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A.L.P. BROADCAST - 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1963

BY DON DUNSTAN M.P.

Good Evening,

Events of the last week have disclosed even more glaringly than before just how ruthless is the Playford dictatorship in defence of its own power to govern against the wishes of the people.

As at the end of the previous week's sittings of Parliament the position was this. The Government had 19 members, one of whom, Mr. Jenkins, had just been taken ill. The Labor opposition had 19 members, one of whom was overseas on a trip in the course of which he was investigating the possibility of the development of a potash works near Port Augusta, which could be vital for employment in his own Parliamentary district. On Friday Mr. Jenkins died. That meant that on the following Tuesday the Government would face the House with only 18 members and that at any time thereafter when the full number of Labor members was present in the House, the Government would not have the numbers to ride rough shod over the people of this State as they have done in the past. They would be one down and could not use the Speaker's support as he only gets a casting vote under the Constitution.

The House of Assembly was due to debate the budget. The Premier had told the House it must meet to pass a further supply bill before the end of September as otherwise he would have no money to pay the public service. He had arranged that the House would adjourn from the 4th to the 17th September.

On Monday "The News" published a story that the A.L.P. executive was meeting to plan to bring down the Government before Mr. Jenkins was in his grave and that Mr. Riches was being rushed home.

On Tuesday in the Parliament, Mr. Frank Walsh the Leader of the Opposition made a personal statement denying that the A.L.P. had held meetings at the time mentioned in "The News" for the purpose of discussing the situation in the House

following on Mr. Jenkins' death. He pointed out that respect of Christian principles was strong in the Labor Party and that the story was unfounded.

On Wednesday, the Premier suddenly moved without notice, that the House adjourn not till September 17th but till after the by-election for the Stirling seat. The opposition refused to concur in the waiving of the provisions of Standing Orders of the House which require the due giving of notice on a previous sitting day. The Standing Orders and the precedents are quite clear on this. No member may move a motion of substance (i.e. other than some purely formal motion) except upon notice duly given. On questions of adjournments of the House to some other day than the one already set, the House may waive the requirement of notice but only by the general concurrence of members, if any member objects then there is no waiver and notice must be given.

That meant that Sir Thomas could not adjourn the House except upon notice, and he could not, therefore, move the motion in question until Tuesday the 10th September. But of course Rules and Standing Orders weigh no more heavily with Sir Thomas Playford than do the principles of democracy. Representations were made to the Speaker Mr. Stott, who then ruled, contrary to the clear provision of standing orders and all published authorities on Parliamentary procedure, that the Premier could move to adjourn the House for a month without giving notice. The A.L.P. disagreed with the Speaker's ruling, and he upheld it on his own vote.

The House therefore cannot proceed with its business until after the by-election Truth newspaper has since said:-

- (a) That Labor was negligent in not notifying Mr. Riches of the position and did nothing to do so. That statement is untrue and completely without foundation. Apprised as the A.L.P. was of the danger in the House, it did attempt to notify Mr. Riches of what was occurring, but ^{he} was unable to get back in time.

(b) That Labor was surprised by the Premier's move and sat stunned and dismayed. Nothing that the Premier does surprises us. He is without principle in maintaining his own power. We knew he might make some move such as he did. We had prepared a case to show that he was not in order, and were ready with all the necessary authorities to cite in our support. We now turn to the Stirling by-election. Sir Thomas is not out of the wood yet and Labor will contest this seat as strongly as possible.

Goodnight.