

The Premier: I thought you were referring to reduction of interest on Government bonds.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am not talking about any forced reduction, applying to past transactions. Why do not those who are endeavouring to secure a reduction in the wages paid to and services rendered to the workers, come forward with clean hands and say voluntarily, "We will accept a lower interest for our investments."

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why do they not give away the £42,000,000 gained from the workers?

The Minister for Works: Why do not the Commonwealth Government reduce the interest on savings bank deposits?

Hon. P. COLLIER: That has been done already in two States. First in Victoria and now in South Australia.

The Minister for Lands: The Commonwealth Government raised the interest rates to get the money into the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The previous Federal Government, not the Labour Government, were responsible for forcing up the interest rates on 'savings bank deposits. In this State we were forced to increase our interest payments because the Commonwealth authorities raised theirs.

The Minister for Works: And the effect of that was to increase the interest paid by the Associated Banks.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Of course.

Hon. A. McCallum: The bank board control the savings banks.

The Premier: Yes, the Commonwealth Bank, but not the South Australian bank or our bank, for instance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: At any rate, it was the Commonwealth that forced up interest charges and that affected the Associated Banks as well. It is a deplorable condition of things we have got into, and there will have to be an awakening of conscience. I think a good deal of this propaganda that is abroad to-day, trying to fasten nearly the whole of the burden on one section of the community, will force retaliation in such a manner that those responsible for it will be sorry before we are through this crisis.

The PREMIER: Of course I cannot hope to reply to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition to-night, and I shall not be here for a week or two, so I suggest that if somebody were to move the adjournment of the

debate it might be opened up again when I return.

Hon. P. Collier: But we can go on with the discussion in the meantime.

The PREMIER: Oh yes. I suggest that somebody move the adjournment of the debate.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.2 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Tuesday, 19th May, 1931.*

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

### MOTION—CONDOLENCE.

*Letter in Reply.*

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have received the following reply from Lady McMillan and family in response to the motion of condolence that I forwarded on behalf of this House: "Lady McMillan and family wish to thank you for your kind expression of sympathy in their great loss."

### QUESTIONS (2)—STATE FINANCE.

*Emergency Legislation.*

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: In view of the increase of unemployment and the continued drift in the State's finances 1, Will the Government immediately reduce the

salaries of Ministers and the allowances to members by 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent.? 2, Will the Government introduce legislation to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Assembly to 30 and of the Legislative Council to 20? 3, Will the Government introduce a measure to reduce the salaries of civil servants on a graduated scale from 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. to 10 per cent.? 4, Do the Government intend (a) to amend the Workers' Compensation Act to the basis of benefits conferred thereunder before its amendment in 1912: (b) to introduce a Bill to suspend the functions of the Arbitration Court and its awards? 5, Will the Government bring in an emergency Bill at once to impose a tax of 6d. in the pound on all incomes and wages without exemption, such tax to be collected by stamps as is now done under the Hospital Fund Act?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, The Government do not intend immediately to submit legislation to give effect to the specific reductions mentioned, but the general question of Parliamentary reductions on a basis relatively uniform with other States represented on the Loan Council will receive consideration in due course. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, No further legislation affecting the salaries of civil servants will be introduced by the Government pending the results of the statutory reclassification of the Public Service that is being undertaken this year, and of the consequent decisions of the Public Service Appeal Board. 4, (a) No, but an amendment is now before Parliament; (b) No. 5, This is not at present contemplated.

#### *Revenue Deficits.*

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, What was the amount of deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the year ended 30th June, 1930? 2, From what fund was this deficit financed? 3, What was the amount of deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund from 1st July, 1930, to 30th April, 1931? 4, From what fund is this deficiency being financed?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, £518,004. 2, Overdrafts and temporary advances. 3, £1,429,823. 4, Answered by No. 2.

#### QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: Regarding the State Government's offer to provide 15s. per week as wages for any extra men employed by farmers, conditionally upon the farmers providing sustenance for such extra employees, 1, How many farmers have taken advantage of this generous offer? 2, How many men have been employed under the scheme? 3, How many men left the Blackboy camp to work under these conditions?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, 400. A great number of applications held over for further inquiries. 2, 130. 3, 61.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE TRAFFIC BRIDGE.

Hon. G. FRASER asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, Will he lay on the Table the report of the diver responsible for the marine survey of the Fremantle traffic bridge during 1930? 2, Do the Government intend to carry out all the work necessary for the safety of the bridge as recommended by the diver? 3, If not, what portion of the work is to be done?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, No written report was made by the diver. 2, The diver did not, nor was he in a position to, make recommendations in regard to work necessary for the safety of the bridge; but the result of his inspection was considered by the engineer, who formulated proposals necessary for the repair and safety of the bridge both above and below water, and submitted them to the Director of Works. 3, All work necessary for the safety of the bridge will be carried out.

#### MOTION—MOTOR ACCIDENTS.

##### *To Amend Traffic Act.*

Hon. G. FRASER (West) [4.40]: I move—

That in view of the dire financial straits to which many victims, and relatives of victims, of motor accidents are reduced, this House requests the Government to amend the Traffic Act in a manner that will protect the financial interests of these unfortunate people.

