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A.L.P. BROADCAST - PRESENTEDBY DON DUNSTAN

Good Evening,

The Premier of South Australia has now announced his proposals for electoral 'reform'. Reform is hardly the appropriate word.

He proposes, for the House of Assembly, an increase of one seat. The metropolitan area, now containing 13 seats, is to be enlarged to embrace the surrounding districts from Gawler in the North to Tea Tree Gully and Stirling in the East and Port Noarlunga in the South. Under the present system that area would be entitled to the equivalent of 17 or 18 seats. The Premier proposes to give it 20. The rest of the State, with, under the present system some 22 seats entitlement, he proposes to give 20 seats. But as he may suffer some losses by the inclusion of former country areas in the metropolitan area, he proposes to offset those losses by creating a new series of "country industrial" seats requiring a larger quota of voters to elect one member than in the rest of the country seats. In other words some country areas are to be given electoral favour in order to see that the Government picks up some seats in the country.

This of course is merely another gerrymander. But the Premier wanted to reinforce it. He proposes to add another 4 members to the Legislative Council by creating another city Legislative Council seat and to redraw the boundaries of the country Legislative Council seats so as to part one of the country industrial areas with each, only for the purpose of seeing that any danger to the Northern and Midlands districts being held by the L.C.C. is removed. Why does he put the proposal forward. He is faced with the fact that the population of the metropolitan area is spreading at such a rate that unless he is able to do something, some of his pocket boroughs just outside Adelaide will be demolished by 1965 when the next State elections are due. So he has to arrange a redistribution quickly to save himself. If he used the same formula as he

used in his 1955 re-distribution he would put himself out of office as Labor would gain another two seats. He had to devise some system which might have the appearance of improvement but which would make the present system even worse. That is what he has done. Under this proposal, Labor could get 58% of the overall vote and still not get a constitutional majority.

In devising the system he threw away two "principles" to which he had previously claimed to be wedded. He was against an increase in the size of Parliament. Now he will increase it by 5 - only 1 in the lower house and 4 in the upper. He doesn't mind an increase as long as it doesn't redress the present unbalanced representation. He was against reducing country representation. Now he will reduce it, so long as he can alter its basis so as to gerrymander the remaining country seats in his favour.

Why did he approach the Labor Party with this proposition. Because to get it through he has to have Labor Party support - he has to have 20 votes in the House to pass a constitutional amendment and the A.L.P. can prevent his getting 20 votes. So he hoped to kid us. We aren't so foolish.