

Hon. E. H. Harris: They can afford to do so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: We know that Collie is a municipality and the clause has for its object the validating of the action taken by the Council. In regard to Katanning, evidently some action was taken by the road board. They may have received assistance, or something of the kind, that requires to be validated. I can give no guarantee that there will be an amendment to the Municipalities Act to legalise actions such as those that have been referred to. Objection is being taken to the clause and a similar objection possibly would be taken to such a clause if it were inserted in the Municipalities Act. All that the Bill before us seeks to do is to give to municipalities the power that is to-day enjoyed by road boards.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: To make the position clear I will move an amendment—

That Subclauses 1 and 2 be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the Committee that if those two subclauses are struck out, Subclause 3 will be meaningless.

Hon. H. STEWART: The clause is purely optional but I look upon the next one as dangerous. It has been anything but a benefit to road boards. They have had that power and it has enabled them to contribute towards the erection of hospitals. There is a road board in Narrogin as well as a municipality. At Katanning there is a road board without a municipality. At Albany there is a municipality and a road board. Wagin has a municipality and a road board, and Pingelly has a road board but no municipality. It is not right that we should find that a road board in an important centre has the power to contribute a portion of its funds towards hospital purposes while the municipality should be debarred from doing so by reason of the fact that the Municipalities Act contains no provision to enable it to do so. I should prefer to have an undertaking from the Government that they would make the amendment in the Municipalities Act, which is the proper place for it, but failing that I could not vote for the amendment.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	8
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	1
				—

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller)

NOES.

Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. Rose
	(Teller)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest that might postpone this clause now and what remains of it readable by incorporating in it some of what we have struck out.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.35 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 26th October, 1927.

Question: Railway project, Lake Grace-East Jilakin-Kalgarin	...	...	...	1
Government Business, precedence	...	...	...	1
Bills: Loan and Inscribed Stock (Sinking Fund), &c.	...	...	...	1
Railways Discontinuance, &c.	...	...	...	1
Traffic Act Amendment, returned	...	...	...	1
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed	...	...	...	1
Public Works and Buildings	...	...	...	1
Labour	...	...	...	1

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, LAKE GRACE-EAST JILAKIN- KALGARIN.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Has the report of the special committee on the proposed Lake Grace-East Jilakin-Kalgarin railway been received by the Government? 2, If not, when will it be available? 3, If so, is it his intention to lay the report on the Table of the House?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, Shortly. 3, Yes.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.35]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session Government business shall take precedence of all notices and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as well as on other sitting days.

I wish to assure the House there is no desire or intention to curtail the rights of members to discuss any matters they may bring before the House. There are not many private members' items on the Notice Paper. Hon. members will be afforded every opportunity to discuss those and any others that might be brought down before the end of the session. However, from this time forward we might as well proceed with Government business without interruption, at the same time affording opportunity for the discussion of private members' business.

Hon. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.36]: I do not propose to offer any objection to the motion, particularly as the Premier has intimated that we shall have full opportunity to discuss the few items standing in the names of private members. My motion under the Electoral Districts Act will, I hope, take some time in discussion. That is the only motion in my name, and I am perfectly satisfied with the assurance given by the Premier. It is the usual thing that the motion now before us should be moved at about this stage of the session, and private members cannot, I think, take much exception to it. There is a safeguard of course, and private members can always get their business before the House. The Premier knows that if he were to block any such attempt it would result in a censure motion, so we are fully protected. It is usual for Opposition members to move at least one censure motion during the session.

The Premier: Not in the first session of a new Parliament.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but is just the time when we should have it moved. There never was a time when consideration for the Government was so little deserved.

The Premier: I have never moved such a motion during the first session of a new Parliament.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: You certainly were never justified in moving such a motion, and certainly you have never succeeded in carrying it. There is very little on the Notice Paper, apart from the Estimates, and we are getting through the Estimates quickly. There is one grievance, a big thing, that will need to receive consideration at the hands of members, namely the motion under the Electoral Districts Act. Then there are the Police Act Amendment Bill and the Dog Act Amendment Bill. They should both be dealt with. There is also an important Bill the Premier has forgotten, namely the Bill abolishing the sinking fund. That will have to become an Act, because it is necessary that we should amend the Act at present on the statute-book.

The Premier: It will be included in the Financial Agreement Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, it ought not to be. The Sinking Fund Bill is something quite apart from the Financial Agreement. It may rightly follow the consideration of the Financial Agreement, but it ought not to be in the Financial Agreement for the sinking fund has nothing to do with the Federal authorities.

The Premier: If the Financial Agreement goes through, the other Bill for the suspension of the sinking fund will automatically follow it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not so sure that it ought to. I do not know that the sinking fund measure will require very long discussion, but consideration of the Financial Agreement Bill will take a long time. I hope the Premier will introduce the measure as early as possible, so that we can have some time in which to consider it while completing the Estimates.

The Premier: We expect to receive the Financial Agreement this week.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Premier will get it, so that we may have it as soon as possible, and that the Premier will introduce the necessary Bill without delay, so that we may have time to consider it. Otherwise the session may be prolonged, for it is a very big question and will require the best attention that members can give it. I think the Premier is right in submitting this motion at this

stage. I am willing to accept the assurance that we shall have full opportunity to consider the business standing in the names of private members and also any new matters that members may bring forward before the close of the session. There is no object in prolonging the session if we can get through our work early; as a matter of fact, if the imposing of the additional cost on the public can be avoided, we are only doing our duty in avoiding it. I support the motion.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.43]: I do not agree that it is usual to have this motion at this stage of the session. It has been customary at the beginning of the session to allow private members one day per week, and at about this stage of the session the Government generally reduce that to every alternate Wednesday. I regret the Premier did not adopt that course on this occasion. It would have assisted the Government in their desires, and would have been a little fairer to private members had the Premier followed that course and taken one Wednesday for Government business, leaving the alternate Wednesday to private members until some time next month.

The Premier: We hope to close down next month.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am pleased to hear that such novel expedition is in the minds of the Government. During my experience of 16 years in the House it has seemed to me that we sit until Christmas, no matter how early the Government may move this motion.

The Premier: We are living in days of reform.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I will believe that and reserve any criticism of the proposed reform until the Government carry it into effect, when I will commend them upon their expedition. However, I thank the Premier for the assurance that opportunity will be given for discussion of all the private members' business at present on the Notice Paper. The item that the Country Party, as well as the people of Western Australia, are most concerned about is the motion for a redistribution of seats. If the Government wish to close down the session promptly, they would assist their object if they not only promised that we should have a full discussion on that motion, but also assured us that they would approve

of the motion. There is no objection to the motion at present before the House.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [4.45]: I had the idea of opposing the motion when the Premier first moved it, but what he has indicated since is quite sufficient for me to agree to its being passed. There are only three items of private members' business on the Notice Paper, and the Premier has promised that members will be given full opportunity to discuss those matters. He has even said that any other business that requires to be brought up can be discussed in the House. The motion is one that has been moved every session since I have been in Parliament. Indeed, I do not remember the notice being moved when the Notice Paper contained so little business for transaction. I do not know whether the Government have it in mind to bring down more legislation than that appearing already on the Notice Paper. If they have not that intention, I do not think there will be many more Wednesdays in the session before we complete our labours. The Premier would have been better advised if he had given some notice before moving this motion. He might have given notice of it to-day and applied it from next week, so that members might have been able to deal to-day with the private business they have on the Notice Paper. So long, however, as we shall have an opportunity to discuss private members' business, I will support the motion.

(Question put and passed.)

BILL—LOAN AND INSCRIBED STOCK (SINKING FUND).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RAILWAYS DISCONTINUANCE

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.47]: In moving the second reading said: As a rule a Minister derives a certain amount of pleasure from introducing a Bill, containing principles with which he is well in accord, but in this case I can take no pleasure in moving the second reading. I am sure my displeasure in being obliged to introduce this Bill will be shared to a great extent by you, Mr. Speaker. It is only from a sense

of duty and responsibility to the whole State, and after looking things squarely in the face, and deciding which is the best course to take, that I have made up my mind to go ahead and do what I consider to be right in this matter, irrespective of whether it gives me any pleasure or not, or whether I must blast the hopes of certain people who have considerably more faith in their own districts than can properly be shared by the rest of the community. The Bill deals with three particular railways. One is the Bunbury Racecourse railway, a small siding about two miles long, and another is the Kanowna railway from Kalgoorlie.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are not throwing up the sponge there, are you?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member himself threw up the sponge there some four or five years ago. His Government had decided to introduce a Bill for the discontinuance of this railway, but the people of the district urged a certain amount of delay. That delay ensued, and now we have come to the stage reached by the hon. member some five years ago. In the development of the country mining has played a very important part. Unfortunately, however, mining is not a permanent industry. We know that every ton of gold that is taken out of the ground depletes the amount of gold-bearing stone left in the ground. In the Kanowna district mining has been languishing for many years. No matter how we may deplore the fact, the position has to be faced. The Kanowna railway was built in 1896. It is 12½ miles long, and for a great number of years was profitably worked. Mining has now gone down in that centre, and it is unprofitable to carry on railway operations over that short length of line. The Royal Commissioner, who dealt with the Railway Department in 1922, strongly recommended that operations on these lines should be discontinued and the rails pulled up, and used to better advantage elsewhere in the State. That recommendation received some support at the hands of the Government of the day, but they did not go so far as to introduce a Bill because of the agitation that arose in the locality affected. It was urged by the residents that there was no great hurry about pulling up the line, and they requested that no immediate action be taken. Happily for the people concerned, they are generally able to display a wonderful amount of optimism.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think they had just made a discovery of alluvial gold there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: We all have had experience of different mining towns. Wherever one goes, even in the most played-out field in Western Australia, there are still left some people who have the utmost faith in their district. They remain on despite every discouragement that may come along. Almost everywhere there are a few people in every mining district, where the industry has in the past been attended with success, who think that in the future the past glory of the field will return, and that they will share in the general prosperity brought about by a revival of the mining industry. We have on various occasions had to put the position of the Kanowna line before the people affected. We had no desire to take the drastic step of pulling up the rails, but the position now has to be faced. Three railways are mentioned in the Bill. From the standpoint of maintenance it is now impossible to keep them in anything like good order. In 1922 so serious had the position become on the Kanowna line that the regular service had to be stopped. When it was proposed to remove the line the people asked that they should be given a year or two before this was done. Three or four years have gone by, until now we have reached the fifth year from that time. Notwithstanding the optimism of the people, there has been no development since to warrant the continuance of operations on that line. The policy of the Railway Department is to go in for 100 per cent. maintenance, and as far as possible to keep the lines in perfect condition. Even that policy had to be altered two or three years ago and maintenance was very seriously curtailed. These three lines had reached the condition when a heavy outlay had to be faced in the matter of renewing sleepers, ballast and general maintenance. The Kanowna line was allowed to remain, but it was understood that until 100 tons of traffic was available for transport no train would be run out. When it was run out the sandalwood and other freights would be transported to Kalgoorlie for transmission over the system. This train has run only six times during the whole year and is not expected to run more than eight times altogether. We have, therefore, a line 12½ miles long over which a train is required to run only eight times in the year.

Mr. Richardson: There are no passenger trains there, are there?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No. People who need the ordinary commodities of life will not wait six or seven weeks to get them by train, and they obtain their requirements by means of motor transport.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There are only hotels in Kanowna now.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is only one hotel there.

The Premier: And that is maintained from Kalgoorlie.

Hon. G. Taylor: I suppose the principal traffic consists of sandalwood.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is practically all sandalwood. This has warranted the running of six or eight trains in the year, because there has been provided a minimum load of 100 tons for each train. Even with the comparatively small amount of running on this line, the sleepers have got out of condition and require to be renewed. If the traffic had been a little more regular, the line would have been kept in better repair. If we are to continue running trains over that line, the department will have to incur considerable expenditure in putting the line in order. The rails themselves are in fair condition. Members representing country constituencies will know that there are many farmers 20 or 30 miles from a railway line, or even further, who have to cart their produce to a railway siding. Sidings could be provided in closer proximity to them if rails could be supplied at a lower cost than they are obtainable at present. In this Kanowna line there are 12 miles of rails, a sufficient quantity to—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Make a start with the Yarramony railway.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Yarramony Railway Bill provides for 60-lb. rails, whereas the Kanowna rails are not of that weight. The rails are in fairly good order. There are sufficient to enable us to construct a number of sidings which would be a great convenience to the producers, and would also be a convenience to the Railway Department on the score of economical working.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you start the Yarramony railway. I will vote for the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think the Yarramony Bill was passed a fair number of years ago, and the Leader of the Opposition therefore has had opportunities to do something towards the construction of the line.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do play the man sometimes!

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Bill has no concern with Yarramony, inasmuch as none of the material in the line can be of any use for the Yarramony railway, which when built will, it is believed, carry considerable traffic and therefore will need 60-lb. rails.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No; 45-lb.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The capital cost of the Kanowna line was £54,510. Working expenses over the past three years have been £630; interest on capital, which of course cannot in any case be avoided, except by making better use of the rails in the line, has amounted to £6,900; so that the total outgoing for the three years has been £7,530, while the earnings have reached only the small amount of £201. Certain of the material, stockpiles of yards and rails, and possibly some of the sleepers, might be put to a purpose which would earn some revenue. Sandalwood is practically the only traffic over the line. Some clay deposits in the vicinity might yield traffic if used in sufficient quantities. Having the opportunity on Sunday last, I went out and had a look at the track; and I agree with hon. members generally that it is most depressing, on going into a town which once had 15,000 or 16,000 people, to find merely one hotel, two or three houses, and three or four small habitations. The town was at one time wonderfully prosperous, a town that did much to build up our mining industry, being one of the early discoveries. Now it consists merely of half a dozen buildings. If Kanowna could by any means be revived, no one would be more pleased than I; but whatever limited opportunities for revival there have been, and they have been taken advantage of, have not resulted in such a permanent improvement as would justify the continuance of the railway. At this stage of the State's development—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We are always doing so, and have always been developing the State.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly; but we cannot afford to have lines that are useless, lines the material in which could be employed with advantage in other parts of the State. As regards the Bunbury racecourse railway, one mile 35 chains long, it was constructed in 1897, I believe.

It runs to the racecourse and show ground, but the advent of the motor car has rendered the railway entirely unnecessary. Practically all the racing and show traffic goes by motor. During the last three years the earnings have amounted to only £20, and the working expenses have been about £30. While that comparatively trifling loss would make no appreciable difference to the finances of the State, the fact remains that the line is absolutely useless and that the rails in it could be advantageously laid elsewhere. Moreover, to put the line into running order would cost from £600 to £700. On account of its comparatively unsafe condition the speed on it has been reduced to eight miles per hour. I do not think there will be many heartburnings over the closing of the line. The third proposal of the Bill is to discontinue the Kamballie-Lakeside section, about two miles three chains, of the Kalgoorlie via Boulder Lakeside line, and also the Lakeside-White Hope section, about 23 miles 4 chains. This is an ordinary Government line, built about 1897; but at its terminus a wood line ran in a southerly direction. The wood line was used for a number of years by a firewood company for the transport of wood to the Kalgoorlie mines. About three years ago the company operating the line found they could not economically continue to work it as a firewood proposition, and they were going to pull it up and realise whatever the assets in the line might represent. In the interim, however, a gold discovery had taken place at Hampton Plains, and a number of small flows and one or two comparatively fair-sized mines were working in that district. Had the line been pulled up then by the firewood company, it would have meant practically the abandonment of a field which at the time was showing some promise. At any rate, supplies for the field were all transported over the line, and there were prospects of further development of the mines. The Minister for Mines reminds me that the most important function of the line was to transport water to the field, so that the White Hope mine could be economically worked. In the circumstances the Government could not abandon the district to its fate, and it was considered necessary to retain the line in order to give the mines a chance to develop into something better than they

were at that period. The Government therefore purchased the wood line for about £18,000. It was recognised, however, that the full amount could not fairly be debited to the Railway Department, the line being a nondescript sort of proposition, with a mixture of rails, and with sleepers that were not too good. Accordingly the Mining Development Vote provided about £7,000 of the cost, and the balance of £11,000 was debited to capital account. Unfortunately the mines and shows in the district closed down one after the other: not a single one is working now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is there no wood along the route of the railway?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No.

