

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 26th June, 1895.

*Latrines in Wellington-street—Removal of Railway Workshops to the Midland Junction—East Perth Railway Station—Interruptions on the Cue Telegraph Line—Date of calling tenders for construction of Mullerwa-Cue Railway—Completion of Subiaco Road—Hours of Sitting in the Legislative Assembly—Sessional Orders and Committees—New Bills—Address-in-Reply; adjourned debate—Adjournment.*

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.  
PRAYERS.

### LATRINES IN WELLINGTON-STREET, PERTH.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways, if the brick building in Wellington-street, immediately in front of the main entrance to the Perth Railway Station, was being erected with his approval or consent; and if not, whether any steps were contemplated to enforce its removal.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that he had no control whatever over the streets of Perth, nor had he any right to interfere in any way with the erection of any building considered necessary by the Municipality; his consent was not necessary, nor had it been solicited.

### REMOVAL OF RAILWAY WORKSHOPS TO THE MIDLAND JUNCTION.

MR. MOSS: I rise, in accordance with notice, to ask the Commissioner of Railways,—

1. If Mr. Allison Smith has in any way been employed by the Government since the date of his report on the Railway Workshops.

2. If so, the dates between which such employment lasted; the nature of the work undertaken by him; the remuneration paid to him for his services.

3. Whether any, and if so what, works have been constructed or commenced by the Government, at, or in the vicinity of, the Midland Junction, prior to the 19th day of March, 1895.

4. Whether any, and if so what, works have been constructed, continued, or commenced by

the Government, at or in the vicinity of the Midland Junction, since the 19th day of March, 1895.

5. Has the Government let a contract for the construction of a dam at the Midland Junction, near the proposed site there for the Railway Workshops; and, if so, what is the amount of such contract, and has the expenditure been authorised by Parliament, and from what allocation in the Schedule to any Loan Act has the money been drawn.

6. What is the purpose for which the said dam is being constructed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. Yes.

2. (a.) 10 days; 19th February to 1st March, 1895, inclusive.

(b.) Consulting, advising, and supervision of detail drawings in connection with new workshops.

(c.) £52 10s.

3. Assuming the question to refer to works in connection with workshops. None.

4. Assuming the question to refer to works in connection with workshops. None.

5. (a.) Yes.

(b.) £1,353 16s. 2d.

(c.) Yes.

(d.) Loan, 1894. Item 6.—Additional improvements to opened railways.

6. Supply of water for railway purposes.

### EAST PERTH RAILWAY STATION.

MR. JAMES, pursuant to notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways when the erection of the East Perth Railway Station would be commenced.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied, as follows: In about a week. The erection of this Station has been delayed in consequence of the City Council declining to allow the closure of the Claisebrook Road. The station will now be erected at the junction of the Eastern Railway and the South-Western Railway.

### INTERRUPTIONS ON THE CUE TELEGRAPH LINE.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—

(1.) How many days the Telegraph Line to

Cue had been interrupted during the present month?

(2.) Was he aware that these interruptions caused serious inconvenience and loss?

(3.) Would he take the necessary steps to prevent such lengthy interruptions in future?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied, as follows:—

(1.) From 8 a.m. on the 17th to 10.30 a.m. on the 19th, and from 4 p.m. on the 19th to 2.30 p.m. on the 21st; about four days in all.

(2.) Yes; and very much regrets it.

(3.) Yes. An extra lineman has been stationed on the line. Every precaution is being taken to keep open communication.

#### TENDERS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF MULLEWA-CUE RAILWAY.

MR. ILLINGWORTH, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways,—

(1.) What was the cause of the delay in calling for tenders for the construction of the Cue Railway?

(2.) What was the earliest possible date upon which the Department would call for these tenders?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—

1. There has been no delay whatever in connection with the Mullewa-Cue Railway. The permanent survey was commenced in September, 1894, and was carried on by a large staff of surveyors. The field work was completed in January, 1895, (200 miles in four months). The plotting and completion of the plans has since been actively carried on.

2. The 1st November, 1895. Preliminary notice of date will be given early in August.

#### COMPLETION OF SUBIACO (CEMETERY) ROAD.

MR. WOOD, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether it was the intention of the Works Department to further improve the Subiaco road, and bring it into a proper condition for traffic?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that arrangements had been made for putting a blinding coat of bluestone on, and that the work had now been started.

#### DAYS AND HOURS OF SITTING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved "That unless otherwise ordered the House will meet for despatch of business on Mondays, at 7.30 p.m.; Tuesdays, at 2.30 p.m., and if necessary, until 6.30 p.m.; and on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards."

MR. WOOD moved, as an amendment, that the House should meet on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. instead of 2.30 p.m. The latter hour, he said, was a very inconvenient one for most members who were in business, or who were professionally engaged, and he thought it would be more in accordance with the wishes of members that the House should meet on Tuesdays at 4 o'clock, and continue sitting until 6.30 p.m. if necessary.

MR. A. FORREST said he would support the amendment of the hon. member for West Perth. It was most inconvenient for most members to attend the House at half past two in the afternoon, and he hoped the Premier would agree to alter the hour as proposed. At these early afternoon sittings the House was generally a thin one, which was not what they wanted. They wanted a full House, and 4 o'clock would suit the convenience of most business members, as well as members of the Government.

MR. KEEF would support the amendment, for, so far as he was personally concerned, it was absolutely impossible for him to be present at half-past 2 in the afternoon; and he believed the same applied to other members who resided at Fremantle.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had no objection to the proposed change, if hon. members wished it. The only objection he saw to it was that it would shorten the sitting considerably, and country members might object to it.

MR. MARMION thought it would be better to alter the hour to 4.30 instead of 4 o'clock, so that the House should meet at the same hour on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

MR. CLARKSON, speaking as a country member, had no objection to the amendment, provided the House sat longer than half-past 6, or met again after tea. It was all very well for members living in town to fix the hours of meeting to suit their own convenience, without any consideration for country members,

who did not like to see time wasted and the session protracted.

MR. RANDELL thought if they were going to alter the hour at all it would be better to make it 4.30 than 4 o'clock, so that the three afternoon sittings should commence at the same hour. Personally he was indifferent whether the House met at 2.30 or at a later hour, but there could be no doubt that to business men and professional men, half-past 2 was a very inconvenient hour.

MR. PIESSE suggested that the motion be adjourned until the following day, so that members might have an opportunity of consulting each other as to the most convenient time for sitting.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought they might follow the practice of the other colonies, and have an off day on Monday, sitting only on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and meeting each day at 4.30 p.m., and continuing the sittings in the evening.

The amendment upon being put was adopted, and the motion as amended put and passed.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and also on Thursdays after 7.30 p.m., Government business should take precedence of all motions and orders of the day.

Agreed to.

#### SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved "That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, and the Chairman of Committees; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.

Agreed to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved "That the Library Committee of this House for the present session consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Burt, and Mr. Harper; with authority to sit during any adjournment, and during the recess, and with authority to act jointly with the Library Committee of the Legislative Council."

Agreed to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved "That the Printing Committee for the present session consist of the following members, viz.:

—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Venn, and the Chairman of Committees; to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members, and all papers laid upon the table, whether in answer to addresses or otherwise."

Agreed to.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved "That the Refreshment Rooms Committee for the present session consist of the following members, viz.:—Mr. Speaker, Mr. Marmion, Mr. R. F. Sholl, and Mr. Monger; with leave to sit during any adjournment, and during recess."

Agreed to.

#### NEW BILLS.

The following Bills were introduced and read a first time:—A Bill to amend the Law relating to Partnerships (introduced by Mr. JAMES); a Bill to amend the Law relating to Arbitrations (introduced by Mr. JAMES); a Bill to amend the Law relating to Evidence in Criminal Cases (introduced by Mr. JAMES); a Bill to confirm certain Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1894 (introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST); a Bill to regulate the Appointment, and the Tenure of the Office of Agent-General (introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST); a Bill to regulate the Interest payable to Depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank (introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST); a Bill for the Establishment and Maintenance in Western Australia of the Perth Branch of the Royal Mint (introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST); a Bill to repeal certain Export Duties (introduced by Sir JOHN FORREST); a Bill to regulate and restrict the wearing of Naval and Military Uniforms (introduced by Mr. BURT); and a Bill to amend the Law as to the Appointment of Justices of the Peace (introduced by Mr. BURT).

#### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. RANDELL: Mr. Speaker,—Sir, if I pass over some of the numerous items in the Governor's Speech, I hope it will not be assumed that I have no sympathy with the Ministry in the statements they have been able to make to us in

reference to the business of the country and its various interests. But it would be improper, I think, for me to detain this House while I went through this long Speech in *extenso*, as other members will be better able than myself to take up some of the points of the Speech with which His Excellency has favoured us. There are many statements in it which cannot fail to be a subject for congratulation to us all; these I pass over, as we may fairly assume that every member joins in the congratulations which are here conveyed. The question of Federation seems to have occupied the attention of the Ministry during the recess, and we are told here that the Federal Council met in Hobart in January last, at which conference this colony was represented. So far as I was able to gauge public opinion on this question of Federation, whilst I was in the other colonies a short time ago, I really think the question is one that does not interest the general public very much. Outside Victoria you will scarcely find anyone taking any real interest in it, or earnestly desiring to see federation brought about at the present time. Many agree that it may be desirable in the distant future, but I could not discover that there was any real intention on the part of the Governments of the other colonies to take up the question seriously at present, or to try to bring it to a successful issue. I think we may safely say there is no such intention. Of course in Victoria it suits their purpose to urge this question forward, and their reasons for doing so are very apparent. They have established in Melbourne and various other towns large manufactories, and they find these manufactories at the present time to a very great extent idle, they find that their population is leaving the colony, and, in these circumstances, they hope that if Federation were an accomplished fact these manufactories would proceed with greater vigour, and they would be quite able to take advantage of the increasing demand that is expected to result from the act of federation. That is so far as Victoria is concerned. But in the other colonies I found little or no desire to see Federation brought about—at the present time or in the immediate future, and I think we may safely take it that the opinion which is expressed here in His Excellency's Speech, that under existing circumstances the question is not a pressing question for this colony, is a proper one, and accurately represents public opinion on the

subject. It is a question which may fittingly occupy the attention of hon. members in their retirement during the recess, and which may also occupy the attention of others who take an interest in public affairs. But I do not think we can at present look upon it as being within the range of practical politics. I look upon it as being an academic question rather than a practical question at present. No doubt, in time, as the colonies become better educated with reference to this question of Federation, the question may obtain a stronger hold upon the public mind, but I think that at present the general opinion both in this House and throughout the country generally is, that Western Australia, at any rate, is not prepared just yet to enter into federation with the other colonies, for reasons which, I think are obvious to us all. I notice in the 5th paragraph of the Speech, a reference is made to the numerous public works authorised by Parliament, which we are told have made satisfactory progress during the recess. If I may briefly criticise the whole Speech we have just had the honour of listening to, I think I may fairly characterise it as merely a kind of progress report which the Ministers have furnished us with, showing what they have done during the time that Parliament has been in recess. There is nothing very startling in the Speech itself, though it affords plenty of food for reflection and plenty of room for congratulation on the progress which has been made with many of the works authorised by Parliament—works which we hope and believe will conduce to the well-being of the community at large. I would, however, remark in passing, with reference to this public works clause, that I have ascertained there is a very strong opinion in the Southern Districts that the route taken for the Busselton Railway is a wrong one, and that great injury has thereby been inflicted upon the country there. I mention this now because there is a possibility that the same may apply in reference to the route of the proposed railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown. I mention the matter as a timely caution to the House, so that we may have the best information possible before fixing upon the route which any future railway should take. A great deal depends upon whether we take a line of railway through country likely to be developed and which will contribute to the revenues of the railway, or whether we take it, (under pressure perhaps from some influential section of

the inhabitants) through a portion of the country which may suit a few, to the injury of the many. I mention it, so that if a mistake has been made—as I am led to believe it has been made—in reference to this particular railway it may lead us to be very cautious in the future, and very careful not to commit such a mistake again, in connection with other lines. With reference to the next paragraph of the Speech, relating to the further development of the coal deposits on the Collie river, I hear there is likely to be a “battle of the routes” in connection with this railway also. Efforts, we know, have been made to take it by the Preston river, while on the other hand there is a strong desire to have it taken by the Brunswick. I do not propose to say anything this evening upon the merits of the rival routes, but I hope we shall have every information afforded us as to the advantages of both routes before we decide in which direction this railway should go. I do not know yet what route the Government have decided upon, but I do know that it is a question for very serious consideration which route should be adopted for this particular railway. If I were to express my own opinion at the present time, I should say that the line should be constructed for the particular object we have in view,—that is, the development of the coalfield itself, and that we should leave other considerations subsidiary considerations, out of the question. That we have a valuable fuel there I am pleased to be able to say I am perfectly of opinion. It is not a gas coal I am afraid, but it is really an excellent steaming coal, and I believe it will be found very largely useful and helpful to the colony. I am somewhat afraid, however, from its composition that it is perhaps likely to create a large amount of small stuff, which will be unsaleable and unfit perhaps for traction purposes. If it were a gas coal it would not matter so much, but inasmuch as I am afraid it is not a gas coal, it presents this drawback. But there can be no question about its heating properties. I convinced myself fully of that at the mouth of the pit, and in other ways since; but there are some particulars which I think we should like to have from the Government as speedily as possible with reference to this coalfield. I believe some 1,000 tons were authorised to be raised, and I should like to know whether this quantity has been raised, and at what cost, and what has become of the coal so raised; also what route has been selected for the railway to the field, and at

what price the coal can be delivered into trucks at the pits' mouth; also, whether any definite information has been obtained as to the area and extent of these coal deposits. I have understood it to have been vaguely stated that there are ten square miles of it. It is sometime since I heard that statement, and I do not know whether it has been confirmed by actual operations subsequently undertaken by the Director of Public Works. If so, it will be very useful information. I think we require some authoritative information on all the points I have indicated, to enable us to form a proper opinion with reference to the desirability of at once constructing this line of railway, and the route it should take. I notice by the 8th clause of the Speech, that, in view of the importance of the Dundas goldfield, it is intended to create facilities at Esperance Bay for the discharge of cargo and for general trade, by the construction of a jetty there. I am pleased to see the Government are recognising the claims of Albany to have at least a share in that trade, and that a contract has been entered into and a subsidy offered for a fortnightly service between Albany, Esperance Bay and other ports on our Southern coast, for the mutual benefit of the people residing in that part of the colony. I think it is a step in the right direction. I should like to know, when the Government can give us the information, whether this jetty they are having constructed is protected from the action of the sea, and whether it will be safe for steamers to lie alongside it. I believe the present jetty is very much exposed to the action of the sea, and is not a place at which vessels can discharge at all times. I understand, however, that that is not a Government jetty, but one erected by private enterprise. I think the House would be glad for some information on this point, as to whether the new jetty will afford safe accommodation for vessels trading to Esperance Bay—steamers for instance. I pass over the paragraph relating to the Agricultural Bank, as some information has been asked for this evening by two members of the House with reference to this institution,—information which when furnished to us will enable us to form a better opinion as to what has been the result of the establishment of this Bank. In the meantime, I think we must all be glad to receive the assurance of the Government—and no doubt that assurance will be sustained by the returns asked for—as to the good work that has already been accomplished by this

institution. Evidently, however, it has not pleased some members of this House. Both the hon. members for Northam and the hon. member for the Williams, who moved and seconded the Address, are not quite satisfied as to the operations of the Bank, and I apprehend the same feeling will prevail over a considerable portion of the community. I recognise of course that everybody cannot participate in the advantages of a Bank which has, in the nature of things, a very limited income. Some reference has been made to the operations of the Bank being hampered by too much red tape. Although that may be the case, I think, myself, the Government are quite right in exercising every precaution when they are advancing this money to those who apply for assistance out of the funds of the Bank. I believe, from what I can gather, that the Manager, in conjunction with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, is exercising the necessary caution in this respect, and, so far as I am concerned, I am quite willing to leave the matter in their hands, merely adding that in my opinion it is very necessary they should exercise every care and discrimination in granting assistance out of the funds of the Bank. It is said in another paragraph of the Speech that some progress has been made in the opening up of well-watered stock routes to our Northern Districts, and that good results are anticipated. This at once brings us face to face with the tax imposed upon imported stock, a short time ago.

