

# Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 4th September, 1940.

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

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of ill-health.

## MOTION—THIRD PARTY INSURANCE.

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 27th August on the following motion by Hon. A. Thomson (South-East):—

That a select committee be appointed to consider ways and means of amending the Traffic Act to provide, at a minimum cost, for third party personal risk arising out of the use of motor vehicles; the findings of such committee to be a recommendation to the Government to introduce amending legislation to the Traffic Act on the lines proposed by the committee.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.36]: Although the Government is of opinion that no real necessity exists for a select committee to investigate this matter, I shall not raise any strong objection to the motion. The Government considers that most of the information it is possible to obtain on this question is already in the possession of the department, and consequently the select committee would be able to secure the particulars desired with little delay and, I hope, with very little expense. As members are aware, a Bill was introduced last year dealing with third party risks, but it was defeated because the

majority of members of this Chamber were opposed to the State Government Insurance Office undertaking general motor insurance in all its branches. Had the proposal of the Government been agreed to at that time, unquestionably compulsory third party insurance would be an accomplished fact to-day. To protect motorists from excessive premium rates, the Bill introduced by the Government last year provided for the appointment of a premiums committee comprising the Auditor General as chairman, the State Government Actuary, two persons representing the owners of motor vehicles, and two representing the approved insurers. The duty of that committee was, after making due inquiries, to fix premiums for third party risks. During the debate on the Bill last year, the point was made quite clear that the Government had no definite idea as to what the approved premium rates would be. Certainly the premium rates charged in South Australia and elsewhere were quoted, and mention was also made of the fact that, after an incomplete investigation of the subject by the local Underwriters' Association, that body thought that the Western Australian rates would require to be higher than those operating elsewhere, according to our knowledge of those rates. The Government, however, did not agree with that contention. We were aware that a margin of 30 per cent. was allowed in South Australia to cover administrative costs and profit, but the Auditor-General, the Government Actuary, and the Under-Secretary for Works, who had been dealing with the matter in a comprehensive way, were of the opinion that that margin might be too high. That could not be determined definitely until such time as all the information it was possible to secure on the subject had been obtained. This phase of third-party insurance was discussed by departmental officials when they were in Adelaide last year. In addition, the Chairman of the Transport Board, when visiting the Eastern States this year on other matters, made exhaustive inquiries in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. He was supplied with a list of the matters it was considered advisable he should investigate. As a result of his visit we have received reports or information from some of the States mentioned. We were advised from South Australia that there is no intention to revise the premium rate in that State at the present time, because the

information supplied by those concerned is not sufficiently comprehensive to allow of any determination being reached. It would appear, therefore, that this legislation has not been in operation in South Australia long enough for the authorities in that State to say whether the premium charged is satisfactory or not.

In introducing the motion, Mr. Thomson referred to an endeavour to fix a definite fee. I assume that he was speaking of his own efforts last year to ensure that a definite amount was stated in the Bill.

Hon. A. Thomson: The same effort was made in another place.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I assume that the hon. member was not suggesting that the Government desired to fix a definite fee, because the Government strongly opposed such a course, believing that this was a matter which should be left to the premiums committee to which I have referred. During the previous debate on this matter I queried the extent of the cover suggested by Mr. Thomson, and he could not reply in any detail. The fact is that third-party risk as it operates in South Australia is a cover for personal risk only, whereas in this State, when a person takes out a policy which includes third-party risk, cover for damage to property is included as well as cover for personal injury. I am inclined to think that if a select committee is appointed the members will be somewhat surprised to discover that third-party risk in South Australia is exceedingly limited, the policy providing for quite a number of exclusions. Probably the select committee would secure a little more information on that point than was given to the House last session, but I feel sure there is official information in the possession of the department to satisfy the committee. Last session it was pointed out that the standard comprehensive third-party cover for which a premium of £3 10s. per annum is charged in Perth, covers damage to persons and property, whereas the proposal in the Bill introduced last year related only to personal injury. In support of this motion the hon. member quoted the South Australian report, and gave certain figures. I was under the impression that the information he submitted was something additional to what was in the possession of the department, but I find on inquiry that he was quoting from the

same report that was used by my colleague, the Honorary Minister (Hon. E. H. Gray), when he introduced the Bill in this Chamber last session. I understand there has been no further report.

Hon. A. Thomson: The report was not available to us.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member will consult "Hansard" of last year, he will find that the Honorary Minister quoted the same report and the same set of figures and made practically the same remarks as did the hon. member. I mention that to show that Mr. Thomson has added nothing new to the information that the Government has on the matter.