The Minister for Mines: One would have to go out 30 miles for wood.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Apparently there is no prospect of traffic for the railway at all. By accident a prospector might discover something new and valuable, but there is no warrant for continuing the line in that particular area; and, again reluctantly, the Government have decided that in order to make the best use of what material is available in the line the railway should be pulled up. The rails are not too good; some are in sections; but we shall be able to make valuable use of them in other parts of the State. Another railway could not be built with those rails because, as I say, they are of a nondescript character: but in the ramifications of the system advantageous use will be found for them elsewhere. Even if we did decide to allow the line to remain, in view of the possibility of some development, we would at this stage have to spend a considerable amount of money to bring it to a proper state of repair. During the past few years the line, which has cost the Railway Department £11,000 and the Mining Development Vote £7,000, a total of £18,000, has involved working expenses totalling £2,898, and the interest has amounted to £1,392, making a total outgoing of £4,290, while the earnings have totalled £2,699. If that state of affairs were likely to continue, the Government would possibly not have decided to pull up the railway; but, as I have said, all the mines have closed down and there is no prospect of any kind of traffic. Consequently the whole of the money spent in working the line would be wasted,

and to keep it open is unwarrantable. I have detailed the position in regard to each of the three lines affected by the Bill. It has not been a pleasant duty. Some people might call it a policy of despair to pull up lines; but unpleasant though duties may be, facts have to be looked in the face so that the best may be done in the interests of the State as a whole, and not merely in the interests of any part of the State with hopes of revival. I commend the people concerned for their optimism, but there have been no recent developments to justify that optimism. It is said that the pastoral industry is going ahead in the Kanowna district, but in view of the comparatively small extra distance of cartage over a good road to Kalgoorlie considerations of traffic resulting from that industry do not justify the retention of the railway. Certainly, any line that is warranted in the interests of development will be maintained and worked. The Government have decided to discontinue the three lines in question and employ the material in them elsewhere, now that there is the opportunity of good, profitable and economic use for it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.14]: I know it is not a pleasant duty to make such proposals as the Minister has submitted, signing the death warrant or sounding the death knell of at least one centre, Kanowna, that has been a magnificent gold producer and a great asset to the State. But the time has come when gold is no longer being won from the soil of Kanowna and there is no longer traffic for the railway to carry. After all, the distance from Kanowna to Kalgoorlie, over a good road, is only 12 miles; so there does not seem to be the least justification for keeping the line working.

Mr. Heron: You did not go over the line when the wet spell was on.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Doubtless the people of the district will be perfectly willing to have a great many wet spells. Unfortunately, those wet spells are altogether too infrequent. If they were even wet enough, there would be no question of pulling up the railway.

The Minister for Railways: I saw a good wheat crop there only last Sunday.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Bow Bros. have been growing hay at Boulder for the last 20 years. With the Minister, I regret

that the time has come when we cannot justifiably continue the existence of that line. Some years ago there was a suggestion to pull up the line. Alluvial developments threatened to revolutionise the position, but unfortunately that did not follow. The Minister stated that the sleepers would have to be renewed. Of course if an extensive gold discovery were made in that area it would be necessary to reconstruct the line, but even so, the cost would not be so very much more than would be involved in the task of re-sleepering the line now. As to the White Hope line, I am sorry that there is no longer any necessity for it. The name seems to be the best part of that goldfield at present. At the time the firewood companies amalgamated it was suggested that the line should be bought at what was then considered a very low price. I think the member for the district saw me about it, and he urged that we should do all we possibly could to retain for the people of the district the necessary railway facilities that they required. The line was continued for the people at a cost of a few thousand pounds to the State, but apparently there is no further use for it. I do not know about the Bunbury line, nor do I know that the Minister should pull it up, because it runs to the racecourse and the show ground.

The Premier: But people will not travel one and a-half miles in a train these days!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: For the time being they prefer to travel in American motor cars. The Minister's Western Australian coal is far better than American petrol, where the interests of this State are concerned. However, I agree with the Premier that there are not many people who would be prepared to travel for such a short distance by train. If they were buying English motor cars or cars of British construction, it might be a different matter. For every British car that we see on the road, we probably notice 20 American cars, but soon I hope the British people will make cars to suit our requirements and then the position will be changed. I presume the Minister has consulted the authorities concerned about this line.

The Minister for Railways: Yes, they suggested pulling it up.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not refer to the railway authorities, but to those in charge of the racecourse and the show grounds.

The Minister for Railways: The fact that we have received £20 as revenue from the line over a period of three years shows that it is not required.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the line is merely a siding and is used for taking stock to the showground and horses to the racecourse.

The Minister for Railways: The line does not serve any good purpose at all now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister has considered whether the committee of the showground and those in charge of the racecourse make use of the line at all.

The Minister for Railways: It has not been used to any extent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not mind the second reading of the Bill being agreed to, but I hope the Minister will defer the Committee stage in order that he may make inquiries as to the use of the line at Bunbury.

The Minister for Railways: I will do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I regret the Bill is necessary, but it is obvious that the Minister has done what is right in introducing the measure. We cannot restore prosperity to Kanowna. If we could, we would. Our hope is that we shall find some new goldfield that will replace the mines that have been closed down. I wish the Minister had told us something about the Wiluna line, where it is to start from and what he proposes to do.

Member: You are asking for an argument.

The Minister for Railways: When the advisory board have furnished their report, we may have something to say.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What is the good of the advisory board? That is merely an excuse.

The Minister for Railways: We want to get the necessary information.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is sheltering behind the advisory board! Did the advisory board suggest pulling up the three lines referred to in the Bill?

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The Government will appoint a super board to inquire into the proceedings of the advisory board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And probably a select committee to review the position.

The Minister for Railways: Why not suggest a Royal Commission as well?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should be told whether the Wiluna line is

to go out from Meekatharra or some other point. If the Minister were to indicate that some of the rails will be used for the Yarramony line, he would be certain of the support of many members on the Opposition side of the House.

The Premier: We shall be able to offer about two pairs of rails for every line that is authorised!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But 27 miles of railways are to be pulled up.

The Premier: That would be perhaps five miles for each line that is authorised.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I was referring to the rails being used for one line.

The Premier: If we suggested that we would lose the support of other members who want their lines constructed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government should be prepared to take a little risk.

The Premier: We want to postpone the evil day.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Surely the Government do not suggest that the rails shall be stored at Fremantle only to rust. We should lay it down that the rails should be used in the construction of some other line.

The Premier: We shall give two lengths to the Yarramony line.

Mr. Griffiths: And that will be a start, anyhow.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Here the Government have 27 miles of rails to pull up and they do not know what to do with them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: That would construct a railway half the distance to Kalgarin.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Unless we have some definite object ahead, it is merely stupid to pull up railways, thus shutting off the work of the country without doing anything to replace that which is being undone.

The Premier: There is the line to link up with the Esperance-Norseman railway at Salmon Gums.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I suppose that line will lead into Fremantle. I admire the Minister for Works for the way in which he brings everything to Fremantle, little caring about other centres. To-day we are considering the policy of the Government; later we shall deal with the policy of the Engineer-in-Chief or other officials

who will, I presume, override the policy of the Government. I am sorry that the Minister for Railways has had to introduce the Bill. It is not a pleasing duty. He has my sympathy and my support for the second reading of the Bill.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.26]: We all regret the introduction of the Bill as it is a further sign of the decline of the mining industry.

The Minister for Mines: You should not say that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; it is a sign of the decline of the industry in certain parts.

The Minister for Works: The Bunbury racecourse, for instance, has nothing to do with the mining industry.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is so. On the facts advanced by the Minister I do not see that the Government could do otherwise than to introduce the Bill. I remember Kanowna when it was a large centre and great hopes were held throughout Western Australia regarding the deep leads. There are still some people at Kanowna who believe there are large deposits of gold ore in the district, but unfortunately a lot of money has been spent without success in the endeavour to locate them. I believe the Government were right in waiting for a few years to afford the mining community every opportunity to locate gold ore in the district and so restore it as a gold-producing centre. Apparently it has not been possible to do that and it is now advisable to pull up the line. As to the White Hope line, as events have turned out, it is a pity that the line was ever purchased by the State. Many private people spent large sums of money at the Hampton Plains field because it was believed that the deposits there would be permanent and would employ large numbers of miners. Unfortunately that hope was not realised, and there can be no objection to the line being pulled up under existing conditions. I am only sorry that the rails used on that line are of a motley description, for I am afraid they will not be very serviceable to the Government in their desire to construct new agricultural lines. We require heavy rails and good material for those railways. I remember, as a boy, when Sir John Forrest decided to build the line from Bunbury to the racecourse. That was in 1896 or 1897. At that time the Bunbury people did not

possess motor cars and there was justification for the line. The fact that £20 only has been derived from the line during three years shows that it is not being used. Today no one would go to the Bunbury railway station and take a train to the racecourse when he could make the journey so much more quickly in a motor car. We regret having to pull up railways in any part of Western Australia, particularly at a time when the policy of the Government should be to enter upon an active period of railway construction. However, the Minister has made out a good case for the Bill and I feel sure the measure has been introduced reluctantly. I believe the people of the State, and more particularly you, Mr. Speaker, will share in that reluctance. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [5.30]: With other members I regret the need for this Bill and especially for the pulling up of the Kanowna railway line. I remember the White Feather in the early part of 1894. Very few sheets of galvanised iron were to be found there at that time; all the habitations were tents when the first deep alluvial was found. Even then Kanowna was a thriving town, though there was no railway line beyond Northam or Burracoppin for some years afterwards. Kanowna grew into a very promising place and provided work for a large number of men. I suppose there were not many fields where more alluvial gold was found than at Kanowna, certainly no others in Western Australia. Now, however, the town has gone to pieces, the gold has cut out and all incentive for people to continue prospecting is gone. I passed through Kanowna in April last and was amazed to find what a change had taken place. I have some very happy recollections of Kanowna. I was frequently in the town during its prosperous days, and I am sorry it has so declined that the railway is to be pulled up. I hope the Minister has satisfied himself that there is no chance of any industry other than gold mining being likely to warrant the retention of the line. Certainly there is no justification for keeping the line for the mining industry. The White Hope section would not be considered a railway line in the ordinary acceptance of the term. It is purely and simply a woodline on which the weight of rails varies. I was rather anxious about the line three or four years ago when the idea of pulling it up was first mooted,

because we then had great expectations of White Hope. Judging from the Minister's speech, however, there is no justification for retaining it. No matter how parochial one may be or how sorry one may feel about the decline of those mining centres, the Minister's speech has shown the necessity for the Bill. The piling up of the Bunbury racecourse line calls for little comment because it has a length of only one mile 36 chains, and in these days of motor transport it would not be seriously considered anywhere. The leader of the Opposition stated that it might be used for conveying stock from Bunbury to the Show. No one would entrain stock for a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles unless it was crippled and unable to walk. To put it into a railway truck would do more harm than to walk it the $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. If stock were carried from outside centres to Bunbury, the line might be useful to run the trucks straight through to the showground. The receipts from the line, however, show that the traffic has been so small that the retention of the railway is no longer warranted. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1927-28.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Lathey in the Chair.

Department of Public Works and Labour
(Hon. A. McCallum, Minister).

Vote—Public Works and Buildings,
£111,262:

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [5.37]: There is not much to be said on the Public Works Estimates as regards revenue expenditure. The big activities are undertaken with loan funds, and it is when the Loan Estimates are before us that the principal discussion takes place.

Hon. G. Taylor: This vote deals mainly with salaries and wages.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The figures relating to expenditure on

works and services last year are as follows:—

Source.	Voted.	Expended.
	£	£
Loan	1,569,146	1,231,038
Property Trust Account ...	89,953	69,087
Revenue	101,232	88,971

The expenditure was distributed as follows:—

—	Loan.	Govt. Property Trust Account.	Revenue.
	£	£	£
Salaries	60,044	7,974	28,528
Incidentals	10,388	1,104	8,967
Railways	328,558	...	2,225
Harbours and rivers	178,552	6,135	7,617
Water supply and sewerage	114,627	...	...
Development of goldfields	726	...	...
Development of agriculture (including abattoirs)	5,710	...	...
Roads and drainage (group settlement, etc.) ...	205,690	...	...
Roads and bridges generally	172,386	8,820	35,673
Public buildings ...	126,421	46,049	33,299
Trading concerns (capital expenditure only) ...	10,289	...	...
Miscellaneous ... ..	...	5	...

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did you spend £386,000 on roads out of loan last year?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: We spent £172,386 on roads and bridges generally and £205,690 on the groups. Under the heading "salaries," although only £88,591 was voted, £93,220 was expended. For the first time for many years, in consequence of money being made available under the migration agreement, the department were in a position to have three railway works under construction at the same time. The Norseman-Salmon Gums line was nearly completed before the 30th June and has since been handed over to the Working Railways; the Albany-Denmark extension was under construction throughout the year, the Ejanding railway was put in hand towards the close of the financial year, and the relaying and reconditioning of the Jarnadup-Pemberton line was com-

pleted. Fair progress was made in carrying out belated repairs and maintenance works to public buildings generally, the amount so expended, including minor additions from revenue and property trust account, having been £79,348. In addition to the money which had to be found by the State under the Federal aid roads agreement no less than £179,428 was expended on other roads and bridges as follows:—

Loan	£151,677
Trust Account	£8,820
Revenue	£18,931

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What was the total expended on roads?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member adds that amount to the previous total, he will have the aggregate. The estimated amount required for salaries this year—£105,338—exceeds last year's expenditure by £12,111. This is largely due to the fact that a number of professional men were engaged and served for only a portion of the year while in these Estimates the full year's salary has been provided. Owing to additional activities by the department, a number of draftsmen have been engaged and others will be arriving from New Zealand and South Australia during the next few weeks. We have scoured the Commonwealth for draftsmen in order to keep our work up to date, but it has not been possible to get all we required and we have had to get others from South Africa and New Zealand.

Mr. Mann: From South Africa or from South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have some from South Africa, but those who are to arrive shortly will be from South Australia and New Zealand.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Are you appointing any cadets?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, all we can get. We have made arrangements with the University authorities to get all the young engineers they have. We take them for a period, train them and give them experience in the field, and we undertake to employ them for a period after they have graduated at the University.

Hon. G. Taylor: How many draftsmen did you need?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From 15 to 20. The whole of the salary requirements are set out in the Revenue Estimates

and then apportioned under various headings; for instance, to Loan £60,028, to sale of Government Property Trust Account £6,000, to goldfields water supply £15,000, to hydraulic undertakings including drainage works £11,500, and credit is taken for services rendered for the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, the Fremantle Harbour Trust, the trading concerns and the Main Roads Board, the total credits being £6,810. Thus the estimated expenditure on salaries chargeable to public works and buildings, totalling £108,015, is £6,000. It will be realised from the figures quoted that the activities of the department, so far as revenue is concerned, are not great when comparison is made with the works carried out from Loan Funds. Generally speaking, the revenue expenditure is confined to the maintenance of jetties and other harbour works, public buildings generally, subsidies to road boards estimated to total £22,000, and the contributions from revenue that the State is authorised to make under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement—£36,000, the other services provided for being contribution towards the insurance fund, namely, 1s. per cent. per annum, rents for buildings leased mainly for school purposes, incidentals, maintenance of electric light, etc., and direct expenses of railways when under construction. The actual revenue received last year was £30,306, made up as follows:—

	£
Rent ex lands	10,213
Reimbursements in aid	5,047
Drivers' licenses and plates	11,672
Traffic receipts, railways	1,636
Sundries	1,738
Total	£30,306

The estimated expenditure for this year is £23,000, as follows:—

	£
Rent ex lands	10,000
Reimbursements in aid	6,000
Traffic receipts, railways	1,500
Tent hire	1,400
Sundries	4,100
Total	£23,000

The revenue from motor drivers' licenses and plates, now credited to the police revenue, is estimated at £12,000. Of course, that makes no difference to the Treasurer.

