

and suitable one to be worked entirely by white men, and if it be found that white divers and tenders cannot be procured, or if procured, are not willing and able to adapt themselves to the work, I shall then do my best to get the present methods of working continued. At the present moment we have in London men who are willing to come out and try the work. They are men trained in salvage and dock diving, but they are not trained in shelling. We are now only awaiting the permission of the Federal Minister to allow these men to land under contract. With the possibility of the Royal Commission being appointed, I shall not dwell further on this matter of the pearling industry. To the pearlery this is a serious and critical time. It was one of the principal reasons that influenced me in again standing for Parliament at the last election—not for the love of office or position, nor yet for honours to be gained—I was prompted to stand again by the desire I had to assist the pearlery at this most critical time in their history—to assist, if possible, in saving this great industry for these people who deserve it and comprise it; and in saving it for the State of which they constitute no mean part.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): Please include my congratulations amongst those you, Mr. Speaker, have already received on the high position to which you have been elected. The coming into power of this popular Government has raised great hopes in the breasts of the people of Western Australia, and we feel confident that when the members of the Ministry have settled down in their respective offices and brought themselves up-to-date with the requirements for the successful running of each department, these hopes will be speedily realised. We know it, because we know the men. We have seen them and their work since in 1905 they faced what the present Opposition are facing now, a strong Ministerial party. They faced the position undauntedly and with perseverance and untiring efforts, and the success of their organisation was shown in the splendid victory afforded them on the 3rd October. The Governor's Speech has been

criticised freely on both sides of the House. Members of the Ministry have been congratulated on bringing forward important subjects for legislation, wise and democratic. It is not necessary for me to go over the same ground as others have, and I am not likely to for the simple reason that up to the present, although every portion of the State has been referred to, the great North-West has been only slightly touched upon. When the member for Geraldton was speaking at the end of last week I had hopes when he referred to "the coming of the north" that at least the North-West would have an opportunity of being adequately represented on this side, but unfortunately he stopped at the Murchison River. The member for Coolgardie speaking to-day also sounded a note which I thought would suit our purpose, when he referred to the fact that much had been done for the farmers of the State. I had hopes that he would say a few words on behalf of those engaged in the pastoral industry in the northern portion of the State, but unfortunately he came no further north than Ora Banda, Waverley, and Coolgardie. Each member, it seemed to me, made reference to the particular wants of his own district and generally, after congratulating the Ministry, referred in a more or less slight degree to the welfare of the remainder of the State. I may be pardoned then, even at the risk of having a parish pump hurled at me, if I refer more particularly to the policy laid down by the Labour party for the development of the great North-West. We have heard much in the course of the debate about the price of meat in the metropolis. That, members may be assured, is controlled by what is called a meat ring. There are two things in the policy for the North-West which would do much to ensure cheap meat for the people of the metropolitan area, the first being the establishment of a State line of steamers, and the second a fresh classification of the pastoral lands of the State. The late Minister for Agriculture stated that he thought the Labour party had promised a boat to trade between Fremantle and the north

and north-west coast. They did more than that; they promised a line of steamers, and we who have been elected to represent the north-west portion of the State repeated the promise during our election campaign. The pros and cons of a State line of steamers have been pointed out on every election platform, and those of us who are pledged to State ownership in all things, the ownership of the means of distribution and exchange, need not ask for reasons to justify this scheme. The member for Fremantle referred in his speech to the shipping disabilities which exist between Fremantle and the north-west ports, and to the appointment of a Mr. Sinclair to report as to the best methods of removing them. That report I have not seen; I merely know of its existence through the member for Fremantle. But I know something of the methods of private enterprise in this respect. Some time ago a sheepowner in the Gascoyne country contracted with a private company to forward 2,000 sheep to Fremantle. The House has heard much of the dry season in different parts of the State, and the Gascoyne constituency is no exception. After great trouble the owner succeeded in bringing these 2,000 sheep to the port, only to find that there was not space available in the boat by which the sheep were to be shipped, and he was forced to send 1,200 of them back to the station. The freights from Fremantle to Singapore are at the present time 12s. 6d. per ton. Private enterprise, however, insisted on a man who wished to shift some stuff from Carnarvon to Shark Bay, a distance of a few miles, paying at the rate of 12s. per ton. Some time ago a business man at Carnarvon made a successful effort, as the member for Kimberley seems to have done in his own district, to establish a trade in live stock between Carnarvon and Java, Singapore, and other Eastern ports. Having established that trade in live stock he thought he might be able to establish a trade in cereals and other products of Western Australia. When he approached the merchants in Singapore they met his proposals very readily, but asked him. "What

