

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Second Day.

Order of the day read for the resumption of the debate from the 30th July.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply be adopted.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [4.45]: Is it intended, Mr. President, to pass the motion for the adoption of the Address-in-reply without discussion? Cannot the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House? I understood Mr. Williams intended to carry on the debate to-day. I move—

That the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—PREMIERS' CONFERENCE.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.46]: I move—

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

I should like to explain the reason for submitting this motion. The Premier is leaving this week for Melbourne on one of the most important commissions ever undertaken on behalf of Western Australia, in that it deals with the question of finance. It is felt by practically all concerned in the composition of this Parliament that, until the Premier has returned from the conference, it will be very difficult to deal with any measure or even to speak to the Address-in-reply. It is, therefore, deemed advisable that Parliament should adjourn until the Premier's return. By that time members will have a better idea of the financial position of the State, and be able to proceed with the business of the country on sounder lines than would otherwise be the case.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 4.48 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th August, 1930.

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

METROPOLITAN MARKET TRUST REPORT.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with Section 21 of the Metropolitan Market Act, 1926, I have received a copy of the accounts of the Metropolitan Market Trust, together with the Auditor General's report thereon. The report will be laid on the Table of the House.

TEMPORARY CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.

Mr. SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 21a, I nominate the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), the member for Leederville (Mr. Panton), and the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) to be temporary Chairmen of Committees.

QUESTIONS (2)—RAILWAYS.

Karlgarin-Lake Grace.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Works: Will the Karlgarin-Lake Grace railway construction be sufficiently far advanced by the time the 1930-31 harvest needs to be handled to obviate the provision of wheat dumps?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: Rails are expected to be laid to Karlgarin before Christmas or very early in the New Year, and the harvest hauled while the line is being completed. Stacking sites in proposed station yards can be fixed in October, considerably before harvesting commences.

Collie-Penrith Bank Engine.

Mr. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, On how many trains between Collie and Penrith was the bank engine requisitioned during the year 1929-1930? 2, What was the train mileage of the bank engine for the same period? 3, What was the additional tonnage hauled? 4, What were the cost and earnings of the bank engine to the department?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, 952. 2, 22,848 train miles. 3, 190,400 tons. 4, This information is not available, nor is it practicable to obtain it.

QUESTIONS (2)—UNEMPLOYMENT.*Pre-election Promise.*

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Premier: 1, Does he intend to carry out his pre-election promise, made in Northam on the 12th January, 1930, that, if elected, he would find work for all? 2, If so, when? 3, If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, When loan funds can be made available by the Federal Government, as authorised by the Loan Council. 3, Answered by No. 2.

Relief for Fremantle Men.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Railways: Will he give the single men unemployed in Fremantle the same opportunity as the single men unemployed in Perth have of going to Blackboy or alternatively grant the local committee sufficient assistance to enable it to give the Fremantle men three meals and a bed per day?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: We are making the best use possible of the accommodation at Blackboy Camp, and absorbing single men with no fixed place of abode, who very naturally flow into the city. The Fremantle Relief Committee is doing very excellent work, certainly no less effective than was done a few months ago. May I add for the confidential information of the hon. member that if the few malcontents at Blackboy continue their complaints, I may have a few vacancies for Fremantle unemployed.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK LOANS.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (for Mr. Corboy) asked the Premier: 1, Do the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank propose to extend the date to which loans for fallowing in No. 2 Zone may be used beyond the 15th August? 2, If so, until what date may such advances be used?

The PREMIER replied: 1, This has already been done. 2, 31st August.

QUESTION—FARMERS' MACHINERY.*Repossession by Merchants.*

Mr. NORTH (for Mr. Griffiths) asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that during the past fortnight machinery firms have repossessed a whole train load of machinery from Eastern Wheat Belt farmers, in one instance the entire plant, and that further writs are being issued for repossession of farmers' machinery and plant? 2, Will he get the merchants and others to confer with him on the serious position arising from this threatened wholesale stoppage of wheat growing, and endeavour to make an arrangement whereby some form of voluntary moratorium or protection can be instituted to carry farmers over at least until the harvest is garnered?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The matter will be considered if the necessity arises.