Mr. Lindsay: Is there to be any alteration in the allocation of fees?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Lindsay: The road boards and municipalities will not get them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The license fees go to the local bodies. The fees derived under the Traffic Act go to the police revenue. In connection with the labour section of the department, the total amount voted last year was £2,600, and the expenditure totalled £3,239. The estimate for this year is £2,762. Last year's expenditure was swollen by an amount of £501, in connection with the basic wage inquiry, and also on account of the large number of cases taken to the court, necessitating heavy expenditure on reporting. We do not anticipate a repetition of that in the coming year. Regarding factories, the vote last year was £5,600, and there was expended £5,068. The estimate for this year is £7,639. The additional expenditure will occur by the appointment of two inspectors under the Timber Regulations Act, one extra inspector under the Scaffolding Act, and grade increments. These items will be responsible for £1,958. Then there is provision for incidentals and travelling expenses of the inspectors—£503. The purchase of a motor cycle involving £110 brings the total to £2,571. The total estimated revenue under the heading of Labour is £250 from the Arbitration Court and £4,350 from Factories, a total of £4,600 as compared with £4,358 collected last year. I have given the Committee a brief summary of the expenditure incurred last year, and the anticipated expenditure for this year. The main activities of the department can be referred to when the Loan Estimates are under discussion. There will then be greater scope for explanations.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.53]: This is the time to have the discussion and not when we reach the Loan Estimates, because then we shall be told that there are no items. The Minister read from notes that were so full that he might have had them printed and distributed amongst us. We are simply staggered at the knowledge that we spent nearly three-quarters of a million of money on roads last year. We admit that there has been a considerable improvement to the roads, but at the same time it is an enormous sum of money to spend, and we cannot go on spending it at that rate year in, year out. Neither can the local authorities maintain the roads as will be expected of them, that is, those roads that

are being constructed under the Federal agreement. It is an extraordinary expenditure, but the Minister has been quite frank about it. He is always frank—it is his only merit. In all the work that is being carried out, he wants to see that he gets value for the money that is being spent, and his job is to employ engineers who will give value. It is easy to get engineers to design a work, but it is sometimes another matter to get them to carry it out. I hope that the Minister will be able to tell us that we have done well. I object to announcements of policy being made by the Engineer-in-Chief. Policy announcements should always be made by the Government. Last year, just before the House adjourned, when we had considered the construction of a railway in a southern part of the State, the Minister came along with a statement by the Engineer-in-Chief that we were to have a line built from Fremantle right away to Salmon Gums. That staggered us. The wishes of this House are set aside and it looks as if they did not count. It is customary for a Minister to say, "These are our proposals; they are what we approve and here is the report of the Engineer-in-Chief; we have gone into it and we recommend the construction." That is the correct pronouncement to make. But the Minister for Works does not make it. No. He takes a back seat and Mr. Stileman's report is handed over for publication.

The CHAIRMAN: The matter being discussed by the hon. member is not included in these Estimates.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Engineer-in-Chief's salary is on these Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: We cannot discuss railways under this vote.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They were discussed by the Minister and a report was read by the Minister. If we are not allowed free discussion now, when we come to Mr. Stileman's item we can talk about what he has done and it will take up a lot of time. With all due respect, I say we can discuss these matters now.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow a discussion on railways that should properly be discussed when the Loan Estimates are before the House.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then we shall discuss Mr. Stileman, because he will not figure on the Loan Estimates. We pay him to do the work that is necessary in connection with harbour construction. He has investigated the Fremantle harbour question

and has produced a report. That is his work and I do not know that we should not increase his salary, or perhaps reduce it. We have read his report and examined his maps, which are pretty. I daresay his report is clever. He has certainly put it up well. I have said that we want value for our money, but at the same time we want due economy in the administration of the affairs of government. The Minister must take the responsibility; we do not want to be told what are the proposals of the officials, no matter how good or how experienced those officials may be. Whenever an announcement is made it must have the backing of the Minister. I can understand the Minister for Works taking Mr. Stileman with him when he proposes to discuss a subject with a body of men, and especially would he do this if he desired to create a good impression. Mr. Stileman would go to Fremantle to discuss his report on the Fremantle harbour and the Minister would take a back seat. I have no doubt the Minister would say, "I have come here as the Minister responsible to you for the carrying out of the work, but I am not capable of putting up the case to you, even in a general way, and so I produce my official, who will tell you what I am not able to say." The affairs of the country cannot be carried on in this way. The Salmon Gums railway is to be carried out under the migration agreement. The expanding Northwards railway will also be constructed under the agreement. I would like to know from the Minister if these areas are to be served with roads to be built with migration money. Then with regard to the water supply that the Minister controls: is money to be taken from under the migration agreement for this purpose as well? It is not right that we should debit to group settlement all the money that we are spending on railways.

The Minister for Works: Don't talk nonsense.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I say that probably this is being done.

The Minister for Works: I say it is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know any better because I have not been told by the Minister. How are all these things charged up? Will the Minister say that all the roads that are being constructed with migration money are in the South-West? Why does not the Minister tell us whether that is so or not?

The Minister for Works: Go on.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Go on yourself.

The Premier: You are talking a lot of nonsense.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not.

The Premier: I tell you, you are. You can go on talking it, and you will get plenty of it back.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am perfectly willing to have it back.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We are discussing the Public Works Estimates.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier must behave himself.

The Premier: You are talking a lot of nonsense.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not. The Premier's nonsense appals us at times. Why cannot we be told frankly where this money is coming from? The Minister said it was from the migration agreement. It is the first time we have heard it. If this money is being used for this purpose, why is it not made clear? The Premier, when delivering his Budget speech the other day, outlined the expenditure from loan money. He told us just what had been spent in various ways, but he did not tell us this railway was built from these funds. He simply gave us the total amount spent. We want to know from the Minister how this money has been obtained and where it is charged, and what it is intended to do with this railway. We know it was intended to settle the disabled miners; but that has been changed and it is now to go into another district. Respecting the vast expenditure of the department referred to by the Minister, I should like to know where the money has been taken from. He has had to find the 15s. for every pound contributed by the Commonwealth towards the construction of the roads, and I suppose the £179,428 he referred to is our contribution towards main road construction. I think the Minister said it was. We have not used the whole of the money provided under the Federal agreement. Something has been said about the main roads, and the Minister has declared in public that we are not obliged to call for tenders before constructing a main road. I believe a great deal of expenditure has been held up by the Federal engineers because some of our roads were constructed by day labour. I should like to know from the Minister if that has been settled, and what amount of money is in question. It has been dragging on for a long time now.

Mr. Griffiths: The newspaper said it was £60,000.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably that means that £35,000 from the Commonwealth is in doubt. I should like to know from the Minister if the Federal Government have paid. I think the Minister should obey the agreement he signed. However, if the circumstances were such as to demand that the work should be done quickly, then so long as it was done economically, I do not see why the Federal Government should not pay their share. By the way, I think there are in this arrangement too many provisions against the State. It is provided that the work must be done by contract unless the Federal Minister agrees that it would be better done by day labour. When we come to the items, the Minister I hope will tell us just how much the State has had to pay of the amount that would have been contributed by the Federal Government had the agreement been observed. I have said and I repeat that we want value for the money we spend. Under the Federal roads agreement maintenance is a charge against the State, whereas under our Act it is a charge against the local authority. The Minister has extraordinary powers to compel the local authority to maintain the roads. So it is essential that we should have the construction work well and economically done. Otherwise all this money will prove a scourge instead of a blessing; for maintenance for 20 years could easily be far more costly than the original construction. Some of the roads are certainly very good. I suppose the engineers and their men have profited by their earlier experiences and so are showing better results. I should like to know that we are going to have a fairly active policy of railway construction, since according to the Minister the land adjacent to our railways is for the most part already taken up. If we allow for 3,000 miles of railway, apart from the goldfields lines, within a width of 25 miles we have served 48,100,000 acres and sold 32,000,000 acres. So we have some 16,100,000 acres left. Then there is the loss due to railway junctions, representing perhaps 5,600,000 acres. Altogether if we allow for timber lands in reserve, and water areas, probably we have not more than 7,000,000 acres of land remaining. It would be a fine thing if we could construct railways fairly quickly so that the present demand for land might be met. An aggregate length of 500 miles of new railways would open up within a 25-mile radius some 8,000,000 acres of land. The demand for land is very brisk

just now, and so I hope the Minister, when the Loan Estimates come along, will keep in mind the desirability of building further railways. I understand he has now a sufficient staff of men to make the surveys if necessary; and if he is going to import draftsmen from South Africa and elsewhere, he ought soon to have a sufficient number of those experts. We have authorised the building of about 500 miles of railway, and it would be well if the construction of those lines could be entered upon at a fairly early date. The trouble is that we dropped the system of spur lines some years ago in favour of looping up. It was thought we could not take our railway system much further east, because of the rainfall, and so at the earnest request of the Railway Department the spur line system was abandoned. But we are now finding that when we set out continuous lines we lose 10 miles of effective railway every time we make a start. So there are in the agricultural districts at least 350 miles of railway that is not effective.

The Minister for Railways: Quite right.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think it is 400 miles, really. Starting from the port of Bunbury, the port of Geraldton and other ports, of course, the land along the first 10 miles of the railway is already served.

The Minister for Railways: Round about Merredin there are five lines.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, and the same applies to each of them. It applies wherever there is a junction. Lines are being provided to link up earlier lines, and so we get, not 100 miles of effective railway, but only 80 miles or even less. There is at present a keen demand for land, and I hope we shall be able to build railways to open up country upon which to settle people anxious to go on the land and develop it. Our own people here ought to have it. There are all the miners whom we want to settle. Then there are the people coming from the East with money. If we really want to increase production, it can only be done by the building of further railways. If I am right in saying that there is remaining not more than 7,000,000 acres of land, apart from timber reserves, the position demands that we should do something. We cannot go on selling without exhausting our supply. It will not be long before we shall have settled all the good land in the wheat belt. I sincerely hope it will not be long. After we once

started it was not long before we had sold enormous areas in conditional purchase blocks. Like the Minister's Kanowna gold, which could not be taken out twice, our land cannot be sold twice. In 1909-10 there were 5,400 applications for land approved. In 1921-22 there were 3,625; in 1922-23 there were 2,997; in 1923-24 there were 2,899; in 1924-25 there were 2,406; in 1925-26 there were 2,579 and in 1926-27 there were 2,455. So we are rapidly exhausting all the available land; land already served by railways. It is a serious matter, and one to which we shall have to give serious attention. Of course I am well aware that some people think we ought to hesitate about constructing further railways. It was because of opposition, not in this House, but outside, that I worked out those figures.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The only increase due to main roads contributions is £36,000. Last year the amount was £16,000. This £36,000 could be provided from revenue, and the other part of our contributions from loan funds. The Federal Government contribute to Western Australia under this scheme on a different basis from any other scheme in which population is the factor. Because of our population we get more than we would be entitled to if cognisance were taken only of the numbers of our people. We have to borrow money. There is no help for it. Although we get money from the Federal Government, they are able to impose indirect taxation, which in this State goes a long way towards covering the contributions. We get more than we would get if the distribution were made on the population basis. Even in this State the contributions collected by the Federal Government must be very considerable. The Minister will find that we imported over £1,300,000 worth of oil, mostly petrol, last year, all of which is subject to taxation. The amount collected in that way must go a long way towards meeting the Federal part of this scheme. One always envies the ease with which the Federal Government can raise revenue. When the agreement was suggested we thought the money would come from revenue without any further taxation being imposed upon the people. It would be interesting to know

from the Minister what proportion of the grant is collected in Western Australia. The sooner we awaken to the fact that whatever we get from the Federal Government the people have to pay for, the better will it be. We are hampered by conditions because of these grants. Not only does this limit our freedom of operations, but it imposes an additional burden in the carrying out of our works. Of course we are dealing with people who are 2,000 miles away. In carrying out a multiplicity of comparatively small works, as in the case of our roads, there must be trouble in dealing with people so far removed from us. The Minister will now have to attend conferences at Canberra. He cannot go there more than once a year, and has a small chance of discussing these many matters dealing with road making with the Federal authority. Apparently they exercise a control which must add to the cost of carrying out the work. The Minister said that trouble was encountered because of that position and that delay resulted. After a year or two we should find that the expenditure has resulted in the construction of many miles of first class roads. The Minister will have to take into consideration the upkeep of these thoroughfares. Not only is traffic becoming greater day by day, but the vehicles are becoming heavier, and because the roads are improving the rate of speed is increasing. The Minister has been perfectly frank in telling members about the works under his control. For the most part they are the same as those that existed when the department was under the control of the previous Minister for Works, but the present Minister's responsibilities have been added to in certain directions.

[Mr. Lambert took the Chair.]

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [7.35]: The Minister for Works has informed us that the Public Works Department last year created a new record when it had three railways under construction at the one time. That is a very creditable performance, and I can realise that the Minister must take some pride in it. The Minister stated that last year the department had under construction the Denmark-Nornalup extension, the Ejanding Northwards railway and the Salmon Gums-Norseman railway. That was very satisfactory. He also

referred to the fact that the Salmon Gums railway had been completed and opened for traffic. I have not, however, heard of any new railway having been started since then. Whereas last year three railways were under construction at the one time, this year only two are under construction.

Mr. Marshall: Has the Yarramony-Eastward railway been started?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: On the contrary, I have to complain that such an important public work is still held in abeyance. Whilst a noteworthy record has been achieved by the Minister's department, I should like to know why that rate of progress has not been maintained. Why has no other railway been started since the Esperance line was completed? Why was not the plant removed from the Salmon Gums railway to enable one of the other important works that are authorised to be put in hand? There is plenty of migration money available at present.

The Minister for Works: Is there?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: According to the Federal member (Mr. Mann) this State is in a very fortunate position. We appear to be getting four-fifths of the migration money, which has so far been allotted to the different States. I do not know whether Mr. Mann's figures, as published in the Press, are correct, but they have been given wide publicity.

The Premier: They may only have indicated that the other States were doing very little.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The figures showed that we are receiving a large amount of migration money.

The Minister for Works: I give you my word that every work that has been approved under the migration agreement is in full swing.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: My complaint is that whereas the Government had three railways under construction at one time last year, they have only two under construction now. There is a long list of authorised railways, several of which are in the wheat districts, where we are getting big crops this year. It would be a great relief to settlers in the Yarramony, Yourakine and Lake Brown-Bullfinch districts if these railways were started. Receiving depots could then be put in, and the settlers would be able to cart their wheat to dumps at the sidings that would be built. There is every need to go ahead with these

works. The Brookton-Dale railway was authorised four or five years ago, and the settlers are most anxious that it should be proceeded with. Three railways have been authorised in the South-West, namely, the Pemberton-Northcliffe, the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook and the Manjimup to Mt. Barker lines. With all the demand there is for land, the big prospects there are before the wheat areas, and with all the migration money that is available, it is very important that the Government should get on with these works.

The Premier: We got on with the business last year to the extent of £4,100,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Last year three railways were under construction, but this year there are only two. Why has not that rate of progress been maintained? The settlers in the districts I have referred to, badly need their railways. Apart from the two lines under construction, there are these others that have been authorised. The Government should have set about building them as quickly as possible. Then there is the railway for the Kalgarin district. I hope a Bill for the construction of that line will be brought forward during the present session.

The Premier: There is no vote on the Estimates for that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I hope it will appear on the Loan Estimates. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the Engineer-in-Chief (Mr. Stileman). Lately I read some correspondence in a metropolitan weekly paper concerning the route of the Ejanging line.

The Minister for Works: That line is not on the Estimates.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: On the Estimates I can refer to the manner in which the Engineer-in-Chief is carrying out his duties. That officer is supervising the survey of a line authorised by this House along a given route. It was stated in the metropolitan newspaper to which I have referred that although the Bill passed by this House fixed the route with a line of demarcation of only five miles, the Engineer-in-Chief instructed his officers to go outside that line of demarcation.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is out of order in dealing with that matter.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am entirely in order.

The CHAIRMAN: That is for me to say. I do not think the hon. member is in order.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: If I am not in order, then I am thankful I have the right to appeal against your decision.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not catch the hon. member's remark.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The Engineer-in-Chief is in charge of the survey of the railway routes in this country. Parliament fixed a certain route for this railway.

The Minister for Works: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is referring to the Ejangding Northwards railway.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am referring to the manner in which the Engineer-in-Chief is carrying out his duties.

The Minister for Works: That railway is the subject matter of a motion that appears on the Notice Paper. I submit that the hon. member cannot anticipate the subject matter of a motion, of which notice has been given. Furthermore, there is no item on the Estimates dealing with the railway question. On both points, I submit, the hon. member is out of order.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Before you give your decision, Sir, I wish to point out that the notice of motion on the Notice Paper merely asks for certain papers. In regard to the second point, the question of the railway need not necessarily enter into the argument. I am criticising Mr. Stileman's action in instructing a railway to be surveyed on a route outside the limits of the Parliamentary authorisation. On both those points, I submit, my remarks are entirely in order.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing a notice of motion on the Notice Paper, nor in discussing a question of routes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I quite agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that if I discussed something on the Notice Paper I would not be in order. But I was discussing something different from the notice of motion on the Notice Paper; I was discussing Mr. Stileman's action in instructing the surveyors to survey a route of a railway which is now under construction; and that is where the danger comes in, because the railway is being built.

