

NOMS.	
Mr. Angwin	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bath	Mr. Price
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Holman	Mr. Ware
Mr. Horan	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Motion thus passed; progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 7th September, 1910.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: 1, Public Library, report for 1909-10; 2, Public Service List, 1910.

By the Attorney General: Return relating to fatalities on racecourses (ordered on motion by Mr. Daglish).

QUESTION — PERTH TRAMWAY TROUBLE, POLICE SERVICES.

Mr. HORAN asked the Attorney General: 1, Is it a fact that all extra police services rendered to banks, companies, or private individuals have always been paid

for by those concerned to the Police Department? 2, What scale of charges has it been customary to impose in such cases? 3, Has the Perth Tramway Company been charged for the extra services rendered by those police who had been specially employed in travelling on the tram cars during the tramway dispute? 4, If not, why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

1, Yes, when applied for, vide Regulation 544—

Police Regulation No. 544.

A sufficient number of police will be in attendance at all places of public resort where their services are likely to be required to preserve the public peace or prevent the commission of offences. When, however, the conductors of race meetings or other sports gatherings, or the managers of theatres, concerts, or other public gatherings require the services of members of the force to keep the grounds clear, maintain order during performances, or fulfil similar functions not properly belonging to the police, a charge will be made for the services of members of the force supplied for such purpose.

2, Under Police Regulation 545: For every constable for a full day and night, 13s. For every constable engaged for any shorter period, 1s. per hour. In the case of mounted constables an additional charge of 5s. per day or portion of a day will be made for each police horse. Where transport expenses are incurred these are charged in addition. 3, No. 4. The police are placed on the tram cars and tramway route for the protection of those on the cars.

QUESTION—MINING REGISTRAR, SOUTHERN CROSS.

Mr. HORAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Having regard to the increase of mining business at Southern Cross will he look into the matter of supplying assistance to the mining registrar, which question was raised by me some years ago? 2, Will he consult with the Public Service Commissioner and various departments concerned in order that this

officer's duties might be properly distributed so as to give adequate facilities to the public for the transaction of mining business?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, When the question of granting assistance to the mining registrar was brought under notice early in 1909, the matter was inquired into and it was arranged that one of the local police officers should assist in the office for a few hours daily. The mining registrar has recently reported that this arrangement is not adequate and requests that he be given assistance. This request is now being looked into, and if an additional officer is necessary arrangements will be made accordingly. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—JUDGES' DECISIONS UPSET.

Mr. HORAN asked the Attorney General: 1, How many decisions given by the undermentioned Judges for three years ended August 31st, 1910, have been reversed or varied on appeal? (a) Chief Justice Parker, (b) Mr. Justice McMillan, (c) Mr. Justice Burnside, (d) Mr. Justice Rooth? 2, What extra expenditure has the Crown incurred in the case of such decisions given by a, b, c, and d, as indicated by question No. 1?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, (a) 5, (b) 5, (c) 5, (d) 14. 2, As regards decisions in proceedings to which the Crown was not a party—nil. As regards decisions in proceedings to which the Crown was a party, all appeals having been decided in favour of the Crown, no extra expenditure was incurred by the Crown, except where the unsuccessful appellant or respondent (as the case may be) had not the means to pay the costs awarded to the Crown, of which the following are particulars:—(a) £31 17s. 6d., (b) £13 10s., (c) 10s., (d) £52 6s.

QUESTION — IMMIGRATION. DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Premier: 1, Is it a fact, as stated in a letter in yesterday's *West Australian*, that advertisements have appeared in an English

paper for "domestic servants at 25s. to 30s. per week, cooks at 35s. to 50s. per week, for Western Australia, free passages on deposit of £2, repayable on landing in the State; apply to a certain firm of licensed immigrant agents"? 2, If so, is it with the sanction of the Government?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The Government have no knowledge of, nor have they given authority for, any such advertisement.

QUESTION — LAND SELECTION, ESPERANCE DISTRICT.

Mr. HUDSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What was the date of applications Nos. 13175/74 and 24147/55 by George Doust for land at Dalyup, near Esperance? 2, On what date were they received? 3, On what grounds were the applications refused? 4, What is the name of the witness to the signature of the applicant? 5, To whom has the land applied for by Doust been granted? 6, What was the date of the present lessee's application? 7, When was it received by the department? 8, What is the name of the witness to the signature of the applicant? 9, On what date was the application approved?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, 21-8-'09, at Esperance; 2, 6-9-'09, at Perth; 3, Previously applied for by F. G. Dempster; 4, R. H. Wace, J.P.; 5, F. G. Dempster; 6, 23-8-'09, at Perth; 7, 23-8-'09; 8, H. A. Ranford; 9, 20-9-'09.

QUESTION — RAILWAY SECOND-CLASS SLEEPING CARS.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Railways: In view of the considerable proportion which second-class passenger traffic bears to the whole receipts from the carrying of passengers on the Government Railways, will he consider the advisability of providing sleeping accommodation for second-class passenger on all-night railway journeys?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: The question has been under consideration for some time, but owing

to the carriage stock being limited it is impracticable to make the necessary provision at the present time.

QUESTION—TIMBER LEASE. CONDITIONS UNFULFILLED.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that the conditions attached to timber leases 145/113, Maryvale District, have not been carried out? 2, What action does the Minister propose to take concerning leases where the conditions have not been complied with?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No, the conditions have been complied with. 2, In cases where the conditions have not been complied with the question of forfeiture will be considered.

QUESTION — STATE SAWMILL, EQUIPMENT.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government to properly equip the State sawmill? 2, Do the Government propose to erect cottages for the employees of the State sawmill? 3, If not, why not.

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Not at the present site. 3, The present site is only temporary, and the employees are supplied with timber to enable them to make temporary camps.

MOTION—MAIN ROADS. MAINTENANCE BY STATE.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan) moved—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the State should undertake the maintenance of the main roads of the State.

He said: In bringing this motion forward for the consideration of the House I do so in the endeavour to arrive at some settlement of a very vexed question, one which gives rise every year to considerable debate, and apparently without any satisfactory finality being arrived at. The matter will, of course, require careful investigation to finally decide which are

the main roads; but, at present, I suppose we may say that the following represent what generally are regarded as main roads:—Perth-Fremantle, Perth-York, Perth-Albany, Perth-Bunbury, and Perth-Geraldton. No doubt there are other roads that may be properly described as main roads, but I am not acquainted with them. I have no doubt this list will be extended, but those are the only roads of which I have personal knowledge and which may rightly be described as main roads. The practice in the past has been for the Government to put a special item on the Estimates for the maintenance of these roads, because it was agreed, and in my opinion rightly so, that the principal burden of maintaining these roads, which are to a large extent used for traffic which is other than local, should not fall entirely on the local authority, and the State recognised that and has year after year given special grants for the upkeep of certain main roads. Objection has been taken that the special grants so given have not been equitably distributed, and that the metropolitan area has had the principal benefit. I hope the Minister will recognise that the time has arrived to agree upon some settled principle in dealing with this matter. I do not know whether any of us who objected to such large votes being expended last year, and in previous years, on the Perth-Fremantle road—

Mr. Angwin: Large votes?

Mr. JACOBY: Well, a large expenditure as compared with that laid out on other main roads. As I say, I do not know whether we objected to the principle of expenditure on main roads; I think the main objection was that one district should have been so singled out while others were neglected. The principle should be applied generally or not at all. I feel sure, unless the Government recognise in some way or other it is necessary and equitable that some contribution should be made from the general revenue towards the upkeep of these roads, we will never get a settlement of the question. My motion proposes that the Government should recognise that the

upkeep of main roads is largely within their province. We have an excellent precedent for this in South Australia, where the main high roads were all built, and are very largely maintained, out of general revenue; and anybody who knows that State knows that the system of main roads there obtaining is recognised as probably the finest system in Australia. The principle observed in South Australia is that the main roads shall be kept in repair by the State, whilst the minor roads are built and maintained by the local authorities. That system has worked satisfactorily. In Victoria they have decided that the time has arrived to adopt a similar system, and recently a deputation waited upon one of the Ministers in respect to this very question. In reply the Minister (Mr. Cameron) said he supported the views put forward by the deputation in advocating the establishment of a main roads board to provide for the construction and maintenance of main thoroughfares throughout the State. Sparsely-populated shire councils, he said, could not be expected to make and maintain main roads which carried through them the traffic of other districts. He pointed out also that each municipal engineer had his own way of making roads, and that, in consequence, a striking diversity of construction was unavoidable under the existing system—a system which he considered was bad and called for improvement. I do not know whether it is the intention of the Government to continue in their present policy of decreasing the amounts annually given to roads boards. I notice that last year the amount went down by another £6,000. If that is to be continued I very much fear the result, because it must considerably retard development in the State. Four or five years ago we were giving as much as £80,000 to the roads boards of the State, whereas at the present time we are giving a little over £50,000. Seeing that development is taking place at a very rapid rate, that settlement is going on apace, that the demands on the roads are every day becoming heavier, and that in certain districts in the South-West de-

velopment can only take place as the result of road building rather than railway building—seeing that road building is essential to the development of those districts, I sincerely hope the Government are not going to continue this policy of reducing the amounts given to roads boards in the South-Western portion of the State. These roads are essential, as they are also, though perhaps to a lesser degree, in all the agricultural districts, and it is impossible that there should be any great extent of development in the South-West unless accompanied by the making of roads. How can these roads be provided; is it possible that the main work of providing them can be left to the local authorities? If members interested in the matter will look at the public works returns they will see that in most of the roads districts in the South-West taxation has been largely increased, some of the boards taxing up to the limit allowed by the Act, and still finding it impossible to provide for the absolute needs of the people in respect to roads. We have seen the result of experiments made in the old country as to what can be done in this State regarding fruit export; and I am safe in saying that, providing the Government give every reasonable encouragement to the development of these South-Western districts, we shall find the development of Western Australia in that industry will be greater than that of any other State in Australia. In saying this I am using a conservative expression. Opportunities for the export of fruit are enormous, and the possibilities of the State are quite equal to these opportunities. Most if not all of these possibilities occur in the South-West, and I cannot conceive how development can be expected to go on if the present policy of reducing the roads grants is to be continued. If this fruit export trade is to be carried on with any hope of financial profit it is essential that the fruit be landed in the markets of the world in excellent condition; and one of the most necessary aids towards that end is the provision of good roads. If anybody will take the trouble to inquire he will find there has been very con-

siderable stimulus given to the development of the South-West, particularly in connection with fruit-growing. So there we find, not only need for maintaining the present amount of assistance given by the Government to road development, but strong reasons for increasing it. Under the circumstances I cannot believe that the Government are proposing to continue to reduce the grants to roads boards. In asking the Government to take over the maintenance of main roads we are asking for what, after all, will be very small assistance indeed. I trust that the Minister, who promised the other night that he was going to consider this question with an open mind—I am not quite sure of the quality of my hon. friend's open mind; I hope he is genuine in this matter—

The Minister for Works: What does the hon. member wish to insinuate?

Mr. JACOBY: I want to make sure if the door of the Minister's mind is sufficiently wide open to allow this project to get through. If it is, then I believe we may hope to have his support for the principle contained in this motion. If the House adopts the motion it will, of course, become a question of how the principle is to be put into practical operation. I presume the best way would be to give power to the Governor-in-Council to define "main roads"; and once a road is declared a main road the system can be elaborated in respect to the upkeep of those roads. I do not for a moment say the local authority should be relieved of all responsibility, but there should be some equitable apportionment of responsibility between the Government and the local authority. The details concerning the method of arriving at that will be for departmental consideration, but I hope I have said sufficient to convince the Minister that the adoption of this motion is necessary, and that it will be of considerable assistance to the Works Department in relieving it of a question that must remain exceedingly troublesome until it is settled. I have pleasure in submitting the motion to the House, and I

trust it will receive favourable treatment at the hands of hon. members.

Mr. CARSON (Geraldton): While formally seconding the motion I am not altogether in agreement with it, because I think it would be a very big contract indeed for the Government to undertake the construction of main roads. In fact, some of those roads are very rarely used. I think the Government should construct all new roads and see that the local authorities maintain them. It is essential that the Government should go in for the construction of certain roads as feeders to our railway system. If the Government undertook the construction of these feeders to our railways it would be a much better proposition than that contained in the motion.

Mr. George: How would you define these feeders?

Mr. CARSON: All roads that lead to a railway. It would be much more difficult to define our main roads. I think the suggestion I offer would be very much better in the interests of the country than that embodied in the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): With a view to easing his anxiety in this direction I may at once inform the hon. member who moved the motion that the reason why the Government had to reduce the grants for special roads during the past four or five years was, not the want of will to render assistance as far as possible, but the want of funds.

Mr. Scaddan: Parliament made you do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do what?

Mr. Scaddan: Make the reduction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Parliament did nothing of the sort; Parliament passed the Estimates every year. I am speaking of roads grants. The mover of the motion expressed the wish that the Government would not go on reducing the roads grants. I want to ease his anxiety on that point by explaining that it was not by the wish of the Government that grants generally to roads boards were reduced, so much as

it was necessary owing to the state of the finances. We would be only too pleased to make the grants as large as possible provided we could see the money was well expended. I want to admit also at once that the great necessity for this State, next to railway construction—almost equal, I think, to railway construction—is road construction; because it is impossible to expect our settlers and our miners and those engaged in the out-back country to make a success of their operations unless they have access to the railway system which we are extending year by year. The House will at once understand that the Government do not wish to cut down these grants merely for the sake of cutting them down. We want to provide as much as we can out of the general fund in order that the roads of the State may be in as good a condition as possible; but the question the hon. member has opened up is a much larger one, possibly, than he imagines or even hon. members can imagine without much fuller information than we have at present at our command. During the few hours I have had to seek information I have been unable as yet to ascertain, first of all, what may reasonably be considered the main roads throughout the State. The hon. member has referred to two or three in the more settled districts, the older districts of Western Australia, and he referred to the Perth-Fremantle, Perth-York, Perth-Bunbury, and Perth-Geraldton roads. Now, although these roads comprise some hundreds of miles, I venture to say there are many other main roads in Western Australia that have to be classed as such equally with those referred to. There are hundreds of miles of goldfields tracks. I have travelled over some of them. I travelled over one the other day from Leonora to Lawlers and from Lawlers to Sandstone—200 miles of main roads.

