

large employers insuring with the State, since that class of business is the least expensive. However, only employers self-insuring before the commencement of this measure will be permitted to continue the system. If there is one class of self-insurance that should be allowed it is that relating to shipping.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: I have no objection to the proviso as it appears now because I think it has had a good effect. When the public read about high rates operating in various industries, particularly the timber industry, it must be realised that the high rates are not paid by many of the biggest firms because they have their own insurance funds. That applies in connection with the coal mines at Collie and with many large commercial concerns in the city. I presume the Minister has had inquiries made as to how the proviso will affect the construction of the Bill itself and whether or not the funds will be under the control of the commission. What will be the position of the workers? The Bill provides that the commission will control the insurance fund and will have power to say what the worker shall do and so forth. Any action by the workers will be against the commission and not against the employer. If the commission will not have control of these particular funds, the proviso will have to be altered. As it is now, I am afraid the miners at Collie, for instance, will have no redress against the coal owners but against the commission only, and yet the commission will have no control over the Collie mines insurance fund.

The Minister for Works: I think the position is covered by Clause 14.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: At the same time, wherever reference is made to action on the part of the worker, it is set up that that action shall be against the commission, not against the employer, yet the commission will not control the private insurance funds.

The Minister for Works: The commission will have no control over self-insurance funds.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: Then where does the worker stand?

The Minister for Works: If there is any doubt about it I shall refer the matter to the Parliamentary Draftsman again.

The Minister for Mines: At any rate, the worker must not be in any worse position

under the commission than he is in at present.

Hon. A. McCALLUM: No. It seems to me the worker will have no redress against the employers having their own insurance funds, and that is a real danger. I shall be content if the Minister gives me his assurance that this matter will be referred to the Parliamentary Draftsman.

Progress reported.

## **BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Report of Committee adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.59*

## **Legislative Council,**

*Thursday, 4th June, 1931.*

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

## **LEADER OF THE HOUSE, TEMPORARY.**

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received from the Acting Premier the following communication, dated the 4th June, 1931:—

The Deputy President of the Legislative Council. Dear Sir,—I very much regret to have to advise you that the Leader of the House, the Hon. C. F. Baxter, has been taken ill, and I have appointed the Hon. H. Seddon to lead the House during the temporary absence of Mr. Baxter. I trust that will be acceptable to yourself and the House. Yours faithfully, C. G. Latham, Acting Premier.

I may say further that, owing to Mr. Seddon having occupied a back seat in the Chamber, I have advised him, for his own convenience and the convenience of members, that during his occupancy of the post of temporary Leader of the House he should use the unoccupied seat on the Ministerial bench.

### MOTION—URGENCY.

*Assistant Minister.*

**HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM** (North) [4.35]: As a matter of urgency I move—

That the House adjourn until Tuesday next.

I do this with the object of inducing members of the Council to request the Government to appoint an assistant Minister in this House, as the work is too much for any one man. Already we have seen the Leader of the House break down under the strain of the work. Even were he able to do the work, it is too much to ask of one man, for it places him in a very difficult position. I held the post of Leader of the Council for four years without an assistant Minister. But in those days we had five or six lawyers in the House, and I generally managed to get one or another of them to help me. It is very difficult for any Minister bringing in a Bill when some member puts up an argument requiring an answer. Were the Minister to answer it at once, he would forfeit his final reply. So he requires someone to help him by replying to those points as they arise, so that the Leader of the House will be able later to reply to the debate. Members will agree that we ought to have a second Minister here, and I feel sure the Government will be sympathetic towards the request. It is a pity to see a man break down, as unfortunately the Leader of the House has, but it cannot be avoided in the circumstances. I might allude to another subject which comes within the scope of this question, namely, that with the Leader of the House ill, and in consequence the House sitting such short hours, people outside say it is hardly worth having a Legislative Council. This has been actually said to me, and the critics have added, "You are there for only 20 minutes or half an hour." I should like this to be taken down by the Press reporters, because so

