

farmers' sons who have had their limbs cut off by the binder. In such a case the boy becomes a burden on the father, who frequently has not the means to provide for him.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: I oppose the amendment. We had better leave things as they are.

Hon. A. McCallum: Yes, drop the Bill and leave things as they are.

The **MINISTER FOR LANDS**: The amendment would afford opportunities for exploiting the fund. The employer who was a father would be disposed to use the fund at every possible opportunity. He would have a personal interest in the fund though his son. He would not have such a personal interest through a stranger. The member for South Fremantle did not include a provision similar to this in his Bill.

Mr. **SLEEMAN**: I support the amendment as being all that is likely to be got from the Minister. If that hon. gentleman were really content to leave things as they are, he would get on very well indeed with this side of the Chamber.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Wednesday, 3rd June 1931.*

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

### QUESTION—SECESSION, ENGLISH LEGISLATION.

Hon. V. **HAMERSLEY** asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, Have the Government (a) protested, or (b) will

the Government protest against the inclusion, in the contemplated Act of Westminster, of such provisions as may make it more difficult for Western Australia to secede from the Federation, and/or prejudice the States respecting such sovereign rights (sovereign subject to the Imperial Parliament), as they now possess? 2, If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, will the Government advise Parliament of the terms of the protestation? 3, If the answer to (b) is in the negative, will the Government give Parliament their reasons for not lodging a protest? 4, Will the Government give an assurance that, if Parliament approves of a referendum on secession, there will be no delay in seeking the opinion of the electors?

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES** replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not usual to disclose correspondence of this nature. 3, Answered by No. 1. 4, The matter will be considered.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. A. Lovekin (Metropolitan) on the ground of ill-health.

### MOTION—STOCK REGULATIONS, KIMBERLEY CATTLE.

*To Inquire by Royal Commission.*

**HON. G. W. MILES** (North) [4.35]: I move—

That an Honorary Royal Commission be appointed to investigate the administration and application of the regulations under the Stock Diseases Act, 1895, as gazetted on the 11th October, 1929, particularly as they relate to the restriction of the movement of cattle from the Kimberley district.

I have not much more to urge in support of the motion than was said by Mr. Holmes on the 27th May last when he moved a motion, the object of which was to secure the taking of drastic steps to reduce the cost of primary production. I assure the House that there is no desire on the part of the West Kimberley growers or of the pastoralists generally to interfere with the stock in clean areas, nor yet with the dairying industry in the South-West. The regulations referred to in the motion were

framed some time back, but for the past 30 years cattle have been sent from West Kimberley to the southern areas. Graziers in the South have bought the cattle as stores when put up for sale at Fremantle, while large numbers of the beasts have been overlanded to other centres. When purchased by graziers, the cattle are fattened and then they are marketed in summer. That is where the people in the metropolitan area get their summer supply of meat. The issue is one that affects the cost of living in the metropolitan area, while it also represents an interference with the interests of the Kimberley growers, who desire that the conditions to obtain shall be those that operated in previous years. They are perfectly willing, in the interests of safety, to tighten up those conditions where necessary. Cattle from stations known to be free from cattle disease should be allowed to be sold to country butchers, not in the South-West. Guarantees could be obtained from the purchasers of the stock that they would be held in the fattening yards until killed. In those circumstances they could not come into contact with other cattle. Under those conditions no harm could result from the sale of such stock to fatteners if none were sold in the South-West. If country butchers and graziers who buy cattle for fattening are eliminated, there will be left but few buyers and they can fix their own prices. That has been the position this winter. That furnishes one reason why the cattle growers have received such low prices for their cattle in recent times. I shall refer to some of the losses that have been made by growers who have sent cattle to Fremantle. The country butchers and graziers have been debarred from buying their cattle, which under normal circumstances would have been taken away to the fattening paddocks and marketed when in condition later on. The Broome district is essentially a store area, not a fattening district. Cattle from that part of the State must be overlanded in order to secure a market. I understand that one station is suspect, but even there, there has been no case of pleuro for over two years. Cattle have been shipped to Fremantle or overlanded from there during the past 30 years, and there has never been an instance of pleuro in that area. Surely such cattle should be released after inspection. I understand that one animal was