**THE PREMIER:** It was in existence long before that.

**MR. RANDELL:** I know; but I think it was increased.

**THE PREMIER:** No.

**MR. RANDELL:** At any rate this question of opening up stock routes brings us face to face with the fact that we have a Stock Tax.

**MR. A. FORREST:** I hope it will be kept there too.

**MR. RANDELL:** I do not know what the hon. member may hope or wish, but I believe there is a very general and widespread feeling, at any rate in the great centres of population, that this Stock Tax should be repealed.

**MR. A. FORREST:** Take off the duty on flour and chaff then.

**MR. RANDELL:** When we take into consideration the high price obtaining for meat in this colony, when we remember also the great difference in the price we have to pay here as compared with the prices ruling in the

other colonies, I think we must arrive at the conclusion, that the feeling of dissatisfaction at this tax, which, exists in the minds of a great part of the population of the colony, is at any rate based on a sound foundation. It has been said in this House that if this Stock Tax were taken off it would not reduce the price of meat in the slightest to the consumer. I am not inclined to say that is correct, but, whether it is so or not, I do think we ought to take into consideration the high price paid for meat in this colony at the present time, and that the time has arrived when we should seriously consider why this Stock Tax should not be repealed. I think, myself, it ought to be repealed, and if the question of repealing it comes before the House, I shall vote in favour of its repeal. It seems to me monstrous that while we have to import meat, as we have to do from the other colonies, to supply our local wants—it seems to me monstrous that we should have to pay this tax of 30s. per head for oxen, which I suppose in some cases amounts to—

**MR. A. FORREST:** A farthing a lb.

**MR. RANDELL:** I should say about 25 per cent. of the value in some cases. Hon. members may laugh, and say I do not know anything about it. But I believe meat can be obtained now at a very low price in the other colonies, when they can afford to sell it for 1½d. per lb. The hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) says "Take the tax off flour." Well, I would be in favour of that also. I am glad the Government are moving in the direction of taking the duties off some articles of food. We shall see by-and-by what their proposals are. The tax on flour some time ago amounted to 25 per cent. on its value, which seems to me a very heavy duty. When flour can be delivered on board ship at Port Adelaide for £5 15s. or £6 per ton, and we are placing a duty of 30s. a ton on it, I think we are going too far altogether, and, so far as I am concerned, I should be quite prepared to have the tax taken off. These are matters that require our careful consideration, and I myself think we may safely and reasonably look in the direction of at any rate lowering the duties on many articles of common consumption. With regard to the harbour works at Fremantle, which we are told are progressing satisfactorily, it is gratifying to learn that the work is being carried on in all its branches considerably below the original estimate. It is also satisfactory to learn that the Government intend

to continue this great work with vigour and energy, so that it may be completed as early as possible. Having expended so much money on these harbour works, I think it desirable they should be finished with as much speed as possible, so that they may become of use to the colony. Therefore, I believe most members will hail with satisfaction the announcement that the Government have seen their way to the introduction of additional machinery in order to expedite the work,—a work which cannot be over-estimated in its importance to the colony. With reference to the proposed construction of a dock inside the river, near the Rous Head, I am not prepared, without further information, to deal with that proposal. I am not inclined at present to admit that the proposed site is perhaps the best site for this dock. No doubt, when further information is afforded to the House on the subject, we shall be in a better position to say whether in our judgment the best site has been decided upon. That it is a necessary work I think everyone will agree. It is most desirable that we should have such a dock at the principal port of the colony, where vessels of considerable tonnage can be cleaned or repaired, without the necessity of having to send them to Adelaide, or Melbourne, or Sydney, for the purpose of undergoing these repairs. His Excellency, in another paragraph of his Speech, says:—"The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the ensuing year are in course of preparation, and will be laid before you as soon as possible; and my Ministers hope to be able to provide from Current Revenue not only for all pressing ordinary requirements, but also for many other important works usually constructed from Loan funds." I am very glad to see that this decision has been arrived at by the Government. For some considerable time past I have thought that we should undertake some of these works out of current revenue, looking at our overflowing Treasury. With our large surplus revenue, so much in excess of the estimated revenue, it seemed to me it had become necessary for us to do one of two things—either to reduce taxation or undertake public works out of revenue, which would under ordinary circumstances be undertaken out of loan funds. I am very glad to find that the Government propose to do both, which is better still, and I am heartily in accord with them,—that is in undertaking necessary useful works out of surplus revenue, and at the same

time looking carefully into the Tariff to see if they cannot reduce some of the items that appear on that Tariff, and which are objectionable. They are objectionable to many classes of the community. Many of them are objectionable to our manufacturers, inasmuch as many of the raw materials required for things we could make in the colony are taxed as heavily as the made-up article itself. Some of the materials used in manufactures of one kind and another pay from 15 to 20 per cent., while the duty on the same articles made up is no higher. I am informed that if the duties on the raw or unmanufactured material were considerably lowered it would materially assist our manufacturing industries, and afford increased employment to the population of the colony—a result which we all desire to see—thus contributing to the well-being and progress of the colony, while at the same time increasing the revenue in other directions. I think the present duties should be reduced, not only upon the articles mentioned here,—articles which are not capable of being produced in the colony; I think there are many others that could be mentioned, such as articles of common consumption. For instance, kerosene, which is very largely used by all classes of the community, and which is now highly taxed. Sugar also may be mentioned, and tea and coffee, and other articles of daily consumption. I presume the Government intend to take off or reduce the duty on all these items; but there are others to which they may direct their attention, and which would contribute equally to the general well-being. I do not think we have a right to collect these high duties when we have a large surplus revenue and an overflowing Treasury. I do not think it is wise or good Government at all. If we have a large excess of revenue over the estimate and over what is required for general expenditure, I think it is the duty of the Government to apply some of this surplus revenue to the construction of some of those works which we are in the habit of undertaking out of loan money. There also should be a remission of taxation. I think no one will deny that the expense of living in this colony at the present time is exceptionally high. I do not mean to say this is altogether caused by the high duties upon articles of daily consumption. There are other elements which tend to contribute to the same cause,—house rent for instance, which is exceedingly high, and which helps to make the

cost of living very expensive. While I admit that in some cases the wages here are equal to, if not higher, than the wages in the other colonies, still I do not think they bear the same proportion to the expense of living as wages do in those colonies. With reference to the proposed repeal of the export duties on pearlshells and sandalwood, I believe it is generally maintained that duties levied upon exports are duties that are necessarily paid by our own people; and I look upon the repeal of those duties as a step in the right direction. It will be an encouragement to those engaged in these pursuits, and I think the proposed step is in every way to be justified, both on the score of political economy and on the ground of justice. I will only just casually allude this evening to the proposed abolition of the annual grant for ecclesiastical purposes, as we have not yet had unfolded to us the precise intentions of the Government with reference to this grant, beyond that it is to be terminated by two instalments. Probably that will be the best way for the churches, but it has not been mentioned how many years' purchase it is proposed to give, in view of the abolition of the grant. I have an idea myself that about seven years' purchase would be a very fair and liberal thing to do, under the circumstances, especially in view of the fact that the grant is an annual grant, which has to be renewed every year and that it may at any time be reduced or rejected by a majority in the House. It would perhaps not be desirable to gradually reduce the grant, as proposed by some members, until it came to an end altogether. I think it ought to be computed, either by one payment, or perhaps two. Probably the latter course would be more convenient for the Treasury than to have to pay it in one instalment. I am anxious to see the grant done away with, in some form or other, without doing an injustice to the churches. I look upon it as an anomaly which has been tolerated too long, a crutch upon which our churches have been accustomed to lean upon far too long, and which should be removed as soon as possible. I do not think I need refer to the proposed removal of the Railway Workshops. I have already expressed my opinion upon that question pretty fully in the report of the Commission which reported on the subject; and most likely a further opportunity will be afforded us for thoroughly discussing this question. It is said, Sir, that everything comes to the man who waits. A good while ago I endeavoured,