very few people realise that the work of members of Parliament is not done in the House while the House is sitting. Take the speeches we have had recently from Mr. Holmes and Mr. Seddon. Is it to be thought that those speeches were composed during the sitting of the House? It can only be done by working previously and intently. That is the way those speeches are prepared. Imagine a Bill containing 20 amendments to some Act. The work associated with that Bill cannot be done in the House, but has to be done outside. Part of the explanation of the short hours we sit is that we get through the work quickly because our members consider the business before coming down to the House, and when here do not speak at very great length. So the work is carried out expeditiously and, at the same time, thoroughly.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I take it the hon. member desires to proceed under Standing Order 59, which deals with matters of urgency, in this instance the necessity for appointing an assistant to the Leader of the House. But under Standing Order 59, the only motion that can be received is that the House at its rising adjourn until some hour or day other than that which has been already fixed.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I moved that the House adjourn until Tuesday next.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: On Tuesday next we shall meet in the ordinary course of events. I will have the motion amended to read—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. to-morrow.

In the ordinary course, to-morrow is a day on which the House does not meet. It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places in support of the motion.

Four members having risen,

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The question is now open for discussion.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: If no other member wishes to speak, I will withdraw the motion.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There is some confusion. The question of requesting the Government to appoint an assistant to the Minister is now open for discussion on the motion for adjournment.

**HON. J. M. DREW** (Central) [4.40]: It is not for me to dictate to the Government as to whether they should appoint another Minister in this House, but I am firmly of opinion it is absolutely necessary they should do so. I have had a good deal of experience in the capacity of Leader of this Chamber, and on all occasions except the first I was assisted by an honorary Minister. Even then I felt the weight of my burden. The present Leader of the House is in exactly the same position. He has the control of an important department. He has to attend to the business of that department and then to the business of this House. All members will realise what that means. He has to come to this Chamber. He has to take notes of the principal points in the speeches, and has to prepare his replies. Bills come down from another place which have originated in departments other than his own. He has no knowledge of the contents of those Bills when they arrive. He has to study the measures, criticise them himself endeavour to detect their weak points, submit those points to the departmental officers, get their explanations and then prepare his introductory speeches and his replies. There may be as many as a dozen Bills which he will have to handle at one sitting. It is no wonder that Mr. Baxter has fallen under the weight of the burden placed on his shoulders. He should have an assistant. That must be realised by every one acquainted with the procedure of the House and with the number of Bills of which the Leader of the House has no knowledge until they are introduced, and which he has to expound to the Chamber. That is my view. It is entitled to some weight, because I felt the effects of the heavy strain placed upon me while I was Leader of the House, although I received the generous assistance of members from beginning to end and had the valuable help of an honorary Minister. Even then it was a very severe strain on me, and I trust that in view of the developments, proving the necessity for assistance since the Minister cannot stand the strain, the Government will take action in order to avoid anything of the sort occurring in future. Again, with an honorary Minister, if the portfolioed Minister becomes ill, the Honorary Minister can take his place. But now as things are, there is no other Minister to take the place of the Leader of the House. So I hope that in spite of the necessity for

economies at the present time, something will be done. Since the appointment of an Honorary Minister involves no expenditure by the Treasury, I trust that, at any rate, an Honorary Minister will be appointed as assistant to the Leader of the House.

**HON. J. J. HOLMES** (North) [4.45]: I wish to express my regret at the illness of the Leader of the House. Yesterday I advised him not to attempt to carry on the business of the House in the condition in which he found himself. The point which concerns me now is whether the motion is in order or not. Mr. Drew referred to an Honorary Minister, but Sir Edward Wittenoom made no reference to such an office.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: I referred to an assistant Minister.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not approve of the House urging for the appointment of another salaried Minister. The point I have to raise is, whether this House can do anything that will mean a charge upon the people, namely, another £1,500 a year for an extra Minister. While there is a necessity for two Ministers in this House, I cannot see any necessity for there being seven in another place. The Minister in this House has to handle all the Bills that come from his colleagues in Cabinet, each of whom deals with his own particular Bills. If the proposal were to take one of the six Ministers from another place, and increase the number to two in this House, it would have my approval. The inference is that this House desires the appointment of another Minister, which would make the number up to nine, and of that I do not approve.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The position is that the Leader of the House has fallen ill. Sir Edward Wittenoom came to me and said he was of opinion that the views of members should be sought. I advised that this should be sought on an urgency motion. Nothing will be resolved, for this merely gives members the opportunity to express an opinion.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I will vote for the adjournment of the House until to-morrow. According to your ruling, Mr. Deputy President, if we cannot discuss the actual motion before the House, what am I to debate?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Standing Order 59 shows that the method for dealing with a matter of urgency is to move for the adjournment of the House to some day other

