

caravan and bathroom on a block, and they have the foundations of a house, but they can go no further.

There are hundreds of such people in the Canning electorate. The road boards concerned are tolerant and try to improve matters for them. They refer many cases to me but there is little that can be done because the Housing Commission simply says, "Yes, they applied for assistance in 1948 but so-and-so is being evicted and must be accommodated first." That is the present state of affairs and the position will deteriorate to a greater extent the more ways and means are provided for landlords to impose on tenants.

One bad aspect of the situation which has not been mentioned has to do with the provision of accommodation for foreign migrants coming into this State. Reference to the Press of recent date shows that many eviction orders are granted in favour of migrants with foreign names. I have nothing of a xenophobic nature about me but I feel these people should not, after working as a family group for perhaps 18 months in order to secure the deposit necessary, be able to pay it down on a house and then take action to evict an Australian family which has resided in those premises for possibly 20 years and which, until the time of the sale, had no idea that they were likely to be evicted.

When that sort of thing happens, the unfortunate evictees represent a further urgent case to be dealt with by the Housing Commission, thus preventing those who have been on the waiting list for many years from taking their right order of priority. It has been said repeatedly during the debate that in all the other States of the Commonwealth there is legislation covering rents and tenancies. Surely if any State needs such coverage it is Western Australia!

As members are aware, the present industrial development in Western Australia is bringing more population here and we must all realise that within a short space of time the housing position will deteriorate still further if the building rate is not maintained at the present figure even without further eviction taking place. I do not think the position relating to the goodwill of small businesses has been well stated by those who think the owner of such a business is not entitled to some remuneration for goodwill.

As things now are, a chain-store grocery may buy up the premises of the local grocer when they set up business on the opposite side of the road, in order to rid themselves of his opposition. They may then evict him, paying nothing for the goodwill of the business, and re-let the shop to someone else at a nominal rent simply, I repeat, to rid themselves of the competition. We should provide fair treatment for both sides and while, like other members, I know that

there are both bad landlords and bad tenants, I am convinced some control is necessary. Unless we have legislation of that kind on the statute book the position will continue to deteriorate until, eventually, we will find pressure groups seeking the passing of various measures to assist them in the way they desire. I support the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 30th June, 1954.

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

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £16,500,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move (without notice)—

That Standing Order No. 15 be suspended so as to enable the Supply Bill (No. 1) to be taken forthwith and to have precedence each day before the resumption of the debate on the Address-in-reply.

In order to make the position clear, I would remind members that Standing Orders have been suspended to enable the Supply Bill to be taken through all its stages at any one sitting. But Standing Order No. 15 says—

Except as provided by these Standing Orders or by leave of the Council, no business beyond what is of a formal character shall be entered upon before the Address-in-reply has been adopted.

I desire to clean up the point and make it possible for the Supply Bill to be debated each day before the Address-in-reply has been adopted.

Question put and passed.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

As to Supplies of Expendable Stores.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) What are the expendable stores supplied to primary and post primary schools?

(2) Is it the practice of the Education Department to provide pads, pencils and chalk for the children attending these schools?

(3) Is the Minister aware that on the occasion of the opening of a new school in the country, children were instructed to bring along money for the purchase of these essential requisites?

(4) Is not this practice contrary to the principles of free education?

(5) What is the full meaning of "free education" as applied to our State schools today?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) First aid equipment, writing cards, pads, pad paper, lead pencils, crayons, nibs, penholders, chalk, blotting paper, cartridge paper, toilet paper and sewing materials.

(2) Yes. See answer No. (1).

(3) No, but enquiry will be made on advice being given as to the school referred to.

(4) Yes.

(5) The term "free education" as applied in Government schools means the system of education whereby parents are freed from a full responsibility for payment of the costs of tuition, children's transport and expendable school requisites.

RAILWAYS.

As to Bunbury Road and Rail Services.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) When is it intended to replace the passenger and freight road service to Bunbury by rail services?

(2) Will the daily service to and from Bunbury be maintained?

(3) Have any public bodies requested a change?

(4) What is the capacity in trains per day of the Armadale-Brunswick section?

(5) How many trains per day run on the existing schedule?

(6) How many extra trains per day is it intended to run?

(7) Will the service be diesel or steam?

(8) What are the receipts per passenger-mile of the passenger-bus service?

(9) What is the running expense per mile of the passenger service?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) A rail service will be introduced on the 12th July, 1954, to take the place of cancelled bus services, but certain buses will continue to run.

(2) Yes, by rail and bus.

(3) No.

(4) Monday to Saturday, a daily average of 25.

(5) Monday to Saturday, a daily average of 18.

(6) One each way.

(7) Diesel electric.

(8) 2.16d. per passenger-mile for Perth-Bunbury route.

(9) 2.49d. per passenger-mile for Perth-Bunbury route.

HOSPITALS.

As to Regional Building, Albany.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

Can he inform the House—

(1) Whether any preparatory work has been carried out, such as the taking of levels, on the site selected for the proposed Albany regional hospital?

(2) Whether a start has been made by the Architectural Division of the Public Works Department on the plans for this hospital?

(3) If the plans have not been started, what is the cause of the delay?

(4) Whether it is anticipated that tenders will be called for this work during the next financial year?

(5) Whether it is the intention to erect this hospital under the Public Works day labour system; and, if so, when is a start likely to be made?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) Pressure of more immediate works.

(4) This will depend on availability of funds.

(5) A decision on this question will be made when it is known that funds will be available.

CHAIRMEN (DEPUTY) OF COMMITTEES.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 31a, Hon. E. M. Davies, Hon. C. H. Simpson and Hon. Sir Charles Latham be elected to act as Deputy Chairmen of Committees during the current session.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I desire to inform the Chief Secretary that I do not wish to take any position on the floor of the House.

The PRESIDENT: Would the Chief Secretary nominate somebody else?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would prefer a nomination to come from somebody on the side to which Sir Charles Latham is attached.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: In the circumstances, I move an amendment—

That Hon L. A. Logan's name be inserted in lieu of that of Sir Charles Latham.

Amendment put and passed; the question, as amended, agreed to.

COMMITTEES FOR THE SESSION.

Standing Orders.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 34, the following members be elected to serve on the Standing Orders Committee during the present session, viz.:—Hon. L. Craig, Hon. E. M. Davies and Hon. Sir Charles Latham.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I desire to inform the Chief Secretary that I do not wish to accept this position.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: In the circumstances, I move an amendment—

That the name of Hon L. A. Logan be inserted in lieu of Sir Charles Latham's.

Amendment put and passed; the question, as amended, agreed to.

Library.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, the following members were elected to the Library Committee:—Hon. F. R. H. Lavery and Hon. A. F. Griffith.

House.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, the following members were elected to the House Committee:—Hon. W. R. Hall, Hon. H. Hearn, Hon. E. M. Heenan and Hon. A. R. Jones.

Printing.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, the following members were elected to the Printing Committee:—Hon. J. Murray and Hon. G. Bennetts.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 1), £16,500,000.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.47]: The Chief Secretary, in introducing the Supply Bill, remarked that it had several unusual features on this occasion.

That is quite true. It is unusual, of course, for the House to be in session at this time of the year. Strictly speaking, the Government is not supposed to go on spending money without the authority of Parliament; but as Parliament is not usually called together until late in July, and as everyone knows that the essential services of the country must be carried on, it has been taken for granted that what has been done will always be validated by a Supply Bill introduced at the earliest possible opportunity once Parliament is assembled. Parliament being in session, I should say that it is a virtual certainty that this Bill will be passed tonight, which will mean that, starting from tomorrow morning, the Government will have legal sanction for the money it spends—which, as the Chief Secretary has remarked, is rather unusual.

Another unusual feature was the offer of the Leader of the House to permit the adjournment of the debate. I was very glad to accept that offer for a number of reasons. One was that the Loan Council in session in Canberra at the present time could be expected to provide material on which members of this House would like to speak. What was published in the paper this morning could easily contain matters on which members might like to comment, and the adjournment of the debate until today will give them that opportunity.