as far as I was able to do, to induce the Government to undertake a survey of the city of Perth for drainage purposes, and I am very much pleased to find that we have now arrived at that point, and that the Government have seen their way to undertake this very important work. I only hope their labours in this direction will be followed by some sanitary measures that will give satisfaction to the citizens generally, as well as to the residents of our larger towns. It is held, by many people at any rate, that this subject of sanitation requires very careful and urgent attention at our hands, and that the existing state of things is calculated to do the country very considerable injury, unless some steps are taken in the very near future to improve the present condition of affairs. At the same time I am not quite sure that the municipalities of the colony are doing all they ought to do under the provisions of the existing Act. I have expressed myself to that effect before. I think, with the powers already vested in them, they might adopt more energetic means than they do in dealing with this very important subject. I hope that while they are waiting for these surveys to be completed and reports prepared by skilled persons as to the best system to be adopted for improving the sanitary conditions of the city—I hope while the municipal authorities are waiting for these things to be done that they will not neglect the means already at their disposal, under the Act at present in force, or under the Bill which it is hoped will be passed this session. It behoves those who undertake these responsible duties in connection with our municipal institutions to do the best they possibly can, with the means at their disposal, to protect the interests of the community which they represent. I am not prepared to say that they are doing this at present, in this city of Perth at any rate. In another paragraph of the Speech we are told that the "railways are proving of the greatest importance to the country, and the revenue for the present financial year will not only exceed the working expenses, but will also pay the interest and sinking fund on the capital expended in their construction." That is a very important and a very gratifying statement to make, and I hope and believe it is justified by the facts of the case. It is very satisfactory indeed to learn that our railways are not only paying the cost of working them, but also providing the interest upon the capital employed in their construction. I suppose



that cannot be said of any other Australian railways. Some of the other colonies, I believe, are losing considerably by their railways,—from what cause I am not prepared to say. There may be reasons with which perhaps I am not acquainted why their railways do not pay their working expenses, and the interest upon the capital expended in their construction, as is the case, I know, in at any rate one of the colonies.

**THE PREMIER:** The immense cost of construction.

**MR. RANDELL:** No doubt that has something to do with it. We are very happy in being able to have our railways constructed at such a low cost as we have recently had them undertaken,—such a low cost that it suggests to my mind the expediency of constructing railways in many places in preference to roads. The fact that our railways are paying so well also suggests to my mind that some little alteration and improvement might be made in our present service. I think the second-class carriages, for instance, are not very creditable to us, and some improvement in that respect might be made, and I hope it will be made at the earliest possible moment. I also think that the first-class railway fares between Perth and Fremantle may, certainly with advantage to the travelling community, if not to the Government also, be slightly reduced. I believe there is room for reducing the difference between the two classes; while the accommodation provided in the second-class carriages is altogether inferior to what the public have a right to expect at the hands of a Government whose railways are being run at such a profit as is here indicated. There is another matter which I think might engage the attention of the Government with reference to the railways: Some effort might be made with the Great Southern Company to secure an accelerated speed between Albany and Beverley. Really it is distressing to make that journey under present circumstances, starting from Albany at 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning and not reaching Beverley until after 8 o'clock at night. I think, perhaps, if the Government were to move in this matter we might have an accelerated service, without incurring any great expense. I believe the General Manager of the Company is prepared to consider the subject if it is brought before him. The trains at any rate might start at a reasonable hour in the morning so as to reach

Beverley or Albany (as the case may be) before night. It certainly is no credit to us to have a railway which has no gradients upon it of any consequence, and no difficulties in the way of travelling at a reasonable rate upon it, with such a slow service, which is very distressing upon such a long journey. I am fully persuaded it is only a matter for arrangement between the Government and the Company, and possibly the payment of a small sum, to secure an accelerated service between Albany and Beverley, which would be a great boon to everyone travelling on that line. I may also mention that in my opinion the time has come when we should increase the speed of our trains between Perth and Fremantle—most of the trains at any rate. It really is too bad that the journey between these two places should occupy 45 minutes, and in some cases nearly an hour. I see no reason whatever why this should be so. I believe that even with our present engines the journey could, under ordinary circumstances, be accomplished by every train in 30 minutes, which I think is quite long enough for the distance. I hope, however, that the Commissioner of Railways will soon recommend to the Government that engines with a larger driving wheel should be placed on this line, and that the line be duplicated between these two towns, so that we may have a more satisfactory service than we have at present. With regard to the Midland Railway, I hope the Commissioner of Railways will endeavour to see that the interests of the travelling public on that line also are attended to, in the best possible way, as regards the hours of arrival and departure. I believe that the gentleman who is the manager of that railway is a liberal-minded man, and is quite willing to meet the wishes of the public. I think I need not say anything more about railways, except this: I was very glad to hear the Director of Public Works this evening disavowing any responsibility in connection with the erection of that wretched building which is going up in front of the principal railway station of the colony. If he has any power at all in the matter—and I believe he has as a citizen—I hope he will do what he can to have that most objectionable structure removed. I think it is a disgraceful shame to our City Council to have erected a building of that character in such a conspicuous place. I certainly should have thought that the Commissioner of Railways would have been consulted in the matter and his permission

obtained, but I understand from what he said this evening that this was not done. If he had been consulted and his permission asked, and he had granted his permission to have such a structure built where it is, he would have deserved a vote of censure at the hands of Parliament. When I heard him say that he had no objection to the building being placed where it is, I looked upon his statement as a piece of irony on his part, after the protest that was raised against the erection of a fence in the same locality. Sir, I need not trespass any longer upon the time of the House beyond saying that I think the debate upon the Address-in-Reply, to my mind, serves a very useful purpose. I have no doubt that on this occasion, as in the past, members will avail themselves very fully of the opportunity which is afforded them of discussing many matters touched upon in the Governor's Speech, indicating as it does the general policy of the Ministry during the session, and dealing as it does with many matters affecting the welfare and progress of the colony. I think that, for that reason, if for no other—the opportunity it affords for a general discussion upon the programme of the Government—there should be a certain amount of latitude allowed in the debate upon the Address-in-Reply. The Speech given to us on this occasion is a very long one, but the Address-in-Reply is an exceedingly short one, and I do not suppose anyone will find any fault with the terms employed there. I feel sure that every member will reiterate the desire that our labours may result in the prosperity of the colony. I only trust that our deliberations and our votes in this House may be such as will receive the approval of the country at large, and will in every case tend to the advancement and welfare of the colony.

MR. LEAKE: Sir, when we asked for the Government policy, on the 4th of this month, we were told in effect that the Government had no policy. We were also told by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government that it was a difficult matter to prepare His Excellency's Speech, or at any rate that it was not so easy a matter as some members of the House assumed it to be. We were told at the same time that the revenue was flourishing, and we were led to suppose that there would be a surplus of upwards of £200,000 over the estimated revenue for the year. Well, we now have the Speech before us, and we can now understand the difficulties under which the

hon. the Premier then lay in providing us with a programme. We find he has given us a Speech of twenty-six paragraphs, but we find (as he very properly hinted on the 4th of the month) that the Government are without a policy. It can scarcely be considered even a programme. Surely we had a right to expect that there would be some evidence of statesmanship in the Governor's utterance on an occasion like this. Surely one would have imagined that the best method of expending so huge a sum as £200,000, which is approximately their surplus—though possibly it may reach £250,000 or £300,000 over and above last year's revenue—would require some consideration, and that even if it did not create a new policy, it would at any rate have involved some new departure from the policy of the past—the policy of the past being one of loans and public works. But there is, positively, hardly a suggestion of a policy placed before us, and only a very meagre programme (of which I shall have something to say before I sit down). The Speech seems to me to move after the manner of the old regime, when we used to deal in high-flown flourishes, and pat one another on the back. The Administration always used to do that. This Speech tells us nothing new. There are one or two items of sensation it is true, but that is not what we want. We really want something that we can consider, something that we can criticise.

THE PREMIER: And squabble about.

