

every paragraph proposed by each Minister, so I presume there must be some difference of opinion amongst the five Ministers. A board of directors do not always agree upon details, but they are supposed to agree generally, and a majority on any point of difference carries the day. I presume that, in framing the Ministerial policy, the majority carry the point.

MR. RANDELL: Those who do not agree should resign. I think.

MR. FORREST: No; they agree by majority. As to paragraph 24, I hope the Government will use their best endeavours to provide a water supply and sanitary arrangements for the larger towns. This is most necessary in the City of Perth, for it is impossible that the Municipal Council, with its present means, can do all that is necessary in providing these large works, without the aid of the Government. I hope we shall try to make the metropolis of the colony as attractive as we can. In conclusion, I congratulate the Government on the position they occupy at present, more especially the financial position; and although my friend, the member for Albany, says they will be turned out shortly, I hope they will have a long reign, and that, having the confidence of the country party, on this side of the House, at any rate, they will stop there till the next election.

MR. GEORGE: It was not my intention to have made any remarks this evening, but as the member for West Kimberley, who also occupies the honorable position of Mayor of Perth, has resumed his seat without answering any of the aspersions that have been cast on the City Council, I have thought it would not be fitting if some member of that Council did not take this opportunity of defending that body for any action it may have taken. Dealing first with the Speech of the Administrator, it would be impolitic for so young a member as myself to attempt to lead this Assembly through the mazes of these 26 paragraphs, and therefore I will try to touch briefly on a few points that occur to me. One hon. member has described the Speech, in business parlance, as a progress report. I am not willing to brand it with that name, because I consider it lacks what business men would require from the heads of their official Departments—a balance-sheet and figures, by which we may be enabled to judge of the work of the Departments of the Government. We have no such figures before us, to judge of what they have done even during the recess. We are

to be asked to consent to a Bill for confirming certain expenditure which belongs to 1894. I do not know what are the usages of an Assembly on matters of that kind, but I do know, that in the case of a business firm, such a lack of knowledge in regard to excess expenditure, and such a keeping back of necessary information, would have led to the severest censure. Reference has been made to the Agricultural Bank. I represent a constituency which formerly returned Mr. Paterson to this House, and although at one election I fought him and he fought me, and we fought pretty hard, yet I have the greatest respect for Mr. Paterson, and, so far as honesty and ability are concerned, I believe he will, as manager of the Agricultural Bank, use his best endeavours to make it a success. I hope he will be successful in that important work. One hon. member has said that fortune favours the brave. Well, if the good fortune which has befallen the Government implies that they possess courage, then certainly they ought to be the most courageous men these colonies have produced, for they certainly have had during the last few years, the best fortune that ever a Ministry could expect. It has been said the revenue has exceeded anything the Government ever contemplated. I am pleased to find that is so; but the thing that causes me the greatest anxiety is that I find the expenditure is also going up by what are termed leaps and bounds, and if any reverse overtakes our present prosperity, we shall find ourselves committed to an expenditure which may be a very incubus on the colony. Those who control the great spending departments require to exercise the utmost care before they allow expenditure to go on in a way I shall presently refer to. We know that our railways are paying now, and nothing shall fall from me to show that I should be sorry if the railways did pay. I am pleased to see coming into Perth and Fremantle large trains of produce from the country districts, and I hope they will increase; and if the Government can see their way to give railway facilities in the struggling agricultural parts, where I know that men are carting produce 100 miles, the Government will receive the greatest support I can give them in providing railway facilities. But we have had no returns to show what the railway traffic had been, and the amount of expenditure; and I venture to say the head of any business firm who framed estimates,

