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Title:

Speech at the opening of the Adult Education Seminar entitled 'Planning of Tourist Resorts'

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SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE ADULT EDUCATION SEMINAR ENTITLED
"PLANNING OF TOURIST RESORTS" BY THE PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA,
DON DUNSTAN.

14/10/71

MR. CHAIRMAN,
(LADIES &) GENTLEMEN:

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME HERE THIS EVENING TO OPEN YOUR SEMINAR.
THE 'PLANNING OF TOURIST RESORTS' IS, AS I AM SURE YOU WOULD KNOW,
ONE OF THE MATTERS OF WHICH I AM MOST IMMEDIATELY CONCERNED AT THE
MOMENT AS MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT.

AND I CONSIDER IT ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE, GIVEN THE LARGE AMOUNT OF
PUBLICITY THAT HAS BEEN RECENTLY GIVEN TO THE TOURIST INDUSTRY IN
SOUTH AUSTRALIA, THAT IT SHOULD BE A SUBJECT DISCUSSED AT AN ADULT
EDUCATION-CIVIC TRUST SEMINAR.

PAGE 2.

FOR IT IS TRUE THAT PLANNING FOR A TOURIST POPULATION HAS ITS DANGERS
AS WELL AS ITS ADVANTAGES. AND BECAUSE OF THIS, IT BEHOVES ALL
INTERESTED PARTIES TO TAKE NOTE OF THE MISTAKES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE
ELSEWHERE, HERE IN AUSTRALIA, AS WELL AS IN AMERICA AND EUROPE.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO THAT STRETCH OF THE MEDITERRANEAN FRENCH COAST
FROM TOULON TO NICE AND INCLUDING MONTE CARLO WAS A SPLENDID, DRY
AND RUGGED LANDSCAPE, DOTTED ABOUT WITH PICTURESQUE VILLAGES HUGGING
THE SIDES OF COVES AND HEADLANDS, CROWNED WITH THE VILLAS OF THE LOCAL
RICH OR THE ECCENTRIC ENGLISH 'MILORD', AND CATERING ON THE ONE HAND
FOR THE LOCAL RURAL OR FISHER POPULATION AND ON THE OTHER HAND
FOR THE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF NORTHERN EUROPE WHO WENT THERE ON
PART OF THEIR 'GRAND TOUR'.

IT WAS AN IDEAL TOURIST REGION. WARM, SUNLIT DAYS, MILD NIGHTS, A BLISSFULLY AZURE SEA, AND A PEACE FOR THE TOURIST ONLY BROKEN BY THE POPPING OF CHAMPAGNE CORKS, THE RATTLE OF DICE, THE SHUFFLING OF CARDS, THE WHIRL OF THE ROULETTE BALL, AND THE GUITARS OR MANDOLINS PAID FOR BY THE ENGLISH GENTLEMEN WHO MOONED AS THEIR LADIES SAT AND PURRED OVER THE MORE PATHETIC PASSAGES OF SHELLEY OR SWINBURNE.

IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ENJOYED THEMSELVES. THEY ENJOYED IMCOMPARABLE SCENERY, LOCAL EXOTICA, ATTRACTIVE TOWNS AND CITIES, AND A WAY OF LIFE THAT BY AND LARGE DID NOT REQUIRE OF THEM MUCH EFFORT AT ALL.

NOW WHEN MY STAFF WAS UNDERTAKING SOME OF THE BASE RESEARCH PRIOR TO THE PREPARATION OF OUR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT POLICY BRIEF, THEY DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE IN A FAIRLY GENERAL WAY THE KINDS OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS THAT NOW EXIST ON THE COTE D'AZUR. AFTER ALL, MANY SEASIDE LOCATIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ARE SIMILAR CLIMATICALLY AND GEOLOGICALLY.

THE OBJECT OF THE EXERCISE WAS TO ASCERTAIN THOSE FACILITIES THAT COULD BE DEVELOPED IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, HAVING AN EYE TO WHAT IS SUCCESSFUL ELSEWHERE.