Another reason was that the Leader of the House explained that, in speaking to a Bill of this kind, members are permitted to touch on any subject they like, and the adjournment of the debate gives newcomers the opportunity to speak on this measure as well as on the Address-in-reply; though we quite appreciate the point made by the Chief Secretary when he said he did not want the measure to be unduly delayed, but desired it to be passed as quickly as possible, thereby intimating that those members who had not spoken on the Address-in-reply would have ample opportunity to say what they wished to say in that particular debate. That necessitated another unusual action, inasmuch as the Chief Secretary had of necessity to move without notice that this Order of the Day be taken before the usual Order of the Day; namely, the Address-in-reply.

Coming now to the deliberations in the Loan Council, we have been told by the newspaper report that the Premiers of the various States submitted requests totalling £255,000,000. The Commonwealth Government made a counter offer of £180,000,000. After a considerable debate, lasting well into the night, a compromise was reached, under which the Commonwealth agreed to provide £200,000,000. The debates nearly always take that form. There is a good deal of haggling and a good deal of explanation, but the agreement arrived at finally is fundamentally

based on the capacity of the country to provide the money. It is no earthly use presenting demands and deciding by a majority vote that something shall happen if, in fact, the necessary money cannot be found. The Commonwealth is willing and anxious to help; and usually, after discussion, decisions are reached in a very friendly atmosphere. Unfortunately, however, most Premiers go back to their own States and complain bitterly that the Commonwealth just would not honour requests submitted to it.

On this occasion, the Prime Minister is reported to have told the Premiers that there was a tendency towards inflation—that is to say, that the supply of money available was greater than the quantity of goods and services in sight, and that there would be competition not only between Government and Government but also between Government and private industry for the necessary materials and manpower to do what was required; and having had one experience of that, naturally the Governments concerned are very anxious about the position that has arisen and are just as desirous of avoiding any tendency in that direction if possible.

In addition to the £200,000,000 that the Commonwealth Government has guaranteed will be provided either by way of loan or from revenue, there are available to the States their own borrowing powers—that is, semi-Governmental borrowings—which are estimated as being likely to return £75,000,000, with a further £15,000,000 which can be raised by local authorities. Up till just two or three years ago, this State was about the only one in the Commonwealth that did not embark upon semi-Governmental borrowing, but a couple of years ago we did float a loan for the State Electricity Commission. As a matter of fact, two loans were floated, and they were well supported by West Australians, who naturally have a great interest and confidence in their own State.

Such projects have been fairly widespread in the practice of finance in the other States; and, as a matter of fact, it was the launching of such projects on a big scale in the various States which created the position where we are now short of the necessary manpower and materials to carry out plans that we have put in motion. In other words, temporarily we are in the situation of having bitten off a little more than we can chew.

Hon. H. Hearn: Which could lead to inflation.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: The tendency is that way, and the Prime Minister has given a serious warning that that factor must be seriously and constantly borne in mind. Inflation is due to the disequilibrium that I have mentioned.

It may be interesting, particularly for new members, if I briefly traverse the system of finance that exists between the Commonwealth and the States. I did touch on this matter last year, but a recapitulation of some of the principles that govern Federal-State financial relationships might be of interest to those who have just been elected to this House.

Prior to 1942, the States raised their own moneys by taxation, although there was an arrangement by which one authority collected both State tax and Federal tax, the States being responsible, of course, for their own commitments. In 1942, a uniform tax Act was passed with a view to saving manpower and the cost of administration. Under that measure, the Federal authority collected all income tax and reimbursed the State at the end of each year. Actually, although the money was reimbursed, a proper reimbursement Act was not passed until 1946, when the Commonwealth Grants Commission was established and a formula was laid down to provide for income tax reimbursement to the States.

Inevitably, there was some give and take, but the original formula tended to penalise the thrifty States and assist more liberally those States that had embarked upon a lavish programme of spending. But as adjustments were made every year, the experts—that is the Treasurers of the Commonwealth and the States—who devised the formula, anticipated that in five years all the anomalies would be adjusted.

Actually, neither the Commonwealth nor the Grants Commission dictates to the States how they shall budget or spend their money; but when called upon to assist one of the claimant States, the commission does expect that State to try to carry its own burden as far as possible. I might explain that there are three standard States—New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland—and three claimant States—South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia—and the principle is that the richer and larger States shall help the poorer and less populous. But the Grants Commission will always help the smaller States, and has considerably helped this State in particular.

In the case of South Australia, however, when it asked for assistance three or four years ago to finance a fairly big deficit, particularly on railway operations in that State, the commission pointed out that the three standard States had raised their freights and that it was hardly fair to expect them to put in money to help South Australia, which had refused to adjust its own freights. So in that instance South Australia was fined £100,000. Still, in substance, the necessary help was forthcoming.

There are four ways in which the Commonwealth can assist the States. The first is by the reimbursement of tax collections.

The second is the distribution of Loan moneys which are raised by the Commonwealth and which are dependent on the state of the money market at the time. The third is by an adjustment according to the needs of the claimant States; and the fourth is by means of special grants, which occur when there are special circumstances such as drought, flood, or some other similar calamity, or, as happened to Western Australia a couple of years ago, on account of the conditions brought about by the disastrous metal trades strike.

This is how it works out so far as Western Australia is concerned: Last year, our State budgeted for about £43,000,000 revenue and £43,000,000 expenditure, with an anticipated deficit of £88,000. Until the figures are released at the end of the month, we cannot say whether the anticipated deficit will be near the mark or not, but the chances are that it will be. In the £43,400,000 revenue, the tax reimbursement was estimated to be £11,250,000, in addition to which the State raised £3,000,000 by way of taxation. A special grant by the Commonwealth amounted to £7,800,000; State departmental fees, such as land rents and the like, amounted to £5,400,000; and £16,000,000 was realised from public utilities and State trading concerns. In addition, the Commonwealth Government provided loan moneys to the extent of £19,000,000. So, out of the total of £62,400,000 which the State had at its disposal last year, the Commonwealth provided £38,000,000 and the State £24,800,000. Those are the relative proportions of the total of £62,400,000 which was used for running the State last year.

When the Financial Agreement was entered into, it was understood that it was a war measure. There was an understanding, too, between the Commonwealth and the States, that the position would be reviewed at the end of five years, or at the end of the war; and if the States considered these taxing powers should be returned, Mr. Chifley gave it as his promise that the request of the States would be favourably considered. I think our State Government was, at least for a time, inclined to ask for a return of the taxing powers; but there was very little support from the other States, and I do not think the request developed into anything tangible. Generally speaking, there seems to be an inclination to allow the present system to ride rather than to alter what has become a feature of our Commonwealth-State relationship.

There are advantages and disadvantages in this system. The first advantage is, of course, the convenience of the taxpayers. There is just the one collecting authority. In addition, there is simplicity and, in wartime, unquestionably it is a necessity. It also has the advantage of economy in administration. The disadvantages are that in the initial stages it undoubtedly penal-

ised the thrifty States and helped the less thrifty; but that position, I think, has ironed itself out. Another disadvantage is that it destroyed the direct relationship between the man who paid the tax and the man who spent it. It means, in effect, that A pays, B collects, and C spends. Again, there seems to have been a tendency over the years for the spending authority to clamour for more and more help from the collecting authority, and then to turn to the paying authority—in this case the taxpayer—and say, "This is what I want to do for you, but I have been stopped by the man who has the money. He will not give it to me."

However, I think that, by and large, most people understand how the problem is worked out and they are philosophical enough to realise that if the money is not there, it is not available to be spent. But there is this point; that when a Government has a direct responsibility to the taxpayer to spend the money it collects from him, it very often means that a brake is put on spending, and there is a greater tendency towards efficiency and economy than when the supplying authority, as far as the money is concerned, does not and cannot question every action taken.

