station fits in with one of them. I acknowledge the need for a new station at Ferny Grove. It will be provided in due course and as soon as finance is available. The station is certainly old, but it is clean, painted, neat and tidy. In times of fund shortages, it will serve the purpose.

Honourable members referred to the commissioning last week-end of the electrification of that section of the main line between Gladstone and Rockhampton. That was the commencement of Transport Week that will be held in Queensland this week. It commenced with a celebration at the Sheraton Hotel to acknowledge the work carried out by contractors, railway employees, engineers and designers who finally had something to celebrate. They celebrated the commissioning the following day of the first section between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Visitors attended from Sweden, Italy, France and Great Britain. They gathered together to acknowledge what a great scheme the main line electrification scheme is, even though Opposition members do not. Everyone sat down and acknowledged the grand occasion.

I noticed that the honourable member for Everton was present. I also noticed that he did not leave his Beef Wellington on his plate and that he was happy to join in the occasion in good spirit. I commend him for that. It is a pity that some of his colleagues would embarrass the honourable member today by rubbishing the celebrations surrounding that great occasion. The honourable member for Everton had the decency to attend the celebration and to sit down and break bread with us, sip a glass of wine and to celebrate the grand commissioning. However, his colleagues do not seem to think much of it. I think he should take them outside the Chamber and talk to them.

I am sure that the honourable member for Everton recognised that he was part of history in the making. I know that he wants to tell his children and his great-grandchildren that he was at the Sheraton Hotel last Friday night celebrating the commissioning of main line electrification and enjoying the festivities with the rest of us. Such events occur only about every 50 years, and they should be celebrated and acknowledged.

When I travelled north to Gladstone for the opening, I was pleased to see the honourable member for Port Curtis. He did not sit in the back row or stand in a corner; he took a prize seat in the front row and endeavoured to identify locally with the whole proposal. He stood there and gazed about and on one occasion even tried to look like he was with the Premier. He did not get very far with it, but he was basking in the glory of the whole occasion. I thought that he was a little bit miffed because the mayor of the city, Col Brown, was on the dais and the honourable member was not. That could not be helped. That is no better or worse than what Labor Governments do when they are in power. Anyway, Col Brown has been more positive about this scheme than has the honourable member for Port Curtis. The honourable member was probably better in the front row than he was on the dais. The honourable member took the opportunity to move round, to talk to people and to shake hands. However, despite that, tonight I heard him complain that the railway station had been painted and that improvements to the platform have taken place. I have never heard such hypocrisy in all my life. He turned up for the good occasion, but he rubbishes it and postures in front of his mates. He has been badly embarrassed today. He would be better off if he said nothing.

Mr Prest interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Port Curtis has already been warned once tonight, so I will not tolerate much more of his shouting.

Mr PREST: I rise to a point of order. When he was in the police force, he was known to be a drunk and lived off prostitutes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I consider the honourable member's comments to be totally out of order. I have already warned him under Standing Order No. 123A. He will now leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Port Curtis withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr LANE: The honourable member for Port Curtis is well known for his comments. I do not think any honourable member takes notice of them. They say something about the spirit of the man.

I have spent 16 years in Parliament, but when I look around this Chamber I see only six honourable members who have been in Parliament longer than I have. I am sure that all honourable members who have come and gone over the years—members of different political persuasions, diverse personalities and natures—would acknowledge that probably the nastiest and meanest member of Parliament during my 16 years has been the honourable member for Port Curtis (Mr Prest). He is bitter, twisted and nasty, and it is a great pity that he cannot behave a bit better than he does.

Mr FitzGerald: Get stuck into him!

Mr LANE: No, I will not get stuck into him. I will not say anything against him.

The honourable member for Sherwood (Mr Innes) seemed to challenge the reasons for the electrification of Queensland's railway lines. People all over the world think that electrification is a wonderful thing. As a result of the introduction of electrification, the morale within the railways is very high.

A great opportunity has been afforded to the Railway Department to improve its efficiency in general and to leap into a new era of electrified traction. However, the honourable member for Sherwood questions the reasons for electrification. He is entitled to do that. However, one suspects that it is not that he does not believe in it, but that it is just that he is not part of it. That is a shame.

The reasons for the introduction of electrification are very clear. Queensland's diesel loco fleet was ageing. Two hundred of the fleet were over 25 years old and were getting beyond their economic life. A decision had to be made as to whether new diesel locomotives should be purchased—especially with the cost of necessary imported fuel—or whether to turn in a new direction and go electric.

The costs of providing diesel fuel—which involves 120 to 130 million litres of diesel fuel per year—can be overcome by the electrification of our rail lines. After paying the costs of the electricity that is generated in Queensland, the savings will be approximately \$40m to \$50m per year in fuel alone. One does not need to be an economist or an accountant to work out very simply that that is a worthwhile project.

Electrification will lead to reduction in locomotive maintenance costs. At the present time diesel locomotives must be serviced every 36 hours. However, electric locomotives are serviced every 14 days. That is an obvious and immediate saving. The reduction in the numbers of staff required is a plus. However, I stress that that can be achieved without anyone being sacked. The numbers of personnel required to operate the electric locomotives will be reduced by approximately 500. That will result in direct saving to the tax-payers. The reduction in staff numbers will be achieved through natural wastage—for example, when people retire. As a result, the money accumulated in the Consolidated Revenue Fund will provide perhaps another 500 nurses or teachers. I am sure that many honourable members would believe that that is an exercise that is worth undertaking—not to replace 500 unnecessary train-drivers, firemen, guards and other personnel who are not needed and to perhaps spend the money on nurses or providing teachers for our children. That represents a saving of about \$15m a year.

As to the reduction in locomotives—166 electric locomotives will replace 222 diesel locomotives. So the capital investment involved is also a considerable saving.

There are faster turn around times for all trains, hence the greater utilisation of locos and the wagon fleet. The introduction of RIX, the rolling stock information control

system and wagon-tracing system, will give greater capacity within the system and greater utilisation of rolling stock. No-one would suggest that main line electrification should not be embarked upon if he sat down and were fair-minded about it.

The method of evaluation was by the normal analysis of costs and benefits, showing a very high internal rate of return and benefit cost ratio. In addition, real interest rates of 6 per cent were used in the evaluation, and no recognition was given of any social or rubbery benefit.

The Treasury Department is very strict in its supervision of these matters. I can assure honourable members that it would not have leant its support to main line electrification Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 had they not shaped up economically.

There is no contribution by the coal industry to this electrification scheme in a strict sense; it is the savings that will be made that will pay for it.

The honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) raised the matter of the Mackay connection. Circumstances have changed. It is ludicrous to suggest that the 1977 report should not be re-examined as time for the replacement of the Pioneer River rail bridge draws closer—1990 at the latest. A committee comprising the Mackay City Council, the Main Roads Department, the Pioneer Shire Council and the Co-ordinator-General is investigating the matter quite thoroughly. No decision has yet been made, but when it is made, it will be announced in the proper way and the honourable member for Mackay will be well acquainted with it at that time.

However, I have given an undertaking that no railway line will pass through the Crowley Estate in this exercise. That is an assurance that people in the area were looking for.

Other Government members made some very positive contributions about things that have been introduced into the system in the last few years, for example, lollipop ladies or school-crossing monitors, who are a blessing to school safety for children. That was introduced three years ago by me. As I said in presenting the Estimates, over a thousand of those people have been retained and are employed from time to time on level crossings adjacent to schools right round the State. I do not think that any member has been able to put up a case based on the criteria that applies and been refused in a situation in which school-crossing monitors or lollipop people are warranted. It has been a great innovation.

The honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith) criticised the giving of right-of-way to buses when they are pulling out from the kerb. As I said to him in my interjection at the time, it is something that is accepted right round Australia. Once people get used to it, even in Townsville, they will come to acknowledge it as a very sensible approach. There was a necessity for some discipline in the matter. It was not right that 30 or 40 people on a bus should be held up to make way for one car with only a driver when the bus was required to pull out into a lane of traffic. That is why the law was introduced. A black and white rule was required to bring Queensland into conformity with the rest of Australia. As people have become used to it, it has been heralded as being very worth while.

I acknowledge the honourable member's remarks about the photographic licences being good and that he supports them, something that brought him into conflict with other honourable members opposite. But that cannot be helped.

Mr Casey: The Liberals?

Mr LANE: No. I have already acknowledged that the photographic licences are very popular. I know that the honourable member for Stafford (Mr Gygar) had some reservations about how the rules apply, but I do not think that it was the sort of thing that the honourable member for Townsville West (Mr Smith) was complaining about.

I make no excuses for the fact that it is necessary these days to use advertising and the television medium to inform the public of what is occurring in terms of public administration, and I make no excuses for having to use paid advertising time in order

to do so. Advertising slogans such as "Take it easy, Take a train" have attracted significant awards overseas. The most recent advertisement, "The Life Lines of Queensland"—an advertisement in which I am featured towards the end for 1½ seconds out of a total duration of 30 seconds—received the creative excellence award which was presented in recognition of the highest achievement in advertising standards by the International Federation of Advertising Agencies in a world-wide competition. The award was presented to Ken Campbell and Associates Pty Ltd on behalf of its client, Queensland Railways, in respect of the television advertising campaign "The Life Lines of Queensland." I show the Committee the certificate that was awarded at the conference held in Toronto, Canada, and I would be quite happy to table it for the information of honourable members present.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 4 September, 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	79,331,800
Balance of Vote, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds and Loan Fund Account	1,443,522,499

Progress reported.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. AHERN (Landsborough—Minister for Industry, Small Business and Technology), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Small Business Development Corporation Act 1980-1983 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 Industry, Small Business and Technology) (9.58 p.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Small Business Development Corporation was established in 1980 to foster economic growth in Queensland's small-business community. The Bill that I have introduced today will serve to improve the corporation's ability to assist the small-business sector by enabling it to provide finance directly to small-business applicants.

The recently established Queensland Industry Development Corporation has agreed to appoint the Small Business Development Corporation to act as its agent to provide small-scale development finance for viable, growth-oriented small businesses that cannot obtain funding from normal sources. Under the proposed Small Business Supplementary Loans Scheme, the Queensland Industry Development Corporation will allocate a pool of funds from which the Small Business Development Corporation, acting as its agent, will directly make loans available to eligible small businesses. In the first phase of this arrangement, it is proposed that the QIDC will allocate a sum of \$500,000 for this purpose, and that the small-business loans provided will be limited to individual amounts

not exceeding \$10,000. In administering the scheme, the SBDC will be required to use QIDC loan application forms, adopt established lending criteria, and observe internal and external audit requirements and monthly reporting procedures.

SBDC loans under this arrangement will bear an interest rate equal to the QIDC's prime lending rate on the day of acceptance of the loan offered, with all associated costs or fees to be met by the borrower. The loans will have a maximum term of five years, but the borrower will have the option to roll the funds over for a further period. Although the SBDC will absorb the administration costs associated with such a scheme, the QIDC will assume ultimate responsibility for any bad debts arising from the operation of the scheme.

This Bill has been introduced on the advice of the Solicitor-General that there is some doubt that the proposed QIDC/SBDC lending arrangements can be brought into effect without an appropriate amendment to the Small Business Development Corporation Act 1980-1983.

I am advised that that Act presently confers no power on the SBDC to make available loan funds directly. While it empowers the SBDC to accept and report on applications for financial assistance, all such applications are presently required to be referred to the Industries Assistance Board, constituted under the Industrial Development Act 1963-1981, for investigation, report and recommendation, and the Minister is further required to submit the application to the Governor in Council, before approval may be granted.

This procedure has not proved effective in the past. Furthermore, with the establishment of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation on 1 July 1986, the Industries Assistance Board has ceased to exist, and this has necessitated amendments in any case.

The Small Business Development Corporation Act Amendment Bill provides for four amendments to the existing Act.

Clause 2 of the Bill will delete the definition of Industries Assistance Board as presently provided under section 2 of the existing Act. This definition is no longer appropriate or relevant, as the Industries Assistance Board was dissolved on 1 July 1986 as a consequence of section 6 (b) (ii) of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation Act, 1985.

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the insertion of a new paragraph in section 12 of the existing Act, to ensure that the Small Business Development Corporation is empowered to act as agent for the Queensland Industry Development Corporation in accordance with the proposed small business lending arrangements.

