Hon. P. Collier: We should send the Sergeant-at-Arms over too.

Mr. ROBINSON: We have had fire brand meetings in the Town Hall where people have talked about secession, cutting the painter, breaking the links and other rubbish of the kind, but we have never put forward in our Parliament any good reasons to demonstrate why we are being badly treated. They are bound to listen to us in the Eastern States if we put up a good case. Of course, as the Premier tells us, he and other Premiers of this State have gone over to Melbourne and talked with the Premiers of the other States round the table for half an hour or an hour, and then adjourned, and nothing ever comes of it.

The Prmier: Oh, yes; we have got consideration.

Mr. ROBINSON: Some consideration, but not much. We want to make, every man and every woman and every child in Western Australia wants to make, such a fuss about our legitimate grievances that Australia will ring with them; and then there will be a chance of getting matters put straight. We know that if in one of our towns something goes wrong the member concerned is stirred up, and he comes here and makes such a fuss that the matter is put straight. Or if a civil servant considers he has been wrongly dismissed, we spend hours——

The Minister for Works: More like days.

Mr. ROBINSON:—discussing his case, and even give him a Royal Commission. But here is something that affects our national life, and nobody makes a fuss about it. I agree with the motion, but I hope the Premier will give us proper notice so that we may all have an opportunity of coming prepared to have a field day on this subject.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. T. P. Draper—West Perth) [10.17]: I should not have spoken in this debate but for the remarks of the last speaker. Personally, I deprecate anything in the nature of a general fuss by the people all over the State. This matter is one which requires much more careful consideration than that. If we are going to do any good with any convention or with the Federal Ministers as regards getting what we consider to be our due from the revenue derived by the Commonwealth through the Customs, it will certainly not be by any general agitation. It can only be done, and I think it should be done, by means of a proper, logical statement, carefully prepared with facts and well considered reasons. That is the only way in which we can approach a body like the Commonwealth. The Federal Parliament will not listen to fuss, or to what one man may say in one place and another man in another place. But the Commonwealth will listen if we show good and reasonable grounds for our contention that we have not received our due.

Mr. Robinson: I want no more than that.

Hon. P. Collier: A solid debate in this House could not be called a fuss.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not call what may be said in this House a fuss; certainly not. In considering our relations with the Commonwealth, the fact should be borne in mind that we in Western Australia, a population of about 300,000 souls, are responsible for the development of a third of the continent of Australia. True, we are developing it for ourselves; but we are also developing this third equally for the benefit of the whole of the Commonwealth. This is a fact to which the Commonwealth must give due consideration. Further let me say that I am not an advocate of publishing our case broadcast three or four months prior to its being laid before the Federal Government. The proper method is to submit one's case and allow a reasonable time to answer it, but not six months or twelve months; for many of our critics in the Eastern States may be only too glad to pick any hole they possibly can in any case that we may put up.

On motion by Mr. Troy, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 14th October, 1920.

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

QUESTION—CARNARVON HOSPITAL, STAFF.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY asked the Minister for Education: Is he aware that a Mrs. Mitchell was employed as a cook at the Carnarvon Government Hospital at a salary of £8 8s. per month, and that she was dismissed because she refused to do the washing for the institution in addition to her other duties?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Mrs. Mitchell shows on Salary Register as Cook-Laundress, Carnarvon, and paid for month of August £8 6s. 8d. at

rate of £100 per annum. This information was received from Carnarvon on August pay-sheet. No notification has been received from the District Medical Officer, Carnarvon, that Mrs. Mitchell has been dismissed.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Supply (No. 2) £350,000.

2, Carriers.

Passed.

BILLS (2)—REPORT ADOPTED.