The Minister for the North-West: What about the supplying authority itself?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Another feature of taxation is that if taxes are too high there is a tendency for production incentives and efficiency to be lost. In those countries where taxes are higher than they are here—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Where would they be?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: America is one. There the company tax is 51 per cent., and if a company makes more than a certain amount, the tax is raised to 82 per cent. Big business houses will embark on expensive advertising schemes and the entertaining of customers, acting in the belief that they are only spending 18-cent dollars, which is their liability out of every dollar spent, which otherwise would be paid to the Federal authority; and, of course, according to their reckoning, the Government pays the 82 cents. That does not benefit the community, on balance, because somewhere, somehow, someone has to foot the bill. It is a good principle that where the individual is encouraged to produce as much as he can and to save as much as possible and to economise, there should be a build-up of a reserve, which means that there will be not only reduced prices of commodities, but also money available for the development of those things which the community needs. That is all I have to say on the question of finance, generally, at the moment.

I was interested in the replies given to the questions asked by Mrs. Hutchison last night, and I am quite in agreement

with a remark that was passed that whatever the cost of the Legislative Council might be—and when it is worked out per head or per week it is a very small amount—it has been offset by the service which this House has rendered to the community. The Council has, I think, on many occasions made valuable suggestions in connection with legislation that has been submitted to it. It has been the means of giving effect to the desires of the people by pointing out defects in Bills passed in another place, the measures being reviewed and re-considered in this Chamber, with the result that certain amendments were accepted, with benefit to the community as a whole. That is the prime purpose of a Chamber of review such as this is.

I think, too, the Legislative Council has been the means, as has been admitted, of modifying and even preventing legislation which would not have been in the best interests of the community. A third reason is that it has been, I think, expected to turn down certain legislation which it is doubtful that the Government wanted, but which it was compelled by pressure from some of the extremist members of its party to bring in.

The Minister for the North-West: It has its uses.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I am pretty sure that is the case. I have just one more remark to make under a general heading, and that is on the question of conferences which are provided for under our Standing Orders when the two Houses fail to reach agreement on questions in dispute. Under our system, the proceedings in conference are in camera, and I think that is desirable. It would be embarrassing and unwise if the arguments and discussions were made public in any way. I think it is necessary to have a means of talking over in confidence the various points at issue, and honestly endeavouring to arrive at some solution.

But there is a handicap. Under our present system, if one member of the conference refuses to compromise or agree with the others on something of importance which, in the majority opinion of both Chambers, is acceptable, it can mean that the legislation is nullified as, too, is the work done by both Chambers. I have a suggestion to make, and it is that, instead of three managers being appointed from each House, as at present, consideration be given to appointing four managers from each House. We would then have one Minister at least from each House at the conference and three members, one representing each party, and I suggest that where the decision is difficult to arrive at, a six to two vote could determine the question one way or the other. That would be preferable to the possibility of one difficult individual causing the conference to be abortive. I think that suggestion is

worthy of consideration, and I place it on record as something that I hope the Government will consider and possibly take action in regard to. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON J. McI. THOMSON (South) [5.13]: This being the first occasion on which I have addressed the House this session, I take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high and dignified office of President of the Legislative Council of Western Australia.

I rise to add my few remarks to those already made on the Bill. I wish to make particular reference to the deferred payment system appertaining to the building of a number of new schools and classrooms in the State at the present time. Under this system, the Government is erecting in the country and in the metropolitan area a total of 12 new schools, as well as some additions and improvements to 18 other schools. The total cost of the work that has been outlined in the programme is estimated at £223,433 and is compiled as follows:—

Name of Contractor.	Amount. £
G. Esselmont	6,000
Concrete Construction Company Pty. Ltd., Western Australia	49,735
Jennings Construction Company Pty. Ltd., W.A.	167,698
Total	223,433

Of that amount £7,500 will have been paid out to the contractors concerned at the close of this financial year, which ends today. No doubt the value of the work completed in that time is in the vicinity of £167,598, because £160,198 14s. 3d. is deferred under the scheme at the rate of 5 per cent. interest until the next financial year, when it will be paid to the contractors.

To clarify the position, I repeat that £7,500 has already been paid in this financial year to the three contractors concerned, but the value of the work done in that period, according to the information supplied in another place during the session held last April, is £160,198 14s. 3d., which is to be carried forward to the next financial year at the rate of 5 per cent. Up to the present I have not been able to ascertain when the amount of £55,734 odd will be paid. Presumably that also will carry the 5 per cent. interest rate. That is quite in order.

I am not raising any doubts or complaining about the system of deferred payments. I quite appreciate the fact that the Minister for Education and the Minister for Works realise the advantage of adopting such a method whereby they can get their school buildings and additions constructed without having to find

the money in advance or make the necessary payments in advance. As outlined by the Minister for Education in another place in reply to a question in April last, the system has enabled the building programme to proceed according to plan. No doubt many of those jobs, if not completed, are nearing completion, and the remainder are in course of construction. In passing, I wish to commend the Minister for Education for his action. It was a worthwhile step to take, because we in the country realise the urgent need for such a works programme being carried out expeditiously.

However, the complaint I wish to make is in the interests of the builders and contractors who have pursued and who are still pursuing, their activities in the various country towns and districts. In fact they are residents of the areas in which the school buildings are being erected by the three contractors whose names I have mentioned. As I do not wish the House to misunderstand me, I repeat that I have no complaints about those three contractors. The basis of the complaint is that these contracting firms have their head offices or establishments in the metropolitan area, and their employee would naturally be drawn from the city to be sent into the country to build the 12 new schools and the additions to a further 18. It is considered by the country builders that they should have been given the opportunity of entering into negotiations with the Government to contract for these jobs on the same basis as the other three contractors.

The Jennings Construction Company has a contract which amounts to a total of £167,698; the Concrete Construction Company has a £49,735 contract; and a private contractor by the name of G. Esselmont, whose work was appreciated by many country members when times were difficult, has a contract to the tune of only £6,000. The other country contractors feel that the contracts allotted to the two construction companies that I have mentioned should have been divided amongst them, because they have found that building activities have tightened up considerably in the country. I know from my own personal experience that such is the case.

I have a letter here from one of the contractors, who said it was hardly fair in that when jobs were being advertised by the Public Works Department there were no contractors available to do the work. Tenders were called time and time again, but no applications were received. As a result, the Education Department saw fit to encourage builders in the metropolitan area to go into the country. The difficulties faced by the country builders, of course, were the shortage of materials and labour. However, the position now is extremely different, and the country contractors consider that they

have a just grouch against the Government because it has seen fit to exclude them from these contracts and so bring into the country builders and their teams from the metropolitan area.

It must be remembered that when that is done the cost of building is increased because if a Perth contractor takes his men to the country he must pay away-from-home allowances, board and lodging, and travelling expenses backwards and forwards. Tradesmen from the city these days are not content to work in the country and stay there until the job is completed. If they are employed at centres such as Lake Grace, Kondinin, Denmark, and so on, they generally ask to be conveyed to their homes at least once every three weeks, and their employer has to provide the travelling expenses incurred. As a result, all those costs have to be added to the total estimate for the building, and the Government is paying more than it should, in addition to the 5 per cent. interest rate. If the departments concerned had allotted the work to the country contractors those extra charges would not have eventuated.

On looking at the list of the jobs included in the building programme I know, of my own personal knowledge, that there are many contractors who are residing in the respective areas where the buildings are to be erected who are quite capable of taking on these contracts, and who had done jobs for the Government prior to the introduction of this scheme. In fairness to the Minister for Education, I admit that he would be concerned with only one aspect. He would say, "Here is an opportunity for me to have all these buildings completed in the shortest possible time"; whereas if he had to revert to the previous practice of calling tenders he would encounter delays similar to those he has experienced in the past.

However, those days are past; and therefore, in fairness to the country contractors and their employees, I say that they should have been engaged on these jobs instead of the city builders. If that had been done, we would not have found country tradesmen drifting to the city for employment. I know of no fewer than four carpenters who have left country towns to work in Perth, and we can ill afford to lose them. That state of affairs has been brought about because of the employment that is offering in the city, and, particularly, at Kwinana. If the country contractors had been given the school contracts those men would have been employed by them and would have stayed in the country.