The Premier: This is distinctly out of order. The hon. member is discussing railway routes on these Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: What railway is the hon. member discussing?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am discussing particular railways well known to the Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: But I desire to know which.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: A railway now under construction in the State. Whilst the route is being surveyed—

The Premier: That has nothing to do with these Estimates.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am discussing the action of the Engineer-in-Chief in putting himself above Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not wish to curb discussion, but I think the hon. member knows full well that he is not in order in discussing a particular railway, and I ask him to refrain from doing so.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Am I in order in discussing the conduct of an official whose salary is on these Estimates?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is what I wish to do.

The CHAIRMAN: It just depends on how far the hon. member goes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am discussing the action of an official in instructing his subordinate officers to survey a railway outside the limits of authorisation of the railway by this House.

The CHAIRMAN: Now the hon. member is discussing routes.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No, Sir; not routes. For the moment I am not saying which is the better route. What I do contend is that the route has been decided by Parliament, and that if the official in question attempts to override the decision of Parliament he is doing something that is entirely wrong and for which the responsible Minister should bring him to book. I regard the Engineer-in-Chief as a highly qualified professional man, but I do not think he should be permitted to override the decisions of the Railway Advisory Board or the routes fixed, with certain limitations, by the Parliament of Western Australia. Now I wish to say a few words regarding the obsolete public buildings in the town of Narrogin, and I want to know whether the Government have any policy to supply proper public buildings in outside distributing centres. In Narrogin there is not one public building occupied for the purpose for which it was originally constructed. The courthouse is an old building that was the first agricultural hall erected in Narrogin. It has been used as an office, and to-day it is the courthouse. It is situated upon a noisy corner, and magis-

trates continually complain of the noise to which they are subjected when hearing cases.

Mr. Marshall: How long has that been going on?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: For a number of years.

Mr. Marshall: Then it is about time Narrogin changed its Parliamentary representative.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: That is a matter of opinion. The business of the Agricultural Bank is conducted in a building which was originally the first school of the town. The building was condemned for school purposes about 20 years ago. The local office of the Lands Department is in a building that was the first schoolmaster's residence, and as such was condemned about 20 years ago. It is dark, damp, and unhealthy. The district police inspector has his headquarters at Narrogin in a building originally erected for police quarters—a little low cottage. All these buildings should be condemned, and the Government should follow the example set by private enterprise in that centre and build modern, up to date offices.

Mr. Marshall: If your description of the public buildings at Narrogin is correct, the local health authorities should condemn them.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Only last week the A.M.P. Society opened in Narrogin a block of two-storey buildings, modern and up to date, such as would adorn any part of the capital. The town council are building new offices and an extension of the town hall. I ask the Government to do something to better the collection of secondhand rat-traps in which to-day the public services are carried on at Narrogin. I hope the Government will erect adequate and up to date buildings similar to the buildings put up by private enterprise. Look at the great faith Sir John Forrest had in the outside districts of Western Australia in days gone by. Look at the splendid public buildings he erected in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, and quite properly; they have served their purpose admirably. I ask the Government, and the Minister for Works in particular, to follow that example not only in Narrogin but in many other important country centres.

The Premier: If it comes to a choice between buildings and railways, what course would you advise us to take?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Railways are the first consideration every time. On behalf of the man on the land, let railways be built first every time. But let us not lag behind in the

matter of public buildings. The question of proper offices for public servants in country districts must not be overlooked. It demands early attention.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.55]: I wish to offer a few words on the operations of the Main Roads Board. No doubt the board have grave difficulties to overcome, but it is a fact that a good deal of dissatisfaction exists with regard to their work. Recently a circular letter was sent to road boards throughout the State mentioning that funds for maintenance work could not be provided by the Main Roads Board. Further, deputations have been informed that damage to roads as the result of heavy cartage carried on by the Main Roads Board could not be repaired, no funds being available for that purpose under the Federal scheme. I believe that in many districts roads which have been constructed, and constructed reasonably well for light traffic, have been reduced to a state of grave disrepair by the cartage of heavy material for the construction of roads either by the Main Roads Board or by contractors under them. This is not one special instance: complaints are general in the outer suburban area as well as, I believe, in the metropolitan area. I have no desire to trespass on the district represented by the member for Canning, but I know that there the position is acute and that the dissatisfaction felt by the local authorities is keen. I claim that if a road is constructed by the Main Roads Board or any other authority to stand up to heavy traffic, it must have either a tar-dressed surface or a surface dressed with a more expensive material. Unfortunately the Main Roads Board's specifications do not include this dressing, and we have been informed that as such has not been provided, such is not possible—I think that statement was made by the Minister. I am hopeful that the hon. gentleman may obtain a variation of that condition, because it is very wasteful to construct roads and leave them with merely a gravel surface, since in the course of a few months series of corrugations, ruts and potholes appear, and the road speedily becomes, comparatively speaking, unfit for use. An instance in point is the Welshpool-road in the Canning district, a work carried out by the old Roads and Bridges Department, but nevertheless through the operation of the Federal roads aid scheme. Already that section is in a bad state. I claim that if in addition to the work done that section had been tar-

dressed, it would be in good condition to-day. It would pay far better to reduce the distance constructed than to increase the distance by means of ineffective work. The Main Roads Board, as I have said, are not allowed funds, or have no funds, for repairs to be effected to damage actually caused by the operations of that body. That is a serious position, and one which I hope can be amended. It would be a pity if every road in the metropolitan area and the outer suburban area were to be closed against traffic; but the local authorities must have support from the Main Roads Board in respect of such repairs, or alternatively, the only course will be to limit the weight of load to be carried on roads that are liable to be damaged. Perhaps a further alternative would be to let the roads get into such a condition of disrepair as to render their use impracticable. I do not want to refer to different road boards, but as the Minister is about to leave for the East I express the hope that while there he will urge, and urge successfully, a variation of conditions with respect to utilisation of funds provided under the Federal scheme. There is another question which I have brought under the notice of the Minister, and I am hopeful that before long it will be possible for him to make a statement with regard to it. It is in respect of the removal of road-making material from properties for the purpose of constructing developmental or main roads. Under the Roads Act of 1919 it is competent to take road-making material for the construction of roads that abut on property from which the material is taken, but under the Land Act and the Public Works Act, it is competent for the Government to go on to any property and take therefrom material, including timber, for the purpose of road construction. That is permitted irrespective of whether the material so taken is to be used on the road that abuts on the property from which it is taken. I have particulars of an instance—I will not read the letter to the Committee—in which not only did those working for the Main Roads Board go upon a property and take material, but they cut the fence in several places and actually burnt the rails and posts from the property. I trust that any dereliction of duty or excess of zeal such as I have indicated will receive strict and careful investigation. I wish the Minister would advise the Committee as to whether it is intended to take advantage of the Public Works Act or the Lands Act in respect of employees of the Main Roads Board being

permitted to go on properties in order to take material for road-making purposes, or whether it is intended that the Main Roads Board shall be content with the powers vested in them under the legislation that enabled the board to be established. Personally, I think the latter course should be adopted. It was never intended that the Public Works Act or the Land Act should be used for the purposes I have indicated. In one particular instance in the Armadale district a carter working for the Main Roads Board removed a good deal of stone from a property. It has to be remembered that some of the land has a very limited value which is determined by the quantity of stone and timber on the blocks. It is not equitable that this material should be taken unless compensation is paid to the property owners. I believe that if a case were taken to the court there would be a verdict in favour of the person appealing for compensation, from the standpoint of equity alone. I cannot say whether he would be able to succeed from a strictly legal standpoint. I hesitate to believe that any Government would be guilty of taking advantage of a section of any Act or of any regulation, if it was never intended that those provisions should be used for the purposes I have indicated. I realise the difficulties which the Main Roads Board have to face, but there is grave dissatisfaction respecting the work of the board. I am hopeful that following on the visit of the Minister for Works to Melbourne there will be such a change in policy that it will be possible not only to assure fair treatment being meted out to those from whose property material is taken but that roads damaged by those working for the Main Roads Board will be put in order again, and that in addition the local authorities will be more sympathetically dealt with than is the case now. I say that with the knowledge that under the Act governing the Federal aid roads grant, it is not competent for the Main Roads Board to repair roads so damaged. That state of affairs should be remedied at the earliest possible moment.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [8.5]: There are one or two points that I wish to raise. The first is the recent decision of the Supreme Court in a case concerning a constituent of mine. I make no apology for referring to that particular case, because it illustrates a serious defect in our present laws. I refer to the case in which Mr

Justice Northmore granted an injunction against the firm of Saunders & Stuart preventing them from continuing the use of certain automatic riveters necessary for the business. The "West Australian" had a sub-leader on the subject the other day, and I wish to emphasise the lessons to be gained from the litigation. What happened was that the firm established a foundry, or steel manufacturing works, not far from the railway on the northern side of the line. A necessary part of the machinery installed comprised the automatic riveters. Those machines make an extremely unpleasant noise when being operated, a noise that renders the lives of the people in the immediate vicinity uncomfortable. In particular they make the work of teaching at St. Brigid's Convent School practically impossible. At any rate, those concerned convinced the learned judge that that was the position, and they secured the injunction that was applied for. The result is that the enterprise of Saunders & Stuart has been wiped out, or, at any rate, has been seriously hampered. If they are to carry on business the firm must find a block of land elsewhere, and then having shifted all their plant, they will have no certainty that the same thing will not happen again.

The Premier: Someone else may complain.

Mr. DAVY: Saunders & Stuart represent only one of other enterprises of a somewhat similar description in the vicinity of the site concerning which the litigation arose. I suggest the time is long past when our legislation should allow this serious conflict of interests between the rights of landowners or occupiers to enjoy the use of their property for residential purposes, and the interests of those who establish new industries in this State, and such conflict should be prevented. This problem works itself out over a long period of time in any country. There are no laws dealing with the situation in England, of which I am aware, but there it has solved itself because over a long period of years certain areas have been recognised as manufacturing centres. Noises have been made there for so long that the people cannot complain. Unless the legislature takes action, we shall have a period during which people will not know where they are. I understand there is on the stocks a town planning Bill. I am sure that if the Minister for Works brings it forward this session, there will be an enormous amount of argument about it, and the Bill will probably be referred to a select com-

mittee or a Royal Commission to be dealt with. It will be a complicated and difficult matter to understand, and such a measure is certainly not one that we should embark upon in great haste. I submit to the Minister for Works, who is charged, if any Minister is, with the duty of supervising local government matters, that it is most urgent that power should be conferred on local authorities, or some other body, to determine in what areas in the metropolis and elsewhere persons may with safety carry on manufacturing operations without the fear of being hampered after they have made a start, because the undertakings interfere with private citizens. It seems to me that it is a matter of great importance and urgency. Another matter I would like to mention refers to the communication between two portions of my constituency divided at present by the railway line. That is not a question peculiar to West Perth. It is shared by practically every other metropolitan constituency.

The Premier: But more particularly by East Perth and West Perth.

Mr. DAVY: Yes. The city proper has a good few means of communication across the railway. Subiaco itself is not concerned, but Subiaco and Leederville combined are interested. West Perth is concerned from the Milligan-street crossing to the Thomas-street bridge. There is a terrible death-trap—I do not want to use extravagant language—in the subway just west of the West Perth railway station. I do not know that anyone has been killed there, but the subway is so obviously dangerous that everyone is particularly careful when going through.

Mr. Mann: It is far too narrow.

Mr. DAVY: It is perfectly ridiculous to have such a means of communication between two sides of the line. The exit on each side is towards a dead end. A person who wishes to pass under the subway has to turn sharply to the right; and when he has proceeded through, he has again to turn sharply to the left or the right. As I have already said, the subway is very dangerous and it is a wonder no one has been hurt.

Hon. G. Taylor: Everyone has to be careful there and that makes it safe.

Mr. DAVY: Recently the "West Australian" published a map of the city in which the dangerous parts of the metropolis were indicated in black. Those places are so obviously dangerous that no one is hurt there. It is the conceivably safe places

that cause accidents, places that look safe but are not. Here again I am prompted to refer to the proposals of the Town Planning Association and the possibility of legislation being introduced to enable those proposals to be carried out. It is obviously absurd that such an important main road as Charles-street should be brought down to the railway and then be diverted down a narrow back street to dive under the subway.

Mr. Mann: The original plan for the city markets made provision for a bridge joining up with George-street.

Mr. DAVY: If we cannot have town planning straight away, let us go to work piecemeal and do something to get away from such absurd things as the Milligan-street crossing. I cannot speak of the position regarding the last month or two, but on two occasions before that the gates were closed on Sundays and no notice was posted up notifying the public that the gates were closed.

The Premier: But the gates are open occasionally for traffic on week days!

Mr. DAVY: Just so. It is a poor thing, too, because, having crossed it and got on to the north side of the railway, a driver is able to go only a little way before running into a square, and it is then necessary to turn again either to the left or the right.

The Premier: Generally to the right.

Mr. DAVY: That depends upon the habits of the driver. If it is a hot day and he is not a total abstainer, he probably turns to the right and drops into the excellent caravanserie that is just outside my electorate. This matter needs the urgent attention of the Minister. He should arrange for some easy and expeditious method of getting over that barrier between the north and south sides. I would not presume to suggest a proper solution, but it has occurred to me that in view of the great importance of Charles-street and its extension northwards—I believe the Government have been responsible for building a magnificent road from the continuation of Charles-street to Wanneroo—some quick way over the railway should be provided. There is one other matter that at first sight may appear to be more appropriate on the Education Estimates and that is the Thomas-street school. It is not in my constituency, but it serves my constituency just as much as it serves Subiaco. Complaints have been made to

me and to the member for Subiaco of the bad and even dilapidated state of the school equipment, including fences, trees, etc. I understand the matter was in the hands of the Education Department and has now been taken in hand by the Works Department. I am repeating what has been told me; I am not speaking of my own knowledge. I ask the Minister to look into the matter and if that which should have been done has not been done, I beg him to expedite the work. Thomas-street school is a large and most important school. The Premier on one occasion did me the honour of accompanying me there to see a demonstration, and I think he enjoyed it thoroughly.

The Premier: It is one of the most important schools in the city.

Mr. DAVY: Some time ago I preferred a request to have the grounds put in order, but was told that the cost would be prohibitive. I urge the Minister to have the playground, buildings and accessories put into the best possible condition at the earliest possible date. I regret that I have dealt more or less with parochial matters, but they are of importance and I make no apology for having brought them up.

[Mr. Angelo took the Chair.]

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [8.18]: I wish to remind the Minister for Works that some time ago I introduced to him a deputation on the question of the Toodyay-road. The Minister has not yet given me a reply. I impress upon him the seriousness of the question.

The Minister for Works: Did I not give you a reply at the time?

Mr. LINDSAY: No, the Minister took a note of the request and promised to forward a reply later on. I made a suggestion to the Minister—one that had been made 18 months before—that it might be possible to divert some of the traffic fees for the benefit of the portion of Toodyay-road in question. I also told him that as the Perth-Northam-road was being constructed and a great deal of traffic was being diverted to the Toodyay-road, some compensation might be paid to the local governing bodies responsible for the upkeep of the Toodyay-road. The unfortunate position is that although my constituents at the west end blame me for not having got the road repaired, a very small portion of the thoroughfare is in my electorate. The members for Guildford and

Swan are as much responsible for it as I am, but evidently their constituents are not worrying them as mine are worrying me. The greater portion of the road traverses country where nobody lives. It is only the people towards the Toodyay end that want it. When we remember that the Toodyay-road is one of the oldest in the State, it having been built by the convicts in the early days, and that it has a very fine foundation, something should be done to keep it in repair. The portion in my district has been kept in repair by the road board and they are prepared to continue keeping it in repair, but it is the portion within the Greenmount district, and I think, the Swan district, that has been out of repair so long. Toodyay is a very old town that is used by quite a number of people for a week-end pleasure resort, and I have been informed that the business of Toodyay has declined considerably because of the bad condition of the road. It is very rough and people will not use it. There is another matter with which I intended to deal, but I am not sure whether I may do so. It appears I have made a mistake by putting a certain motion on the notice paper. Through having done so, I understand I am not permitted to discuss the matter at this stage. Still, in so far as it relates to the action of the Engineer-in-Chief, I think I am in order in dealing with it on these Estimates. That is my opinion, anyhow.