QUESTION—LICENSES REDUCTION BOARD.*Expiration of Appointment.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Attorney General: 1, Is he aware that the term of appointment of the State Licensing Court and Licenses Reduction Board expired on the 15th August? 2, Is he aware that the work of the Licenses Reduction Board under the present Act does not cease until the 31st December next? 3, Do the Government propose to extend the term of the present board until 31st December? 4, Does the Minister intend to introduce an amending Bill immediately?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Matters are under consideration. 4, Certain appointments have been made. I should like to add that since

notice was given of the question, the Government have appointed gentlemen to act on the Board. The names will probably be published to-morrow.

QUESTION—HOMES PURCHASERS, MORATORIUM.

Mr. RAPHAEL asked the Premier: Does he intend to pass a moratorium for the protection of people who are purchasing homes and are in arrears with instalments?

The PREMIER replied: No complaints have reached me to date justifying such a comprehensive remedy.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT— FINANCIAL POSITION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.48]: Hon. members are aware that a meeting of the Federal Loan Council was held at Canberra recently, when Sir Hal Colebatch represented this State, and Mr. Simpson, the Under Treasurer, was present. It is within the knowledge of the House that the meeting was also attended by Sir Otto Niemeyer, the representative of the Bank of England. I can say very little to-day as to the results, but I am in a position to inform members that a meeting of State Premiers and the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth is to be held in Melbourne this day week, at which I shall be present. At that meeting financial matters and other subjects will be discussed fully, and I hope that after attending it I shall be able to tell hon. members a good deal more. I can inform them that in London about £36,000,000 is due in the form of short-dated loans, overdrafts at various banks, and Treasury bills. It is hoped, however, that arrangements can and will be made to meet these commitments in some way, so that we shall be free of that anxiety. We shall be able to do this only if we arrange to finance our own requirements for the future. The banks of Australia will be remitting about £3,000,000 per month through the Federal Government. They are arranging to transmit that amount monthly to London to meet our annual interest obligations totalling £36,000,000. So far, the position is satisfactory. It will be impossible for us to approach the London money market for some considerable time. The seri-

ousness of that will be realised when it is remembered that in the past we have been able to borrow for the purpose of carrying on our work of development and for other needs, such as shortage of exports to meet our imports. These shortages have in the past always been met by borrowing in the Old Country. That can no longer be done, at all events for the present. We shall have to rely entirely upon money that can be borrowed within our own territory, for some time to come. Hon. members will realise that it does not help us very much to borrow money here. It really means, since we have exhausted all the public have to lend to Governments, that money borrowed now is taken from private enterprise. Such borrowings cannot do much good. It will be remembered that recently a loan was over-subscribed. Of the over-subscribed amount Western Australia will get probably £200,000 or £300,000. The over-subscription is not a good sign, since it shows that people are willing to put their money into Government securities rather than into private enterprise. On the other hand, it would have been a bad thing had we not been able to raise money. In any case, I am not certain that we shall be able to raise much money by local loans in the future. All of us are agreed that the ledger must be balanced. In our case it will be a difficult matter, though probably not quite so difficult as in the case of some of the other States. Now that Australia is thrown upon its own resources, we shall have to endeavour to meet our responsibilities to the public in an entirely different way. I do not know that we quite realise what this means. We shall no longer be able to go, at all events for the present, to the Old Land for loans. Western Australia and the other States, and semi-Government bodies as well, are to be asked to refrain from borrowing in London for the present. Such a change is bound to bring with it considerable trouble. The Premiers at the forthcoming meeting will consider with the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth ways and means of carrying on. There will be no possibility of spending money as we have done in the past, not even on the most desirable works. In our case it is a pity that we cannot go on with the active work of developing our primary industries. For the moment that is impossible. There will, naturally, be rigid economy, and cutting

down of valuable services will probably be necessary. Australia must increase its production. In our case the imports last year were not much greater than the exports, thanks to the fact that we sent away a good deal of gold. In the immediate past Australia has shipped away £29,000,000 in gold. That gold, of course, will not be available for export this year. I do not know that I need discuss the subject much further at this stage. The London position will be made more satisfactory thanks to the arrangement which has been entered into. This matter has caused the Government a great deal of anxiety. Gold, as I say, has been shipped to London, and in other ways money has been raised to meet obligations there. We all recognise how necessary it is to meet the State's obligations. There is no question as to Australia's ability to pay, but the difficulty is to get the money to London. The exchange position is extremely difficult at the moment. To remit money to London has been a highly expensive matter. I hope hon. members realise that at this stage I cannot say more. I thought it well to inform the House of what has been done, and to indicate what the London position is. That position will be rendered easier by the means I have described, but the position in Australia will become more difficult. I hope we shall overcome our difficulties very soon. Western Australia is in a wonderful position except for its want of cash. Our people have deposited with the banks three millions sterling more than the banks have advanced to them. Two years ago the excess of deposits over advances was about twelve millions sterling. The State has borrowed about 86 millions and has paid off about 15 millions. Certainly we have paid off far more than we have lost. Thus our investments are really well covered. That, too, is highly satisfactory. The money we owe is well covered by the assets which have been created by the expenditure of that money. Further, as the years have gone by we have put a good deal of our own revenue into works of a permanent character. Therefore on the whole the position is highly satisfactory. We have, in fact, created with the money that we have borrowed assets that will go on producing as long as Western Australia exists. It is a fact that our people owe money to each other, but we possess assets worth at least 200 millions sterling. Even apart from the possession