1, Stallions' Registration,

2, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

BILL—CORONERS.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: This is a Bill which I think will be welcomed not only by all sections of this House but by all sections of the community. The present legislation dealing with the coroners' inquests is somewhat antiquated. The parent Act was passed in 1856, and its most important provisions were that every justice of the peace should be a coroner ex-officio, and that juries of not less than three, nor more than six persons might be summoned to inquire into the cause or causes of any death or casualty within the jurisdiction of the coroner. In 1863 this Act was amended in certain minor particulars. Prior to the amendment there was no power to hold inquiries on Sundays and it was recognised that, with the climatic conditions of Australia such as they are, the matter of holding these inquiries should be left open, as it might be necessary for a body to be viewed and the inquest opened immediately no matter what day it might be. So the Act of 1863 provided that inquests might be opened on Sundays. It also gave a coroner or a justice of the peace acting as a coroner, power not previously provided, to compel the serving of jurors and the attendance of witnesses. It also set out that inquests should not be quashed on account of technical defects. That is the most recent legislation in this State dealing with coroners' inquests. Thus we have the parent Act of 1856, amended in minor particulars by the Act of 1863. There can be no question but that justices of the peace, acting as they do in a purely honorary capacity, have rendered important services to the State and the public by holding inquests often in circumstances of a most painful and distressing kind. This Bill is not intended in any sense as a reflection upon justices whose valuable work is fully recognised. At the same time, it has been felt—and it has been the subject of public comment and Press criticism—that the time has now arrived when this important matter of inquiring into a death which may have been sudden, violent, or apparently not natural, should be investigated by some person having peculiar qualifications for the position. The chief purposes of the present Bill are to alter the condition of affairs, in which every justice of the peace is ex officio a coroner and entitled to hold inquests; to provide for the appointment of coroners and deputy coroners; for the removal, if necessary, of such coroners and deputy coroners; and for making regulations respecting the duty and remuneration of such coroners or deputy coroners. It is not intended to exclude justices of the peace from acting as coroners, but they will only be eligible to act as coroners when appointed for the purpose by the Attorney General. The practice at the present time is for the police officer in charge of the locality where a body may have been discovered or where it may be considered necessary to hold an inquiry into the circumstances of a death, to call upon any justice of the peace to hold an inquest. Under the new measure, the resident magistrate or justice of the peace may sit as a coroner but only if armed with the authority of the Attorney General to act as a deputy coroner. In the metropolitan area, for instance, the practice under the new Act, no doubt, will be for the Government to appoint some suitable person as coroner, and, so far as practicable, the whole of the inquiries there, and perhaps over a much wider area, will be held by that man who will possess peculiar qualifications for the post. In other States, it has been the practice for doctors to be coroners, and that may or may not be followed here; but it is intended that the office of coroner shall be filled by a person having, as I say, peculiar qualifications for the post. In other parts of the State magistrates or justices of the peace who may be considered to have those special qualifications for the work will be appointed as deputy coroners and will hold inquiries. In addition to the two Acts I have referred to regarding inquests on sudden, violent, or apparently unnatural deaths, there are three other Acts relating to inquiries. There is the Fire Inquiry Act of 1887, the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902, Section 49 of which deals with the holding of inquests, and Section 35 of the Mines Regulation Act of 1906. The whole of these provisions have been embodied in the Bill now before the House, so we shall have, within the four corners of one measure, all matters relating to coronial inquests, whether in the case of death or fire. The Bill is based very largely upon the present Imperial Act, and other Acts that have been drawn upon by the Attorney General in drafting the Bill are the Victorian Act of 1915, the New South Wales Act of 1912, and the Tasmanian Act of 1913. The purpose of the Attorney General in framing this Bill has been to embody the best legislation regarding this matter in the other parts of the Commonwealth, and to take from these Acts which I have referred to just what is considered applicable to the conditions in Western Australia. Another important amend-