and fell into such errors as have been disclosed in connection with a Government Department would soon be required to transfer himself to a place where his abilities would be better appreciated. As to the proposed removal of the Fremantle workshops, I quite agree with it. Their present site is unsuitable; it is too small; it is not a place where valuable machinery should be placed; and, with regard to its want of space, probably a great amount of the excessive expenditure, and the terrible state in which we find the rolling stock of our railways, may be accounted for in that way, although I have no returns at present to show it. I have no doubt it will be possible for the Government to combat my statement that the rolling-stock is in bad order, but I shall be prepared, if necessary, to prove the truth of the statement I make. I see reference has been made to Mr. Allison Smith, as an authority in regard to these workshops. I do not know—perhaps the Government will never say—from whom they received information to make out that Mr. Allison Smith is an authority on railway workshops. I remember very well when the railway workshops at Newport, in Victoria, were built, and Mr. Allison Smith laid himself open to the criticism of all working engineers, in consequence of the absolutely foolish manner in which those workshops had been laid out. It will be perhaps new to learn that in building those workshops at Newport, the roof was so low that there was not room for the travelling cranes to pass with anything like ease over the locomotives and other rolling stock in the place. In fact, a considerable amount of ill health was caused among the workmen in those shops. It was absurd for the Government of this colony to give fifty guineas to Mr Allison Smith for an opinion which is not worth the paper it was written on—a gentleman who is discredited and disgraced in the countries where he has been. He has been discredited in New Zealand, and is almost discredited in Victoria. But some one here has had the foolishness to bring this properly discredited man into this colony and try to ram his report on the people here, in regard to workshops. It is quite right that the workshops should be removed from where they are, but it is quite wrong that the recommendation of Mr Allison Smith should be received with any favour by the Government here, or by this House. As to his recommending the removal to the Midland Junction, I should

like to know what were the instructions given to him by the Government on that subject. I do hope that the workshops can be removed to some suitable site nearer to Fremantle. I do not think, I do not believe, that it can be shown, with any amount of fair reason, that it is necessary to remove the workshops to the Midland Junction. If the Government have bought 260 acres of land at the Junction, let the Government keep the land, and not perpetrate a greater mistake by putting perhaps £50,000 on a spot which may not be suitable. The raw material landed at the port will have to be conveyed a greater distance, in that case, and if we are to develop the Collic coalfield, as I hope we shall, cannot we carry that coal just as well to Fremantle as to Guildford. I think this matter will require reconsideration on the part of the Government—that is to say if their action will be endorsed by this House. I am disappointed with the Government policy, so far as disclosed in the Speech, and I regret that no reference whatever has been made to what, not only in my poor opinion, but in the opinion of a great number of persons in this colony, is a burning question—that is the Education Question. I think the Government must see that, from the way in which public opinion is turning round. From the manner this question has been fought in the recent elections, it is manifest that the Education Question is one of the burning questions of the day; and I do hope that, before this session closes, those who think as I do, will see this question settled once for all. I had intended to refer more particularly to the public works and railways of this colony; but, as I have the honor to occupy a seat on the Civil Service Commission, I feel that in some degree my lips are closed. We are now enquiring into the railways. After that, if we are permitted to live—if the hon. member for the Gascoyne (Mr. R. F. Sholl) allows us to do so—we shall enquire into public works; and I do not despair that we shall be able to present a report to this House which will certainly be acceptable, and will require no apology from me or any other member of the Commission for our continued sitting. An incident in the enquiry has occurred within the last few days, and it has been a rather unpleasant one. I do not know what has been the reply sent by His Excellency the Administrator, but I can say this much at present, that, owing to the circumstances which took place, it was necessary

for us to abruptly close the examination, and to communicate with His Excellency in order to find out what powers were conferred upon us. I believe that, whoever was the cause of the mistake, he regrets it very much, and I wish it were possible for me to refer to it more fully at this time. With regard to certain remarks made about the City Council, in this debate, I regret that the Mayor of Perth (Mr. A. Forrest) is not on this occasion sitting on the same side of the House as myself. We agree very much on most matters, when sitting as members of the City Council, and I am surprised that a gentleman of his intellect and business powers has not seen fit to join me in sitting on this side of the House. Much has been made, in this debate, of what is called "an objectionable convenience" which is being erected in Wellington-street, Perth. The City Council needs very little defence from me. They are a body of men to whom I am proud to belong. I think their intelligence is equal to almost any task that may be placed upon them, and I am certain they are quite able to deal with this "convenience." It may surprise hon. members of this House, and also the public of Western Australia, to know that this objectionable, but very useful structure, has been put in the place in which it now is, because, in the judgment of the City Council, that is the only suitable place in which they can put it, until the hon. the Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works sees fit to reconsider his decision with regard to a small triangular piece of ground, which is said by the Commissioner to be useful for railway purposes, but which the Engineer-in-Chief, the Engineer of Existing Lines, the Engineer for Construction, and the General Traffic Manager say—with all respect to the Commissioner of Railways—is not required for railway purposes. A few weeks ago, when I came down to my place of business, I found on the site where this objectionable, but very necessary, convenience is being erected, that materials for the building were being deposited. I saw the City Surveyor, whom we councillors highly respect, and in whom we believe, and I said to him, "Surely you are not going to build that affair there?" He said he was. I said, "I understand you were to communicate with the Commissioner of Railways, to see whether he would give you the small triangular corner of the street." The Surveyor replied that he made out a plan, and saw the Com-