The Premier: Under the Standing Orders you are not entitled to deal with it if you have a motion on the notice paper.

Mr. LINDSAY: All my motion asks is that certain papers be laid on the Table. I propose to deal with statements made by the Engineer-in-Chief.

Hon. G. Taylor: You can deal with them.

The Premier: No, they are the subject matter of a motion on the notice paper.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am inclined to think it is within my right to deal with statements by the Engineer-in-Chief—statements that have been published in the Press.

The Minister for Works: Where did you see them?

Mr. LINDSAY: The other night I read a statement that appeared in an Albany paper, and I have seen it stated in other papers that the Engineer-in-Chief recommended that railways be constructed farther apart. He also suggested that the Agricultural Bank trustees should be asked to alter their policy of assisting only those farmers within 12½ miles of a railway.

The Minister for Works: He has never made such a statement.

Mr. LINDSAY: But I have seen it in the Press.

The Minister for Works: I have seen several statements attributed to me in this week's papers, and they were untrue. That applied to the Engineer-in-Chief. Have not you seen things about yourself in the Press.

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes.

Mr. Latham: In the "Worker."

Mr. LINDSAY: I can understand the Minister for Works saying that the statement is not true, but when I know that effect has been given to what was stated, I must assume that the statement is true. The Engineer-in-Chief is actually doing what he said should be done.

The Minister for Works: If you permit me I will give you the facts.

Mr. LINDSAY: The position is as I have mentioned.

The Minister for Works: You are wrong.

Mr. LINDSAY: When I was dealing with the question, the members of the Railway Advisory Board were in my electorate.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has been all right up to the present, but he is now getting on to dangerous ground.

Mr. LINDSAY: I wish to show that the statement must have been true, since I understand from my constituents that the Railway Advisory Board have returned to the district to look at the junction in question. It is an important matter. I can speak with some knowledge of the subject and I am prepared to say that if influence is to be brought to bear, as the Engineer-in-Chief suggests, it will not be in the interests of the State.

The Premier: The hon. member cannot discuss the route of a railway on these Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think he is doing so.

The Premier: Of course he is.

The CHAIRMAN: He has not yet mentioned a railway route.

Mr. LINDSAY: I am speaking of the statement of the Engineer-in-Chief.

The Premier: You have been dealing with the railway route for the last ten minutes.

Mr. LINDSAY: I think I have some privileges in this House.

The Premier: Within the Standing Orders, you have.

Mr. LINDSAY: I believe I can exercise my privilege in another way.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The hon. member is speaking of the actions of an official.

The Premier: The whole thing is a mare's nest and there is no truth in it.

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not wish to act contrary to Standing Orders, but I considered it my duty to bring the matter forward. Probably I shall have an opportunity later on. There is another matter affecting the Works Department. We are receiving a road grant from the Commonwealth. Some time ago the road boards in my district—I suppose the same thing applies to all the electorates—were notified that a certain amount of money was available. There must be something seriously wrong with the department when we find that, although the road boards were so informed some months ago, they have not yet had the money to do the work. I have heard that the money will be allocated next year, but many road boards have communicated with me. They want to know why it was not possible to get the money and carry out the work.

The Minister for Works: The money was available three months ago.

Mr. LINDSAY: That is surprising, because I have received requests for money from road boards in my district. Representatives of the Nungarin Road Board came to Perth for that special purpose and waited on the Main Roads Board.

The Minister for Works: The Main Roads Board do not hand out the money.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Nungarin board desired to put in a tender for the work. If the money was available, why could not they get it? I agree that we cannot form roads in the wheat belt during the summer, but some of the road boards have been pressing me for months to know when the money would be available. They have been desirous of getting on with the work, but so far have not had an opportunity to do so. The Minister interjected just now that the money was available three months ago. I am surprised to hear that. Certain specifications for road construction were sent out to the country. I asked Mr. Anketell, of the Main Roads Board, about those specifications and explained it was impossible for a road board to construct roads according to the specifications. Mr. Anketell told me he intended to withdraw them. Within the last fortnight an engineer has been in my electorate with the same

specifications, which were intended for main trunk roads and main arterial roads. When I informed the Chairman of the road board that the specifications had been withdrawn, the decision was passed on to the engineer, who replied, "Then it is of no use my staying here" and he returned to Perth. The Minister says the money has been available for three months. If that is so, why were not the road boards informed? The Nungarin Road Board sent me two telegrams on the subject, and I went to the department on two occasions and obtained all the information I could get there. The road board, however, were dissatisfied and said they wanted a deputation. I took the deputation to the Main Roads Board and the deputationists pointed out that the season for constructing roads was getting late and that they were prepared to submit a tender. We were informed that things were not ready and that the money could not be spent for some time. It appears to me there has been too much delay in this matter. The money was supposed to be available during June and the local bodies were prepared to submit tenders for the work at any time after that date and they have not had an opportunity to do so. If the money was available, the Main Roads Board should have informed the local authorities and asked them to submit tenders.

The Minister for Works: You are talking nonsense.

Mr. LINDSAY: There is no nonsense about it. Can the Minister tell me of any road board in the State—that is, a board doing this work—that has yet spent its grant? A conference attended by the representatives of 16 road boards was held in Perth during show week. They met to consider this matter. The Trayning Road Board had circularised other road boards in the wheat belt and I met their representatives in Perth. We met at the Bohemia hall and sent a deputation to wait on the Chairman of the Main Roads Board. We were informed by him that the money would be available next year. That was one of our troubles up to that time. We were not given the opportunity to spend the money. If the Minister says that is wrong, then he has the opportunity of showing me that it has been done this session. I have already referred to the specifications and told the House that I had interviewed the Minister.

The Minister for Works: That was not our fault.

Mr. LINDSAY: The specifications as altered by the Minister were suitable and we worked under them.

The Minister for Works: I altered them?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes; when we put up the question the Minister said he would do his best to get them altered and they were altered and we were able to tender for the work. That took place in his own office. Since then we have had a fresh set of specifications. The member for Moore showed them to me and I said to him that they could not be for us. The road boards conference saw the specifications and declared they would not be suitable. It was then that we were told that a special set was going to be made for the road boards in the wheat belt. I do not say that the deputation went away dissatisfied. They got from the Chief Engineer of the Main Roads Board the information they had been worrying him for.

MR. MANN (Perth) [8.32]: I desire to add a few words to the remarks of the member for West Perth regarding the advantages that will be gained by connecting the northern with the southern part of the city. That also applies to the electorates of Perth and East Perth, which are similarly situated, as the member for East Perth would say if he were referring to the subject. There is, however, a bigger proposition that requires consideration. Instead of dealing with a subway here and a bridge there, and a crossing somewhere else, we should tackle the advisableness of removing the central railway station to a position further north of the city.

Mr. North: Hear, hear.

Mr. MANN: A position between Mt. Lawley and East Perth might be considered, probably a mile or a mile and a half north of the existing site.

Mr. North: And we should save money on it.

Mr. MANN: I do not know whether the matter has been investigated. Probably it has, but of course the public would not know anything about it. In any case the matter is worthy of investigation if only to ascertain the probable cost, and whether the land owned by the Government to-day and which could be sold to great advantage, would not more than pay for the cost of shifting the

central station further north. The one job would thus get away with all the disabilities that exist at the present time, and it would remove the various bottle-necks and the dangerous crossings that now exist.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Travellers would be inconvenienced.

Mr. MANN: I do not know that they would. In any case the arrival and departure of trains should not stand in the way of a question of such national importance. The City of Perth is in a bottle-neck. It has the river on two sides, on the south and on the east, and there is the railway on the north. It is bottled in, in a narrow area, and values have been forced up in that area beyond all bounds. If the railway were removed further north, there would be a reasonable possibility of the city growing in the right way.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The south Swan railway would get over a lot of difficulty.

Mr. MANN: No city can become prosperous when it has a railway running through the centre of it. The existence of the goods yards almost in the heart of the city means considerable expense to the merchants, and those costs naturally are passed on to the consumers. There is great waste of time in the removal of goods from the yards to the crossing at Melbourne-road by reason of the gates being so frequently closed and the same thing exists when it is desired to enter the yards from Melbourne-road. Heavily laden vehicles cannot go over the Beaufort-street bridge, because of the steep grade. Those vehicles make for the Pier-street level crossing, only to find very often that they have to wait there for 20 minutes before the gates are opened. The same disability exists at the Lord-street crossing and it is becoming aggravated every day. The suggestion I have made would probably run into a considerable sum of money, but at the same time, land that is held by the Government could be sold to such an advantage that it would pay for the resumption of property further north on which to build the station. Regarding the recent legal proceedings to which the member for West Perth referred, I might mention a similar case in Lord-street. About a year ago a man established a box factory and he had to remove it because it was considered a nuisance in the neighbourhood. The manager of Tomlinson's foundry told me recently that he was unable to take advantage of a great deal of work that was offered him in the shape of the manufacture of oil tanks, for the reason that he knew that if he in-

stalled a riveting machine he would be landing himself in trouble with the schools and the hospitals that were adjacent to his foundry. The point, however, is that he built the foundry on its existing site before the schools were established, and at that time he did not dream that the foundry would ever become a nuisance in the neighbourhood. I urge the Minister to give statutory power to the local authorities to declare factory areas. I hope the Minister will give sympathetic consideration to the several matters that I have referred to.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.40]: On looking at the estimate for the Works Department which is set down at £111,262, my only regret is that the sum is not more, because I consider that the Public Works Department is one of the most important to the people in this State. It is well known that if we want a school house built or a public building of any description, the request is referred to the Public Works Department. We ought to know that many important works are held up because not sufficient funds are provided to permit of those works being carried out. Let me instance requests made to the Education Department. The Director of Education approves of a school being built, or a school being removed from one place to another. In my own particular case I have had word sent to me that when funds were available the work would be done. The matter goes on for a time before the funds do become available, and for that reason alone I consider it is of the utmost importance that the Minister should have at his disposal as much money as we are able to provide for him. We know that he has nothing to do with the railways beyond constructing them. Then when they are built, they are handed over to the Railway Department. I regret very much that the name of the Engineer-in-Chief should have been mentioned so frequently here to-night. There was no occasion to do that. I have had a little trouble over the Brookton-Dale River railway. I have been told that they were going out beyond the 5-mile limit, but the Minister has informed us that the route cannot be altered except with the authority of Parliament. What is being done is only a suggestion from the Engineer-in-Chief or his engineers. Parliament will decide whether the route is to be altered. Reference has been made to Mr. Stileman's salary which I notice is £2,100 per annum. I rejoice to think that we now have an engineer of his qualifications

and it is satisfactory to know that by the work he has done he has lived up to those qualifications. We have only to read his report on the Fremantle harbour which I consider to be a masterpiece. I do not pose as an engineer, and it would be foolish on my part to do so, but I am aware of the fact that the State went to the expense of securing the services of an eminent man like Sir George Buchanan when at the same time we had in our employ an engineer who was equally as good, if not better than Sir George Buchanan. I should also mention that we have very capable engineers in other branches of the service. I refer more particularly to those who are associated with the water supply department. These officers have graduated in what might be termed the climatic conditions of Western Australia and they are now in a position to make recommendations of great value. Speaking of the qualifications of engineers, I might mention that I have been travelling for about 32 years now over that section of the railway between Wooroloo and Chidlow, where a deviation has lately been constructed. The other day I was on a train that went over that deviation, and I was surprised to find that it was taking a full load. That was the first occasion on which a full load had been carried along that part of the railway system. What I want to know is why could not the discovery have been made 30 years ago that the gradients were such that it was impossible to carry a full load on the line that is now to be discarded. I do not think the distance of the new route is any greater than that of the old, and yet we have been put to all that expense for so long a period all through the bungling of the engineers of the past. I am told that if the money had been made available the engineers could have discovered the route in the first place. But after 32 years we find an engineer who comes along and discovers a route within a mile and a half of the original route, and the new one is so advantageous that a full load can be taken over it on a grade of 1 in 80.

Mr. North: They must have been in a great hurry when they built the original line.

Mr. BROWN: That is the question: did the department give those engineers sufficient time? Whose fault was it? There are dozen old roads just there, all long since abandoned. Any Minister is justified in instructing his engineers to find the best route. Some of my friends think I have great admiration for Mr. Stileman because he favours a railway that I have been adv

cating ever since I have been in Parliament. That is not so. I advocated this line long before we ever thought of Mr. Stileman.

Hon. G. Taylor: He was brought out specially to support you

Mr. BROWN: I am pleased to know he is following out what I have advocated for so long. I am glad to think I have a man of Mr. Stileman's qualifications to support me. Turning to the drawing up of specifications, I say the whole thing depends on how they are prepared. In the past we have had specifications drawn up for many expensive works. The estimated cost might have been, say, a million pounds, but in the end the work cost two million pounds. Something must have been radically wrong to give rise to such a discrepancy. Whose fault has it been? We know that the costs of labour and materials have gone up very much, and so it has been difficult to make accurate estimates. I should like to see tenders called for a great many of our public works. The only people who have plant for railway construction are the Government. In the early days we had great railway contractors in the State with large plants. I often wonder if figures could be supplied showing that our public works might be constructed more cheaply by contract than by the Public Works Department. In my opinion, opportunity should be given to contractors to tender in competition with the Public Works Department, the lowest tenderer to get the job. In little country towns we have many large Government buildings deteriorating for want of a coat of paint or other small repairs. A stitch in time saves nine. We have a lot of this work awaiting attention in country towns, and I regret that the vote we are now considering is not larger than it is.

Mr. Latham: This is only for salaries.

Mr. BROWN: No, it is for more than that. I know we have to look to the Loan Estimates for provision for big works. Every member requires a lot of work done in his own electorate. In my electorate we require several public works, such as the building of railway stations, and the like. If the Minister can get through the year with this vote I think he will be doing remarkably well. I hope he will have sufficient money to afford some relief to all the applicants that will come before him. In Pingelly we are waiting for money for our hospital. We have found our own share of the cost of the work, and we are waiting for the Public Works

Department to find the balance and proceed with the improvements, so that the hospital may be put into good condition.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.50]: There are one or two small points I should like to touch upon. The first is in regard to the planning and layout of Perth and its suburbs. The Minister, when replying, might inform the House as to the real position regarding the future of the city and suburbs. Has any move been made? Is there to be a commission appointed, or will definite action be taken? The question is in everybody's mind. The city is growing very fast, and an announcement would be welcome as to what is intended in respect of railway stations, subways, new trunk roads and many other requirements. It is all involved in a central policy as to whether the Government believe in town planning, or whether it is advisable to have a commission appointed. The years go by and wrongs are perpetuated, narrow roads are made, dead-ends are created and a lot of money is wasted through temporary works. I should like the Minister to refer to that in general terms, because it is too important to be overlooked much longer. We have now in the railway suburbs level crossings almost as dangerous as those nearer the city. In my own district there is a good place for a subway at reasonable cost. Some years ago I had plans drawn by the Minister for Railways, and I now propose to make an attempt to induce the Minister for Works to carry out the work. This subway could be put in at the Cottesloe station. It would close two dangerous level crossings, one on each side of the station. The cost would be only about £15,000. If the city is to become as large as we all expect, and if it is worth while spending millions on water supplies and in other directions, it would be well to attend to the subway. There was a terrible accident at Guildford recently when a schoolboy was killed at a level crossing. So the question is worth considering, together with that of the future lay-out of the city and suburbs. Another unpleasant subject is that of the routes for the buses and taxis.

The Minister for Works: Where do you find that in the Estimates?

Mr. NORTH: I understand we are dealing with the salaries of the members of the Routes Advisory Committee.

The Minister for Works: They don't get any salaries.