MR. LEAKE: Yes something we can squabble about, if you like. It seems to me there is an epidemic of congratulation and of adulation in this House whenever a Governor's Speech comes down. It is always so,—at any rate on the benches opposite. It was interesting to notice how the mover and the seconder of the Address threw themselves into paroxysms of congratulation (as it were) over this wonderful Speech of 26 paragraphs. Well, I am not myself in that mood this evening. I am not in the mood to congratulate the Government; I really am not. I feel more or less in a critical mood; and I think that before I sit down I shall be able to show that, although there may be a few political truisms embodied in the Speech, yet there is really nothing which is substantial. It is certainly not worthy of a great occasion like the present moment. It is a great occasion. We have a rising revenue as well as a risen one. Our revenue has risen over and above anything that the members of the Government were

able to contemplate, and surely they ought in the face of this rising revenue to be able to sketch out something or other in the shape of a comprehensive scheme of expenditure. As a literary effort, I have really no objection to the Speech. I notice that the "i's" are all dotted, and the capitals in their proper places. I also notice that the Speech is properly punctuated, and there is really no faulty spelling. But it is inordinately long. It is inordinately long considering the small amount of matter it contains. In that respect it is almost on a par with the electioneering address of one of the Premier's colleagues, which was delivered only a short time ago.

A MEMBER: He is absent.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, I am not going to attack him. I only say the Speech is a piece of colourless oratory, and in that respect on a par with the electioneering address of the Commissioner of Crown Lands. It is merely an *ad misericordiam* appeal to this House and the public generally, to keep the present Ministry in office, because they have done something in the past. That is all it amounts to. As my friend, the hon. member for Perth, suggested, the Speech is really no more than a progress report, a sort of diary—for I suppose the Premier keeps a diary of those magnificent works he has done during the recess. We find that at the present juncture, when we have great means at our disposal and when their wonderful policy of loans and public works has worked itself out—we find that the Government is in a difficulty in regard to enunciating or formulating any other policy. Any Ministry could carry out a policy, of loans and public works. Practically anybody, without any political instinct at all, could do that. They have only to sit down, spend the money, and wait for the result. We have waited for the result, and no doubt the result of our loan policy has been as magnificent as any member of this House expected. I congratulate the country upon that result. But I do not give the Government credit for all this. It is not the Government who discovered our goldfields. It is not the Government who have increased our Customs revenue. It is the circumstances under which we live, and the exigencies of the situation. But it requires some statesmanship—I cannot repeat this too often—it does require some statesmanship to deal with unexpected developments. The unexpected development I particularly refer to is that ex-

ceptional bound that our revenue has made, particularly during the past twelve months, placing £200,000 or £300,000 at the disposal of the Government, which they never anticipated. It is no doubt a difficult matter, or at any rate it requires some little statesmanship, to deal satisfactorily with the judicious expenditure and the administration of departments. I have heard it said, and it is a good axiom too, that one of the first principles of good Government is good finance. Finance does not merely involve the borrowing of money; it involves also the spending of money, and it is the spending of their money that this House should particularly guard. If we are reckless in our expenditure we may land ourselves in difficulty. I have heard members in this House, and I have heard members of the other House say that a surplus revenue is an element of danger. So it is. It is when we have enormous sums of money to spend that we want good men in the Ministry to control that expenditure in a proper manner. Not only that: we want to be consulted. This Assembly ought to be consulted. The country should know. It is not the duty of the Government to keep everything up their sleeves until the last moment. They should not pursue that policy of secrecy which characterised the old order of things. They should not lay themselves out to creating a sensation when the House meets, which is what the hon. gentleman opposite has done on this occasion. He should take us into his confidence. Long before Parliament meets he should let members have an opportunity of consulting their constituents with regard to the questions that are going to be brought before us. We want to be able to guard against any improper expenditure.

MR. A. FORREST: Where is the improper expenditure?

MR. LEAKE: I say we want to guard against it. We don't know what they are going to do. The hon. member for West Kimberley may, for he is the "sixth Minister." Of these 26 paragraphs in this wonderful Speech, if hon. members analyse them, and if we except just a slight reference to proposed new lighthouses, a dock for Fremantle, and certain proposed new legislation, the first 18 paragraphs are really devoted to recounting the doings of the Government during the recess, and they refer really to works which it was incumbent on the Government to perform—works which they were directed by Parliament in the last session

to perform, and the Government were thus under an obligation to do them. In fact, the Government could not help themselves. Yet we are told in the Speech, with a string of flourishes, that the Government have done what this House has told them to do. And then look at the proposed legislation. The Government are evidently exhausted with their efforts in the administration of their loan and works policy, for they can present only seven—well I suppose they call them major—points of legislation which are thus submitted to us; and of these there are four which were really suggested last session, so that the only new legislation is that relating to Justices of the Peace, to a Standard Time, and to the Law of Copyright. Surely this indicates a tremendous mental effort on the part of the Ministry! And yet they tell us they have had to devote all this time and all this expense—because there is expense involved in printing—in preparing these paragraphs, which tell us really nothing at all. Then with regard to the last eight paragraphs, which include passing references to the improvement of railways and the development of the colony—as if we did not know that!—and also the reference to the prayer in the last paragraph, we find these paragraphs really contain the gist of the programme; and what does that amount to? A proposed commutation of the Ecclesiastical Grant, the duplication of the telegraph line to Eucla, the removal of the Railway Workshops, the reduction of railway freights to farmers' produce, deep drainage for the City of Perth, and tariff reform. Well, the Ecclesiastical Grant is not a very important matter; it is not one giving rise to anything like feeling in this House; and there is no particular demand for it; but we cannot object to the suggested desire for terminating the Grant, on terms equitable to the churches; although that also was suggested during the debates of last Session, so that it is not a new question of policy. Then, as to the removal of the Railway Workshops from the present site at Fremantle, the Government were practically told, during the last session, that this must be done; but we know that the Premier, during the recess, told a deputation that he would not spend any more money on that project, but would leave the matter to be decided by Parliament when it met; although we know also, that he told the House, during the debates last session, that the workshops would

practically have to go, and that the Government would decide the matter during the recess. We now find, however, that although the hon. the Premier told a deputation from Fremantle, which spent an afternoon in interviewing him in Perth, that the matter would be left to be dealt with by Parliament, yet the Government have been going on building a dam and incurring expenditure on the proposed site for the workshops at the Midland Junction. Well, as to that expenditure, I am going to leave the hon. member for Fremantle, and the hon. members for North and South Fremantle, to deal with it. Then we are favoured in the Speech with a suggestion for certain reductions in the charges for carrying farmers' produce over the railways. That looks very like a sop to Bunbury and the Avon Valley. I do not know what hon. members may think of that, but it is perhaps not fair to be too critical on that subject until we hear a little more about it. Still, we know the much boasted agricultural districts are Bunbury and the Avon Valley, and there is no doubt a certain amount of Ministerial support comes from those districts. Then we have deep drainage for Perth—an attempt, no doubt, to placate the Mayor of Western Australia. Lastly, and perhaps the most important of all, is the suggested tariff reform. That too was suggested during the debates of last session, although at that moment the Premier did not think it worth while to consider the question of reforming the tariff; but, fortunately for the country, though perhaps unfortunately for the Premier, he has got in his Ministry a gentleman who is imbued with the principles and ideas of free-trade, and had it not been for my friend, the Attorney-General, I do not think we would have heard much about this tariff reform. (Mr. FORREST: He has changed, perhaps.) No; we know pretty well what the opinions of the Attorney-General are. We find in the Speech that it is proposed to abolish the export duty on pearl shell. That is a very good suggestion, and I see no objection to it. I have no doubt the Attorney-General and the newly elected Commissioner of Crown Lands, being representatives of Northern constituencies which are interested in the pearling industry, will not object to the abolition of the duty. The Government seem to have aimed at the avoidance of all really debatable matters in His Excellency's Speech; and, no doubt, the Ministers rely, as usual, upon their huge majority to

