

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, October 14, 1959.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Walter Duncan) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

MILLICENT AND BEACHPORT RAILWAY (DISCONTINUANCE) BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

EXCHANGE OF LAND (HUNDRED OF NOARLUNGA) BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to enable the Catholic Church Endowment Society and the South Australian Housing Trust to effect an exchange of land in the hundred of Noarlunga. The Roman Catholic Church holds section 616A in the hundred of Noarlunga. The land is 20 acres in area and was granted to the church as glebe land in 1851. The grant to the land has been lost and, although exhaustive search has been made, it appears that the grant was never registered in the General Registry Office. The only records relating to the grant are found in some Government docketts. The land is now administered by the Catholic Church Endowment Society, which is a body created by the church to administer its land holdings. Section 616A is in close proximity to the site of the oil refinery to be constructed nearby and abuts land acquired by the trust in the vicinity.

As part of the negotiations for the establishment of the refinery, it was agreed that the trust would provide houses for refinery employees, and from 300 to 400 houses will be needed for this purpose. In order to meet the housing needs which will arise from the industrial development which can be expected after the refinery is in operation, the trust has purchased over 2,000 acres of land near Christies Beach. For the time being, housing development will be limited to the western part of the trust's holding where the 300 to 400 houses needed for the refinery will be built. At some future time, however, and as industrial development proceeds, it can be expected that a large town will be created by the trust.

When the trust develops large housing areas, it is the practice to make available to religious denominations areas for churches and schools, and the Roman Catholic Church frequently obtains land from the trust for these purposes. When the trust proceeds with large scale housing development at Christies Beach, the Roman

Catholic Church will, as usual, need its church and school sites. Whilst section 616A, the present holding of the church, is of little value for its present purposes, it can be valuable if used for industrial development after the establishment of the oil refinery. Accordingly, the church and the trust consider that it would be mutually beneficial if section 616A were exchanged for an equivalent area in the future new town to be erected by the trust. A Bill to enable this to be done is necessary, firstly, because the land grant to section 616A is lost and secondly, because the grant is of glebe land, that is, land held as part of the property of an ecclesiastical benefice. The present practice is not to grant land as glebe land.

The Bill has been suggested by the trust with the approval of His Grace the Archbishop. It provides that the Governor may issue a grant to the trust of the fee simple in section 616A, upon the Minister of Lands being satisfied that the trust and the Catholic Church Endowment Society have agreed that, in exchange for section 616A, the trust will, at some future time to be mutually agreed upon, transfer to the society 20 acres of land in the area held by the trust near Christies Beach. The land to be transferred by the trust will be decided upon by the parties in the future and may be in one or more parcels of land to a total of 20 acres. The actual land to be transferred to the society and the time of transfer will, therefore, be determined according to the requirements of the church at the relevant time. The Bill being a hybrid Bill within the meaning of Joint Standing Orders on Private Bills, was referred to a Select Committee in another place. That Committee reported in favour of the Bill.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH secured the adjournment of the debate.

UNDERGROUND WATERS PRESERVATION BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 997.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—On October 17, 1957, a similar Bill was introduced in another place, but after the Premier had given his second reading speech no further progress was made and the Bill was discharged from the Notice Paper—why I do not know. If it was necessary then—and we were told it was—it is even more necessary today in view of the exceptionally dry period we have experienced this year. Consequently, I look upon this as a very important

measure. It may be suggested that this is another instance of the imposition of controls of which we already have too many, but on mature consideration I feel sure that there will be no opposition to the second reading. The 1957 Bill proposed a system of licensing and the Premier said that the measure was rather advanced in its application.

Very few Bills are introduced into our Parliament that do not provide for the right of appeal. I can recall only one, namely, the Prices Regulation Act, but generally speaking the right of appeal is given. This Bill provides, in critical areas, for the control of sinking, deepening and maintenance of wells and the amount of underground water that may be taken from wells with a view to the prevention of contamination of the supply. In South Australia there are a number of relatively small artesian basins some of which, locally, are quite important. The Adelaide Plains basin underlies the Adelaide Plains between the Mount Lofty Range hoist and the Gulf of St. Vincent, covering an area of 1,130 square miles. The component strata are tertiary sands and limestone overlain by quaternary beds. Beds are fed mainly by river flows from the Mount Lofty Range, an area with a rainfall of more than 25in. The natural discharge is probably under the floor of the Gulf of St. Vincent.