Mr. Underwood: You should travel from Peak Hill to Nullagine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have travelled from Nannine to Peak Hill, and it is quite sufficient to travel that track without going further North

to Nullagine. At any rate we would possibly have a thousand miles of main roads in Western Australia, if not more, if we had to take all these tracks into consideration together with others that may be classed as main roads and which are being opened up in our agricultural districts. It amounts to this that we would first of all have difficulty in defining the main roads. That may be overcome. Then we would have to extend the department or create a new department to take charge of these roads with the necessary engineers and district supervisors. I very much doubt whether the work would be done cheaper. In fact, I am bound to say that in my opinion it would not be done cheaper than by the local authorities. It might be done better, that is, more expensively; but I do not think the work of maintaining these main roads would be done more economically than it is under the local authorities.

Mr. George: Have you not made provision in the new Roads Bill for loans? That would get over it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. We come to this point, that if we cannot benefit by altering the system, is it wise to attempt to alter it; if the work cannot be done more cheaply or better by creating a department than it is at the present, is it wise to alter the system? I had the pleasure of introducing the other night a new Roads Bill, which, as the member for Murray has interjected, provides very much increased powers for these local authorities to borrow for the construction and maintenance of roads. The member for Swan has impressed on us on more than one occasion that it is necessary to give these local governing bodies greater powers in this direction; and I hope when this measure passes and they have these powers they will exercise them. But after all is said and done, the taxpayer has to find the money for this work, in common with any other work that belongs to the State; and whether we take upon ourselves as a Government or as a Parliament to impose general taxation for the purpose of carrying out this work, or whether we

allow the local authorities to impose that taxation, it matters very little in the principle. It appeals to me in this way, that perhaps it is fairer that the local authorities should have the burden cast upon their shoulders. As long as we give them the requisite powers, is it not better for the men who are in the districts through which these roads pass to maintain their portions of the road and impose the necessary taxation for their upkeep, always, of course, with the Government to adjust any little difference there may be, for instance in very wide and sparsely populated road districts, or where perhaps one district has a much greater extent of main roads than it is justly entitled to maintain? It seems to me we can get better results out of the present system; and if we pass the Bill I have referred to, giving these extended powers, I am satisfied from late inquiries these roads boards in a general way do take much greater individual interest in their work than people imagine. I have met a good many members of these boards who have described to me the personal supervision they have given to work carried out under their directions as members of boards. I think at the present juncture, at any rate, it would be wise to hasten slowly in the direction the hon. member has indicated. I am prepared to say, as the member for Geraldton has said, that the Government ought to construct these main roads. Whenever they are necessary we should find the money to construct them; and the same with bridges; but once the roads and works are completed, then I think the local authorities concerned ought to take upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining them and finding the necessary money for the purpose. I do not know that I need say any more on the subject. That is the opinion I have formed lately. Of course my mind is perfectly open, and I am prepared to be convinced that I am wrong. Certainly I should take the opportunity of consulting the officers of the department to see if they can throw any further light on the subject. Not only are main roads required for con-

veying food to the market, but in our wheat-growing districts roads are badly needed, and out in the mining districts they are badly needed; right throughout the State in connection with every industry and in connection with every progressive movement in Western Australia money is wanted for roads; and more especially at the present time do we want money for the construction of hundreds of miles of new roads. I think we must turn attention to that first, provide the new roads and let the local authorities, for the time being at any rate, do their best, under the new powers which I hope they will have shortly, to maintain these roads in a proper state of repair.

Mr. COLLIER (Boulder): The member for Swan in his motion desires that the Government should undertake the maintenance of main roads, but from what I gathered the most of his argument was in the direction of favouring the construction of main roads. If the hon. member desires merely that roads already in existence should be maintained, no matter how much I may sympathise with his object, and with those who are compelled to use roads at present in a bad state, I maintain the proposal is utterly impossible. The estimate of the Minister for Works as to the mileage of our main roads is considerably under the mark. He said we had 500 miles. It would be nearer the mark putting it at 5,000 miles.

The Minister for Works: I may have mentioned 500 miles as being the length of the roads referred to by the member for Swan.

Mr. COLLIER: We must realise there are thousands of miles of roads other than those mentioned by the member for Swan. Of course it all depends upon what a main road is. If the roads described by the hon. member may fairly be classed as main roads, there is no doubt there are other roads which with equal justice may be classed as main roads. If we had the money to spend in this direction I think it should be spent on the construction of roads in new districts. With the advance that is being made in agricul-

tural settlement during the past few years, which we know will increase in the years to come, there are settlers situated some distance from railways, and it is almost impossible, in the wet weather at any rate, for them to get their produce to the railway. So I say that if we have any money at all it should be expended in the direction of constructing roads rather than maintaining them. I have no sympathy with the proposal to spend money on the maintenance of the main road between Perth and Fremantle or that between Perth and Guildford. It may be argued, as it has been argued in the past, that these roads run through sparsely-populated districts and are not used to any great extent by the residents themselves; but the fact remains that they are splendid roads in good condition, and if they are not used by the people residing in the immediate vicinity they are to a large extent, if not almost entirely, so far as Perth and Fremantle are concerned, used by the people of these two cities. To use the revenue raised from settlers who are struggling in remote districts and spend it on these roads between Perth and Fremantle and Guildford cannot be justified in any sense whatever. The member for Swan states that they maintain roads in other States, but what a difference it is maintaining roads in a small State like Victoria and in old settled districts such as there are in the Eastern States! If we undertake to maintain the main roads of this State we are undertaking an enormous liability, much greater than they have in the Eastern States where they have larger populations. I think it is just as well to be frank. I believe the Minister might—I will not say frank—but he might have said that in his opinion it was impossible to comply with the motion.

The Minister for Works: I gave my opinion very clearly.

Mr. COLLIER: So long as the need for new roads is likely to continue during the next few years as it has in the past, the question of the maintenance of roads already in existence is out of the question.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): Unfortunately I was not in the Chamber when the hon. member submitted his motion, nor had I the pleasure of hearing the Minister for Works make his statement. I have been informed that the hon. member indicated certain roads which, in his opinion, provided examples of what might really be termed main roads, such as those between Perth and Fremantle, Northam, Bunbury, York, and Albany. Surely it is altogether too much to expect that money should be taken from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the maintenance of such roads. The Government should at all times give facilities to people for transit, whether by railway or main roads; but, when once the Government open up roads, the people should maintain them, especially in such areas as those indicated by the hon. member, they being the most densely populated portions of the State. The Minister knows well what difficulty has been experienced by members representing the sparsely populated outside districts in obtaining small grants for road construction. The Minister will remember how, when he was Treasurer, he found it necessary to husband the funds of the State. It was only when one could bring more than strong arguments to bear upon the Treasurer in favour of the obtaining of a grant for road construction that the request was complied with. It is one of the functions of a Minister, especially the Treasurer, to preserve the funds of the State. I do not know what the Treasurer feels about the matter, but I hope he will not fall in with the views expressed by the member for Swan and maintain the roads which have been built in the districts indicated for many years. In the outback districts we have not roads through the bush but merely tracks, which in the winter season are almost impassable. The Premier will remember a road he drove over a couple of years ago when the coach was bogged and the passengers very nearly drowned. The road is fairly passable in dry weather, and there are numbers more of the same kind in the back country. There are such roads in

the newly-settled agricultural areas, in many of which places the people have to cut their own tracks.

Mr. George: The same in the old settlements.

Mr. TAYLOR: In view of that, it would be unwise for the House to convey to the Government the idea, by supporting this resolution, that they believe the State should maintain roads already constructed. I feel quite sure the people in the outback districts would be only too pleased to maintain the roads after they were once constructed.

Mr. George: They cannot all do that.

Mr. TAYLOR: I admit that, but they can go a good way towards it. It is certainly a very laudable idea of the member for Swan that we should have good roads in all the main centres. Personally, I have suffered inconvenience about the metropolitan area at times through the roads being a little rough, but I am not satisfied that their maintenance should come out of the Treasury. One of the great faults of the local governing bodies is, that once a road has been constructed, they let it run for years without doing anything in the way of repairs, with the result that it eventually costs as much money to put it in order as it did to construct in the first instance. If they only looked after these roads and kept them in repair from the outset, the cost would be but small. Look at the road to Fremantle. Parts of it are almost impassable, and will have to be formed afresh and the cost of repairing will be almost equal to that of construction. I hope members will not support the motion.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): I desire to move an amendment to the motion. It is as follows:—

That all the words after "should" be struck out, and "render greater assistance to roads boards in the construction of new roads which are necessary for the development of the State's resources" be inserted in lieu.

In my opinion a motion providing for the maintenance of what the member for Swan characterises as main roads is not

desirable, for the funds of the Treasury should not be utilised in that direction. No doubt the members for Swan and Murray were right in their definition of what constitutes a main road.

Mr. George: I did not make a definition.

Mr. BATH: I beg the hon. member's pardon; I thought he did. Members might give a definition, but I think it would be a very unsatisfactory one.

The Premier: What is your definition of a main road?

Mr. BATH: I am not prepared to give one. It can readily be understood that there are many cases of roads upon which those engaged in the primary industries of the State are dependent, but which perhaps cannot be characterised as main roads. Take as an illustration a road branching out eight or ten miles from a railway line, or one for a longer distance running out to a new mining centre. Such roads would not answer the description of a main road as appearing on the Estimates year after year, but they are most important roads, and need very much greater assistance than those mentioned by the member for Swan. They are much more necessary than the roads which radiate from Perth and run in the vicinity of the railway lines. The same importance cannot attach to such roads as those running out, for instance, from places like Kellerberrin to the large settlement taking place to the North, North-East, and South in the Kwollyin division. Those roads are of very great importance, and the roads board are being tested to their uttermost to provide reasonable facilities for those who are pioneering such areas. This fact will undoubtedly be recognised during the coming season when the settlers find it necessary to cart their hay, and, later on, their wheat, to market. One can imagine the condition those roads will be in after the recent heavy rains. They will form a very serious handicap to the settlers at the outset of their farming career. If, on the other hand, we affirm the desirability of greater assistance being rendered to the roads boards, we can leave it to the local authorities to determine how the money should best be expended.

I have faith in the roads boards, and believe they will recognise the need for expenditure on these new arteries from the railway to areas situated ten, fifteen, twenty, and up to forty miles away, and that they will utilise the money for the purpose of providing the best possible facilities. If we are to affirm any motion, it is necessary that we should affirm the desirability of giving assistance towards the provision of new roads, not only in the agricultural areas but also in the mining districts where new fields are being developed in outlying parts. That assistance could be best granted by making a greater contribution instead of a less, as has been the case during the last few years, to the boards controlling those districts.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore): If this discussion does nothing else, it will show that members are desirous of according assistance with the object of developing the country by means of roads; but, at the same time, I hardly think the amendment will meet all that is desired. I would point out that last year the sum of £25,000 was provided from loan exclusive of revenue votes for the construction of new roads, but in some of the old settled districts the so-called main roads are in greater need of expenditure than those in some of the new districts. I am not speaking without my book, for I know well the country to the East of the Great Southern line. I have surveyed 100 miles of boundaries from the centre of a block, and have driven in a buggy to every portion of it, without there being a track, whereas we know that in some of the South-Western portions of the State it is almost impossible to get along some of the roads that have been in existence for the last 50 or 60 years.

Mr. Heitmann: One wants a boat.

The PREMIER: Yes, in some instances. Take a road that has been in existence for years, namely that between Bunbury and Capel. In many parts it is nothing but sand, but one cannot even go along it at the present time in a motor car. Those are examples of districts where the conditions are entirely different.

In the Great Southern country the question of clearing a track is only a small item, amounting to £3 or £4 a mile; but we know that in places in the South-West culverts have to be constructed every five or ten chains, and it must be remembered that culverts run into a big expense. Neither the motion nor the amendment meets with my views. I think it would be preferable to see framed a motion expressing the opinion of the House that the Government should take steps to increase the amount voted, with the object of giving better road facilities. If that were done discretion might be allowed to the local authorities. In some cases the vote might be expended on new roads, and in other cases it might be expended on maintenance and on repairing roads which have been in existence for a number of years. I believe there is one road which the leader of the Opposition is prepared to support, although it can hardly be characterised as a new road; therefore, I do not expect the hon. member will be able to support the amendment moved by the member for Brown Hill. I quite agree with what has been said by the member for Brown Hill that it is difficult to define a main road. In the constituency of the member for Swan it would be rather difficult to define a main road. Off-hand, I should say that the road to Chidlow's Well would be a main road, and the road to Armadale would be a main road; but the roads that would be of value to the settlers very often would not be the roads running parallel with the railway line, but the roads leading into the various stations. Take the Swan district which the hon. member represents. The cost of making roads there is very heavy indeed, and those settled in that constituency, fruit-growers and others, will not derive very much benefit from the money which will be allocated by Parliament if the motion is carried. I think it would be preferable if both suggestions were dropped with a view of formulating a motion which would give effect to the wishes of the House generally, that greater assistance should be rendered and that it should not necessarily be confined to main roads.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): It seems to me that it would be far better if both the motion and the amendment were withdrawn. The Roads Bill which has been referred to a select committee of this House contains provisions under which a roads board may borrow money to do work in its particular district, and surely those gentlemen who are in favour of decentralisation should be inclined to give a local government a fair show to demonstrate what they can do. The question was raised as to what a main road is, and it has been stated by an hon. member that the districts should attend to these roads. I will give an instance in my particular district. Between Pinjarra and Mandurah there is a road 14 miles long which has been made for a great number of years. It was originally made by the Government, and the wearing down of that road has been principally through the traffic brought about by the visitors who proceed to Mandurah.