The hon. member suggested a scheme that he thought might be practicable. I understood him to say it would be possible for the Police Department to assist by issuing a license form which would contain the information that an insurance premium covering third-party risk had been paid, and that because this course was possible, the cost of administration would be reduced to such an extent that it should be possible to arrive at a premium considerably less than any previously suggested. We must remember, however, that there are many insurance companies operating at the present time in this State and in other parts of the Commonwealth which issue a comprehensive policy including third-party risk. So if the suggestion of the hon. member was to be taken to its logical conclusion—and I gather that he really meant that the premiums should be paid to the Police Department—there would have to be some arrangement whereby the motorist who took out a comprehensive policy with another insurance company could be catered for. The idea behind Mr. Thomson's remarks was that the Police Department should receive these premiums at the same time as the license fees were paid, thus making doubly sure that the insurance cover had been paid. There would, however, be difficulties in the way. I have mentioned one valid objection to that procedure. If the House is going to say that one office or a certain number of offices are to be the only offices to deal in insurance of this kind, I suppose it would be possible for the Police Department to receive the premiums and to pass those premiums on to the office or offices concerned. That detail would have to be considered by the hon. member or anyone else who desired to introduce a Bill dealing with the matter.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: The production of a receipt from any office should be satisfactory.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That would be my idea. So long as a motorist can satisfy the department that he has taken out an insurance policy for a particular vehicle, that should be all that is necessary. That is one aspect of the suggested scheme mentioned by Mr Thomson. There was another phase of the subject the hon. member did not, to my knowledge, discuss—the question of the 30 per cent. margin to cover administrative expenses, etc. He did not state what method he proposed for assessing any claim that might be made by a motorist who was insured under the scheme. A good deal of expense would be involved in checking the various claims made from time to time under policies of that description. I understand that the experience of some companies has not been a happy one in respect of motor car insurance. Under the slightest pretext claims are made, and it has become a much more expensive form of insurance than was perhaps expected in the first place. That is only one of the factors that would have to be considered. The Government believes it is desirable to have compulsory third-party insurance. I must, however, reiterate the objections that were raised last year to the suggestion put forward in this House to the effect that the State Government Insurance Office should be allowed to attend to third-party insurance risk only so far as motor cars are concerned. Apparently that is the least profitable form of motor car insurance, and it would not be fair to the State Insurance Office to say, "We will allow you to do that part of motor car insurance but not any other kind of motor car insurance." If the House agrees to the appointment of a select committee, I hope the members of that body will bear in mind that this is war time, that we cannot afford to spend more money on these matters than is necessary, and that, as so much information is available in the department, the question will be dealt with expeditiously and inexpensively.

Question put and passed.

#### *Select Committee Appointed.*

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, a select committee appointed consisting of Hon. G. Fraser, Hon. W. R. Hall, Hon. H. Seddon, Hon. G. B. Wood and the mover, with power

to call for persons, papers and records, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on Tuesday, the 1st October.

### **BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. C. F. BAXTER** (East—in reply) [4.57]: In a short speech yesterday the Honorary Minister suggested I should withdraw this Bill, but I am not prepared to do that. He argued that my Bill, and another measure to amend the same Act that was introduced in another place, were brought down simultaneously. That is not so. My Bill was introduced in this House on the 15th August, and I notice from the records of another place that the Bill brought before that House was introduced on the 20th August. My Bill was, therefore, introduced five days earlier than that of another place. Be that as it may, this House has no knowledge of any Bill to amend the Inspection of Machinery Act other than that which is before it to-day. My feeling is that the Government should announce in the Lieut.-Governor's Speech the Bills it intends to bring down. If it could have a Bill prepared ready to introduce on the 20th August, surely a decision to do so would have been arrived at a few weeks before, and that measure could have been referred to in the Speech. In that event, no Bill would have been introduced by me. It is competent for private members to introduce Bills, provided they do not infringe the Standing Orders, which this Bill does not do. The Honorary Minister took exception to Parliament being called upon to deal with two Bills to amend the same Act. That is not unusual or uncommon in the history of Parliament. In view of the strong remarks made by the Honorary Minister, I draw attention to what occurred last session. We then had simultaneously two Bills to amend the Government Railways Act, three Bills to amend the Agricultural Bank Act, two to amend the Road Districts Act, two to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, two to amend the Factories and Shops Act, and two to amend the Traffic Act. So that there is nothing new in having two or more Bills