supposed to be suffering from lung complaint, but it was not determined whether it was pleuro pneumonia, although the officials of the Stock Department seemed to think it was. With regard to cattle from the Eastern States that are brought to Western Australia, two years' exemption is allowed. When Mr. Troy was Minister for Lands, efforts were made to purchase dairy cattle in the Eastern States. At that time pleuro pneumonia was supposed to be rampant in South Australia, Victoria, and the southern portions of New South Wales. In those circumstances, it was only possible to purchase the cattle in the northern parts of New South Wales. Since then the embargo has been lifted, and for some time the authorities have been purchasing cattle from Victoria and placing them in the South-West. It is claimed by the growers that the conditions that are applied to the growers in the Eastern States who send cattle to Western Australia, should also apply to the Kimberley growers. In these days we are all striving to restore prosperity to Western Australia, and to keep our money within the State. In this instance we are reversing that policy by forcing our money into the pockets of the growers in the Eastern States. While the embargo lasts against West Kimberley cattle, it means that stock required for summer supplies will have to be imported from the Eastern States. I believe that the Commonwealth railways transport cattle from the Eastern States to Western Australia at a cheaper rate than that levied by the State railways between Perth and Kalgoorlie. That also applies to other goods, and I think the Railway Department should revise their freights in view of those operating on the Commonwealth railways. The Kimberley growers consider that they are apparently exempted for all time, with no period of immunity. That shows the difference between the treatment accorded the Kimberley growers and that applied to those operating in other parts of Australia. I have mentioned the position regarding the meat trade for next summer. Last year the country butchers and the graziers bought over 1,700 cattle that were shipped by Kimberley growers, besides some that were overlanded. If the present conditions continue, it will spell ruination to the Broome and West Kimberley cattle growers. Mr. Holmes referred to some of the losses that had been experienced

by the growers. I think it necessary to repeat some of those facts to demonstrate what has resulted from the limited market made available as a result of the stock regulations. In one instance, 280 cattle netted 16s. 9d. per head, while 150 returned 11s. 1d. per head. In another instance, the growers had to pay 6s. per head on 140 cattle in order to cover expenses. These figures can be verified. There is another circumstance that has an important bearing on the position, although it does not concern the effects of the regulation. I refer to the freight charged for bringing cattle down from the North. The charge of £4 10s. per head is excessive, and if we are to secure cheaper meat for the people in the southern parts of the State, that phase should be investigated. It is stated that one of the reasons for the enforcement of the regulations was the condition of one animal included in a consignment of 20 head that were purchased by Mr. Frank Wittenoom and placed on 100 acres at Maida Vale. That is a small area, but the 20 head were put in the paddock. The man in charge of the stock discovered that one animal was off-colour and a veterinary surgeon declared it to be suffering from pleuro-pneumonia. It is questionable whether it was suffering from that disease. In my opinion it was not; it was merely suffering from some lung complaint. That is a question that should be investigated to ascertain whether the animal suffered from some form of contagious pleuro, or merely a lung complaint. The other 19 head of cattle were destroyed, but no sign of pleuro was found in any of the beasts. The farce of the position is that those cattle had never been in the North-West. They were Holsteins bred at Corrigin, and there are no Holsteins in the North. The action taken on that occasion savoured of panic. People who have pioneered the North over a period of many years, during which they have developed the country with the expenditure of their own money, have been interfered with unduly, and to such an extent that they are faced with ruination unless the existing position is remedied.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What was done with the carcasses of the 19 beasts?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I believe the meat went into consumption. There was no sign of disease at all. Regarding the other animal, I claim there has been no proof that it suffered from pleuro-pneumonia.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What is the difference between pleuro and lung trouble?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The difference between a cold on the chest and tuberculosis.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Later, I shall quote the opinions of some experts from Queensland and Java on that subject. Another point made by Mr. Holmes the other day was the expenditure on reconditioning the Canning stock route. When that work is completed, a sum of £22,500 will have been spent. The Works Department are spending money to open up that stock route and the Department of Agriculture say that no stock will be allowed over the route. It is farcical that the country should be run in that way.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: By departments.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes. So far as I can understand the cattle likely to use the Canning stock route would be from clean country. They would be brought from south of Halls Creek, and yet the Department of Agriculture say they will not be allowed to use that route. Some of the best cattle country is De Grey, Roy Hill, and Ethel Creek, and there is other cattle country on the East Murchison at least 800 miles from here. One owner on the East Murchison has a fine herd, and he undertakes to receive Kimberley cattle and keep them for two years before marketing them. Yet the department bar the Kimberley cattle from coming down. I do not ask for an expensive Commission. It could be an honorary Commission, and all the evidence required could be obtained in Perth. Something must be done to relieve the Kimberley pastoralists and allow their cattle to be brought to the southern parts of the State. Those people should be treated fairly, at any rate as fairly as we treat the people of the Eastern States. Regulation No. 1 reads—

No store cattle on stations affected with pleuro-pneumonia or on stations adjoining affected stations in the West Kimberley district shall, during the operation of these regulations, be removed therefrom except to the Owen's Anchorage quarantine area, Fremantle, for slaughter, or thence under quarantine restrictions for slaughter at Midland Junction.