Mr. Bath: What roads board is that in?

Mr. GEORGE: The Murray roads board, who are alive to the necessity for repairing the road, and they have looked after their work very carefully, and always get it done as cheaply as possible. I know that that roads board would be prepared to borrow money if they had the power to put that and other roads in their district in order; and the board have interviewed the Minister for Works already on that subject. In dealing with what might be termed main roads, a considerable amount of care and judgment needs to be exercised in determining whether those roads are likely to be used for any length of time. I might mention a road which the Premier knows well, that which runs from Brunswick to Lunenburg and then on to Collie. For about three miles this road can be used, but beyond that it is very difficult to even walk there. This is not because the road was not made in the first instance, but because the scrub and the young trees have grown to such an extent that now it will be necessary to put on a clearing gang. That kind of thing prevails all through the

South-Western district. One can quote a similar instance in the district of Denmark, where there is a great amount of clearing done, and where, at the present time, a good deal of the work will have to be done over again, not because it was not properly done in the first instance but because Nature has reasserted itself, as it will do in all these wet districts. Seeing that the Roads Bill will give a roads board power to borrow money, I think the House might fairly remember that in dealing with the motion. The roads boards of the State have done and are still doing good work, and it must also be remembered that the rating system has only been in existence for a few years. The motion and the amendment might properly be withdrawn without any harm being done. The discussion will have done some good, because it will cause hon. members to think on a subject which is of importance to us all. There are lots of places in the country where the formation will make it an easy matter to construct roads; but there are also other places where the cost of road-making will be very heavy. There is another matter I might draw attention to; the Government are pushing forward their railway policy, and many of these railways have been constructed parallel, or in close proximity, to what were at one time main roads, and as the railway traffic will increase these main roads will hardly be used. There is the road from Pinjarra to Marradong that the Premier knows of; that was a main road at one time, but now that the railway is out 16 miles a good portion of the road will hardly be used at all, and it will cease to be a main road. As there must be many such instances, we should go about this matter very carefully.

Mr. BATH: I may explain with regard to my amendment that I have no objection to leaving out the word "new."

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): I cannot see why the Premier objects to the amendment, because it will not curtail any assistance that the Government might desire to render for repairing the

roads which have already been constructed. The amendment states that it is necessary that the Government should give greater assistance for the construction of new roads. I merely rose for the express purpose of objecting that in a discussion of this kind the road between Perth and Fremantle is always brought into the debate as an argument that main roads should not be constructed out of general revenue. The member for Boulder pointed out that it has been stated the main road between Perth and Fremantle is not used by the residents in the vicinity of that road; it is used by residents of Perth and Fremantle. The only way to make the residents of Perth and Fremantle contribute to the upkeep of that road is by taxation payable to the revenue of the State. I fail to realise why those people, who are taxpayers, should object to the maintenance of these roads by the State. An hon. member stated that it would not be fair to use the taxpayers' money in the construction or in the maintenance of roads such as these. But are not all people taxpayers? It has also been argued that the people should be able to maintain the roads in their own district; but I would point out that money which has been used by the Government for the maintenance of roads does not belong to one particular section, and no matter what money is expended it must be the money of the people generally, and therefore the people are maintaining the roads. It has also been pointed out that it would be a matter of impossibility for the Government to take over the maintenance of these roads. It might be very difficult at the present time for the Government to do that, but not, as explained by the Minister, because we wanted district surveyors and superintendents to see the work carried out. I fail to see anything impossible about that.

The Minister for Works: I did not say it would be impossible.

Mr. ANGWIN: Some member said so. It can be done, and I consider, as far as the main roads are concerned, that such roads should be maintained from the gen-

eral revenue. I realise in various parts of the world that they have local authorities controlling large areas for the purpose of keeping up these main roads, but the work is not confined to the local bodies entirely. The main roads are kept in good order by the greater body, and if it can be done in other parts of the world there is nothing, as far as I know, in Western Australia to prevent the same result being carried out. I agree at the present time that it might be difficult, and if the amendment is carried, whereby the Government will render greater assistance for the construction of new roads, I think the requirements of everyone will be met.

Mr. PIESSE (Katanning): I am pleased an opportunity has been given to-day to discuss this all important question of roads construction. I take it the member for Swan desires the House to indicate to the Government that it is necessary to provide a larger amount for the upkeep of main roads throughout the State. I agree that in certain cases the Government should maintain main roads, but I think that has been done to a certain extent by the subsidies allowed to the various local bodies. However, I feel sure all hon. members must regret to notice that year after year the roads vote has been a diminishing quantity; and it is the more regrettable considering that there is a greater necessity to-day for more active road construction than there has ever been in the history of the State. The grants to roads boards were not less than £50,000 some 25 years ago; and to-day we find that the vote from revenue has been reduced to £25,000, whilst special grants total some £12,000, and an additional sum of £25,000 is voted from loan. After all, when we come to consider the enormous extent of country which has been opened up by the clearing of roads, it will be seen that it is impossible for the local authorities to deal successfully with the requirements of their various districts with so small a subsidy at their disposal. The Minister has pointed out that there are 104 roads boards in existence in the State to-day, and I under-

stand there are many other localities both in agricultural and goldfields districts applying for the creation of roads boards. In other words there will be an increase in the number of roads boards in the near future, and, presumably, a decrease in the amount of subsidy which will be available to each board. It is all very well for us to indicate to the Government our desire that they should increase the vote both for construction and for maintenance of the roads throughout the State. I am perfectly in accord with these objects; but at the same time we are apt to overlook the most important feature in connection with this, namely, the question of ways and means. It seems to me impossible to increase the grants to roads unless we agree to increased taxation. Therefore it will be necessary for the House to indicate the manner in which the Government may obtain the funds necessary to carry out this work. I am satisfied the Government will have to consider some bolder policy in regard to these roads. In other words we will have to borrow money to a larger extent for the construction of roads. I think if one looks around this country and sees the development taking place, not only in our agricultural districts, but also in the South-Western district, as pointed out by the member for Swan and by the Premier, it will be realised that greater efforts will have to be put forward to meet the growing requirements in respect to roads. It might be argued that the construction of spur lines of railways taking place at the present time will, to some extent, relieve our main roads; but as these railways are pushed out roads, of course, are pushed further back, and it means that we will have to provide greater road facilities for the bringing of the traffic to these railways. As pointed out by the member for Brown Hill, this is a growing necessity in every agricultural district, in all those districts at present growing wheat. Quite recently I had an opportunity of paying a visit to the districts East of the Great Southern, and I can assure members that the roads in that district were in a deplorable

state, in fact they were not passable. One road in particular, over which I had to travel had been cut up so much by the traffic that it was dangerous to follow it, whether by night or by day. To give the House some idea of the condition of that road I may say that with a pair of fresh buggy horses it took me an hour and a-half to drive less than seven miles. The road had merely been cleared; nothing had been done in the way of construction; and during the very heavy rains it had been woefully cut up by the traffic, with the result that every foot of the full width of some 16 to 20 feet cleared had been converted into a veritable brick yard. It struck me at the time that some bolder policy of assistance to road construction should be developed. To my mind it will be necessary to borrow money for road construction, and I hope the Minister for Works will look into this question and see if some scheme cannot be brought forward for giving greater assistance to the local authorities. I quite realise that if such a scheme were adopted it would be necessary to have a better system of supervision, and possibly a better system of roads construction. I think that difficulty could be overcome by the appointment of a district roads engineer to look after certain localities. If this were done Parliament and the Government could be satisfied that, whatever expenditure had been made on the road, the work would be carried out to their entire satisfaction. I hope that even if nothing be done in the immediate future to increase the roads grants, the Government, before Parliament prorogues, will indicate that they are prepared to undertake some larger scheme of roads construction, something which will be more in keeping with the requirements of the progress of this State.

Mr. HEITMANN (Cue): There is but little I have to say on this matter. I listened with some degree of interest to the member who moved the motion, and knowing that he had during several discussions in the Chamber mentioned this matter of main roads I certainly expected

to hear from him some more tangible reasons why the House should be asked to approve the motion. As a matter of fact it appears to me the hon. member has not even satisfied himself as to what he requires. He has mentioned several roads as examples, and I take it when he mentions these he means that these roads, and roads like them in various parts of the State, should be maintained by the Government. I believe he also mentioned various roads which, in his opinion, should be built. As a matter of fact all the roads in the out-back portions of the country mentioned by the hon. member are roads running parallel with the railways; and I do not think that even he would hold that the various roads boards through whose districts these roads run could legitimately claim from the Government the cost of the upkeep of their particular sections of the roads. He mentioned in the metropolitan area a thoroughfare that has, I think, been discussed in the House. With several other members I am of opinion that whilst it is true the upkeep of this particular road between Perth and the port is very heavy, the proportion of ratepayers in the districts through which the road passes is quite sufficient to keep the road in repair. I have heard a good deal of late of the good work done by the roads boards in various parts of the State; and I wish to add my opinion that undoubtedly the gentlemen who serve on these boards are doing good work, generally speaking. But I would like it to be understood that to my thinking there is any amount of work to be done by the Government, and by members themselves, in endeavouring to bring about some economy in the administration of the various roads boards and other local governing bodies in the State. I am of opinion that the task of making and keeping these roads in repair would really not be so heavy if the work of these roads boards were carried out in a proper way. One can only speak confidently of any one particular district of which he has had experience. Before mentioning my own district I would like to say I think the Gov-

ernment should inquire very closely into the administration of these various local governing bodies, and if it be found that an undue proportion of their income is being expended in administration then the Government should want to know the reason why. In my own district, that is Cue, there is opportunity for saving hundreds of pounds if the various bodies would meet and agree to amalgamate. Failing their doing so, I think it is the duty of the Government to protect the taxpayers—and I feel sure they could do it—to the extent of many hundreds of pounds? We have the municipality of Cue, and three and a half miles away the municipality of Day Dawn, and surrounding and between the two municipalities is the road district. Added to these local bodies we have also the local board controlling the distribution of water for the district. It is interesting to know that in the whole of the area controlled by these local bodies there are 1,160 ratepayers; and the cost of the administration of these bodies, together with the health boards, which of course come under the municipalities, amounts to £1,309. Here is a case where I feel sure great economy can be effected. There is a town clerk at Cue to whom they pay £250 a year, I believe. They have a town clerk at Day Dawn, and there is a secretary to the roads board, while until recently they had a secretary to the water board at £300 a year. If these local bodies amalgamated I believe £600 a year could be saved on administration and expended, if necessary, in the improvement of roads, or, if that were not necessary, the taxpayers could be relieved to that extent. Of course I understand that the matter brought forward by the hon. member was particularly with reference to agricultural areas. I think the Government should be prepared, if they find it necessary, to assist the boards controlling districts where people are few and far between. At the same time it would be unwise to pass the amendment moved by the member for Brown Hill for the reason we should not lay down hard and fast principles. I prefer to leave it to the Government and their officers to take into

consideration the circumstances surrounding each individual case, so that if the Government and their officers considered a roads board could do certain work, or was taxing up to the limit, they might think it a fair thing to give assistance to these people. It is a well known fact that five or six years ago the Government of the day decided they would have to decrease the grants to various parts of the State, and the great difficulty the Government had in refusing or putting off various applications for assistance is well known. I believe that if it were put forth now that we intended to increase the amount set aside for the building and maintenance of roads we would have hundreds of applications in a very short time from people outside those really legitimately entitled to Government assistance. I am prepared to leave it to the Government and the departmental officers to do what they think a fair thing by the different bodies. At the same time I urge the Government to take into consideration the question of forcing the various local bodies to amalgamate wherever it is possible and wherever it can be shown to be beneficial. I feel sure that in my own district and on the Eastern Goldfields, to say nothing of Perth, which is a more striking case, hundreds and thousands of pounds could be saved in administration, and, if necessary, devoted to the purpose of improving our highways, or the boards could refrain from collecting such a large amount of taxation.

Mr. JACOBY (in reply): I am quite convinced the Minister for Works is sincere in his endeavour to assist the road development of the State. If he were a private member without any responsibility as a member of the Government I feel sure he would be as eager and as keen as any member of the House in endeavouring to force upon the Government the desirability of a vigorous road policy. I hope, therefore, he will not allow the pressing necessities for other services in the State to altogether overshadow the necessity for road construction. I can assure the Minister that for every mile of road that could be

constructed in the South-West, speaking of the district I know intimately, just as much development in production would ensue as would be derived from the construction of a railway. In these districts, therefore, roads are absolutely parallel in importance to railways, so I hope that by hook or by crook the Minister will not only maintain the present amount given to roads boards, but that he will seek by some means to increase it. If he can do so, I think we can rely on him to do it. I recognised there was some difficulty in bringing this motion before the House in the form I did in devising a scheme that was going to apply equally throughout the State; I trusted some suggestion would arise in the course of discussion that would suggest some scheme; but nothing has been suggested, each member apparently looking upon the question merely as it coincides with his own experience. I would like to point out the special difficulties of portion of my own district in this regard. The York road runs through the Greenmount road district. That road is very much used for through traffic, traffic that does not arise in the district and does not concern or benefit the district. I refer to motor traffic, timber traffic, and heavy goods traffic, which goes through the district. The Greenmount roads board has to maintain the road in a high state of efficiency, and owing to the wet and hilly nature of the district, it is not a cheap road to maintain. The board has taxed the district to the full extent allowed under the Act—2½d. in the pound—and to-day there are twenty roads urgently required in the district for which money is wanted, but there is no possible hope of the people getting the roads in the present circumstances, so far as I can see. The withholding of this assistance is very seriously retarding production.

The Minister for Works: The new Bill will help them.