carry them through. And there the majority is : (pointing to the Ministerial benches). It will be our effort and hope, before the end of this session to attract some of the more intelligent members to this (the Opposition) side of the House; but at the present moment we have to admit that the Government supporters are too many for us. They should remember, however, that it is not going to be very long before a general election must take place; and if there were a general election now, half of them would not be returned. (Several hon. MEMBERS: Where would you be?) We on this side would come in with flying colours, and those who sit there (the Ministerial side) if they got returned, would sit over here on the Opposition side, if they did not vote with us. However, we won't predict too much. (An hon. MEMBER: You got in by one vote.) Yes, but it was a good one. It is true I got in by only one vote, but it was so good a one that no man dare stand against me in the same constituency, when the time for another election comes. Referring further to His Excellency's Speech, what I submit to the House is that the Government programme does not go far enough. A glance at the Speech as printed, leads us to infer that the proposed reform of the tariff is not of a very extensive nature, because the duties proposed to be abolished are those on "articles of food in general use, and not capable of being produced in the colony." Well, my honorable friend the member for Northam (Mr. Throssell), yesterday, with a flourish, and with the idea, perhaps, of getting a vote or two, made use of that oft-expressed platitude, a "free breakfast table." But this does not suggest a free breakfast table, because whilst we hear this talk of a reduction of taxation on the necessities of life, we are told, at the same time, that the Premier intends not to interfere with the Stock Tax. We will perhaps get our tea and sugar cheaper, but we will be eating taxed mutton and beef and taxed flour. Do you suppose the honorable member for Northam is going to agree to have the duty taken off flour? Then what is the use of talking about a free breakfast table, under such circumstances? No; this tariff reform amounts to nothing. It is a tea and sugar policy, or a milk and water policy. That is what it amounts to. I should have expected, if the Government were sincere in their proposed reductions in the tariff, that some reference would be made, in the Speech, to the reduc-

tion of the *ad valorem* duties, and to an extension of the free list; and, in addition to food, I should have expected to hear something about the abolition of the duty on clothing, and even on spirits and liquors. Oh, you may all laugh; but it is better to get drunk on good liquor than to be poisoned by bad, and so long as you encourage these almost prohibitive import duties on liquor, you are doing an injury to the country and encouraging frauds on the revenue. It is a pretty well known local secret that frauds on the revenue are practiced, or at least attempted, because the risks of detection are so small, and the profits are so great when the smuggler makes a coup. Now is the time to reduce taxation, and I appeal to every member of this House to use his utmost endeavour to secure a reduction of taxation. I say, let this colony be made more attractive than it is, for those who are here or desire to come here; let it be made a place where we can live at reasonable rates of expenditure—a place where every member of the community, the working class and every other class, can live in comfort; and let us remove from it the reproach that Western Australia is the most expensive of all the Australian colonies to live in, notwithstanding its magnificent goldfields and its exceptional advantages. One could speak on this subject for hours, but on this occasion I need only refer to the principle, and in doing so I do ask hon. members to insist, not only on a reduction in the Customs taxation, but on a substantial reduction. Wipe out the 20 per cent. and the 15 per cent. duties; and above all, the 12½ per cent. *ad valorem* duty; for it is not your tea and sugar duties particularly that affect the working men and the poor class of the community—these duties hardly affect them at all—but they suffer most from the duties on those necessities of life which are included in the *ad valorem* class of imported articles, and it is these which make the cost of living in this colony so terribly expensive. It is only a sop, when Ministers talk of taking the duties off the necessities of life. Let us, by all means, reduce them, and no time can be more advantageous than the present for such a reduction, when the revenue of the colony is increasing by leaps and bounds; for so surely as our revenue is exceeding the most sanguine expectations of the most sanguine Minister, I say as surely will the day of depression come, and in the history of a goldfield you never know when it

will come. When it does come how can you increase your revenue?—how can you increase your *ad valorem* tariff from 12½ per cent.?—how can you increase the 20 per cent. duties?—how can you increase the specific list with any chance of increasing your revenue to an appreciable extent? Now is the time to act; and I commend seriously to the notice of the Premier, the leading article in this morning's issue of the *West Australian* newspaper, showing that with reduced taxation the consumer has more money to spend, and that the decrease of the revenue resulting from such reduction is not so real as some people may think. With an overflowing chest and an increasing revenue, now is the time to make reductions. Do not—and I shall repeat this at every chance I get—do not lose the opportunity of reducing the Customs taxation under which we labour. I shall examine, and no doubt every hon. member will examine, with the greatest possible care, this Tariff Bill when it comes before us. We on this side of the House are sometimes twitted with having no policy. Well, I do not suppose it is our duty to have a policy till we see we have got a chance of giving effect to it; but I can tell you that, if ever I have anything to do with a Government, and if it should happen to come at short notice, the one plank in my platform would be to reduce the duties on imports, and make the tariff as near—I won't say an absolutely free trade tariff for we must in this country get our revenue to a large extent through the Customs—but I would cut the tariff down to the lowest possible point. If we have got an exceptionally large revenue, and if the Premier won't take us into his confidence and tell us how he is going to spend it, we will find that, towards the end of the session, down will come the Commissioner of Railways, and he will sop it all up. His department, we know, is the most grasping in the whole country; that nothing satisfies it, and that what it cannot spend it loses, as was done the last time that department got a trifle of £50,000, and could not account for it. Down the Government had to come with Supplementary Estimates, at the last moment. That is one reason why we want to have more particulars. That all-absorbing Minister for Works and Railways will have the whole lot—he and the Engineer-in-Chief. My friend, the member for West Kimberley knows that, full well. So far, I have referred only to matters in the

Speech which are not exactly matters of congratulation. I have referred to as many pleasant matters as I can think of; whereas now I won't say I will go exactly on the other tack, but I will now direct my criticism to the acts of omission of the present Government, and it is the acts of omission in which the Speech is really so faulty. There is not much debatable matter in the Speech; there is almost nothing that is new; there is certainly nothing to cover the expenditure of our possible surplus revenue—without mentioning the possible surplus from our Coolgardie railway; so that we must look to this Speech, and see whether the Government are guilty of acts of omission. They have had so much regard for what was suggested during the last Parliament, that we might have expected something more than a passing reference to the education question. The Government lost a division, last session, on the education question; therefore I should have thought they would have regarded that as an important matter for consideration. Then there was the Defence Vote, which was thrown out last session and had to be recast. There has also been a new Commandant appointed in place of the one resigned; and we might have expected some reference to that matter. Instead of this feeble reference to new legislation, I think we might have expected something about the consolidation of our statutes. Every Justice of the Peace knows how difficult it is to put his finger on the law in our present Statute book; for constantly repealed, constantly amended, the principal Act becomes a hideous thing altogether, and not every lawyer can trace out any particular principle in these Statutes. This matter of consolidating the Statutes is one of the most important we have to consider. Again, I should have thought—because it has been discussed during the recess—that the separation of the Works and Railways into two departments would have been referred to. Still, there are one or two other matters which have not been referred to, and which did occur during the recess. I know that some hon. members did express surprise at the manner in which the delegates to the Federal Council were appointed. This House was then in session, and it was known perfectly well that certain hon. members would be required to attend the meeting of the Federal Council at Hobart. The Premier had every opportunity of consulting the wishes of members of this House as to who should be appointed; he

might also have consulted the Legislative Council; but he did nothing of the kind. He took it upon himself to appoint certain gentlemen, and I need hardly remind hon. members that those appointments led to unpleasantness. The hon. gentleman did something else during the recess which seemed to trample on the constitutional privileges of this House, and that was to take upon himself to alter the titles of Ministerial offices. We know that under the Constitution Act, five Ministerial officers are appointed; and this House having only a few days before passed the annual Estimates in a particular form, and passed them on the understanding, or at any rate on the assumption, that those votes would be administered by certain particular Ministers, we find that, without consulting this House—and here again the hon. gentleman is wrong, because he must have had this in contemplation at the moment he took upon himself to alter the whole administration of the departments—coolly told the then Colonial Secretary (Hon. S. H. Parker) that he (the Premier) was going to pop him into the position of Commissioner of Railways and Director of Public Works, and at the same time, as good as told the Commissioner of Railways that he had got to clear out. Strange to say, the Commissioner of Railways did not object. Very well. The then Colonial Secretary was told, in effect “You are no good as Colonial Secretary; you have got to make way for me; and I will put you into another billet.” But what did the Colonial Secretary do? He promptly resigned. He was not going to submit to an indignity of that kind, and I think he was perfectly right. I am astonished, and I think nearly every member of this House is astonished, that the Commissioner of Railways did not resign too. He ought to have resigned, and ought not to have allowed himself to be sat upon by the Premier. The Commissioner of Railways ought not to encourage this autocratic form of Government, and which has been growing up. He should have asserted himself and taken a proper stand. He should have said, “These existing arrangements have met with the approval of the House hitherto, and you have no right to make fresh arrangements without consulting the Legislature.” But, the Commissioner of Railways did not think fit to uphold his dignity and to take a firm stand. We cannot shut our eyes to this fact—and when we are engaged in politics we

