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Speech Opening Murray Valley Development League Annual Meeting, Murray Bridge

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, OPENING MURRAY VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING.

MURRAY BRIDGE. 15.6.72

YOUR WORSHIP, MR. SCHMIDT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO OPEN YOUR ANNUAL MEETING. I'M ALWAYS GLAD OF ANY OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE TOWN IN WHICH I GREW UP. MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY THE FINE WORK THAT THE LEAGUE IS DOING AND TO THANK YOU FOR IT. THE JOB YOU'VE DONE IN THE AREAS OF DECENTRALISATION, WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, TOURISM AND EDUCATION IS WELL KNOWN AND WELL APPRECIATED. LESS WELL KNOWN, PERHAPS, BUT IN THE LONG TERM OF GREATER IMPORTANCE IS THE LEAGUE'S ROLE IN FOSTERING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE STATES AND IN BREAKING DOWN THE LOCAL JEALOUSIES WHICH HAVE, FOR TOO LONG, BEEN A CHARACTERISTIC OF SOME RIVER TOWNS. THE LEAGUE'S STRUCTURE, WITH ITS REGIONAL COMMITTEES CROSSING STATE BOUNDARIES, FACILITATES THIS BUT IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYWHERE NEAR AS EFFECTIVE WITHOUT THE ENTHUSIASTIC PERSONAL BACKING OF LEAGUE OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS.

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SIR, I'D LIKE TODAY TO SPEAK BRIEFLY ABOUT A COUPLE OF MATTERS OF CURRENT IMPORTANCE TO MY GOVERNMENT AND TO THE RIVER TOWNS. THE FIRST IS OUR DECISION TO ESTABLISH A MAJOR NEW TOWN IN THIS AREA. IT'S A DECISION THAT WAS MADE IN RESPONSE TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS OF VARYING PRIORITIES. WE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS TIME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT DECENTRALISATION RATHER THAN BEING CONTENT TO TALK ABOUT AS HAS, I FEAR, BEEN THE CASE WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS IN THE PAST. THERE'S BEEN A NATIONAL TENDENCY FOR POLITICIANS TO PREACH THE MERITS OF DECENTRALISATION FROM PULPITS FIRMLY IN THE MIDDLE OF THOSE SWELLING COASTAL CANCERS, THE AUSTRALIAN STATE CAPITALS. THE CONSEQUENCES ARE NOW BEING BROUGHT HOME TO US IN THE FORM OF CLOGGED HIGHWAYS, MILE UPON MILE OF SPRAWLING SUBURB AND SMOG. WE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING THIS IN ADELAIDE - THOUGH NOT TO THE SAME EXTENT AS THE EASTERN CAPITALS. ACCORDINGLY WE ARE SEEKING TO LIMIT THE GROWTH OF METROPOLITAN ADELAIDE BEFORE IT TOO JOINS THE INTERNATIONAL WHERE'S WHERE OF UNWORKABLE CITIES.

WE ENVISAGE THAT METROPOLITAN POPULATION CAN BE STABILISED AT ABOUT 1.3 MILLION WITH THE EXCESS BEING SIPHONED TO THE NEW CITY GIVING IT AN ULTIMATE POPULATION OF AROUND 200,000. IT'S AN EXCITING - EVEN A BALD - CONCEPT. IT'S ALSO A VERY PRACTICAL ONE. THE STATE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS THAT IT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO SPREAD GROWTH OUTSIDE THE METROPOLITAN AREA, ALONG THE RIVERLAND REGION, IN THE GULF TOWNS AND IN THE SOUTH EAST. THE NEW TOWN WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY FAR FROM ADELAIDE TO BE CIVICALLY AUTONOMOUS AND PREVENT UNDESIRABLE RIBBON DEVELOPMENT WHILE BEING SUFFICIENTLY CLOSE TO IT - AND CONNECTED BY A FREEWAY - TO PERMIT RAPID AND CHEAP ACCESS AND SO PROVIDE FOR INDUSTRIAL INTEGRATION. IT WILL ALSO - AND THIS WAS A FURTHER FACTOR INFLUENCING OUR ORIGINAL DECISION - PROVIDE A POWERFUL STIMULUS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER RIVERLAND AREAS. SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE NOW BEGUN THE JOB OF DETAILED PLANNING AND I CAN'T YET SAY MUCH MORE THAN WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE PUBLIC. BUT I ANTICIPATE THAT, ONCE WE HAVE THEIR REPORT AND IT'S BEEN CONSIDERED BY CABINET, WE'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE SPECIFIC ANNOUNCEMENTS NOT ONLY

ABOUT THE NAME OF THE SITE OF THE NEW CITY BUT ALSO THE SPECIAL CONCESSIONS AND INDUCEMENTS THAT WILL BE OFFERED TO INDUSTRIALISTS TO ESTABLISH THERE. I AM CONFIDENT THAT THESE WILL BE ENOUGH, TOGETHER WITH THE CHANCE TO GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF SUCH A MAJOR PROJECT, TO SECURE THE TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT WE WANT AT THE RATE WE WANT IT.