Members must realise the seriousness of the position in which many people have been placed during recent months through the motor accidents that have occurred. From Press reports we learn that the hospitals have been forced to take a serious view of the mounting costs for the treatment of patients who have suffered through motor accidents. Quite recently it was stated that the hospital authorities were moving to arrange a conference to discuss this item. However serious the position may be from the point of view of the hospitals, I do not intend to introduce that phase into this discussion. If members have given the subject any thought, they must have wondered why there have not been more prosecutions and court actions in connection with motor accidents. Considering the number of accidents that have occurred—reports appear in the Press daily, particularly of accidents in the metropolitan area—it is remarkable how few cases are taken to court. For this there are three reasons. The first is that many of the mishaps are purely accidental, and people are not prepared to go to court when there is a risk of losing the case. The second reason is that many cases are settled out of court to the satisfaction of the parties concerned. The third reason is that many people who have met with accidents have discovered that, though they could probably get a verdict in court, the person responsible for the accident was not possessed of assets and they would be throwing good money after bad in claiming from him. I wish to quote three cases out of many that have come under my notice recently, each illustrating different phases. The first is that of a young lad who was killed, the coroner found, as a result of an accident. There are three or four sisters younger than the boy and the mother is in a desperate position. Her husband is an inmate of the Lemnos mental hospital and she exists on the war pension. The loss of the boy has placed the family in very poor circumstances, and it is almost impossible to meet the burden of the funeral expenses, etc. The second case is that of a man who had the misfortune to lose his wife through an accident. The coroner found that no blame was attachable to anyone. This man has lost his work and, because he is now regarded as a single man, he cannot get sustenance. He has no chance of securing recompense for the loss of his wife, and he is burdened with the expense of the funeral, etc. The third

case I wish to quote is that of a young lady about 20 years of age who met with an accident and for over 12 months now has been receiving medical attention. She has large bills to meet for medical and massage treatment, and another for hospital expenses. Altogether the charges in connection with the accident exceed £300. She happens to be a member of a family where the mother is a widow and every member is out of employment. The family are now being pushed for the settlement of accounts arising out of the accident. They came to me a few months ago rather worried because they had no money to brief a lawyer to fight the case for them. I told them there was a possibility of obtaining assistance under the legislation providing it for poor persons in certain circumstances. Application was accordingly made to the Crown Law Department, and after the lapse of a month or two the department, having evidently satisfied themselves that the lady had a good chance of winning, investigated the pecuniary circumstances of the person responsible for the accident. Only last week I learnt from the department that the person in question having no assets, it would be throwing good money after bad to bring an action. The family are now faced with bills of over £300, and the young lady has lost her position. It is absolutely impossible for the family to meet these expenses, which have been incurred through no fault or neglect on their part. In addition, the young lady will suffer from her injuries for the remainder of her life. The motion does not stipulate any particular amendment of the Traffic Act. It merely asks that the Government, in view of the seriousness of the existing position, should give consideration to the matter. No doubt other members have knowledge of similar cases. If a man indulges in liquor while in control of a motor car and thus becomes the cause of an accident, the person suffering the injury has to foot the bill.

Hon. E. H. Harris: How do you propose to deal with the matter?

Hon. G. FRASER: I have left that for the Government to decide. One obvious method is compulsory insurance against third party risk. However, I do not wish this Chamber to lay down definitely the manner in which the Act should be amended.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Another remedy would be for everybody to insure himself or herself.

Hon. G. FRASER: Even if they all insured themselves, the person meeting with the accident would not be protected.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Yes, if the person was insured against accident.

Hon. G. FRASER: Why should such people carry the burden of an accident policy? Why should they be forced to incur expenditure for the benefit of careless drivers?

Hon. V. Hamersley: It often happens that people meet with accidents through not looking. The fault is not necessarily that of the driver of the car every time. People do not get out of the way.

Hon. G. FRASER: I think hon. members will agree with me that the position is so serious as to call for some legislative action. The Government may be able to devise some means other than that of compulsory third party insurance. I am not particular as to what method is adopted, so long as something is done. I hope the House will give the motion serious consideration and carry it unanimously.

On motion by the Minister for Country Water Supplies, debate adjourned.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

**THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES** (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.49]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 26th May.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 4.50 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 19th May, 1931.*

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

### QUESTION—LANDS—KODJ KODJIN SETTLERS.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware that Messrs. Turnbull Brothers and Graham, of Kodj Kodjin, North Kellerberrin, are so placed through the inability of the Agricultural Bank to assist them to carry on, that they have over a thousand bags of wheat still unharvested? 2, Will he have inquiry made to see whether any steps can be taken to save this wheat, and whether these deserving settlers can be assisted to remain on their blocks?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. Only 30 acres not harvested. 2, See answer No. 1. 1,000 bags of wheat which remain to be carted is subject to creditors' lien, and no surplus is in prospect. The settlers have no fallowed land to support their application for super.

### QUESTION—STATE GOVERNOR.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In view of the attack upon wages and conditions of civil and semi-civil servants, and Government employees generally, thus economising for the purpose of balancing the Budget, and having regard to the prospective retirement of the present Governor, will he refuse to make any further appointments or re-appointments in this direction with a view to effecting further economy? 2, Is he aware that the amount now absorbed in the maintenance of the Governor, his staff, and establishment an-