Clause 4 of the Bill substitutes the word "manager" for "executive director" in section 15 of the existing Act. This amendment is made necessary by the removal of the office of executive director in amendments to the Act in 1983.

Clause 5 of the Bill repeals sections 31 to 31G of the existing Act. These sections were inserted in 1983 to provide for financial assistance under the Act to small business. However, with the dissolution of the Industries Assistance Board and the establishment of the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, it is no longer possible for the SBDC to process applications for financial assistance under the Small Business Development Corporation Act.

As I said earlier, this Bill is designed to ensure that the Small Business Development Corporation is equipped to further the interests of the small business community.

I am confident that it will achieve this objective. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Casey, adjourned.

WHEAT POOL ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading—Resumption of Debate**

Debate resumed from 20 August (see p. 465) on Mr Turner's motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (10.4 p.m.): The Labor Party supports this legislation, the principle of it being to change the voluntary levy scheme for wheat research into a compulsory levy scheme.

Queensland growers have paid a compulsory levy of 30c a tonne and a voluntary levy that is currently 15c a tonne. Unfortunately, however, the voluntary levy has been paid only by approximately 40 per cent of growers, as is usually the case. This legislation therefore asserts a long-standing Labor principle—if everybody stands to benefit, then everybody should contribute. It is simply not possible to separate the benefits and make them available only to those who contribute.

The Minister's second-reading speech contains the marvellous following lines—

“Only some 40 per cent of growers choose to pay the voluntary levy, whilst all growers benefit from the research activities the levy provides.”

Those lines could easily have been written for a trade union leader. It is strange how this Government implacably opposes the concept of compulsion when it comes to unionism but embraces it whole-heartedly when it comes to its own bailiwick. Would it be fair to say that the Queensland Government is again exhibiting its double standards?

The wheat industry in Australia and in Queensland has long been one of the nation's largest, most productive, most efficient and most successful industries, generating important export earnings and contributing to the nation's standard of living. However, it is currently in deep trouble. A hungry world is no longer begging for our product. Our tried and trusted ally, our conservative friend, that bastion of anti-communism, the United States of America, is subsidising wheat exports to our traditional markets of the Soviet Union and communist China.

Many farmers are in trouble. Times are tough and they do not look like getting much better. However, the average farmer is a battler and he has been through tough times before. I am pleased to say that the attitude expressed by the Premier in *The Sunday Mail* of 31 August is, thankfully, not indicative of Australian farmers in general. The Premier vowed not to grow grain again until the ALP Federal Government was removed from office. That is a statement from Queensland's positive leader! Just imagine where Australia would be today if that was the prevailing ethos in the nation's farming community. The Premier went on to blame the Federal Government for everything that has gone wrong in farming areas.

The article also stated—

“He would not blame unfair trade practices by the United States and Europeans who have dumped subsidised grain on world markets, depressing prices.”

That calls into question the Premier's understanding of the agricultural sector in Australia and also his commitment to the farming sector and to the wheat-farmers of Queensland.

In difficult times our research effort becomes that much more important. The Labor Party therefore supports this legislation and hopes that it will lead to an increase in research effort. However, it is also important that research be directed into areas where it will do most good. At times in the past, our research effort has been criticised. When *The Australian* was criticising Australia's wheat research effort, it stated—

“... the mindless production of massive quantities of an agricultural commodity, fostered by research and development policies aiming at producing more of the same.”

One may well be forgiven for asking why Australia has a research effort costing in excess of \$12m per annum that is aimed at maximising returns and especially increasing

production for a world that no longer wants our product. Perhaps Australia should be learning how to grow less, not more. However, when times are tough, it is more important than ever to have adequate research directed at cutting costs—and perhaps less towards increasing yields—improving marketability, preserving the resource base and so on.

There have been major changes at the Commonwealth level aimed at redressing the new realities in the Australian wheat industry, particularly in relation to research. Rural research in Australia is organised under the auspices of the Rural Industry Research Trust Funds (RIRFs). They are financed by industry and Government—that is, the Commonwealth Government—on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis and administered by statutory-based research committees in each of the States. In each of the past two Budgets, the Commonwealth Government's contribution to RIRFs has been increased by approximately \$5m, thereby demonstrating the Commonwealth's commitment to research in the nation's agricultural sector.

The Commonwealth Government and industry now contribute about \$32m to research in the agricultural sector. Those funds are additional to those provided by the Commonwealth to the CSIRO, universities and colleges and to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics for rural research. Australian wheat-growers contribute approximately \$6m per annum towards research from the levy they pay on receivals currently set at 35c per tonne.

That is matched by the Federal Government and distributed by the Wheat Research Council and the five State research committees. The Commonwealth Government will contribute matching amounts of up to 0.5 per cent of the value of production. Therefore, the wheat industry could more than double the current 35c per tonne levy in order to utilise fully the Commonwealth offer.

The industry needs to consider that because there will be a steadily increasing need for funding to pay for high-priority research designed to retain and build up the competitiveness of the industry as a whole.

I ask the Minister whether the 15c per tonne levy previously paid on a voluntary basis by Queensland—and presumably to be paid on a compulsory basis after the passing of this legislation—will attract the matching grant from the Commonwealth.

Recently the Commonwealth Government reviewed the organisation and direction of the research industry funds, the first broadly based review in 30 years. That is in line with the Federal Government's commitment to ensure that primary industry statutory organisations operate with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

The objective of the Government has been to ensure that these organisations are structured so as to provide the flexibility and professionalism that will increasingly be required if Australian agriculture is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The proposed changes to the organisation and direction of the RIRFs are in line with several broad principles being adopted in relation to the operation of primary industry statutory authorities generally. I think it is important that these principles, as applied to the RIRFs, be included in *Hansard*, so I will outline them.

A Government Member: What are RIRFs?

Mr De LACY: If the honourable member had been listening in the first place, he would know. I am sorry that he cannot follow me.

The principles are as follows—

- (1) the objectives need to be clearly identified and established in enabling legislation;
- (2) the objectives need to be reflected in strategic plans developed in consultation with the industry and approved by the Minister for Primary Industry;
- (3) the research body should be endowed with the maximum autonomy possible, consistent with its responsibility to be accountable to industry and to Government;

- (4) the research body should be comprised of people with skills and experience relevant to the objectives of the trust fund; and
- (5) the administration of the trust funds needs to be efficient.

I commend those principles to the Minister and I hope that they can be embodied in the State statutory authorities involved with the administration of research funds.

In respect of the wheat industry, and also the barley industry, there are some unique arrangements. The Commonwealth's financial contributions are administered through the National Wheat Research Council and the industry contributions are administered through the State-based research committees.

The Commonwealth hopes that the strategic planning and accountability provisions applied to the Commonwealth authorities will likewise apply to the State committees. The research committees will be encouraged to devise mechanisms whereby the principle of selecting a broadly based committee, on the basis of experience and expertise, might be applied.

These principles have been embodied in the new Federal legislation—the Rural Industry Research Act 1985—and, according to Don Blesing, chairman of the Wheat Research Council of Australia, charges research councils to be corporate, to be pro-active, to develop formal planning processes which document high-priority areas, to be more accountable to their industry, and to fund research which brings about improved productivity and increased commercial returns to growers.

The new Wheat Research Council, which replaces the Australian Wheat Industry Research Council, is fortunate in that it inherits a stable and broad-ranging research base, a long history of grower research levies matched by Federal Government funding, and a system of State committees which fund regional and local issues. The Wheat Research Council is corporate in the sense that membership is based on experience and qualifications rather than being representative of research organisations, grower bodies or States. Planning and decision-making is expected to be for the wheat industry as a whole, with accountability to the Grains Council of Australia generally. Industry is now in charge of its own researching using the resources of the research establishment in a partnership to achieve joint goals.

“Pro-active” means to positively seek out research areas that are likely to increase yields or cut costs and actively encourage research into areas where pay-offs are greatest rather than rely solely on volunteered research applications, which too often has been a feature of research in Australia.

A five-year plan for research and development, along with an annual program, has been approved by the Minister. These plans were developed after full and wide consultation with the wheat industry and reflect industry pressures and priorities. Some of the pain and hardships that are so real on the farms must inevitably show through in the research program. The five-year plan sets out major objectives as being increasing grain yields, reducing on-farm costs, improving resource conservation and management, developing improved and more cost efficient storage, handling and transport systems, and improving the marketability of the crop.

Increasing grain yields still takes up a majority of the research effort and amounts to 70 per cent of the 1986-87 annual program. An increasingly larger percentage is going into improved marketability and reducing on-farm costs.

In summary, the economic pressures felt by the wheat industry now will undoubtedly lead to changed production patterns as farmers make rapid changes on the farm. Wheat will increasingly be grown under lower cost and/or higher yielding systems, probably incorporating grain or forage legumes.

Economic pressures could also affect the shape of the wheat industry across the nation, as low-yielding regions change to other enterprises and low freight and premium quality areas of Australia increase their relative profitability. To quote Don Blesing—

“It would be pleasant if the WRC could present a five-year plan which concentrated on growing an extra tiller, or an extra head or an extra 10 grammes

per hectare, or developing varieties that enable farmers to grow higher yields in disease or mineral deficient situations, or on acid compacted or non-wetting soils."

This statement is pleasant, but irresponsible. Low and declining wheat prices are concentrating farmers' minds wonderfully. Unless farm input costs are reduced and until storage, handling and freight costs off the farm are cut, both the size of the industry and the hard-won reputation for grain quality are at risk. I might add that that hard won reputation is an international one. This morning I saw something in the press about the quality of wheat produced by Australia and Canada being far better than that produced in the United States. The livelihoods of thousands of wheat-growers across the State are also at risk.

Australia still needs wheat-breeding research and wheat-breeders. Wheat research that is aimed at increasing grain yields will still be a major thrust in Australia's research programs. However, the primary objective, which is that of increasing commercial returns to growers, dictates that there be a shift in priorities to enable economic and marketability research and resource constraints be increased.

The State Opposition supports the legislation.

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (10.18 p.m.): I have much pleasure in supporting the Minister's amendments to the Act. After listening to the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy), it is obvious to me that he does not realise that the biggest problems for our wheat-farmers are in Australia's own back yard. Those problems stem from the anti-farmer attitude of the Hawke Government, which has presided over crippling high fuel costs and high interest rates, withdrawn many of the deductions on clearing and water and fodder conservation improvements, introduced the fringe benefits tax, imposed high taxation and eroded the capacity of Australia's primary producers to compete on the export market. Effectively the Hawke Government has killed the incentive of the producers of this nation's wealth—the sector that provides the greatest bulk of Australia's export income.

It was interesting to listen to the honourable member for Cairns talking about the need to reduce farm costs. It is a pity he does not tell some of his colleagues in Canberra about the costs he has referred to. It appears he has one view in this House and another view out in the community.

The effect of the Bill will be to increase the productivity of our wheat-growers, while ensuring that the users of the wheat receive a commodity that meets their requirements. The Bill is all about developing farming systems and practices that are more efficiently adapted to Queensland's environment, in respect to both its exploitation and its conservation. The Queensland Wheat Research Institute can rightly be called the growers' institute in that the growers have played a major role in its establishment and over the years have supported the institute financially through both statutory and voluntary levies. In addition, growers have representation on the committee through which they exercise an important influence on the institute's activities.

Since its establishment, the Queensland Wheat Research Institute has made an extremely valuable contribution to winter crop production in this State, and its basic purpose has remained the same, namely, to employ science to solve the problems of winter crop production. During those years the industry has more than trebled. Cropping has extended west and north into new environments. Farming is now big business, with high stakes and high costs.

The institute has been responsible for the breeding of such varieties as Oxley in 1974 and Cook in 1977. I had the pleasure of being included in the breeding multiplication program for Cook during those years when I used to grow seed-wheat on my own farm. Banks was another variety that was bred, in 1979, Flinders in 1982, Hartog in 1983, Bass in 1983, as well as Torres and King, Vasco in 1985 and Diaz in 1986, which is the new variety that has been released. The popularity of those varieties is such that, with the exception of Oxley and Cook, which have fallen to rust, they now comprise 80 per cent of Queensland wheat-plantings. Those varieties have improved yields by more

than 20 per cent compared to the varieties they replaced. The Hartog variety has added a further 10 per cent yield since its release. The additional yield resulting from the use of semi-dwarf Queensland Wheat Research Institute varieties has, by conservative estimates, added about \$150m to the value of Queensland wheat crop during the last decade. The institute varieties are also popular in New South Wales and Victoria, where they have also significantly added to the nation's wheat output.

