

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, August 14, 1968

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

### QUESTIONS

#### FLUORIDATION

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I ask leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I do not intend to question the conclusions reached by the medical and dental professions regarding the benefit to South Australian children that would arise from fluoridating our water supply, but I do question the proposed method of administration of the fluoride. It has been announced that the whole of the metropolitan water supply will be fluoridated, but I believe that only a very small percentage of children—

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member cannot debate the question.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Will the Minister ascertain the amount of water consumed by those children under the age of 15 years who would benefit from fluoridated water?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I assure the honourable member that I will do my best to obtain the information for him, but it may be difficult to do so. I should like to point out, however, that Cabinet decided on the fluoridation of South Australia's water supply after considering much scientific evidence. I point out that many areas in South Australia use water supplies in which there is already sufficient fluoride to satisfy the requirements for dental health laid down through medical research. I believe the water supplies of Millicent, Port Lincoln, Penola, and Naracoorte have sufficient fluoride for this purpose. All health organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Australian Health and Medical Research Council and the South Australian Public Health Department, strongly support the addition of fluoride to our water supplies. Also, Cabinet has considered the findings of the Royal Commission in Tasmania, and I hope all honourable members will soon be supplied with a copy of the Commission's report.

Cabinet is satisfied that there will be very real benefit to the community as a result of fluoridating our water supplies. It will especially benefit children up to the age of 12 to 15 years, but further research has shown

that it is also particularly beneficial to the bone structure of older people. A close study was made of the cost involved to provide people with the correct amount of fluoride in tablet form, and it was found that it was a good deal more expensive to do it that way and also that it was not as effective as adding fluoride to the water supply. Cabinet has decided on this move, and it is open to any member of Parliament in either House, if he is not satisfied regarding the addition of fluoride to our water supplies, to move a motion to disagree with Cabinet's decision.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: Bring a Bill down and let us all have a go.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: On the evidence I have read from other countries and on the findings of our own organizations set up for the purpose, I am perfectly satisfied in my own mind that the addition of fluoride to our water supplies will be of benefit to the community of South Australia.

#### SILVERTON TRAMWAY COMPANY

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Can the Minister of Transport tell the Council the correct position regarding compensation for the Silverton Tramway Company for any loss that company may incur as a result of the construction of the new standard gauge railway line between Broken Hill and Port Pirie?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Negotiations are in train at present regarding this question, but no agreement has yet been reached. I think the honourable member would know that an offer of \$1,250,000 was made to the company. To my knowledge, we have not yet received any actual counter offer of one monetary sum from the company. That is the position at present.

#### PROFESSOR RICHARDSON

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government representing the Minister of Education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: On July 24 the Hon. Mr. Kemp directed a series of questions to the Minister in connection with the proposed visit overseas of Professor J. A. Richardson. As some time has elapsed since then, and as the questions received wide publicity and created a good deal of public interest, I have been waiting quietly and patiently for the replies to arrive from the Minister of Education. I do not know whether they are in fact available or whether they have not been given

because of the reluctance of the Hon. Mr. Kemp to obtain them. Has the Minister received the answers to the questions and, if so, will he make them available to this Council and to the public? If he has not received them, will he in the interests of the Council pursue the matter and obtain the answers, and in the public interest will he make those answers available in this Council?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: It is the usual courtesy for a Minister to inform a member when he has replies to questions that have been asked, and at one stage (speaking from memory it was the week before last) I told the Hon. Mr. Kemp that I had replies to his questions. However, as I was not asked the question again I did not pursue the matter further. To the best of my knowledge, the replies are now back in my office, and if I am told that the questions will be asked again I will again follow the procedure of bringing down the answers and awaiting the questions being asked.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: Without going into detail, I resubmit the questions in my name because they reflected on a certain gentleman who had no effective right to protect himself. Also, the public is interested in these questions. I would, therefore, like to get answers to those questions, which can be found on page 192 of *Hansard*.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I shall obtain the replies and give them to the honourable member.