A few bores have given flowing supplies up to 48,000 gallons a day, and the salinity varies between 30 and 607 grains a gallon. The water is used for irrigation and industrial purposes and augments Adelaide's water supply. The Pirie-Torrens basin is in the quaternary deposits along the front of the Flinders Range hoist and bears the same relationship to it as the Adelaide basin bears to the Mount Lofty Range. It extends from a little south of Port Pirie along the eastern margin of Spencer Gulf to the northern end of Lake Torrens and covers an area of about 3,600 square miles.

Part II of the Bill deals with wells, and under it the Governor may by proclamation declare that any part of the State shall be a proclaimed area. Within three months after a proclamation is issued, the person interested must send a notice to the Minister of Mines. This part of the Bill will apply to every well in the area proclaimed, even if it is not completed. Clause 7 provides that a permit must be obtained for the sinking or the deepening of a well, and a person who does not first obtain a permit is guilty of an offence.

During the last few years a number of country towns have been seeking a sewerage system. I have in mind such places as Port Pirie, Mount Gambier and Naracoorte. We should be particularly careful regarding the protection of our water supplies. The proposed sewerage of Gumeracha gave the Engineering and Water Supply Department and the Advisory Committee on Sewerage much concern. Gumeracha is situated in the Torrens catchment area, and it is possibly a source of pollution of the metropolitan water supply, and for years it was a constant worry to the department and to the advisory committee. The problem was accentuated there because the soil, particularly in winter, became tight and water-logged as a result of pollutional material remaining on the surface, and at the time of heavy rainfall it was quickly washed into the Torrens and then carried on to the reservoirs. Considerable concern was also caused by the large quantity of water discharged into the catchment area from the cheese factory at Gumeracha, which is operated by the United Co-operative Dairymen Ltd. We must be prepared to take steps to prevent the contamination and deterioration of our underground waters. There has been a great increase in the use of underground waters for purposes other than primary production. Some towns have introduced the septic tank system because it will be many years before they will have a sewerage system.

This legislation is necessary to control the sinking, deepening and maintenance of wells. The Bill will apply to the Adelaide Plains as far north as three miles beyond Gawler, to portions of the Mount Lofty Range, Mount Gambier, Cowell and Willunga. At any time the Government can by proclamation bring other parts of the State under the legislation. Mr. Campbell, the Engineer for Water Supply, when appearing before the Public Works Committee, was asked a question regarding bores in the metropolitan area and he gave the following reply:—

I have said that we will have to exercise caution to see that we do not deplete the bores. We have an additional 24 bores we can equip. I am suggesting only 10 additional at present. From that source we think we can get 1,000,000,000 gallons. From the additional pumping along the Mannum line we can get a further 127,000,000 gallons. Added to that there will be the water from South Para, and we will have a deficiency of a little over 3,000,000,000 gallons.

I commend the Government for introducing this legislation. Honourable members realize what

a clear clean supply of water means to the people of this country. We in South Australia have not the same facilities as other States in regard to water supplies, but it is good to know that in Adelaide, up to the present time, there has been no restriction imposed on the use of water and the foresight of those responsible for the construction of the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline has played a great part in the achievement of that happy position and has paid dividends. This legislation will protect people generally and it will particularly protect the persons concerned and, as every honourable member knows through travelling around the country, many additional bores from which good water has been secured have been sunk over the years, but it is necessary for some sort of control. I support the second reading.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 1000.)

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL (Central No. 2)—This Bill appears to me to be both necessary and desirable. The keynotes of the Bill seem to be contained in one or two passages of the address of the Minister of Health when giving the second reading, and I quote those as a preface to my remarks because I shall try to enlarge on them from the point of view of my own approach to the Bill. The Minister said:—

The purpose of this Bill is to give status to a large number of persons performing nursing duties in nearly all hospitals, but who have had no organized training.