The institute's breeding program has been singularly successful in keeping at bay stem rust, which is potentially the most damaging disease of wheat in Queensland. Mutations in the rust organism break down a variety's resistance to such an extent that in the past new varieties have had an average life of only five years. Recent victims of the disease have been the varieties of Cook and Oxley, which I mentioned earlier. Breeding of new varieties to replace those rendered susceptible is a crucial and ongoing task at the institute. Research currently under way at the institute is aimed at incorporating in our commercial varieties resistance to pre-harvest weathering damage and to the disease yellow spot. Both those problems can cause severe economic loss to growers in particular seasons.

A long-standing and baffling problem of heavy losses in wheat yield of about 50 per cent on the normally productive central Darling Downs has been solved by the institute's soil microbiology group. A soil-borne nematode was identified as the cause of the problem, allowing wheat-growers to take avoidance measures. Nematode-resistant varieties are currently being developed at the institute.

Soil conservation research at the institute, which has produced valuable information on rates of run-off and soil loss, has been instrumental in alerting authorities to the severity of the soil erosion problem, not only in Queensland but also throughout the rest of eastern Australia. Recent pioneering research on loss of crop productivity caused by soil erosion has further emphasised the seriousness of the erosion problem. The trend towards stubble retention as a farming practice to conserve soil and prevent run-off of rainfall is based on results of research from the Queensland Wheat Research Institute.

Wheat yields and protein contents have declined in Queensland on soils that have been cropped for many years. Research at the institute has shown the rate of the decline for a range of important cropping soils. Queensland farming is currently exploiting native fertility. Newly cultivated soils have shown a significant fertility decline in less than 10 years. Some sandier soils in the western wheat-belt lose the bulk of their organic matter in just two years of cropping.

Studies of phasic development of wheat under various environmental circumstances have greatly improved our understanding of the crop and so enabled breeders to produce varieties that are well tuned to Queensland's growing conditions and has allowed farmers to adjust their planning practices, varieties and planting times to suit those conditions. The early planting of wheat in central Queensland, which gives considerably improved yields in that region, is based on research by the institute.

Based on production in the 1984-85 year, the sum of \$580,000 was received by the institute for its activities in the year ended June 1986. Those funds came from growers under two schemes, \$481,255 from the compulsory levy of 30c per tonne on all wheat delivered and \$101,400 from a voluntary levy of 15c per tonne. As stated by the Minister, that voluntary levy was paid by 40 per cent of wheat-growers. It is interesting to note that that 40 per cent produced 51 per cent of Queensland's total wheat crop.

The money that is allocated is directed to all sorts of activities: operating and maintenance, research costs and capital items; wheat breeding, research and variety-testing; zinc deficiency of soils; fallowing practices; effects of soil management on evaporation; photographic identification of weeds and seedlings; communication between the institute, growers and Department of Primary Industries extension officers; wheat quality evaluation; weathering resistance evaluation; and the restoration of fertility-depleted soils.

The allocation of \$101,400 that came from the voluntary levy was used for the replacement of a truck and tractor and for a new bird-proof enclosure in which breeders could grow summer-generation wheat and therefore save time in breeding weathering-resistant varieties. The remainder of the money was expended on improvements at the institute's Well Camp farm.

The Bill will make the voluntary levy compulsory. All wheat-growers will contribute, as compared with approximately 40 per cent of growers under the voluntary scheme. The increased funding will enhance and speed up the work that is already being undertaken by the institute. All growers in Queensland—and indeed many growers in other States—have benefited financially from the valuable contribution that has been made to the industry by the Queensland Research Institute. It is only reasonable that all growers in Queensland should contribute to that continuing work.

Mr De Lacy: Do you believe in compulsory unionism?

Mr NEAL: The honourable member for Cairns can stick to his unions.

As far as I am concerned, those moneys are well spent. Over the years that I have grown wheat I have contributed voluntarily because I have always believed that the institute does a magnificent job. That is something that all growers take notice of, especially in years when the season is not good or when prices are down. In those times growers look at the authorisation at the bottom of their returns and, because of their financial situation, wonder whether or not they ought to sign the authorisation for that year's crop. Obviously, 60 per cent of those growers have made the decision not to sign the authorisation. I have signed it for quite a long time, because I believe that the institute has done a tremendous job in its field.

I personally commend the staff of the institute and the committee for the work that they have done. I also thank the director, Dr Allan Clarke. I recently visited the institute and inspected its operations. I have much pleasure in supporting the Minister and the Bill.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (10.29 p.m.): I support the Opposition spokesman on primary industries and I support the legislation. It is interesting to look at what happened when the legislation was first introduced back in 1920 by the then socialist Labor Government under the control of E. J. Theodore. It is also interesting to see that this socialist type of legislation is even being improved by the National Party. It was first introduced for the benefit of the farmers.

It has been interesting to hear during this debate that the attitude of the National Party has not really changed. When the Honourable A. J. Jones introduced this legislation back on 25 November 1920, he also was able to see the kind of scandal-mongering, fear-mongering attitude that was being implemented by the so-called National Party against the Labor Government of that day. When asked why the farmers did not like the Wheat Pool Bill, he said—

“It may also be due to the fact that there is a certain number of agitators—men who really farm the farmers, and who are employed by the conservative party—not the Farmer's party, but the so-called National Party.”

What has changed from 1920 to 1986? Even then it could be said that the National Party was not the farmers' party.

The Honourable A. J. Jones went on—

“The agitators who do most harm to the country are the agitators who are agitating against this Government, and, therefore, are opposed to the best interests of the farmers.”

In other words, they were the same type of National Party people who were opposing the introduction of a guaranteed price for the farmers' wheat.

The situation in 1920 was very similar to today—poor prices and difficult times—and it was left to a Labor Government to help the battling farmers.

When honourable members look at the introduction of the different Acts that really helped the farmers, they can see what they did. The Honourable A. J. Jones went on to mention some legislation that was introduced by the Labor Government at that time—

“... the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act a piece of legislation which gave a measure of relief to the sugar-cane growers. The total gain to the growers under that Act was £229,944. We also passed other legislation for the benefit of the farmers, such as a Settlers Relief Act, and we distributed something like 80,000 bushels of seed wheat among 1,389 farmers. We reduced the charge for the railage on that seed wheat by an average of 26 per cent. During the year 1915-1916 the present Government also distributed 171,748 tons of fodder to 811 farmers, and we reduced the railage on that fodder by 75 per cent., which caused the Government an expenditure of £12,000. We also granted a concession of 33½ per cent. for the railage of starving stock both ways. The Government further distributed 3,333 bushels of seed maize to the farmers.”

They are very similar policies to the ones that are being enacted today. They were enacted by a Labor Government six decades ago.

At that time, it is interesting to note that there was an interjection by the Opposition—

“Do you know that American wheat dropped yesterday?”

In other words, the Queensland Government—the Labor Government at the time—was prepared to guarantee a wheat price even with falling wheat prices. Not only that, it was prepared to guarantee a price that was more than the price guaranteed by either the then conservative New South Wales Government or the Federal Government.

It was also interesting to note that the old National Party—the conservative party—had two reservations about the legislation. One of the reservations was the fact that it might continue indefinitely. It was said—

“Instead of confining the operations of the measure to one period of twelve months, by proclamation, it may be continued from year to year.”

The National Party was against the type of legislation that guaranteed prices to farmers.

Things have not changed from 1920 to 1986. The National Party also disapproved of the introduction of the system of arbitration and the power to extend the Act from year to year. Those things they found highly objectionable. They found it highly objectionable to give workers within the Wheat Board the protection of the Arbitration Act, and things have not changed today.

Honourable members can see the double standards of the National Party. It does not mind having compulsory associations for its own members but it frowns upon compulsory associations for workers.

Mr Casey: They soon run away from this free enterprise concept, don't they?

Mr CAMPBELL: That is right, they believe in socialising their losses and capitalising their gains.

It is interesting to note that, although the Queensland Government does not believe in anything being compulsory, it fosters and supports a compulsory membership of organisations such as Queensland Cane Growers Council, the Queensland Commercial Pork Producers State Council, the Queensland Dairymen's State Council, and the Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing. In contrast to that, all great legislation passed by a Labor Government is branded as legislation introduced by a socialist Government.

The aims of the National Party are designed to protect the farmers. In addition to the organisations I have mentioned, compulsory marketing boards have also been established such as the State Wheat Board, the Barley Marketing Board, the Central Qld Grain Sorghum Marketing Board, the Maize Marketing Board, the Peanut Marketing Board, the Navy Bean Marketing Board, the Cotton Marketing Board, the Rice Marketing Board, the Ginger Marketing Board, the Queensland Milk Board and the Egg Marketing

Board. The fact is that the Government does believe in compulsory unionism except that it believes in it only for the protection of members of the National Party; in other words, for the benefit of an influential few.

All rural producers should be protected by legislation. I do agree that, in order to obtain a compulsory levy for research, the Government is at least going about it in the correct manner on this occasion. The presentation of this legislation contrasts markedly with the Sugar Acquisition Act, which was stuffed up completely. At the time of its introduction, it was discovered that the State Government had been acting illegally by allocating growers' funds to research into the quality of sugar-cane. What did the Government do? It acted illegally and it did not take the proper steps, so something had to be done.

On 22 September 1982, when amendments to the Sugar Acquisition Act were presented to Parliament by the then Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Ahern), he stated that a full-scale review would be undertaken during the following 12 months and that a representative committee would be appointed to carry out that review. The Government was determined to ensure that the interests of the growers were protected: but what happened? Not even the back-benchers believed the Government. At that time, they called for the inclusion of sunset provisions that would ensure that the so-called refinement—the illegal action taken by the Government—would be stopped by October 1984 because of the establishment of a special committee of inquiry. What happened in October 1984? The Government had the audacity to extend the application of the sunset clauses for another three years till June 1987. In other words, up till October 1984 the Government had done nothing to protect the interests of cane-growers.

The Government is at least doing the job properly this time, and is obviously prepared to protect the interests of growers. I believe it is very important for the Government to engage in research because it is more important now for wheat-growers than it was in 1920. The problems that beset the industry are exacerbated by the fact that the fertility of the soil has started to decline and soil erosion has also emerged as a problem. Those factors have had a significant effect on wheat yields. Moreover, in recent years, wheat has been sown in areas of low and variable rainfall.

The Government is obliged to take into account various methods of research that can provide information on those factors. The Wheat Research Council has nominated five research priorities that it believes will provide assistance for the wheat-grower. The first priority was allocated to farm costs. Although the council recognises the impact of external issues associated with farm costs, it nevertheless recognises that approximately 65 per cent of costs are on farm and are capable of being influenced by the producer. That indicates a need for research to be carried out so that costs on wheat farms can be either contained or reduced.

The second priority was assigned to grain yield maintenance and improvement. Over that past 25 years, on average only moderate increases in wheat yields have occurred. The council found that that contrasted markedly with high levels of wheat improvement that had been achieved in other temperate regions.

The third priority for research was the investigation into land degradation that was the cause of declining yields. In Queensland, that problem is probably of greater significance than it is in any other State.

The fourth research priority was nominated as grain storage, handling and transport. It is important to note that Queensland Railways imposes one of the highest levels of transport costs in Australia. The cost is being borne by the Queensland wheat-farmers. It is a cost imposed by the State Government.

The fifth research priority was assigned to the marketability of grain. Because of the great variation in climatic conditions that can be found in Australia, the wheat industry can offer many quality types of grain for the world market.

One of the advantages of Queensland's wheat industry is that Queensland can look at the specialised markets such as the markets for pan bread, noodles, flat bread and

steam bread, which are also specialised markets that require specialised types of wheat. They have to be looked at so that overseas sales can be maximised.

