

projects in the north of Australia. In the late 1920s and the early 1930s a former member of the Federal Parliament for the Indi electorate—he was a member of Mr. Swinburne's party—said that no community would be established in northern Australia unless the people were paid to go there or obtained subsidies for this purpose. No one paid much attention to his comment, but he was right.

If we are successful in establishing new communities, I believe everybody will be eternally grateful. To sum up, it is clear that the Governor's Speech contains a challenge, and it is not only the Government's duty but also that of the Opposition to see that the challenge is accepted. I do not think the Opposition will contribute much towards it, although doubtless it would support conscription of labour and nationalization of certain activities. The problem is basically one of encouraging people to move to new areas and accepting the challenge that has been issued.

I am happy to say that I endorse the suggestions that have been put forward. Furthermore, I support the flexible thinking of the Minister for Conservation, the Minister for Local Government, the Minister who is responsible for tourism, state development and decentralization, and others who will be keen enough to say, "This is a challenge. I will support the Premier in his leadership". Members of the Government party believe in challenge, and will not accept some of the old methods that are supported by our friends on the Opposition benches.

**The Hon. I. B. TRAYLING** (Melbourne Province).—I feel something like the nineteenth man in a football match who must wait on the bench to get a run late in the game. I wish to speak briefly about three matters which, although not strictly connected, are related at least by theme. I refer first to the laws and regulations and the differences which exist between the States. In many instances, I believe the laws and regulations in the various States should be the same;

there seems to be no real reason why the current differences should continue. I refer in particular to laws and regulations on roads, censorship, health, workers compensation and so on. The characteristics of people in each State of Australia are substantially the same, and the physical characteristics of the States as well are essentially the same.

I know that there have been meetings of Attorneys-General and other representatives from the various States in an endeavour to iron out the problems which exist as they affect the differences in laws and regulations between States. I am aware, Mr. President, that some progress has been made in this regard but I understand there is much still to be achieved. I suspect that as things move it will be a long time before we can hope to achieve, if we ever achieve, desirable uniformity in these areas.

Secondly, I believe that certain competition as it exists between the States is in fact a cost imposition against the national interest, I refer to direct costs and indirect costs if you like. There is the direct cost of each State maintaining separate offices in overseas countries—agents-general promotion committees, immigration authorities and so on; I do not think there is a need for separate offices of this type. I believe Australia is one country in terms of promotion, immigration and certain other areas. Consequently, we should examine our requirements in these areas, not from the point of view of one State competing against another for business, migrants or what have you, but in terms of the national interest. If we take the example of a multi-national company wanting to set up in Australia for the profit motive—there is nothing wrong with that—the various States compete with one another, with the result that the company concerned—it could be a large manufacturing plant—could be located in an area which is not the most advantageous for it.

It is all very well for the States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, to set up offices and endeavour to attract business interests to Australia, but in the national interest I do not think this is the way in which it should be done. Perhaps a national committee of representatives from each State could decide more objectively where an industry should be established and what are the best terms to attract overseas business. In this way, some of the subsidies currently offered to industries by the various States may no longer be necessary. The Commonwealth might be prepared to provide the necessary subsidies, particularly if a national committee had decided which would be the most suitable State in the national interest in which any industry should be located. I believe this would not infringe on State rights and would be a rational way of dealing with the matter.

The third matter to which I shall briefly refer could be termed the rationalization of local government. I am irrevocably convinced that our present structure of local government is bordering on the ludicrous. It was stated earlier that the law relates back to the last century. I suggest that local government does too. Look at a State the size of Victoria, even with its population, and consider that we have 210 separate municipalities with approximately 2,500 councillors. From the most generous viewpoint, this appears to be something bordering on over-government. I do not think local government will ever achieve the status and influence it speaks about and to which it constantly aspires unless there is a drastic revision of its structure and its way of working. I know that members on both sides of the House will agree and disagree with that sort of thing but sooner or later I believe it is inevitable that changes will be required in the system. It has been suggested briefly in the report on local government finance.

Those who have made any sort of examination of local government in

the past have usually strongly tended to the view that rather significant changes should be made. I do not apologize to any parochial interests for saying that there should be wide amalgamations or regionalizations as between municipalities and that the sooner the process is started the better it will be.

