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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, HON. DON DUNSTAN, Q.C., M.P., AT
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL WELFARE. 30.11.67.

MR. CRAWFORD, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO COME THIS EVENING TO TALK TO YOU REGARDING THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON SOCIAL WELFARE. I THINK THAT THROUGHOUT THE CIVILIZED WORLD TODAY, IT IS ACCEPTED THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF THE STATE TO UNDERTAKE THE SUCCOUR OF THE POOR AND OF THE NEEDY, THAT WE OUGHT TO HAVE A SOCIETY IN WHICH THOSE WHO ARE UNDER-PRIVILEGED, THOSE WHO FALL INTO MISFORTUNE, SHOULD BE ASSISTED BY THE COMMUNITY, AND THAT THIS IS BASICALLY A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY.

WHEN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT CAME INTO OFFICE, THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION HAD BEEN UNALTERED IN PRINCIPLE FOR MANY YEARS, AND AS THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE WALSH GOVERNMENT, I WAS VERY KEEN TO SEE SOME LONG OVERDUE ALTERATIONS

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MADE. THE FIRST ACTION WAS TO ABOLISH THE PREVIOUS BOARD AND TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT UNDER A DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE RESPONSIBLE TO THE MINISTER. A SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COUNCIL WAS INSTITUTED TO ADVISE ON ANY MATTERS REFERRED TO IT BY THE MINISTER, OR INDEED ANY MATTERS UPON WHICH THEY CARED TO PROFFER ASSISTANCE. THE OUTCOME OF THE NEW ACT HAS, I THINK, FULLY JUSTIFIED THE CHANGES MADE. ALTHOUGH SOCIAL WELFARE IS A MATTER IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT MUST ACT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY, THERE IS ALSO AN ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY PROVIDED ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF HELP FOR THE NEEDY.

AS A COMMUNITY, WE HAVE A CONSTANT JOB OF SEEING TO IT THAT THOSE WHO ARE UNDER-PRIVILEGED ARE LOOKED AFTER AND IN THIS THERE IS AN ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE. IT IS NOT A MATTER OF THE STATE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE

IN COMPETITION WITH THE CHURCHES. THERE ARE AREAS IN WHICH THE STATE IS ABLE TO ASSIST AND ASSIST IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY BECAUSE ITS ASSISTANCE IS SUBJECT TO GENERAL PROVISIONS. BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, THE PROVISION OF STATE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THE POOR, THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED, THE SICK, THE NEEDY, CAN RARELY HAVE THE SAME SORT OF INFLUENCE WHICH THE PROVISION OF CHURCH INSTITUTIONS IN THESE AREAS CAN, SIMPLY BECAUSE IN CHURCH INSTITUTIONS THERE ARE INEVITABLY THOSE INVOLVED WHO COME TO THE TASK NOT BECAUSE OF PAYMENT, NOT BECAUSE OF A CAREER, BUT BECAUSE THEY FEEL A SENSE OF CHRISTIAN MISSION AND BEING INVOLVED WITH THOSE WHOM THEY ARE SERVING. THEREFORE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SOCIAL SERVICES NECESSARILY INVOLVES CHURCH PARTICIPATION. WE HAVE TO SEE THAT OUR SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM GENERALLY WORKS EFFECTIVELY TO PROVIDE A BASIS OF SECURITY FOR PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. THERE IS A DANGER,

AND A VERY REAL DANGER, THAT AT TIMES WE REACH THE POSITION WHERE THERE ARE QUITE SERIOUS GAPS IN OUR SOCIAL SERVICE PROVISIONS, BUT BECAUSE THESE GAPS ONLY AFFECT SMALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING WITH THE WHOLE SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY, THE EXISTENCE OF POVERTY, OF MISERY, OF NEED, OF DEGRADATION AMONGST THOSE PEOPLE DOES NOT IMPINGE UPON THE CONSCIENCES OF THE GENERAL COMMUNITY, AND, IN CONSEQUENCE, THE GAPS CONTINUE TO EXIST BECAUSE PEOPLE'S CONSCIENCES ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY JOGGED TO SEE THAT THE GAPS ARE FILLED IN.

