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Title:

Statement: Premier replies to Tonkin

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STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date... November 4, 1976...

Embargo.....

State Administration Centre,
Victoria Square, Adelaide,
South Australia 5001
227 2688

PREMIER REPLIES TO TONKIN

The Opposition's so called " new policy on juvenile crime" merely demonstrates how ill-informed and desperate Dr. Tonkin and his colleagues had become, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, said today.

"The Opposition will do anything for a headline and yesterday afternoon obviously dreamt up a grab-bag of ideas so that they could cynically exploit a story in yesterday morning's newspaper.

'The fact that the story was incorrect didn't bother Dr. Tonkin. He went ahead with his hastily drawn up policy regardless, not realising that of the 15 points in his policy, 13 are already being carried out as part of the Government's programmes in the Police Department, the Education Department and the Department of Community Welfare.

"Dr. Tonkin is so desperate to hide the fact that the Liberal Party is bereft of ideas that he seizes on figures which are more than a year old in order to give the appearance that the Liberal Party Opposition is actually doing something.

"The Liberal Party cannot be responsible nor apparently can it be original".

Going through the points of the Liberal Party policy, Mr. Dunstan said that six short term proposals had been suggested by Dr. Tonkin. Four were already in operation and the other two would require very detailed examination.

"Dr. Tonkin said the Police Force should be strengthened and maintained at 'an adequate level'. We already have the best Police Force in Australia and the ratio of police to population compares more than favourably with other State forces.

"The Police Department is satisfied that all its submissions for extra manpower have been granted. In fact, next year the active strength of the Police Force will be increased by more than 100 officers.

"Dr. Tonkin makes these generalisations but he cannot name any specific instance where the Government has refused requests from the Police Department for extra staff. Not only have we built up the force, we have given it much better facilities and equipment. The services have been decentralised to country areas and many new police stations have been built in country areas. Communication facilities have been very greatly improved and in areas such as 'Tarta' telephone radio links for patrol cars, South Australia is leading the country.

. The Government has already greatly increased funding to voluntary counselling and support organisations. In the last financial year \$600,000 was given to voluntary organisations in the community welfare area of which \$60,000 went directly to youth organisations. This financial year \$640,000 has been allocated, \$80,000 marked for youth organisations.

. The Community Welfare Department is constantly seeking to improve the quality of its assessment facilities to help officers manage young offenders. The Department holds regular training courses and is always seeking to improve the qualifications of its staff.

. The Government has already established weekend detention centres. This was done four years ago in 1972 when the Magill Youth Project Centre was established and an integral part of the training and rehabilitation program for offenders sent to the Centre by the Court is taking part in special projects to benefit the community. Since then two new Centres have been set up for boys and girls between 8 and 15 years of age who have social and behavioural problems in school settings.

Under the heading of long term projects, the Premier said :

. The State Government has improved facilities in primary schools to a very large degree since it was elected in 1970. Successive Liberal Governments had let education spending decline and our schools, particularly primary schools, were a disgrace. We have changed that to the point where South Australia now leads the States. In the next five years, 28 new primary schools will be built, 11 will be replaced or converted and another 13 will receive major upgrading work.

. The Government has consistently increased both teaching and support staff for all education facilities in South Australia and once again South Australia is in a favourable position compared with all the other States. The Government will certainly be continuing this policy but restrictions in education funds from the Federal Government will make it more difficult.

- . The Government already provides specialised teachers in music, art and other fields for 107 primary schools on both part time and full time employment. Specialised music teachers teach selected children in 84 schools. Part time and full time specialised teachers are employed to teach English as a second language to migrant children in 147 primary schools.
- . The Education Department already provides 58 guidance officers and 111 counsellors.
- . The crisis care service and the community care service provide special counselling and services for children and families in potential crisis situations.

Under the heading Other Policy Measures, the Premier said :

- . The Government had already increased its support for the establishment of youth groups and the Education Department encouraged the use of school facilities after school hours for these activities. There is wide spread use of school ovals and activity facilities in both metropolitan and country areas and out of school programmes have been financed by the Childhood Services Council at seven primary schools. The Department has carried out a pilot project at three primary schools in which a staff member was made available to co-ordinate out of school activities. This has proved extremely successful.
- . The existing youth organisations are getting increased subsidies and support.
- . The Police Department has a vigorous policy of telling the community what it is doing and it has concentrated especially on youth centres and primary schools.
- . The facilities for general family counselling in South Australia are by far superior to that of any other State and the Government strongly supports the present system of both services provided by the Department of Community Welfare and voluntary organisations. The amount of money we have made available to voluntary organisations proves our intentions.



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