He then went on to divide those people into two categories, those whom he styled as nurse attendants (being adults who for some reason could not take the ordinary course of training for nurses), and nurse assistants, who were said to be girls too young to commence training or who had not the required educational standards, but I should like to add to that, "at that stage." The Minister said that nurse aides could be employed in the nursing of people who did not require highly skilled surgical or medical care, and towards the end of his speech, when referring to these aides, he added:—

These are the younger girls who later, if they possess the natural attributes of this profession, may be induced to continue and obtain the necessary educational qualifications to become qualified nurses.

He was referring to the question of living in hospital or not, and the Minister explained that for nurse attendants, who were what he styled adults, it would not be necessary for them to live in but for nurse assistants it would be, no doubt on account of their youth. All honourable members will agree that nursing is a very noble profession and possibly one of the avocations for women in particular—although there are male nurses in a limited number—which brings out their highest qualities and for which they are admirably suited.

I have had the misfortune to be a surgical case on a number of occasions. That is a misfortune on account of the discomfort which is involved but I have also had, contemporaneously with those occasions, an opportunity of seeing the nursing profession in full flight and to have been nursed by quite a large number of nurses both in private hospitals and in army hospitals, and thus I claim to know something of nursing from the practical point of view, and that is the point of view from which I have approached this Bill. I am not so concerned with the details of the Bill because they are a matter for those who possibly have more knowledge of its contents than I have, but I prefer to approach it from the more general point of view, in relation to the principles upon which it dwells and also its wider implications. As I understand the situation, looking back over the years, this Bill probably stems mainly from two sources: one as regards the increase in population but not necessarily an equivalent increase in the number of people capable of being or wishing to become trained nurses and, secondly and possibly more important, the elevation of the status of nurses in comparatively recent years.

As we all know and as I know particularly from my own experience, nurses used to have to work very long hours indeed and their wage standards were not as high as possibly one would expect in a skilled avocation such as nursing. Both these matters were rectified many years ago, but naturally this elevation of standards brought problems in its train. First of all we need, if we have shorter hours—and the hours have been very considerably shortened—many more nurses, which no doubt created a practical difficulty both for the Government and for the private nursing institutions when the hours were shortened, and also of course there was a need for more accommodation. That has been resolved to a great extent by the building of large nurses' homes at various hospitals, but of course it has also involved

a tremendous amount of capital outlay, and it seems to me from my limited knowledge of the matter that we shall have in future more nurses living outside hospitals than we have at present.

I think in the earlier days it was essential for every nurse or nurse attendant of any skill to live in. This Bill seems to be aiming to solve that problem because, as the Minister explained, certain of the adult nursing attendants will not be obliged to live in and I would think that that is definitely a move in the right direction. One realizes that, from the very nature of the profession, it is necessary for many nurses to be on the premises, but that does not apply to all or even to any great percentage of them. The Bill seems to me to be aimed at increasing the number of people available to give assistance to the sick while retaining the high standards—and I think they are high standards—of our nursing profession.

I have been in hospitals abroad as a patient as well, and I think that our standards are a good deal higher than anything I have seen over the other side. That is a very good thing indeed both from the nurses' point of view and from the point of view of the patient. However, it seems that at present many of our qualified nursing sisters are doing chores which could be done by people less skilled. This is an era of specialization when we do not put the specialist on every little odd job around the place. I think again that is one of the aims of this Bill, and again I feel that is a very good thing, namely, to retain the specialists and highly trained nursing sisters for the highest surgical and medical duties required, and to give the skilled nurse assistants the more everyday jobs and chores.

I would like to liken that to the work of the V.A.D.'s in the recent war, with whom I had contact in army hospitals. They did a wonderful job, as any honourable member who has been in an army hospital will agree. They came in practically untrained but, naturally, were able to pick up the job as they gained experience. They were started as is the habit of the army on the most base level that existed or were given the more mundane tasks, and then they graduated to better things. They, I feel, were in the military sense what these aides are envisaged to be in the civil sense today. I imagine that their jobs would be very much the same and, having seen those V.A.D.'s at work, I know that not only were they of great assistance to the nursing staff, but that one of them who assisted in nursing

me and my compatriots at the Woodside Camp was of definite assistance to our morale. We called her "matron," which she enjoyed very much; I do not know that the trained sisters enjoyed it quite so much because they were inclined to regard the V.A.D.'s as persons not quite as good as themselves: in a technical sense that was perfectly true, but in the other sense may not have been so appropriate.