than the ordinary sitting days. The matter that is urgent is then discussed.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Am I not allowed to discuss the matter of urgency?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then why stop me?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The motion merely provides members with an opportunity to express an opinion on the subject that it is desired to deal with.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The urgency is for the appointment of another Minister in this Chamber, but I am not going to be a party to the appointment of an additional Minister, making the total number nine. I contend there is not enough for seven Ministers in another place to do.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There cannot be nine Ministers, because the Constitution provides for eight.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That can be amended. Only recently the number of Ministers was added to, but not with my consent. There is nothing to prevent the Government from bringing down a Bill providing for the appointment of a ninth Minister. I entirely approve of what has been said, that the position of Leader in this House is too much for one man. He should not be asked to do it. If, however, the motion means the appointment of a Minister of full Cabinet rank, it does not meet with my approval.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.50]: I wish to express my sympathy with the Leader of the House in his illness, and agree it is necessary that an honorary assistant should be appointed at once. I have no desire to see another portfolioed Minister.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: Nor does anyone else.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is very necessary that the Leader should have some assistance. This has been proved in the last two sittings we have had, both of which were shortened through the ill-health of the Leader of the House. The Minister could not continue to sit in his seat, so that the business of the House could not be carried on.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.51]: I agree with the views expressed by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Miles. The need for an honorary or an assistant Minister in this House has been very obvious to us since we

resumed our sittings, especially during this week. It was also obvious earlier in the session that the Leader of the House, in discharging his duties with such efficiency, had too heavy a load placed upon him. It is more than any one man has a right to bear; he should not be called upon to discharge all these duties without help. The Government would be well advised to adopt the suggestion advanced by Sir Edward Wittenoom, at the same time avoiding the creation of another portfolioed Minister. The motion will meet all that is required, and I hope it will be supported.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North—in reply) [4.53]: I had not contemplated the appointment of a new Minister. If the Government did anything objectionable the House would not approve of it. They will probably appoint some hon. member as an Honorary Minister, and this will be exceedingly good training for him should he at any time be made a full member of Cabinet. I should like it to be understood that this motion is no reflection upon the Leader of the House, on the score that he has not carried out his duties satisfactorily. He has done his work wonderfully well considering he has not had much practice at it, and I congratulate him on the way in which he has done it. I also very much regret his illness. I would now like to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: If the House is of opinion that the remarks which have been made concerning the appointment of an Honorary Minister are not sufficient, it may proceed under Standing Order 102. A motion may be moved that an Honorary Minister ought to be appointed, but this would have to be moved by leave of the House. I am of opinion that at this juncture Sir Edward Wittenoom's motion has served a useful purpose, and that the Standing Order might be resorted to later on.

#### QUESTION—CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: How many owners have been called upon under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act, passed in 1927—(1) to put their land to that

reasonable use to which, in the opinion of the Land Acquisition Board, it should be put; (2) to subdivide the said land, and to offer the subdivisions for sale—(a) by the Collier Government; (b) by the Mitchell Government?

Hon. H. SEDDON (for the Minister for Country Water Supplies) replied: 1 and 2, None.

### QUESTION—LONG SERVICE LEAVE.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, How many public servants have been granted long service leave during the period 1st July, 1930, to date? 2, What was the average length of such leave? 3, What was the average monthly salary paid to each person?

Hon. H. SEDDON (for the Minister for Country Water Supplies) replied: 1, The number of officers under the Public Service Act who were granted leave between 1st July, 1930, and 31st May, 1931, was 61. 2, Fifty-three were granted three months and eight six months on full pay. 3, The average monthly salary of the officers granted leave was £26.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. W. H. Kitson, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. E. H. Gray (West) on the ground of ill health.