Mr. JACOBY: Quite so. But let me point out that whereas the average amount given to roads boards is something like 20s. to 30s. in the pound, the

Greenmount roads board receives only 10s. in the pound upon the amount raised, and has to maintain a road that is national in its character. What is the board to do? Is it to go on developing the roads necessary for the progress of the district and neglect the main road altogether? That is the position in which it is placed. I had hoped that this discussion would lead the Minister to attempt some sort of classification and grading of road districts, that special grants would be practically abolished, and grants given according to the importance and necessity of the work to be done by the different boards. Some of the older established boards might be able to get along with a little less money from the State Exchequer than the newer districts or those where perhaps great lengths of main roads have to be maintained, roads that really serve a national purpose rather than local. That appeared to me to be the only suggestion I could advance as being an equitable way of overcoming this question of the main roads difficulty. As the Minister has referred to the facilities in the new Bill for borrowing, I hope he will give consideration to the facilities afforded in New Zealand for financing roads boards that need to raise money by loan. Every time the State raises a loan it includes a sum which can be set aside for the local authorities, and this is lent to the local authorities at a low rate of sinking fund, and practically enables the roads boards to develop their districts and pay the same amount for their money as the State does, plus a small charge made by the Government for book-keeping purposes. If, in connection with the new scheme of borrowing given to the roads boards of this State under the new Bill, the Minister is able to come to the assistance of the boards and let them have money as cheap as the State itself gets it, he will be giving a great deal of assistance towards the development of the country districts. I may say in conclusion that I accept the amendment moved by the member for Brown Hill. I presume he intends to

adhere to his intention to drop the word "new" so as to allow a freer hand to the department in this matter.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (on amendment): Before tea the amendment proposed by the member for Brown Hill was about to be put to the House. I want to say at once that the Government are most anxious to do all in their power, indeed they have always done so, to construct new roads wherever required, so far as the financial means at their disposal will permit. I have no decided objection to the amendment so far as the principle is concerned with the exception of the words "to roads boards." The member for Swan moved, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the State should undertake the maintenance of the main roads of the State." The majority of members have agreed to drop that aspect, as has the hon. member himself, and the member for Brown Hill moved an amendment so that the motion would read, "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the State should render greater assistance to roads boards in the construction of new roads which are necessary for the development of the State's resources." I want the hon. member to agree to drop out the words "to roads boards" so as to make the motion read, "To render greater assistance for the construction of roads which are necessary for the development of the State's resources." I am with him heart and soul in that, but I do not think he should endeavour to tie the hands of the Government and make them render that assistance always through the local authority. We are opening up new country very largely, as members know, in the Eastern agricultural districts, and we are surveying and throwing open large areas almost every week. We hope to open up the great South-Western and Southern districts, the fruit-growing country, to a much greater extent than has been the case in the past, also to encourage the dairying and like industries. If Parlia-

ment will grant the funds to undertake a large scheme of road construction, which I think is essential if our agricultural railway policy is to be as successful as we all hope it will be, as it must be with the settlement that is going on, I want the department to have a free hand to construct the new roads either departmentally, through the department and its officers, or through the medium of local authorities. We are at the present time doing a good deal in that direction. My colleague, the Minister for Lands, is now doing much in the way of clearing roads. He has cleared scores of miles of roads which will have to be made. As he is undertaking that work departmentally, so I want to be able, if the necessity arises, to initiate a big policy of road construction. It is desirable that this policy should to a very great extent be carried out by the officers of the department. There is also the position that in many cases a main road runs through several roads board districts, and in a case of that sort it would be desirable that the department should construct the road. I do not want the House to tie the hands of the Government in the direction the hon. member, perhaps unintentionally, has suggested should be done and as will be done if the amendment is carried.

Mr. Bath: It would not prevent the Government from doing what the Minister desires.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would have to do the work through the local authorities.

Mr. Bath: Certainly not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment reads "Render greater assistance to the roads boards in the construction of new roads"; that is giving them monetary assistance for the construction of new roads.

Mr. Bath: That does not say you must not do the work if you desire.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: By inference, it does. There is another aspect. As I have already said, there are

104 roads boards or local governing authorities who come to me for special grants for road construction and maintenance. Members know, for they introduce the deputations, that they visit me every week. What is to be the result if the amendment is carried? Within a couple of months I will have deputations from the 104 boards saying that it is Parliament's instruction to the Government to give greater assistance to the boards and that they want £1,000 for this road, £500 for another, and so on.

Mr. Collier: You can deal with them all right.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot. I ask members to give me some degree of freedom, so that I may deal with the matter in a proper business-like manner. I am with members in the opinion that the State should render greater assistance in the construction of roads. Let that be the resolution, leave it to the Government to decide as to whether that assistance shall be through the local authorities—in many cases it would be—or that the Government should have a free hand to develop and initiate a big scheme, if Parliament grant the funds, for road construction in the outlying districts. The requirements of our new settlers can only be satisfied properly if I have that freedom. If I have to render the assistance through the roads boards there will be the eternal squabbling which is always going on between local authorities—especially when one main artery goes through two or three districts—which will obviate the good results which might be obtained if the department had a free hand in carrying out the policy. I hope the hon. member will agree to strike out the words "to roads boards" in his amendment. If he does I shall be glad to accept that as an instruction from the House that every effort shall be made and that there shall be proper provision on the Estimates, so far as the means of the Government will permit, to carry out a policy of road construction. I am with some members even to the extent of spending a certain amount of loan funds in this great work. I believe that road construction is just

as reproductive, although not so directly reproductive, as railway construction. Our railways cannot for one moment be expected to be the great commercial success we anticipate, or keep up their present state of prosperity, unless we spend large sums in the construction of roads to act as feeders for the railways. I hope the hon. member will see the necessity for giving the Government a free hand to some extent in this matter and accept the suggestion I have thrown out. If he does so he will obtain all he wishes and the Government will have a free hand to carry out a scheme of road construction, either through the medium of the roads boards or through the departmental officers who control this work.

Mr. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): I am quite in accord with the views expressed by the Minister in this matter. I am one of those who have always opposed the making of large annual grants to the roads boards. Not that I am against the development of the roads in the various districts, but I see very clearly that a large portion of the grant is spent in administration and that there is too much waste over the works that are carried out. Consequently the full advantage of the grants has not been obtained. I am with the Minister in his remarks as to the further development of the various roads and I therefore move the following amendment on the amendment:—

That the words "to roads boards" be struck out.

This will leave the Government a free hand either to carry out the work departmentally or through the medium of the roads boards if those bodies are considered to be competent.

Amendment—to strike out the words "undertake the maintenance of the main roads of the State"—put and passed.

Amendment (Mr. Butcher's) on amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	25
Noes	..	17
		—
Majority for	..	8
		—

AMES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Layman
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Collier	Mr. Monger
Mr. Cowcher	Sir N. J. Moore
Mr. Daglish	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Murphy
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Nanson
Mr. George	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Heltmann	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Price
Mr. Bath	Mr. Swan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Troy
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Horan	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. O'Loghlen	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed.

Amendment (Mr. Bath's) as amended put and passed.

Question as amended agreed to.

PRIVATE MOTIONS, CONTINUATION.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore) moved—

That motions be continued.

Mr. Scaddan: It was understood that the Orders of the Day would be gone on with.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition asked the member for Brown Hill, who was a member of the University Commission, what it was proposed to do with the motion referring to the university.

Mr. SCADDAN: The Premier was under a misapprehension. During the afternoon and before the House met, in chatting with the Government whip he (Mr. Scaddan) stated that the Opposition desired to go on with the Orders of the Day after the tea adjournment, and the Whip replied that it had not been decided what course would be followed. During the tea adjournment, and before proceeding to the dining room, the Premier, who was conversing with the Minister for Works and the member for Swan,

was asked whether he would go on with the Orders of the Day after the tea adjournment, and he replied in the affirmative.

Mr. HUDSON: When the leader of the Opposition entered the dining-room during the tea adjournment, he asked what arrangements had been made with regard to the Orders of the Day, and the reply was that no definite answer had been given. The leader of the Opposition then went out, and on returning said that the Premier intended to proceed with the Orders of the Day after the adjournment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was understood that the House would proceed with the motions after the adjournment.

Mr. Hudson: What was the reason for going on with the motions?

The PREMIER: The motion with regard to the university question had been on the Notice Paper for a considerable period, and it was time that it was dealt with or wiped off.

Mr. HORAN: It was a most extraordinary thing for so many people to be making explanations about this motion standing in his name, and yet he had not been consulted with regard to it. The motion should stand as it was, and it was his desire to go on with it.

Mr. SCADDAN: The member for Yilgarn should not make statements of that kind.

Mr. Horan: Unquestionably I will make such a statement.

Mr. SCADDAN: The hon. member for Yilgarn was under a misapprehension. He should have been in his place in the House.

Mr. Horan: I was in my place.

Mr. SCADDAN: Why should the member for Yilgarn be consulted as to what other members desired? The Premier was consulted before the House met this afternoon as to whether he would be prepared to go on with the Orders of the Day after the tea adjournment, and he said he would consider it. At the tea adjournment, at the request of the member for Dundas, he (Mr. Scaddan) put the question to the Premier as to whether he intended proceeding with the Orders

of the Day, and the Premier's reply was in the affirmative.

Members: There is a misunderstanding.

Question put and passed; motions continued.

MOTION—UNIVERSITY.

To utilise Government House.

Mr. HORAN (Yilgarn) moved—

That, in the opinion of this House, any action for the establishment of a university should be preceded by the condition that Government House should be utilised for this purpose.

He said: I regret to learn that the Government seem to be somewhat embarrassed by this notice of motion of mine. It may have been due to the failure of the Government on the previous night to keep a majority in the House that the motion is occupying the place it does on the Notice Paper.

The Premier: I had absolutely nothing to do with the preparation of the Notice Paper. I was not in the Chamber last night.

Mr. HORAN: I will accept the Premier's explanation. I suppose in connection with this matter I have to some extent anticipated the action the Government will take, inasmuch as my motion appears before the country has been committed to any expenditure with regard to the proposed university. The Governor's Speech, however, has given us an inkling of what is really to occur, and therefore I take it that we at this early stage of the position are entitled by a vote of this House to give an instruction to the Government of the day, whether it be the present or a future Government, as to what the wishes of this House are with respect to a university in Western Australia. I hope I shall be exonerated from any desire to bring about a tightening of the purse strings. Nothing is further from my desire than to curtail expenditure on education. If we had the money, I would be only too glad to assist the Government in the direction of the development of education. But unfortunately the Treasury chest, and the Treasurer will agree

with me, is somewhat empty, and therefore we cannot carry on that development as extensively as we would wish to do. I think I am in duty bound to compliment the administration of the Education Department. They have done their work very well, and in their efforts to establish secondary schools and extend the functions of education throughout the State they have grappled with a big problem, made doubly difficult on account of the vast areas of the State itself. In my motion are two or three questions which can easily be straightened out. One is that Government House, as it at present exists should, in the event of a university being established, be utilised for that purpose. The second, by implication, involves almost the abolition of the position of Governor; and if I have to rely upon that, to start with I might recall hon. members to a period of a few years back when even in the House it was moved and carried on the voices that a petition be sent to the powers that be in England, requesting that before a Governor was appointed the local Ministry should be consulted. In South Australia and Queensland also the same course was, I think, adopted; and I fancy I am speaking correctly when I say a despatch came out from the Secretary for State for the Colonies indicating that if the whole of the States of Australia agreed as to the abolition of the position of Governor, the Imperial office would take it into very serious consideration. Three or four of the Australian States have gone that far, while the others have not as yet taken any forward movement. The next question I desire to discuss is as to the wisdom, or otherwise, of establishing a university here. I have observed in my reading that certain members on my side of the House, whose confidence I do not happen to possess, belong to some university commission and that their report has not yet been published. Doubtless the report will be well phrased and considered, like most other reports presented to the House. But I wish to indicate that in all the Australian States, with the exception of Western Australia, universities have been established. They were established first in Victoria and New

South Wales; then came South Australia, and Tasmania afterwards, while Queensland, I believe, came into line only the other day. If our education establishments fall short in any degree of the requirements of our more or less cultured and wealthy people, I hesitate to say we should vote the necessary sum of money now, when even our country roads are languishing for want of that money, and our hospitals have not sufficient funds to keep the sick and wounded properly provided for. Under any circumstances, for the next few years we would not be justified in establishing a university. However, that, of course, will crop up when the Bill comes before us. The general trend of my remarks will be that Government House, if a university is decided upon, should be the place for that institution. My reasons for holding this view are that, first of all, Government House is splendidly situated in a delightful position; that the students, whoever they are likely to be, will be very few for many years to come, but that such as they may be they will there be afforded every facility for aquatic sports, pedestrian exercises and the like—for we want to build up our future generations on the lines laid down by Mr. Cecil Rhodes. There is a fine hall, one almost equal to the university hall in Sydney, and there are grounds sufficiently suitable to justify the State in utilising the Government House in preference to embarking upon any great expenditure involved in the buildings for a university. We have only to look around us and see where certain architectural ideas have landed us, namely, in this more than extraordinary structure in which we now are. It would be an absolute disgrace to any place in the British Empire. I have seen all the Parliament Houses in Australia, and this is certainly the worst. Even to-day I had to conduct some lady immigrants over the House, and I was obliged to make the Irishman's remark that the front of the building was behind. It is a disgrace to look upon, and if we are going to start a university building involving great expenditure, and leave it unfinished as we have done Parliament House, it will be piling misfortune on misfortune. The question may

arise as to providing with other quarters our own distinguished representative, Sir Gerald Strickland, who performs the duties resting upon his shoulders in a fashion that commands great respect from all—indeed, it would almost compel one to hesitate to mention the removal of His Excellency from Government House to make provision for the students of the future; but the university is a long way off, and I think that for many years to come the Government will be fully occupied in financing the projects forecasted in His Excellency's Speech. It is not necessary for me to go further than to indicate that even in Queensland, when Lord Chelmsford was Governor he was only too pleased to hand over Government House in Brisbane for the purposes of a university; and I think that with certain alterations our Government House would make an excellent university building. The country could thus check the hands of the Government in any desire they might have to recklessly expend money which, on account of a diminishing revenue and the straitened circumstances under which we now exist, should be devoted to other purposes.

