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Radio Broadcast - Water supplies

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WATER SUPPLIES.

GOOD EVENING :

WE HAVE HAD SOME REMARKABLE STATEMENTS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS THIS WEEK REGARDING THE SITUATION WITH WHICH THE STATE IS FACED ON WATER SUPPLIES. THE TREND OF THE STATEMENTS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS HAS BEEN TO BLAME THE GOVERNMENT FROM EVERY POSSIBLE ANGLE. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE OPPOSITION APPEAR TO WANT TO LAY THE BLAME FOR THE DROUGHT CONDITIONS AT THE DOOR OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, I POINT OUT THAT THE STRONGEST CASE POSSIBLE FOR ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA BECAUSE OF THE SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS, HAS BEEN PRESENTED TO THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA, AND DESPITE THE URGENCY OF THE MATTER, AFTER MANY WEEKS WE ARE STILL AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER. THE FACTS OF THE MATTER RELATING TO WATER SUPPLIES ARE THESE:- THE MINISTER OF WORKS HAS GIVEN THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE ATTENTION TO THE CHANGING CONDITIONS OF THE WATER SUPPLIES HELD IN OUR RESERVOIRS,

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AND IN THIS RESPECT HE HAS HAD THE UTMOST CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE OFFICERS WITH EXPERT KNOWLEDGE IN THE ENGINEERING AND WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT. SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE BY OPPOSITION MEMBERS THAT PUMPING SHOULD HAVE COMMENCED AS FAR BACK AS APRIL OF THIS YEAR. HAD THE MINISTER ACCEDED TO THIS REQUEST AGAINST THE EXPERT ADVICE AVAILABLE TO HIM, THEN CLEARLY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE FOR PUMPING HAD THERE BEEN SUBSTANTIAL RAINS IN JUNE AND JULY. AS THERE WERE NOT SUBSTANTIAL WINTER RAINS, PUMPING DID COMMENCE AS SOON AS EXPERT OPINION THOUGHT IT PRUDENT. BUT THE MINISTER DID WARN THE PUBLIC OF THE POSSIBILITY OF RESTRICTIONS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS IF SUBSTANTIAL SPRING RAINS WERE NOT RECEIVED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS RECOGNIZED THAT THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY IS A RESPONSIBLE ONE AND THE CO-OPERATION WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC HAS BEEN SUCH THAT I WAS ABLE TO ANNOUNCE THIS WEEK

THAT WITH CONTINUED CO-OPERATION AND CARE BY THE PUBLIC, IT MAY STILL BE POSSIBLE TO AVOID SEVERE RESTRICTIONS DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. BECAUSE OF THIS ACTIVE SUPPORT BY THE PUBLIC, THE OPPOSITION NOW HAS THE TEMERITY TO SUGGEST THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS GAMBLING WITH THE STATE'S WATER SUPPLY. THE TRUTH IS THE COMPLETE REVERSE OF THAT SUGGESTION. SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS ENJOYED UNRESTRICTED USE OF WATER FOR MANY YEARS. OTHER STATES WITH MORE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FRESH WATER THAN SOUTH AUSTRALIA ENJOYS HAVE HAD RESTRICTIONS ON AND OFF OVER A LONG PERIOD OF YEARS. AT THE PRESENT TIME THE CITIZENS OF MELBOURNE HAVE COMPULSORY RESTRICTIONS, BUT I HAVE NOT HEARD THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN OPPOSITION PARTY LAY THE BLAME FOR DROUGHT CONDITIONS IN VICTORIA AT THE FEET OF THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT THERE. THIS ATTITUDE IS, OF COURSE, IN KEEPING WITH THE GENERAL POLICY OF THE OPPOSITION TO MAKE GROUNDLESS ACCUSATIONS OF IRRESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ACTION IN FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. THEY CONTINUALLY ACCUSE THE GOVERNMENT

OF NOT PROVIDING SUFFICIENT MONEY FOR ALL DESIRABLE PROJECTS, AND IN THE SAME BREATH ACCUSE IT OF OVER-SPENDING INSTEAD OF PRODUCING A BUDGET TO PROVIDE FOR A SURPLUS RESULT.

I WANT TO ASSURE THE GENERAL PUBLIC TONIGHT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO GIVE DAY TO DAY ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANT MATTER OF OUR WATER SUPPLIES. IF THE PUBLIC CONTINUE THEIR WHOLE-HEARTED CO-OPERATION AND IF THE STATE RECEIVES ADEQUATE RAINFALL IN THE LATE SPRING, I FEEL CONFIDENT THAT OUR CITIZENS WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY UNRESTRICTED USE OF WATER. IF WE CONTINUE TO SUFFER A PROLONGED DROUGHT, THEN I ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT ANY RESTRICTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE IMPOSED WOULD BE OF AS LIMITED A NATURE AS IS POSSIBLE IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

GOOD NIGHT.