### MOTION—PRODUCTION COSTS.

#### *Action to Reduce.*

Debate resumed from the previous day, on the following motion by Hon. J. J. Holmes—

That, in the opinion of this House, drastic steps should be taken to reduce the cost of primary production, affecting particularly the pastoral and wheat industries of the State, so that they may continue to exist in competition with similar industries in other parts of the world.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.0]: I congratulate Mr. Holmes on having brought forward this motion. Many of us have held views as to the steps that should be taken in this direction, and I heartily agree that whatever steps are taken they should be of a drastic nature.

I feel that the anticipations and hopes that were entertained by the Government and by the people last year have not been fulfilled, and that the estimates are not likely to be reached. The revenue has not been coming in, and it is becoming more and more difficult for the Government to finance the State. It is essential, therefore, that drastic steps should be taken to try to pick up some of the losses on recent months and then shape a straighter course for the future. Many people realise now that their positions are very much worse than it was ever expected they would be. We are aware that the Government have taken steps to reduce the number of officers in the various departments, and that because of the absence of loan funds and the consequent inability to carry on necessary works, there was nothing for many of the officials to do. We also find that the traffic on the railways has decreased considerably and that there is not the same development going on in connection with the lands of the State, and that generally we have not been able to do for some time past what we have been accustomed to do in recent years with the aid of loan moneys. It is undoubtedly a very serious problem that is facing the Government, but we cannot help realising that Parliament itself should make an earnest effort to assist to bring about reduction of costs generally. Many of us hoped that something of the kind would have been announced in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the present session, nearly 12 months ago. I know it was the opinion of many members that there should have been some reference in the Governor's Speech to suggestions regarding drastic cuts and alterations. There was no such announcement. Subsequently reductions were made; the salaries of members were reduced. However much we might wish to continue to receive our original emoluments that obtained for some years, it was recognised that a reduction had to be made. It was considered that this ought to have been £200, and the probability is that before we go very much further there will have to be another cut in our salaries greater than the first. I think it would be the correct gesture for Parliament at this juncture to recommend that something in that direction should be done. However much the Government might wish to get through by raising more revenue, I feel that so far as primary production

costs in this State are concerned, they have well-nigh reached the limit. Our conditions are so very different now from what they were. Previously loan moneys were distributed throughout the community, and those who were in receipt of wages and salaries as the result of that distribution are now without it, and consequently money is not being circulated as freely as it was. Those associated with primary production now find many avenues closed against them, and that the markets of the world do not leave them any margin. It is now a question as to how they can possibly meet the demands that are made upon them in respect of the payment of taxes that have been placed upon their shoulders. There is a general tendency for them to lose heart, and they feel that at least other sections of the community should bear a proportion of the load they are now carrying. They would welcome any drastic cut that might be made, realising that it would be of the utmost help to them at the present juncture. It is not only upon the States of Australia that trouble has fallen, but it has come upon the world in general. In Australia, and particularly in Western Australia, we rely so much upon primary production, and we realise that there is not sufficient money to go round. Those who in the past have been receiving better prices for their wool and wheat and also for other commodities recognise that owing to the big fall in the prices for those articles, their income is nothing like what it was. Because of that, there is not sufficient money to divide amongst the whole community. Consequently drastic alterations must be made in every direction, and a commencement should be made with Parliament. There has not been anything like a reduction in costs to correspond with the fall in prices, and it is to this we are asking the Government to give serious attention. I was speaking to someone recently, who said, "I know of a man who sent some pelts to the market, and when he got his account sales returned he found that those pelts had realised 2d. apiece." There were many others who had receipts for similar consignments, and those receipts showed that the sellers got nothing at all back, and that as a matter of fact they were in debt. It is a very unfortunate position when a man finds, on sending pelts to the open market, that he can realise only 2d., if