The Minister for Works: What are you to do with the Governor?

Mr. HORAN: There are other places in which an English gentleman such as he is could make himself perfectly happy. Indeed, probably he would be delighted to have his quarters somewhat limited in order that he might not have to entertain so widely as at present. But if one may be allowed to make a suggestion, the Government, I understand, have before them a proposition for the purchase of Crawley. Where would be a better place for His Excellency to reside than at Crawley? Recently I wired to Mr. Kidston, and I have here his reply—

We have set aside £70,000 from last year's revenue as capital expenditure on a university and technical college. It was simply the suitability of the Government House site for the combined purpose of a technical college and a university which induced us to take it. We have lodged the Governor in temporary residence.—W. Kidston.

You will understand that by lodging the Governor in other quarters suitable to himself and the Government we will not be involved in any great expenditure; and if Government House, Perth, can be the centre of social and political life, surely we can also make it the centre of learning for the future, and strive, so far as this Parliament is in a position to do, to afford the privilege of giving to the youth, whether children of the poorest or of the highest, the best education that can be secured at a university—that is, of course, always contingent on the decision that a university is desired. I move this motion with the object of securing from hon. members some expression of opinion on a matter worthy of sincere consideration before the Government endeavour to precipitate a Bill for the establishment of a university.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Sir Newton J. Moore): If one were not aware that the hon. member who moved this motion is desirous of extending educational facilities throughout Western Australia one might be tempted to wonder whether his suggestion were intended to help or retard the movement for the establishment of a university; inasmuch as, if his motion were carried, it would mean that there would be no likelihood of a university being established in Western Australia until the expiration of the present Governor's term of office. That term of office is for six years, and the present occupant has completed only a little over 12 months; so there would be no possibility of the establishment of a university for at least five years.

Mr. Heitmann: You can put the Governor in temporary quarters.

The PREMIER: Temporary accommodation may mean a five-roomed cottage or a bell tent, according to the requirements or ideas of those considering the question. My idea, as far as accommodation for a university is concerned, would rather be in the direction of providing a certain area of land from the estate referred to by the hon. member and which

has been purchased by the Government, namely, Crawley. That land has been resumed at a cost of £15,500 and contains something like 160 acres. It certainly would provide much more accommodation for a university than would Government House, and provide also the area necessary for recreation and other purposes, while the aquatic sports to which the hon. member referred might very well be indulged in at Crawley; in fact I think they could be more successfully followed at Crawley than on the river adjacent to the existing Government House grounds.

Mr. Angwin: It was a waste of public money to buy Crawley.

The PREMIER: That may be so in the hon. member's opinion. Unfortunately Crawley is only two miles towards Fremantle, and, consequently, the purchase does not appeal to the hon. member as it would if the property were within two miles of Fremantle. At the present time a Royal Commission is inquiring into the establishment of a university, and it has been asked to report as to what buildings and what area would be required for a modern university. The report has not yet been received. I was under the impression that when the hon. member who moved the motion had it postponed last week it was with a view to holding it over until the report from the Commission was received.

Mr. Horan: Quite so; but it is not forthcoming.

The PREMIER: I understand that the report will be presented in the course of a few days. I hope a university will be an established fact in Western Australia before the expiration of the term of office of the present Government. Whether the motion has been moved with the desire to giving effect to the wish to abolish the position of State Governor or not the hon. member has not given us any indication. I can only say that while we have the Governor here it is the duty of the State to see that he is provided with such quarters as will enable him to uphold the dignity of the position. We have been particularly fortunate in the gentlemen we

have had as Governors of this State. We have had men who have been desirous of doing all they possibly could in the interests of the State, and who have not hesitated in expending large sums of money in extending hospitality to distinguished guests and representatives of all sections of the community at Government House. And the practice which has been in vogue in the past has not been diminished in any degree by the present occupant of the position; and I would certainly oppose any motion in the direction indicated by the hon. member. I do not think that the premises would be in any degree suitable for a university. The total area of Government House grounds is about 14 acres, and only portion of it is high ground, the balance being very low ground with the water only two or three feet below the surface.

Mr. Heitmann: We want 100 acres for a university.

The PREMIER: Yes; we would want considerably more than 14 acres. I think it would be better if the university were situated a little distance from the centre of the City, but I would be glad to hear the views of hon. members in connection with the matter. It is a national question and one on which I do not wish to influence hon. members one way or the other. I simply give my own views as a citizen of the State, and I think the suggested premises would be utterly unsuited for the requirements of a modern university. Consequently I intend to oppose the motion.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): When the member for Yilgarn gave notice of this motion I told him that the Royal Commission inquiring into this question of the establishment of a university had to deal with the question of a site amongst other matters, and that it would be better for members of Parliament to wait until the Commission's report was before them before any discussion took place as to the relative merits of the various sites.

Mr. Horan: That is correct.

Mr. BATH: The hon. member has referred to the fact of the report of the

Commission not being forthcoming. I may say that since the Commission has been in receipt of certain information sought from elsewhere it has met at frequent intervals and a great deal of time has been given to the point; and the report has been expedited as much as possible consistent with fair investigation of the matters delegated to the Commission to be dealt with. As to whether the report is worth the consideration of hon. members or not, I think hon. members will agree that, seeing that those appointed to the Commission have given great and lengthy consideration to it, they should at least wait until the report is presented before passing judgment on it. Members of the Commission act in an honorary capacity, and they are giving their time to it, so that I do not think it is the right thing to pass judgment on their report or to make any predictions about its being worthless until the report is presented. Members should judge on the report itself. The question of the site is being considered, and I think we would be wise to wait until the report of the Commission is presented with the considerations actuating the Commissioners in reporting on particular sites before dealing with the subject.

Mr. HUDSON: Have the Commission considered Government House as a probable site?

Mr. BATH: The hon. member will not expect me to make any statement here to-night in connection with the nature of the report; it would be betraying confidence. It cannot be done until the report is presented. If we look at this motion as a means for accomplishing the removal of the State Governor or for altering the system of appointing State Governors, we must consider it an unwise method to pursue. As a matter of fact the member for Yilgarn is right when he says that the Colonial Office has in a despatch stated that it will only consider representations from States united, and that if the States meet together and make a recommendation it will take the recommendation into consideration. If we wish to carry out the proposal which

was supported by members of the Opposition when there was an interregnum between the term of one Governor and that of another, we should do it in a proper way by asking those in authority, that is the Government, to communicate with the other States with a view to having a meeting at which united action could be taken. I think it is objectionable, no matter how much one may be committed to a proposal for altering any system for appointing State Governors—and I am one, to pursue that course in such a way as to cast a slight on the occupant of the position at present. It would be still more objectionable to do it by what can only be characterised as an eviction. There is a proper course to pursue, one that is consistent with what I may term the decencies of public life, and I hope that before long we will be able to influence those in authority to take that proper course in a proper manner, but at the present time we should wait until the report of the Commission is presented, and then we can come to the consideration of the question in a proper way, with all the evidence that can be brought to bear in favour of the various sites that may be recommended.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): It was with no desire to retard the project which every hon. member of the House desires to see brought into operation that I seconded the motion moved by the member for Yilgarn. I seconded it for two reasons: firstly, that it might be discussed in proper form, and secondly, because I believe that if we are to have a university, as I hope, the present Government House would suit the purpose best. There can be no question that the establishment of a university, particularly in regard to the erection of a building, will cost a great deal of money, money which the State requires for other purposes, and immediate purposes, such as building railways, making roads, and a hundred and one other facilities necessary to help the pioneering class in this country. I altogether deprecate the contention that this motion cannot be discussed without associating

it with the present Governor. Not one member will say anything against the gentleman who has proved his capacity, who has proved himself worthy of the position he holds. While I am not a believer in imported Governors, still I hope that while Governors are imported we shall always have Governors of the calibre of the gentleman who at present occupies the position in this State.

Mr. Horan: Hear, hear!

Mr. TROY: The member for Yilgarn is quite correct in his contention that utilising Government House would save this country a great deal of expenditure; and, moreover, I do not think there is a more suitable site for a university. Other sites have been mentioned, but I think Government House is a particularly good site. It is well located, and I believe it would suit every purpose. So far as aquatic sports are concerned, the river is there just as it is for other colleges. The Christian Brothers' College is adjacent, and the students of the college use the river for this purpose. I feel sure that, as has been pointed out, since the Government of Queensland are utilising Government House at Brisbane for a university, the same thing could be done here; and the time must assuredly come when the importation of Governors will cease and when these States will be governed by persons chosen locally; and when that time comes there will be empty Government Houses. The local Governors, the persons chosen locally, will have no use for, and probably will not be able to bear the expense of the upkeep of, such large buildings as the present Government Houses. When that time comes I feel sure dwellings suitable for the purpose, and not so pretentious as the present Government Houses, would suffice. I look forward to the time—and I feel sure it will come not many years hence, because the feeling is growing all over Australia—when there will be in almost every part of Australia a democratic Government, and concerted action will be taken with a view to having the importation of Governors stopped and having local Governors appointed. When

that time comes these large Government Houses will be vacant, and what are we to do with them? The best purpose to which our Government House could be put would be for the establishment of a university. I do not agree with those members who say that the motion moved by the member for Yilgarn will retard the establishment of a university. I feel sure the motion is merely voicing the opinions expressed in the House by members previously; and it is a matter that might well be brought forward, because it gives an opportunity for discussing a principle which each member hopes to see in early operation in this State.

Mr. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I cannot understand the views of the member who moved the motion and of the member who seconded it. Although they disclaim any desire to delay the establishment of a university, it is admitted that about five years of our present Governor's term of office have to run, and I understand that neither hon. member desires to urge that the present occupant of the office should receive notice to quit immediately this motion has been carried. Therefore the work of establishing a university must be delayed, if the motion is assented to, for at least five years from now. We have also this further fact, likewise known generally and as stated by the member for Brown Hill, that we shall retain Imperially-appointed Governors until there is an agreement by the States, or a majority of them, in favour of locally-appointed Governors. Therefore in carrying this motion we not merely support a five years' delay, but a certainty of that delay to begin with and a longer delay that may occur afterwards for an uncertain period. That is one of the reasons why I cannot support the motion and why I cannot understand the action of the member for Yilgarn in bringing it forward when, at the same time, he says he has no desire to delay the university movement. I say nothing of what I may call the unwisdom, even the bad taste, of the hon. member in bringing forward a motion like this in anticipation of the report of the Royal Commission. It is surely a reasonable thing that Parliament, who were

a party to the appointment of that Commission through the Executive, should wait to hear the recommendations, and the reasons for those recommendations, from the Royal Commission before uttering a hasty opinion as to the site. With regard to the site, the Premier seems to have cast an eye in one direction, Crawley, and I can understand his doing so, and cannot imagine a better site; but I do not want to commit myself to a site, even in my own district, without hearing what others are available. There is another aspect of the case to consider in connection with the proposal that the present Government House site should be the site of the university. Both hon. members who spoke in support of the acceptance of Government House as a site for the university refrained from giving us any details on the question whether that building would be entirely suitable for the purpose. I have not a close enough knowledge of the interior of the building to be able either to admit or contradict their views that it would be suitable, but I very much doubt the statement that a building erected purely for residential purposes would be eminently adapted for the purposes of a scholastic institution like a university. I hope that in the consideration of a university we are not going to be satisfied with a second-hand building which would have to be patched up year after year and never be reasonably decent, and in the long run turn out far more expensive than a new building erected for the purpose on proper plans. There cannot be any building to which more attention should be given in design and construction than a scholastic one, whether it be a primary or secondary school or a university, and I feel quite satisfied that, altogether apart from the question of site, it is a mere absurdity to assert that Government House, as we at present have it, is adapted for university purposes. I hope that in any case we are not going to say that we will have a second-hand building because it will be cheaper; there are plenty of directions in which this Parliament can adopt economies rather than in the educational channel. Whether it be in connection

with the lowest or the highest schools of the land I hope Parliament is not going to be in any way parsimonious. When we have a university we should have one worthy of the State and worthy of Australia, in the nature of its buildings, and in the ability and likewise the attainments of its staff, because I believe there will be something to be proud of in the capability of the students who attend. I desire very strongly to deprecate the introduction of this motion at all. I think it is wrong.

Mr. Underwood: It has supplied you with something to talk about for a good while.

Mr. DAGLISH: It is wrong, for if members desire an expression of opinion in regard to the appointment of a local Governor they should not attempt to obtain it by means of a side issue. If such a motion is needed let there be a straight-out proposal, which members might discuss, as to whether we should have an Imperially-appointed or locally-appointed Governor.

Mr. Hudson: We carried a motion about that before.

Mr. DAGLISH: I have no objection to the hon. member carrying it again. Is it reasonable to bring in a side issue like that of a site for the university as if it had any bearing upon the question whether we should have Imperially-appointed or locally-appointed Governors? I hope the hon. member will withdraw the motion.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): I desire to move the following amendment—

That the word "Government" be struck out and "Parliament" inserted in lieu.

Mr. Heitmann: Why continue the discussion?

Mr. Hudson: We are only filling in time.

Mr. Heitmann: Let it die.

Mr. WALKER: I will not let it die. I may possibly do some public good if the amendment I have moved be considered in earnest. By doing this we shall turn the discussion on the original motion to some public utility. If the amendment is carried the motion will then read "That,

in the opinion of this House, any action for the establishment of a university should be preceded by the condition that Parliament House should be utilised for this purpose." The only question to be discussed is the best site for the university. We cannot possibly discuss under this motion, and it is almost indecent to attempt to do so, the advisability of retaining the system of Imperially-appointed Governors. That is simply a subterfuge.