After the existing contracts have been completed, the Government will be called upon to erect more new schools, and make more additions to the old ones. Is it then going to revert to the previous method of calling tenders and rely on the country contractors, or is it going to give the jobs

to the three contractors I have mentioned? I ask the Minister for Education to give this matter his earnest consideration, because I think it is quite possible that it has escaped his attention on account of the lack of labour and materials. I want to be sure that the builders in the country will be given the opportunity to tender for future contracts on the same basis.

I wish to quote the figures of one reliable contractor who has, to the satisfaction of the department, completed the infants school at Albany. He also completed, before this new scheme was introduced, the additions to the Denmark school. Yet, in a matter of less than a couple of years, he was excluded from participating under the existing scheme. We find that the cost per square of a timber-framed building under this system is £400, that amount being based on authentic figures supplied to me by a reliable country builder. How does that measure up with the cost per square indicated by the Minister for Housing in reply to Mr. Watts in another place last week when he inquired into the building costs in the metropolitan area as compared with those in the country? The Minister said the cost of a timber-framed house per square in the country was £206, while the cost in the metropolitan area was £250. We will readily see the tremendous difference in the cost of a building under the deferred payment system which runs out at £400 per square, against the £206.

It may be said that there is a difference between a house and a school building. There may be a difference, but it is a very slight difference, and nowhere near £194 per square, although I am aware that the provision of sewerage and ablution facilities is included in the school building. But, of course, the same would apply to a house built in a sewered area. It would apply to a house built in the metropolitan area. In our anxiety to complete these buildings, we have disregarded costs and the fact that employment should be given to workmen engaged and living in the country. We should do everything to safeguard the principle of tendering for our public works, thus retaining those workmen in country areas.

This information is quite authentic regarding the school at Denmark. On the basis of £400 per square on deferred payments, the cost will be £2,000 over and above the quote if tenders had been called, and the contract secured and carried out by a local builder.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That is the cost plus 5 per cent.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Exactly. Unfortunately that point has been lost sight of by those responsible for this scheme. A builder knowing that he has to complete his contract on time, that he has to go into the country; and that 5 per cent. of the cost will be added to the price, must

of necessity build up his contract price to a higher mark than would have been quoted if tenders had been called for.

Competition is the best and surest way to arrive at an economical and satisfactory basis of building, and that is done by tendering. There is nothing surer and safer than the system of tendering, which brings into play competition. In tenders recently called for by the Public Works Department for the erection of a building for the Rural and Industries Bank in Albany, seven different contractors submitted tenders, two being Perth contractors.

It is a good practice to receive tenders from Perth firms; it makes the competition for country jobs keener and gives a better basis for tendering. It is also of advantage to country contractors to be able to compare their quotes with those received from Perth firms, because they know whether they have tendered on a sound basis.

In this instance, the tenders ranged from just under £34,000 to £39,000. For a job of that description that is good tendering. The four lowest were within a few hundred pounds of one another. From my own experience of building construction I can say that the difference of £300 or £400 in a tender of that size is very reasonable.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: You begin to worry then.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: We do not. On the other hand, we know very well that the basis on which the tenders are arrived at is sound. The person paying the cost of construction can see that he is getting value for his expenditure. We made a grave error when we embarked on the deferred payment system. It was done for a reason, and we have paid very dearly since. I hope that contractors will be given the opportunity to enter into similar arrangements, or revert to tendering.

All this brings me back to one point. It has been stated in this House on numerous occasions by many speakers that a public works and accounts committee should be formed. I was glad to hear the Chief Secretary say during the 1953 session that the Government was giving serious consideration to the matter. It is long overdue. To those members who have advocated such a committee over the years, the information that Cabinet was giving serious consideration to it was a source of satisfaction. Such a committee is very necessary. Here is a glaring instance in which thousands of pounds could have been saved if we had had such a committee to investigate and make recommendations. I am sure its recommendations would not have been along the lines I outlined.

Therefore I sincerely hope that the Chief Secretary will soon convey the information to this House that the proposal is beyond the thinking stage, and that the Government intends to form that committee during the life of this Parliament. It

would be of use not only on occasions such as I have outlined, but also on scores of other occasions on which but for its recommendations, money would be spent without due consideration of economy, advisability and sound finance. As a result of its investigations money would be spent economically, wisely and soundly. I trust we will not have to continue to advocate the creation of this committee, but that it will soon be established. Such a committee would render great service to this State.

Reverting to the housing scheme, it has only been possible in the country towns I mentioned to build the new schools in timber instead of brick, because contractors expressed a preference for timber-framed and asbestos buildings and declined to build with bricks. In that way a great disservice has been done to this State, to the districts concerned, and to the taxpayers, because frequent maintenance work on a timber-framed building is necessary. Every three years or so painting and repairs have to be done. The most economical method would have been to construct the new schools in brick. No doubt they would have cost more; but when I look at the figure of £400 a square for these timber-framed structures, as compared with £270 per square for a brick house in the metropolitan area, I feel we would have done the right thing by building in brick, because we would have saved the maintenance costs. It is agreed that in a brick building the maintenance is practically negligible compared with that for a timber-framed house. Therefore it would have been far more economical in the long run to build in brick. So I say we should be more watchful of these things.

This afternoon I asked some questions regarding royalties paid by the Forests Department to landowners for removal of timber. I am awaiting the replies. This matter is one which has been of concern to farmers who purchased or leased properties from the Crown. They cleared the land and put down the pastures and fences. We then find sawmillers and the Forests Department coming along and saying, "This tree and that one can be felled," and the royalties all going to the Crown. Up till the 12th May of this year, when a joint statement was made by the Minister for Forests and the Minister for Lands on the matter of timber royalties, to which I will refer a little later, timber millers went on to the private landholders' property, and felled trees with no regard to the damage they did to pasture improvements, clearings, etc., their attitude being, "That's just too bad; all that we can give you is our sympathy," and the settler receiving not one penny by way of compensation.

Sympathy, of course, is not of much help to these settlers. When the trees have been felled and the limbs chopped off, the butts are carted away to the mill and all

the debris is left on the block. Consequently, the individual concerned has to undertake a tremendous amount of clearing up in order to restore the damage done to his pasture. Now the Government has seen fit to grant to the settlers a portion of the royalty.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That was done by the present Government.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: Yes, but these people should have received far better treatment than has been meted out to them, irrespective of the Government concerned. Let me quote the Press statement of the Government's decision—

The Government has decided to grant timber royalties retrospective to March 1st, 1953, to landowners who have improved their holdings to at least 50 per cent. in excess of the requirements of the Land Act.

This was announced yesterday in a joint statement by the Minister for Lands (Mr. Hoar) and the Minister for Forests (Mr. Graham).

Landholders will be granted 5s. a load of timber or 50 per cent. of the royalty whichever is the less.

The concession will apply to all landholders who have resided on their properties for a period of five years or more.

New owners of properties will be entitled to benefit from the concession if the conditions of improvement have been complied with by the previous owner or by the united efforts of two or three previous owners. The concession applies only to sawmill logs and not to piles, poles, firewood, malted and sandalwood.

All timber will remain the property of the Crown and will continue to be sold through the Forests Department. Existing logging contracts will stand.

Thus the payment has been made retrospective to the 1st March, 1953, only, and I think the Government could have been more generous to these settlers. I appreciate that the cost of recompensing them has to be met by the taxpayers, but it would have been a far more generous gesture on the part of the Government had it undertaken to make the payment retrospective for three years or five years.

Especially is this so in view of the fact that the responsible Ministers, when electioneering for candidates in the Denmark district, definitely stated that if the party were returned to power, the payment would be made retrospective for three or five years. I cannot say exactly whether it was three or five years, but it was one or the other. I believe that Sir Charles Latham could give the exact time because, previous to the present Government taking office, he was interested in an endeavour to do something for these people.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The representatives of the Labour candidate were far more generous than those of the late Government and more generous than what you have just mentioned.

The Chief Secretary: How much did they get from your Government? Nothing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We had no opportunity.

