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Title:

Speech opening new Government Printing Department premises

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR DUNSTAN, OPENING NEW GOVERNMENT PRINTING DEPARTMENT PREMISES.

NETLEY.

25.3.74

Mr James, My Ministerial and Parliamentary Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for inviting me to perform this official opening. May I first of all extend a special welcome to the overseas and interstate Government Printers. We're delighted that you're able to be with us for today's ceremony.

Completion of this new headquarters gives the Government Printer and his staff a much needed, enlarged and efficient headquarters. With its distinctive suspended roof - unique to this State - it also provides Adelaide with another immediate landmark.

The Government's operations have come a long way since their beginnings in 1849. Then the staff consisted of the impressive establishment of three men, a boy and a horse. And it says much for the frugality of the Treasurer of the day that the horse was hired. Its job was to drive the press. Since then it's been a story of steady expansion. But, as all those concerned would testify with feeling, barely steady enough to keep pace with the Government's demands on it.

It is in the nature of Governments to make impossible demands on the Printer and his staff and then innocently to request that a rushed job be finished impeccably yesterday.

They have also responded magnificently and I'd like formally to place on record today my appreciation and that of my colleagues of the way in which the Printer and his staff have always responded to the burdens placed on them.

It says much for the pride they take in their work that accuracy has always been combined with speed of production and quality of printing. And when they get a chance to take a more leisurely approach - as in the case of some special reports, pamphlets or brochures - the results exemplify the very best of the printer's craft.

It's only a small part of the total product but I do urge anyone who hasn't encountered it already to have a look at the hand binding work produced by our Government Printer. It really is absolutely first class and meets the most exacting standards of that most exacting art. Now that we have this fine new headquarters I'm sure that the same high standards will be maintained in far more comfortable conditions in the years ahead.

It's one of the most modern establishments of its kind in the world and a credit to its designers and builders. It's planned to be able to meet the needs of Government for a couple of decades ahead without any major structural alteration and is a model of flexibility and

ingenuity.

I said earlier that the Government Printer began operations in 1849. In fact Government printing had begun much earlier - very shortly after the founding of the colony.

It began in fact in a bedroom in Glenelg and the first Printer, George Stevenson, struck a note that later official printers might envy.

He was also a journalist and Governor Hindmarsh's private secretary and is supposed to have drafted the first proclamation and ordinances himself - a task he felt obliged to perform because, he said, the Governor couldn't "write two sentences of grammar or common sense". So there began right from the start that close contact and occasional misunderstanding and mutual wariness between journalism and Government which has continued in South Australia since.

There is, unfortunately, an instance of it again today in the State Government's proposed legislation to provide citizens with guarantees to privacy.

This is one of the most troubling and pressing problems in Australian society today and I take considerable pride that my Government has taken the lead in making an attempt to resolve it.

There is no doubt of the need for such a measure.

It is recognised by civil libertarians, distinguished jurists and the aggrieved private citizen around the world.

It stems of course from the remarkable growth in sophisticated computer and eavesdropping systems which enables information about a citizen - which may or may not be accurate but which cannot be challenged by him - to be logged, stored and duplicated. It stems also from the inadequate or imprecise nature of the law at present. Professor Zelman Cowen summed it up in his series of Boyer lectures: "In the face of all the pressures and threats, I believe that the claim to privacy is a matter of great and increasing importance in our crowded society with its unbelievable technological resources and inventiveness.

A man without privacy is a man without dignity: the fear that Big Brother is watching and listening threatens the freedom of the individual no less than prison bars".

We endorse that view.

We also accept that one of the conditions of a free society is that the press has the right, and, indeed, the duty, to investigate and report on matters of public interest.

The problem we are faced with, then, is to reconcile two goods - to guarantee the privacy of the individual and the freedom of the Press.

We have made a genuine, and I believe practicable, attempt to do so but by putting within the Bill a defence of the public interest. Again it is the first time that this has been done and it is in my view a considerable step forward from the present situation. We have also shown good faith in introducing the legislation so that all interested parties may examine it and comment upon before it is debated in Parliament.

We want the maximum of examination and comment.

We are not in any way seeking to muzzle or hamstring the Press or the other information media.

We will look most carefully at any and all objections raised. We have approached this problem in a sincere attempt to correct a present evil but not at the price of committing another.

I have, I'm afraid, drifted somewhat from the subject matter of this occasion but I thought it was a matter of sufficient importance that you'd bear with me.

Before formally opening the building I want to pay special tribute to the work of Mr James, Mr Stewart of the Public Buildings Department and Mr Less of the Public Service Board.

Back in 1966 they made the plans for this building. To them goes much of the credit for a product that much improves conditions for those who work in it and which will give service to the people of South Australia for years to come.

I have much pleasure in formally declaring it open.

Thank you.

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