about freights?" He remarked that there was no difficulty about freights at all, for the stuff would be landed at Singapore from Fremantle at 12s. 6d. per ton. The merchants in Singapore laughed at the idea, and showed an invoice and bills of lading whereby stuff was landed in Singapore from Victoria for 5s. 3d. per ton. Furthermore, he asked what might be done in connection with taking a shipment of flour, say, 4,000 tons, from Western Australia and landing it in Singapore. The merchants assured him it could not be done owing to the absence of shipping facilities. On inquiry he found that the export agent in the East for Victoria, Mr. Sinclair, regularly shipped consignments of 4,000 tons of flour from that State to the port of Singapore. I have no doubt that so far as this trade is concerned, State steamers would go a long way towards insuring cheap freights for the producer. I met in town to-day the owner of one of the stations in my constituency. He brought down some thousands of sheep from his station and they were sold in Fremantle for 4s. 1d. apiece. The freight on these came to 2s. 8d. a head, so that after commission and other charges were met there was very little left for the grower. Another man sent down 3,000 sheep, and the result was such that he declared it would have been better for him to have sent the sheep back to the station, taken the wool off them in the coming year and then cut their throats. I mention these things to show that although the price of meat is high it is not on account of the growers, it is on account of the shipping charges and the other expenses of handling the carcasses at this end of the voyage. A steam boat was recently chartered to bring 400 bullocks and 2,000 sheep from Carnarvon. The cost was £62 10s. a day, and the average speed was five knots an hour. Another boat of slightly greater carrying capacity cost £70 a day. Those who have gone into the matter and understand shipping stock, maintain that a boat that will ship 500 cattle and 2,000 sheep and travel at 11 knots an hour could be chartered at £90 a day. We can realise the amount of interest that can be earned on money

expended should these ships belong to the State. Steamships trading between Argentina and different parts of Europe, fitted up properly for the beef and mutton carrying trade, may be had at the cost of £30,000. Taking three of these ships it would cost £90,000; and if we estimate the charter rate at £90 a day, we can see there is a very good business proposition in the matter. In regard to another matter I desire to mention, I am emboldened by the example set by the member for Fremantle who pointed out that, as a Bill would be introduced for the appointment of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, he wished in the first instance to save the time of that committee by stating at once what his constituency required in the way of harbour facilities. Now, we have a jetty at Carnarvon and just before the elections the late Minister for Works went on a tour of inspection, a tour of promises. I am informed the jetty at Carnarvon returns a profit of £1,500 a year, so that also, it will be admitted, is a very good business proposition, but it is not capable of coping with the increasing trade at Carnarvon. As I was saying, the late Minister for Works went on a tour of inspection, and he was interviewed by people at Carnarvon and taken to inspect this particular work. He at once saw the urgent necessity for increasing the length of the jetty by 50 feet and widening it, and he promised that a report would be made. I do not know whether it was to be placed on the Table of the House or what was to become of it, but we have not heard of it since. He promised to get the report from the Engineer-in-Chief and to communicate at once with the people of Carnarvon through their mayor. This has not been done, but I hope the present Government will recognise the importance of Carnarvon with a view to having that work put in hand immediately. While speaking of the jetty I may also mention another work going on in the Gascoyne district that might also be characterised as an electioneering job; that is the building of the foreshore. Like many other Ministerial works, it begins at the right end and stops in the middle.

