

mentioned in the proclamation. It is not to apply to (1) payment of wages or salary. There is no limit to this provision, which therefore extends to all occupations at fixed remuneration. Next (2) are any payments in respect of a liability which when incurred did not exceed £5 in amount. This will probably need to be interpreted by the courts as there must be many doubtful cases where it is not clear whether the amount to be claimed was when incurred part of a larger sum. The capital sum of a mortgage could not be recovered, but presumably the interest payable under the terms of the mortgage can be if it does not exceed £5. A point has been raised as to whether instalments under a hire-purchase agreement are recoverable. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already expressed the opinion that where the total amount of the original liability does not exceed £5 they are covered by the moratorium, notwithstanding that the instalments may be less than £5. But this is at least doubtful. It is difficult to see how such instalments differ from the amounts of mortgage interest the liability to pay which is incurred by the instrument of mortgage. A difficulty must also arise in cases where a running account has been kept with a tradesman. In the ordinary way the debt payable is the total amount of the account, which, in the event of an action being brought, must be included in the claim. But there can be no doubt that each item in the account, if it did not exceed £5 when incurred, can still be claimed under the terms of the proclamation. The position of the banker and his customer is certainly anomalous and not easy to estimate. Strictly the banker is the debtor to his client, and it might be held that each sum not exceeding £5 paid into his account by a customer is a debt recoverable. No doubt the point will never be raised, as, after all, the moratorium is only one of the expedients to maintain the credit system, and the use of cheques makes most drawings on banks merely paper transactions which banks will always encourage. The proclamation also does not apply to the payment of (3) rates and taxes. Maritime freight (4) is also excepted, on the ground that it was thought that otherwise it would be impossible to pay wages. It will not apply to (5) any payment in respect of any debt from any person resident outside