missioner of Railways about it, and was told by him that the piece of land was wanted for railway purposes, and that the City Council could not have it. Well, I felt so strongly on the point that I determined to see the Commissioner of Railways myself, hoping that possibly he might yield to my entreaties. I knew I had no power to force him to do so, but I thought I might persuade him, for it was not Naboth's vineyard that the City Council wanted, but a piece of public land that was required for a public convenience. Yet, although I went twice to see the Commissioner, I found him so guarded that it was impossible for me to see him. In my despair, I called on certain officers of the Department, whom I have already mentioned, and their answer in each case was that the small triangular piece of ground could not fill any railway purpose. However, as I could not see the Commissioner in person, I interviewed him through the telephone, and the hon. gentleman will bear me out that, having explained the matter to him, he told me had really no power, but perhaps he could offer no objection, that perhaps after all the place where the building was being erected might be the best place for it. And, as to the triangular piece of ground, he said he had made his decision, and could not alter it. That is the history of the much abused, but what I am afraid will be the much used, convenience near the railway station in Perth.

MR. PLESSE: Is the hon. member in order in referring to the City Council? There is no reference to this matter in the Administrator's Speech.

THE SPEAKER: It was usual to allow some latitude in the debate on the Address-in-Reply.

MR. GEORGE: I should be sorry, through my ignorance of the rules of this Assembly, to be out of order, and nothing is further from my wish than to impose the City Council's affairs on this Assembly; but as the City Council has been attacked, I felt I should be wanting in loyalty to those municipal colleagues with whom I am proud to sit, if I did not defend them, and the City Council has not received from the Commissioner of Railways that consideration which its position entitles it to. As to the Collie coalfield, the coal has been tried in the workshops of my firm, and we have found it answer our purposes very well. With regard to the

making of a railway to the coalfield, that question will be debated in due course; but at present I am glad to bear my testimony to the fact that the Collic coal has been tried and not been found wanting. I cannot resume my seat without expressing my pride that I find myself in a colony which is beginning to move; and I think the gentlemen who form this Assembly should feel justly proud that they are some of the leaders who are assisting this colony to go on. Five years ago Western Australia stood at the threshold of the nations and timidly knocked. To-day her doors are thrown wide open to the world, and she welcomes those adventurous spirits to whom their own land has for a time denied a footing and driven within our shores. Our goldfields have attracted, and are still attracting, these men; and we are proud that the recent discoveries prove almost without a doubt the permanence of the fields. I believe that we have yet to realise the full benefits resulting from this influx of population, and Western Australia is to-day showing to the world the one bright spot in the cloud of dark depression which has fallen upon her neighbours, the Eastern Colonies—a depression which we sincerely and fervently hope has begun to mend, and ere long may entirely clear away. Meanwhile, we heartily welcome those who come to our shores, and recognise that out of them we may fairly expect a large proportion to remain amongst us, and become, in fact and in name, true and loyal citizens of this fair colony of Western Australia.

MR. HOOLEY: I must congratulate the Government on the bill of fare which they have laid before hon. members. I think they have a satisfactory tale to tell, though they do not deserve all the credit, because circumstances have forced it upon them. I would like to refer to a few of the items in the Governor's Speech. With regard to the federation of the colonies referred to in paragraph 4, it appears to me not to suit this colony at present, although it may in time to come. It is well known that nearly everything we use has to be imported from the other colonies, and that we send very little of anything away. It would, I think, be a very one-sided bargain to federate with the other colonies. With regard to public works I think the Speech is very satisfactory, not only to hon. members, but to the people of the colony. It is a source of satisfaction to know the public works are carried on in the