Mr. George: If you abolish Parliament you will be abolishing us.

Mr. WALKER: No; what I am seeking is to abolish not Parliament, but this House.

Mr. Heitmann: Are you going to condemn the students to this building?

Mr. WALKER: This building could never be fitted up decently for Parliament, but it could be built in and around so as to make a university containing decent lecture rooms for students, laboratories, class rooms, etcetera. There is plenty of space here and good material for the reconstruction of this building, which is comparatively new, to make it suitable for a university.

Mr. Daglish: There are no grounds here.

Mr. WALKER: We are in close proximity to the Observatory grounds, which could be included. Also, it is not far from King's Park and by a very little resumption we could provide plenty of ground for the university. The site is close to the river.

Mr. Daglish: Put the university in the park.

Mr. WALKER: I do not see that the distance between here and the park will prevent us utilising a portion of the park as part of the university scheme. It is not necessary that all the buildings for a university should be under one roof, and the grounds of a university, the precincts, so to speak, could extend right into King's Park.

Mr. George: In Oxford all the buildings are not under one roof.

Mr. WALKER: Quite so; they are separated into different colleges, but they all combine to create one university.

Mr. Underwood: It is to be hoped that students will learn something better than to discuss a motion of this importance.

Mr. WALKER: I do not quite see the drift of the hon. member's wise interjection. Government House, so far as its position is concerned, is utterly unfitted for a university; it has not the requisite area in grounds, nor by its construction is it calculated to lend itself to the necessities of a modern university. It is absurd to think of utilising that building for university purposes. I am moving the amendment because I have a conviction that we might turn this waste of money on a Parliament building into something of real service and make this structure into a part of the university enterprise. All of us are convinced that for the real purposes of a Parliament House no worse designs could have been planned and carried out than resulted in the erection of this structure, and we are conscious too that the building, with slight alterations, might be utilised for the purposes indicated by my amendment. I am not going to waste time in discussing the advisability of establishing a university. All know my opinions on that question and know that I feel that knowledge is the king of the world, so to speak, higher than all majesties; more precious than all crowns is knowledge, and the utility of a university needs no elaboration in language from me. Its value is known to all. I will content myself with moving the amendment.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): I second the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): I quite agree with the member for Kanowna that it is wrong to attempt to get at a big question such as the abolition of State Governors by a motion of this description. If the hon. member for Yilgarn desired to deal with the question it would have been better for him to bring forward a direct substantive motion. I would point out to the member for Kanowna, however, that his amendment looks as if he were endeavouring to get at the abolition of the State Parliament.

Mr. Walker: No, only to get rid of the House, not of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Yilgarn only wanted to take away Government House and establish the university there, and now the member for Kanowna wants us to turn out of Parliament House for a similar purpose. What will he do then with the State Parliament, will he abolish it?

Mr. Walker: There are plenty of better places than this for a Parliament House; the skating rink would be better.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I agree there are many places that would be better than this, at all events for some of us, but I would point out that the continuation of the State Parliament is, as far as I am concerned, just as precious as the continuation of the State Governor.

Mr. Walker: That is not in question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It must be by the member's argument. I do want to know, however, what we are to do with the State Parliament if we are going to take Parliament House away. I want to say at once I appreciate highly the remarks the member for Yilgarn made with regard to the Education Department. I quite agree with him that good work has been done, and I am happy in the knowledge that I have had some little hand in the control of that department for some three years, and that I also had something to do with the erection of the Technical School, and had the pleasure to appoint the Royal Commission on the establishment of a university, a Royal Commission which has undertaken its onerous duties in an honorary capacity. The whole question has been left to them to thresh out, and they are going into the scheme, not only for the establishment of a university, but also as to the cost of the housing of that university. Surely, when we have placed this duty in the hands of the gentlemen who constitute the Commission, and who have devoted many months in going fully into the question, the least we can do is to await their report and see what their recommendations are. Courtesy demands that we should await that report.

Mr. Collier: Even if courtesy does not demand it, common sense demands that we shall not select a site in this off-hand fashion.

Mr. Underwood: And public utility seems to demand that we should attend to more important business.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member wants to live up to the reputation he said he had the other night when he assumed the new position that he is occupying, he will have to cease interjecting. Let me say that as far as I am personally concerned, and I am only expressing a personal opinion, I think this university when it is established—and I hope it will be established—should be located, if there is sufficient ground, at the Observatory site. I would like to see the Observatory merged into the university, and to see also those who are engaged in Observatory work take up positions in the university, and I would also like to see this continuous expenditure in connection with the mapping of the heavens, which is to take 150 years to complete, and which is to be for the benefit of untold generations, placed on wider shoulders, those of the Commonwealth. We have a diversity of opinion as to the site on which the university should be built. I think it should be on the site of the Observatory. The Premier suggests that it should be built on some portion of Crawley grounds; the member for Yilgarn wants it at Government House, and the member for Kanowna wants it on the site of Parliament House, and with all this diversity of opinion I agree with the member for Boulder that we cannot come to a satisfactory solution of the matter. It would be absurd for the House to ear-mark any particular site and say that the university should be built there.

Mr. George: If you can house Parliament elsewhere, what is wrong with this place?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing is wrong with it, but I would not like the job of fitting it up as a university. Anyhow, what is wrong with this Parliament House? I hope the member for Yilgarn will withdraw his motion. It would be absurd to tie the hands of the

Government, or any future administration, in any shape or form in connection with the establishment of a university which I hope will result from the appointment of the Royal Commission.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): In connection with this motion there may be a slight tinge of impropriety in discussing a report which has not yet been laid on the table of the House. I wish to say that in connection with Parliament House all members have agreed that this is the most inconvenient place which could have been fixed for a site. It is right out of the City; it is a great labour to come here, and lots of people in the metropolis who would like to hear the debates and know what their representatives are doing cannot come up here. Therefore, I think the Government might well take into consideration the advisability and possibility of converting this Parliament House into a university. As to the difficulty in doing so, that will be a matter for architects.

The Minister for Works: I think the hon. member was in Parliament when this site was selected.

Mr. GEORGE: I had nothing whatever to do with the selection of this place. Even if it were a fact that I had anything to do with the shifting of the House to this locality we know now this is a most inconvenient site for the purpose of Parliament House, and I would suggest to the Minister that as the Government have a large block of land in Irwin-street in the heart of the City, a large Parliament House with more conveniences might be erected there and at less cost. This building will cost £100,000 to finish according to design, and it would be a wicked waste of public money to do that. To convert it into a university would cost only a few thousands, and if the Minister is satisfied that the proper place for the university is the Observatory, we are close enough to it, and we are close enough to King's Park and to the river. The universities at Oxford and Cambridge have little ground attached to them. Their playing grounds are far away from the university, and the river has to be where nature put it. If this will mean placing Parliament House

in a more convenient position, the Government will earn the gratitude of members who are in Parliament at the present time, and members who will be elected in the future. The amendment is the most sensible put before members this evening, and I will support it.

Amendment—to strike out the word "Government"—put and passed.

Amendment—to insert the word "Parliament"—put and negatived.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison): I would like to know how we stand just now. We have carried the amendment and struck out the word "Government" and we have failed to insert the word "Parliament." As the motion is at present, neither Government House nor Parliament House is mentioned. It merely states "that — House." Will the Minister for Works tell us what sort of a place "that — House" is going to be?

The Minister for Works: What "house" are you suggesting should be put in?

Mr. HOLMAN: I do not know. Crawley has been suggested, but the position seems to be that we do not know exactly where we are. The Minister for Works should be in a position to make an explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Yilgarn is at liberty to withdraw his motion. As it stands now it is quite senseless.

Mr. HORAN: I am not responsible for the stupidity of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to withdraw the motion? I have not suggested that he should.

Mr. HORAN: To get members out of a difficulty, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

MOTION — RAILWAY ADVISORY BOARD.

Mr. HORAN (Yilgarn) moved—

That in the opinion of this House the constitution of the present Railway Advisory Board militates against that independent expression of opinion which such a body should exercise.

He said: I desire to comment upon the fact that the advisory board was appointed without statutory authority. was

appointed by the edict of one of the Ministers. It is composed of three or four gentlemen who certainly stand high in public estimation; but, nevertheless, in my opinion it should have included other representatives. Further, if I may go so far as to say so, I entirely disagree with the composition of the board, inasmuch as I would suggest that instead of having an advisory board we should, as in New South Wales, have a standing Public Works Committee, appointed from members of the House; or we should have a board consisting of a retired contractor, a retired commercial man and a retired engineer. In Tasmania they have such a board. It is a standing commission, and I think they are only paid a small sum, some two guineas per day's sitting, with train fares; but they are able to give an independent opinion without any suggestion from the Government they are employed by. Here we have distinguished people, it is true; but would the Minister controlling any one of the departments represented say for a moment that none of the gentlemen on the board is at any time under his control? Recently these people went up to report on the Norseman-Esperance railway. Long before one or two of them set their eyes upon the new track it was proposed to follow they betrayed unmistakable evidence of hostility to the proposition of building the railway.

Mr. George: Who are the members of the board?

Mr. HORAN: Speaking from memory, Mr. Lowrie, Mr. Muir, Mr. Paterson, and Mr. Johnson, the Surveyor-General. These people should not, I think, be in such entire harmony with the Ministerial views for the time being; and, rightly or wrongly, somehow their reports have a complexion, or are tinged with their Minister's wishes.

The Premier: You do not know the men, that is evident.

Mr. HORAN: Well, I know more than you do in the matter, but I am not going to tell tales out of school.

The Premier: This is the place in which to tell them.

Mr. HORAN: A lot of these things can be better fixed up outside.

Mr. Scaddan: Is that intended for a challenge?

Mr. HORAN: I do not care how he takes it. I think, under the circumstances, the Ministry might reasonably reconsider their appointment of this board—not by any means to exclude a single member of the board as it stands to-day; but they might add to it some totally independent persons. For example, if we have a proposition for a mining railway we should at least have Mr. Montgomery, or some mining expert on the board to explain the prospects of that proposition from a mineralogical standpoint. And even where traffic is concerned we should have someone on the board, someone representing the working railways. Certainly these people are eminent in their way, and I would be the last in the world to question their ability; but they do not claim to be experts in all branches of practical science. Consequently, we have had boards whose reports have been laid on the table, not in this Parliament, but in a previous Parliament, and to sensible persons those reports caused much laughter on account of their stupidity; and Parliament has been obliged to reverse them. I think the Government should take into consideration some amendment of the constitution of this board.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): May I be permitted to second this motion *pro forma*. I insert that qualification because I am not in agreement with all that has been said by the mover. For instance, am I not right in assuming that the hon. member suggested that because these persons are civil servants they are unable to give a conscientious decision? So far as I am personally concerned I believe these officials appointed by the Government will give a decision which is their own, according to the best of their ability. I do not think there is one of these gentlemen who would be influenced by any member of the Government in regard to any decision they might give. Whilst I say that, at the same time I see a danger from this advisory board; for instance, these gentlemen might be so hedged about with restrictions as to be unable to give a decision on all the points

affecting the building of a railway. The Government might restrict this board by laying it down that a certain railway shall be a purely agricultural railway. They will send the board out to decide whether the railway shall be built for the purpose of agricultural development, when they should leave it to the board to decide whether this railway, if built, would be in the best interests of the State for the development of more than one industry. I have one railway in my mind at the present time. The board lately traversed a certain portion of the country to inquire into the desirability of constructing a line from the Wongan Hills to the Murchison railway. I hold that line should not be regarded as a purely agricultural proposition, but as one making for the development of the agricultural, mining, and pastoral industries. If it is to be for mining and pastoral development, and it must have a great influence on these two industries, the board should be sent out with open minds so that they might present a report showing how that line would affect the State as a whole, and how these industries in particular would be influenced by its construction. But if the board be sent out with a view of deciding how agriculture alone would be served by this railway, they can only give a report in respect to the prospects of agricultural development. I shall always hold that if a board be restricted, if their instructions are such that they cannot take a broad view of the question, their reports will not be satisfactory. But so far as those gentlemen are concerned, no member, whether of the House or of the Government, will succeed in influencing them in their decisions. My only objection to the advisory board is that they may get certain definite instructions which would serve to keep them in a narrow groove. Then a Bill is brought down by the Government and members are informed that the board have supported this proposition and have reported favourably. When, perhaps, if the board had been given an entirely free hand they might have brought in an entirely different report. The railway I have mentioned is one which is to be built for

all time, and which should not be for the exclusive development of the agricultural industry. It will serve that purpose, but at the same time if it is confined to the development of agriculture it may connect with the Murchison railway at a point where it will be of no advantage whatever to the mining industry. I hope, in regard to this board, the Government will not restrict them to any particular set of instructions.

Mr. WALKER (Kanowna): This House, I am sure, would not for a moment attempt to reflect on the character, on the ability, or on the integrity of any member of the Railway Advisory Board. The personnel of that board may be left out of the question. The point for consideration is, is a body of this kind in itself desirable, is it well to have such a board? Since I have been in the House I have frequently endeavoured to further the introduction here of a system long ago instituted in New South Wales, namely, that of a public works committee, consisting of members of Parliament; and I desire to show the advantage of that course over the one we have adopted in respect to the advisory board. For if the Minister for Works, or the Minister for Lands, or any other member of the Ministry can have an advisory board, why should not every Minister have an advisory board in connection with his particular office? The objection to all this is that we would be governed by irresponsible bodies. Bodies would have the governing of the country, instead of our having responsible government as we understand it, and as is consistent with the growth and development of a democratic community. We must have responsibility. What is the course taken in dealing with public works of large proportions in New South Wales? First of all the Ministry have to take the responsibility of recommending certain public works; the Ministry bring down, so to speak, each schedule of public works; that is the Government policy so far as the works are concerned. Then this course is taken: each of these particular works, if the estimated cost is over £20,000, is remitted to the Public Works Committee; and then what course

is taken? Each of those men capable is called in to give evidence before that Public Works Committee.