Mr. NORTH: That makes it all the more pressing. I understand the local authorities concerned all favour different routes, and I trust they will be able to reach the Minister, so that he can deal with the question shortly. It is very unpleasant to have taxis running on no definite routes, and this continual quarrel between the public and the Routes Advisory Committee and the Minister. Then I should like to ask the Minister how the local authorities are to carry on the making of roads in the existing circumstances of increased traffic, increased loads, and the existing boundaries making small local authorities, none of which can afford to purchase road making plant. They are all anxious to know how they are to fare in the future. It is generally believed that no local authority in the metropolitan area can meet the existing situation and keep its roads in good order and condition. Although there are certain funds, such as the petrol fund, which might divert sufficient money to meet the existing difficulty; yet it cannot be done on the existing rates, for the ratio of increased cars is far greater than the ratio of increased population. So it is obvious that the work devolving on the local authorities cannot be carried out with revenue that is increasing very slowly as against the increased number of cars. Parliament should know how the Government think this great problem can be faced. Now I should like to mention the Cottesloe jetty. I trust the Minister will receive a deputation, consisting of the mayor and one or two councillors, so that this matter can be discussed. The structure was supposed to have been put in good order 18 months ago. However, it was badly smashed up in the recent storms. The council feel that they have a grievance in that £1,200 was spent on the jetty by the Public Works Department, and already another £1,500 is required.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [8.59]: I listened carefully to the Minister when he was introducing his Estimates. He read out the details of expenditure of large sums of money. It was impossible for any member to follow them without having the figures before him. I should think if all the amounts were totted up, they would run into something like £14,000,000. I hope we shall be able to see the figures published in the Press tomorrow. A considerable amount of money

has been spent by the Main Roads Board. A great deal of dissatisfaction exists concerning that board, but I am not prepared to say whether or not it is justified. I have only one road board in my district, but enough trouble comes from that source to keep me going. The local authority does not seem to get much satisfaction from the Main Roads Board. I have interviewed the acting chairman and the other members of the board, but I was not able to get much satisfaction from them. I believe they gave me all the information they could. I am not complaining about any treatment received or any lack of courtesy on the part of those officers. They gave me all the assistance they could, but they told me the Federal authorities were hampering them in certain directions; if that is so, the Minister should step in and Parliament should know all about it. For every £1 we get from the Federal Government for road construction we contribute 15s. of State money. We are therefore, a very important partner in this business. Apparently the Main Roads Board altered their policy this year. Last year the Laverton Road Board carried out certain works apparently to the satisfaction of the Main Roads Board. The money was forthcoming, and everything appeared to be in order. This year the lines of procedure have been altered. The board has not been sufficiently expeditious in sending out money to the local authorities. An engineer was sent up to Laverton. They said no work could be started until the engineer had inspected the proposed scheme. Most of the work consisted of clearing roads in new country, to open up routes along which stock-raisers could bring their stock to the railway terminus. The work was being done very cheaply. The local authority was doing the rough work of grubbing out the big trees and clearing the track. I should think the road was 16ft. to 18ft. in width. This work was being done for £6 5s. per mile and when completed the cost was about £11 per mile. The local authority was blocked this year because of the new conditions. I do not know whether these conditions still exist, or whether the trouble has been remedied. I get a mail only once a week from my district, and if I wrote this week a fortnight would elapse before I received a reply. The acting chairman and the other members of the Main Roads Board told me they were going into the matter and would let me know the result, but so far I have heard nothing further. I believe an engineer inspected

the roads controlled by the road board and advised the local authority to go on with the work, stating that the money would be available. The road board had previously been informed that £1,000 was set apart for one road, and I think another £1,000 for another road. In view of the statement of the engineer the road board naturally went on with the business. The first thing to do was to survey the route to be followed by the road. I think this cost about £135. I do not know if that included one or two roads, or what distance was covered. An application was made to the Main Roads Board for the money, but it was not made available. I was asked to call at the office of the Main Roads Board, and did so. The acting chairman asked me whether his board had authorised the survey. I replied that I did not know. I said the survey had been completed, and that the surveyor wanted his money. At the direction of the road board the secretary had written to ask me to call upon the acting chairman of the Main Roads Board, and see whether an arrangement could be made for the payment of the money. The acting chairman said, "If we have not ordered the survey we cannot pay; that is what the Federal Government tell us." I have written up for the information. The engineer told the road board to proceed with the work and that the money would be allocated. I have not since seen the officials of the Main Roads Board. I think it was suggested that the surveyor had to be a qualified surveyor. The man who carried out this work was a qualified surveyor of the Melbourne University. I do not know whether these delays occur everywhere. They certainly are rather unsatisfactory. I do not know whether the Minister is very much in touch with the Main Roads Board so far as the construction of roads is concerned. The work I am speaking of is being done by the local road board. Some of it has been done by day work, and tenders are being called for the other work. They are trying to comply with the conditions at the distance they are away from Perth, and having previously acted under certain conditions they did not know there had been any alteration. They have got into some difficulty, for the money is not forthcoming. I intend having another interview with the chairman of the Main Roads Board to-morrow to see whether anything can be done to help this local authority. It would be interesting to know how the tenders for big works are accepted. There

is a lot of talk about tenders being rather peculiarly handled. That is the general talk. Whether there is any truth in it or not, I do not know. Since I have been in Parliament, no matter what Governments do, someone is always finding fault. People will have us believe there is a lot of underhand work going on. When the trouble is solved one finds that it is a mare's nest. It is something that is only in the minds of certain people. They feel suspicious if their tenders have not been accepted, and they think something underhand is going on. There are rumours about the tenders that are called for these big works.

The Minister for Works: I suppose you are referring to the rotten article that appeared in the "Mirror."

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I never see the "Mirror." I have not read two copies of it in my life. Perhaps my education has been sadly neglected, although I do not think I have missed a great deal.

The Minister for Works: I do not think so either.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not making any complaint. I am merely telling the Minister of the rumours that are going about.

The Minister for Works: Started by the people who read that article.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If I had known an article had appeared in the "Mirror" I might have looked at it to see what it was all about. I did not do so, however, and I am not likely to do so. I believe a great deal of dissatisfaction exists, and it would be well if the Minister kept a pretty close watch upon what is going on, especially with regard to the tenders.

The Minister for Works: There cannot be any suspicion regarding the handling of Government tenders. Everything about them is too open.

The Premier: There is no possibility of anything being wrong in regard to the tenders.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not myself think there is a chance of any funny business, but that apparently is not the view held by some people. When tenders are advertised and a closing time is specified, nothing wrong can happen with respect to them. I have no desire to make any further remarks other than that I hope steps will be taken to rectify the trouble that exists. If these are only suspicions to which I have referred I hope they will be cleared up, and that the

other grievances will be rectified. We spend too much money on main roads for us to have anything in the way of dissatisfaction over the manner in which the money is being used.

[*Mr. Lutey took the Chair.*]

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [9.10]: It was pleasing to hear from the Minister that cadets are being taken into the drafting office of the Public Works Department, and that the Government intend to utilise the budding draftsmen who have emerged from the University. Many complaints are made about the few openings for our young men. If the Government take this step they will be commended for seeing that in this department at all events some means are taken to absorb these young men. I presume that auditors are sent out by the Public Works Department to audit the books of country road boards. I have one complaint to make. Perhaps the Minister will be able to expedite matters affecting the auditing of books of road boards. The Road Districts Act states that an annual meeting shall be held, at which accounts certified to and signed by a Government auditor shall be presented. In the case of many road boards three years have passed since a Government audit of the books has been made. The chairman has been obliged to read out a balance sheet to which a local auditor has certified, and to apologise for the fact that the signature of a Government auditor is not attached to the document. The Public Works Department is handling enormous sums of money in connection with the main roads grant. I reckon from the Minister's figures that something like three-quarters of a million pounds was spent last year on road construction. That is a large amount of money for Western Australia. A lot has been said about the Main Roads Board. In my dealings with them I have little to complain of. I believe that other districts have not been so fortunate.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is some difficulty with the Federal Government.

Mr. Heron: That is the trouble.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Nungarin Road Board is half in the Toodyay electorate and half in mine. This board was represented on a recent deputation.

Hon. G. Taylor: Divided authority again?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It is in good hands when it is in the hands of the member for Toodyay.

Mr. Lindsay: All the road boards come to me.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: As stated by the Leader of the Opposition, the question is whether we are getting value for the money. That is a very important question to members. We have to consider also the people who frame the specifications handed out for the building of roads in the wheat belt. Those people have come from Melbourne, and entirely overlook the fact of our being about 30 years behind Victoria in point of development. In this State, with its area of 975,920 square miles, into which Victoria could be put 11 times, specifications applicable to what was formerly called the Cabbage Patch are not applicable at all. In Victoria special super roads are required, whereas we need miles upon miles of developmental roads. When the Minister goes East, he might bring before the Federal authorities certain statements made by a board noted for the excellence of its roads—Kellerberrin—as follows:—

As far as the eastern wheat belt is concerned, every £1,000 spent should show ten miles of roads good enough for our needs for the next 30 years. Now, what will we get for our £2,000? About two miles of a ribbles road, only 12 feet wide, upon which after the first two years the annual maintenance cost will be greater than that of keeping a 44-foot earthen formation in good order. A 12-foot road must be expensive to keep in order, because the traffic is confined too closely. Indeed, to instance the experience of the Kellerberrin Road Board, that body has already found the 12-foot roads built by the department in that district are more expensive to maintain than their own 16½-foot roads. Just as in earthen roads a 20-foot formation is a poor road, so a 33-foot road is a very fair road and a 44-foot formation is an excellent road, and will outlive the 20-foot road five times over, if properly looked after.

I want to impress upon the Minister and upon the Committee that these people know what their district requires. I would far sooner take the opinion of the writer of this report, a man who has spent 30 years in Victoria and 15 years in this State dealing with road matters, than the opinion of some so-called road experts. The Minister spoke about that rotten article in the "Mirror." The hon. gentleman should give that production some denial. Here is the heading of the article, which I have cut off.

The Premier: Why bring up that kind of stuff?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: We know that money has been wasted in certain directions. The Main Roads Board had a hard row to hoe when starting. But when stuff such as this

is published, the Minister should sift things to the bottom and show the country that there is nothing in the allegations. I handed the article in question to one of my conferees to read, and he read it. When this evening I went back to have a look at the article, I found it had been removed; someone had cut it out of the paper. In any case, I do not attach much importance to it. But there has been a waste of money, and the country wants value for money spent, and so does the Minister, I believe. Whether there is any truth in the "Mirror's" allegations I am not prepared to say. Now as regards distance between railways. While on this subject I am not thinking about the Ejangding railway, but about other lines. The "West Australian" has printed an article stating that the economic limit of cartage of wheat may now be considered to be 17 miles. The writer of that article wants his head read. Last year this State spent well over three millions sterling in motors and oil and petrol, and our Railway Department earned not much more than that amount. Those facts should make us pause. If members think that building of roads alone is going to be a payable proposition, let them listen to this illustration: I know of a settler at Goomarin who this year will be in a position to cart 5,000 bags of wheat to the siding. He is 17½ miles from the railway, and therefore will travel something over 10,000 miles in getting his wheat to the railway. He has invested his life's savings, and all the savings of his father and his brother, in the farm. On the other hand a farmer distant only 12½ miles from the railway would travel only about 7,000 miles in performing the same work. Thus there is a saving to the latter farmer of about 3,000 miles.

MR. FERGUSON (Moore) [9.25]: I wish to say a few words on road board affairs. The statement of the member for Toodyav (Mr. Lindsay) which was characterised by the Minister for Works as sheer nonsense is absolute fact. The unfortunate point about the Main Roads Board—to whom I wish to be absolutely fair, as they had a most difficult task laid on their shoulders, a task made far more difficult because they were rushed into a huge job before they had any organisation—is the lack of harmony between that board and the various road boards throughout the State. Country road boards experience great difficulty in getting satisfaction from the Main Roads Board through correspondence. The only means of securing in-

formation is to get the member for the district to wait upon the Main Roads Board, when particulars which have been vainly written for during weeks or months are readily forthcoming. The Main Roads Board should take the road board into their confidence, and tell them what they have to do. The Minister can rest assured that in such circumstances the road boards would do the rest. They are quite prepared to spend the money available; but they do want the Main Roads Board to let them know when the money is available, so that they can submit tenders for work, and so that when work is allotted to them they will be able to get on with it promptly. I wish to draw the Minister's attention to one or two roads of considerable importance to the Midland district. Some time ago, when the agreement with the Commonwealth was entered into, the Minister stated publicly that for ten years each board could count on receiving approximately £2,000 to spend on roads. All the road boards were pleased to hear this, and in the first year the Gingin road board put in a claim for £2,000. The amount was reduced to £1,000 without any explanation being given. The Main Roads Board assured me that, to put matters right, in the following year the Gingin road board should get £3,000. The Gingin board sent in a requisition accordingly, and were allotted only £2,000. I understand the reason given for the reduction was that although the Main Roads Board were quite prepared to allocate £3,000 to the Gingin board, the Government did not approve of that being done. I would like the Minister to state definitely whether that is so, and if it is so, why it is so. That any board, after being led to believe by the Minister that they could count on £2,000 annually, should have the allocation reduced by 50 per cent. is distinctly unfair. The road I specially refer to is that from Gingin to Moore River. A previous Government, having come to the conclusion that the district in question was eminently suited for dairying, began to build a road to it. A good deal of money having been spent on the road, the work terminated in a patch of sand; and the road is and will be practically useless until completed. I urged upon the Minister the necessity of having it completed by allocating to the Gingin road board £3,000 next year, and allowing them to spend the amount on that road, which is their first preference. The road in question has been absolutely cut out, and the £1,000 allocated to the board is to be spent on their second preference road.

I also desire to refer to the work done on the road between Muchea and Gingin. The boards concerned have been urging for some time the necessity for the construction of that road. This year the Minister has allocated a certain amount for the road, but those who have been on the work are being put off and the road is not completed. There are a few miles of heavy sand to be dealt with yet. The people had been looking forward to the prospect of being able to transport their perishable produce by motor to the metropolis. The extra handling it receives on the railways depreciates the value of the produce considerably before it reaches the metropolitan market. Now that the work has ceased, the road will be of little use to the people, because they will not be able to traverse the heavy sand. I urge upon the Minister the advisability of utilising the services of the men and the plant to complete the work while they are in the locality. The road must be completed sooner or later, and it would be more economical to undertake the work while the men and plant are on the job than to make them return next year. I also wish to impress upon the Minister the necessity for appointing one or two more auditors to audit the books of the road boards. I have attended a number of road board conferences and at each one a motion has been agreed to urging the department to appoint one or two more auditors. The delay in auditing the books of local governing authorities is rather an encouragement to dishonest secretaries to steal the ratepayers' money.

The Minister for Works: But they have their local auditors.

Mr. FERGUSON: Some boards have auditors, but some have not. The auditors some of the boards have are not of much use, and most of the boards rely for protection upon the Government auditor. The unfortunate experience we have had in connection with a number of road board secretaries should furnish an adequate reason for the Minister to appoint additional auditors. If the books of certain boards have not been audited for three years, surely that in itself is sufficient to warrant the additional appointments.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.33]: The Minister for Works is responsible for any mistakes that may occur in connection with his department and I wish to point out

what is happening in the agricultural districts to-day. It appears to me that we do not know where we are. The Minister understands the position, but local authorities, members of Parliament and the people generally do not know. The engineers and the staff of the Main Roads Board have everyone wondering what is to happen next.

Hon. G. Taylor: They don't know themselves sometimes.

The Premier: That is just the position we are in.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They make traverses, horse-shoe bends and twists and turns of every shape and description in going through the best agricultural land in my electorate. A man named Moriarty told me that the road board people had been spelling out his name in going through his property.

The Premier: That is the artistic touch.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know what they are doing. I do not know whether the Minister does. There are rumours that instead of the grade being one in 16, it is to be made one in 20. Is that correct?

The Minister for Works: Not that I know of.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is the talk in my electorate. The position is dreadful.

The Premier: You get a lot of mulga wires at Bridgetown.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not want these people to go through my little patch! As it is they seem to go through all the valuable property. I have informed Mr. Anketell of what is being done.

The Premier: When they come to valuable blocks, they should construct overhead roads!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is not what is required. It should be a matter of common sense. These people should not be allowed to run mad all over the country. The Blackwood River bridge was constructed 40 years ago at a cost of approximately £1,000. The Main Roads Board have asked the local authorities to make improvements to the bridge because it is out of alignment to the extent of 3 feet in some places. They propose to spend £1,500 on the widening of the bridge, and expect the local authority to pay half the cost. The whole thing is ridiculous. Before the Minister agrees to the proposition, I hope he will inquire fully into it. What is required, of course, is a new bridge altogether. Then

again the Main Roads Board needed office accommodation at Bridgetown. The Lands Department, in whose building there is ample room, offered the board one or two rooms at a reasonable rental. The board rejected the offer, but went to a private individual and got him to build offices for them.

