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Title:

Speech at the opening of the Adelaide Building Centre Promotion Area

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT THE OPENING OF THE ADELAIDE BUILDING CENTRE PROMOTION AREA. 9/9/71.

MR. LeMERCIER,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WAS PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO OPEN THIS NEW PROMOTION AREA.

ITS ESTABLISHMENT REFLECTS THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY AND RANGE OF CHOICE IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY.

THE NEED TO KEEP PACE WITH VERY RAPIDLY ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY AND TO ADJUST TO CHANGE IS A FACT OF LIFE IN ALMOST ALL INDUSTRIES TODAY. AND IT'S PARTICULARLY TRUE OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY.

BUILDERS ARE NO LONGER SIMPLY CONCERNED WITH ORGANISING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF BRICKS AND SUFFICIENT LABOUR TO USE THEM.

IT'S A ROLE WHICH NOW CALLS FOR MANAGERIAL SKILLS IN A VARIETY OF AREAS AND FOR EXPERT TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE.

PAGE 2.

A DISPLAY SUCH AS THIS WHICH HAS THE DUAL PURPOSE OF INFORMING THE CUSTOMER ABOUT THE VARIOUS COMPONENTS AVAILABLE IN MAKING WHAT WILL PROBABLY BE THE LARGEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL DECISION IN HIS LIFE - HOME BUYING - AND WHICH EDUCATES THE INDUSTRY ITSELF IN NEW TECHNIQUES AND PRODUCTS HAS A MOST VALUABLE PART TO PLAY, AND I'M SURE IT WILL PROVE A GREAT SUCCESS.

WE, AS A GOVERNMENT, ARE ANXIOUS TO DO ALL WE CAN TO ASSIST IN ENSURING THAT BUILDERS, PLANNERS, ARCHITECTS AND ALL INVOLVED IN THE INDUSTRY HAVE READY ACCESS TO THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION THEY REQUIRE TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS HERE AND OVERSEAS. FOR SOME TIME A SMALL COMMITTEE HAS BEEN EXAMINING, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR. RAMSAY, THE HOUSING TRUST'S GENERAL MANAGER, THE FEASIBILITY OF SETTING UP A TECHNICAL INFORMATION CENTRE FOR THE INDUSTRY IN THIS STATE.

THE COMMITTEE HAS NOW REPORTED ITS FINDINGS TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED ITS RECOMMENDATIONS.

BROADLY, THE COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE SUCH A CENTRE HERE AND THAT, INITIALLY, THE EXISTING TECHNICAL AND RESEARCH LIBRARY AT THE HOUSING TRUST SHOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR USE BY THE INDUSTRY.

IT WILL BE ADMINISTRATIVELY WITHIN THE TRUST BUT OPERATED UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF A STEERING COMMITTEE.

AFTER A TRIAL PERIOD OF A FEW YEARS IT IS HOPED THE CENTRE CAN BE SEPARATED FROM THE TRUST AND PHYSICALLY LOCATED ELSEWHERE.

IN SETTING UP SUCH A CENTRE, WE WILL BE FOLLOWING THE PATTERN WHICH HAS DEVELOPED IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS BRITAIN AND AMERICA, WHERE THESE LIBRARIES HAVE PROVED A GREAT SUCCESS.

THE CENTRE WILL NOT NECESSARILY HOLD ALL THE INFORMATION ITSELF. IT WILL BE AN INQUIRY POINT, ABLE TO PINPOINT WHERE MATERIAL CAN BE FOUND IF IT ISN'T ACTUALLY WITHIN THE CENTRE.

I BELIEVE IT WILL BE EXTREMELY USEFUL NOT ONLY TO MEMBERS OF THE INDUSTRY USING IT BUT TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE APPLICATION OF NEW SKILLS AND IDEAS.

THERE IS ONE OTHER MATTER OF CURRENT INTEREST TO THE BUILDING INDUSTRY WHICH I'D LIKE TO MENTION THIS AFTERNOON - THE NEW LICENSING SYSTEM NOW IN FORCE.

THERE ARE AT PRESENT MOVES IN PARLIAMENT TO DISALLOW THESE REGULATIONS.

DISALLOWANCE WOULD BE A GRAVE DISSERVICE TO THE INDUSTRY AND THE PUBLIC THEY PROTECT AND WOULD BE A MOST RETROGRADE STEP.

IT'S BEEN SUGGESTED THAT THESE REGULATIONS IN SOME WAY INFRINGE PERSONAL FREEDOM AND SPELL THE DOOM OF THE SUB-CONTRACTING INDUSTRY.

THIS IS NONSENSE.

THE ONLY FREEDOM INFRINGED IS THE OPPORTUNITY BY A FEW UNSCRUPULOUS PEOPLE - WHO ARE MOST UNREPRESENTATIVE OF THE INDUSTRY IN GENERAL AND WHO ARE REPUDIATED BY THEM - TO FLEECE THE PUBLIC WITH LITTLE CHANCE OF BEING CAUGHT.

THE LICENSING OF BUILDERS BY THE BOARD MEANS THAT IF COMPLAINTS ARE LODGED THEY CAN BE INVESTIGATED AND, IF FOUND TO BE OF SUBSTANCE, THE LICENSEE IS IN DANGER OF LOSING HIS LICENCE IF HE IS UNWILLING TO RECTIFY WHAT IS JUDGED TO BE SHODDY WORKMANSHIP.