This Bill, as I read it, is for the fundamental purpose of enabling more people to become nurses. That is what we want. In the words of the Minister that I quoted he emphasized that by saying that younger girls may be induced to continue and obtain the necessary qualifications to become nurses. They will start as nurse aides, acquire a liking for the profession, and probably aim higher. If these facilities were not extended many would be lost to the nursing profession because they would not have a chance of getting a footing, not having the necessary educational qualifications at the time they wished to start on their chosen pursuit in life. However, most people with diligence and by trying can obtain those qualifications. Thus whereas a nurse entering upon a nursing course at 17 years of age needs certain academic standards, these aides can start off without a high standard and can acquire it as they go along, and this seems to be the essential matter in this Bill.

I would like briefly to refer further to this question of ages, for it is important. In a different profession we have had in our office from time to time girls who were too young to start a nurse's training course but had to do something to earn a living between the time they left school and the time they could start. Speaking subject to correction, the age for entering upon a nursing course used to be 18 in an A class training hospital. I think it still is. In recent years I believe that the commencing age has been reduced for B class training hospitals and that they can do two years there which will count as one in an A class hospital. This, again, I feel is a move in the right direction.

This Bill provides for nurse aides being registered on the roll at the age of 19, but, of course, a fully qualified nurse needs to be 21 years of age before she can be enrolled. I have always been one who has advocated starting young in any walk of life; possibly as one gets older one may be able to learn more quickly, but at a younger age one has other attributes which are valuable in later life. Some people criticize young people being licensed to drive a motor car at the age of 16.

I am all for it because I think that by the time they reach the age of 18, when they start to want to drive fast, they will have acquired a little technique at that lesser age when those desires are not so uppermost in their minds.

Applying this thought to the nursing profession I would feel—although I am not necessarily advocating it because obviously there is a reason for this age of 17—that an even earlier age would be quite desirable, and the Minister has been good enough to point out to me in discussion that it is possible, but not in this enrolling sense, to start earlier in a hospital training without, of course, getting any credits in the way of time for enrolment purposes. Nevertheless they can start earlier and get some sort of grounding in the duties, and this, I feel, is a most desirable thing.

Finally I would like to deal for a moment with the question of what the effect of this measure will be. That will be determined by the way it is administered, not only by the Government, but by the Industrial Courts. I think that the tendency of this Bill will be to raise rather than lower the standards of the nursing profession by, in effect, creating A grade nurses in respect of whom the normal course would be to go up a little higher in the scale, and B grade nurses, as it were, who will be below the present standard. The only implication that I can see that could affect the high status of the nursing profession is that people of lesser academic attainments at the younger ages will be able to become nurses. The fact that they have not a high academic attainment at that age may not be due to their incapacity to attain it, but to their background in life. On the other hand, it could mean that people with less intellectual ability will be able to become nurses and thus lower the standards of the nursing profession. However, I do not think that would be so. I believe, with my friends opposite, that anyone should have a real opportunity to attain whatever avocation he may desire. We know that there is a great need for more nurses. They have been in short supply in the past and probably that is still the case, and unless proper and sensible steps are taken that state of affairs will continue. This seems to be a valuable attempt to solve that problem and thus I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH secured the adjournment of the debate.

WANDILO AND GLENCOE RAILWAY (DISCONTINUANCE) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 1004.)

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—I am pleased to support this Bill. The Wandilo to Glencoe line was of later vintage than the Millicent to Beachport line with which we dealt yesterday. It was authorized in 1903, was only nine miles and 10 chains long, and served a prosperous little district. The closing of this line was inquired into in 1936 by the Transport Control Board, which recommended against this action being taken. At a later inquiry the board recommended that the line should be closed. The cost of broadening this section under the agreement with the Commonwealth Government was estimated at £224,000. It had already become one of those one-train-a-week lines and consequently did not carry much freight. Conditions were very much different from those existing in the horse and buggy days when 10 miles was quite a distance to cart timber, dairy produce and so on. In 1910 the freight on the line totalled 5,929 tons and in 1955 it had declined to 4,265 tons. Livestock carried in 1910 numbered 3,577 compared with the small number of 333 in 1955. Therefore, it was obvious that the quantity of traffic had considerably dropped and the line had deteriorated in condition. The Railways Commissioner reported that the loss of revenue to the department by closing this line would be £586 a year, but the loss in the general running of the railways would be reduced by about £13,308 a year. For the sake of such a small amount of revenue, the continuance of the line was not justified.

