

to the cemetery for burial. House Bill 241 eliminates this requirement, and permits an unlicensed employee of the undertaker to take charge of the remains from the time the casket is finally sealed until the burial.

It was contended at the hearing that the services of a licensed undertaker are not really required after the closing of the casket. It was urged that one of his unlicensed employees is competent to do all that need be done from the home to the grave, and that the question involves no health considerations.

This does not meet what I feel is the objection to the bill. The undertaker performs one of the most solemn and sacred tasks that can be performed. His employment involves the utmost measure of trust, and a confidence which is often the result of the faithful performance of this trust on previous family occasions. The relationship between the undertaker and the family begins at the moment of death, and it does not end until the casket is lowered in the grave.

I believe the family is entitled to have the undertaker continue in personal charge of the remains until the last final rites have been performed at the cemetery, and if the undertaker himself for some reason cannot continue in charge until the actual burial, then I believe the custom should be continued of having one of his licensed undertakers in charge until the end. I do not think the family ought to be asked or required to accept for this last and most solemn part of the whole ceremony the superintendence of some employee or subordinate who does not afford the responsibility and the confidence which the possession of a license assures.

This bill is not desired by the undertakers as a whole. It is opposed by the Maryland State Funeral Association and by the State Board of Undertakers. The force behind the measure is the professional interest of one large undertaking establishment in Baltimore City. I do not think that this is sufficient justification for making the proposed change in the law. For these reasons, I will veto the bill.

WOODLAND BEACH CHARTER.

(Chapter 121, House Bill 305.)

Woodland Beach is a Summer resort in Anne Arundel County. The present population consists only of about eight families, and there are about fourteen hundred lot owners who are accustomed to spend week-ends there during the summer months.