The work that the Queensland Wheat Research Institute is doing should be looked at. It does have a very comprehensive area of wheat research. The one thing that I did find difficult to appreciate was that, when trying to research the Bill, I found that the latest biennial report by the Queensland Wheat Research Institute in the Parliamentary Library was that for 1980-82. Something should be done to ensure that later reports—I hope that there are later reports—of the Queensland Wheat Research Institute are put into the Parliamentary Library.

The major area that the Queensland Wheat Research Institute has been looking at is wheat variety improvement. That is important not only for improved yields but also for Queensland's markets. In plant pathology and soil microbiology the institute is looking at fungal diseases, nematode research, and micorrhiza research. In agronomy it is looking at fertiliser and plant nutrition, crop physiology, weed research and legume research, all of which are methods of maintaining production, low-cost management practices and soil fertility and surface management. The effect of soil properties and also the effect of different management processes are being looked at to protect the soil and maintaining yields.

A very interesting part of the research that has been carried on by the Queensland Wheat Research Institute is research into cereal chemistry. That research will be very important in maintaining high-quality wheat varieties and wheat on the world market. It is very interesting now that a situation exists in which the growers are going from voluntary levies to compulsory levies. Those voluntary levies have been greatly appreciated by the Queensland Wheat Research Institute. It is very important to see what has happened to the money that has been raised through those levies.

Dr Allan Clarke was very impressed by the levy support from wheat-growers. He said that over the past 10 years approximately \$1m has been provided by the voluntary levy of wheat-growers. He also said that the voluntary levy, currently at 15c a tonne, has been paid regularly over that time by about 40 per cent of growers, in addition to the compulsory levy which is now 30c.

He further said—

“The money raised by the voluntary levy has been used in various ways to support the Queensland Wheat Research Institute. Farmers who have paid it have looked upon it as a good investment in the future of their industry, rather than yet another tax that must be paid.

The voluntary levy was introduced back in 1962 when the Institute was established, to bolster the meagre funds available for wheat research in Queensland. Like the compulsory levy, decisions for its spending have been made by the Queensland Wheat Research Committee on behalf of the growers who contributed.”

He went on to say that the visible things that the institute has been able to achieve by this voluntary levy have been greatly appreciated. Now it goes further than that and the institute looks forward also to being able to utilise the compulsory levy.

As the shadow Minister has said, the Opposition supports the Bill. It also supports the Government in providing and making certain that this so-called socialist legislation is made even more socialist and gives more protection to Queensland's wheat-growers.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (10.44 p.m.): In rising to support the Wheat Pool Act and Another Act Amendment Bill, I first of all take issue with some of the comments that were made by the honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell). He said that in our country there are some agitators who do the most harm. Of course, today it would be militant union-leadership. That would answer that comment very clearly. I refer to the ACTU. I bear in mind the time—and of course I do not have to go back too many years—when the leader of the ACTU was Mr Hawke. I can also remember the time when Mr Hawke, in that position, said that he would bring Australia

to its knees. Everyone now knows that he has almost done so. Now he wants to pose as saviour.

I was interested to hear last night on the first new program of the *Gillies Republic* the following words—

“Australia now has an actor as a Prime Minister.”

There is the old adage: many a true word is spoken in jest.

It is also true to say that the nation has a Prime Minister who is a slave—a slave to Simon Crean. Is it any wonder that there is a movement afoot within Australia to counter the sort of damage that has been done to Australia over the years? That movement is pushing for wage flexibility and a lift in productivity. Only today I read in the *National Farmer* of the plight of the Australian economy. The article pointed out that the things that Australia does best are being over-taxed to assist the things that it does worst. In fact, it stated that miners and farmers in Australia are the best in the world, better in fact than those of our trading competitors, such as Argentina, Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

The member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell) commented that both past and present Labor Governments have been prepared to guarantee prices to look after the farmers. I shall quote the following article from *The Australian*—

“The managing director of the Australian Grain Corporation, Mr Desmond Cooper, last night condemned the Federal Government for abandoning wheat farmers in their hour of need.

Mr Cooper said that by lowering the GMP the Government was forcing farmers to bear the brunt of the international trade prices.

‘To drop the guaranteed price like this is one of the last nails to go into the farmer’s coffin,’ he said.

The guaranteed minimum price frankly isn’t worth a stamp because they (the Government) keep setting it in line with the world price, so the Government doesn’t have to do it in.”

The point is that there is an agreement that when the world price of wheat falls below the domestic price, the Government is to chip in to make up the difference. Conversely, when the world price is high, the Australia wheat-grower has to subsidise the domestic market. We have had one side of the coin; now that the other has turned up, Mr Kerin makes an announcement that the Federal Government is lowering the guaranteed minimum price, which does not give much credence to a statement made by one honourable member.

It is interesting that the member for Cairns should make a comment that Labor came with a great record to protect the farmers, because not long before the member for Cairns was appointed Opposition spokesman on primary industries, I read in a press release that he realised that the majority of farmers do not vote Labor. He went on to say that he does not care about the farmers’ vote, that he would look for votes in the bush other than from farmers. That is on record.

Mention has been made of the review of grain-handling charges. I totally agree with the review, as does the Queensland Graingrowers Association. I wish to bring to the attention of the House an article in the *Queensland Graingrower* that states that the State Government and Queensland Railways, by forgoing the 6 per cent increase on freight last year and by upgrading their ability to handle grain, have saved the growers of Queensland \$3m, or about \$1 per tonne.

I also point out that, for the last two years, Bulk Grains Queensland, which is the body responsible for shifting the State’s grain, has reduced handling charges to growers. That is vital, and it shows that although the people in Queensland have undertaken their own review, they are still falling into line with the review Mr Kerin has put in place.

Mr De Lacy: Do you know that Queensland's grain-handling charges are the highest in Australia?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I beg the honourable member's pardon! He is not correct at all. The wheat-growers of New South Wales are charged much more than growers in Queensland. They are keen to get their wheat over the border at Goondiwindi so that they can get it through Queensland's system and export it through Fisherman Islands. The honourable member is dead wrong.

I refute the comment that the payment by the State Wheat Board to the Queensland Wheat Research Institute is akin to compulsory membership. That is far from the case. The first point is that this proposal is wholly and solidly backed by the Queensland Graingrowers Association. I remind honourable members that its leaders are elected by a majority of members, so they cannot be said to be elected in the same way as union-leaders, who, in some cases, are elected by the 20 per cent of the membership that controls the election and the entire union. So to say that there is any similarity at all to compulsory unionism is utter bunkum.

I will now speak to the Bill itself. I understand that the Commonwealth Wheat Research Act 1957 set up the sort of funding that is now being amended.

Queensland, of course, has its own Wheat Research Council, which set a compulsory levy that I thought was 35c a tonne—other honourable members have said that it was 30c a tonne—and that was matched up to a tripping ceiling, as was mentioned by the honourable member for Cairns (Mr De Lacy), at which the Commonwealth Government pitched in dollar for dollar. That has worked extremely well. It was in 1963 that the voluntary levy, under which growers had the chance to put in an additional 15c a tonne, came in. The honourable member for Balonne (Mr Neal) spoke about that.

It has already been stated—and I agree—that at present something like 40 per cent of the growers and about 50 per cent of all the wheat produced contributes to that research levy.

In August last year, the Graingrowers Association made representations to the Government suggesting that a compulsory levy be imposed on all wheat. The Government and the QGA considered that and they have come up with a more appropriate means of doing it. The system proposed in the Bill is that the State Wheat Board will make a payment direct to the Queensland Wheat Research Institute.

It is worth while noting some of the achievements of the Queensland Wheat Research Institute. Of course, it must be realised what the advantages are. In this part of Australia, weather conditions allowing, farmers are able to grow prime hard wheat. It is also interesting to note that, last year, if a farmer was able to grow prime hard wheat, it attracted a premium of \$25 a tonne. \$25 a tonne on something like \$105 in one's pockets is a pretty fair increase if the wheat is good enough to command it.

The Queensland Wheat Research Institute is in touch with the need for our wheat to have the baking qualities that are required by the various bread-makers and pastry-makers of the world. As has been pointed out, this country is very keen to increase production per acre. Of course, to that end, there has been the introduction of all the new varieties spoken about by the honourable member for Balonne.

I too can remember when Oxley was first introduced. Of course, that variety also became susceptible to stem rust. Other varieties are in the pipeline. Queensland is extremely fortunate that the Wheat Research Institute is doing such a good job and keeps releasing new varieties.

I pay particular tribute to the work of the Queensland Wheat Research Committee. The chairman of that committee is Mr John Bell, a farmer from Bowenville. He is a very experienced and practical farmer, who is backed up by other practical farmers and some very highly qualified scientists.

As I understand it, that committee determines what course research will take within the guide-lines that I mentioned before. That committee is trying to keep a product that

is very much in demand. It determines also the level of funding and where it should be directed.

That would not be possible unless the Department of Primary Industries pitched in and paid the salaries of the members of that committee. That is the Government's share. Of course, in addition, there are a great number of farmers who are willing to co-operate fully with the Wheat Research Institute, and there are trial plots all over Queensland helping out.

At present, the world trade in wheat is extremely poor. There is a severe over-supply. This country is battling against subsidised sales from the EEC and the United States of America. That is putting extreme pressure on grain quality and cleanliness of the sample.

Recently I was interested to read that the USSR, a large importer of wheat, has notified all suppliers of its new requirements. All imports must now meet the USSR quality controls, otherwise they will not be accepted.

That is significant, because I am led to believe that Australian wheat has a No. 1 place in the world for its cleanliness of sample. If this country is to hold the markets that it has and, as well, find new markets, it is important that it maintain cleanliness of sample. In addition to that, the good-quality wheat as a result of the wheat research work that is carried out and the natural ability to produce hard quality wheats should also be in our favour. That demonstrates the importance of research-funding.

I have already spoken briefly about the release of the guaranteed minimum price for wheat. I will now deal with that more fully. Last Friday, the Federal Minister for Primary Industry (Mr Kerin) stated that this year the guaranteed minimum price for ASW wheat will be \$130.62 a tonne. An interim payment of 95 per cent of that guaranteed minimum price is paid out initially.

Working down through the cost, I will give honourable members some idea of what is going back into the farmers' pockets. Freight costs and handling costs in addition to that will take about \$35 or \$40 off that figure, leaving farmers with something of the order of \$80 a tonne or a bit more in the pocket. That is not very much. Last year, of course, the guaranteed minimum price was \$149.87 a tonne. Now it is down to \$130.62. It is down by almost \$20 a tonne.

To put that into perspective—the average grain-farmer in Australia grows 500 tonnes of grain. That means that with a drop of almost \$20 a tonne, gross income will be \$10,000 less per farm this year. That is a pretty significant drop. The farmers say they have been pretty drastically hit with the downturn in their gross receipts, so how can they afford to put extra money into research? Probably the better question is: can they afford not to?

An Opposition Member: Make up your mind.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will stick to the second choice. I have mentioned Australia's natural advantages, and it has to stick with them to maintain its present position.

Naturally research plays an important part in any industry. Australian farmers are the most efficient in the world. They are great innovators and have done a lot of research. That has helped Australia reach the position it currently holds and will keep it there in the future.

I refer to fertiliser research. This aspect fits in with the QWRI. Extensive research has been carried out on how to use fertiliser, the kinds of fertilisers that should be used, and the levels and methods of application. Over the years fertilisers have changed and become more sophisticated. That is part and parcel of the research. Presently there is the situation in Queensland where the grain-growers have found they are paying much more for their fertiliser than their fellow farmers in the other Australian States. In Australia there tends to be one manufacturer of fertilisers in each State. In some States an importer competes with that manufacturer. In those States there is a significant difference in price of some fertilisers in the region of \$30 or \$40 a tonne.

Mr Kerin stated that the people of Australia, in whatever industry, must reach the situation where they are cost competitive on world markets. Australia must learn to sell on world markets and survive. That being the case, the farmers can quite logically argue that, if Australia takes what is offered for sale on the world market, it should be able to operate in a situation where Australia has world prices for inputs. That is not the case. The grain-growers take issue with the last Federal Budget because Mr Kerin has introduced a system of bounties. In the opinion of the grain-growers, that will shield Australian manufacturers from competition from overseas and will cost the nation dearly, because bounties are paid out of general consolidated revenue to the tune of \$300m a year.

Mr De Lacy: It does not cost the wheat-grower.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thought they were average Australians.

