

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, November 4, 1952.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Walter Duncan) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

ASSENT TO ACTS.

His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor intimated by message his assent to the Uranium Mining Act Amendment, Friendly Societies Act Amendment and Hospitals Act Amendment Acts.

QUESTION.**SUBSIDIES TO SCHOOL COMMITTEES.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (on notice)—In view of the proposed increase to £64,000 of the amount to be provided as subsidies to school committees, is it the intention of the Government to extend such subsidies to cover committees of private and denominational schools?

The Hon. R. J. RUDALL—There is no provision on the Estimates which provides for this being done.

POLICE REGULATION BILL.

The Hon. A. L. McEwin, having obtained leave, introduced a Bill for an Act to consolidate and amend certain enactments relating to the management of the Police Force and other matters incidental thereto.

Read a first time.

LANDLORD AND TENANT (CONTROL OF RENTS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

METROPOLITAN AND EXPORT ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

PHARMACY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF S.A. ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 28. Page 1069.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I support the second reading. The Bill contains two main provisions, the first of which allows present Electricity Trust members upon reaching the age of 65 to be re-appointed until attaining 70, thus giving much needed elasticity. However, no new member

can be appointed after reaching 65. I support this proposal because any person holding a responsible position on any trust or board might, although old in years, possess the same mental faculties as younger men and when they have gained experience and displayed it in carrying out their duties in semi-governmental undertakings their services should be continued. The main provision of the Bill relates to the question of inscribed stock. Some semi-governmental undertakings seek loan moneys by way of bearer bonds, but the trust at present issues debentures. The holder merely has a document or receipt, which may be lost, as frequently happens, and some investors desire that there should be a system of inscribed stock. In this case no document of title is issued, but the holder's title is evidenced by an entry in a register kept by the trust. The difference between debentures and ordinary shares is that debenture holders are paid a fixed rate of interest, and shareholders have to rely on profits for their dividends.

I do not think it would be amiss to direct a few remarks to the position which obtained in Great Britain in 1919 when an attempt was made to set up electricity commissioners to control the supply of electrical energy throughout Great Britain. The measure passed the House of Commons but was so mutilated by the House of Lords that it was allowed to remain dormant until 1926, when a Bill was reintroduced based on recommendations of the Weir Committee. From this report it will be seen that the conditions in Great Britain then were almost identical with our own. That committee recommended that the generation of electricity should be concentrated in 58 selected power stations and that 432 existing power stations should be closed down. Secondly, that selected stations should be inter-connected by high tension transmission lines linking up with regional systems then in existence and, thirdly, that a central board should be appointed to carry out the work.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Could not we have improved on 1926?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—We have not. The problems confronting the Government of that period in Great Britain—and it was a Conservative Government—confronted us. Similarly, it was only with the support of Labor in the House of Commons that it was able to get its Bill through, just as was the case here. I do not say that with any

idea of seeking political kudos, but simply to indicate how Parliament works and to show that there is a responsibility on members of Parliament to see that these public services are conducted in the interests of the people.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—We have no objection to a Liberal Government copying our ideas.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—No. I pay a well-earned tribute to the Electricity Trust, although I have been a critic of some of its activities. We know that criticism is always levelled against such undertakings until all the relevant facts are known—

The Hon. F. J. Condon—That applied to Leigh Creek, too.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Exactly, and it was only the support of Labor members in this Chamber that saved that legislation.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—Are you trying to justify your existence?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—No.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—This is a question of inscribed stock.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—If these works were not carried out it would not be necessary to ask for loan money because no project could be attempted. I know there are certain members who bristle at the mere mention of the acquisition of something they consider sacrosanct in the interests of their particular section. When the Government takes over social services they must provide a service to the community.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—Social service?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—An electricity supply is a social service, for we could not exist without it. My friend is associated with heavy industries, but they could not function without a supply of electrical energy. In order to cheapen the supply of electric power and light it is necessary to have technical standardization with special provisions in difficult areas and the service must be organized on behalf of the consumers. I believe the trust is attempting to put into operation the full provisions of the points I have mentioned and it has shown a desire not to burden the consumer with high costs. I will not weary members with figures relating to the cost of electricity per head of population in the U.S.A. as compared with Great Britain and here but the U.S.A. has hydro electric schemes which have resulted in a greater consumption of electric power and energy per head of population

and at cheaper cost than elsewhere. I have been a critic of the trust's activities and realize that the cost of electricity in South Australia is high but it is no higher than in other States of the Commonwealth. However, other States have no developmental projects similar to Leigh Creek coalfield.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment.

Committee's report adopted.

INDUSTRIAL AND PROVIDENT SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 28. Page 1079.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I oppose the Bill because it cuts right across the industrial legislation which has been passed by Parliament from time to time. With the growth of the trade union movement and with the urge for regulated hours, Governments, irrespective of political complexion, have passed legislation governing the trading hours of shops, factories, warehouses and industries. That has been done because of the early history of industrialization in Great Britain when women and children worked around the clock in coal mines. At that time Lord Shaftesbury advocated and was successful in preventing the employment of child labour. We have travelled a long way with legislation affecting the working conditions and health of the community. There has been other legislation dealing with industrial matters which affects early closing or the extension of the opening and closing hours of premises used by one particular section of industry.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—That is not industrial legislation.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It is an extension of the hours of trading. Early closing of shops was introduced primarily for the purpose of protecting employees.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—And the owners, too.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—The Bill cuts right across principles established not only by this Parliament but every Parliament in the English-speaking world.

The Hon. F. T. Perry—The English-speaking world includes America.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I even apply it to America, where industrial legislation

has been passed. Moreover, America was the first country in the world to pass legislation dealing with trusts and combines. In introducing the Bill Mr. Cowan said:—

In brief, this is an attempt to give the self-employed barber an opportunity to work during such hours as, according to his judgment, suit his clients. Surely, to encourage people to earn an honest living by giving the public the service they want is no crime.

That language is most extravagant and is a reflection not only on barbers in country towns who do not want extended trading hours but also on employees in the industry. Mr. Cowan has the temerity to use those words in order to bolster up his case. Only 300 people signed the petition for the Bill.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—The Bill would not apply in the metropolitan area.

The Hon. K. E. BARDOLPH—When overtime is worked in industry it is impossible for some employees, especially those in heavy industries, to get their hair cut owing to their hours of work.

The Hon. R. J. Rudall—You can move an amendment to extend the hours.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I do not want to move an amendment; I want the existing conditions to stand. On Mr. Cowan's statements the Bill is not justified. Unlike most employees in the metropolitan area most people in the country can find time to get their hair cut.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—They work twice as many hours a week.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am not saying anything about that as I know primary production in South Australia is a major factor in our economy. The Bill is unwarranted and if it is passed will break down a system that has been established for years.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 2.38 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, November 5, at 2 p.m.