The Chief Secretary: That Government was in office for six years and could have done something if it had desired to.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: The Government could have made the payment retrospective to an earlier date; but instead of that, and in spite of the election promises, we have this modest payment dating back to the 1st March, 1953, only. In the considered opinion of those affected, it will barely meet the expenses of clearing out the stumps and debris and the cost of other incidental damage to the property.

The Chief Secretary: The previous Government held office for six years and did nothing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And the Government before that was in office for 15 years and did nothing.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: There is no doubt that the candidate whom the Labour Ministers were supporting stated that the settlers would get back payment over a period of three or five years. Yet what have they got?

The Chief Secretary: They have got something.

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON: If the Chief Secretary considers that this is a generous gesture on the part of the Government, he is entirely unappreciative of the deserts of these people and of their need of this assistance. Even at this stage I hope that the Government will see its way clear to increase the royalty to the settlers or, if that cannot be done, to make the payment retrospective for three years in order to cover the cost of the damage that has been done. I support the second reading.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.54]: On rising to speak for the first time this session, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your accession to that high office. I know that you will fill the position with dignity, and that in years to come you will be able to look back on your term of office with a sense of satisfaction. No man can accept an office of that sort in such a traditional place as this without feeling a sense of responsibility, but we have faith that you will at all times maintain the dignity for which the office calls.

My object in speaking is to bring once more to the notice of the Government the urgent need for a medical school in Western Australia. The time has arrived when there can be no possible doubt of the urgency of the matter, particularly as the

Adelaide University authorities have made it quite clear that, within a space of about 18 months, they will be unable to admit students from Western Australia to continue the whole of their clinical studies in Adelaide.

Having discussed this matter with members of the profession, I can say quite frankly that the difficulty in Adelaide arises from the fact that it has not the essential space or material to enable our students to continue their studies there. Adelaide has only one major hospital in which training can be done, just as we have only one here, and it is from this point of view that the Adelaide authorities are confronted with the difficulty of providing accommodation. They have just completed a medical school which will accommodate students taking the anatomy and physiology courses, but many find considerable difficulty in providing for the clinical course, and so it is unlikely that students will be able to continue in Adelaide beyond the pre-clinical years.

The 18 months left to us in which to prepare is a very short period of time. So far as we are concerned, no further delay can be brooked if we are going to be fair to those students who will complete their three years next year and will be returned to us in 1956. From what I was able to gather in Adelaide, the faculties are prepared to be very fair to us. One of the great difficulties confronting the formation of a new school, especially in these times when its commencement envisages so much and calls for such vast expenditure, is that the degrees conferred by the University concerned may not have the influence that those of an older University would carry.

The Adelaide authorities, I believe, will be willing to a number of years—the period to be arranged after consultation between the two universities—to confer upon our students, who have done their first three years in Adelaide and their clinical years in Western Australia, the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and of Surgery. This represents a very fine gesture and one that will give our students the standing they need, and eventually when we feel that we are in a position to confer our own degrees, they will be such as will be recognised as of an equal status with those given by the universities in the other States of Australia.

It is my intention to write to the Premier and advise him that, within the next three weeks, three members of the Faculty of Medicine of the Adelaide University will be in Perth. I spoke to one of them in Adelaide a couple of weeks ago, and he said they would be willing to give us all the assistance possible during their stay here. I think it would be an excellent opportunity to discuss, with a Faculty of Medicine which has been so generous to us in the past, steps that may prove necessary for the inauguration of the clinical

years here. Under this arrangement we will not be called upon for immediate vast expenditure, such as Adelaide has had to face in the last few years in building its new medical school containing its anatomy and physiology sections. We have in the Royal Perth Hospital one of the most modern buildings possible and what we really need is a teaching staff and possibly a considerable amount of technical and research equipment.

Teaching personnel are the real necessity, and 18 months is a very short period in which to find them. These men will have to come either from other parts of Australia, or from the older teaching universities of the British Empire. It must be understood that it is not possible suddenly to change one's life in the field of medicine, from that of a general or even consultant practice, to the teaching role. Rather is it true that the teaching role in this profession is one that one enters soon after qualifying and, from there on, remains therein. Teaching is just as important a training within the profession as it is in any other sphere of education, and it is to that angle that we must turn our thoughts in the formation of a medical school here. We must never allow our medical school, when it starts, to be of any lower quality than those of the Eastern States, although of course the actual research work that has been done in the older universities cannot be contemplated here yet, or even for years after we have commenced our school.

The one way in which we can make certain that our medical school does maintain the standards set by the rest of the medical schools of Australia is by not sparing cost in appealing for teaching members of the staff, professors, associates, and so on, and by making generous arrangements for them to travel periodically to other centres in order to keep abreast of the rapid changes in medical progress. To understand the necessity for that requires only a visit such as I have recently paid to Victoria where I visited the training hospitals. Such an experience makes one realise the tremendous amount of investigational work which has been carried out, and how much we are relying upon the results of their investigations for the standard of our own work within this city.

When I first came to Western Australia, practically every member of the profession here had come from Victoria. There were one or two from New South Wales, and one or two from Adelaide; but in recent years most of them have come from Adelaide, and we have had very few students trained in medicine at the University of Melbourne. The time has come when we can no longer rely upon those universities either to take our students or even send us their graduates. We must now face this responsibility ourselves. We will receive the assistance of Adelaide in the

early years; but we must realise that we have to face this large and necessary expenditure which will return to us one hundredfold through the standard of the medical services available to the public throughout our widespread State. It was only for these reasons that I rose to speak. I support the measure.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [6.51]: This, Mr. President, is the first opportunity I have had of addressing the House during the present session and, to begin with, I wish to extend to you my heartiest congratulations on the high office to which you have been elected. With other members, I promise you my wholehearted support in the very difficult task you will have from time to time. Like Dr. Hislop, I believe not only that the job is a very big one, but also that it is one which always results in a great development of the individual occupying the position. We are looking forward to many years of good leadership on your part; and, although we know your development has been rapid since you first came to this Chamber, we feel that you will ultimately emerge from your experience as President of this House with a bigger and broader outlook than you have hitherto attained. Again I extend to you my heartiest felicitations.

I desire also to take this opportunity of welcoming the new members who have been elected to this House. Although, strictly, from the point of view of friendship or of party, we much regret the passing of those who were present among us for such a long time, we welcome the new members; and I desire to assure them that, as time goes by, they will find here a type of friendship which is peculiar and often beyond the ties of party. During my sojourn in this House I think I have received at least as much consideration and advice from my political opponents as from my own leaders. Notwithstanding the way in which we stick to our party principles, it will be found that, overriding it all, there is a spirit of friendship which I am certain will be appreciated by our new members as time goes by.

That is one reason why I feel constrained to introduce a somewhat different note at this stage. I was most perturbed to think that one newly-elected member should, before knowing anything of the background of this Chamber or of what it had accomplished in the past, be so definite in her views as to come out in the Press with talk of the abolition of this House, and make certain strictures concerning the conduct of its members during the previous session. I am sure—I am certain other members believe it also—that if anyone examines the debates of the past, and the utterances of the men who took their seats and played their parts in this Legislative Council in years gone by, it will be found that we have no reason to be ashamed of our traditions.

I would commend to new members of this House the reading of some of the old volumes of "Hansard" in order that they might gain a truer picture of what really happens from time to time in this Chamber.

As one of the leaders of industry in this State, I say—and without doubt it will be agreed to by members of the opposite side—that we have arbitration laws which are the envy not only of the other States of the Commonwealth but possibly also of many other parts of the world. As we know, the Bill responsible for our Arbitration Act was introduced into the Parliament of Western Australia by the late Mr. McCallum, a prominent member of the Labour Party. Throughout the years he has received the credit for that Bill, and rightly so, because it was introduced while he held the portfolio of Labour.