he is fortunate enough to get that. Those pelts when converted into leather are disposed of by tradesmen for 5s. or 6s. apiece. The same thing applies to hides, which realise perhaps 10s. to 12s. each, and which, when turned into leather and sent to the tradesmen, command a price of £2 per side or £4 for the whole hide. Then, when the tradesman pays those prices, he has to pass them on and amongst those they reach is the individual who sold the hides in the first place. That, too, is one of the directions in which we should try to bring about a reduction in costs. The cost of tanning pelts and hides displays too great a margin, which is charged up to, amongst others, those who use harness. We want to induce our people to get back to the horse and to avoid the use of motor spirit, but with the extreme charges that are imposed—remembering the cost of the raw material—no encouragement is given and the return to the horse is made very difficult. The charges should be looked into and reduced very considerably. This is only one of the many avenues through which the primary producer is hit to leg or victimised. It is due to the private firms who are handling the articles to assist in any investigation that might be made with a view to reducing the charges. I find that there are many instances where wheat lumpers at the sidings make very big money. Some of them do not handle a large quantity, and they have a difficult time because there is an insufficient flow of wheat to the siding to keep them fully employed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is an argument in favour of the wheatgrower stacking his own wheat.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: At some of the sidings men handling wheat have a contract and they handle large quantities, and the money they receive is altogether out of proportion to the value of the work done. A farmer might handle his own wheat at the siding, but when there is no one to receive it, there is a risk of its disappearing.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He could be his own stacker.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We have heard of wheat being signed for that was never produced. What I complain of is that the handling cost at the sidings, the railage, and the handling cost at the ports place a tremendous burden on the industry. The Commissioner of Railways claims that wheat is

carried at a loss, but I am satisfied he knows that, with the full train loads he gets, it is one of the most profitable of freights, if not the most profitable that the system gets. Although the freight on wheat is lower than on other goods, the railways get full loads and can transport it at a minimum of expense. Wheat does not require the same amount of booking, or the same amount of tallying that other freights need. The booking is finalised at the siding and the department, with one consignment to haul direct to the port, have no further worry. It is a simple matter compared with other kinds of merchandise that the railways handle at higher rates. Such lines require more handling, more clerks are required to tally them, and the transport entails greater responsibility and necessitates closer control. The quantity, too, is smaller than the quantity of wheat. Although the freight may be higher, those lines of merchandise produce nothing like the profit that is obtained from a big consignment such as wheat or timber. Those are bulk lines and weighty lines, and although they are carried at a lower freight, they produce extraordinarily good profit. Railway freights on wheat must be reduced. I believe it would be possible to reduce the handling charges on wheat. On the production of last season a reduction of 1d. per bushel in the handling charges would have meant £200,000 to the growers, and if we could have saved 2d. per bushel on the handling costs, the amount would have been £400,000. Such a sum would have gone a long way towards helping many of the farmers who are practically bankrupt and who may have to walk off their holdings. Many farmers would have been helped to use a larger quantity of super for the coming crop. Any reduction of handling charges would considerably help the settlers upon whom we rely to produce export commodities, provide freight for the railways and make work at the ports. The question of Government costs, as well as handling and shipping costs, should be carefully overhauled to ascertain what savings can be made. The men in the industry are becoming heart-broken, and if the present low prices continue. I think it is well within the mark to say that this is the last season when there will be much land under crop. We must have a drastic cut in costs or a considerable improvement in the price of wheat.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would not expect a great reduction in the handling costs at Fremantle, would you?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I believe that a penny per bushel could quite easily be saved there. Before the war I was closely associated with some of the early shipments of wheat, and the cost of receiving the wheat at the country centres, transporting it to Fremantle and putting it on the boats, was then half of what it is to-day. Unless costs are reduced, the farmers will be hopelessly broken. My constituents will have to throw up the industry. They have to carry not only the expense of cultivating their land, but the expense of machinery, which is much greater to-day than it was formerly. That is largely due to the tariff.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is a Federal matter.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The fact remains that it is a burden on the industry. Many farmers will have to go out of the industry unless we can get back to lower costs. The primary producers also have to bear their share of the heavy imposts of taxation, and I cannot see any prospect of that load being lightened in view of the straitened conditions of the finances, both State and Federal. Unless handling costs are reduced, farmers are not likely to continue the growing of wheat, because they are not making enough to live upon. If they cannot get a reasonable living wage, they will have to walk off their holdings.

Hon. G. Fraser: What is the handling cost per bushel at Fremantle?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I cannot say exactly, but I understand it is 3d. per bushel from the time of leaving the farmer's wagon until it is put on the boat.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you know that the lumpers at Fremantle are handling a far greater quantity per man than ever in the history of the State?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am glad to hear it.