The Premier: Where was that?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: At Bridgetown.

The Premier: That is all helping to build the town up.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is not helping to do any such thing. The building I refer to was constructed as a garage, and is an eyesore to the town. The local authority should never have allowed it to be constructed, and the housing of the Main Roads Board officers there is not a good advertisement for the Minister for Works. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) referred to various railways to-night, including the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook, the Pemberton-Northcliffe and the Manjimup-Mt. Barker lines. The Minister for Works did not interject and I take it that he had in mind that the Government intend to go on with those railways. It is pleasing to know that! I hold him responsible, and Parliament as well, for what is happening to-day, more especially in connection with the roads and what the officials are doing in the Nelson electorate. Certainly the Minister should put his foot down hard on the proposition to spend £1,500 to strengthen a bridge that was built 40 years ago at a cost of less than £1,000. That such a proposition could be put forward shows that there is something radically wrong.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle—in reply) [9.40]: I was surprised to note the attitude adopted by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the presentation to the House of the report furnished by the Engineer-in-Chief concerning the extension of the Fremantle harbour. He went so far as to say we were allowing Government officials to pronounce on questions of Government policy and that the Government did not seem to have a policy at all. That was an extraordinary statement to make. The Engineer-in-Chief was called upon to submit a report regarding the extension of the Fremantle harbour and that

naturally involved the question of railway communication with the port. He submitted a report that I hope every member will read carefully. If they do that, I believe the consensus of opinion will be that it furnishes a fine survey of the position, and stamps the Engineer-in-Chief as a man of high attainments. The Government decided to present the report to the House. It was resolved to have it printed so that each member might receive a copy. I believe the report was brought to the House before all Ministers had an opportunity to read it. That was done after it had been in our hands for a few days only. Our idea was that every member should be apprised of the opinions expressed by our chief professional adviser. We wanted members to know what were his recommendations and his ideas. Does that indicate that the Engineer-in-Chief was announcing Government policy? We have not asked the House to deal with his report. When we do ask Parliament to undertake that task, we will say what is the policy of the Government. That will be the time when the House will be asked to decide just what action we shall take. Until then the course adopted by the Government was the right one. We wanted to let hon. members know what the Engineer-in-Chief recommended. What would have been said had we sat down on the report?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But it appeared in the newspapers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Had we suppressed the report and had we not brought it to the House until we asked Parliament to pass a sum of £3,000,000, with the mere intimation that there was the Engineer-in-Chief's report and that it was for Parliament to agree to it as we wanted to get on with the job, what would have been said?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the report did appear in the newspapers.

The Premier: Only after the report had been placed on the Table of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. It was on the Table for a fortnight.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was a typed copy.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: Having been tabled, the report was public property.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Quite so. It was to allow hon. members to study the report and get a grip of it that we tabled the document. It was such an exhaustive report dealing with the activities of the State that we wanted all members to know what the Engineer-in-Chief thought, what he

had put up to us and so enable members to grip the position before we asked Parliament to decide. That was only right and generous.

Hon. G. Taylor: Most of the work will have to be dealt with under the Loan Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course. To accuse the Government of allowing the Engineer-in-Chief to pronounce on matters of Government policy seems to be extraordinary. Instead of receiving criticism the action taken by the Government should have received the approbation of every hon. member. We could have held the report back, but had we done so we should have been criticised for not having adopted a course that was in the interest of hon. members. The Leader of the Opposition inferred, if he did not actually state, that the migration money used for the building of the Esperance railway and the construction of water supplies in the agricultural districts had been charged to group settlement. The hon. member must know that cannot be correct. I wonder what put it into the hon. member's mind that such expenditure had been charged to group settlement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What was it charged to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To the works on which the money was spent. The hon. member probably had in mind that under the agreement operating during his term of office, he could spend migration money only in the South-West and he spent all of it on groups. He was not permitted to spend it outside the South-West. Under the new agreement we can spend money in any part of the State and on different works. We can spend it on railways, water supplies, groups, harbour works, in fact, on any public works so long as we receive the approval of the Imperial Government's representative in Western Australia and of the Commonwealth authorities.

Mr. Griffiths: The expenditure on group settlement would be charged to group settlement?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Undoubtedly. Yet the Leader of the Opposition inferred that money spent on the Esperance railway and on agricultural water supplies had been charged to group settlement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could not spend £400,000 on group settlement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know how much was spent on group settle-

ment. That comes under the department of the Minister for Lands.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did you spend £205,000 on roads for group settlements last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, not only migration money but our own money. I have already mentioned the amounts that were spent. An enormous sum of money has been spent on roads to serve group settlements and a lot is still being spent.

Hon. G. Taylor: How are the roads down there, good?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but the heavy rainfall makes construction and maintenance expensive.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is the timber traffic that knocks them out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The roads over which we have jurisdiction have been closed to heavy traffic during certain months of the year, and I think the road boards follow the same course. I did not propose to deal under these Estimates with the business of the Main Roads Board. I thought the more appropriate time to refer to the board's activities would be when the Loan Estimates were before us. However, I shall reply to one or two points of criticism and leave the remainder until the Loan Estimates are discussed. When the Main Roads Act was passed, members were generally of opinion that the board should be entirely removed from political control. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) particularly urged that; the Minister was to have no say at all. To-night the hon. member said the Minister was responsible. Members of both Houses have informed me that they desired to introduce deputations asking me to intervene in this matter and that, and they were the very members who were strongest in their advocacy of the Main Roads Board being kept free from political control. When a body of professional men propose something in connection with a bridge, the member for Nelson wants me to put my foot down.

The Premier: To test the bridge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, a bridge that is 40 years old. The inconsistency of some members is really amazing. I have not prepared any matter regarding the Main Roads Board, but I shall show members that I know what is going on. I am surprised to find how ill-informed the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) is, especially in view of his long experience of road board work. The member for Mount Mar-

garet (Hon. G. Taylor) seems to have a far better grip of the position. I repeat that when the member for Toodyay was advised in June that the money was available and the Main Roads Board notified all the road boards, it was available. There is no question about that. When the hon. member stated that the money was not available, he was saying something that was not correct. What is puzzling him is the alteration of policy forced upon us by the Commonwealth. Up to this year we used to ask the local boards to give us a price for certain work, so much per chain for clearing, so much per chain for forming, so much per chain for gravelling, and they were able to undertake the work and get on with it. Now, however, the Commonwealth Government say, "We are not going to agree to that. You have to have plans and specifications drawn up for every job, tenders are to be called by advertisement in the district where the work is to be done and at the Main Roads Board's office."

Mr. Lindsay: I have had that explanation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member does not seem to understand it. Before we can prepare specifications, we have to send out engineers and surveyors to take levels, the whole work has to be examined and reported on, the field books have to be plotted and set out before anyone can be invited to tender for the work. A contractor could not be expected to give a price for a job unless he knew what he was tendering for. Every detail has to be set out. When the Commonwealth imposed that restriction, I said it would mean at least 12 months delay to our programme. We have not the surveyors, the engineers or the draftsmen to cope with the work. We have been trying to get engineers. We brought in all the students from the University and worked them through their Christmas vacation. The drawing staff have been working overtime and even on Sunday. The chairman of the Main Roads Board, when in London, tried to get draftsmen and we have advertised throughout the Empire for draftsmen. We cannot let a chain of work unless specifications are prepared and all the details are set out.

Mr. Mann: Are you offering sufficient inducement for surveyors or are they scarce?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are not to be obtained; every State is in the same position.

The Minister for Railways: The railways have had to go outside the State for men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, the railways brought a couple of men from England. Men are not available anywhere.

Mr. Lindsay: All that fuss has to do with main and arterial roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it applies to every penny of Commonwealth expenditure. Though the hon. member says the money is not available, it is there and waiting to be spent, but we cannot spend it until we have followed through all its ramifications the procedure laid down by the Commonwealth. The member for Mount Margaret understood the position, but the member for Toodyay did not.

The Premier: There is a great difference between the two.

Mr. Lindsay: I knew all that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But did the hon. member understand it?

Mr. Lindsay: You said the money was available.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said it was available, but the hon. member kept on repeating that it was not available, although I told him he was wrong. The money has been available and I wanted to spend it. The moment I received approval of our programme I wired from Melbourne asking the Mains Roads Board to inform the local authorities of the fact. I knew that a lot of the local boards were engaged on last year's work and I wanted them to carry on the additional work without taking their workmen off the roads. When the Commonwealth insisted on this new procedure, however, all that work had to be stopped.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is in the agreement, is it not?

The Minister for Works: The agreement says nothing of the kind.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The agreement says the method of construction shall be by contract.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The agreement says the work shall be done by contract, but if the State Minister decides that it can be executed more expeditiously and economically by day labour, then with the approval of the Commonwealth Minister it may be done by day labour. The agreement under which the Leader of the Opposition operated set out that the work shall be done by contract, but in special cases the Commonwealth Minister might give per-

mission for the work to be done by day labour.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is practically the same thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When that clause of the agreement came up for consideration at the conference that I attended, every State, including Victoria, which had an anti-Labour Government, declined to agree to it. The representative of the Main Roads Board of Victoria held that they could do the work cheaper by day labour than by contract. His Minister supported him and the Commonwealth could not get one State to support the clause in the old agreement. The Commonwealth Minister left the conference and held a consultation with Mr. Bruce. When he returned with the new clause, the interpretation he placed upon it was, "This shifts the responsibility on to you State Ministers. If you give me a certificate that in your opinion the work can be done more expeditiously and more economically by day labour, you can do it by day labour. The responsibility is removed from my shoulders to your shoulders." We accepted that as the interpretation of the agreement, and under that we carried on for 12 months. We followed the practice adopted by the Leader of the Opposition. Every penny of Commonwealth money spent by the hon. member under the agreement was spent on day labour. Not one penny worth of road work did he have constructed by contract.

Mr. Marshall: He was a wise man.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And he spent the money on day labour without the consent of the Commonwealth Government. In no instance did he get permission to do the work by day labour. His agreement stated that only in special circumstances could the work be done by day labour, and then the consent of the Commonwealth Minister was necessary.

Hon. G. Taylor: All were special cases, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Having that bad example before me, I followed it, but I was not alone in that. All the other States did the same thing. When we submitted to Melbourne our list of roads and gave a certificate that the engineers considered the work could be done more expeditiously and economically by day labour, it was approved. No question whatever was asked and no objection whatever was raised right up to the time of the elections. When the elections were approaching, a man who

is supposed to represent this State in the Commonwealth Parliament raised the question. Although the hon. member had been carrying on during his term of office having every road made by day labour and I had been going on myself for over 12 months no questions were asked. Then the matter was raised immediately prior to the elections. Instead of the Federal authorities saying "You must not start any more works until you get our consent," without giving any notice whatever they dated the whole back for some months. They said, "The work you have done for months past is outside the scope of the agreement, and you will not be paid for it." Ultimately they dated the decision back as far as January the 14th or January 16th. Without giving any notice to us they made this retrospective. They said, "From now on you have to submit your jobs here before you can carry anything out." They admitted we had been carrying on with their consent in the past, but they would not give us that much fair play. They made their decision retrospective as far back as January. Up to date South Australia has not yet called for tenders for one job. Their work is all being done by day labour, but there is no question about non-payment. There has been no election there, or at all events no hue and cry was raised there. Unlike ourselves, that State did not have a sportsman such as Gregory! The position is most unfair. The action of the Commonwealth was entirely unwarranted. They singled Western Australia out for treatment that they have not meted out to any other part of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Marshall: Incensed by our own representatives.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. They singled this Government out for treatment that they did not mete out to the Leader of the Opposition when he was in office.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was not the same agreement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's agreement was more severe and tighter than ours. There is a certain amount of money in dispute, but it is nothing like the £60,000 mentioned in the Press. Negotiations are proceeding, and I hope to make some progress when I attend the conference in Melbourne, the date of which I hope soon to hear. That explains the position of the day labour problem. We were able to demonstrate to Mr. Bruce,

when he was here, that everything was being carried out satisfactorily and well. We pointed out that if he insisted on his decision that the work had to be done by contract immediately, it would mean holding it up and much delay being caused. It would also throw many men out of work. Ultimately we got an extension up to the end of October. At the end of this month the day labour system has to stop, and we have to put off all our men. That is one of the items in the scurrilous article that has been quoted. I say it is beneath contempt to take notice of such a scurrilous statement. The article says we are putting 2,000 men off. There have not been 2,000 men employed on main roads for approximately 12 months. All the men have to cease work at the end of October as a result of the decision of the Commonwealth Government. After that date there will be no further day labour.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is going to happen?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We shall have to call for tenders. We have all the draftsmen, surveyors and engineers that we can get out in the field. They are making plans and specifications and taking levels, and setting the whole thing out so that tenders may be called. We are rushing the work as much as possible. Overtime is being worked and shifts are being put in on Sunday. Members can see the lights burning every night in the office through men coming back to work. We have advertised for tenders. A firm in Bunbury in a pretty big way in the timber industry (which is passing through a pretty bad time) has, in order to keep the plant and the men together, been submitting tenders for road construction. The firm is taking the work on at a pretty low figure, so that the staff may be kept together and the plant kept in use. I refer to the firm of Jackson & Rodgers. These people have three or four contracts current at the moment, and I signed two this morning. The scurrilous article says there is a firm receiving contracts from the Main Roads Board that, it is rumoured, is associated with a prominent official of the Main Roads Board office. That is a statement the hon. member referred to when he talked about there being something fishy in the business.

Hon. G. Taylor: I have not read the article.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is what the paper was hinting at. Mr. Steve Rodgers, who is well known to the Leader of the Opposition, is supervisor at present in the Main Roads Board office. The Mr. Rodgers of Jackson & Rodgers who was one of the partners in the business, and a brother of Mr. Steve Rodgers, died in England over a year ago.

Mr. Wilson: Eighteen months ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The Premier: The firm is carrying on with the same title.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that of Jackson & Rodgers, Ltd. The newspaper infers that because a brother of a deceased member of that firm is employed in the Main Roads Board office, and that two contracts have recently been let to that firm, something is wrong with the business.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has he anything to do with the Tender Board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing whatever.

The Premier: Even if the brother was still alive Rodgers would have nothing to do with the tenders.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tenders are placed under lock and key, and are opened by a special committee. The officials of the Main Roads Board have nothing to do with them.

The Premier: This man could not possibly have anything to do with them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Rodgers is a supervisor. He works out in the country and is one of the best men in the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He is a straight man, anyhow.

Mr. Wilson: He is so.

The Premier: He is no relation to the present members of the firm, for his brother is dead.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It makes one sick at heart to have to put up with such scurrilous insinuations. A notification has gone out to the different road districts that the Main Roads Board will not be able to maintain developmental roads for 12 months, as we have done in the past. The Main Roads Board has assumed the responsibility of maintaining developmental roads for the first 12 months. The road boards do not contribute anything towards the cost, but the Main Roads Board hand these roads over when they are consolidated. This was

done by agreement with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth engineer did not consider a road was properly finished until there had been 12 months of maintenance in connection with it. It was arranged between him and our own engineer that 10 per cent. of construction money should be kept back for maintenance during the first year. But all of a sudden that stopped: the Commonwealth said, "No; we will not permit that: there is no further money available for maintenance." The same thing applies in regard to damage to by-roads over which material has been carted to the job. We have kept those roads in decent repair, and have left them in at least as good condition as they were in before the job was started. The cost of this was made a charge against the particular job. But notice has now come that that system must cease, that no further money is available for it. We are certainly widening roads, more especially in the South-West on flats where much water comes down from the hills. Drains 12ft. wide have been made in such places. In other places it has been found necessary to make road deviations, involving resumptions. All these things, it was agreed, should be charged against the job; but now we are told that for each of these matters the State Government must find the money. The Commonwealth and the State are supposed to be equal partners in these schemes. Representatives of the Commonwealth and the State met, and came to an understanding. The next thing that happens is that our partner in the undertaking notifies us that we are not to do this, but must do something else, and that unless we follow his directions no Federal money will be available. The agreement does not empower the Commonwealth to tell us to do certain things which we have, in fact, been told to do. The Crown Law Department advise me to that effect. I do not wish to say all I know, before I get to Melbourne. Quite a number of things have been done and have not yet been made public. If unable to come to terms and arrive at decent working conditions, I shall have to make those other things public. The meeting in Melbourne is to be held early in November, though the date is not yet fixed. I hope I have said enough on that aspect. The specifications which have been referred to are specifications agreed upon between the Commonwealth and the State engineers, and our State board have no power to depart from them without the consent of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Lindsay: If those absurd specifications are to be carried out, it would be better not to have developmental roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The latest communications lead me to believe that a modification will be agreed to for our wheat belt. As regards the goldfields and further northward, I have arranged for tests to be made, with plant lent free of charge by the Government, in forming, grading, and rolling. I shall ask the Commonwealth for modifications of the specification as applying to this State with the exception of the South-West. In reply to the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) let me say that the Government have had three railways under construction at one time, and that having created such a reputation, we are anxious to live up to it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We would like to know which is the next railway to be built.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If I named the next railway, it would create dissension in the hon. member's party, and I would not like to see him and his confreres fighting one another. Much has been said about the Engineer-in-Chief overriding Acts of Parliament. One newspaper report stated that the Minister for Works had not only defied the Government and ordered a railway to be constructed without the Premier or other members of the Cabinet knowing anything about it, but was also constructing a railway outside the authorising Act. I think that suggestion was behind the remarks of the member for Toodyay, and his action in giving notice of motion for papers relating to the Ejanging Northward railway.