However, I suggest to the newer members here that they should sometimes look into the past in order to obtain the facts. The arbitration measure to which I have referred constituted the greatest advance ever made in employer-employee relationships in the history of Australia, and I repeat that it is still the envy of the other States of the Commonwealth. Yet it was practically rewritten, when the Bill was being dealt with by a conference of managers, by members of this Legislative Council.

Therefore, before anyone states that he or she is out to abolish this House, he or she should wait, at least for the first session, in order to try to understand the atmosphere of this Chamber. I say that in all kindness, because I believe the member in question is completely sincere, and I am sure that when she assimilates the true background of this House she will realise that she spoke prematurely. If, after three or four years here, she is still of the same opinion, she can—if she can obtain the necessary constitutional majority—proceed to do away with this place; but that, I think, would be difficult.

Let us examine the attitude of the Labour Party in regard to the Upper Houses throughout Australia. I remember that Labour held an election in New South Wales to abolish the Legislative Council there, but the fact is that Labour keeps its own councils. It has at present, and will have for the next 17 years—so I am assured—a majority in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, and certainly it has a splendid majority in the Legislative Assembly there; yet nothing is done to abolish the Upper House. The A.L.P. conference recently rejected the idea, and I hate to think what would happen to some of the Labour members of this House on the night when a vote was to be taken for the abolition of this Chamber. There would be an epidemic worse than the Spanish 'flu the night that vote was taken. I commend that thought to the new member for the Suburban

Province, as I believe she has still to learn the true position; and I hope and trust that she will not embarrass her friends and the Government by pursuing an obviously futile course.

I desire to be realistic and I feel that it is possible for a lady, on entering this House, to do a wonderful job. I believe that, ultimately, we might have more women here. I feel that they would bring us fresh viewpoints; and, surveying the years of the past, I do not think that women, had they occupied our seats here, could have done a worse job than the men have done.

I believe, however, that we should make haste slowly, and I think the new member for the Suburban Province should wait until she knows what has been done and what is still being done by this Chamber as a House of review, before speaking of abolishing it. Of course, she was influenced a bit by the spectacle of what was a purely political session, which brought us back from our holidays or our election campaigns in order that the Government might be able to say to the people, "Look what the Legislative Council did." Nevertheless, we have forgiven our opponents for that—

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: What have you been doing? Have you taken some vitality pills?

Hon. H. HEARN: Does the hon member think I need them?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. HEARN: I have dealt with the background of the Legislative Council and, I hope, in all kindness. I now want to refer to something which I discussed last session. I am sure most members will agree with me that we hear consistently from Labour Party members in this House remarks about the welfare of the worker. Sometimes I feel that they think they have a monopoly of the wish to see that that the worker has a fair deal. But I am sure that on second thoughts they would not think so unkindly of the employing interests.

I wish to make a statement in the House—and I make it without fear of contradiction—that the Government itself is most lax, because of the conditions under which it is prepared to employ people, session after session, within the precincts of this Parliament. I said once before that if any private employer provided such amenities for his employees, a Labour Government would say that he had fallen down on his job. Yet the employees of Parliament are forced to work under these dreadful conditions for session after session, and at all ungodly hours.

The Joint House Committee has been and is doing everything possible to provide facilities for the servants of Parliament and for members themselves. But

the time has arrived when every member, irrespective of party affiliations, should be prepared to make up his mind where he stands on this question. As past and present members of the House Committee will verify, there has been a consistent effort on the part of the committee, for many years—irrespective of the type of Government in power—to endeavour to improve the facilities available. I think we must make up our minds, as individual members of Parliament, to advise the Government—and, after all, members of Parliament represent the people—in no uncertain terms, irrespective of the Government in power, that we are not satisfied, firstly, with the facilities provided for the people who work for us; and, secondly, with the facilities provided for members. Unless we, as members of Parliament, irrespective of our party affiliations, are prepared to say that we believe in unification, and we want an abolition of State Parliaments, we will have to do something along the lines I have suggested.

As one who has been round the Commonwealth, I say advisedly—and I think this can be backed up by other members—that in no other part of the Commonwealth would one find such poor accommodation for the "Hansard" staff and members as exists here. The Joint House Committee has taken cognisance of the grave position and has applied to respective Governments for something to be done; but so far, nothing has happened. There is only one way to accomplish anything. We must make it quite clear, not from a party political point of view, but from the point of view of all members, that we want a certain sum of money placed aside each year so that these dreadful conditions can be improved. The facilities available to individual members who are elected for the specific purpose of representing thousands of electors are a standing disgrace to all Governments that have been in power in this State.

Finally, I want to stress the need—I am sure a lot of members will not agree with me—for economy in our public administration. It seems ludicrous to me, in these days of seeming prosperity, to see the fight that is being put up at every Premiers' Conference to get more money for the States. We can have responsible government only when the Government that is spending the money has the job of raising it. I know that people will say that that is not in the best interests of Western Australia. That may be so, financially, for the time being; but I believe that out of such a proposal would come sane government and, instead of seeing these comic shows that we see at every Premiers' Conference, we would see some desire to formulate a policy, and a recognition that it is not possible to keep on spending money.

The money asked for in this Supply Bill is the greatest amount that has ever been sought in our history, and

the time has arrived when the Government should be frank about the millions that it has salted away. It can obtain £500,000, out of the air, for one of its huge projects, and it is time a more realistic approach to the question of loan moneys and Federal assistance was made.

Hon. C. W. D. Barker: We cannot economise and expand at the same time.

Hon. H. HEARN: There is one other point. I refer to the question of superannuation for members of Parliament. I am in a peculiar position, but I think I can speak freely. If I were here for another 20 years, I would get little out of the scheme; and if I retired, I would get less than I had paid in to the fund. I think that the public assesses parliamentarians on the basis on which they assess themselves. We have a superannuation fund; and after a member has been in Parliament for seven years, and retires, he gets £2 10s. a week for ten years. For each additional year of service he receives a slight increase, but it appears to me that the fund is merely a substitute for the social service benefits and the old-age pension.

If we want good government—and we do, because of the future development of this State—we must have the best brains in Parliament. Can we say to a man, "Take the risk. Come into Parliament and, after you have been in for 15 years, if you are defeated, we will give you £3 or £4 a week."? Is that the way we should treat people who are responsible for the welfare of the State?

I believe the time has arrived when we must look into the question of the salaries paid to members, so that those who are elected can afford to give of their best. If something is done to increase members' salaries, we will attract into Parliament those who would make fortunes in private enterprise. They are the type of people that this State will need in the next decade, when we are facing terrific development. I support the measure, and I trust that the few words I have said will not fall on barren and stony ground.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West—in reply) [7.43]: I shall reply briefly to those members who have spoken, and I shall go down the list and deal with the last speaker first. I appreciated many of the sentiments expressed by Mr. Hearn. The points he raised have been mentioned every year that I have been in Parliament, but they seem to be forgotten. I admit, quite candidly, that the accommodation for members and staff is a standing disgrace to any Parliament, and it amazes me how it has been suffered for so long.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Is not this the only unfinished Parliamentary building in Australia?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know. I have not checked that point. I hope that now, as the question has been raised, the agitation will continue until such time as improvements are effected.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is the only parliamentary building in Australia that does not provide accommodation for country members.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know that we should worry about that phase at the moment, or at least until we get accommodation for members—

Hon. C. H. Simpson: So that they can carry out their parliamentary duties.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. If we reach that stage, we can then advance further. When I came here 26 years ago, there was talk about extensions and the necessity for the provision of further accommodation. As I have said, down through the years, the subject has been resurrected on odd occasions; but unfortunately, it has then been forgotten. Because of the financial straits in which the Government finds itself today, we have difficulty in securing sufficient money to carry out necessary works in Western Australia. Until State Governments can obtain, not perhaps all the money they require, but at least that which they require for urgent purposes, I cannot see that there is much hope of improvement in conditions here.

Members know that in this State, which is so undeveloped, every portion is screaming out for something that is really necessary. Mr. Simpson mentioned the usual yearly howl that is going on at the moment at the Premiers' Conference. We find the Premiers have set forward a programme of something like £250,000,000 to cover urgent needs in the various States of the Commonwealth. On the other hand, the Commonwealth authorities say the most the States can get is £200,000,000, which means that each State has to cut down its requirements to the amount that will be split up amongst each of them.