of our wonderful territory, there is no question about the financial strength of the State. However, that is not enough at present. I hope hon. members will be satisfied to know what I have just told them. There will be a further meeting of the Prime Minister and the Premiers taking place in Melbourne on Tuesday next. I move—

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

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.58]: Before proceeding to discuss the Premier's motion I would like to know from the hon. gentleman whether the proposed adjournment of the House will at all prejudice the position of members on this side as regards expressing their views on the attitude of the Government in challenging the 44-hour week and district allowances. I should like to have the Premier's assurance that if the adjournment of the House as proposed is agreed to, it will not in any way jeopardise or prejudice the position of members on this side of the Chamber in that respect when the House reassembles. The Premier knows that by that time it may be possible to contend that the matters referred to are sub judice. I do not know whether that will actually be so, but I desire an assurance from the Premier that the position of members on this side in that respect will not be prejudiced by the proposed adjournment in any way.

The Premier: The adjournment will not in any way prejudice the right of members to discuss the matters mentioned by the hon. member.

Mr. McCALLUM: Having received that assurance, I offer no objection to the motion. Indeed, I am glad to know that the Premier is going to Melbourne. Recently I took the opportunity of objecting to the fact that either the Premier or one of his Ministers did not go to the meeting of the Loan Council at Canberra. I am pleased that there has been a change of attitude on the part of the Government. I am sure the House is glad to know that Lady Mitchell's health has improved sufficiently to permit of the Premier's attending the forthcoming meeting in Melbourne. Everyone will agree that the finances of the State represent a matter of the greatest importance at the moment, and it is right that the head of the Government should be present at the conference to consider that vital

question. Although I regret that the business of this Parliament is to be hung up for a further fortnight, I realise the adjournment is warranted because of the financial position confronting the country. In view of the assurance given by the Premier, I raise no objection to the adjournment.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.2 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 26th August, 1930.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £1,730,000.

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT.

Hon. E. H. GRAY asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: In view of the acute distress now being suffered by large numbers of unemployed married men and their wives and families, by the failure of the local authorities through lack of funds to provide supplementary relief work in addition to the assistance granted by the State, will the Government give immediate advances to any local authority who will undertake the responsibility of redeeming such advances under the scheme recently placed before the Minister by a combined deputation of representatives of local government bodies?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: At present the Government are not in a position to finance local authorities in the manner suggested. Apart from that fact local authorities cannot borrow until the procedure laid down by the Road Districts and Municipal Acts has been observed. Local authorities have power temporarily to finance by means of overdrafts on their bankers.

QUESTION—RAILWAY EMPLOYEES.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, What is the cost of transferring railway employees to take over ordinary duties—(a) a loco. driver; (b) a guard, from (1) Perth to Merredin; (2) Merredin to Perth? 2, How long is each required to remain at Merredin before being entitled to transfer to the metropolitan area? 3, How long will it take each to learn the road and various duties peculiar to a new district, and what is the cost of this in respect to Merredin? 4, What is the present district allowance for such employees?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1 (a) Approximately £8 for a married man and £5 for a single man; (b) approximately £7 for a married man and £3 15s. for a single man. 2, There is no definite period. 3, This depends upon circumstances and the previous experience of the worker. 4, 1s. 6d. per day, 7 days per week.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: I move—

That the following sessional committees be appointed:—

Standing Orders Committee: The President, Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. A. Lovekin, and Hon. J. Nicholson.

Library Committee: The President, Hon. J. Ewing, and Hon. J. M. Drew.

Printing Committee: The President, Hon. W. H. Kitson, and Hon. A. Lovekin.

Joint House Committee: The President, Hon. J. Cornell, Hon. E. H. Gray, Hon. G. A. Kemp-ton, and Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom.