

Dandenong Pays Tribute To A Very

Wonderful Nurse

Large Gathering Honors Sister C. Williams On Her Retirement

THE universal affection in which Sister Catherine Williams is held, and the "soft spot" which district mothers attending the local Truby King Centre over the past 20 years, have in their hearts for this very charming and competent nurse, was strikingly demonstrated last Friday night when district citizens filled the Dandenong Town Hall in a spontaneous tribute to Sister, on the eve of her retirement.

Speaker after speaker paid warm tribute to Sister's remarkable record here in Truby King work, and to the debt which the young mothers of this shire owe to her for her cheerful and expert guidance. And they were no empty platitudes, for the voices of all rang with sincerity.

As Mrs. C. Calthness so aptly put it, "Over the past 20 years, Sister has been a real mother to the mothers of Dandenong."

And the mothers — and fathers — and children — were there to show just how appreciative they felt.

During the very pleasant evening, the Shire President presented a smart handbag to the guest of honour, and tucked away in it was over £265 contributed by district friends as a tangible expression of appreciation to one who has endeared herself to all.

With Jeff Ryland as compere, the first half of the evening was given over to an excellent programme of entertainment from the Dandenong Orchestra (led by Mrs. Van Damme, and under the baton of Mr. Eric Reader), Mr. John McCurdy (accompanied by Miss Thelma Talbot), Mrs. Winstone, and the Mosquito Quartet. Mrs. Vic. Tharle later

moved a vote of thanks to them all for such a pleasant interlude.

Cr. Vic. Tharle, chairman for the evening, in welcoming the large crowd, said it was very pleasing to see so many present to wish Sister all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

Among those present were Mrs. P. Small, first secretary of the Dandenong Baby Welfare

Centre, Mrs. E. Hill, the first president, as well as Mrs. E. K. Keys, Mrs. Godfrey, snr., and Mrs. Moysey, all members of the original Truby King Committee.

A VERY WONDERFUL NURSE

"We have come here very humbly to pay our tribute to a very wonderful nurse," and above all, to a woman whose friendly smile endeared her to everyone fortunate enough to meet her," declared Sir Gilbert Boileau. "For the past 20 years Sister Williams has been Sister-in-Charge of Infant Welfare in this Shire, and during those long years she has given kindly encouragement and help to many thousands of young mothers during anxious days. I'm quite sure that no young mother who spoke to Sister, seeking her advice, ever returned home without feeling happier in her own mind, and much less worried. It was characteristic of Sister that, notwithstanding her long experience, she never developed little fads and foibles we so often see in people who have occupied one job for a long time. She successfully put into practice the principles of the late Sir Truby King. She believed his system was the correct one, and remained loyal to it throughout her long period of service. I'm sure that if Sir Truby King was still with us, he would be here tonight to pay tribute to one of his greatest disciples. It is said of him that he devoted his life to making this a better world for little children—and I'm sure you will all agree that that has been Sister Williams' accomplishment throughout the years." (Applause).

"There must be in this district hundreds of people who have found this a better world because of the help Sister has given them," continued Sir Gilbert.

If he were Prime Minister, and knowing Sister Williams' great record, he would be proud to recommend that she should be included in the New Year's Honors. (Applause). Referring to his own happy associations with Sister, Sir Gilbert said that until he came to Dandenong he had never previously experienced the benefits of an Infant Welfare Centre. He soon realised that here in Dandenong we had an Infant Welfare Centre in which he, and the mothers could have complete confidence. He made it a rule that mothers under his care should take their babies to Sister Williams, and get her to share their responsibilities. Her advice was a particular boon to mothers with their first baby.

"WORK AN INSPIRATION"

After sincerely wishing the

Nursery School's deep appreciation of the valuable service Sister Williams had rendered it over a considerable period of years. She had gone beyond the bounds of her ordinary work to take a very deep interest in it—in fact, but for her, he doubted if they would have had a Nursery School. Sister had never failed them, and there had been very great co-operation between the two bodies. He thanked her for the kindly way she had always carried out her duties, and congratulated her on the wonderful success that had attended her efforts.