I will not go into the distribution of the amounts now, but I think members know that Western Australia is unfortunately in the worst position in relation to that distribution. This is because of a set of circumstances that operated when that cut-up was decided upon. Accordingly we carry on a mistake made many years ago; a mistake that we find is most difficult to get out of. If it were possible, I would like someone to suggest a way by which the difficulty could be overcome, so that this State could in future get its just dues from the loan point of view.

The necessity of a medical school was mentioned by Dr. Hislop. Everybody realises the urgent need for the establishment of that school in this State. Again,

however, we return to the starting point of all questions; namely, the provision of the money. So, while we all agree it is an urgent necessity, when we will get to that stage, or whether we will get to that stage quickly enough to fill the gap that will occur when South Australia says, "Look after your own," I am not in a position to say.

Hon. H. Hearn: Offer £ for £.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I can assure members that the Government is very sincere; and if there is any possibility at all of anything being done, the Government will do it.

Some complaint was made by Mr. Thomson regarding builders in the country areas. Naturally I do not know the particulars of the various matters upon which he spoke, but I give him the guarantee that whatever action was taken by the Government, or the Minister handling that department, was taken after due consideration of all aspects of the case. I can assure him that the only actions taken by the Government are for the best. However, I will send along to the Minister concerned the various comments he made; and when I am replying to the debate on the Address-in-reply I will have the reasons why certain things were done.

Mention was made by Mr. Simpson of the question of inflation. Whether it causes inflation or not, I think every member will agree that this State should get a lot more money for developments than it does at present. I imagine members will admit that even if we got double the amount we will finally get—I will not speak for the other States, because I do not know either their programme or their needs—it would not be a matter of assisting inflation, but the return would be so great from the investment of that money here that it would help stop inflation.

Hon. H. Hearn: Provided you could get labour, which is very scarce.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: The trouble is that it is governed by a formula, and each of the States has to agree to any variation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so. That has been our difficulty; and we were caught in the unfortunate position of having had the worst five years that any State ever experienced. We were very patriotic and did what the Commonwealth required of us. On the other hand, the other States said, "Blow the Commonwealth! We will do what we want." We came in when our expenditure was at its lowest, and they came in when their expenditure was at its highest. We are on the same formula as we were at the start, and accordingly we are miles behind and find ourselves penalised on that account. The present system requires some alteration in order that we may be given a fair deal.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: The Grants Commission is the only avenue.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That may be so, but it also takes a number of things into consideration which militate against our getting our just dues from that source.

I was very pleased to hear Mr. Simpson's views regarding this House. He said it had very many useful purposes. He also mentioned the question of pressure groups. I have not had any experience of pressure groups, and I would have liked him to give us more information about them. I wondered whether he had let the cat out of the bag when he said the Government introduced legislation in another place hoping that it would be thrown out here.

Hon. H. Hearn: You know that is true.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Simpson said that the measure was introduced because of pressure groups. I repeat I have not had experience of them. Every Bill that has been brought down by the Government has been introduced with the idea of getting it passed, not with the idea of having it thrown out. I daresay the hon. member is speaking from experience he has had of his own government, and not of the present one.

I am very pleased that some members took the opportunity of speaking on the Supply Bill, because I know that when members speak on the Address-in-reply there are many matters which they do not introduce because it would take too long to do so. During the Address-in-reply debate one speaks of matters which are of vital importance from the State point of view, and they are of immense interest to those who listen.

Question put and passed

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Fifth Day.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [7.56]: Let me also congratulate you, Mr. President, on your elevation to that high office. I am particularly pleased if only because of your apparent youth, and I am sure you will do honour to the position. You will certainly receive all the assistance you need from me and all other members. I would also like to thank those members who have welcomed other new members together with myself.

In speaking about the goldmining industry, I am pleased to note that the Minister for Mines has been rather kindly disposed towards the smaller mining activities, and I am particularly pleased that he has seen fit to improve the existing

batteries, and has promised that other areas will have new ones when funds are available. It gives me great satisfaction to note that a new battery is to be established at Menzies, and that it is to be one of the most up-to-date of its kind.

I have heard it said that many of our State batteries are not as efficient as they might be because of years of service; and it is to be hoped that they can be put into a more efficient state as rapidly as possible, and, where necessary, be replaced by new batteries. I know it has had a great psychological effect on the people at Menzies, and it has already set up an impetus which is most refreshing to see. I am quite certain it will give heart to those along the northern line right through to Laverton.

It is very pleasing to find that the Minister for Mines has in mind the use of diamond drilling machinery; that will certainly appreciably affect the search for gold in this State. I would strongly urge that as much assistance as possible be given in that direction. With reference to the outback areas, we find Laverton showing a new lease of life lately. However, though their rail service may be quite up to date, it is possible that with the resurgence in that town the question of an additional service could well be given consideration. I hope the Minister for Railways will give attention to providing an additional service or, if that is not possible, to accelerating the one already in existence.

A question actuating the minds of practically all people in the State but none so much as those of the people of the Eastern Goldfields, where I reside, is that of water supply. The people on the Goldfields are concerned, because they have previously had what could be called a good water supply service from the inception of the Goldfields scheme. Consequently, when restrictions are imposed, they are perhaps a little irritated, because they have been accustomed to something better. The Minister in charge of this department recently gave us an assurance that if the coming summer was no more severe than that which we have just experienced, no further restrictions would be imposed.

Restrictions irritate the people because they come at a time when the gardens, the lawns, and the parks can stand but a very limited restriction; and in about a fortnight's time it is hard to recognise one's own garden, and the parks show a decided falling off. What most irritates dwellers on the Goldfields is to read in the newspaper that another district is to draw supplies from the Goldfields main. I therefore strongly urge that no additional service be provided from that pipeline until those who are now served and have been served for years are assured of a good and continuous supply.

An indication of a further step forward in the life of the Goldfields and an improvement in the conditions of those who live there was the recent announcement of the new diesel train service. I have read that while that service will continue to operate mostly by night, the time of arrival in Perth will be about the same as now; namely, 10.30 a.m. I think I speak for a great majority of the people on the Goldfields when I strongly advise that an attempt be made to provide that the train service, which is to be accelerated by three or four hours, should be so arranged that the arrival time in Perth will be about 9 o'clock or shortly afterwards. Not only would the people be more satisfied, but the railway service, which we all desire to see come into its own, would also benefit.

People who come to Perth from outback areas, if they are not on holidays, travel on business or in connection with their health. If they arrived early in the morning to see the specialist with whom they had an appointment or to attend the warehouse for which they were bound, they could return the same evening. At present that is not possible, and it is necessary for a person to come down to Perth on one day and do his business in the city the next day. Thus a day is added to his visit, and the expense is increased. If the arrival time of the train could be made earlier, the railways would benefit because those now travelling by air or by road would favour train travel because they would be able to complete their business transactions in one day.

In recent years, the Main Roads Department has assisted road boards, and I have been pleased to note that it is also assisting municipalities. The municipality to which I was attached as a member received some assistance in this way, and I strongly urge that the help given to road boards and municipalities be continued, because I am certain that no one can handle the money that is spent on main and subsidiary roads better than the local governing bodies can. Those authorities have excellent plant, though sometimes it may not be as good as Main Roads Department plant. They have picked men, and the work is done more efficiently and economically than the Main Roads Department can do it. I say that in no disparaging way, because the department does a particularly good job. But the local governing authorities will do a better one. Where possible, the assistance given should be continued. If that is done, not only will better roads be built, but the finances of the local authorities, which have been sorely depleted, will also be helped.

Turning now to the matter of infectious diseases, I would point out that local governing authorities are responsible for patients who contract such diseases. They are responsible for

their being properly attended to in hospitals and, to a marked degree, for the cost of that attention. The medical authorities have what is called a formula for those receiving treatment; and I have never been able to understand why they should assess the cost of treating a patient at a higher figure when the Bill is sent to the local authority than is the case when it is sent direct to the patient. I do not know why there should be any difference. It is causing many heartburnings. It has resulted in long, inconclusive debates and also, I think, unpaid accounts.