manner they are, and that they are returning such a fair revenue to the country. I may say I took some part in the work of the Commission that considered those public works, and it is a source of satisfaction to me, and to others, to know that they are being constructed as they are, so well within the estimates. Referring to the harbour works at Fremantle, I sincerely hope the powers that be will see their way to extend the North Mole a considerable distance beyond what is contemplated at the present time, so as to form a safe anchorage during such weather as we have been having of late. I consider that in doing this the money will be very well spent. With regard to the railway line to the Coolgardie goldfields, I have not long since returned from that locality, and am very glad indeed that the line has been let well below the estimate, and I hope, in consequence, the Government in their wisdom will see the desirability of extending it to Hannan's, if not beyond it, for they must have a considerable amount of money in hand. I hope the Government will do this at the earliest possible moment, because the opening up of the fields will assist, not only the goldfields, but the colony generally. With regard to the Agricultural Bank, I may say, at the time this Bill was passed, I had not the honor of being a member in this House, or else I should have had something to say against it. I have no faith in it, although I have the greatest possible faith in the gentleman who has been appointed manager. He is a capable gentleman in every way, and will certainly do his best, as will also the Government, but I am afraid their very best will be very bad. I am afraid that when they want to call in money they will find it is not forthcoming. A thing of this kind is not good enough for the Government if no private individual is willing to take it up; and I venture to think that no financial institution would lend money upon the same security as the Agricultural Bank holds. With regard to the Northern Districts, I consider the Government have done their best to open up the stock routes. They did wisely in opening up the route over three or four hundred miles of the driest districts by spending a few hundred pounds. It was almost impossible to get the stock to market, and I consider the Government have met the matter very fairly. I see paragraph 15 refers to the running of trains on the Midland railway. I can quite endorse the remarks of the hon. member

for West Kimberley. I believe four trains a week to be far in excess of the requirements, and I should like to see the number reduced to three trains each week, up one day and down the next. I am satisfied that trains on three days a week would be equal to the requirements for the next twelve months, and that would certainly ease the funds of the company, and they are not overburdened with funds. I am satisfied from my knowledge and experience of the country, and the trade of that district, that three trains each way would be sufficient, and I hope the Government will take this matter in hand, and assist the Company. I do not like to see people pressed, and I think it would press them to have to run four trains, each way, per week. I see by paragraph 19 that the Government propose to reduce the tariff on sundry articles. Though the articles are not specified, I suppose the reductions will be upon articles that cannot be produced in the colony, such as tea, sugar, coffee, &c., and I do think they ought to include tinned meats, for these form a considerable item on the gold-fields. Even the tins when emptied are of great service. I saw people collecting them and making a revenue by burning them down for the solder. I even saw in one case, at the Londonderry, a house that had been built with these tins; but, apart from the use of the tins, I think it wise to put tinned meats on the free list, or at any rate to considerably reduce the amount of duty on them. It is said that the people will not use tinned meat if they can get fresh, and there is just now a great outcry with regard to the meat question. I am quite sure that those who are talking about the Stock Tax, and its remission, do not see its true bearing. They say the Stock Tax is heavy upon them. I ask hon. members what the Stock Tax has to do with it? The butchers go into the sale yards and purchase cattle at such prices as they value them at. They do not go to the owners, or shippers, and ask how much per head it has cost to rear or land the cattle; they go there, and know how much per head they are going to give either for bullocks or sheep. The Stock Tax, instead of pressing upon the consumer, presses upon the shipper of cattle, the people in the other colonies. We do not want to get money out of our own people, but from the people in the other colonies, and it is a mistake to imagine it presses upon the consumer. If steamers could be procured in

larger numbers to bring cattle and sheep from the other colonies, it might be cheaper than to the consumer if the market were overstocked, for then, instead of selling at £10 or £12 per head, they would have to take what they could get. It is all very well to cry out about the Stock Tax pressing hard upon the consumer, but it must be borne in mind by hon. members that the squatters in this colony are not making salt for their porridge. The only thing they can rely upon is beef or mutton, provided they get seasons sufficiently good to produce it, for wool scarcely pays the expenses of sending it home. The fact is, in their food, and clothing, boots, fencing and everything they use, the squatters are taxed, and they surely ought to be protected to some slight extent. Hon. members must admit that the argument for remitting the Stock Tax, is a very one-sided one. I do not think there is much more that I need to dwell upon in connection with the Governor's Speech. I think on the whole the Government are to be congratulated upon it. There is just one remark I would like to make in reply to the hon. member who complained of the Government importing stone; if that hon. member lived at Fremantle, he would see a very large building going up there for a private owner, not of stone, but of brick, every brick of which, was imported from the other colonies. Why then blame the Government?

MR. JAMES: They should not follow a bad example.

MR. HOOLEY: As I said before, the Government are to be congratulated on the bill of fare they have presented to us, and I join in that congratulation.

MR. HASSELL: I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.45 p.m. until 4.30 p.m. next day.