THE BOARD CANNOT DIRECT THAT THE WORK BE CORRECTED BUT IT MAY USE THE SANCTION OF THE POSSIBLE REFUSAL TO RENEW, SUSPEND OR CANCEL A LICENCE TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ITS REQUESTS..

SO FAR AS THE SUB-CONTRACTING INDUSTRY IS CONCERNED, THE BOARD HAS BEEN QUITE LAVISH IN THE NUMBER OF LICENCES APPROVED FOR GENERAL BUILDERS AND THE CLASSIFIED TRADE.

IT HAS APPROVED THE ISSUE OF 3,839 GENERAL LICENSES TO BOTH GENERAL BUILDERS AND LARGE SUB-CONTRACTORS IN PARTICULAR FIELDS. IN THE RESTRICTED FIELD THERE HAVE BEEN 5,823 APPLICATIONS APPROVED. AS AN INITIAL STEP THE BOARD HAS GRANTED LICENCES TO ALL WHO ARE GENUINELY ENGAGED IN THE INDUSTRY.

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN ILL-INFORMED CRITICISMS OF THE METHOD OF LICENSING SUB-CONTRACTORS, THAT IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE STRICT DEMARCATION IN THE INDUSTRY FOISTED ON BY THE UNIONS.

THIS SIMPLY DOES NOT HOLD WATER.

THE SUB-CONTRACTORS ARE SPECIALISTS, EARNING THEIR LIVELIHOOD AS SPECIALISTS.

IN FACT THE BUILDERS LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WHICH THE INDUSTRY WAS REPRESENTED HEARD EXPERT WITNESSES, ENGAGED IN THE PARTICULAR TRADES EXAMINED, RECOMMEND THAT A LICENCE SHOULD BE AVAILABLE TO COVER THE VARIOUS TYPES OF SUB-CONTRACTOR AT PRESENT WORKING IN THE INDUSTRY.

IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT A MAN WHO UNDERTOOK ONLY PART OF THE WORK OF A RECOGNISED TRADESMAN SUCH AS A CARPENTER AND JOINER OR A MASTER PLUMBER SHOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN A LICENCE FOR THE PARTICULAR WORK IN WHICH HE SPECIALISED.

IT WOULD BE UNJUST TO OTHERWISE TAKE AWAY HIS LIVELIHOOD AS, SAY, A BOARD FIXER UNLESS HE COULD QUALIFY AS A FULL CARPENTER AND JOINER.

THAT IS WHY THERE ARE A MULTIPLICITY OF LICENCES - IT ENSURES THE CONTINUANCE OF SUB-CONTRACTORS RATHER THAN THE REVERSE AS HAS BEEN ASSERTED.

THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE IN FACT - WITH ONE EXCEPTION - CAME FROM PEOPLE IN THE VARIOUS TRADES WHO ARE NOT CONNECTED WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE UNIONS AND UNIONS WERE OUTNUMBERED ON THE COMMITTEE.

IN MANY CASES THIS EVIDENCE WAS FROM MEMBERS OF THE MASTER BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION.

THE CONTINUANCE OF RESTRICTED LICENCES FOR SUB-CONTRACTING TRADESMEN IS ESSENTIAL IF THE GOVERNMENT AND BOARD ARE TO ACHIEVE THEIR AIM IN RAISING THE STANDARD OF BUILDING WORKMANSHIP IN THIS STATE.

ALTHOUGH THE SYSTEM IS STILL IN ITS EARLY DAYS IT HAS ALREADY PROVED ITS WORTH.

A NUMBER OF DISPUTES HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORILY SETTLED.

IN TWO CASES WOMEN COMPLAINED ABOUT PAINTING WORK AND IN ANOTHER INSTANCE A MAN COMPLAINED ABOUT ADDITIONS TO HIS HOUSE AND IT WAS EVENTUALLY AGREED THAT THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS FOR THE BUILDER TO DEMOLISH THE ROOM AND VACATE THE SITE.

ANOTHER PERSON COMPLAINED OF NUMEROUS DEFICIENCIES IN HIS HOUSE AND THE BOARD ARRANGED FOR THE WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE OWNER.

IN ANOTHER CASE THE BOARD DECIDED THAT THE BUILDER WAS NOT AT FAULT IN ANY WAY AND THE CLIENT'S DEMANDS WERE UNREASONABLE. THERE WAS ALSO AN INSTANCE WHERE WORK PERFORMED BY AN UNLICENSED BUILDER WAS INSPECTED.

THE STANDARD WAS SO LOW THAT THE BOARD REFUSED A SUBSEQUENT APPLICATION.

IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE MAN HAD NO REAL KNOWLEDGE OF BUILDING WORK AND HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY EARNED HIS LIVING AS A GENERAL BUILDER.

THESE EXAMPLES, I BELIEVE, SHOW HOW USEFUL THIS SYSTEM IS TO BOTH THE INDUSTRY - WHICH SUPPORTS IT - AND THE PUBLIC. BOTH BENEFIT FROM THE INCREASED PROTECTION AND CONFIDENCE WHICH FLOW FROM IT.

AND THEY DEMONSTRATE, TOO, WHAT A FOLLY DISALLOWANCE WOULD BE.

I NOW HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN DECLARING THIS PROMOTION AREA OFFICIALLY OPEN.