Mr. Lindsay: I spoke before the article was published.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the article was based on the hon. member's statements, though it went far beyond what he said. A spur line was running out towards Lake Mollerin, and of the country northwards not too much was known. The question was which side of the lake the line should go—east or west? The Engineer-in-Chief had his attention drawn by the Surveyor General to the fact that east of the lake there is fine forest country. The Surveyor General considered that within five years this country would have to be served by a railway, and he suggested to the Engineer-in-Chief that before finally determining the route he should have the country examined, with a view to ascertaining whether the line could be so constructed as to serve it. The object was to avoid repeating mistakes of

the past in railway construction, mistakes to which no fewer than three members opposite have referred this evening. If the Engineer-in-Chief had refused to accept the Surveyor General's suggestion, and had said that he would construct the railway within the five miles deviation authorised by Parliament, notwithstanding that something entirely new had been brought to his attention, what would the member for Toodyay then have said about the Engineer-in-Chief?

Mr. Lindsay: He is making a similar mistake in regard to the Yarramony railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No mistake has yet been made. The Engineer-in-Chief has merely sent out a staff of engineers to investigate and report to him. I asked him this morning if he had received any information and the Engineer-in-Chief said, "No, I have not got the report back yet. I do not know anything about it until I get the information and all the necessary data and facts. If I feel that the case is strong, that some alteration should be made, I will make a recommendation." Then the position will be, should the Engineer-in-Chief furnish me with a recommendation, that it will have to be considered by Cabinet and, should the Government consider the deviation of the line necessary, a Bill will have to be presented to Parliament in order to deal with the question.

Hon. G. Taylor: Of course it will.

Mr. Lindsay: But the people do not seem to have been consulted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have been consulted. The first thing the Engineer-in-Chief did was to call in the advisory board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The extraordinary thing is that we passed the Bill on the board's report.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But it must be realised that the country out east was not known then. The Surveyor General did not know there existed a stretch of forest country lying to the eastward.

Hon. G. Taylor: We have too much country; we do not know what there is there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is largely so. To have ignored the discoveries that were made subsequently would have been the height of foolishness.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is nothing wrong in doing what you have done.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Engineer-in-Chief would have been remiss in his duty if he had not taken the trouble to collect the information and make the necessary inquiries, so as to be in a position to advise his Minister and the Government as to what should be done.

The Premier: He has collected information for the Government and Parliament to say what shall be done.

Mr. Lindsay: Is that what you wanted, information that the railways should be further apart?

The Premier: No, information as to what would best serve the interests of the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We want the best route for the railway to serve the country. That is the responsibility of the Engineer-in-Chief. I hope hon. members will be satisfied that no wrong has been done, nor can any wrong be done without Parliament first being consulted. First Cabinet must consider the position and then Parliament must say what shall be done.

The Premier: The whole thing is nonsense.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does appear to be nonsense. All this talk about lines being constructed, the Act ignored, and the Minister defying his own Government is nonsense and balderdash. It is a mere attempt to create an atmosphere; it is propaganda to influence a man in his duty. If I know the Engineer-in-Chief aright—I have not known him for very long—all this propaganda will not sway his judgment.

The Premier: It has been suggested that we propose to deviate a line to serve 30 or 40 miners on the land!

Mr. Lindsay: I was not responsible for that statement.

The Premier: You are responsible for starting the whole thing! It was in consequence of your speech!

Mr. Lindsay: I understood it was the duty of the advisory board to recommend where railways should go, not the Engineer-in-Chief.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What the hon. member contends is that we should not have regard to new discoveries, or facts; we should shut our eyes and act blindfolded.

The Premier: It was the Surveyor General who suggested it.

Mr. Lindsay : He is not the advisory board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell : The Surveyor General should have known about the country.

The Premier : That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : At any rate, the members of the advisory board are there now and the House should realise that everything is right. I want to assure the member for West Perth (Mr. Davy) and the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) that the points they mentioned regarding railway approaches and subways, as well as the prospect of town-planning legislation—the member for Claremont (Mr. North) also mentioned that subject—that the Government hope to bring down a town planning Bill this session. We do not know whether we shall be able to get it through this session but we hope to introduce it and allow it to be discussed.

The Premier : It can soak in during recess.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : As to the appointment of more auditors for the road boards, it is true that the audit of the books of some road boards was behind to the extent of three years. That applied to some in the Kimberleys.

Hon. G. Taylor : And it has always been so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Of course it has. We have put on two temporary men to endeavour to pull up the back work. I am seriously considering a proposal to discontinue the work of Government audit of road board books altogether.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell : You mean to amend the legislation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Yes. It appears to me that the system of Government auditing was introduced at a time when large sums of Government money were made available to the road boards on the pound for pound basis. In those days the road boards were spending Government money. This is not the position to-day, when they are spending their own funds. I do not know what justification there is for the Government auditing road board books. I have not yet made up my mind one way or the other but I am looking into the question to ascertain whether it is advisable to continue the present system.

Mr. J. H. Smith : Past experience shows it is necessary to have a check.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : As to the roads mentioned by the member for Moore (Mr. Ferguson), as having been disallowed on this year's programme, it is true that I made a statement that the road boards could count upon getting £2,000 a year for 18 years. I believe that will prove correct, too. If a board is short of £1,000 for one year it will be made up to them. I do not think there will be any difficulty in that matter. If the agreement continues over a period of 10 years I think each board will certainly receive its quota of £20,000. There is no doubt about that. I was responsible for disallowing the expenditure of money to complete the Gingin road. I do not propose to endorse any recommendation for additional expenditure on that road until some agreement is arrived at with the Minister for Lands as to what is to be done with the land there. A number of protests were made to me about that particular road being constructed. I looked into the question and found that the road was estimated to cost £53,000 to serve 11 settlers. I could have bought them out for half that amount.

Mr. Ferguson : You should have done so and put some dairymen on the land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : As it was put to me the road started nowhere and ended nowhere.

Mr. Ferguson : That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The Government considered the position and stopped the job. There was a proposal to undertake some drainage works and land resumption as well. I believe it was suggested that the district was suitable for dairying. It is a wrong policy to pursue to spend public money on increasing the value of land held by private owners if it is anticipated that the Government will resume the land.

Mr. Ferguson : A large sum was spent on the road already.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I stopped it shortly after I took over the department. The expenditure was approved by my predecessor.

Mr. Ferguson : You will waste £30,000 if the road is gone on with.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : At any rate, I will not approve of any more money being spent on the road until it is decided what is to be done with the land to which the road leads. If the Minister for Lands decides that that is to be resumed for closer settlement, and that people are to be put

out there, it might be justification for going on with the job. But if the road board up there want £2,000 in the meantime, the best thing they can do is to make another road. I think that answers the points that have been raised. When it comes to the Loan Estimates I will undertake to give the complete list of the activities of the Main Roads Board and let the House know what they have done. It is no light task to undertake the construction of roads from one end of the State to the other, and to create the necessary organisation. Here was every district crying out for its roads to be done first, while the season lasted. We were all anxious to help and do the best we could. We still have the record of living nearer to our programme than any of the other States. We have got far nearer each year to completing our year's programme than has any other State. In big schemes like this not everything can be done right up to the mark. But when members say there has been waste of money, I want them to put up a specific case to me and give me the information so that I can have inquiries made. It is of no use their saying to me, "We know there has been waste of money," without saying where and when. While I was away on sick leave I noticed a leading article in the "West Australian" slating the Main Roads Board and declaring that on one road there had been placed a greater depth of metal than was required by the specification, and that to remedy the position the Main Roads Board put on men with picks and shovels to take off the extra metal. The article went on to say that that job could be seen.

The Premier: Somebody was pulling the writer's leg.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I tried to find out where the job was. It was on the Northam road, going up from Chidlows. The facts are that an engineer was put on the job who has since been dismissed. He got the sack over that job. His fault was that he put a lot of poor-quality gravel, not the right stuff at all, but all mixed with clay, on the surface of the road, and when the rain fell the road became quite boggy. The Main Roads Board put on a grader and scraped the stuff off, replacing it with proper gravel.

Hon. G. Taylor: Was the engineer sacked?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Good gravel was put on in place of the poor stuff. I have been over the road, and I can say it is a really good job. Yet out of that incident arose the tale that there was

too much metal on the road and that accordingly men with picks and shovels were put on to take it off. That is the way the "West Australian" imagines things.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, the stuff was put on too thickly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If members have complaints to make, I want them to let me have the details. The Main Roads Board are not blameless. They have an enormous task, and they have made their mistakes. The only men who make no mistakes are those who do nothing. Those who set out to do things are sure to make mistakes, particularly when the task is so widespread as are the activities of the Main Roads Board. The board are anxious to see that good value is got for the money they spend. I hope that at the forthcoming conference in Melbourne we shall come to a better understanding with the Commonwealth people and be able to clear up a lot of the difficulties. Until that is done, the whole agreement is in jeopardy, for it is not possible to carry on under existing conditions. We cannot have an agreement that allows one party to tell the other fellow what he has to do all the while. We cannot have an agreement under which one man can lay it down, "That is what I say, and unless you agree, there will be no money." That can only lead to litigation. We disagree with their interpretations on many points, and we are backed by our legal advisers. Still we do not want the spectacle of one Government suing another in the courts. The position is becoming intolerable. I have not yet told the House and the public a lot of the things put up to us, because I am hoping to overcome the difficulties. There are serious obstacles in our way, and we have to try to find a solution at the forthcoming conference in Melbourne. I shall be back in time for the Loan Estimates, when I hope to explain to the House a lot of points I am unable to deal with to-night.

Item—Main Road contribution: Construction main roads, £36,000:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have listened to what the Minister had to say about the Gingin-Moore River road. People who have been there since the early days say there is plenty of good land. It certainly seems a considerable sum to spend on this road, but we cannot relinquish that area. It is impossible for the people there to get out over the country until the Min-

ister provides a reasonably good road. We have there a couple of thousand acres of swamp land drained, which could be sold and the returns from which would go a considerable way towards paying for the road. To say that people are not to have roads because there are only few settlers in the district is altogether a wrong attitude. The Minister took up a high-handed course when he stopped the construction of that road immediately on coming into office. He referred to the expenditure under the agreement before his term of office. As a matter of fact we had endless trouble. By the time we had all arrangements made the year was nearly out and very little was spent. I agree with the Minister that to enter into a hard and fast agreement is not always wise. If the Commonwealth are going to give us this money to spend, it ought to be subject to as few conditions as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: That is quite away from the item under discussion.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it is provided for under the agreement.

The CHAIRMAN: The agreement cannot be discussed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, I disagree with your ruling. We cannot be held up in this way. This amount is here because of the agreement: it is provided for under the agreement. I do not think you have the agreement before you.

The CHAIRMAN: No, but I have the item before me.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This item is here because of the agreement. I am endeavouring to point out that the Commonwealth have no right to tell us how to find the money. They have no right to say that £36,000 shall be taken from revenue and so much shall be provided from loan, simply because they make a contribution. Why should we be told to take £36,000 out of revenue for this purpose?

The Premier: Why should we be told how to find our portion of the money at all?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, why should we?

The Premier: It is for this Parliament to decide how it will find its share of the money, not for the Federal Government to tell us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is the point: they insist that we must do it. This agreement, which is a very hard and fast one, may or may not be good, but the spirit of it is wrong. I do not approve of

all that has been done in the way of road construction and I do not profess to believe that everything done has been done in the best way possible, but it has been done in our way and in our territory, and that should be sufficient.

The Premier: They not only say how their contribution shall be spent, but they say how ours shall be spent, and how we shall raise our portion. That is the extraordinary thing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I do not know whether this money may be used for the maintenance of roads or whether we have to maintain them entirely out of our own funds. If so, this business will be a terrific scourge because for all time the road boards will be responsible for the maintenance and it will be a responsibility they cannot shoulder. When the Minister goes to the conference, I hope he will secure a modification of the agreement. If the road boards have to spend hundreds of pounds on the maintenance of roads in the first year, the roads will not be maintained. We are calling upon the people to do far too much. We are constructing roads as we please, and then telling the road boards to maintain them for the rest of time. It cannot be done. We have no right to place these burdens upon the people without consulting them in any way. We have not asked them whether they want a road or whether they do not want it. We have simply said, "Here is the road; take it and maintain it. If you do not maintain it, we shall not find the money but shall take it out of your rates." The Minister will find that his task at the conference will tax his energy and ability to the full, but I hope he will be able to secure some modification that will lead to this expenditure becoming a blessing to the people and not the scourge that it is likely to be if we are not mighty careful. I hope some of the £36,000 will be spent on the Moore River road. The Minister has no right to take up the attitude he has adopted. A reasonable road should be provided for those settlers, who have been there since the early days. There is drained land in the locality that ought to be used.

Item — Rottneet Jetty, repairs and strengthening, £50:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Last year £50 was voted but nothing was spent. This year the same old £50 is provided. I should like to

know whether it means nothing is going to be done this year in the way of providing a new jetty.

Mr. Mann: That will come under Loan Estimates.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The £50 is provided on these Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No decision has been arrived at, but if there is to be a new jetty it will be dealt with on the Loan Estimates.

Item—Swan River, maintenance channels and minor works, £500:

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Is this amount for the work of reclamation at Victoria Park?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, it is merely for the channels.

Item—Traffic expenses, railways under construction, £2,300:

Mr. LINDSAY: Will the Minister state how far out the Ejanding northwards railway is likely to be constructed by the beginning of next winter? Before wheat can be accepted at the sidings, some definite information is required as to when it can be shifted. If it were known that the wheat could be shifted from a certain point in May, dumps would be erected at the sidings. It is expected that 750,000 bushels will be delivered at the sidings this season.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This item refers to traffic expenses—the expenses of running railways under construction.

Mr. Lindsay: That is what I am referring to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, you are talking about roads and how far the line will be out before next winter. I am not in a position to give the information, but I will try to ascertain it from the engineer and advise the hon. member.

Mr. LINDSAY: I understood that this item related to the expenses of railways before they were handed over to the Railway Department.

The Minister for Works: That is so.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Ejanding northwards railway will not be handed over until the 75 miles are built. If 50 miles were built by the middle of next year, the line would be operated by the Works Department. If the wheat is shifted in May, it will be handled not by the Railway Department but by the Works Department.

Item, Rates on revenue producing properties, £1,000.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Are the Government altering their policy in dealing with the payment of rates on the valuable properties they possess? Are rates going to be paid to the Manjimup Road Board upon State property at Pemberton. There are State hotels in the country which do not pay any rates. Will this money be devoted to the payment of these charges that ought to be paid by the Government?

The Premier: That is a question of policy, which has nothing to do with the Estimates.

Mr. Sampson: What are the properties on which rates are paid?

Mr. DAVY: This may have reference to railway properties that are let. I cannot understand under what circumstances rates would be paid by the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Let me instance the markets site at West Perth, where we let a lot of cottages to tenants. We pay rates on those cottages, which are revenue-producing. They are controlled from the Public Works Department.

The Premier: We do not pay in cases where properties are used for Government utilities.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Labour, £12,512—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's amendment.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.