The price of fertiliser has not reduced correspondingly to match the price of the overseas product. The grain-growers are pursuing this matter very closely in an attempt to get justice and bring the price of fertiliser in Queensland down to the level it is at elsewhere in Australia in an attempt to make the Australian price equivalent to the world price. Mr Kerin and the ALP Government are probably right in saying that Australia must meet the world scene both in inputs and what it receives for its sales.

Mr De Lacy: You don't agree with dumping, do you?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I have a few comments to make about the current situation, yes.

The wheat-traders of the world have a few options open to them. The honourable member for Cairns would be aware that just recently the free traders met and discussed various matters. I understand that the GATT forum will meet shortly and certain proposals will be put forward. The first proposal is that Australia can give its wheat away to the Third World countries that are badly in need of it, and the second is that the wheat can be destroyed or dumped, which is not a very moral thing to do. There are examples of various products being dumped, and the Tasmanian apple industry has done it in the past. The third proposal is that everyone gets together and tries to reach an agreement where subsidies and production will be cut. That would mean protracted discussions lasting for years and the result would be that, while those discussions were taking place, all the farmers, especially those in the unsubsidised countries, would go broke.

Currently in Australia something like 30 per cent of farmers are at risk. Another 12 per cent of farmers in Australia represent 25 per cent of the Australian farm debt. Those farmers are probably too far down the tube to get out, and perhaps that is due to their own mismanagement or bad advice from their financial adviser. That is the reality of it. My own personal opinion is that Australia should look pretty hard at either disposing of its wheat to Third World countries or implementing the short, sharp shock of destroying some of the stocks and returning to the natural supply and demand situation in the world market. There will have to be some hard negotiations carried out on that latter suggestion. I do not have time now to expand on that point, but I think that it is a matter worth pursuing very closely.

I fully support the Bill. I am confident that the Queensland Graingrowers Association as late as August last year put forward that this is the way in which research should be funded. Research is very important to the future of the grain industry, which is severely depressed at present. The industry needs some relief from the Federal Government.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I believe that all members indicated their support for the Bill.

I point out again that the legislation has been requested by the industry and not forced on the industry by the Government. The honourable member for Cairns (Mr De

Lacy) somehow tried to connect the Premier's grain-plantings on his property to this Bill. That was a rather unusual approach. He also asked whether the contribution from the State Wheat Board would attract matching grants from the Commonwealth. He would do well to direct that question to his colleagues in Canberra, as the Commonwealth does not make a matching grant. The member for Cairns also asked whether the new levy attracts a subsidy. The compulsory Commonwealth levy is the only levy that attracts the Commonwealth subsidy under the Commonwealth Act. The legislation is not designed to impose a compulsory levy but rather to permit the State Wheat Board to make a contribution to research. The board may choose to set that at a rate for each tonne received but is not obliged to do so.

The member for Balonne (Mr Neal) is a wheat-grower and has an intimate knowledge of the wheat industry. He spoke about the industry in great detail. He mentioned farm costs, which are excessive in present times, particularly because of the policies of the Labor Party in Canberra. He spoke about different varieties of wheat and the need for research into breeding new plant varieties, the problems of soil erosion, stubble-mulching and that type of thing. He stressed the need for disease and nematode resistance. This requirement emphasises the need for a certainty of funding for the further breeding work that was not possible under the voluntary levy.

The honourable member for Bundaberg (Mr Campbell), after supporting the Bill, gave his usual distorted history lesson. The difference between his form of socialistic agriculture and that of the Queensland Government is that the system fostered by the Queensland Government is what producers want; we do not force it on the industry, as is done by the ALP. Queensland's boards are formed after a request by growers. They are run by growers for growers. They are not run by the Government or controlled by it.

The honourable member for Bundaberg referred at length to the changes in attitude of members of the National Party between 1920 and 1986. Perhaps he does not realise that the present ALP, which is more commonly known as the academics and lawyers party, is a far cry from the Chifley and Curtin era of ALP Governments. However, I do not propose to take up the time of the House to elaborate on that.

The honourable member for Condamine is another wheat-grower who has a knowledge of the industry. He supported the Bill and the need for its introduction to further wheat research. He rightly touched on the major problems confronting the farmer in Australia today; that is, the socialistic policies and philosophies of the Australian Labor Party. He also complimented the Queensland Wheat Research Institute and the Queensland Wheat Research Committee, and rightly so. They do a fantastic job.

Once again, I thank all honourable members for their support and contributions to this debate.

Motion (Mr Turner) agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Turner, by leave, read a third time.

FARM PRODUCE MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading—Resumption of Debate

Debate resumed from 20 August (see p. 467) on Mr Turner's motion—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Mr De LACY (Cairns) (11.5 p.m.): The proposed amendments to the Farm Produce Marketing Act set the regulations by which licensed farm produce commercial sellers—that is both agents and merchants—can trade. The proposed amendments seek to iron

out the anomalies of the 1982 Act and the 1984 regulations. They seek to improve the effectiveness of the Act and to streamline some of the administrative processes. As such, the Labor Party has no fundamental opposition to the changes and supports the Bill.

I believe that it is fair to say that the anomalies that surfaced in the 1982 Act were not all as a consequence of deficiencies within the Act, but rather because they were not properly policed by officers of the DPI. The DPI has been less than diligent in enforcing the various provisions. That proves what I have often said in this House, that the best legislation in the world is useless unless sufficient resources are provided to ensure that the intention of the Act is put into effect. At the end of the day—even if the Act is OK—without the administrative back-up, the inspectorial system and sufficient resources, it simply will not work.

I believe that the DPI did not adhere to the general spirit and the letter of the 1982 Act. Far too many exemptions were granted, and certain provisions were inadequately enforced, particularly in relation to the fidelity bonds clause. The DPI did not run with the ball. Either rules exist and are enforced or they are abolished.

The 1982 Act was introduced partly as a consequence of a fairly celebrated Fraud Squad investigation of the Brisbane Markets during the late 1970s. The legislation was put into place five years after that investigation, namely in 1982. It was a further two years before the regulations were laid down.

The present legislation brings merchants within the ambit of the Act. The ALP supports the need for legislation to set standards for an industry and to provide protection for growers. That is part of the orderly marketing process, which has been an article of faith within the Labor Party for most of this century and basically has enjoyed bipartisan support from both sides of Parliament.

To a certain extent that may be seen as an infringement of free trade and free enterprise. The way in which the present National Party State Government stomps around the countryside trumpeting the virtues of free enterprise never ceases to amaze me. However, when it comes to legislation or putting principles into place, the Government very quickly reverts to the agrarian socialism of old. Two of the pieces of legislation that have been introduced here tonight have borne that out. Its rhetoric bears no relation to its performance. Both direct and indirect costs are involved in Government regulations. Red tape is costly and can be very inefficient. Inefficiency means cost. However, both I and the Labor Party believe that farmers need protection. On the farm, farmers are susceptible to a host of uncontrollable elements, such as the weather. Off the farm, they are susceptible to unscrupulous traders, who are very often in a monopolistic position to manipulate the system.

This legislation addresses itself to the horticultural producers who, because of the very nature of their occupation and their product, certainly need a measure of protection. They are not usually business managers in the accepted sense of the word. In fact, in many instances I think it is fair to say that they can be naive. Therefore, the aim should be for legislation that has the right balance between rampant free enterprise and regulation.

I will be interested to see whether the Liberal Party supports this legislation.

Mr Jennings: They are not even here.

Mr De LACY: That surprises me. One of the Liberal farmers has just appeared in the Chamber.

I wonder how this legislation fits in with recommendations by the Savage committee on deregulation and cutting red tape. My question is: When will the National Party be honest and say that it does not unequivocally believe in free enterprise or the untrammelled workings of the market-place? The Labor Party unashamedly believes in regulation, but I must say that we resent being bashed over the head with the free enterprise stick by people who benefit from regulations and orderly marketing procedures.

Three important issues are addressed in this legislation, the first being that of fidelity bonds. Under the new Act, pure merchants will not be exempted. COD, a spokesman

for the producers, has consistently opposed any exemptions and supported the holding of fidelity bonds for licensees who operate as either merchants or agents. It has further recommended that the prescribed amount of the fidelity bond be increased from the current maximum of \$100,000 to a maximum of \$200,000, with an annual review of the adequacy of that limit to apply.

I note that the legislation does not address itself to the amount of the fidelity bond. I imagine that that will be covered in the regulations. I ask the Minister whether or not that is a reasonable request to be included in the regulations whenever they are gazetted.

I point out that there would be no change out of \$50,000 for a pantechicon—a refrigerated van—full of good produce. So \$200,000 is surely not too much by way of a bond guarantee.

The second area is the streamlining of administrative procedures, and particularly the substitution of the Registrar of Farm Produce Commercial Sellers for the clerk of the court. The Opposition supports that change. It is obvious that time lost would be minimised and administrative streamlining would result by transferring administrative responsibility to the registrar, although it is important to retain the right of appeal to the courts in the event that a licence is cancelled or suspended. I understand that a deputy registrar has recently been appointed. It is important that an efficient cell be maintained within the Department of Primary Industries to administer this very important function, because it goes back to what I was saying earlier—the best legislation in the world will not work unless there is sufficient administrative back-up.

The third important area to which this piece of legislation addresses itself is that of the fixing of prices. The new system is now based on the New South Wales 24-hour trading provision. The Labor Party believes it to be a new and necessary provision. The existing section referred to the absence of a price or a basis of determination of price. A new section has been added that says that the price shall be advised no later than the close of trading on the next trading day.

The Act has been improved in a number of other areas. The consignment note system provides a very strong disincentive rather than a compulsion of all growers, and therefore agents and merchants, to adopt the system. For the life of me, I do not know why it has to be included in legislation, because one would think that a business operator would be operating on a consignment note system in the first place.

Another section deals with the tightening-up of existing provisions in relation to the destruction of farm products. The section is clarified in respect of both agents and merchants, and particularly the need for merchants to obtain a certificate if the price has not been set, otherwise it will be the merchant who has to bear the cost of the destruction of the product.

The easing of provisions in relation to the keeping of trust accounts is also included. That requirement was very difficult and hard to enforce in the first place. I believe that the area is covered adequately by the fidelity bond requirement. No exemptions now exist, even for merchants.

The old provision whereby a de facto provision could be established extending the period of payment to growers has been tightened up. It must now be in writing, which is another necessary safety valve. In short, the legislation is worth while. It is supported by most sectors of the industry and the Australian Labor Party.

The legislation appears to retain some flexibility and also has the necessary safety valves. Flexibility is important, especially when attempts are being made to break into new markets. I believe that attempts will be made increasingly in the future in the field of marketing agricultural products.

Having said that, I must point out that a few matters have not been addressed by the legislation. I refer particularly to problems associated with supermarkets and direct sales that are being made. As the Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Turner) would know, people involved in horticulture are becoming increasingly concerned about the

way in which they will fit into a regulated system and the inroads being made by supermarkets.

I wish to address a few other remarks to the topic of marketing horticultural products. Australia's export market development performance over the last decade has been abysmal, and that is also true of Queensland. Queensland's success has been exclusively confined to bulk food products in agriculture. Queensland's only other successes have been along the lines of soft drinks, snack foods, cordials and flour products, which are the easy areas of marketing because success depends upon hype and intensive advertising in familiar markets rather than long-term growth strategies aimed at opening up unfamiliar markets. I could mention many instances. For example, supermarkets in Asia are crammed with canned and other food products that are grown in Australia but processed in places such as the United States, Europe and Hong Kong. Australian supermarkets display evidence of a rising share of the Australian retail market that is being held by imported processed products.

A number of instances have come to my attention, but I refer specifically to Queensland. The cane-farmers are unable to sell their sugar, yet imported jams are available on supermarket shelves in increasing quantities. Jams that are produced in Queensland are in cans similar to those available when I was a child. They even bear the same labels. Some time ago I read an appeal made by the manager of the Golden Circle cannery for everyone to stick to brand loyalty. I put it to honourable members that brand loyalty is not a concept that will work in this day and age, when people have been known to cross a double line to obtain petrol at 1c a litre cheaper than it can be obtained elsewhere. Because of the way in which the Golden Circle cannery is managed—the way it waits for markets to appear without developing its products or investigating the market-place—it is really a disaster waiting to happen.