Hon. G. Fraser: At the present time the handling costs at Fremantle compare more than favourably with those of any port in Australia.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is the first time I have heard that. We have heard it stated frequently that the costs at Fremantle are very much greater than at other ports within the State.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think some of the ship captains have complained of it.

Hon. G. Fraser: They would complain of anything.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I know that such complaints have been made. There are other ports within the State at which the handling costs are very much lower. I dare say Mr. Kempton could give us some information about Geraldton, and other members could speak of Albany. Mr. Holmes twitted members who had voted for the Financial Agreement.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He was quite right in doing so.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I felt rather proud of the fact that that was the one opportunity we had of ensuring a cessation of borrowing.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We have borrowed more since the Financial Agreement than we borrowed before.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: When we entered into the Financial Agreement, the idea was that borrowing would be stopped. One of the biggest difficulties confronting us arises from the huge borrowings throughout Australia during recent years.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Would you approve of all borrowing coming to a dead stop to-morrow?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I disapprove of lavish borrowing, regardless of the cost.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is not an answer to my question.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: When money was becoming dearer, I protested against altering the Colonial Stock Act to enable us to borrow money at 5 per cent., whereas the maximum previously provided was 4 per cent. Later on the Act was again altered to enable the Government to borrow at 6 per cent. As money became dearer, it was essential that we should stop Government borrowing. The Government were openly competing with private individuals who found it impossible to use borrowed money to advantage. Now we have reached the stage when we realise the ills of over-borrowing, and yet our Premier says that he could put things right if he could only borrow. Mr. Holmes said he would go to London.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I did not.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understood the hon. member to say that, if we had not

joined the Loan Council, we would have been able to get whatever money we required in London.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: When did I say that?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The hon. member has said it to me several times.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What I said was that our £10,000,000 of sinking fund would be worth £13,000,000 to-day.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The Loan Council was to stem the tide of wholesale borrowing; it is extremely difficult to raise loans to-day.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What would you do with borrowed money to-day except feed the unemployed?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I believe a good deal of borrowed money is being used for that purpose now. Extensive borrowing at high rates over a number of years for public works has been the means of encouraging those who thought that wages could be fixed and that day work could prevail against contract in the construction of public works, more especially railways. Through the day work policy principally, and also through lavishness on the part of those handling public funds, the cost of railways has been altogether too great. The overhead charges of the Railway Department are now being borne by those who always opposed the day work principle. The primary producers are told that heavy railway freights must be paid in order that interest and sinking fund may be covered. The same remark applies to harbour charges. All these heavy burdens are being borne by that section of the community who, had they had their way, would have resorted to the old system of competition. In that case the State would not be so hard hit as it is to-day. These remarks have a more special application to the Wyndham Meat Works, of which mention was made by Mr. Holmes, than to any other public work in Western Australia. Enormous sums were expended at Wyndham, and the annual cost of running the works is altogether too great. Day work was a fetish with certain people, as also was the borrowing of money irrespective of rates of interest; and so the Wyndham Meat Works have cost altogether too much to build and to operate. The burden has to be borne by station owners who find it almost impossible to live on their leaseholds. The Kimberley country has magnificent lands, magnificent prospects, and magnificent opportunities; but the pas-



toralists there are baulked by high development costs for which they are not responsible. The Wyndham Meat Works represent a scheme foisted upon the pastoralists.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the hundreds of thousands of pounds squandered in other State trading concerns? Do you approve of that expenditure?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Distinctly not. A Bill to enable the Government to dispose of them has been passed, but nothing has yet been done.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the State insurance monopoly?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understand that that matter arises under another Bill, which is to come before us. However, I thought State insurance was to be abolished. I support its abolition.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is to be established, legalised.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am assured that the opposite is the case. However, we have not the Bill before us.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You fell in over the Financial Agreement. Do not fall in over this.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Seddon propounded a scheme for an unemployed tax. The proposal quite scared me. A large number of our people cannot bear any further taxation. I well remember Mr. Scaddan introducing a Bill for a similar purpose years ago, a measure imposing a tax upon incomes to be specially earmarked for the unemployed. The Legislative Council gave that Bill short shrift. My view then was that the effect of a special tax for the benefit of unemployed would be to stimulate unemployment, that the day after the imposition of the tax people from all over the country would flock to the city to see who could get the first and biggest slice of the fund.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You have a poor opinion of the country.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is a matter of common sense. If some people hear that a fund of, say, £50,000 has been set aside for the unemployed, they will throw up their jobs.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You believe that, do you?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Something of the kind has been happening.