#### PROSH MAGAZINE

The Hon. L. R. HART: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government, representing the Minister of Education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. R. HART: The recently distributed *Prosh* magazine (a product of the Students Representative Council at the Adelaide University, or one of its subcommittees) has aroused much unfavourable comment from citizens of high standing in the community. In addition to distributing this magazine on the streets of Adelaide, efforts have also been made to sell it in some country towns. Indeed, in one town that I know of an endeavour was made to distribute it at the local high school. Fortunately, however, the distribution of the magazine at that high school was not allowed. Will the Minister of Local Government therefore ask the Minister of Education to investigate attempts to distribute this magazine at country high schools? At the same time, the Minister might examine the quality of the

magazine in general, because I am sure it does not truly represent university talent at the present time.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: It seems to me that the question is in two parts. The first is the question of distribution and the rights of people to distribute literature in this way. That is, generally speaking, a matter for local government, in regard to regulations as they exist, and I shall obtain a report on that matter for the honourable member. In reply to the honourable member's further question regarding the quality of the contents of the magazine, I will discuss this matter with the Minister of Education and bring down a reply.

#### PORTFOLIO CHANGES

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: It was suggested in today's newspaper that there could possibly be a change of portfolios within the Cabinet. Can the Chief Secretary inform the Council whether there is any truth in that suggestion?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Perhaps I can answer the question in this way: there is much political gamesmanship in the report in today's press. There is no truth whatsoever in the rumour. I point out to the honourable member that, as he well knows, we in this Council have no contact whatever with the Party in another place. This, therefore, precludes any of the gamesmanship ever becoming fact.

#### ANZAC HIGHWAY

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Roads.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: During the lifetime of the previous Government I asked a question of the then Minister about parking or ranking on the Anzac Highway. I explained then that, from my observation, the bicycle tracks were not being used and I suggested that they might be brought in as a fourth lane for parking, so that three lanes on each side of the highway would be available for traffic. The reply I received from the then Minister (I am speaking from memory but I think I am quite correct) was that the Keswick bridge as it then was created a bottleneck and it would be of no great advantage to do what I suggested at that stage until the completion of the new Keswick bridge. I did not altogether agree with this at the time, but the new Keswick bridge has now been completed. I noticed a letter in the paper a few weeks ago from someone suggesting that parking bays might be made where the bicycle tracks had

previously existed. I notice that many of the bicycle tracks have already been taken away.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: We determined to remove the bicycle tracks before our Government went out of office.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: I thank the honourable member for that, because I have noticed that the bicycle tracks are being removed but are being filled in with earth, which suggests to me (in the lack of evidence to the contrary) that they are going to be made into lawns or something of that nature. As only two traffic lanes are now available for traffic on each side of the highway at peak periods, because of the odd sporadic car parked alongside the kerbing, will the Minister consider providing suitable bays at appropriate places along the highway where the bicycle tracks are being removed with a view to prohibiting parking in the third lane, thus making available to traffic three lanes on each side, which would be valuable in peak periods in particular?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The use of this space, which has become available because of the decision to dispense with the bicycle tracks, is under review at present. We have had some correspondence with the West Torrens council about this, too. I shall get a full report for the honourable member and bring it down as soon as possible.

#### CROWN LANDS ACT

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I understand that legislation will be introduced into Parliament to amend the Crown Lands Act with a view to giving better tenure of allotments in unproclaimed towns. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Lands say when such legislation is likely to be brought before Parliament?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I cannot give the honourable member an undertaking on the specific question he has asked, but the Crown Lands Act is now under consideration and amendments will be brought down. I will refer this question to the Minister of Lands for reply.

#### NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 13. Page 556.)

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Leader of the Opposition): I support this Bill, which is a step in the right direction. It provides for the age for enrolment of dental nurses to be

reduced from 18 to 17 years. I discussed this matter with the Nurses Registration Board when I was Chief Secretary. Many girls wanting to become dental nurses face the difficulty of having to wait until they are 17 years of age before they can be accepted. This gives them a long time in which to make up their minds, and some decide to take up other occupations or professions instead. So, there was a difficulty from that viewpoint, but a more serious difficulty could arise if a girl waited until she was 17 and then started her 12-month training course. Half-way through the period she might find that she was not suited to the course and did not like it. In such a case the girl found it difficult to obtain an apprenticeship or another course of training.

Consequently, this Bill provides that a girl will be able to start training at 16 and be accepted as a dental nurse at the age of 17. Nowadays we hear much about our young people being further advanced at a given age than they used to be. I am not prepared to say whether this is correct. However, this Bill will enable the dental profession to obtain more trainee nurses because it will encourage trainees to start at the age of 16 and, if they do not like the course, they can drop out and take on some other occupation. I support the Bill.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): I, too, support the Bill. The honourable member who has just resumed his seat has said almost all that can be said about the Bill. Its most important aspect is the opportunity afforded a girl to try her hand at training for this job at an earlier age. Nowadays, young people, whether they are training to become dental nurses or training for some other occupation, are sometimes compelled to make very early decisions about their future occupation, and their education must be oriented towards this end at perhaps too early an age. Later, they may find that they do not like the course they have chosen, and, in these circumstances, they should have every opportunity to change to some other form of training that is more to their liking. It is altogether wrong for a young person to be unable to make this change at a sufficiently early age. This is clearly the main reason for the Bill now before the Council, and I wholeheartedly support it.

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT (Southern): I, too, support the Bill. Dental patients are often very apprehensive, and one of the most important persons who can allay their fears is the dental nurse. The trainee nurse will work

in a limited sphere, but she will receive a basic insight into caring for human beings. If she later wants to go further and undertake a fuller nursing course she will have good experience behind her and, as a result of this Bill's provisions, she will still be young enough to start on a second course of training.

We all realize the important part that dental care plays in the general health and well-being of the community. Because we are short of dentists it is important that the dentists we do have should have young and enthusiastic helpers. A girl aged 16 or 17 is able to do this sort of work, whereas if she waited until she was older she might not be prepared to take the position, because it is limited in its scope. This Bill is a step in the right direction and I support it.

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): I, too, support the Bill. I have always been keen on the idea of a course of training for dental nurses. In fact, a study of *Hansard* would show that I gave my views on this matter prior to the introduction of this form of nursing. I wonder what the future holds for dental nurses, since we are to fluoridate our water supplies. I assume we shall always need dental nurses because we shall still have tuckshops to counteract the benefits of fluoride.

Regarding nursing in general, there is a certain amount of attraction to dental nursing because the dental nurse works a 40-hour week from Monday to Friday and attends lectures and does examinations in her working time, and the course is for only one year. The general nursing trainee works an 80-hour fortnight, but in most cases she has to attend lectures and do examinations in her own time. At

present trainee nurses in some Government hospitals are working overtime. I believe that they are working an 88-hour fortnight in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Admittedly, they are paid overtime at time-and-a-half rates for the period they work beyond 80 hours. Of course, the 80-hour fortnight includes shift work. When they work on night shift they are required to work a 48-hour week and, of course, they are paid overtime. The matter of shift work is one of the disadvantages of the nursing profession.

I assume that the academic qualifications required for a dental nurse are not as high as those required for a general nursing trainee. In this connection, it is significant that the dental nurse's salary is almost the same as that of the general nursing trainee. At 21 years of age the dental nurse receives \$58.70 a fortnight, and when she has completed her first year of training and is entitled to be registered she qualifies for an extra \$3, which would bring her fortnightly salary to \$61.70. A general nursing trainee in her third year of training, having taken her lectures and examinations in her own time, receives only \$61.20 for an 80-hour fortnight, which is less than that received by a dental nurse. So, we should consider the whole question of the nursing profession, because here lies one of the reasons why nurses are at present required to work overtime and why insufficient nurses are available. I support the Bill.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 2.51 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, August 20, at 2.15 p.m.