All of the canned apples that are available in Queensland are transported from Tasmania, although surplus apples might sometimes be available in Stanthorpe and other areas of the granite belt. All of the cream that is put on packaged cakes in Queensland comes from Victoria, in spite of the fact that Queensland is experiencing difficulty in selling its processed dairy products. Navy beans are grown almost exclusively in Queensland but are sent to Victoria for processing. When they arrive in Victoria, they are moved seven times. Each time they are moved, is added to the product. Transporting, warehousing, processing, canning, saucing and labelling are all carried out in Victoria. Queensland merely grows the product and sends it interstate.

I heard a story about a particularly large supermarket chain that operates in Queensland wanting to develop a generic brand of peanut paste. It approached the Peanut Marketing Board, but was informed that the board sold peanuts in a raw state only. The company finally obtained the product it required from South Africa.

All the food-manufacturing companies have virtually moved out of Queensland. Many of Queensland's marketing boards are not really marketing boards. Honourable members will note that I have referred to "many" marketing boards. At last some are waking up to the realities. As I was saying, many of the marketing boards merely operate as central collecting agencies. They offer a product for sale, but they do not follow the market. They wait for markets to appear. When the product cannot be sold, they scream. Many of the marketing boards are not free enterprise oriented.

Mr FitzGerald: Which marketing boards handle horticultural products?

Mr De LACY: If the cap fits, they can wear it. The honourable member for Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) can work out for himself the ones that do not demonstrate a knowledge of the modern system of selling.

I put it to the honourable member that they are not marketing; rather, they are merely selling the products. There is a great deal of difference. It is absolutely disgraceful that the major growth in the meat trade in recent years has been in live animals. In terms of trade policy, it is crazy for Australia to export live animals because every step of the processing at which value is added is carried out overseas.

In Queensland, agriculture can still have an exciting future. By international standards, Queensland still has cheap land. It still has the right resources and it still has efficient farmers. The future belongs to those who grow what the consumer requires instead of what the farmer wants to grow. As markets become more selective and sophisticated, marketing is becoming increasingly specialised.

I repeat that there is a vast difference between selling and marketing. If Queensland is to prosper, it needs to become more market oriented, actively pursue new markets and market products, and gradually change its emphasis from bulk foods to value-added products. Above all, a reputation for quality and reliability of supply must be developed.

With those few words to the Minister, I reiterate that the Opposition supports this legislation and believes that it brings the right amount of protection to the growers and the producers of horticultural products without introducing too much stifling regulation.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (11.21 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in this evening's debate on the Farm Produce Marketing Act Amendment Bill. For various reasons, I will be supporting the legislation.

I agree with much that the Opposition spokesman has said on the Bill, although I do not agree with everything he said. However, he dealt with more than the horticultural products that are mentioned in the Bill. The Bill does not cover meat; it does not cover peanuts. The Bill covers horticultural products. I know that extensive discussion has taken place between departmental officers, who have seen weaknesses in the present legislation, and the Queensland Chamber of Fruit & Vegetable Industries and the COD.

As a member representing an area that has a real interest in this legislation, I will be interested to see how the legislation works when difficulties are encountered. The legislation was introduced in the light of circumstances that had arisen over a period of years, during which merchants were unscrupulous, had become less viable as a result of their trading practices or were straight-out rogues. The legislation was necessary to give primary producers an indication that the merchants and agents whom they supplied were being watched. Those who wished to trade in Queensland as sellers of produce had to conform with the Act and had to be registered. The experiences that occurred in the past need not be canvassed. Generally they came about through southern agents or merchants not paying Queensland merchants who had purchased products in Queensland and sent them south. The Queensland merchants were unable to pay because of the non-payment of the account by their southern colleagues.

The provision of a fidelity bond for merchants will not answer all the problems. I agree with the Opposition spokesman that it is only one day's trading for some merchants; it is only a couple of semi-trailer loads of produce. Protection is afforded to primary producers through the inspectorial powers. If a merchant is not paying on time, his books may be looked at. Maybe the balloon will go up a lot earlier and the amount of money that an agent or merchant loses by default will not be as great as if the person continued to trade for the whole season. Generally, a merchant gets into a problem with trading because he has made a bad sale early in the season or he has been caught by a merchant in the south. If a person who has not paid his account keeps on trading for the whole of the season and becomes a little tardy in paying, by the end of the season it may be found that he cannot settle his accounts. He defaults. That has been the nasty experience for some time. However, the legislation will certainly be drawn to the attention of those people, and inspections will be made.

The previous speaker did touch on one point that is dear to me, which is the export of products by Queensland to the world market. One of the areas in which Queensland will have a strong future is in the growing of horticultural products and in supplying those throughout the world.

Now that the value of the Australian dollar has dropped, our exporting industries should be more competitive on overseas markets. Industry must develop the techniques and expertise in exporting our products for sale on the world market, which is very,

very large and extremely competitive. Most of the Asian markets to which we are relatively close require a reliable supply of high quality product. In that, I agree fully with the member for Cairns. I know that in the past producers have had some very nasty experiences with regard to reliability of supply. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that at the end of June or early July this year a product was left sitting on the wharves in Brisbane. I shall now quote from an article by Mr Neville Smith that was contained in the *Queensland Fruit and Vegetable News*. The article, which was headed "Horticultural exports at risk", states—

"Last week's strike by the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) placed 150 tonnes of fresh Queensland-grown Chinese cabbage and its Hong Kong market in serious jeopardy, according to COD's general manager, Neville Smith.

Twelve containers of chinese cabbage sat on the wharf at Fisherman's Island from June 24 until July 4, awaiting loading onto the Oriental Export.

The vessel berthed to commence loading on Monday, June 30, several days later than scheduled.

With the strikers returning to work on Friday, July 4, after a four day stoppage, the consignment will now be able to reach Hong Kong without further delay.

Mr Smith said the shipment represented the culmination of an integrated growing and marketing initiative by COD, as the cabbage was produced specifically for export to Hong Kong."

He went on to list the sequence of events, but it is sufficient to say that for a grower or an organisation to go to that sort of trouble to produce a commodity and then run into that type of problem is unforgivable. Australia has to wake up to the fact that it has to be a reliable supplier of high quality product.

Mr Innes: It is another illustration of the problems on the wharves.

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes. I believe that the necessary steps will be taken. I know that during a recent debate the honourable member for Sherwood spoke about the problem on our wharves.

Mr De Lacy: Would you acknowledge that the waterside workers, the COD and others have come to some sort of an agreement at least to try to do something about this?

Mr FITZGERALD: I am not willing to discuss what is being foreshadowed, but I acknowledge the fact that discussions have been taking place. I wish to leave it at that at this stage. I do not want to jeopardise any negotiations. I am saying that the waterside workers will have to realise that, if Australia's future is to be that of an exporter of produce, they have to co-operate. I commend any steps that are taken to achieve co-operation between producers, those responsible for marketing, waterside workers, the shipping companies and who ever else is involved so that Australia can take its place with a lot of pride on the world market. It has been regrettable that farmers have supplied products but have not been able to sell them or get paid for them.

The developments in farming techniques over the last few years have been enormous. Broccoli, which is now the second biggest crop in the Lockyer Valley, is being exported to eastern Asia. It has to arrive at the market-place under ice. It has to be chilled on the farm. The temperature has to be reduced immediately it is picked. Lettuce, cabbages and similar products keep much better and can be better transported if their temperature is reduced very, very rapidly after harvest. In that way the quality remains very, very high. The whole idea is to transport the product very quickly.

Until now Australia has been only horsing around or playing around at getting fair dinkum on exporting products. Over the last few years attempts have been made to develop overseas markets. Although some small markets have been developed, they are only a drop in the ocean compared with what can be developed in the future. I support that export drive as much as possible.

Over the years expertise in growing products has improved enormously. As I have already outlined, the temperature control of product improves its quality. Housewives and other consumers demand a high quality product, otherwise they will buy elsewhere. Apart from that, the techniques for growing and harvesting produce have improved enormously. At the recent expo 9 at the Queensland Agricultural College, farmers were able to see the demonstration of tomato-harvesters that had been developed in the Bundaberg region. With the use of tomato-harvesters, enormous quantities of tomatoes can be harvested in a day. They remove a great deal of the back-breaking work from the harvesting of tomatoes.

Of course, the fields would have to be large to handle that type of machinery. However, it is just an indication of one area in which harvesting techniques have improved. Many of the horticultural products have to be harvested by hand, but no doubt mechanisation will enter all areas of horticultural production.

The United States is much more mechanised than this country in some areas of horticultural production and very cheap labour is available from Mexico. That labour is sometimes called sweat labour. Undoubtedly, Australia is a very high labour-cost country. However, with the mechanical aids that are available and being developed very, very quickly, this nation has the potential to enormously expand production.

People who are growing produce require some assurance that they will get paid for it. The Bill does go some way towards ensuring that. It is refining the Act. I support the Bill and I look forward with interest to seeing it help the industry to develop.

Debate, on motion of Mr Wharton, adjourned.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act 1962-1981 in certain particulars and to provide with respect to property vested in or under the control of The Treasurer of Queensland for the purposes of the sugar industry.”

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr Turner, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Warrego—Minister for Primary Industries) (11.33 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Bill is an important step in the evolution of the Queensland sugar industry in that it demonstrates the industry's ability and preparedness to adjust to changing economic and social conditions.

During the last two years I have had extensive consultation with all sectors of the industry and have discussed in great detail the changes that are considered necessary. To a large extent, these changes are embodied in or associated with this Bill.

At this stage, I pay tribute to the four industry organisations whose presidents, members and executives have been more than willing to take part in consultations with me on these issues.

The Australian Sugar Producers Association, the Co-operative Sugar Millers Association, the Proprietary Sugar Millers Association and the Queensland Cane Growers Council have been worthy representatives of their respective interests and have

endeavoured, as far as has been possible, to adopt an industry rather than a partisan view, although not always successfully.

At the outset of the industry deliberations following the collapse in world sugar prices, I was advised by all sectors that the item the sugar industry as a whole most needed to survive was money—money to support grower returns to get them over the hump and money to restructure the milling and growing sectors of the industry to enable them to face the future with confidence.

At this juncture I propose to place on record the full extent of financial support that the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments have made and propose to make to the Queensland sugar industry.

In total, \$210m has been paid or committed to the sugar industry by both Governments since 1982-83.

During the last four years to 30 June 1986, the Queensland Government has provided \$52m mainly in carry-on loans to growers and as interest subsidies on No. 1 pool payments in respect of the 1985 season. During the same period, the Commonwealth actually provided \$15m with a further \$14m paid as price support on the 1985 crop on 26 August 1986.

In addition, the State and Commonwealth Governments have committed up to a further \$20m and \$40m respectively in interest subsidies and price support for the 1986 and 1987 seasons. At this time both Governments have also recognised the vital importance of industry adjustment at both the grower and miller level.

Accordingly, a total of \$69m will be funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments on a \$2 to \$1 basis to provide grower and mill adjustment assistance during the next three years. I consider that the extent of the financial assistance provided or committed to the sugar industry, especially by the Queensland Government, has been timely and well-directed to save this vital Queensland industry. It is now the responsibility of both the growing and milling sectors of the Queensland industry to take and accept the necessary measures to improve the structural and economic base on which the industry is to operate. In many respects, the Bill which I now introduce will go some way towards achieving that objective.

Probably the most significant element in the amendments is the recognition in law that a cane-grower has a property right in his assignments which is capable of being transferred by whatever means. This right has been assumed over the years but has never existed in law.

The amendments incorporated into this Bill fall into two broad categories, deregulation and mill rationalisation. The deregulation measures are designed to free-up the complex approval mechanism presently required of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and either to devolve authority to local boards or to remove the requirement entirely. In the case of grower transactions within a mill area, growers will be free to arrange substitution by sale or substitution of assigned lands without restriction except that a local board could prohibit such a transaction only if the land or locality was unsatisfactory for cane-growing. The local board and the central board will be advised of the transaction for record-keeping purposes and the usual rights of mortgagees will be protected by local boards. However, growers will no longer have to go through a complex and expensive procedure to conclude a fairly routine commercial arrangement. These measures have the total support of all sectors of the industry.