Owing to the expediency, efficiency and good work of the supervisor, the work has cost much less than was originally anticipated, certain things were found to be unnecessary and money has been saved on the job in that respect; but I hope that work will be completed, instead of finishing as it does in no particular place and being absolutely useless to protect the foreshore of Carnarvon against the lapping of the tide. I hope as much more will be done in point of distance as has been done at the present time. I have no exact idea of the distance required, but it is something like 200 yards more that will have to be done to complete the job and render the foreshore of Carnarvon safe. Mention is made in the Governor's Speech as to the encouragement of prospecting, and as to the latest discoveries at Payne's Find, Mount Egerton, and other places. The Speech also says that copper mining is becoming more and more a settled industry. The member for Roebourne will probably refer more particularly to copper mining later on. I just wish to say that during the elections there were many industrial disputes, strikes, and one thing and another altogether militating against the success of this industry; and were it not for the fact that an amendment of the Arbitration Act is promised by the Ministry, the chances are that, quicker than even the Ministry expect, the industry at Whim Creek will be settled. I would like to remind the Minister for Mines of the existence of such a place as Bangemall. According to a report of the Government Geologist, Bangemall is situated in the Gascoyne goldfield about 270 miles from Carnarvon on one of the tributaries of the Lyons river and about 30 miles west of Mount Augustus, one of the highest mountains in the State. According to Mr. Maitland this field was discovered early in 1896, but owing to its geographical situation and want of the necessary machinery for extraction, it has not produced any large quantity of gold. I would like to compare Bangemall to Linden in the Mount Margaret district to show that the fact of non-production of gold in the early stages of the field's existence does not show that gold is not

there in any large quantities. The Government Geologist, referring to Bangemall, says—

The main or vertical shaft passed through the reef at 35 feet. Free gold may be seen in the stone lying in the dump; the quartz is of the ferruginous type common to the reefs of Bangemall; portions are highly brecciated, the interstitial cementing matter being oxide of iron.

In 1903 a report was received from Mr. Bennett, owing to a request being made at that time for Government assistance towards helping the people of Bangemall. That report also is lost, but Bangemall in the three years of its existence produced 531½ozs. of gold; yet the Government are talking about giving assistance to a place much further out on the Gascoyne. I refer to Mt. Egerton. I do not ask that a Government battery be sent to Bangemall at once on account of the 531½ozs. of gold won from it, but I maintain that an expert should be sent there to look over the place and make some offer to willing prospectors. Some of the older men, those who originally took up the land in the first place, are quite prepared to spend from £1,000 to £2,000 for the development of the district, provided the Government will ensure for them some means of treating the stone when they have it raised. I mentioned I intended comparing Bangemall with Linden. Linden was a promising place in the early days of the Coolgardie goldfields. Somewhere about the end of last century, however, work stopped there for the simple reason that the only means of crushing stone raised by the prospectors were two batteries owned by private enterprise. Private enterprise was so strong and so keen on accumulating profits that before very long the prospectors got tired of raising stone the benefits of which only went to the owners of the batteries, and the field was deserted for five or six years. However, in 1907 a gentleman well known in the mining world, Dr. Laver, interested himself in some properties there and a Government battery, a small Huntingdon crushing plant, was sent to Linden. In 1907 the total gold raised from Linden amounted