The effect of the regulation is that butchers outside those areas cannot buy the cattle, as they have to be slaughtered at Midland or Fremantle. This restricts the price that

the grower receives for his cattle. The local butchers pay what they like for them and the consumer does not get the benefit of the low price. Other regulations read—

2. With regard to clean stations in the West Kimberley district on which no pleuro-pneumonia has been found to exist, store cattle from any such clean stations may be allowed to go to Owen's Anchorage quarantine area, and thence to the country for depasturing. Provided such clean station shall not adjoin a holding affected with such disease, but subject to the following conditions and not otherwise, and any breach thereof shall be an offence against this regulation:—

- (a) Such cattle shall be inoculated before leaving the quarantine area, Fremantle, against pleuro-pneumonia;
- (b) Such cattle shall be sent to a property approved by the Chief Inspector of Stock, which shall be declared a quarantine;
- (c) Such cattle shall not be removed from such station without the written consent of the Chief Inspector of Stock.

3. No cattle from West Kimberley shall be permitted to depasture in that portion of the State bounded on the north by the 30th parallel of latitude and on the east by the 119th meridian of longitude.

4. No cattle shall be overlanded from West Kimberley further south than the 19th parallel of latitude.

5. Any person who commits a breach of any of the foregoing regulations shall be liable on conviction to a penalty of not exceeding five hundred pounds.

Thus there is an absolute embargo; cattle from clean stations are not permitted to travel overland. I have it from an authoritative source that a number of stations merely breed the cattle, as the country is not suitable for fattening them. Such cattle, for years past, have been overlanded, fattened on stations further south, and eventually brought into the market for the summer supply of beef. Shipped stores have in the past been purchased by graziers and fattened and marketed in the summer when the Kimberley shipments were not available. If the regulations are strictly enforced, there will be a grave shortage of beef next summer. Immediate action is necessary if a shortage is to be averted. In addition, shipments will be largely curtailed next year, which will mean costly beef. This will indirectly affect freight rates for all other goods and produce carried on the steamers trading on the North-West coast. If pastoralists are not able to send full shipments of cattle down, the ships cannot be run at

a profit. They will have to increase their freights, and that would be another tax on the people of the North. Cattle have been overlanded, shipped and distributed from the North for over 30 years. If those cattle were likely to cause infection, where is all the pleuro? Dutch veterinary officers reported that a few Kimberley cattle shipped to Java were found to be suffering from a lung complaint. Those officers are recognised in scientific circles as experts. It is presumed, therefore, that they are well acquainted with the disease of pleuro. That being so, why did they report the disease as lung complaint and not pleuro? The fact that pleuro has not broken out before leads one to believe that a mistake has been made. Drovers who have had experience of the real pleuro laugh at the few instances of this lung complaint being called pleuro. They say that if it were the real thing, heavy infection and mortality would have been experienced. Cattle being overlanded are herded together when they camp at night and, if there was any pleuro amongst them, it would develop and spread. All this indicates that there is grave doubt whether the complaint is really pleuro. I maintain that it is not. It is some other form of lung complaint. Dairy cattle have been imported from Victoria on certificates that the cattle came from districts that have been free from pleuro for two years. Why are not cattle from clean districts in this State treated in the same way? The enforcement of the regulations will mean ruination to the cattle industry in West Kimberley and will shut off meat supplies from the metropolitan area. A careful investigation should be made before this is allowed to happen. The following letter has been received from the Chief Inspector of Stock in Queensland:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 21st inst. relative to regulations dealing with the movement of cattle from Queensland to other States of the Commonwealth. In reply I desire to inform you that with regard to pleuro-pneumonia contagiosa the Queensland requirements are that affected stock shall be quarantined for a period of two months after successful inoculation, and travelling stock are quarantined for two months on the first available agistment country. This period of two months was approved of by the chief veterinary officers of the various States at an interstate conference held some years ago. Previous to this the period of detention varied from one to three months in the different States. Cattle travelling to New South Wales must be certified to as not hav-

ing been in contact with animals suffering from pleuro-pneumonia-contagiosa for the previous three months. The direct introduction of cattle into Victoria and Queensland is not permitted owing to cattle tick restrictions. Cattle to South Australia are admitted on practically the same conditions as those applying to New South Wales, provided the cattle enter South Australia at the Queensland-New South Wales border. (Sgd.) Arthur H. Cory, M.L.E.C.V.S.