THE MISFORTUNE OF SMALL SECTIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY TENDS AT TIMES TO BE SWEEPED UNDER THE CORNER OF THE CARPET WHILE THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY PROCEEDS IN A CERTAIN SENSE OF AFFLUENT COMFORT. I HAVE KNOWN IN MY OWN DISTRICT THE EXISTENCE OF SOME OF THE WORST SLUMS I HAVE EVER HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO SEE,

AND THE EXISTENCE IN THEM OF PEOPLE WHO WERE LIVING IN DIRE CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY WERE ABOUT A STONE'S THROW FROM PEOPLE WHO WERE LIVING WITH EVERY CONCEIVABLE COMFORT AND WHO KNEW NOTHING OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE PEOPLE I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT, AND WHEN TOLD OF THEIR EXISTENCE COULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO BELIEVE IT. THEY TEND TO SAY "OH, SURELY THIS IS EXAGGERATION. PEOPLE AREN'T THAT POOR OR UNEMPLOYED OR IN DIFFICULTY THESE DAYS, OR, IF THEY ARE, NO DOUBT IT IS THEIR OWN FAULT." LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE ARE STILL MANY PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM DEPRIVATION WHICH THEY SHOULD NOT SUFFER FROM. AND SO WE NEED TO DO EVERYTHING THAT WE CAN TO FILL IN THE GAPS IN OUR SERVICES. WHEN I BECAME MINISTER FOR SOCIAL WELFARE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, THE PUBLIC RELIEF SYSTEM OF THIS STATE HAD BEEN SET UP ON A BASIS WHICH SEEMED COMPLETELY ILLOGICAL. I HAVE BEEN UNABLE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS TO DISCOVER THE BASIS UPON WHICH RELIEF PAYMENTS WERE ORIGINALLY

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FIXED AND NO OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO EXPLAIN HOW THEY CAME TO BE FIXED IN THE WAY THAT THEY WERE. IT IS PERHAPS NOT SURPRISING THAT IN CONSEQUENCE THE RELIEF SCALE WAS NEVER PUBLISHED, BECAUSE IF IT HAD BEEN, THE UTTER ILLOGICALITY OF IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EVIDENT TO ALL. WE HAVE SPENT THE LAST TWO YEARS ENDEAVOURING TO WORK TOWARDS FILLING IN THE GAPS AND GETTING A MORE LOGICAL SYSTEM, BASIS, FOR THE ALLOTTING OF PUBLIC RELIEF IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND WE HAVE AT LAST ARRIVED AT IT. IT WAS LONG OVERDUE AND A NEW SYSTEM OF STATE GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELIEF IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WAS ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK.

TO PEOPLE SUCH AS MEMBERS OF THIS INSTITUTE, I NEED NOT EMPHASIZE HOW MANY PATHETIC CASES THERE ARE IN OUR SOCIETY. ONE FREQUENTLY HEARS OF NEW CASES WHICH ARE WORSE

THAN THOSE PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT TO BE AS BAD AS THEY COULD BE. ONLY THIS WEEK A CASE WAS REPORTED TO MY DEPARTMENT WHERE A WOMAN WITH THREE CHILDREN FROM A DEFACTO RELATIONSHIP WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY ASSISTANCE WHATSOEVER UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH SOCIAL SERVICES SCHEME. SHE HAS BEEN HELPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE, AND UNDER THE LATEST SCHEME THERE IS FORTUNATELY PROVISION FOR THE DIRECTOR TO EXTEND ADDITIONAL HELP IN CASES OF EXTREME HARDSHIP SUCH AS THE ONE I HAVE IN MIND. IN SHORT WHERE THERE IS SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IMMEDIATELY, WE ARE NOT NOW TIED DOWN BY RED TAPE. THE MINISTER HAS IT IN HIS HANDS TO ASSIST PEOPLE WHO NEED IMMEDIATE HELP IN UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THIS WAY WE WILL BE ABLE, I BELIEVE, IN SOME MEASURE, TO RELIEVE SOME OF THE BURDENS WHICH HAVE FALLEN PREVIOUSLY UPON CHURCH MISSION BODIES.

I HAVE BROUGHT WITH ME TONIGHT SOME COPIES OF THE RECENTLY PRINTED EXPLANATION OF THE STATE PUBLIC RELIEF SCHEME AND THE COPIES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED. ADDITIONAL COPIES ARE ALWAYS OBTAINABLE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE. THE CHIEF FEATURE OF STATE PUBLIC RELIEF IS THAT IT ENDEAVOURS TO COVER THE GAPS IN THE COMMONWEALTH SOCIAL SERVICES SCHEME. STATE PUBLIC RELIEF, FOR INSTANCE, IS AVAILABLE TO WIVES DESERTED FOR LESS THAN SIX MONTHS, FAMILIES ^{PRISONERS} OF PERSONS DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF IMPRISONMENT, AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF DEFACTO RELATIONSHIPS. THESE ARE ALL CATEGORIES WHICH THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT AS YET SEEN FIT TO ASSIST. .. ALTHOUGH TALKS HAVE BEEN ARRANGED BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND STATE GOVERNMENTS REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF REIMBURSING SOME OF THE EXPENDITURE INCURRED BY THE STATES IN THIS FIELD. ONE OF THE CATEGORIES WHICH HAS CAUSED THE