to 82ozs. Between then and 1910 no less than 6,227 ozs. of gold was won from the former deserted goldfield, and since then 400 tons have been crushed for 1,000ozs., bringing the total to 7,227ozs. from what had been deserted as a mining centre. I know these figures fall into insignificance beside the mighty figures quoted by the member for Coolgardie in his speech today, but at the same time they are not without a certain amount of significance, more especially as the voided leases in the Linden district have crushed 7,000 tons for a yield of 10,000ozs. I mention that as a comparison for the simple reason that what has happened in the Linden may well happen in Bangemall, seeing that better conditions exist now than existed when Bangemall was discovered in 1896. The establishment of experimental farms is also a subject I might bring under notice. Some members of the Opposition have mentioned the question of irrigation in the south-western districts. For the last two or three weeks we have had the Commissioner for Tropical Agriculture and Mr. Scott, the irrigation expert, in Gascoyne, and they have declared that the country along the banks of the Gascoyne river is eminently fitted for the growing of lucerne. Mr. Scott went into figures and they are so surprising that I feel a certain amount of diffidence in mentioning them; but the example he saw, ground that had been sown with lucerne and irrigated, produced lucerne of such quality that he said 70 sheep to the acre was not by any means too high an estimate to make of the carrying capacity of that ground. On account of the dry season 3,000 tons of fodder have been imported to Carnarvon this year at the average cost of £7 a ton. A small sum in arithmetic will show that means £21,000 has been spent by the people of the Gascoyne district for fodder which under irrigation might well be grown in the district. Bores have been put down on both sides of the Gascoyne and good water has been found. I hope therefore that the Minister controlling this particular department will see his way clear to sending a water expert up there to gauge as far as he possibly can whether water exists in suffi-

cient quantities in the river sands of Gascoyne to ensure proper irrigation of land which, according to Mr. Scott, the irrigation expert, are well worth irrigating. The Labour policy also promises a continuation of the present treatment of diseased natives in lock hospitals. That is right enough from a humane point of view; but I maintain that, as far as those natives who are not diseased are concerned, there is a slavery existing in Western Australia more vile, more abhorrent than any which existed in the Southern States of America before the War of Secession. I had pointed out to me on one particular station a native who had been drawing water from one well for 20 years and the only recompense he received during the whole of that time was an occasional stick of tobacco and old clothes left by shearers and just enough flour and kangaroo to keep him alive. On another station in the North-West all the shearing is done by natives. I passed through one where 13 of them had finished shearing for the day 1,013 sheep; at another station 13 white men in one day sheared 1,303 sheep. Those who are employing the white shearers had to pay 25s. a hundred, and to keep 12 or 13 shed hands, in order that the shearing might be carried on properly. Those who are shearing with the natives gave the ringer a gun, and the natives got nothing except their tucker. What sort of tucker they received may be gained from what I am about to say. A stockman was being sent out with a black fellow, his gin, and three youngsters to look after sheep. He said to the manager, "What about tucker?" The manager said, "You can take for the natives eight pounds of flour a week and allow them meat at your own discretion." The man, to a certain extent, was humane, and said "How can you expect this family of natives to live on that?" "Why," the manager replied, "before you came here the native had two more children, there were seven altogether, and they used to do it on six pounds of flour a week; if, at the same time you think they can do it on eight pounds of flour and not less, give them that much." Those are the kind of things that occur in the North-West; they are the result of

my own experience. I have here a letter from a gentleman who spent seven years in Kimberley and who knows as well as any one in the whole State of Western Australia the conditions which prevail there between the aborigines and their white employers. He says amongst other things—