dealing with the same Act before Parliament at the one time. Another argument used by the Honorary Minister was that while the Government did not intend to oppose the amendment to Section 4 of the Act, in other words, that the Government approved of the amendment, the other two amendments contained in my Bill were included in the Government Bill to be submitted in another place. That Bill, however, is not with us to-day and I am asked to withdraw my Bill when actually we do not know what the other contains. Why should I withdraw my Bill because, as stated by the Government, two of the amendments proposed by me are included in the Government's Bill? What can the Government's objection be to the amendments contained in the measure we are now debating? My Bill was submitted five days before the Government's Bill made its appearance in another place.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Briefly, what is the effect of the amendment to which the Government objects?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government does not object to any of my amendments. The first amendment in my Bill extends the exemptions and that is approved by the Government. One of the other two corrects an anomaly as regards the issuing of certificates. Under the Act authority is given to issue certificates for winding engines driven by steam or by air. The amendment will include electric winders. The third amendment is to bring all lifts, whether for the conveyance of persons or goods, under the Inspection of Machinery Act. All are simple amendments and I cannot see why I should withdraw the Bill. At any rate, I do not propose to do so. Moreover, the Government itself considers that the three amendments are required. This is not the time to bring in cumbersome legislation which may further burden industry, and it is not the time to start experimenting, and in that way also adding burdens to industry. We should be concerned only with legislation directly affecting existing Acts, and not submit anything which might be contentious. I intend to stand by my Bill because the amendments are in order, they are required, and the Government is not opposed to them. I submit the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## **BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 2, Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.
- 3, Mine Workers' Relief (War Service).
- 4, Mine Workers' Relief (Payments Authorisation).

Received from the Assembly.

## **BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.12] in moving the second reading said: This is one of those Bills with which I do not think Mr. Baxter will be able to find fault, because it is not contentious in any way. Clause 2 of the Bill provides for the repeal of Section 33 of the Police Act, 1892, and the insertion of a new Section 33 in its place. The present Section 33 enacts that fines and penalties imposed on members of the police force for misconduct shall be paid to the Commissioner of Police for the benefit of the Police Benefit Fund. This fund having ceased to exist since the 29th June, 1939, the existing Section 33 in the Police Act cannot operate, and so an amendment of it has become necessary. The proposed new Section 33 accordingly will provide that the fines and penalties will be collected and recovered by the Commissioner of Police and be paid by him to the Treasurer for the public uses of the State. Because the Police Benefit Fund ceased to exist on the 29th June, 1939, the new section will contain a provision that it shall have retrospective operation as from the date on which the fund ceased. The new provision will cover fines and penalties which have been imposed on the police since the 29th June of last year, and which are now being held in suspense. Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the repeal of Section 75 of the Police Act, 1892, and the insertion of a new section in its place. The existing Section 75 enacts that unclaimed stolen goods and money may be sold and disposed of after being held for 12 months for the benefit of the Police Benefit Fund. That fund having ceased to exist, Section 75 cannot operate and an amendment has become necessary. The proposed new section accordingly will provide for

the delivery of unclaimed stolen money to the Treasurer and for the sale of unclaimed stolen goods and the delivery of the net proceeds of the sale to the Treasurer, and for the receipt of such money and proceeds by the Treasurer for the public use of the State. Also for the same reasons mentioned in relation to the proposed new Section 33, Subsection 3 of the proposed new Section 75 provides for the retrospective operation of that section from the 29th June, 1939. Briefly, the position is that moneys previously paid to the Police Benefit Fund are now to be paid into the Treasury, in view of the fact that the Police Benefit Fund has ceased to exist and that in its place the Superannuation Act is operating. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### **BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; Hon. G. B. Wood in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Agreed to

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 5 of the principal Act:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In order to appreciate fully the effect of the amendment, I would like Mr. Wood to define "pastoral product."

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The definition is contained in the schedule to the Bill. Wheat is not included, as it is the subject of other legislation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: But what is a pastoral product? Does the hon. member mean a bullock? That is not a pastoral product.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is not a pastoral product. A calf is the product or progeny of a cow. My idea is to avoid a misunderstanding. I agree with Mr. Wood that

the Act does not include wheat. If I grow something in the soil, that is the product of the soil.

Hon. T. Moore: And if you rear something on the soil?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What is that? What would a calf do if there were no feed for it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The hon. member would possibly find some other kind of fodder. There should be a definition of "pastoral product" in order to make the position clear.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If the hon. member's contention is correct, he is taking work away from his profession.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not mind that. My desire is to remove an obscurity. If Mr. Wood's desire is to exempt certain classes of animals, it would be far better to specify the animals in the amendment.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I cannot quite understand what Mr. Nicholson is driving at. He contends that a bullock is not a pastoral product.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is not.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Then what is it?