Hon. G. Fraser: It must be in your district.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Men have found that unless they came to the city they had no opportunity of benefiting from Government funds for unemployed. It was published in the Press that men gave up their jobs in the country and came to the city, where they obtained consideration. During many years Government expenditure has had the effect of attracting people from the country districts to the capital cities. That trouble has been general throughout Australia. As flies will always collect around a honey-pot, so communities will always collect around Government funds.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I was indeed sorry to learn of the great loss that arose from rain in connection with the transport of wheat.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That has been challenged.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: During the war period wheat growers lost tremendous sums owing to huge waste in the Government handling of wheat. I am quite satisfied that recently there has been enormous destruction of wheat owing to wet, irrespective of any contradiction. When three or four inches of rain fall on wheat exposed, whether on trucks or in stacks, the wheat must deteriorate. I saw a statement claiming that any loss due to wet would be made up by the advantage of the wheat weighing more in consequence of its having got wet. Probably the fact of the wheat weighing more will enable the charges against it to be increased. The agents may get more for handling the wheat by reason of the extra weight, but the extra weight will never make up for the deterioration of the wheat and of the flour made from it. We know that during the war period Australian wheat got a bad name through a large quantity becoming wet and subsequently being milled at out-ports. We do not wish to run that risk again. Therefore we must urge those who control our wheat to protect the ware of the primary producer as far as possible. As at this time of the year wet weather must be expected, no wheat truck should be allowed to start on the railway without being adequately sheeted. Although the price of wheat is low, such protection is essential in order that the grower may obtain whatever return is available.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Had not the farmers already been paid for the wheat which you say was lost?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: In some instances. I suppose so; in others, not. However, that does not alter the fact of the loss, which someone has to bear. It is a national loss. And there is not only the immediate loss, but there is the danger of the damaged wheat being used overseas and damning the good name of Western Australian wheat.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Was not there something of that sort in connection with bad shipments to South Africa? Am I right in saying that?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There was a shipment of flour manufactured from deteriorated wheat to South Africa. Certainly that shipment has been a thorn in the side of those wanting to trade with South Africa in Western Australian flour. The effect has been to divert much trade from Western Australia. The Government are responsible for not having provided proper accommodation or covering. In all conscience, they are getting enough out of the charges levied, and I hope that in future they will make more adequate provision for the proper covering of the wheat so that these conditions will be obviated. I do not desire to keep hon. members any longer in dealing with this matter. Most of the other points I have to place before them, will be considered when we deal with Bills that have been hinted at. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Drew, debate adjourned.

#### **BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 5.47 p.m.*

## **Legislative Assembly,**

*Thursday, 4th June, 1931.*

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

#### **QUESTION—FARMERS' INSURANCE.**

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What is the total amount of all insurance premiums paid by (a) I.A.B. clients; (b) Agricultural Bank clients? 2, What is the total amount of claims paid to (a) I.A.B. clients; (b) Agricultural Bank clients? 3, Do the Government intend to grant the same relief to farmers on their insurance as it is proposed to grant to employers under the Workers' Compensation Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, (a) £342,719; (b) £12,293. 2, (a) £133,586; (b) £18,972. 3, Farmers will be given the benefit of any concession extended to other employers of labour.

#### **BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **MOTION—HARBOUR DUES, PORT HEDLAND.**

Debate resumed from the 27th May on the following motion by Mr. Lamond (Pilbara):—

That in the opinion of this House the action of the Commissioner of Railways in levying differential harbour dues, by way of rebates, at Port Hedland on wool transported by motor lorries is inimical to the welfare of the pastoral industry, and should not be allowed.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS**  
(Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [4.38]:  
Strictly on the basis of party considerations,