Now the mode of working these natives is a disgrace to the Commonwealth. Nearly all the work in the pastoral industry in Kimberley is done by unpaid natives. . . . It is a common sight on the sheep-stations to see a gang, consisting of men, women, and children, erecting a line of fence. When fencing, the squatter presses all available native labour into the gang, regardless of age or sex. I have seen a gang of natives of both sexes, old and young, erecting a line of fence in the heat of a tropical summer, with two white men in charge, who were paid a percentage on the work done as an incentive to goad their gang to do more work. Likewise the man who is in charge of the native shearers is also paid a bonus for work done or the number of sheep shorn. . . . All the compensation the natives get is just enough of the coarsest food and clothing to enable them to do more work. If a man has a good or useful beast of burden he treats it in a manner that he calls "well," with a view to getting more work out of it; the same with the squatter and his slaves. The native shearer, who often shears well over 50 sheep per day, sometimes gets, after shearing, a suit of clothing for his labour. More often he gets nothing. . . . It must be obvious to all that a native who cannot read or write cannot have a clear or intelligent understanding of signing his name to a printed document. It is almost impossible for one of the world's most unintelligent and primitive inhabitants to thoroughly understand the duration of a year, and that in advance. . . . Yet, notwithstanding that, if a native gets tired of the tyranny and harsh conditions under which he exists, and runs away, he is arrested and dragged before a magistrate, and given a term of imprisonment. I maintain, therefore, that one of the first

duties of the present Government is to insist on the carrying out of the particular section of the Act relating to the treatment of native employees, and although they intend to treat humanely those natives who are unfortunately diseased, at the same time they should not deny the justice due to those who have not, I was about to almost say the good fortune to be diseased, because they are much better off in the lock hospitals than if they were left to the tender mercies of the squatters. Some hon. members dealing with the Governor's Speech have referred to the need in agricultural districts of agricultural colleges. I fancy, as well as building agricultural colleges, something should be done in the way of teaching the farmers up-to-date methods of growing wool. Wool is one of the staple industries of the Commonwealth, but very few, even amongst the foremost woolgrowers, know anything about it. It is not an uncommon thing to see in a farmer's flock of from 500 to 1,000 sheep, half-a-dozen different types of sheep each carrying different classes of wool. It has been said that the man who would make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before was a benefit to the community. The same thing applies to the wool-grower; the man who is able to make a sheep carry one pound more of wool of better quality, at no more cost of labour, and at no more cost of feeding, is just as much a benefactor to the human race as he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, more especially in Western Australia under present conditions. I think, therefore, that the Government might take into consideration the advisableness of appointing a sheep expert, whose duty it would be to attend agricultural shows and deliver lectures in agricultural districts, and do, as it were, missionary work towards furthering the wool trade of Western Australia, and growing a better class of wool. Another thing I wish to deal with, and I hope the Government will carry it forward, is the question of passing a Shearers' Hut Accommodation Act. Such a thing does not exist in Western

Australia. All the other States of the Commonwealth have Hut Accommodation Acts. In Western Australia the conditions that prevail are simply vile. I have seen on up-to-date stations, nice homesteads, pleasant surroundings, and good wool sheds, but the huts for the shearers and shed hands were not fit for a decent dog to live in. I have seen in another place, where nearly £1,000 was spent on building a wool shed, men working in the shed having to take their meals in a bough shed and at night time having to sleep in the creek or under a convenient bush. It is necessary, therefore, that something should be done to better the conditions under which shearers are forced to live. Sometime ago one of the most up-to-date stations in the North-West, not wishing to go to the expense of building accommodation for the shearers, put up eight or ten tents. Anyone who has lived in a tent for any length of time will know that after a hard day's or a hard week's work in shearing, Sunday should be spent under comfortable conditions. Living in a tent does not, to my mind, constitute what might be considered comfortable conditions. We are also promised a repeal of the Licensing Act. I do not know whether we should be proud of the fact, but the constituency which I represent was the only one which, at the recent poll for an increase or decrease of licenses, polled strongly in favour of an increase. We are a thirsty constituency and we desire that the Licensing Act should be repealed as soon as possible. The people there cannot understand, living in a hot climate and working hard, why a man should be able to drink on six days of the week and not on the seventh. We hope that the Government in repealing this Act, or amending it, will do so in such a way as to allow a certain amount of Sunday trading to be done, so that the men need not be total abstainers on the Sabbath. I am at one with the member for Coolgardie in promising loyal support in all things, and possible criticism at times. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing which they have given me on this my first attempt in addressing the Chamber.