A PERSONAL TRIBUTE FROM SIR HAROLD LUXTON

Other speakers, said Sir Harold Luxton, had spoken of the professional side of Sister's work, and he knew that Dandenong had benefited tremendously from that over the past twenty years, but his was a more personal tribute. He would take them back a little earlier to the days when he was a young married man, and had to go abroad. Sister went with them to help look after their young family, and was an intimate member of their family circle for 4 years. It was then that he formed such a high regard for her, and his friendship and regard for "Sis" had grown with the years. "We had such complete confidence in her, and she was such an asset in our family that I thought I had to come here tonight to publicly pay tribute to a wonderful and charming personality, and a very good friend," he declared.

Cr. A. W. Bowman said the Dandenong Council deeply appreciated the wonderful work Sister had done for this community, and thanked her sincerely for her loyal service.

Mrs. E. Reveleigh (Girl Guides), and Mrs. Philpot (St. John Ambulance), paid warm tributes to Sister for the cheerful assistance she had rendered these organisations, and Mrs. Len. Matthews (formerly Sister Rees) who worked with Sister Williams for so many years, said she had made Truby King work her life's work—and all would agree that she had achieved wonderful results. Nobody had worked harder, and nobody had made more friends. Sister could retire with happy memories of a job well done for the young people, and with a great peace of mind that her life's work had been achieved. "God bless you, Sister, and may your days be very happy," she concluded feelingly.

Mrs. Eric Hill spoke of the great regard and affection all mothers had formed for Sister.

TWINS PRESENT FLOWERS

There was spontaneous applause

guest of honour every happiness in a long retirement, Sir Gilbert concluded, "I can assure her that the great work she started here 20 years ago will still go on, because her name and her record will be an inspiration to those who follow in her footsteps. (Loud Applause).

Dr. Barbara Meredith, Director of Maternal and Infant Welfare in Victoria, said it was a very great pleasure for her to see the very great warmth and regard they had for Sister. Infant Welfare Sisters such as Sister Williams, had given very wonderful service to the State, so much so that Victoria had the lowest infant mortality rate in the world. There was no centre of which this was more true than

Dandenong. The Department fully realised the value of the work that Sister had done here—for eight years on her own for a start. A happy spirit existed between Sister and mothers here, and Sister Williams had gone beyond her own duties and helped build up the Pre-school Centre, too. From the Department, she was pleased to pay her a very warm tribute, and convey the officers' every good wish for many happy years of leisure.

After apologising for Mrs. Mawdsley, the President of the Truby King League of Victoria, Miss Harrison, the secretary of that organisation, in conveying every good wish to Sister in her retirement, said that her dear old friend, Sister Primrose, now in Austin Hospital, was also thinking of her that night, with fond recollections of the day, 20 years ago, when they first opened the Dandenong Centre. Sister Primrose it was who realised that Sister Williams was the only person for Dandenong, and she had been instrumental in getting her to come out here. The young people of Dandenong were a great tribute to the teachings of Truby King, and it must be a very great satisfaction to Sister to now look back on the fruits of her work.

"WON THEIR HEARTS"

Mrs. Chas. Caithness said it had been her great pleasure to know Sister for the past fifteen years, and she could say that she had really won the hearts of everyone connected with the Centre. She had the happy knack of being able to put the young mother instantly at ease, her lovely smile very quickly setting any fears or doubts at rest. They had all had a true friend in her. "She has indeed been a mother to the mothers of Dandenong over the past 20 years," she concluded, "and on behalf of the Centre Committee I express the earnest wish that she will be long spared to enjoy her retirement. (Applause).

Mrs. Caithness then presented Sister with a lovely floral tribute—one of the many which the guest of honour received.

As president of the Dandenong Nursery School Committee, Mr. W. L. Brumley expressed the

first twins ever to attend the Centre, came forward and presented Sister with some lovely flowers.

SHIRE PRESIDENT'S TRIBUTE

"We are all gathered here tonight, to do honor to a very gracious lady," declared the Shire President (Cr. Ray Jeffers) as he read out a eulogistic letter which was going from the Dandenong Council, under seal, to Sister Williams, in official recognition of her sterling services. Amidst applause, he also announced that Sister would be the first to receive long service leave under council's new scheme for rewarding long service employees—a reward she had richly earned.

On behalf of the citizens of Dandenong and district, Cr. Jeffers then presented Sister with an attractive handbag containing over £265, as some tangible recognition of the love and esteem in which she was held by the people of this town and district. With the gift, he said, went their sincere appreciation of all she had done for them, and their very best wishes for happy days in her retirement. (Loud applause).