The Premier: A public works committee consisting of members of the House?

Mr. WALKER: Yes; and responsible to the House and reporting to the House. The advantage is this. If they are not satisfied with the evidence tendered by any one of the specialists in the Government service they can go outside and call in independent expert evidence on the particular matter.

Mr. George: And they are able to speak upon the matter in the House?

Mr. WALKER: Yes; and also to lay their views before members.

Mr. Angwin: Has it been successful?

Mr. WALKER: Absolutely, and to my knowledge it has saved New South Wales hundreds of thousands of pounds. There is no question of its success. The institution arose while I was in New South Wales, and I am speaking of my knowledge of it while I was in Parliament in New South Wales. In 1900 they made an amendment to the committee though they did not touch the principle; they only made a difference in the method by which the members of the committee were to be elected; instead of making them Government nominees they made them elected by the whole House.

The Premier: Before that were they simply nominated by the Government?

Mr. WALKER: No; I believe they were subject to ballot after nomination.

The Premier: What was the object of the amendment?

Mr. WALKER: The object of the Bill was to make certain amendments in the method of electing members of Parliament to the Public Works Committee. There had been a good deal of complaint about the system of election then existing, and objection was taken to the delay which took place after the Minister nominated the committee. When the Bill came before the Parliament in New South Wales the House adhered to the principle, and all they considered was a different form of election, making it more popular and occasioning less delay. Therefore, it

is not as though the experiment had been tried in New South Wales and allowed to continue by its own impetus; the matter has come up for rediscussion and has been endorsed because it was found to work so well. I am going to point out further advantages of this method over an advisory board. First of all, we get all the advantage of the ability, knowledge and experience, and travels and inspections also if we like, of every member of a board such as that constituted in this State, plus that of those who may be able to assist us, plus personal inspections, plus the consideration of all the evidence that is tabulated and printed, and plus the facility of communicating the committee's views to the House, of expressing the result of its deliberations, of laying before members all evidence taken before the committee, and of being able to answer further questions if raised in the House when the matter is up for discussion. All these advantages are there. There can be no presumption, no suggestion of any bias or of subservience to the views of any one particular person. In a case of that kind it is purely a matter of accumulating knowledge, tabulating and printing it and preparing it so that it is readily comprehensible, and laying it in the clearest manner before members of the House. All these are the advantages of a public works committee. Now, the disadvantage of an advisory board of the character now proposed is this: Human nature is human nature; and I do not care, men of the utmost honour are liable to be deflected unconsciously by consideration of the purposes upon which they are put upon their task, sent about their business; and unconsciously their actions are more or less coloured by the fact that they are in the service of the particular Minister in whose department they work. We may not be able to put our hands upon a single blemish in that respect; those persons who are on the board may not be able to accuse themselves of one breach of complete and entire rectitude; but there it is—this colouring, this human nature, this impulse, this invisible bias which must inevitably work while human nature is what it has

hitherto been in the world. It is wrong to subject these gentlemen to even the faintest breath of suspicion in that respect.

The Premier: Does not a public works committee give the Government the opportunity to avoid their responsibilities?

Mr. WALKER: No; it does not.

The Premier: The Government say, "We are in favour of this work, but the board will not agree to it."

Mr. WALKER: No; they can not. In the first place the Government take the responsibility of bringing down the work. That is the first step of responsibility.

Mr. Scaddan: Then it is simply like referring to a select committee?

Mr. WALKER: Quite so. The Government take the responsibility of bringing down a list of works and they stand by them. Supposing the Government say, "We are going to build a railway from Perth to Meekatharra, or anywhere else;" and after having made their pledges and promises, the work comes down to the House with the Government's recommendation and it is referred to a committee; then the committee bring in their expert evidence, traverse the route and obtain all the knowledge necessary to form a sound opinion as to whether the work is good or not, independent of all policy. Imagine then the committee exposing the Government to having tried to spring a purely political line. That would be manifest on the evidence. Undoubtedly it would make the Government more careful as to what works they recommended when they knew that their works have to be sifted by a purely independent committee, capable of collecting evidence from all sources and all classes of men.

The Premier: What position would the Government be in if they are honestly satisfied it is a good work and then it is thrown out by this committee?

Mr. WALKER: It would put the Government just in exactly the same position as if the work was thrown out by Parliament—in the position that Governments are always subject to. Is it not the case now with Bills brought in by Ministers? I have seen in this House a Bill brought in with the utmost good faith by a Minis-

ter, who before he got half way through, discovered that the Bill was not what he dreamed it was when he fathered it; and it has been submitted to a select committee whence it never emerged, and no one ever wanted to hear of it again, and the country has been saved a folly.

Mr. George: That never occurred in Western Australia!

Mr. WALKER: It was in this House.

Mr. Scaddan: And with this Government; with the Police Offences Bill.

Mr. WALKER: We have seen it. What is wrong with the principle I am speaking of when only last night the Minister for Works consented to one of his Bills, a most important measure, being relegated to a select committee? Where is the responsibility there?

The Minister for Works: It was a proper thing to do, as the hon. member knows.

Mr. WALKER: Quite so. I believe that every measure and every proposal involving the welfare in any sense of this community ought to be thoroughly thrashed out, not rushed through the Chamber or left merely to the dicta of the Ministry, but thoroughly sifted. Members should know every step they are taking, and should be assured of the accuracy of every step.

Mr. Scaddan: Would they send the Redistribution of Seats Bill to a select committee?

Mr. WALKER: Ah! I wish they would. But the principle is the same, relegating to a committee for sifting or examination purposes; and I submit the method adopted of having an advisory board is not a sifting process. It gives a fictitious value to what is brought into the House by the Ministry afterwards.

The Premier: It only means giving the House the opportunity of judging as against a committee judging.

Mr. WALKER: No; it does not. It creates the position that we cannot really tell who is responsible for a proposal, whether it is the Ministry or the advisory board. We do not know on whom we should put the real burden of responsibility. Ministers say, "Ah, the advisory

board;" but the advisory board is the creature of the Ministers.

The Premier: I do not think the Government have dodged any responsibility so far as railway construction is concerned.

Mr. WALKER: They have never dodged any responsibility, but they are backed up by an irresponsible body in their opinions or proposals, and that is what I am objecting to. If the Government are going to stand by, as I believe the Premier always would do, the proposals they make, what do they want an advisory board for; why do not they take the responsibility?

The Premier: You have never asked for an advisory board before.

Mr. WALKER: Then why have one now?

The Premier: Because there is plenty of country which the people have no opportunity of judging as to whether railway communication would be warranted.

Mr. WALKER: The Government delegating the functions of Parliament to an advisory board! Is that the policy? What are we here for but to have some judgment? Are we here to have an advisory board telling us what we are to do, they pulling the strings and we voting accordingly?

The Premier: They are there to tell us the country that will be served, and whether a proposition is reasonable.

Mr. WALKER: Is that the only use they are? We can get that information in other ways. Before ever we heard of an advisory board, when the Government had any important work to bring down to the House, did they not bring down the particulars?

The Minister for Lands: And you questioned them.

Mr. WALKER: Is it not our right to question them when we are in doubt? Are we to swallow these things like young birds in the nest? When the Minister comes with the worms are we to gape wide and swallow them? Is that the position to which the Minister would reduce members of Parliament? But notwithstanding these interruptions, in calm reason can there be any comparison between the suggestion, or rather the ex-

periment, which has been tried and proved a success, of a public works committee, and an irresponsible, Ministerially-nominated advisory board that cannot be reached or questioned, that has only the Minister for its counsel and its repository; can there be any comparison, I ask? There are dangers in this method. I do not say one word about those composing the Government, but it is possible that men might occupy those positions who would not be scrupulous.

Mr. George: That is rather rough on the next Labour Government.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member would like to take their place if he got the chance. We have seen people depart from that side within a comparatively recent time. There might be at times advisory boards that would be mere creatures of the Government, would decide any way they were wanted to, and would know how to obey.

The Minister for Lands: Do you suggest that this board does that?

Mr. WALKER: The Minister knows that I suggest nothing of the kind. I am simply referring to a possibility.

The Minister for Lands: We are discussing this board.

Mr. WALKER: No, we are discussing the principle of having boards of this kind appointed. There is no question of the men comprising this board, it is the principle that is under discussion, not the character of the men. As I have said, it would be quite possible to have boards that would be mere creatures of the Minister for the time being, and it would be possible that the Minister for the time being would not be the most honourable of men, and that this House, relying on the Minister's assurance that he had received testimony from the board as to the advisability of the work being constructed, might vote away the people's money absolutely unjustly and solely for political purposes. I want the responsibility to be upon the proper shoulders and I want this House to take their proper share of the responsibility, therefore I am going to vote, not against the men who are on the board now, but against the principle of having a board of this kind, especially when we know

that we can get more solid and better men by means of a public works committee.

Mr. George: Why not appoint one?

Mr. WALKER: It would require an Act of Parliament to constitute such a committee. Such a measure should be introduced as soon as possible, as the country would save money by it in many respects. In addition there could be no possible suspicion against anyone in connection with the construction of public works.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray): I do not like the wording of the motion, because unfortunately it causes members to say a lot of things which might be taken as a reflection upon the gentlemen forming the existing board. While I think an advisory board might be of service to Ministers, and to them alone, I do not think the present constitution of the board is in the best interests of the State. Where one is dealing with railways there should be provision for obtaining the opinion of those engaged on working railways. On the board we certainly have a railway engineer, an engineer of surveys, in the person of Mr. Muir, we have a surveyor in Mr. Johnston, who knows all about land values, we have Professor Lowrie, who is an expert, and Mr. Paterson, whom we all know and respect. None would say a word against these gentlemen, but I do not think the board are complete when they have to deal with railway matters. I have held the opinion for some years, I held it in the old House and I held it during my career as railway commissioner, and I still hold it, that in any question of new railways the working railways department should be taken into consideration, as they would be by railway companies in the old country. The gentlemen who comprise the board are experts in their own particular lines. We all know that the difference between a railway engineer and an engineer of working railways is considerable, although both are trained practically in the same school, but the working of railways is very different from the planning and building of them. If the advisory board are to be of any

use we want the opinion not only of those gentlemen who can speak of the possibility of building a railway, of the cutting up of the land for certain purposes, or for the opinion that it would be suitable for other purposes, and as to how much money would be lent on it, but we also want to know and have the right to know, from the working railways, what the prospects of the traffic are. We also want to know what would be the cost of running it and that can only be obtained from those who know what that expenditure would be. Without having the slightest intention of harassing the Government, I say the House should be able to know whether the proposed railways are within the range of practical politics. The member for Kanowna has suggested the creation of a board similar to that in New South Wales, and to those in other States in connection with such works. I remember that 14 or 15 years ago this question was brought up in the old Parliament. At that time there were large projects being put forward, very ambitious projects in connection with various matters for the development of the State, and members then felt that while they might have great confidence in the integrity of the Government, the experience of the members of that Government must be limited and it was desirable that, before these projects were brought into the House and debated, and in order to avoid making mistakes, a board should first make inquiries and then put the result of their investigations and their report before the House. Members on both sides should be primed with information, primed with the opinion they had formed, for by this means members on both sides of the House would be able to vote properly on any project brought forward. It was felt then, and it must be thought now, that the expenditure of public money on public works should not be a mere party question. We all should feel, and I hope we do feel, that we are the custodians and trustees of the people's money, and that upon us rest the task and responsibility of ere-

ating taxation, and that therefore we should do everything possible to see that the money is well spent. By authorising the borrowing of money taxation is rendered necessary and it is only proper that all members of the House should be thoroughly satisfied, when voting for the expenditure of public moneys, that they are voting on the right lines. Party lines should not come in. There was another aspect which was lightly touched upon by the member for Kanowna, and which might be amplified upon without offence. It would be possible in connection with the construction of public works for the Government to feel inclined to advise, and perhaps put through the House, the expenditure of a large sum for what could be regarded as a political work. I do not put that in an offensive way, but the work might be considered more of a political character than for the benefit of the whole of the State. Supposing an expenditure of over £25,000 for some work were gone into by a jury of this House, members from each side, who would have the opportunity of getting information from the officials of the Government and others not on the permanent staff of the State, but who work outside. So much information would be obtained by them and put at the disposal of other members that, without relieving the Ministry of responsibility, we should be doing our duty properly and would not be shielding ourselves behind the *ipse dixit* of persons whose knowledge and information had not been laid before us. From a remark made by the Premier I understood he thinks that if a committee of this kind were formed it would result in infringing upon the responsibility of Ministers. It is not a question of infringing upon the responsibility of Ministers at all, it is not a question of taking away from the dignity of Ministers or taking away anything that might pertain to their office, but it is the duty of every member of Parliament and of every Minister not to neglect an opportunity to prevent the mispending of public funds. We are here, or are supposed to be here, and I hope we are, for the purpose of

doing all we can in the interests of the State. Whether we sit in opposition or on the Ministerial side, that should be the position for us to take up. It could not infringe the dignity of Ministers, it could not take away their responsibility. All members have to be prepared to take responsibility in regard to expenditure which has to be borne by the people of the State. Again, in connection with a matter of this kind, the committee, or whatever you choose to call it, would not be confined in its personnel to members of the Assembly only, for we should have the advantage of the experience of members of another place, so that when the matter came before them they would not be like children playing in the dark, afraid of what might come near them. I cannot vote for the motion in its present form, for it contains what might be considered as a slur on the gentlemen who form the present board. I know them all and I know that they are honourable men and that so far as it is possible for honourable men to avoid going wrong, they do it. But I trust that before the session is over the Government will arrange for the formation of a select committee, or whatever one likes to call it, to be drawn from all sides of the House and also from among members of another place, with power to go into these matters thoroughly. I can assure Ministers that it would not be taking from them any of their dignity, but would merely strengthen them, for they would know that when they brought a proposal before the House it would be properly debated. It would not be a case of turning a Government out and putting another in, but it would simply result in ensuring that the money of the State was properly conserved.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. Frank Wilson): I cannot help thinking that members in dealing with this motion have perhaps gone beyond the terms of it and have confused the advisory board, for which I take full responsibility as having suggested their appointment to the Government, with the public works committee, such as the member for Kanowna explained exists in

New South Wales. I am prepared to admit that a works committee such as he has outlined would have some advantages, but at the same time, if it acts exactly as the hon. member suggested, it would also possess many disadvantages, not the least being—I can hardly credit that this is true—that the Government's existence might hang upon the report which a committee of this kind might bring in. If one wants to get away from responsible Government, that is the method of doing it. Put it all on to the committee, delegate powers to the committee and what they recommend do, but what they do not recommend leave in abeyance.