must indulge sometimes in a little plain speaking—that the country is not, nor is this House, satisfied with the administration of the Works and Railways Department; and that is evidenced by the fact that the Premier wanted to get rid of the Commissioner of Railways. There is no doubt about it, Parliament must help the hon. the Premier to get rid of the Commissioner of Railways. I will do so, because I do not believe in this kind of thing. If we are going in for politics, let us play the game properly. Let us speak freely. I object to see any person in power imposed upon, or to see any mean advantage taken of him. Time is not at my disposal to criticise the many failings of the Railways Department, but I give the hon. the Commissioner fair warning that, before this Session closes—and if I do not do it myself, I am satisfied some other member will—there will be a direct adverse motion against the administration of that Department, and I do not know how the hon. the Commissioner of Railways will get out of the corner he will be placed in. Very likely some of the hon. members on the other side, who are so loud in barking at him from their seats, won't bite when the time comes; but we on this side must do our duty, and it is only fair to give the hon. gentleman fair warning. We have got to put a stop to all these internal dissensions in the Ministry. How many changes have there been in this Ministry since they came into power? Enough to drive forty Ministries out. But no: there they stick. It would perhaps be thought I am carping when I refer to small matters, but really it shows a lack of intelligence on the part of somebody in the Public Works Department, when we find that for the new post office at Albany, for instance, the stone required for the corners—the quoins, I think they are called—have to be imported from Sydney or Melbourne—at any rate, from beyond Albany. Surely we have got stone enough in this colony to put in a building like the Albany Post Office. Hon. members will be astonished, and may well say that stucco might do for such a purpose, without the necessity for importing stone. My hon. friend, the member for Perth (Mr. Randall) referred to that unsightly building now being erected in front of the Perth Railway Station. I am glad to hear the Commissioner of Railways did not give his consent, but I should have expected him to have protested against

that offensive building being put there, right up against what is practically his own front door. I say it is the duty of the hon. the Commissioner to have protested, particularly when he knew the matter was being referred to, with a considerable amount of feeling, by the people of Perth. So far as I am concerned, and speaking from the Opposition benches, I do not hesitate to say that I will do my best to terminate the reign of the present Government. If I can do it, I will; and I only hope I can imbue other members of this honorable House with the same desire. Ministers have had ample time to show whether they are possessed of any statesmanlike ability. We on this side say there is a feeling that the present Government have not really the confidence of the country. We know that they have not the confidence of the country. (Mr. FORREST: Where do the country members sit?) Aye; but let those country members dare to go back to their constituents—you would soon see what the feeling of the country is. If the hon. member for West Kimberley and others travel about the country as much as I have done, you will see—unless you go about feasting and brousing—that the feeling of the country against the present Government is as strong as it can be. (Mr. FORREST: In what part?) Everywhere. So far as this Opposition and the Government are concerned, I do hope that hon. members, if they have convictions, will act upon them, and that hon. members will not sit on the Opposition side and vote with the Government, or *vice versa*. There are some members, who, I am afraid, when it comes to the pinch, will not go so far as they ought to go, or so far as their convictions should lead them. I do not suppose we shall be successful, any of us, in opposing the Collie coalfield railway. I will only say now that I hope the Government will have got together abundance of information to convince us, because that little jaunt we took the other day had no more effect on me than to shake up my liver, and I can assure honorable gentlemen on the other side that the Collie railway has not got my vote, nor has my opinion changed since last year. I am pleased to see that, although the Government propose to reduce the railway freight rates in certain lines, there are no suggestions in the Speech that the Government are going to reduce the rates on the goldfields railways. We have been spending enough money on those

railways, and the higher freights will help to pay the cost of working and the interest on capital. Well, Sir, I make an apology to the House for having spoken at such great length. If I have been tedious, hon. members can always go out, if they don't like it. (Mr. FORREST: A very interesting speech.) It is not always you pay me that compliment. But there were certain things I desired to refer to, and I want to emphasise as often as possible my intention to oppose what appears to me to be the effect of the policy of the Government—what their policy of loans and public works is running us into. When we find them face to face with practical legislation, with practical administration, with practical statesmanship, they are unable to grasp the occasion. They are not able to tell us, as they ought to do, how they propose to expend the money. Their principles have become worn out by this system of public works and loans, and they can think of nothing else. They have fulfilled their mission, and if they cannot grasp the present situation, it is time for others to step in and take their places. That concludes my observations on the Speech of 26 paragraphs, with which His Excellency the Administrator has been pleased to open this session of Parliament.

Mr. GEORGE moved that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH seconded the motion.

Question put and negatived.

Mr. FORREST: It appears that hon. members who have been criticising the Speech of His Excellency the Administrator are afraid to get up in their places and deal with the important business that has been placed before Parliament. We find that some members wish to adjourn the debate. I can hardly recognise that members should wish the debate to be adjourned, when we have only just commenced business, because the sooner we dispose of the Address-in-Reply the sooner we can get on with the business of the country. To prolong the debate on that Address cannot mean anything, unless members on the Opposition side think they will be able to turn out the Government. I hope that day will be a long way off. It will be a source of satisfaction to every member of the House, and to the country generally, that the financial position is such that the Government are enabled to propose the remission of duties on the necessaries of life. I am sure that the



Government will particularly take into consideration the duties on those articles that cannot be produced in the colony, or which it would be almost impossible for us to produce, and which therefore we must import; and I hope the Government, in their tariff proposals, will take good care not to interfere with any of the industries that are kept together by protection. I hope we shall be very careful, in reducing the present tariff, to reduce only the duties on those articles which are necessities of life, and which we cannot produce here; because we have been suffering during the last two years from drought, and have thus been compelled to import a great deal which could otherwise have been produced here; and which I hope will be produced in another more favourable year. The public works constructed during the year have been of immense benefit to the country, more particularly the opening of the railway between Geraldton and Mullewa; and we hope that in a very short time that railway will be pushed forward into the interior in the direction of Cue. The railway to Coolgardie also will be the most important work that has ever been undertaken in the colony, and I think we may all congratulate ourselves on the contract for its construction being taken at a price so low that it seems almost impossible for the contractors to carry it out without loss. However, those who have got the contract are well-known business men, and doubtless they intend to make their profit out of the traffic during the short term they have for completing the work. If such be the case, what benefit from the future traffic may we not expect when the railway to Coolgardie is completed and handed over to the Government? The revenue from our railways in the near future will, I hope, be sufficient to pay nearly the whole expenses of the Government of the colony, because if a contract for 113 miles of railway can now be taken for about £60,000, we know that only a few years ago it would have cost half a million of money to build a railway of that length, in a situation not so accessible. These railways are now, in fact, being built at a cheaper rate than a road of the same length would cost; therefore I hope the Government will, in their wisdom, with the surplus revenues they will receive from the line to Coolgardie, continue that railway to Hannan's and to other important centres of our goldfields. The next important paragraph in the Speech is that referring to the progress of our goldfields. I think that

hardly any member who has travelled over the whole of our goldfields, as I have had to do during the last twelve months, can have failed to be impressed with the importance of the growth of those goldfields. No one can really understand how a town of not two years' standing, as the town of Coolgardie is, has grown up so quickly; and people may say what they like, but building sections in a new goldfields town at £30 to £40 a foot, are not bought by persons who think these goldfields are not of a permanent nature. I believe this will, in the near future, be the greatest gold-producing country in the world. We have in the inner parts of our colony, down to the most southern portions, a line of gold-reefing country which is only scratched at the present time, and whereas we are now exporting gold to the value of about a million pounds per annum, we will, I hope, soon far exceed the total export of the South African goldfields, of which so much is made, and then the time will arrive when British capital will come here in quantity, the same as it has done in South Africa. In paragraph 9 the Government state they have had an offer from the West Australian Timber Company, and have agreed to purchase that company's rights existing under the land concession which was granted in 1871. I was under the impression that the company had no rights, but I suppose they must have had some, or the Government would not have felt compelled to purchase them. I would suggest to the Government that they should invite tenders and should offer the plant and the area of the timber concession, in order to recoup the money expended in purchasing the company's rights, and that the freehold land should not be included in the timber area to be offered. There is a railway of about 22 miles in existence, there are mills erected, and there is the area of timber land, included in the purchase made by the Government. That property should not be left in its present useless state, and I suggest that tenders be called for purchasing the land concession, without the freehold land. The Agricultural Bank, alluded to in the Speech, is moving in the right direction, and I am sure that, with time and the careful management of Mr. Paterson, that new institution will be a financial success, if it in any way realises the wishes of those who brought the scheme forward and those who supported it. The opening up of stock routes to our Northern and