ment of the existing law is that it confers upon the coroner power to hold inquiries without a jury. This is at the present time the law in Victoria. I have attended coroners' inquests, have been on juries and have myself acted as a coroner. Most of us will agree that in a great many instances it is entirely unnecessary to have a jury. The coroner could just as readily arrive at the facts by himself. But whether or not a jury should be summoned is not left entirely to the discretion of the coroner. In the case of an inquest on the body of a person whose death has been caused by an explosion or accident in or about a mine to which the Mines Regulation Act or the Coal Mines Regulation Act applies, a jury must be summoned. The discretion of the coroner does not apply in cases of that kind. In any special case in which the Attorney General directs that a jury shall be summoned, the coroner must summon a jury. Again, where a request is made for a jury in writing by any relative of the deceased person, or by any person knowing the circumstances leading up to the death of the deceased, the coroner has no option, but must summon a jury. And in addition to those cases in which he is compelled to summon a jury, he may summon a jury in any case in which he considers it necessary. Where a jury is summoned, the number of the jury is fixed at three. As a matter of practice all our coroners' inquests held before juries have been held before juries of three. Provision is also made that in certain cases in which the coroner does not consider a view of the body necessary, that formality may be dispensed with; but if the coroner does not consider a view of the body necessary, it is still open to anyone to obtain an order from the Supreme Court for a view of the body. This provision is taken from the Victorian Act. When the Bill was introduced in another place it contained a provision taken from the Tasmanian Act, that when an inquest is held touching the death of an infant in the care of a person licensed under the State Children Act, the coroner should inquire, not only into the immediate cause of death, but also into all circumstances of treatment and condition of the infant during life. In Committee in another place the words referring to the care of a person licensed under the State Children Act were struck out, thereby making this provision applicable in all cases of inquests on infants. But a further amendment was made changing the word "shall" to "may." So under the Tasmanian Act, and as the Bill was introduced in another place, it was mandatory on the coroner or the jury to inquire, in certain cases of deaths of infants, into the circumstances of the treatment and condition of the infant during life; whereas under the Bill as we have now to consider it, it is put before the coroner and jury as one of the things they may do in all cases of inquests into deaths of infants. I think it is a valuable provision and one likely to aid in the protection of infant life.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Which clause is that?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Clause 11, Subclause 5. Provision is made in the Bill under which a coroner may order a post-mortem examination of the body of the deceased with or without analysis of the contents of stomach and intestines That provision, which is contained in Clause 39, is followed by this proviso:—

> Provided that if it appears to the coroner that the death of the deceased was probably caused partly or entirely by the improper or negligent treatment of a medical practitioner or other person, such practitioner or other person shall not be allowed to perform or assist at any such post mortem examination or analysis, although he shall in every such case be allowed to be present thereat.

An interesting provision is that contained in Clause 21, under which the verdict of *felo de se* is abolished.

Hon. J. Nicholson: A very good thing too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I understand that verdicts of that kind made it compulsory that the body should be buried at four cross roads with a stake passed through it, and that the whole of the property of the deceased should be forfeited to the Crown. Another provision in the same clause provides that it shall not be lawful for a coroner, or any other person whomsoever, to forbid the rights of Christian burial at the interment of any person who has committed suicide or died by his own act. I confess that, on first reading that clause, I wondered whether it was necessary; but I am assured that without the provision it might be possible for a coroner to forbid the rights of Christian burial in the case of a suicide. The next succeeding clause makes it unlawful for any coroner or coroner's jury to find any forfeiture of any chattel which may have moved to or caused the death of the deceased. For the information of members interested in mining, I point out that Clause 25 deals with fatal mining accidents and to a very large extent takes the place of Section 35 of the Mines Regulation Act. In another place an amendment was inserted in Subclause 2 giving the workmen's inspector the right to be present at an inquest to examine witnesses and to elicit evidence relative to the cause of death. Clause 26 deals with inquests on deaths from accidents in coal mines. Clause 31 refers to inquests on deaths from explosion or accident in or about a mine. Those three clauses cover provisions taken from the Mines Regulation Act and from the Coal Mines Regulation Act, and do not materially alter the existing law. Provision is made that if a jury fail to agree after six hours of deliberation, they may be discharged and a fresh jury empanelled. I do not think there is any provision in the Bill which is in any way unusual, or which amends the existing practice. It is a Bill