Here is another instance of apparent panic on the part of the departmental officials. Not long ago the Department of Agriculture were adamant in debarring Spearwood settlers from using the manure from cattle boats, and compelled the ships to proceed to sea and clean out. That was done because of the danger of introducing buffalo fly into the southern areas. Apparently the department are satisfied that there is no danger, as permission has been given for the use of the manure again. While not suggesting that the manure should not be used, I simply quote this to show that the department appear to be somewhat panicky on occasions. That would not matter if such serious harm did not result. In these depressing times we cannot afford to have panic legislation or regulations inflicted upon us. In Queensland, where real pleuro exists, the prevention of the disease is controlled on sane lines, as shown in the letter from the Chief Inspector of Stock in that State. There are more cattle in Queensland than in any other State of the Commonwealth, and large numbers are sent annually to New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Was the prohibition of the use of manure due to rinderpest?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: No; there is no rinderpest in the Kimberleys. It was due to the danger of introducing buffalo fly.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Kimberley cattle are being sent via the Territory to South Australia. They will be grazed and fattened in South Australia, and probably some of them will later be sent here and other people will make the profit on them. I hope the House will agree to the appointment of a Royal Commission. We do not want an injustice to be done to any portion of the State, but an inquiry should be held by a Royal Commission composed not necessarily of Parliamentarians, but preferably of practical men, to take evidence

on oath and submit a report to the Government so that some relief may be given to the Kimberley cattle growers.

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

### 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. E. H. H. HALL (Central [5.3]: Before addressing a few remarks to the subject matter of the motion, will you, Sir, allow me to offer my congratulations, and those of other hon. members who may not have had the opportunity yet to do so, to Mr. Nicholson—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: And you may also add mine.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL—on the honour conferred upon him by His Majesty the King. I desire to support the motion moved by Mr. Holmes. I realise that the present Government have tried in various ways to meet the unfortunate position in which the primary producer finds himself at the present time, but as was said shortly before the session adjourned in December last, we do not think the Government have done all that might have been done, though, after all, that may be only natural. Frequently we hear expressions of surprise at the position in which the primary producer finds himself in this the first real setback he has experienced after a number of years of good seasons and good prices. This is not a matter of surprise to anybody who has taken an interest in the industry; the surprising part is that so many have been able to battle along for the number of years they have done notwithstanding the good prices and good seasons, which they may or may not have had. My reasons for saying that are that whilst the primary producer has had those good seasons and good prices, those advantages have been more than counterbalanced by the extra high costs he has had to face. From an official publication I learned that in 1923-

24 the total land tax in this State totalled £70,879, and in 1928-29 the total had increased to £196,301, or £125,000 more than the figures for 1923-24.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Much more land was occupied.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: That is taken into consideration. The land tax is only one of the many burdens the primary producer has had to bear in recent years. I could mention the tariff, but we know that that is not a State, but a Federal matter, and I desire to keep strictly to those things over which the State has control. Can any good come out of Nazareth? We read that question in the Old Book hundreds of years ago. I might paraphrase the query by asking whether any good can come out of New South Wales. In the "West Australian" of the 19th May, there appeared a telegram from Sydney which read—

When speaking at Moree on Saturday, the Assistant Minister for Labour and Industry (Mr. Ely) said that £2,975,807 had been received from the wages tax up to April 30.

What a good many of us in this State would like to know is why our own Government have not thought fit to bring in a wages and salaries tax. We are told that we cannot tax people into prosperity, and on the 15th of last month the Premier declared that it was not possible to get in the taxes that were already owing, and therefore more could not be imposed. I respectfully submit that the reason for the Premier's complaint is that he is still trying to tax the man on the land who is the individual to-day that has not any money with which to pay his taxes. If that section of the community had been asked to bear just a fair share of taxation, I think the Premier and his Government would have found those people able to pay. and then, with the imposition of a wages and salaries tax, many thousands of acres which will this season remain idle would have been cropped. A good deal has been said about the saving that has been effected in the Railway Department. I learned that with mixed feelings. Members of the Government had stated in the country that it did not give them very much pleasure to have to say that about 2,000 men had lost their employment by having to be dismissed from the railway service. If those of us who are receiving some wages or salary had contributed towards the revenue of the State, per-