Local government has no opportunity to make proper use of modern methods of administration through the use of computers and no real opportunity at this stage, with the exception of the Melbourne City Council, properly to employ the use of its own heavy equipment. That will continue to be the position until there are amalgamations.

I think the Parliament can influence this a good deal. Already there is evidence that it can be done. The provision of library services is an example. Grants are given to regional library services which are not given to independent services, and this is an encouragement to municipalities to involve their library service in a regional grouping which is designed by the Library Services Board and, I believe, is supported by the Government.

I do not know how this will be brought about, but I do not think we can forever run away from the need to make the sort of changes I have spoken about. There might be some sort of progressive methods made to bring about an optimum situation after a period of time, but I cannot see any real reason why at least the examination of local government should not be made soon. I believe it could be made almost on a non-party basis and that some real changes could be effected.

Mr. President, those are briefly the areas in which I am interested, and perhaps I shall have an opportunity at a later stage of developing these subjects more fully.

On the motion of the Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

*The House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, October 17, 1972.

The **SPEAKER (Sir Vernon Christie)** took the chair at 4.5 p.m., and read the prayer.

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

*The following answers to questions on notice were circulated:—*

#### HOSPITALS.

**ALFRED AND ROYAL MELBOURNE HOSPITALS: FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS.**

(Question No. 261)

**Mr. WILKES (Northcote)** asked the Treasurer—

Whether the amounts outlined in the Budget concerning allocations to—(a) the Alfred Hospital (extensions); and (b) the Royal Melbourne Hospital (renal unit), are identical to those already announced by the former Treasurer after additional sums were made available from Canberra; if not, what are the amounts now referred to by the Treasurer and how they differ from those previously announced by the former Treasurer?

**Mr. HAMER (Premier and Treasurer).**—The answer is—

The additional amount of \$600,000 for the Alfred Hospital rebuilding programme announced in the House on 1st March, 1972, by the previous Treasurer following the February, 1972, Premiers Conference, was paid to the hospital during the 1971-72 financial year. This amount is not included in the allocation of \$3.5 million for the Alfred Hospital rebuilding programme in the current financial year as mentioned in the Budget speech. The allocation of \$400,000 in 1972-73 for the renal unit at the Royal Melbourne Hospital represents the initial expenditure on this project. Approval was given for this project to proceed following the February Premiers Conference but, in fact, no expenditure was incurred before 30th June last.

#### WEST GATE BRIDGE.

**EXITS: ESTIMATED TRAFFIC DENSITY.**  
(Question No. 305)

**Mr. TREZISE (Geelong North)** asked the Minister of Transport, for the Minister for Local Government—

1. Where traffic traversing the West Gate Bridge in an easterly direction will exit from the bridge?

2. What is the expected daily number of vehicles that will cross the bridge in the initial year of operation?

3. Whether it is expected that exit traffic from the bridge will "bottleneck" in the South Melbourne-city area; if so—(a) where are the problem areas; and (b) what action is proposed to overcome such traffic problems?

**Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).**—The answer supplied by the Minister for Local Government is—

1. At Graham Street, Ingles Street, Boundary Street and Lorimer Street.

2. 50,000.

3. No "bottleneck" is expected.

#### VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.

**WEDDERBURN JUNCTION-WEDDERBURN LINE.**

(Question No. 323)

**Mr. CURNOW (Kara Kara)** asked the Minister of Transport—

1. In view of the laid-down guidelines regarding the closure of railway lines announced by him on 29th March instant, and reported in Hansard on page 4581, why this procedure was not carried out in connexion with Wedderburn Junction-Wedderburn line?

2. What was the total revenue from this line in each of the past five financial years?

3. What was the total operating cost and maintenance cost, respectively, of this line in each of those years?

4. What average amount of goods was carried on the weekly Wednesday train to Wedderburn, what revenue was derived from this service, and what has been the operating cost of this service in each of those years?

5. Whether the Wednesday train carries goods for any other stations on the lines both north and south of Wedderburn Junction; if so, to what stations and whether the service to these stations will also be curtailed?

6. Whether he will undertake to postpone any closure until the guidelines as announced by him are carried out?

**Mr. WILCOX (Minister of Transport).**—The answer is—

1 and 6. It is not proposed to close the Wedderburn line but to operate it each year on a seasonal basis. The railways have arranged with the carrier serving Wedderburn and Wedderburn Junction to contract