Eastern Districts is of great importance. The only way to bring stock to market in a colony like this is to open the country with railways; otherwise, in a season like the present, it is impossible to bring stock over long distances to market, except by coasting steamers, and the cost of such transit from the North is prohibitive. The completion of the Midland railway is another important matter, and I believe the Government intend to insist on the running of trains six days a week, instead of four days as at present. I hope the Government will not insist on that condition at present, because the Midland Company can carry all the present traffic of that district by running four days a week, and we ought not to insist on the running of more trains than the traffic really requires. The most important question dealt with in the Speech is the proposal to establish a Mint in the Colony, and, to make my remarks practical, I will give you an instance of the cost and the charges for bringing gold from Mount Magnet, which is situated between Geraldton and Cue. Twelve hundred ounces were brought to Perth, and sent thence to Melbourne, and the banking charge amounted to 2s. 6d. an ounce, including the Mint charge and everything. I was myself fortunate enough to be at Mount Magnet at the time, and with a loaded revolver I brought the gold down myself. I paid the insurance against all risks. I paid the railway freight. At the coast I paid the insurance to Melbourne, and every charge. What do you think all these charges amounted to? The average total was about ninepence an ounce, and yet the Bank charged 2s. 6d. an ounce, and pocketed the difference. So I think we will be able, with a Mint in Perth, to bring our gold to it at a total cost of about ninepence an ounce, instead of having to pay 2s. 6d. an ounce for sending our gold to the Mint at Melbourne, beside the prestige that will be given to this colony as an exporter of sovereigns, as we can then export our gold through the Mint in the form of sovereigns. A number of Bills are promised in paragraph 17, and particularly the Municipal Government Bill, which I hope will, with some amendments suggested by those engaged in municipal work, and certain amendments desired by the Government, be passed, so that this necessary measure may become law this year. I regret the Government have not, in their list of measures, included a Bill for dealing with the timber lands of the col-

ony. At present there are companies holding large timber areas on the sea board, most of them 100,000 acres in extent, and it is impossible for the persons engaged in working smaller areas to pay a larger rental for their small areas than is paid by the large companies. I hope a Bill will be brought in for enabling those working the smaller areas to compete with the larger mills. If the Collie railway and the Blackwood railway be constructed, the timber mills along these lines will become a very important industry, and the new men should be charged such a rental as will enable them to compete with the larger mills. I am sure the member for East Perth (Mr. James) will agree that those industries which are carried on with small means should be enabled to compete with those of larger means, in the matter of rental. I am glad to see the Government have given way on the question of a duty on pearl shells, and I am pleased indeed to find that the export duty on pearl shell and on sandalwood is to be abolished. The proposed discontinuance of Ecclesiastical Grant has my entire sympathy. Ever since I have been a member of this House I have opposed the Grant, and I am sure any equitable terms will receive the favorable consideration of members, and that this House will deal liberally with the Churches. Paragraph 22 deals with a matter of great importance to the whole colony, and those who are interested in the staple products, especially wool and cereals, will sympathise with those engaged in them under present conditions. I can assure hon. members that the low price of wool has now made it a question whether it is worth while to even shear the sheep on stations at a distance from the coast. Wool has been sent from Northern stations to London, and realised only 2½d. a pound; the freight has been three farthings and there is the 5 per cent. Even the washed wool, which used to bring 2s. and 2s. 6d. a pound, is sold now at 8d. Under these circumstances it becomes a grave matter for consideration as to how the pastoral industry of the colony is to be carried on. I did hope that Ministers would have brought down something in the shape of remitting the rents on the pastoral lands, or have made some attempt to cope with the anxiety and trouble, and the fear of financial institutions and banks and private persons, as to what is to become of those engaged in our pastoral

industry. It is no use for hon. members to look at this question other than as one of real distress. I speak feelingly on this point, for it is a matter of urgent necessity that some thing should be done to relieve the pastoralists in Western Australia. I say there is not one station in the colony that is paying its way at present. It cannot possibly pay its way. The rents have not been reduced. The price of the staple product has fallen almost to nothing. The price obtained for the carcass has not fallen, and that is the only saving which helps the pastoral industry at present. Yet at the same time we find an agitation by the population of Perth and Fremantle for doing away with the only relief that is possible to our Northern settlers. I have thought this question out, and have gone so far as to say, and I am prepared to advocate in this House, that the Stock Tax should be repealed—that is with the condition that the Northern settlers should have their flour, hoots, and other necessities, and their machinery for mines, free of duty. These things cannot be grown or made in the North, and have to be obtained elsewhere. All that the Perth and Fremantle people can say is that there must be a repeal of the Stock Tax—but, do the persons who advocate that cause really understand the question? If hon. members would like to go into the interesting question of the cost of meat, and the price at which it can be sold to butchers and to consumers, I shall be glad to give all the information in my power. It means only, at the most, three-eighths of a penny in the pound. Firstly, the animal has to come from the growers; then the shipping companies take a piece; next it is landed to agents in Perth or Fremantle, and they take a piece; then the butcher must have something; and I say that, considering the low price of wool, it is impossible for a man to carry on a station and pay the present rent, especially if he has also to pay interest to his banker. I hope that, if this question comes before the House, hon. members will bear in mind that the feeding of stock for market is the only industry which pastoralists in the North can carry on at present, and if you take from them the protection of the Stock Tax, you should give them something in return. The only portion of the Speech I intend to object to is the removal of the railway workshops from Fremantle. I am sorry to find my friends the members for Fremantle have thought of flitting over to the other side of

the House, because the Government had intended to remove the workshops from Fremantle. I should have thought those members would have preferred to sit on the Ministerial side of the House, because it has not been the wish of the Government to remove the workshops, but it has been the wish and action of members on the Opposition side, for a long time, to have the workshops removed—especially my friend, the member for Albany. I say this question of the workshops has not been dealt with in a spirit I should like to see prevailing. There has been no evidence taken, beyond that which was given before a Commission some years ago, when that Commission recommended that the workshops be removed. If they are removed to the Midland Junction, all the material will have to be carried 25 miles. That removal was first suggested, I believe, by Mr. Allison Smith, when brought here from Victoria to advise as an expert. When he first told me he was going to recommend their removal to the Midland Junction, I said, "If you do, you had better leave this colony, because you will have no show of remaining in it." But that did not frighten him. He got 50 guineas for ten days' work. I do not think the time has arrived when these workshops should be removed. There is plenty of land to be had in Fremantle; and as we are informed in the Speech that the railways are paying working expenses and interest on capital, why should we require a change in the workshops? The same thing occurs in connection with the Eastern Railway up the rungs, for we were told the steep gradients prevented the railway from paying, but we now find that the line is paying, notwithstanding the gradients. When you see a return showing the cost of the deviations, the extras will be found to amount to 30 per cent. In fact, the extras will be enormous. There are many places between Perth and Fremantle to which the workshops could be removed; but no—the Government are not content—they want to remove them to a place where I have seen water covering the land. As to the artesian supply of water obtained there, I believe there is an artesian supply nearer the coast. I hope that when a division is taken on this question, it will not be a party division, but that some members of the Government will vote against the removal, and show they are not in accord with this portion of the Speech, because I presume that when the Ministers made up this Speech, they were not necessarily in accord with

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. PIESSE: 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.