THE SECOND MATTER I'D LIKE TO MENTION IS THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESOURCES OF THE MURRAY ITSELF. ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY NOTWITHSTANDING, IT'S CLEAR THAT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE SOUTH AUSTRALIA WILL CONTINUE TO BE ABSOLUTELY RELIANT ON THE MURRAY FOR SURVIVAL. THIS MEANS WE MUST BE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES DEvised TO MANAGE THIS CRUCIAL RESOURCE. I BELIEVE THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO CONSIDER REPLACEMENT OF THE RIVER MURRAY COMMISSION WITH A NATIONAL WATER CONSERVATION AND CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY. THE COMMISSION HAS BEEN OF PROVEN VALUE TO ALL ITS MEMBERS BUT IT IS LIMITED IN SCOPE AND ACHIEVEMENT.

THE WHOLE HISTORY OF THE CHOWILLA PROJECT SO FAR (AND I SAY DELIBERATELY SO FAR BECAUSE I'M NOT READY TO REGARD IT AS A DEAD LETTER) SHOWS JUST THIS. NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA REFUSED TO RENEGOTIATE. WHY SHOULD THEY? THEY HAD AN AGREEMENT THEY COULD ENFORCE. THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE TO ELECTORS THERE NOT HERE. BUT A NATIONAL AUTHORITY WORKING WITH THE STATES TO PRIORITIES DETERMINED ON SOUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES COULD HAVE TAKEN SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S FUTURE NEEDS INTO ACCOUNT AND DETERMINED ACCORDINGLY. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS MUST, OF COURSE, REMAIN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS BUT THEY SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BECOME THE ONLY INFLUENCE JUST AS STATE NEEDS MUST BE BALANCED AGAINST NATIONAL PRIORITIES. THE MURRAY-MURRUMBIDGEE-DARLING COMPLEX IS SIMPLY TOO IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US FOR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE BASIS OF STATE BOUNDARIES OR THE POLITICAL COMPLEXION OF A PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT COMMISSION'S CHARTER IS THAT IT REGULATES WATER QUANTITY BUT NOT QUALITY ALLOCATED TO THE STATES.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CHARTER WOULD BE FULFILLED EVEN IF EVERY GALLON OF WATER DELIVERED WAS TOO SALTY FOR MAN OR BEAST. OUR CONCERN WITH WATER QUALITY IS PLAINLY GOING TO INCREASE STILL MORE IN THE YEARS AHEAD. ALREADY WE HAVE LIMITED THE NUMBER OF IRRIGATION LICENCES ISSUED NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEM OF GUARANTEEING SUPPLIES IN DRY YEARS BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE EFFECT THAT FURTHER IRRIGATION WOULD HAVE ON QUALITY BECAUSE OF SALINE SEEPAGE. SIR, THE LEAGUE HAS PLAYED A VALUABLE PART IN PROMOTING NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THESE PROBLEMS AND IN GETTING NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR ACTION TO CHANGE THE DIRECTION OF AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS THE PROVINCES AND AWAY FROM THE CAPITALS. YOUR WORK IN SETTING THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OFF THE GROUND IS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS AND I THINK YOU CAN PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN PROMOTION OF THE NEW TOWN. WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE BEEN THE FIRST STATE GOVERNMENT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEAGUE'S FINANCES AND WE'RE PROUD, TOO, THAT OUR LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION IS

CURRENTLY HIGHER THAN THAT OF NEW SOUTH WALES OR VICTORIA.
I APPRECIATE THE PROBLEMS OF RISING COSTS AND INCREASED ACTIVITY
WHICH LED YOU RECENTLY TO SEEK AN INCREASE IN THE GRANT. THIS IS
PERHAPS THE OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE THAT I HAVE APPROVED AN INCREASE
OF \$1,000 FOR THE 1972/73 ESTIMATES.
IT NOW GIVES ME VERY GREAT PLEASURE OFFICIALLY TO OPEN YOUR
ANNUAL MEETING.

THANK YOU.