for careful consideration in Committee. Having briefly outlined its leading principles, indeed all of its principles which can be said to be novel or in any way depart from the existing practice, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. R. G. Ardagh, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDING SOCIETIES.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Purpose for which societies may be established:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: On the second reading the Minister said that he would get information on two points which I then raised, namely, building societies being permitted to lend on leasehold properties and also on vacant land.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not know that I can offer any information. It is purely a matter of opinion. It is not considered essential that building societies should have only freehold security. It is for the societies themselves to protect their securities. There may be circumstances in which it is considered quite safe to advance on leasehold. If the Committee is of opinion that building societies should be restricted in the matter of security, it is for the Committee to say so.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The Minister's reply is not satisfactory. The Bill has been framed to protect the investing public. In view of this, it is not fair that we should present the societies with a blank cheque. Some limitation should be placed upon the tenure of leasehold on which money may be lent. Unless that is done, a society may be tempted to lend money on a leasehold which has only three years to run.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member has now raised an entirely different issue. I took the precaution of having amendments prepared which would meet the case if the Committee determined that it was undesirable to permit building societies to lend money on leasehold, or on vacant land, but I did not contemplate the confining of loans on leaseholds to leaseholds having still a certain period to run. If it is thought necessary to limit building societies in this way, and the hon. member can persuade the Committee to take this view, it will be an easy matter to draft an amendment to meet the case. The Solicitor General thinks it inadvisable to confine the operations of building societies to freehold property, or to interfere with the previous practice. It has been left to the discretion of building societies to make advances upon what are considered to be good securities.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would be inadvisable to restrict building societies in their operations in this way. For instance, it is necessary that the fullest measure of assistance should be given to holders of conditional purchase land. The directors of these societies are presumably endowed with some degree of common sense, and would not be so foolish as to lend money on securities which were inadequate. Under the Trustees Act certain limitations are imposed in regard to the lending of money, and the directors of these societies would come within that law.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: This Bill will be in operation in normal as well as abnormal times. There have been Australian boom periods when boards of directors have committed acts of foolishness. It is to prevent the recurrence of that sort of thing that I am aiming at an amendment to restrict the lending of money on leasehold property.

Hon. T. Moore: Why leasehold property?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: A person only holds leasehold land for a certain period. It has been pointed out to me by one of the important societies in Perth that some protection in this way is desirable. If the Minister for Education will move to report progress I will endeavour by Tuesday next to bring up an amendment which will meet the case.

The Minister for Education: You have had the Bill before you for a week.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: When I brought the matter up before, the Minister for Education said he was prepared to reply to the queries raised by me, but he has not done so. Apparently he has been too busy to get the information I require in regard to the granting of protection in respect to freehold property.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: It seems to me Mr. Duffell wishes to prevent rogues of directors from making ducks and drakes of the shareholders' money on leasehold property. If the directors are rogues there is nothing to prevent them from making ducks and drakes of the money on freehold property.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I take exception to Mr. Duffell's remark that I have been too busy to obtain the information he asked for. I told him that when this matter came up I would put the position before the Committee as it is, and I have done so.

Hon. J. Duffell: You have not given me the information.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have told the hon. member what the Solicitor General says. If Mr. Duffell wishes to move an amendment, and does not know the exact form of it, if he will embody the principle that he requires in his amendment it can be put into any form that he likes. I must oppose the amendment he wishes to submit, because there is no necessity for it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Prohibition of advances on second mortgages:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: What is the necessity for the proviso in this clause? It appears that existing societies are to be allowed to continue making advances on second mortgages, but that any new society is not to be allowed to do this. This would seem to be creating a monopoly. If it is wrong for a new society to embark upon this sort of business, it must be wrong for existing societies to carry on in this way.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Bill as introduced in another place did not contain this provision. It is considered undesirable as a matter of principle for building societies to advance money on second mortgages. It was pointed out in another place that one particular building society had been in the habit of advancing money on second mortgages, and this proviso was put in so that their position should not be prejudiced.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I shall vote against the inclusion of this proviso in the clause. It is peculiar that, because a building society is carrying on what is considered to be unsound business, it should be allowed to continue merely because it is in existence to-day, while any new society would not be allowed to do this.

[Hon. W. Kingsmill took the Chair.]

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is a good deal in the argument put forward by the hon. member. I am not satisfied in my own mind as to what should be the proper course. It seems to me that it would be improper to penalise any society which, before this Bill became law, had been acting bona fide in accordance with their rules, or to make illegal any act of theirs under this heading. It is open to contention that the proviso instead of protecting these societies should protect that which they have done in the past.

