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Radio broadcast - hospitals

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The L.C.L. government has been in office in South Australia for twenty five years. It has had every opportunity to show how it can solve the problems of this State. It is no use now its making promises for the future when its past performance has been so woeful.

In hospitals, despite bally-hoo about plans for the future, this State has fewer hospital beds per head than any other State. The other States on average had in 1956 58.8 public and subsidised hospital beds per 10,000 people. We had only 43.3 per 10,000. To get to the 1956 average of the other States, South Australia would have had to provide since then, an extra 1,646 beds - but in fact we provided only 263 - less than enough to keep our already bad facilities in pace with the increase in population. The Premier in 1956 promised an £11,000,000 program for hospitals - but it was never carried out.

The new casualty block at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the women's treatment block, the doubling of the size of Port Lincoln Hospital, the provision of an extra 260 beds at Northfield, all promised in 1956, simply have not eventuated. The Government now promises a £15,000,000 program for hospitals. It will be like the last program - judge it against performance. The Commonwealth Grant's Commission's report reveals that this State has consistently spent less per head on health and hospitals than has any other State. The conditions at the Royal Adelaide Hospital are in many cases shocking and antedeluvian. The wait for beds there is in some cases up to two and a half years for needed operations. Pensioners have had to wait from eighteen months to two years for the removal of a cataract.

This Government does not spend to the level of other State Governments in hospital subsidies - whereas Victoria provides 48% of total expenses and New South Wales 70% , South Australia provides only 19.8%.

The Labor Party is determined to spend capital monies and obtain the whole reimbursement available from the Grant's Commission to provide hospital facilities to the standard of the other States at least. The Premier has made promise after promise on hospitals which he has shamelessly broken - but he admits that the money is available.

Only Labor represents the majority of the people - it is determined to do the job they need.

Labor will build additional hospitals in Adelaide, de-centralise facilities to the country, increase country hospital subsidies, provide hospitalisation free in all public hospitals.