The Government has lost because bills have been unpaid. Hospitals have had to wait for their accounts to be met and, in the long run, the local governing authorities will lose, I imagine. I therefore urge that the same fee should be charged to a local governing authority as to an individual patient. I would go further and say that right from the inception an account should be given to the local governing body for what it will be finally expected to pay on the reduced basis. That would have the effect of accounts being paid promptly. The particular lodge or benefit society concerned would pay its proportion, the Government would be left to meet its share, and the matter would be concluded happily. As things are now, accounts remain unpaid. The benefit societies are not paying, and chaos results. I am certain that would not be so if a stand were taken on this matter should an account be sent to a local authority different from that which would go to an individual patient; and if an assessment were made on such local authority right from the inception instead of later on.

There is another subject upon which I would like to touch. I refer to the Electoral Act and its administration as applied to the Legislative Council. This is something concerning which I have acquired considerable knowledge over the last several months. I have been connected with elections and have assisted others in that direction for more than 20 years, and I thought I knew a little about the subject. But I found there was a lot I did not know, and there is probably much that I still do not know.

Eight months ago I made up my mind that I would contest the North-East Province of the Legislative Council. It is no good contesting any seat unless those entitled to have a vote are enrolled. It is useless anybody saying he will vote for a candidate if that prospective voter is not enrolled. So the task of the candidate is to see that eligible people are enrolled. My assessment was that there would be over 2,000 persons who were not on the roll of the province I was contesting, and that the job of enrolling them rested with the candidate or candidates;

because, from my observation, the Electoral Department does very little to enrol people.

Imagine the task! There were over 2,000 people, and they stretched from Wiluna to Kalgoorlie and lived in such distant places as Laverton, Mt. Magnet, Sandstone, Big Bell, and Meekatharra, most of which are not easily accessible by road. The months that lay ahead of me in which to do the work, perhaps with some assistance, were the hot months. So, during November, December and January, I took upon myself the task of enrolling those people. I walked from house to house, with the temperature very often well over 100 degrees.

Hon. H. Hearn: Did they not offer you a cup of tea?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: In many instances I was given a cup of tea by kindly disposed people. I started at 9 a.m., and by 11 or 12 o'clock I was exhausted. Picture it! I would go to ten houses, and there might be only one man at home. That necessitated calling at the other places again. In such circumstances one discusses the matter with the wife of the man entitled to be enrolled, and leaves a card intimating that one will call again. One does so and is told that the woman forgot to speak to her husband about the matter, or else that he forgot to sign the card and leave it! That sort of thing happens time and again. Not one in ten has a card completed.

While money is spent on appointing people to enrol voters for the Federal Parliament, I know of nothing of that kind being done in respect of the Legislative Council, and the job is left to the candidates. The task is rendered all the more difficult because the enrolment card is so complicated. I go so far as to say that out of any 20 people one could meet, not ten would readily be able to complete that card. I would say further that it is actually frightening. The qualifications set out look out like a problem in algebra. One shows the symbols C.A.V. to a claimant, and he says that he would not be prepared to sign the card because he is not likely to possess the qualifications. So one has to tell him what the expression "C.A.V. £17" means. That has to be explained in simple terms. Sometimes one finds that the man is entitled to vote because he is a freeholder, but he does not know the lot number of his property, and one has to wait until he can obtain it from somewhere.

How many are competent to fill in these enrolment cards? I have asked quite intelligent people to assist me in this job, and the results were disappointing. The electoral officer might say that it is the job of the claimant to enrol himself, but I have tried to point out that the wording of the enrolment card is almost

frightening. It is not a simple one, so enrolment is not effected. There is no compulsion, so it is not done. To quote an instance, I know of one particular town where a kindly disposed and intelligent person said, "I will call at each house." He called at about 60 houses where he thought the occupiers were entitled to be enrolled, and he left cards; but only about two of the cards were returned. The balance were left on the mantelpiece because the persons claiming to be enrolled thought they did not have the qualifications. I go so far as to say that the card which is placed in front of a claimant keeps him from enrolling.

There is a saying that laws are made by lawyers for lawyers, and I say this card is designed by the privileged for the privileged. I merely make the statement that a basic-wage earner or day labourer has very little chance of coming into this House as a member. I spent eight months at this work and it took me 4½ months to put on those that I did get enrolled; and I consider that when I finished there were still at least 800 people not on the roll who were entitled to be. How would the day labourer get on if he had that task to do? He could not take a month off work to do it; in addition, he would need to have a car and money.

Hon. L. C. Diver: He would have to win his selection ballot first.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: That is not his hardest job. The difficult task is to see that the electors are on the roll. Unless a candidate has plenty of time, some spare cash, and a motorcar, he has no chance. Therefore, we can exclude the basic-wage man. I could spare the time because I had a good wife who was willing and intelligent enough to do the work I ordinarily do.

It would be thought that, having done this task one would be acclaimed for it; that the electoral office would say, "It is very good of you to put these people on the roll." I simply went from house to house. I did not ask whether the occupiers were Labour, Liberal or Country Party. So I say we should be acclaimed for doing this job. But instead, when the task is done, we see letters churned out from the Electoral Department, by clerks sitting at their ease in Barrack-st., in which a person is asked to "Please explain the circumstances under which you were enrolled and reply by return mail." There is almost a threatening attitude—a police attitude—about it. I worked in the Taxation Department, but I never saw a more threatening attitude than this adopted towards people who are ordinarily honest. Not all people are dishonest. No one will say that the majority of Western Australians are dishonest.

Finally, I give some good advice to the Electoral Department. If I criticise the department it will say, "What is the remedy?" Well, I will

give the remedy, and it is this: Let those clerks who sit so comfortably in Barrack-st. carry out the task of enrolling these people. If they do it, neither I nor any other candidate will have to do it. Not only will they do the job faithfully and well when the temperature is 110 degrees, but when they get back they will not have the task of sending out nasty letters to themselves. Let the electoral office clerks do the enrolling and not us, because we do not know how. I do not want to do this job again. I get pretty hot about this, and I can say a lot about it, because I have just done the job.

I have another complaint, too. When I undertook this task of enrolment, there had not been a contest for four years, so the job had not been done for four years. The roll I was using was two years old. On the Goldfields, as elsewhere, people change their dwelling places. So we just made a blind stab and put them on, hoping that, as in previous years, a roll would come out. From my researches, it appeared that a roll used to come out about the 31st January in every second year—about two or three months before the elections—and I was building on that. I thought, "When the roll comes out, I will study it. I will find plenty of people who are not on it, and I will interview them and put them on if necessary, and will do what I can to help." But no roll came out, so I was just working in the dark. I was probably calling on houses to help to enrol people who were already enrolled.

There is a multiplicity of rolls. We have the Legislative Council roll, and the municipal council roll, and so on, and people just do not know whether they are on a roll or not. We say to a person, "Are you on the council roll?" He says, "Yes, I voted last week," and he is reminded that he voted then at the municipal council elections and that the municipal council and the Legislative Council are two different bodies.

The roll came out not long before the election took place. I had nothing to check on. It came out just before the closing of the roll, and not two or three months previously, with a supplementary roll issued later. It would have been a great help to us to have had that roll. After giving us that task, I say, "Do not treat us as though we are blackfellows or dishonest, but as though we are ordinary, honest Western Australian citizens, as the majority of us are." I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 6th July, at 4.30 p.m.
Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.24 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 30th June, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOMES FOR AGED WOMEN.

As to Available Beds and Applications.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Health:

With regard to the homes for aged women under his control, will he state—

- (1) The total number of beds available?
- (2) The number not occupied, if any?
- (3) The number of applications accepted, but still outstanding?
- (4) Has there been any increase in the number of applications since the recent alteration in the rents and tenancies Act?
- (5) What is the current waiting period between acceptance of applications and admissions?