Hon. J. Cornell: Put them all on a level for the future.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: That argument is worthy of consideration. I am sure Mr. Holmes does not wish to prejudice existing societies which have been carrying on their business in this way in a bona fide manner. His point is that an existing society in respect to its future operations should not continue to enjoy privileges which may be formed after the passing of this Bill.

Hon. J. Duffell: Is that to say that a society lending money on second mortgage cannot continue in that line of business?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, if the clause is put in that form. In regard to future operations they would come under the same provisions as any new society.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: That is not the information that has been given to me. It appears that this clause applies directly to one particular building society in Perth, whose chief business is to lend its money on second mortgages. It is the intention of this society to continue doing this.

The Minister for Education: The clause is drafted to allow the society to do so.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The proviso is put in to prevent anyone else from operating in this way.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: My point is that another place considered that this was a class of business that a building society should not be allowed to conduct. I do not propose to interfere with anything a particular society has done, but we should strike out the proviso so as to prevent that society from doing any further business which is not considered sound business for a building society. I move an amendment—

That the proviso be struck out.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I would like to move an amendment to the proviso.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Perhaps I may be allowed to withdraw my amendment until we have heard that of the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member does not like Dr. Saw's amendment he cannot then move again for the deletion of the proviso.

The Minister for Education: Dr. Saw may suggest an amendment by which the proviso may be made acceptable.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: My amendment would be as follows—

That all words after "any," in the first line, be struck out, and the following words inserted:—"advance on second mortgage already existing."

The proviso would then read—

Provided also that this section shall not apply to any advance on second mortgage already existing.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The commitments already entered into must be honoured. We cannot have two classes of building societies in the State. The clause is for the protection, benefit, and continuity of one society. We cannot legislate for one in the way of curtailment and legislate for another by way of protection. I am going to vote in the direction of honouring commitments.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Would it not assist us if the leader of the House could inform us what procedure is adopted with regard to the building societies elsewhere? This question must have already been thrashed out.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Bill provides that this society shall continue the practice and that no other society shall.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I would like to know what the other societies say on the point.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The point we have to consider is the usefulness of building societies to enable small holders to get homes together. I communicated with this particular society to learn what the position was.

I was informed that the society carries on operations in a way which does extend to its members the greatest possible help by second mortgage. Members of the society who have small means are enabled to get together homes which they otherwise would not be able to do. A member goes to the society and says, "I have a chance to buy this property for so much." The property is inspected and valued. Instead of the society employing the whole of its funds in a few of its members' purchases, the society itself arranges to get a first mortgage on the property, and they say, "We can advance the balance and we will also undertake to give a guarantee if need be to the first mortgagee that the money will be repaid," thereby assuring the purchase of the property. I have a letter from the society which explains the matter. It reads—

> Our system of loaning money is rather different from that of other societies, in that we obtain a certain proportion of outside money on all our properties on first mortgage and advance the balance ourselves on second mortgage. By doing this we can, of course, settle more of our members in their own homes than if we used our own money only. For instance, in the first seven years of our existence we loaned over £60,000 to our members of which we obtained approximately £35,000 outside. As a matter of fact the method employed by other societies which practically amounts to the same thing is as follows: they advance their own money on first mortgage, then arrange for large overdrafts on the security of these mortgages, and in addition take in deposits. The advantage our system has is that all our first mortgages are for definite periods, whereas overdrafts are at immediate call, our system therefore being the safer.

When one looks at a security, the first thing that is said is, "I want a first mortgage." But the various sections of the public have to be considered and not one section only. We know there are many men who have only a few pounds of capital and that the societies are prepared to assist them to get a home together. If we strike out the proviso we will deprive these people from acquiring their own homes. That is wrong.

Hon. A. Sanderson: You would strike out the whole clause?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am urging that the clause be left as it is. This society in the first place arranges a loan for so much on first mortgage and they have their own money they can advance on second mortgage, and the member pays it off at so much per week or per month.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am at a loss to follow the hon. member. He proposes to prohibit anyone from forming a company to transact this class of business. My point is that the clause prohibits any other person or combination of persons from forming a company to carry on this class of business. Under the proviso, the companies in existence will be allowed to continue the practice which may be good or which may be bad.

[Hon. J. Ewing resumed the Chair.]