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is a bullock.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The hon. member said that a calf was the product of a cow; a bullock was once a calf. If a bullock is not a pastoral product, what does the pastoral industry produce? I hope the Committee will not agree to Mr. Nicholson's suggestion.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I cannot quite understand where the proposed addition is to be inserted. If it is to be put at the end of the definition of commodity, it appears to me it would not be in its correct place.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I take exception to the clause on another and broader ground. My contention is that there should be no exemptions whatever. Many things could be brought within the scope of the term "agricultural or pastoral product." Such things are sold by persons engaged in those industries by means other than auction sales. I understand the hon. member is desirous of protecting the primary producer who disposes of his products through auction sales. Take one item, eggs. These I suggest are an agricultural product.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No, the product of a hen.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hen could be described as an agricultural product. There are many people earning their living by the production of those commodities.

Hon. J. Nicholson: There is a special Act dealing with eggs.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. To say that such items are not produced by an agriculturist or a pastoralist seems to me to be wrong. The method proposed by the Bill is that the cost of production shall be arrived at and that then the price shall be fixed by adding a certain margin of profit. I ask the Committee how that could be done with regard to eggs, fowls and similar products which can legitimately be claimed to be agricultural products. Many things apart from livestock are produced on farms.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Headaches, for instance.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Plenty of those. Some people specialise in certain branches of the industry. Surely chaff is an agricultural product! If we agree to the clause, the Act will lose much of its efficiency. It will exempt from the operations of the Commissioner quite a number of commodities that are essential. The definition of "commodity" in the Act includes, amongst other things—

(a) Except as hereinafter provided any article of food or drink for man or for any domesticated animal.

I should not like the task of enumerating the large number of commodities that fall within that definition. If we pass the clause it will mean the exclusion from the Act of all agricultural products in the ownership of the producer. A producer could decide not to send his livestock to market but to dispose of it by private treaty, and could please himself what he charged so long as the purchaser was prepared to pay the price.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is not that the position to-day?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause is altogether too far-reaching.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: To overcome the objection of the Chief Secretary, I move an amendment—

That after the word "product" in line 3 of paragraph (a), the words "as provided for in the schedule" be inserted.

Then there could be no objection because the schedule sets forth only a few items. As an alternative, we could eliminate from the schedule the words "and other stock."

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What would be the position when a farmer sold sheep to a dealer who acquired them for fattening for market? Would the dealer be classed as a grower or a producer? If the clause is passed, the remainder of the Bill will not be needed.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The remainder of the Bill will be needed, because Clause 5 makes provision for the protection of consumers. Subclause (2) provides that though there shall not be a declared price for any commodity mentioned in the schedule, the Governor may, on the advice of the Commissioner, fix and declare in respect of such commodity, on a percentage basis, the maximum margin of profit.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: But he will have been prevented from doing that by your definition of "commodity."

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The schedule definitely provides for cattle, sheep, etc., "when intended for human consumption." In the Midland market one cannot define which are fat sheep and which are store sheep.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: How would it be possible to fix the price of chaff, for instance, if it is included in the schedule, seeing that chaff is an agricultural product? The definition of "commodity," as proposed by the Bill, will exclude chaff from the operation of the law. If the clause is agreed to, it will provide, in effect, that chaff as an agricultural product is not subject to the Act.

Hon. L. Craig: That is how I interpret it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Of what value would it be, then, to provide in the schedule that the price of chaff shall be calculated in a certain way? I am criticising the Bill with a desire to be helpful. If Clause 2 is agreed to, I am of opinion that the proposed schedule will be ultra vires the Act.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I should like your ruling, Mr. Chairman, as to where the words "and also shall not include any agricultural or pastoral product," etc., will be inserted in the Act if the Bill be passed?

The CHAIRMAN: I have not the Act before me.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I feel doubtful about the clause, and suggest that further consideration be postponed. If the clause is negatived, the Bill will be of no use. I am not satisfied, either, that we should exclude certain agricultural products and not others. The clause may prove dangerous unless we know clearly what is meant.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The Chief Secretary said that chaff would be excluded from the commodities dealt with under the Act. That is not so. After the auction sale, it would be subject to the Act as provided by Subclause (2) of Clause 5.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Parker's suggestion is valuable. First of all, we say that an agricultural product is concerned; and seeing that chaff, as an instance, is not a commodity within the meaning of the Act, the clause must necessarily refer to commodities mentioned in the definition of the Act proposed to be amended. The Bill excludes certain commodities, and they cannot be brought in by the back door. The sponsor of the Bill would be well advised to postpone the clause, so that it may be examined from that aspect. I have not submitted the point to the Crown Law authorities, and therefore am speaking without legal advice.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The matter needs close investigation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I opposed the Bill; but if we are to have a measure of this kind, let it be of a workable character. Let us not enact something that will seem ridiculous to the people concerned.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is important to Mr. Wood that he should have those words included. "Agricultural or pastoral products" would cover chaff. However, there is no indication of where the amendment should be inserted. I take it that the words would be inserted after paragraph (h).