Mr. Hudson: You have not got the grip of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am giving the House the idea I obtained from the remarks made by the member for Kanowna.

Mr. Walker: I gave you credit for more intelligence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Of course the hon. member gives me credit for a good deal more intelligence than I possess. And then the board have either to endorse or condemn the recommendation—

Mr. Hudson: No, they report to the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They either recommend or condemn. That is a nice position for a Ministry to be in. The Government recommend to the committee that a railway should be constructed, say from Wongan Hills to the East Murchison Railway, and the committee say, "Mr. Speaker and gentlemen we do not agree with that recommendation." Where does responsible Government come in? If this is to be the position, I for one would be sorry to be placed in it.

Mr. Scaddan: If such a Public Works Committee had been constituted, you would not have had a clause in the Governor's Speech relating to the Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member is romancing. That clause would have appeared in the Gov-

ernor's Speech just the same. I can assure the House that the Government do not want to be relieved of any responsibility at all. The Government are prepared to carry out the responsibility of the measures they suggest to the House. Fancy a Government proposal to expend £20,000, and having to wait until the matter had been remitted to a committee of the House!

Mr. Walker: Do you not have to wait always for what the Committee does on any Bill you bring in?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have to wait for Parliament to authorise. But let me point out that the other day we authorised the expenditure of £50,000 without the Committee. The Government took the responsibility of doing that, and the hon. member would have been the first to condemn the Government if they had not done so. Here was a pressing need. We had a harvest coming in, and there was a suggestion of the possibility of delays in the shipment of the wheat at Fremantle, and we were faced with the question of what we should do to facilitate that shipment. Recommendations were made with regard to extra wharfage accommodation, new grain sheds, and special appliances for the rapid loading of vessels, and it was pointed out that if we waited for Parliament to meet we would have no hope of handling the harvest, and there would be a greater congestion than happened last season. The result would have been that the country would have suffered, the producers would have suffered, and the shipping community would have suffered. Therefore, we took the responsibility and authorised the expenditure of money which has to some extent been covered by a Supply Bill. Surely the hon. member does not mean to say that a vote of that description should be remitted to a Public Works Committee, and that we should wait for the assembling of the House before the work could be carried out.

Mr. Bolton: That was one of your decent actions.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I admit it is one of the best actions we

have taken during the recess, and I am glad the hon. member appreciates it.

Mr. Scaddan: The position did not suddenly arise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position suddenly arose, and the Government faced it. The question of rolling stock also arose, and that was faced. The member for Murray has found fault with the personnel of this advisory board.

Mr. George: Not the personnel; I want you to add more to it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I want to point out there is no reason for adding more members. This advisory board was appointed on my recommendation by Cabinet and Executive Council to advise Ministers and the Government as to the further extension of the agricultural railway policy. We have gone out in many directions as far as we had personal knowledge of, and we have come to this stage that it was desirable that we should have the opinion of men who had travelled over the country, and we took the position that Ministers are entitled to utilise the collective expert knowledge of their officers on all occasions, as in the past the Government have used the expert knowledge of the officers individually. On every occasion when I have introduced a railway measure I have had maps prepared by these expert officers, and these maps have been backed up by reports as to the capabilities of the country for settlement and production. What have we done now? We have knocked these reports into one and instead of having one report from one department, another from another department, advising Ministers about the districts inspected and recommending that they are suitable for railway construction, instead of having such individual reports the best expert knowledge has been placed at the disposal of the Cabinet from one advisory board. We have taken Professor Lowrie as an expert in agricultural matters; we have taken Mr. Paterson—and no one will cavil at his expert knowledge as far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned, an institution which is so largely interested in the de-

velopment of the agricultural railway system; we have taken Mr. Johnston, the Surveyor General, who also is able to give expert advice, and we have taken Mr. Muir, the Chief Surveyor on railway construction in my department. Could we have got a better set of advisers? If we had not appointed these gentlemen, what would I have done? Supposing to-morrow I were introducing a measure for the construction of a railway from Wangan Hills to the Murchison line somewhere, whose advice would I have sought, and whose reports would I have placed before members?

Mr. Hudson: The individual reports of these very men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then, is there any objection, or is there anything condemnatory in getting the collective report of these officers?

Mr. Walker: It is quite different. You know the value of John Smith's reports, and how John Smith in giving you his report presents it in his own language. The board report generally.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board does not report generally. The individual members when they cannot agree present a minority report. Anyhow, I disagree with hon. members. The Government have a perfect right to utilise the expert officers attached to the different departments, and I think it is absurd for any member to condemn what has been done ever since we have had Responsible Government. I remember on one occasion some years ago when this very question of the Norseman railway cropped up that our friends opposite who were in possession of the Treasury bench appointed an advisory board to recommend the construction of that railway, and the individuals they appointed condemned the project which hon. members now wish to ram down the throats of this Government without any report at all. The members of that advisory board appointed by our Labour friends on that occasion consisted of Mr. Douglas, now Chief Traffic Manager, and who was then a District Engineer; Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer; and the Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. George: That is a better board.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nonsense! What is the hon. member talking about when he says it is a better board! Fancy such a board advising the Government as to the agricultural railway expansion! What on earth is the good of a traffic man on such a board?

Mr. George: A jolly good thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the kind. The Minister for Lands is going to cut up some hundreds of thousands of acres of land here and there, and throw it open for selection. What can a traffic man do on a board of advice? What estimate can he make of the possible traffic to a country which it not yet opened up? It goes without saying that we have adopted a sensible and businesslike course of taking the best expert advice we could avail ourselves of in order to get reports which would tell us what in the opinion of the board was the best method for the expansion of the agricultural railway system, and it is not proposed for a moment that we should send that board to recommend or advise us on the construction of railways in mining districts. It was not by the will of the Government that we sent this board to inquire into the Norseman-Esperance railway; it was because it was stated that there was agricultural land in that locality that required to be opened up, and immediately that statement was made my colleague the Minister for Lands agreed that they should go.

Mr. Collier: And you expressed an opinion on the proposition before they reported.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Horan: What rubbish you do talk.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members have all had their chance, but they do not like a castigation to be administered to them.

Mr. Collier: Did not the Minister for Lands give his opinion of that proposal before the board reported?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Will the hon. member ask the Minister for Lands that question? He is here, and

can answer it. The hon. member accused me of having given an opinion about it. I gave an opinion, and said that unless there was much more agricultural land within an assured rainfall that railway would not be warranted. I pointed out that every man, woman, and child in the State were the proprietors of the railway system, and we would not be justified in putting the country to a large expenditure of money in extending that railway system unless we could see some prospect of increased traffic, both passenger and goods, and an increased revenue. I pointed out that the construction of that line as far as I was concerned, and could judge at that time, would not bring that increased traffic, and therefore I was opposed to its construction, and I am still opposed to it.

Mr. Collier: You were judging before you had the report.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Judging on common sense, and on business lines supported by a great number of business people.

Mr. Collier: That may be; but you did not have the report of the board just the same.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask hon. members not to interject so much.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now I want to emphasise the point that a board of this description is not more likely to be biased in their advice to Ministers than would be the individual men who compose the board. I for one deprecate any such suggestion, and I am glad the member for Kanowna also deprecated it, and said that there was no chance of that unless, indeed, the board were unconsciously biased. I want to say also that the advisory board—I know the instructions given; in fact the papers can be produced if members want them—the advisory board have received no instructions and no colour as to which way the Government wished their advice. The fact of the matter is that the Government have not inspected that portion of the country through which this board have travelled. Members of the Government have passed through the country perhaps, in sections, but such travelling does not

give you the information enabling you to advocate or condemn a railway project. It may give a general idea, it may serve to enable one to say, "I passed through the country and it seemed to be likely country"; but until you have the district classified by competent surveyors, and until you have men of this description with the necessary experience traversing to and fro in the district you cannot get a correct estimate as to the necessity for railway construction.

Mr. Troy: Do the Government restrict these officials to a certain set of questions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; absolutely not. They are instructed to travel over the country and advise the Government as to further extensions of the agricultural railway system—that is in regard to agriculture alone. As for a mining railway, I would not, perhaps, send this board to the goldfields. In respect to a proposition such as that on the Notice Paper in the name of the member for Leonora—in respect of the probable traffic over such a line I would send a traffic man. I say it would serve no good purpose to take an officer from the working railways and travel him up and down a new country with a view to his arriving at an estimate of the traffic likely to pass through that district.

Mr. Troy: Some of these railway propositions serve both agriculture and mining.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Exactly. The hon. member instanced the Wongan Hills. I travelled through there, according to a promise given, but that is as far as I have seen of the district to be served, except Mullewa. I have not been in between these points. So far as I have seen, there is a very reasonable prospect of the proposed line proving profitable. All these people have to report to us is as to the agricultural prospects: the other factors can be gone into afterwards. The question of traffic is one eminently for the Traffic Department, and they can undertake that duty at any time. It is not necessary for the traffic inspector to spend two or three weeks in the bush with

a view to finding out what traffic there is likely to be over the new line.

Mr. Troy: But will we have the traffic estimate before us when the proposition is being discussed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the country warrants a railway being put through it for agricultural purposes the hon. member need not worry about it going through so far as his goldfields are concerned. In such circumstances it certainly will go through. If it be rather a faint-hearted recommendation so far as agriculture is concerned, we will have a report from the Traffic Department as to the probable goldfields traffic. It is unnecessary for me to labour the question. The Government have no intention nor any desire to shirk their responsibility one iota. We take the responsibility of our measures whether we have a report favourable or otherwise from the advisory board. The advisory board was appointed to advise Ministers, to give them further knowledge than that already possessed themselves; but in regard to the policy, it is a question for the Government, and the Government intend to abide by their own decision.

On motion by Mr. Hudson, debate adjourned.

MOTION—ZAMIA PALM ERADICATION.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest) moved—

That in view of the loss amongst dairy and other cattle in the South-West the Government should grant a bonus for a cheaper and more effective means of eradicating the Zamia palm.

The object of the motion was to draw the attention of the House to this subject with a view to inducing the Government, by means of a bonus, to encourage chemists to discover some cheap and more effective means of eradicating this palm, which was the greatest curse known to settlers of the South-West. Letters which he had received from settlers in the heavily timbered country showed the losses they had suffered owing to the existence of this palm, which ex-

tended from Fremantle to Albany, particularly along the coast. The methods of destroying the palm were two. First, by piercing it with a bar, and, secondly, by applying kerosene, which, of course, was a very costly method. One selector in his district had used up 70 cases of kerosene on a small area of 300 acres.

Mr. George: He must have a wasteful chap working for him.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In addition to this it had cost the selector 1s. 2d. an acre to apply it, and the job was not yet finished. Both the methods of destruction referred to had proved too costly for the settlers, and if some cheaper and more effective means could be found for destroying the palm it would confer an inestimable boon upon the selectors in the timber country.

Mr. Jacoby: You would not get anything cheaper than kerosene.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Members should not run away with the idea that nothing cheaper than kerosene could be devised. The chemists had come to the assistance of agriculturists before, and with the inducement of a bonus of, say, £200 they would probably make the attempt again. If no satisfactory method were discovered the bonus could not be claimed; if, on the other hand, somebody were to come forward with a successful experiment and demonstrate the virtues of the new method, the Government would have conferred the greatest possible blessing on the settlers of the South-West. The Minister for Lands had gone in for a policy of encouraging the dairying industry, and it was the Minister's intention to expend a large sum of money in this direction; but it was a contradictory policy to do all we could to encourage the importation and breeding of dairy cattle while we neglected to protect the cattle we already had. Quite recently one man had lost 35 head of stock within three months, another 31 head within three weeks, and another nine head in one week, all being valuable stock.

Mr. George: When was this?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: These losses had been sustained within the last few months. It appeared that once stock

acquired a taste for the cones of this particular palm, once they had contracted the habit of pulling it out of the ground and eating it, they would go to no other feed. Ten years ago he had noticed on the Donnelly river, and also out in the Warren country, some of the finest looking stock useless and worthless owing to the fact that they had the rickets, or the wobbles as it was called, as a result of eating this palm. He had seen magnificent bullocks bogged in 18 inches of soft ground, totally unable to extricate themselves. He knew that right through the South-Western country the stock-owners suffered severe losses every month owing to the existence of this palm. Quite recently he had read of some of the methods adopted in different States to deal with local pests. In Queensland they had the prickly pear and the water hyacinth. This last-named pest, it had been found, was capable of being eradicated by cattle dip, and the farmers were now using this peculiar remedy to get rid of that pest. It might be possible to introduce some disease into the *Zamia* palm which would serve to kill it. Settlers on the Darling Ranges, who had got their land free of the palm, found that they had to begin their task all over again owing to the seeds being washed down from Crown lands above them. It was certainly a suicidal policy to allow this palm to flourish in our midst.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.15 p.m.