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The leader of the House tells us that the second mortgage system is bad, but Mr. Nicholson says that there is a company doing this business, and doing it well, and that it is a sound and advantageous method of doing business for the benefit of members of the society.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Then why prevent other people from doing it?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If we could settle the question raised by the leader of the House and Mr. Nicholson, we could then decide whether we would permit second mortgage business in future by a company which in the past has enjoyed that right. I am inclined to agree with the leader of the House, but I would like to know the procedure in South Australia. If other States are all against the second mortgage system, I should support the leader of the House.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I believe that under the Victorian Act advances on the security of second mortgages are prohibited, but I am not in a position to say what the law is in other States. It must be either right or wrong to allow building societies to advance on second mortgages. If it is wrong, we must protect what a society has bona fide done up to the present, but no one should be allowed to do it in future. If on the other hand it is right, everyone should be allowed to do it. I move—

> That the further consideration of Clause 19 be postponed until after the consideration of Clause 52.

Motion passed.

Clauses 20, 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—Power to secure repayment of borrowed money:

On motion by the Minister for Education Clause 22 postponed until after the consideration of postponed Clause 19.

Clauses 23 to 33—agreed to.

Clause 34—Societies to make annual audits and statements of funds:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Does this involve the Government in any responsibility? It would appear that the secretary makes a return to the Government department, that the department notes it and there the matter ends. Have the Government any responsibility of any kind?

The Minister for Education: No.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is that the usual method? When people see a statement of accounts in a Government paper, the tendency is to attach special weight to it and to conclude that the Government had satis-

fied themselves of the accuracy of the statements.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It has always been the practice for building and friendly societies to deposit their balance sheets with the registrar, together with such information as the Minister may direct, but this does not involve the Government in any responsibility. It is the practice of the registrar to call attention to anything which he considers to be irregular or wrong. This is designed as an extra protection to the public.

Hon. J. Cornell: The registrar is very strict, too.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. If a building society got away with the money of its members, there would be no obligation on the Government; but the registrar does his duty thoroughly, and if anything is wrong, he is very quick to direct the attention of the society to it.

Hon. A. Sanderson: I do not question that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 35 to 52—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—WESTRALIAN MEAT WORKS.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

House adjourned at 5.43 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 14th October, 1920.

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

QUESTION—OIL LEGISLATION.

Mr. PICKERING asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When will the Oil Bill, promised to the deputation that waited upon him, be introduced? 2, Is he aware that suggestions have been made to the Commonwealth Government to declare petroleum a Commonwealth monopoly in the Empire's interest? 3, Will he safeguard the interests of the State by anticipating Commonwealth legislation?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Conditions under which prospecting for oil will be regulated and under which areas will be provided are to be introduced in a Bill to amend the Mining Act, together with other necessary amendments, such as to provide better methods of tributing, and will be brought before the House at an early date. 2, I am not aware that it is proposed that the Commonwealth should claim it as a monopoly in the sense that only the Commonwealth Government would be entitled to work it. I think this would require an amendment of the Federal Constitution. It has long since been suggested that all oil should be reserved to the Crown in order to protect the interests of the Empire, and this is not being overlooked in the draft. This does not imply that leases will not be grated but the conditions of working same shall be such as serve the best interests of the Crown and the Empire, particularly the Navy and the British Mercantile Marine. 3, Answered by No. 2.

QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT.

Bulk Handling.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1, Will he inform the House when the necessary legislation will be introduced in regard to the installation of the bulk handling of wheat? 2, Is he aware that it is most imperative to enact the necessary legislation so that no time may be lost in getting the system working?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied: 1, I am informed by the Chairman of Directors of the Grain Growers Elevators, Limited, that the company does not wish the Bill introduced this session. 2, Answered by No. 1.

Marketing, Payments, Guarantees, etc.

Mr. MALEY asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that harvesting operations have already commenced in some districts, owing to the exceptionally early season? 2, If so, when is it intended to introduce the necessary legislation to control the marketing of wheat? 3, What financial arrangements have been made in regard to payment upon delivery of wheat at sidings for the present harvest? 4, What amount per bushel is it proposed to advance, and what date is being fixed to commence taking delivery? 5, What were the