

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.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Homes for aged women, as to available beds and applications	155
Bus shelters, as to conference and legislation	156
Railways, as to changing colour of diesels	156
Entertainments tax, as to exemption of infant health centre dances	156
Local government, as to metropolitan boundaries	156
Blind persons, as to assistance in travelling interstate	156
Jewell-st. plant depot, as to delay on machine overhauls and repairs	156
Metropolitan sewerage, as to deficits and reduced rating	157
Coogee Beach, (a) as to pollution	157
(b) as to investigating extent	157
Bricks, as to advice by C.S.I.R.O. experts	157
Collie coalminers, as to preference for McLarty-Watts Government	157
Loan funds, (a) as to unspent amounts	158
(b) as to expenditure, 1953-54	158
Water supplies, as to retaining unshipped piping	158
Margins for skill, as to fear of Commonwealth Government intervention	158
Municipal elections, as to A.L.P. nominations	158
Leave of absence	159
Committees for the session, Council's message	206
Bills : Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment, 2r.	159
To refer to select committee	199
Com.	208
Supply (No. 1), £18,500,000, returned	208

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?