STATE GOVERNMENT CONCERN UNTIL NOW WAS THAT OF PREGNANT SINGLE GIRLS AND PREGNANT DESERTED WIVES, WHO WERE LEFT PENNILESS AND HAD TO TAKE REFUGE IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS. THE ONLY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT IS A SPECIAL BENEFIT FOR SIX WEEKS, PRIOR TO THE ANTICIPATED CONFINEMENT, AND SIX WEEKS THEREAFTER. IT WAS THE PRACTICE ON THE PART OF SOME MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS TO CERTIFY THAT SOME OF THESE UNFORTUNATE WOMEN WERE SUFFICIENTLY SICK TO WARRANT CERTIFICATION FOR COMMONWEALTH SICKNESS BENEFITS. THIS WAS VERY OFTEN MERELY A SUBTERFUGE FOR SUCH THINGS AS RASHES WOULD OCCASIONALLY BE ACCEPTED AS INCAPACITATION. IN THE CASE OF GIRLS NOT IN INSTITUTIONS, IT HAS BEEN THE PRACTICE TO PAY THEM UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PROVIDED THEY CALL REGULARLY ON PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS AND ARE REFUSED EMPLOYMENT. WE HAVE AUTHORIZED STATE PAYMENTS FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO 12 WEEKS BEFORE THE EXPECTED CONFINEMENT

AND WE HAVE STIPULATED THAT APPROXIMATELY 60 PER CENT OF THIS MUST BE PAID TO THE INSTITUTION. THIS IS BECAUSE MANY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE FINDING IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE WITH SO MANY OF THEIR INMATES BEING UNABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE COST OF THEIR MAINTENANCE. A SINGLE GIRL OF 21 YEARS OF AGE WILL RECEIVE \$8.25 AND A DESERTED WIFE WITH TWO OTHER CHILDREN ALSO IN THE INSTITUTION WILL RECEIVE \$11.25 PER WEEK. THIS WILL NOT ENABLE THEM TO LIVE IN LUXURY, BUT IT WILL MEAN THAT THEY HAVE A LITTLE MONEY TO USE FOR NECESSITIES.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO AUTHORIZED THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, AT HIS DISCRETION, TO PAY LONG-TERM PUBLIC RELIEF RATES TO PERSONS WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED OR SICK FOR LONG PERIODS. MOST OF YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT THE COMMONWEALTH

PENSION RATES ARE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE COMMONWEALTH BENEFIT RATES FOR THOSE TEMPORARILY UNEMPLOYED AND SICK, SO THAT PERSONS WHO ARE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE UNEMPLOYED FOR LONG PERIODS HAVE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT PREVIOUSLY TO KEEP UP PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS SUCH AS RATES AND TAXES. THE NEW POWER FOR THE DIRECTOR TO INCREASE SHORT-TERM RATES TO LONG-TERM RATES WHERE PERSONS HAVE REMAINED ON STATE RELIEF FOR LONG PERIODS IS THEREFORE A MATERIAL ADVANTAGE TO THESE UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE. MANY OF THE RECIPIENTS OF SUCH PUBLIC RELIEF ARE WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN DESERTED BY HUSBANDS OR BY DEFACTO HUSBANDS. THESE MEN, QUITE FREQUENTLY, TRY TO EVADE THE PAYMENT OF MAINTENANCE FOR THEIR CHILDREN, AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, MAINTENANCE FOR THEIR WIVES.

CABINET ANNOUNCED RECENTLY THAT THE POLICY SHOULD BE TO BUILD UP THE STAFF OF THE MAINTENANCE BRANCH OF THE SOCIAL

WELFARE DEPARTMENT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SO LONG AS IT IS ECONOMIC TO DO SO. I MIGHT ADD THAT THE STATE WELFARE DEPARTMENT HAS A BETTER RECORD OF MAINTENANCE RECOVERIES THAN MOST OF THE OTHER STATES' MAINTENANCE SECTIONS. THIS IS NOTABLY SO IN THE CASE OF RECOVERIES PURSUANT TO INTERSTATE OR OVERSEAS ORDERS.