THEY WERE RATHER DISAPPOINTED WITH WHAT THEY DISCOVERED, BOTH IN THE WRITTEN BRIEFS AND IN PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY AGENTS. FOR THE COAST HAS CHANGED SINCE THE DAYS OF HENRY JAMES. IT IS NO LONGER A STRETCH OF UNSPOILT HILL, CLIFF AND BEACH, PUNCTUATED BY ARCHITECTURALLY INTEGRATED TOWNS, CITIES AND VILLAGES. RATHER, IT HAS SUFFERED FROM WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS 'TOURIST BLIGHT' - IT IS A LONG RIBBON DEVELOPMENT THAT SITS LIKE A GARISH EXCRESCENCE ON ONE OF THE LOVELIEST COASTS IN THE WORLD.

WHAT WENT WRONG? OR RATHER, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, NEVER HAVING VISITED THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, WHAT IS CONTINUING TO GO WRONG? WELL, IT SEEMS THAT THE SOUTH OF FRANCE IS SUFFERING FROM JUST THE SAME ILLS THAT ARE CURRENTLY BESETTING THE GOLD COAST IN QUEENSLAND.

WITH THE EXPLODING TOURIST POPULATION THAT WESTERN AFFLUENCE HAS CREATED, THE PRESSURE FOR THE RAPID DEVELOPMENT OF TOURIST FACILITIES IS SUCH THAT, BY AND LARGE, IT IS SPECULATIVE AND UNPLANNED.

NOW I DON'T AT ALL DECRY BRIGHT LIGHTS, HAMBURGER STALLS, DISCOTHEQUES, KIOSKS, CAR PARKS, HIGH RISE TOURIST APARTMENTS, AND SO ON.

EVEN IN A TOTALLY UNPLANNED STATE, A DENSE COMBINATION OF SUCH ESTABLISHMENTS CAN IN ITSELF CREATE A KIND OF PERMANENT CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE. TAKE KINGS CROSS, FOR INSTANCE, WHERE THIS HAS HAPPENED. TAKE THE GOLD COAST IN QUEENSLAND WHERE INCREASINGLY DENSE DEVELOPMENT IS MAKING IT HAPPEN, EVEN THOUGH NOW MANY PARTS OF SOUTHPORT, SURFERS PARADISE AND COOLANGATTA ARE IN THAT HORRIBLE MID' POSITION BETWEEN THE LOVELY, INTEGRATED RESORT AND THE KIND OF SUBURBAN MIAMI THAT IS BEING CREATED THERE.

BUT IT IS THE POSSIBILITY OF THE 'MID-WAY' POSITION BECOMING THE LONG-TERM POSITION THAT MUST BE GUARDED AGAINST IN ANY FORM OF INTEGRATED RESIDENTIAL OR RESORT PLANNING. AND UNFORTUNATELY, THE MOTOR CAR DOES NOT, IN OUR KIND OF COMMUNITY, HELP HERE, FOR CONVENIENCE OF TRAVEL HAS A DISPERSAL EFFECT ON TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OR ROADSIDE FACILITIES. JUST AS THE CAR AND PLANNING SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS HAS DETERMINED THE SHAPE OF MANY OF OUR WORST SUBURBS, SO IT CAN REDUCE A TOURIST AREA TO SIMPLY A TWENTY MILE LONG STRIP OF JERRY BUILT HOUSES, HAMBURGER JOINTS, AND FISH SHOPS.

THE OLD CRY IS, OF COURSE, THAT PLANNING IS NECESSARY. BUT WHAT KIND OF PLANNING? IT IS POSSIBLE TO PLAN A SPRAWL SO THAT IT WORKS MORE EFFICIENTLY AND LOOKS BETTER, AND BY AND LARGE THIS IS WHAT OFTEN HAPPENS IN AUSTRALIA. BUT I THINK THAT THIS IS IN FACT A DISASTROUS APPROACH, ONLY TO BE CONSIDERED IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THE PROCESS IS UNDERWAY AND IRREVERSIBLE.

BUT IN THE PLANNING OF NEW RESORTS, OR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OLD ONES, THE QUESTION THAT I BELIEVE SHOULD BE ASKED BY PLANNERS IS 'WHAT POPULATION CAN THE AREA BEAR WITHOUT DESTROYING THE VERY QUALITIES PEOPLE INITIALLY GO THERE TO ENJOY? THUS, IN PLANNING OF A NEW BEACH RESORT, OR FOR AN INFLUX OF TOURISTS INTO AN HISTORICALLY INTERESTING AREA, OR IN BUILDING NEW ACCESS ROUTES INTO A NATIONAL PARK, THERE ARE AN IMMENSE NUMBER OF FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED. WITH A SITE FOR A BEACH RESORT THAT IS CHOSEN, SAY, FOR ITS LONELINESS AND RUGGED GRANDURE, NOT ONLY SHOULD THE RESORT NOT INTRUDE EXCESSIVELY ON THE SHAPE AND TEXTURE OF THE LANDSCAPE, BUT IT SHOULD NOT BE PLACED, ASSUMING THAT IT WILL BE WELL DESIGNED, IN A WAY THAT WILL ENCOURAGE, FOR INSTANCE, UNPLANNED SHACK AREAS OUTSIDE ITS PERIMETER OR ON OTHER NEARBY BEACHES.

WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN, SAY, AN AREA LIKE THE BAROSSA VALLEY AGAIN THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES - THE ATTRACTION OF MANY PLACES IN THE BAROSSA IS DEPENDENT ON THEIR RURAL QUIETUDE. AND THE CHARM OF THEIR EARLY AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE. THIS COULD BE EASILY RUINED IF A PROPER REGARD IS NOT PAID TO DESIGNING SUCH NEW BUILDINGS AS ARE NECESSARY IN A WAY WHICH CLOSELY INTEGRATES WITH LOCAL FORMS, AND TO SPREADING THEM IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE TOURIST POPULATION AT ANY GIVEN TIME DOES NOT BECOME TOO CONSTANTLY DENSE IN ANY SPECIFIC AREA.

AGAIN, WITH NATIONAL PARKS AND AREAS OF ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE, THE DELICATELY BALANCED NATURE OF AUSTRALIAN FLORA CANNOT STAND UP TO A CONSTANT BATTERING FROM HUMAN FEET, LET ALONE THE PLASTIC WRAPPERS, DRINK CANS, BOTTLES AND IMPEDIMENTIA THAT MANY TOURISTS FIND VITAL TO THEIR COMFORT. THEREFORE IT IS CLEAR THAT ACCESS TO PARKS SHOULD BE DESIGNED WITH THIS IN MIND, PROVIDING AREAS OF EASY ACCESS AND AREAS OF LIMITED ACCESS.

IN ALL THESE THINGS THERE IS, AS I HAVE SAID A NUMBER OF TIMES RECENTLY, A TWO FOLD ADVANTAGE TO THIS STATE. EFFECTIVE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT WHETHER IT BE IN THE RESTORATION OF ATTRACTIVE OLD CITY BUILDINGS OR SCHEMES FOR IMPROVING CITY BEACHES, OR THE PROVISION OF RESTAURANTS, PARKS AND HOTELS OR TOURIST VILLAGES IN THE COUNTRY, NOT ONLY PROVIDES THE BASE FOR AN INDUSTRY WITH LARGE ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN EFFECTIVELY TAPPED IN THIS STATE, BUT ALSO FOR A LIFE THAT IS JUST A BIT MORE INTERESTING FOR THE LOCAL POPULATION.

I THEREFORE HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN DECLARING YOUR SEMINAR OPEN, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO READING AN ACCOUNT OF YOUR DELIBERATIONS.