The Bill also contains a deregulation element referred to as roaming. A grower may seek annual approval of his local board to expand his assigned area by up to 15 per cent provided he identifies and harvests only an area not exceeding his original 100 per cent in any one season. This measure therefore is also under the control of a local board and is designed to free-up the range of management options open to a grower without causing an expansion in assignments. It does not, however, have the unanimous support of growers as those in so-called land-locked areas believe that their colleagues in less restricted areas may be able to gain the advantage.

However, the Government has decided to incorporate the roaming provision in the legislation in the interests of overall economic efficiency and in accordance with our undertaking to the Commonwealth Government concerning legislative amendment to facilitate appropriate deregulation measures. The policy concerning roaming also has the official support of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, the statutory body representing Queensland cane-growers.

With regard to the sale of a cane farm as a going concern, it is proposed to remove all previous restrictions except that parties to a transaction must inform the central board for record purposes. Similarly, transactions to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of farm peaks within a mill area now may be entered into without outside approval, save that the central board must be informed for record-keeping purposes. The ability to sell peak independent of assignment breaks the traditional linkage and is a significant step in the ongoing rationalisation of industry regulation.

Taken together the measures contained in the Bill represent a significant restructuring in authority within the industry, particularly with regard to the functions of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, and have been adopted by the Government on the recommendation of the Queensland Cane Growers Council and with the support of all other industry organisations. Of particular concern to the growing side of the industry has been the power of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board to recommend to the Minister an increase in aggregate mill peaks in any season. The Government has therefore accepted the Queensland Cane Growers Council's recommendation that the powers of the central board be modified to prohibit it recommending an increase unless additional profitable and stable sugar markets or a higher demand for sugar on existing markets justifies such an increase.

In addition, the Bill provides for a number of administrative matters, such as empowering local boards to employ staff subject to the approval of the central board; the central board to issue administrative guide-lines to local boards; local boards as well as the central board to mediate in disputes; local boards to interpret plans; and the central board to maintain a central records system.

As to mill rationalisation, the Bill refers to two matters. The first extends the power of the Minister to make a reference to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board on any matter that he considers relevant and ensures that the board has the jurisdiction to act on such a reference. The second provision extends the cut-off date, by which applications are required to be made to the central board for exemption to be made to operate a mill in a season, from 30 September to 31 December.

Although it is not referred to in the Bill, I mention the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee. This committee will have an important part to play in the restructuring of the industry over the next three years. In association with the Queensland Industry Development Corporation, the Sugar Milling Adjustment Committee will have the responsibility for recommending to the Commonwealth and State Governments the manner in which rationalisation finance should be allocated in the long-term economic, social and commercial interests of the industry.

The Government, therefore, will be monitoring the effectiveness with which the existing industry structure is able to cope with the situation to ensure that industry rationalisation processes proceed without avoidable delay.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr De Lacy, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. C. A. WHARTON (Burnett—Leader of the House): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Maps Sold by Sunmap at *Telegraph* Boat Show; Sports Fishing

Mr BURNS (Lytton) (11.42 p.m.): I wish to refer to the maps being sold by Sunmap at the boat show last week-end. A number of maps of Moreton Bay, one of which was made in November 1982, were being sold for \$3, which was the price for which they were sold in 1982. When a complaint was made that the map was out of date, that many areas on it were not marked properly and that people could get into trouble by using it, it was withdrawn. However, Sunmap continued to sell a map that was produced in March 1984.

The map that was produced in 1984 was sold for \$3, which was the old price. The map that I now produce has been laminated and costs \$11. However, a person can obtain an ordinary map for \$5. The difference between the two maps is alarming. People who buy the ordinary map would find that 30 changes have been made. In fact, the old map contained 40 errors.

A person might buy a map and go fishing on the bay with his mate. He could be heading for the Hope beacons and say to his mate, "Keep your eyes open for a green flashing buoy on the Hope beacons, because that is the way that it is marked on the map." If that person looked at the new map, he would find that there is no green buoy there any more. There is a new long-angled buoy with red and black on it. The person using the old map would not know the right light or the right buoy. All of a sudden, he would think to himself, "If my mate cannot find that buoy, we are obviously going the wrong way." He might then swing his boat around and try to get on the right side of the next flashing green light that he could see. He could end up on Peel Island, the reefs or on the drying banks of the Rous Channel.

I will refer to some of the alterations that have been made.

Mr McPhie: Aren't those changes notified?

Mr BURNS: They are, but ordinary people can buy these maps at the boat show right now. If a person bought a map on Monday, he would expect to be purchasing an up-to-date map. He would not go and get the list of notices to mariners to find out whether his map was up to date or not. The map should never have been sold.

On the new map, the boat passage entrance leads have been changed. The buoy off the Platypus was green in 1984 and yellow in 1986. Waterloo Bay had two beacons in 1984, whereas 10 beacons are marked on the 1986 map. Four beacons in the Manly channel were not marked on the 1984 map and the lights had a different time sequence. On the Hope Banks, the buoy was replaced by a beacon of different colour, shape and light. The river entrance Coffee Pots have a different flashing sequence. I could go on and on. Wave-marker buoys are not shown.

It is not good enough for the Government to be selling maps of that kind. The \$2 saving that a person makes could ruin his life. For the sake of a lousy two bucks, a whole family could be destroyed. A person who buys a map must put his faith in it. He says to himself, "That's it." I do not know whether many honourable members have been down to the bay. If a person works in fog or on dark nights when he is disoriented by lights and other distortions around him, the only way for him to get home is to aim for the right beacon, use a map and common sense. If, because a place that is marked on a map is no longer there, a fisherman cannot find it, and he has very little chance of survival.

I now wish to refer to the \$1m that was given towards sports fishing. That is a belated recognition of sports fishing. Although I acknowledge the money that has been provided for sports fishing, I ask honourable members to consider one of the greatest and most distressing set of circumstances that has attended sports fishing in recent years. I refer to the dearth of tailor along Queensland's beaches at the present time.

During August 1984, 31 325 kg of tailor were processed through the Brisbane markets. In 1985, 12 197 kg of tailor were processed, representing a reduction of approximately 19 000 kg on the previous year. In September of 1984, 10 578 kg of tailor went through

the Brisbane markets. During last year the figure was 1 757 kg. That distressing set of figures represents a blow to the tourist industry both on Fraser Island and all along the beaches.

Fishing records show that during the 1960s and the 1970s, three fishermen were catching 300 fish in six hours. Nowadays the records show that at the Queensland surf-fishing championships, 30 to 40 people did not weigh in. Some people caught three tailor over the entire night. People are going all the way to Fraser Island, spending a lot of money in getting there, and are unable to catch any fish—no tailor whatsoever.

If honourable members believe that only a few fishermen are affected by the reduction in the numbers of fish that are being caught, they should go to Fraser Island and see the numbers of people who line up there each year waiting to catch the tailor. For those people within the fishing industry and for those who are interested in fishing as a sport and spending their holidays on Fraser Island every year, that is a drastic set of circumstances.

Not only must research be undertaken here in Queensland, but co-operation must be maintained with New South Wales as well.

RID Campaign

Mr HENDERSON (Mount Gravatt) (11.47 p.m.): Considerable debate has centred recently on the introduction of random breath-testing in Queensland in the form of the RID campaign.

I draw the attention of the House to an excellent editorial that appeared in *The Sunday Mail* of 31 August 1986. I believe that the editorial was written by Ric Allen. I will read that editorial into *Hansard*, because I believe that it makes a significant contribution to this debate.

The editorial is headed "Responsibility put to the test" and states—

"The introduction of random breath testing for motorists—in the guise of the Reduce Impaired Driving campaign—should be welcomed by all Queenslanders.

The name does not matter. Saving lives does matter. Some of us will be stopped, stone cold sober, and questioned by police. Too bad.

Driving safely is a skill too few people have. Driving while our judgment is impaired is indefensible. If RID merely gives added Government emphasis to the spot checks police have always made on drivers who weave from lane to lane or run red lights, then its about time.

Random testing won't stop the fools whose misplaced bravado tells them they are fit to be behind a steering wheel, however large their alcohol intake, but it will make the responsible motorist think twice.

To keep motorists in that cautious frame of mind, the police profile must be kept high. A study in New South Wales, sponsored by the Federal Office of Road Safety, found visible police enforcement, not publicity about random testing, was the main deterrent to potential drink drivers. Random testing, regardless of publicity, lost its effectiveness without a continued high police profile on main roads at peak hours.

Motorists who had not seen random testing in operation for some time were more likely to risk drinking and driving than those who had.

It will be more difficult for police to keep a high RID profile in Queensland than in NSW where mobile testing stations, known as booze buses, are set up at the roadside. But it will be easier here, with the mobility of the RID blitzes, to act on the NSW study's advice that, attempts by motorists to avoid RBT, through the careful calculation of back-road routes, should be countered'.

A report to the South Australian Parliament, where police did not keep a high profile after the launch of random breath testing, showed RBT had little effect on the number of drinking drivers.

The NSW study, by a behavioral scientist, said random testing was introduced in December, 1982, into a community where most motorists drank, and where driving after drinking had become common practice.

There is no reason to think Queenslanders have been any less irresponsible."

That is a most significant contribution to the debate. It raises several interesting points about RBT and RID campaigns. One is that it does not really matter which campaign is used, the critical aspect of the campaign is the visibility, particularly in peak hours, of the police who are enforcing that campaign. I am pleased to be able to report that in the Queensland RID program, the police have maintained a highly visible presence, the media has reported this, and the results have been very encouraging to this point in time.

Prior to the introduction of the RID campaign, the papers—and particularly the *Daily Sun*—tended to suggest that deaths on Queensland's roads were something of a national disgrace because the death toll was way above what it should be. On 26 August 1986, the *Telegraph* released the latest statistics on deaths on roads. The important point is that the most significant increases occurred in New South Wales and Western Australia. The biggest increase was in New South Wales, which has RBT. It is interesting to note that 17 per cent of all deaths on Australian roads occurred in Queensland. Queensland's contribution in terms of motor vehicles and so on is about 16.7 per cent. The statistics suggest that the number of deaths on Queensland roads is no greater than anywhere else in Australia. The current campaign, particularly by the *Daily Sun*, to scandalise the Queensland situation almost amounts to a concerted campaign of defamation against the Queensland Government and against Queensland motorists.

Appointment to Council of Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education

Mr DAVIS (Brisbane Central) (11.52 p.m.): It is with difficulty and much regret that I have to bring to the attention of the House the scandal of "jobs for the boys" in the Darling Downs area. This time, perhaps I should say "jobs for the fathers-in-law".

On 31 August 1986, an article in the *Sunday Sun* read—

"Powell keeps it in the family!"

State Education Minister Lin Powell has appointed his father-in-law to the council of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education.

The appointment of Donald Eric Osborne who lives in Hervey Bay has sparked a political row."

The only reason why I involve myself in this horrible debate is that I was born on the Darling Downs and it pains me to think that in all that huge area of the Darling Downs, in which there would be 250 000 people, there was no person who could take up this job and that it went to the person who was appointed.

I would like to ask whether the honourable members for Toowoomba North (Mr McPhie), Toowoomba South (Mr Warner), Warwick (Mr Booth), Cunningham (Mr Elliott), Lockyer (Mr FitzGerald) and Condamine (Mr Littleproud) were consulted.

Mr FitzGerald: The area is well represented.

Mr DAVIS: Does the honourable member for Lockyer mean to say that in the Lockyer area and the range area of Toowoomba that he represents there was no-one who had the business acumen—

Mr FitzGerald: The chairman lives in my electorate. You can take his word.

Mr DAVIS: Why didn't the honourable member ask him? No-one could be found, so the Minister for Education (Mr Powell) had to get good old dad-in-law for the job.

Mr Casey: That is the new dad-in-law.

Mr DAVIS: That is the new dad-in-law. What an insult to the Darling Downs area! The honourable member was not even consulted.

Mr Littleproud: How much was he paid?

Mr DAVIS: Somebody asked how much he was paid. I do not know. Perhaps the members who represent the Darling Downs area might be able to find out. They certainly were not consulted when it came to the selection of that person.

Mr Casey: I bet he has a big travelling allowance.