The Public Works Standing Committee was called upon to inquire into the closing of this line and in its report stated that its closing would react adversely on the two timber mills and to a lesser extent on the two cheese factories established in or near Glencoe. It was satisfied that the extra cost incurred by those industries in transporting their products to other lines would be many times less than the cost to the State of maintaining the Wandilo to Glencoe line. The fact that the committee recommended the closing of this line gave the Railways Commissioner the opportunity to take it up. The material available from the line, etc., was estimated to be worth £13,850, which would return a profit over the cost of taking up the line of £5,000. It seems that it was desirable to close the line because of the small quantity of traffic. The freight just prior

to the closing of the line amounted to 1,151 tons a year, and was mostly inward superphosphate. The outward traffic amounted to 3,960 tons, 3,143 tons being timber, 187 tons cheese, and the balance general cargo. In making its recommendation the Public Works Standing Committee made these four points:—

(1) the Commissioner of Railways be authorized to take up and remove the tracks, buildings, etc.; (2) the sale of the materials *in situ* or as expediency dictates; (3) the land to be retained; and (4) the road from Glencoe to Kalangadoo to be put into suitable condition to carry the traffic diverted from the railway.

Those who know the area are aware that the road to Kalangadoo cuts off a long distance for those bringing produce to the city. The road is not in very good order and is still uncompleted. People have requested time and again that finance be provided to seal the road. Under the Act, the cheese factory is not allowed to bring its produce by hired transport to the city and consequently it is forwarded in refrigerated vans to Mount Gambier, where it is transferred to the railways for transport to Adelaide. It would be advantageous for the cheese factories if they were permitted to send their produce direct from Glencoe through Kalangadoo to Adelaide. I feel sure that it would be a desirable action for the Transport Control Board to permit them to carry their produce right through without a break in transport. However, it is necessary that the road should be put in good order. I hope that the Government will remember the fourth recommendation of the committee and attend to this road at the earliest possible opportunity. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Railways)—Two points have been brought forward during the debate to which I shall reply. A recommendation was made by the Public Works Committee for the improvement of the road from Glencoe to Kalangadoo, and although it was in comparatively bad order, considerable sums have been made available to two district councils to undertake this work. As Mr. Densley pointed out, the amount of traffic using it is still such as not to warrant a big expenditure forthwith, even though it may concern the transport of cheese. I assure

the honourable member that money is being made available and that reports have been received from the two councils concerned, one of which has made considerable improvements to portion of the road. The sealing of the road has a comparatively high priority. However, before that is done reconstruction and earthworks will be necessary.

Certain honourable members some years ago supported the broadening of the railway gauge in the South-East and were unanimous in saying what a tremendous advantage it would be. The members representing that area were unanimous in their support. I think all members realize that if we are to spend a considerable sum in broadening the gauge, the Government and the railways could reasonably expect most of the produce to be carried on that railway, which today is probably one of the most efficiently run routes in the State. There is a daily fast freight train to and from the South-East, and this does not apply to certain other lines. The South-East line is quite competent to deal with the traffic offering. I am somewhat surprised that it is now suggested we should adequately repair the Glencoe-Kalangadoo road, not for the purpose of transport to the Kalangadoo railway station, but for the purpose of using road transport in opposition to the very railway the honourable member supported some time ago.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—It is the same old story.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—Yes. It is only fair to suggest that we should do what we can to support this very good service to the South-East, particularly having regard to the fact that it is obvious to any business man that the backloading factor is a tremendous thing in the matter of freighting to the South-East. I would be pleased to know whether the return freighting was for the purpose of carrying cement or some other commodity that could be much more easily carried by the excellent railway system we have at present.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment; Committee's report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.08 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, October 27, at 2.15 p.m.