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Speech Opening Taxation Institute National Convention, Hotel Australia

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, OPENING TAXATION INSTITUTE
NATIONAL CONVENTION, HOTEL AUSTRALIA.

14/4/72

MR. O'LOUGHLIN, MR. DOYLE, MR. JACOBS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO OPEN YOUR SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION. ON BEHALF OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT I EXTEND A PARTICULAR WELCOME TO YOUR INTERSTATE DELEGATES. I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND THAT YOU COULD NOT HAVE PICKED A BETTER CITY IN WHICH TO HOLD A CONVENTION.

I'D ALSO CONGRATULATE YOUR ORGANISERS, SIR, ON THEIR IMPECCABLE TIMING FOR THIS GATHERING. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO LAUNCH A LONG OVERDUE INQUIRY INTO OUR TAXATION SYSTEM WILL GIVE ADDED POINT TO YOUR DISCUSSIONS OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

AS STATE TREASURER, I SHARE YOUR CONCERN WITH THE RENDERING UNTO CAESAR OF HIS - THE STATE'S - DUE IN THE FORM OF TAXES.

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BUT AS PREMIER AND DEVELOPMENT MINISTER I'M EQUALLY CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS DONE WITH CAESAR'S ALLOCATION AND I'D LIKE TODAY TO TALK ABOUT ONE PARTICULAR AREA OF PUBLIC POLICY WHICH CONCERNS THE LARGE MAJORITY OF OUR CITIZENS AND WHICH I FEEL VERY STRONGLY IS BEING SHAMEFULLY NEGLECTED.

FROM THE WINDOWS OF THIS HOTEL YOU LOOK OVER ONE OF THE GREATEST PLANS CONCEIVED IN AUSTRALIA, THE CITY OF ADELAIDE PLANNED BY COLONEL LIGHT. IT WAS A GRAND DESIGN SOUNDLY EXECUTED. MUCH OF IT - THOUGH NOT ENOUGH - REMAINS. INDEED, IN PLACES WE ARE ADDING TO ITS QUALITY. THE PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX NOW TAKING SHAPE ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER TORRENS WILL PROVE A WORTHY ADDITION TO LIGHT'S ORIGINAL SCHEME. (AND, IF I MAY PUT IN A QUICK PLUG AS TOURISM MINISTER, WILL PROVIDE CONVENTION FACILITIES WHICH SHOULD ENSURE THAT INSTITUTES AND ORGANISATIONS SUCH AS YOURS HEAD FOR ADELAIDE IN FUTURE LIKE SO MANY HOMING PIGEONS).

BUT WE PRESENTLY FACE A MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM WHICH - AS STATE AUTHORITIES WITH EXTREMELY LIMITED RESOURCES - WE CAN'T TACKLE IN ANYTHING MORE THAN PIECEMEAL FASHION. THE CITY OF ADELAIDE AND INNER SUBURBAN AREAS ARE BEING STEADILY SAPPED OF POPULATION AND, AS A CONSEQUENCE, WE HAVE AN EXTREMELY RAPID BUILDUP OF OUTER SUBURBS COMBINED WITH DECAY OF THE INNER AREAS. THIS PROBLEM OF URBAN BLIGHT IS NOT UNIQUE TO ADELAIDE. IT'S BEING ENCOUNTERED IN THE OTHER MAJOR CITIES OF AUSTRALIA. NOR IS IT YET IRREVERSIBLE. BUT, UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE, AND DONE QUICKLY, IT MAY BECOME SO.

THE SEVEN KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN AND AROUND ADELAIDE ARE ALL LOSING POPULATION. BETWEEN THE 1961 AND 1971 CENSUSES THE POPULATION OF THESE AREAS FELL BY 11.4%. AT THE SAME TIME THE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE TOTAL ADELAIDE URBAN AREA ROSE BY 28% AND IN THE STATE AS A WHOLE IT WENT UP BY 21%.

THIS IS PRESENTING US WITH INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE INNER AREAS HAVE EXTENSIVE PUBLIC FACILITIES - SUCH AS SEWERAGE, POWER SUPPLIES, ROADS AND THE LIKE - WHICH ARE USED BELOW CAPACITY AS POPULATION IS DRAINED FROM THEM. THE ONCE THRIVING COMMUNITIES TEND TO ATROPHY. THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUPPLY EXTENSIVE NEW FACILITIES AT MUCH GREATER COST TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE POPULATION BUILDING UP ON THE FRINGES OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA. THE SPREAD TO THE OUTER SUBURBS INCREASES PRESSURE FOR MULTIPLE CAR OWNERSHIP, WORSENS THE DRAIN ON PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, INCREASES CONGESTION AND ADDS TO AIR POLLUTION.

