

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, October 4, 1974

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

SPECIAL SITTING

The PRESIDENT: Honourable members will recall that the Council was adjourned yesterday until Tuesday, October 8. In the meantime, the honourable Premier requested that both Houses be asked to resume on Friday, October 4, in order to consider legislation which might become necessary to assist any prescribed financial institution. Acting under the provisions of Council Standing Order No. 1, I dispatched urgent telegrams to all members, appointing Friday, October 4, as the day for the resumption of the sittings of the Council. The business to be transacted at today's sitting will be as determined by the Council, but I think it would be appropriate if I read the relevant House of Commons Standing Order (No. 122), paragraph (2), relating to this matter:

The Government business to be transacted on the day on which the House shall so meet shall, subject to the publication of notice thereof in the order paper to be circulated on the day on which the House shall so meet, be such as the Government may appoint, but subject as aforesaid the House shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to the day on which it shall so meet, and any Government order of the day and Government notices of motion that may stand on the order book for any day shall be appointed for the day on which the House shall so meet.

Accordingly, the Notice Paper has been reprinted under today's date and it is for the Council to decide the order of business to be dealt with. I intend to proceed with the normal routine of business of the Council.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: BUILDING SOCIETIES

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary): As you have said, Mr. President, the Premier, because of a certain situation that existed, especially in regard to the building societies of this State, where a panic situation existed and there was an—

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Emergency.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: It was an emergency. People formed queues and endeavoured to draw their

money out of the various building societies and it did appear at that stage that a situation of extreme emergency existed. For that reason, the State Government thought it necessary to introduce legislation to assist these societies or institutions. A Bill was prepared which it was proposed to introduce, but as a result of an easing of the situation and the various activities of the State Government and the Commonwealth Government in an endeavour to assist that process by making people realise that there was no need for the panic that seemed to exist, the position has improved to the point where the Government considers it unnecessary (at this stage, anyway) to introduce legislation. I express my appreciation, and that of the Government, for the co-operation received from the staff of the Council and from all honourable members who, no doubt at some inconvenience, presented themselves today to assist the Government in this situation. I apologise for any inconvenience caused to honourable members as a result of their having to attend Parliament this afternoon. I move:

That the business listed for today be listed for Tuesday, October 8.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): In commenting on this position, I assure the Chief Secretary that, at any time such a situation as this occurs, honourable members are only too pleased to attend at sittings of the Council. I believe the Government has acted correctly and that the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly has played a very responsible role in the present situation. This exercise demonstrates possibly more than does any other the fact that there is no need for drastic emergency powers to be sought by any Government (as this Government did not long ago when it wanted dictatorial powers to contain a specific emergency). The word came to us yesterday at about 5 p.m. that the Council would meet today, and one can see by the attendance that every honourable member is in his place. This incident proves clearly that there is absolutely no need for the Government to seek excessive dictatorial powers, as it did about six weeks ago, for dealing with emergencies. Parliament is definitely capable, without those powers, of handling the situation.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2.23 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, October 8, at 2.15 p.m.