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The words would go in, as Mr. Baxter has said, after paragraph (h), or after the word "Commonwealth."

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Without wishing to be a carping critic, I would like Mr. Wood to clear up this matter the next time the Bill is before the Committee. If the words are inserted, would not the paragraph then mean that all pastoral and agricultural products are entirely and absolutely excluded from the principal Act?

Members: No.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am open to correction, and prepared to listen to other opinions; but as I read the amendment and the clause at present, if the clause is passed we need not worry about anything else. Here is a definition of "commodity," and the whole of the Profiteering Prevention Act deals with commodities—the commodities mentioned in this definition. Those are the only products which are commodities within the meaning of the Bill. As soon as we exclude agricultural and pastoral products, we are outside the scope of the principal Act altogether. Being outside the scope of that Act, what is the use of the rest of the Bill? It is not wanted.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The commodities in the Schedule are not excluded from the Act.

The CHAIRMAN: The argument is that if you add those words to the definition of "commodity," you put something outside the scope that is now within it. To provide machinery to deal with something that is excluded would be ridiculous.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The exclusion from the Act applies only to auction sales.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is not the way the clause reads.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Then, to protect the consumer, when the commodities pass from auction sale to wholesaler and retailer, the Prices Fixing Commissioner has control over them.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: But they are not commodities.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing about auction sales in the amendment.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I am prepared to meet that by adding "as provided in the Schedule."

The CHAIRMAN: That will not overcome the difficulty.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would strongly recommend Mr. Wood to postpone further consideration of the Bill.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Will you refer the matter to the Crown Law Department?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: In those circumstances I am prepared to move progress.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In my opinion, if the hon. member wishes to deal with the particular commodities to which he has referred, by the method stated in the Bill, there is really no need to amend the definition of "commodity." If, however, he leaves that definition as it stands but provides in the Bill a method whereby the

prices of the particular commodities to which he now refers shall be arrived at, he will have achieved his desire. But the amendment takes those commodities right outside this legislation; and no matter what machinery might be included in the Bill, the Price Fixing Commissioner would have no power whatever to deal with them.

Progress reported.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.54]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday next.

(Question put and passed.)

*House adjourned at 5.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 4th September, 1940.*

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

### QUESTION—POLICE.

#### *Esplanade Speakers.*

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police: 1, Is it a fact that the Police forbade speakers from addressing a meeting on the Esplanade, Perth, on the afternoon of the 18th August? 2, If so, (a) Upon what facts; and, (b) Under what law, was this prohibition based?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, (a) That a well-known communist endeavoured to speak from the platform used by the communists and bearing their insignia. (b) Under the National Security Regulations.

### QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURE.

#### *Eviction of Farmers.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: 1, Has the Government considered the effect on the State's economy that will result from farmers being forced off their properties by mortgagees? 2, Does the Government consider such action by mortgagees in the best interests of the State? 3, Is it the intention of the Government to take steps to stop such practices? 4, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No, but each case should be considered on its merit. 3 and 4, This is a matter of Government policy which will be dealt with in due course.

#### *Drought-stricken Stock.*

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, In relation to the discussion between the deputation of the Wheatgrowers' Union—brought to Parliament House by me on the 24th August—and the Premier, the Minister for Agriculture, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the National Party, has he formulated any plan for the immediate relief of the stock in those areas affected by the abnormal drought conditions? 2, Would it be cheaper for the Government to sell the sheep so affected at the best price and to replace them at a date when conditions are again favourable, rather than repurchase wheat in the bins at 4s. 3d. per bushel? 3, Is the south-western portion of the State capable of carrying part or the whole of the stock affected until conditions in the drought-stricken areas become normal?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, 2 and 3, All the points raised by the deputation and in these questions are receiving full consideration. Since the deputation, the Government has approached all firms and institutions concerned asking whether they are prepared to co-operate in a general policy to protect the stock population in the areas affected. They have also been asked whether their plans include the provision of the necessary fodder or grain. All the replies are not yet to hand, but one