EVEN WITH OUR LIMITED RESOURCES AS A STATE WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS.

WE HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT A NEW MAJOR CITY WILL BE SET UP IN THE MURRAY BRIDGE AREA TO TAKE THE OVERSPILL POPULATION FROM ADELAIDE AND TO SEEK TO ENSURE THAT THE POPULATION OF METROPOLITAN AREA DOES NOT GO BEYOND THE 1.3 MILLION LEVEL. IT WILL BE THE MOST EXCITING PROJECT IN TOWN PLANNING SINCE THE FOUNDING OF CANBERRA.

WITHIN THE INNER CITY AREA ITSELF WE HAVE ANNOUNCED A BOLD NEW SCHEME TO ERASE ONE OF THE MOST DECAYED AREAS OF ALL - HACKNEY NORTH - AND TO REPLACE WITH A NEW 1,000-STRONG COMMUNITY PROPERLY MIXED AS TO INCOMES, AGES AND OCCUPATIONS. IN IMPLEMENTING THIS SCHEME WE HAVE WORKED OUT NEW PROCEDURES FOR COMPENSATING AND RELOCATING - ELSEWHERE OR IN THE SAME AREA - THE PRESENT RESIDENTS WHICH ARE ATTRACTING FAVOURABLE ATTENTION FROM PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES IN OTHER STATES AND WHICH ARE PROVING A GREAT SUCCESS LOCALLY.

I BELIEVE WE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA ARE NOW SHOWING THE WAY TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING CONCEPTS AND POLICIES.

BUT HOW MUCH MORE COULD BE DONE. IT IS, TO MY MIND, QUITE ABSURD THAT IN THIS - THE MOST URBAN FEDERATION IN THE WORLD - THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO ASSUME ITS PROPER RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING OUR CITIES WORK. THE FEDERAL GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAS PROVIDED 450-MILLION DEUTSCH MARKS OVER TWO YEARS FOR CITY RENEWAL; THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN URBAN RENEWAL. FOR YEARS, I HAVE PRESSED THE COMMONWEALTH TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR URBAN RENEWAL. I HAVE POINTED OUT THAT IT IS A PROBLEM NOW, THAT IT WILL BECOME A MUCH GREATER PROBLEM IN THE FUTURE IF NOTHING IS DONE ABOUT IT. I HAVE BEEN, FRANKLY, IGNORED.

SURELY CITIZENS HAVE A RIGHT TO DEMAND THAT THE TAXES THEY PAY TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE USED IN PROPER PROPORTION TO MAKING THEIR OWN CITIES ATTRACTIVE PLACES WHICH THEY WANT TO LIVE IN RATHER THAN HAVE TO LIVE IN.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD, I BELIEVE, IMMEDIATELY ALLOCATE MONEY TO ENABLE PROPER RESEARCH TO BE CARRIED OUT INTO THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM AND THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF URBAN REDEVELOPMENT. IT SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDS TO UPGRADE EXISTING HOUSES IN THE INNER AREAS AND IT SHOULD PROVIDE INCENTIVES - IN THE FORM OF LOW INTEREST LOANS OR TAX CONCESSIONS - FOR OWNER-OCCUPIERS AND OTHERS IN RENEWAL SCHEMES.

THE VISION OF COLONEL LIGHT IN PLANNING THIS GREAT CITY DIDN'T DIE WITH HIM. ADEQUATE FINANCING AND INCENTIVES BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT - WHICH ALONE HAS THE RESOURCES NECESSARY - COULD ENSURE THAT WE HAND ON TO OUR NEXT GENERATION, AS HE DID, A CITY OF WHICH WE CAN ALL BE PROUD.

SIR, SOMEBODY ONCE REMARKED THAT THE ONLY THINGS OF WHICH WE CAN BE SURE IN THIS LIFE ARE DEATH AND TAXES. I'M SURE THAT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS YOUR DELIBERATIONS HERE WILL ADD TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF - IF NOT OUR ENTHUSIASM ABOUT - THE SECOND OF THOSE CERTAINTIES. IT GIVES ME MUCH PLEASURE OFFICIALLY TO DECLARE YOUR CONVENTION OPEN.