haps some of those 2,000 men might still have been in employment, though perhaps not under the old conditions. At least a good number of them might have been saved from being thrown on to the unemployed market. That is the attitude which should be taken up in connection with this matter. I said in this House, when the previous Government were in power, that in my opinion the Civil Service was considerably overmanned. Mr. Drew, who was then in charge of the House, very properly asked me to give specific instances. The hon. gentleman well knew that an outsider might have an opinion, but that it would be very hard for him to give specific instances. Now I should like to know whether it has been possible to find out only in the last 12 months that there were so many surplus employees in the railway system of the State. If the Government have not already considered the matter, they might extend their inquiries beyond the Railway Department, and endeavour to ascertain whether it is not possible to effect reductions in the number of employees in the Lands and Education Departments as well. It might well repay the Government to conduct this investigation. An overhaul of this description has not taken place for many years. When the postal services were taken over by the Commonwealth, or perhaps a few years later, the Federal Public Service Inspector, Mr. A. Green, who was sent to Western Australia, travelled through the length and breadth of the State, and without a retinue of clerks, to personally inquire into the duties that were being carried out by all post office employees. If some such system were adopted now I am convinced that a considerable number of highly-paid officials would be hard put to justify their positions and the money they were drawing from the State. Mr. Seddon said last night that there were many ways in which those who are out of work could be profitably employed, and he mentioned regrading of railways. No doubt a lot could be said for that, but at the same time, as other members remarked, the Arbitration Court would stand in the way. Last year the Government did not meet with very much success when an effort was made to reduce wages so that more men might be employed at a lower rate. There is a good deal of regrading work that could be done. I might refer to the district I represent, and Mr.

Drew and Mr. Kempton will bear me out in what I have to say. The grade on the Mullewa line from Geraldton to Eradu is one that ought to have received attention many years ago. Trains travel along it at a snail's pace. Surely that is a work that would pay to carry out. But if work of that description cannot be undertaken, one would think that the Government would turn their attention to abandoned farms in the various agricultural areas. Those farms are fast becoming of little value. It ought to be possible for the Government to place men in charge of those properties to prevent their slipping back. Only last week one individual was convicted for getting away with property from an abandoned farm, and considering the stage that many of the farms reached before they were abandoned, it is surprising that more thefts have not taken place. That is one way in which the Government of the day could assist to find employment for some of those who require it. As we are told that the future success of the State depends so much on agriculture, I might also suggest something that perhaps will be considered to be of a socialistic nature. I may be accused of changing my opinions, but in times such as we are passing through it is up to everyone to take a broad view of things generally, and to take stock also of what is going on in other parts of the world. What has weighed heavily on the primary producers in the past is having to insure their crops with private companies. I am not suggesting that the Government should start or continue the insurance business, but I think that more attention should be given by the Government to assisting and advancing the aims and objects of co-operation. Denmark is one of those countries in which co-operation has proved very successful. Notwithstanding the fact that it is wholly dependent on primary production, Denmark is better off, comparatively, than many other nations simply because her people have practised co-operation. I suggest that the Government should endeavour to foster the co-operative spirit. Even in Great Britain co-operation has achieved considerable success. Dealing with the industries of the State, I ask permission to quote a short extract from "The Structure of Modern Industry":—

It was recently stated, for instance, by a group of well-known business men that "the

control of economic forces by political means violates every principle on which British prosperity was founded, is alien to the free instincts of the national character, and ought only to be used, if at all, within the narrowest limits." As against this, of course, it may be argued that rationalisation is the direct opposite of the older type of business individualism; that, as it develops, it will not leave much room for the "free instincts of the national character"; and that in any case freedom and initiative are realities for few people to-day.

It is clear that we have to alter our outlook on things and that the Governments, if they wish the primary industries to be able to stand up against the powerful interests existing, must do something to assist it. Here is another extract from the same work:—

First, what does "rationalisation" mean? The soundest of the many definitions given seems to be that adopted by the World Economic Conference held by the League of Nations in 1927 and endorsed by the conference between the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and Lord Melchett's Group of Employers in 1928. The full definition is given in the interim report of the Conference (quoted in the "Labour Year Book" 1930), but rationalisation is briefly defined as "the methods of technique and of organisation designed to secure the minimum waste of either effort or material. It includes the scientific organisation of labour, standardisation both of material and of products, simplification of processes and improvements in the system of transport and marketing." Rationalisation is thus a many-sided movement, the main purpose of which is to avoid waste of land, of human labour, of materials, of power; to secure, that is, the largest possible output from each hour of human labour, each unit of materials and of power, each acre of land.

So I say the Governments of the day should address themselves to these matters with the idea that they will give all possible assistance to the men engaged in primary industry on which, we so frequently have been told, the success and prosperity of this State depends. I will support the motion.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, debate adjourned.

#### BILL—HIRE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

*House adjourned at 5.18 p.m.*