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25/11/62

Good Evening,

The Playford Government, for all its boasts of fostering industrial work in South Australia, is never loath to allow Government contracts to go outside S.A. if it thinks it can save a penny at the expense of S.A. Workmen.

The leader of the A.L. has complained on many occasions about Sir. Thomas Playford's allowing contracts for diesel locomotives to go outside the State and the E.F.S.A. has also failed to carry out essential construction works itself although it has the necessary trained staff to do so.

The construction of the high tension and S.W.S.R. systems between Adelaide and Port Augusta was carried out by two Italian firms with workmen from overseas who did the work without the safety protection or award wages and conditions required for S.A. workmen. At the time I protested about this action, but the Government went blithely ahead. Numbers of E.F.S.A. workmen, trained for the job, were dispersed from jobs for which they were trained and notified that they would be liable to re-classification within two years to unskilled jobs.

Well, now, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Although the towers carrying the lines were supposed to be able to withstand winds above a force of 80 m.p.h. in last week's gale (which did not exceed that figure) a number of towers were demolished and several miles of cable lost. E.F.S.A. has apparently no spare towers, no parts to repair existing towers and no spare cable.

If you take a little trip up to Montacute you will see on the hill where the corkscrow road at the top one of those shattered towers. There are others between there and Red Hill.

The wrecking of this line means that E.F.S.A. is depending on the Western Circuit for a part of Adelaide's supplies and if any emergency occurred there we could well be in difficulty about supply to a number of consumers.

It is, of course, the policy of Government to keep these

little messes as quiet as it can. Where there has been an error causing the taxpayer a loss of many thousands there should be a public accounts committee to investigate and make recommendations which will see this sort of thing does not happen again. In the Federal Parliament, indeed in most British Parliamentary systems there is such a committee. But Sir Thomas Playford does not like anyone publicly uncovering mistakes which can show that his administration is anything but the well-oiled efficient machine which he wishes everyone to take it for, so he won't have a public accounts committee and has resisted all Labor attempts to set one up here. Sir Thomas doesn't want this matter investigated any more than he wants the faulty sewerage connection at the Royal Adelaide Hospital about which I told you a few weeks ago investigated though each of them would have cost us thousands. His motto appears to be "Hum'e the word - and not a word to Bessy".

Goodnight.