**PRIMARY PRODUCERS ’ DEBTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1939**

**Legislative Assembly, 10 August 1939, pages 457-8**

Second reading

**The Hon. R. J. RUDALL, for the Treasurer**, moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—

That it is desirable to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Primary Producers ’ Debts Act, 1935-1937.

Motion carried. Resolution agreed to in Committee and adopted by the House.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL (Angas—Commissioner of Crown Lands)—This short Bill is for the purpose of extending the operation of the Primary Producers’ Debts Act of 1935. Some months ago, realizing the difficult position of wheatgrowers owing to the present prices, the Government asked the Farmers’ Assistance Board its opinion as to the desirability of extending the Primary Producers' Debts Act, and the board advised the Government that it might be advisable to re-open the Act. The board said that a substantial sum from Commonwealth funds was likely to be available, somewhere in the vicinity of £500,000. The last day for receiving applications under the present Act was March 31, 1937. At that time the price of wheat was comparatively high, and the board thinks that in view of the present depressed prices, a number of farmers who two years ago thought that they could continue operations without adjustment may by now have realized the necessity of obtaining relief if they are to carry on. The Government therefore considers there is justification for reopening the Act and proposes to extend the time for applying for debt adjustment until June 30 of next year. By this time farmers will have harvested next year’s crop and probably sold most of it and will know what their income is likely to be.

Clause 4 deals with supplementary assistance to those farmers who debts have already been adjusted. In some of the earlier adjustments the board was hampered because it could not foresee with accuracy the total number of cases likely to qualify for adjustment nor the amount of money available, and therefore could not work out the average amount of Commonwealth funds that it could apply to each case for the purpose of effecting adjustments. The board now thinks that in some of the earlier schemes possibly some further funds could be made available to effect supplementary adjustments, particularly by way of discounting secured debts by means of cast loans. For this purpose clause 4 of the Bill provides that applicants whose debts have already been adjusted may, if the board thinks fit, receive further assistance. The assistance may take the form of loans or grants of money from Commonwealth funds, or the -writing off of the whole or any part of any debt accrued due to the State. The board, however, may make it a condition of any further assistance that the other creditors of the applicant shall release him from such parts, if any, of the debts due to them as it thinks just.

Mr. Christian—Does the Bill also make eligible for re-application these who have pre­viously been declined?

The Hon. B. J. BUD ALL—I cannot say. I move the second reading.

The Hon. B. S. BICHABDS secured the adjournment of the debate.