Mr DAVIS: The next penguin has just walked into the chamber. I want to know whether old dad-in-law will do it out of the goodness and graciousness of his heart; I want to know whether he will travel from Hervey Bay to Toowoomba because no-one in the area could fill the position. I want to know how much it will cost.

Mr Henderson: Nothing.

Mr DAVIS: The honourable member for Mount Gravatt has stated that dad-in-law will certainly receive no remuneration.

Mr Casey: It should be remembered that enabling legislation had to be introduced into the House to allow the honourable member for Mount Gravatt to remain as the representative for that electorate.

Mr DAVIS: Honourable members should not forget the situation that arose because of the honourable member's membership of the council of the Griffith University.

Government Members interjected.

Mr DAVIS: I do not know why Government members are worrying about this, because they were not consulted.

I am informed by the very noisy characters who occupy the Government benches that dad-in-law receives no remuneration whatsoever. I ask whether that is right.

Mr Henderson: Correct.

Mr McPhie: Correct.

Mr DAVIS: It is surprising that, when a similar matter has been raised previously on at least three or four occasions, the honourable member for Mackay (Mr Casey) has been able to catch the members of the Government out because a conflict arose when they accepted an office of profit under the Crown. I think that a remuneration is involved. If that is not the case, I think honourable members will find that hefty expenses associated with travel by motor vehicle will be involved. I do not believe that dad-in-law will come down from Hervey Bay for nothing.

Members of the Opposition will look into the matter. I certainly hope that members who live in Toowoomba and adjacent areas whose views were not considered or ascertained——

Mr FitzGerald: The chairman comes from my electorate.

Mr DAVIS: They would not have consulted the honourable member for Lockyer—that is for sure. Apparently dad-in-law, all the way from Hervey Bay, was appointed. I remind the House that the distance involved is approximately 300 km.

Art Show, Trinity Lutheran Primary School

Mr JENNINGS (Southport) (11.57 p.m.): In *The Sunday Mail* of Sunday, 7 September, under a column headed "Exit Lines", Marion Smith made a number of quite incorrect and misleading statements about an art show which is to be held at the Trinity Lutheran Primary School Hall next Friday night. Marion Smith starts the column by stating——

"After the fuss and bother over politicians being barred from addressing students on the Sunshine Coast, can it be that politics and school functions are not done

with yet? Take the case of the Trinity Lutheran Primary School at Southport where they are holding an arts and crafts function next weekend.”

The introduction is obviously purposely designed to mislead the reader into thinking that there is some dubious and improper connection between this art show and politicians addressing students in the class-room, which of course is absurd nonsense commonly called a stargazing “beat-up”. The introduction also gives the clear impression that the art show is being organised and promoted by the Trinity Lutheran Primary School at Southport, which is also completely untrue and has caused embarrassment to the school staff, the school council, and many others connected with this very fine school.

The facts are that this art show was organised some months ago by the Southport ladies section of the National Party and has been publicised accordingly. A number of very good articles appeared in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* art pages as long ago as 26 July, in which the sponsors and purpose of the art show are clearly stated.

Mr Davis: Pastor Noack.

Mr JENNINGS: The honourable member ought to be entered in the art competition. He would win a prize for being the best bull artist.

The Trinity Lutheran Primary School hall is always available for public functions, and any organisation is able to rent the hall for a function of this sort if it so desires and if the hall is not already booked. The Southport ladies section of the National Party booked the hall accordingly.

Mr Milliner: Who is the pastor down there?

Mr JENNINGS: Pastor Sam Simpfendorfer. I reckon that would be a great name for a symphony orchestra. Pastor Simpfendorfer is a great guy.

Marion Smith’s article goes on to state—

“Local artists invited to take part, for an entrance fee of course, have been somewhat dismayed to discover inadvertently that a whopping 25 percent of the takings from the fair will go to the campaign funds of National Party candidate Doug Jennings—a fact that has not been widely publicised at all by the organisers of the fair.”

This further piece of villainous fantasy is also completely untrue. It slanders the very fine volunteer Southport ladies section of the National Party, and casts the ladies in the roll of some sort of card sharps or confidence tricksters.

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The facts are that every artist taking part received full particulars on a form, which was headed “N.P.A. National Party of Australia—Queensland—Southport Ladies Section—Art and Craft Exhibition 1986—12-14 September—enquiries with the convenors”, and so on. That was followed by the 10 conditions of entry, including the 25 per cent commission, the viewing times on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday and the fact that the official opening will be carried out by that great Queenslander and guest of honour, Senator Lady Bjelke-Petersen, at the Trinity Lutheran Primary School hall, Cotlew Street, Ashmore, at 7.30 p.m. on Friday next.

The entry form was attached. It was headed, “Entry Form National Party Ladies Art Exhibition Committee 1986”. At the bottom of the form was a line which read, “I accept all the conditions of entry”, followed by the exhibiting artist’s signature.

I have been reliably informed that art galleries usually deduct 33⅓ per cent commission, not the 25 per cent that is deducted in this particularly well-organised art and craft exhibition.

Finally, to give some idea of the enthusiastic response that has been received and the exciting works that will be on display, I should state that among the more than 50 artists and sculptors who will be featuring are Jack Absolam, Rosa Leonard, Tony

Scheelbeek, Hugh Sawrey, Pro Hart, Eric Minchin, Eric Whisson, Rex Newell, Max Boyd, Roxanne Minchin, Veda Arrowsmith, John Guy, Jean Sinderlar and Ted Secombe.

In view of the fact that the Marion Smith article was in poor taste, unresearched, offensive to a number of very good people and untrue, it is, of course, appropriate that the *The Sunday Mail* insert a retraction and apology in its next edition.

Effect on Restaurants of Non-deductibility of Entertainment Expenses

Mr CASEY (Mackay) (12.2 a.m.): In recent months comments have been made, especially by members of the Liberal and National Parties, about forecasts of what will happen to their pay packets and their profits, mainly because the Federal Government has had enough common sense to really take on the outmoded tax system that exists in an endeavour to sort out a more equitable tax in Australia. All that is heard from the Queensland Government is bleating, criticism, confrontation and another word that starts with "c", which I will not mention now. The same people who promoted the hysteria and panic about the end of the tax deductible business lunch are now promoting the division and misinformation in the community about the fringe benefits tax.

Let me take honourable members a little bit further down the line about the business lunch. In Queensland, National and Liberal Party politicians were forecasting tens of thousands of job losses in the restaurant trade when the Federal Government ended the tax deductibility for entertainment expenses. They said that hundreds of restaurants would fold up and thousands of people would go bankrupt. People were told that the tourist trade would suffer on the Gold Coast and everywhere else in Queensland. But what has happened since then?

The reality is that the number of jobs in the restaurant and hotel trade in Queensland has increased since the business lunch rorts were removed. I repeat: jobs have increased! In Queensland in March 1985, months before the free business lunch was killed off, 47 300 people were employed in restaurants, hotels and clubs. What is the position now? In March this year, months after the tax changes and before the Townsville casino commenced operating—certainly, I would agree, after the opening of the casino on the Gold Coast—49 700 people were employed in restaurants, hotels and clubs in this State. That is an increase of more than 2 400 jobs. Where are the tens of thousands of jobs that were supposed to go down the gurgler, according to those prophets of doom?

What about all the restaurants that were supposed to shut their doors once their customers could not dine out at the expense of other tax-payers? Again, the facts directly contradict the wild claims that are made by the National and Liberal Parties. In Queensland, the number of licensed restaurants has actually increased since the tax deductibility of business lunches was removed. At the end of 1983-84, Queensland had 555 licensed restaurants. At the end of 1984-85, there were 581; and at the end of the 1985-86 financial year, there were 622, which is 41 more than at the same time last year when the Federal Government, according to some people, imposed this burden.

What it really did was initiate an equitable taxation system and stop the rorts. That is what really happened. Those are the facts that prove what forecasting frauds infest the Liberal and National Parties in this State. The same people who spread doom and gloom when the free business lunch was abolished are now spreading equally contemptible lies about the fringe benefits tax. Their forecasts about jobs being lost and restaurants closing their doors did not come true. Their equally inflammatory claims about the effects of the fringe benefits tax will not come true, either.

The Queensland restaurant story is the same Australia-wide. What has happened in the whole of Australia is that the tax system is being changed to a fair and equitable basis that stops the rorts of people eating out at the greatest possible expense on everybody else. My discussions with long established restaurant-owners indicate that, since the Federal Government's move, the industry has become more competitive. Consequently, because of better quality meals, better presentation and more competitive prices, including wine and corkage charges, more people are now able to afford to eat out. In the face of this competition, restaurant-owners who were once charging between

\$12 and \$15 for a meal have dropped their prices. There has also been a noticeable swing towards high quality meals in established hotels in order to attract customers. The figures I have related prove that the business lunch is still alive and well, but people now have to pay for it themselves. The forecast by the spokesmen for the Liberal and National Parties that 80 000 jobs would be lost in the industry have been absolute hog-wash. Put simply, those who were on the tax-racket, business-lunch dodge are now meeting their proper taxation commitments and are no longer dining out at the expense of others.

State Statistical Comparisons

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (12.7 a.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of the House some of the problems that are caused by comparing statistics in the various States, which seems to be a ploy engaged in more and more by members opposite. The community as a whole is starting to wake up to the fact that figures tell only a part of the story. People tell their own story and they know the real story. In fact, their hip pocket nerve tells them that, in any case.

People need to be aware of the wider implications of the relationship of figures and facts when things such as unemployment are compared. The wider implications need to be understood. In fact, in some senses, the misinformation seems to be getting through.

The other afternoon I travelled back to Townsville with a lady from New York. She had visited Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and was on her way to north Queensland. She remarked that she had been told in both Melbourne and Sydney not only that Brisbane was a funny town but also that the people up here were funny. She came to understand very quickly that exactly the opposite is true, not only that Brisbane is a delightful city in a delightful State but also that the people are just like those she knows at home—hard-working and with an ethic that does not seem to be understood in the south. Those comments were quite spontaneous; I did not in any way seek to elicit them.

When interstate statistical comparisons are made, the vast area of Queensland and its vast distances have to be taken into account. For instance, Queensland has 22 per cent of the land area of Australia. I will compare that with the eastern States. Queensland's 22 per cent of the land mass compares with 10 per cent in New South Wales, 3 per cent in Victoria and 1 per cent in Tasmania. Regardless of that fact, many people ask Queenslanders to consider that interstate comparisons are made on the basis of like with like. The problems of distance have to be considered.

I will now consider a comparison of exports. As well as having a large proportion of the area of Australia, Queensland has a large component of the nation's exports. Queensland has 23 per cent of exports; New South Wales, 23 per cent; Victoria, 22 per cent; and Tasmania, 3 per cent. Is it fair to lump Tasmania in with a comparison of the other States?

I will use another figure. Every man, woman and child in this State is responsible for \$2,751 worth of export earnings annually. That figure is for the last financial year.

New South Wales paled into insignificance at \$1,300. It could be said that that State is only half as productive as Queensland. I would not suggest that for a moment. However, the arguments of honourable members opposite have led people to believe that the people in New South Wales work only half as hard as people in Queensland. I will not comment on whether or not they do. That simple figure shows that they do.

Queensland has \$2,751 worth of export earnings per head of population; Victoria has \$1,587; and Tasmania has \$1,856.

I will compare the sizes of the States. Queensland is 2 100 km long and 1 500 km wide; New South Wales is only half that, 1 100 km long and 1 200 km wide; and Tasmania is 250 km long and 300 km wide. The comparisons can go on and on.

I turn to density of population. Queensland has one and a half persons per square kilometre; New South Wales has almost seven; Victoria has 18; and Tasmania has six and a half.

Unless one is comparing like with like, figures do not tell the whole story.

I will examine the amount of roadway that every man, woman and child in this State has to maintain. Queensland has 65 metres of road for every person; New South Wales has 37 metres; Victoria has 39 metres; and Tasmania has 50 metres.

I turn to railway lines. The situation is similar.

I cite the example of net migration. During the last year, there has been a very positive migration to Queensland. A total of 11 000 people voted with their feet and came to Queensland. New South Wales suffered a net loss of 10 000 people.

Mr Borbidge: Political refugees.

Mr STONEMAN: Yes, political refugees.

Time expired.

Motion (Mr Wharton) agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.12 a.m. (Wednesday).