IN THE FIELD OF ADOPTION, MY GOVERNMENT RECENTLY HAS PROCLAIMED A NEW ACT WHICH WILL REQUIRE ALL ADOPTIONS TO BE ARRANGED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT. PRIVATE ARRANGEMENTS WILL NO LONGER BE PERMITTED AND I FEEL SURE THAT THIS IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

IN ADDITION, WE HAVE TO MOVE FURTHER INTO THE AREA OF GERIATRIC CARE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. THIS HAS LAGGED FOR A VERY LONG TIME. WE HAVE MAINTAINED THE MAGILL HOME AND, OF COURSE, SOME OLD PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ADMITTED TO GERIATRIC WARDS IN

VARIOUS STATE HOSPITALS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS HAD A REPORT FROM THE OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ON THE BASIS OF OUR GETTING AHEAD WITH PROPER GERIATRIC SERVICES HERE. WE HAVE ALREADY CALLED APPLICATIONS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A GERIATRIC PHYSICIAN TO THE GOVERNMENT WHOSE SPECIAL JOB WILL BE THE ORDERING OF GERIATRIC SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHURCH INSTITUTIONS ALREADY ENGAGED IN THIS SPHERE.

IN MY OWN DISTRICT OF NORWOOD, RECENTLY I OPENED THE NORWOOD YOUTH ACTIVITIES CENTRE. THIS CENTRE REPRESENTS A NEW VENTURE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE REALM OF PREVENTIVE ACTIVITY. IN THE EASTERN STATES, THERE ARE IN SOME PLACES SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS. WE HAVE TAKEN THIS A LITTLE FURTHER IN THAT THE CENTRE IS OPEN AFTER SCHOOL HOURS AND ON SATURDAY MORNINGS UNDER THE CONTROL OF A SALARIED MALE

AND FEMALE OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT AND CHILDREN ARE NOT MERELY SUPERVISED BUT VERY OFTEN RECEIVE INSTRUCTION IN NEW GAMES AND, IN THE CASE OF GIRLS, ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THEATRICAL WORK. WE HOPE THAT THESE CHILDREN WILL NOW HAVE SOMETHING TO OCCUPY THEM AT A TIME WHEN MANY OF THEIR PARENTS ARE WORKING. THE DECISION TO OPEN THIS CENTRE WAS BASED UPON A SURVEY CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF THE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY WHICH SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A VERY GREAT NEED TO OCCUPY THE CHILDREN AFTER SCHOOL.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO HAS PLANS FOR A "DROP-IN" CLUB TO CATER FOR OLDER CHILDREN.

THIS MONTH I ALSO OPENED THE NEW McNALLY TRAINING CENTRE. THIS CENTRE REPRESENTED A NEW CONCEPT IN THE REHABILITATION OF DELINQUENT CHILDREN AND IN THE TRAINING OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED. I THINK THE CONTRAST

BETWEEN THE OLD MAGILL REFORMATORY BUILDING AND THE NEW CENTRE WITH ITS GYMNASIUM, AUDITORIUM AND PLAYING FIELDS, PROVIDES A STRIKING ILLUSTRATION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE OLD CONCEPT OF CHILDREN'S WELFARE AND THAT OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CENTRE MEANS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE NOW HAS A COMPLETE RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS CAPABLE OF CARING FOR CHILDREN OF EVERY AGE GROUP.

IN THE HILLS AT STIRLING, THE BOYS FROM THE McNALLY TRAINING CENTRE ARE ENGAGED IN BUILDING A HOLIDAY CAMP ON WHAT WAS RAILWAY LAND SURROUNDING A LARGE DAM. WHEN IT IS COMPLETED, THIS HOLIDAY CAMP WILL PROVIDE HOLIDAYS FOR CHILDREN IN DEPARTMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND ALSO FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE PLACED OUT WITH FOSTER PARENTS.

I THINK YOU WILL AGREE THAT IN THE TWO AND A HALF YEARS THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN IN OFFICE WE HAVE WROUGHT A REMARKABLE CHANGE IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT.

WHEN OUR PARTY WAS IN OPPOSITION WE HAD A LONG LIST OF THINGS ON WHICH WE FELT MORE MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT, AND HAVING ATTAINED OFFICE WE HAVE SPENT MONEY ON NUMBERS OF THOSE THINGS. AS YOU KNOW, GOVERNMENT IS NOT A MATTER OF SLEIGHT OF HAND OR OF MAGICIANSHIP, AND IN ORDER TO PAY FOR CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS, THE COMMUNITY MUST RAISE MONEY TO PAY FOR THEM. YOU CAN REST ASSURED, HOWEVER, THAT SOCIAL WELFARE WILL NOT BE NEGLECTED.