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Title:

Places of Public Entertainment Act - sent to all country newspapers

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Premier's Office,

Adelaide.

PRESS RELEASE BY THE HON. THE PREMIER, MR. DON DUNSTAN, O.C., M.P.,
FOR COUNTRY NEWSPAPERS.

The Premier, Mr. Dunstan, this week expressed his gratitude to the Heads of Churches in South Australia for the assistance which they have given him in the drafting of the Government's amendments to the Places of Public Entertainment Act.

Mr. Dunstan was commenting on the urgent need of amending this Act to deal with the whole question of Sunday activity. A Bill to amend the Act was introduced into the State Parliament last Tuesday. The Premier said that the provisions of the Places of Public Entertainment Act were all being widely avoided by the constitution of "clubs" which were facades for evasion of the Act. "In other words, premises which are not subject to the Act are being used for what is in fact public entertainment, and the device used of obtaining applications to join a club from all who enter", Mr. Dunstan said. "The payment of an admission charge becomes the payment of a fee for club membership, and on the opinions given to the Government, it seems that we cannot successfully prosecute these people. We now have widespread threats that those who have been properly complying with the Places of Public Entertainment Act but whose licences are now being adversely affected by the activity which I have mentioned, will use the same device to enable them to compete on Sundays unless we take action promptly during this session of Parliament to control the whole field."

Mr. Dunstan said that in order to close the loopholes, the Government would have to bring clubs generally within the ambit of the Places of Public Entertainment Act and inevitably this would mean that it must deal with all Sunday activity to say what is allowable in the way of public entertainment and what is not, as this new and broad field must be covered urgently. He said that in the majority, the submissions which he had received from the churches accepted the proposals of the Board of Inquiry on Sunday Observance in Tasmania, although subject to some suggested modification in some cases. The Government proposed to proceed along the lines of the Tasmanian Act, again with some modifications. He said that two of the submissions which he had received from the churches suggested that before any action was taken on Sunday entertainment, the question should be submitted to a referendum. The Government, however, could not agree that this was a wise course to follow because of the considerable need for urgency in acting during the present session of Parliament, and, secondly because the only questions susceptible to resolution at a referendum were simple questions capable of a "Yes" or "No" answer. The submissions of the churches themselves had shown that there were many facets to the matter of Sunday

entertainment and that these could not possibly be dealt with on a simple Yes/No answer basis.

Mr. Dunstan went on to outline the modifications to be made on the Tasmanian proposal on games and entertainments in the Bill currently before the House. He said that on the question of games, the Government had sought, in enacting provisions similar to those of Tasmania, to avoid large concourses of people who would be a disturbance of the peace on Sundays in residential areas, but, at the same time, it had sought not to interfere with existing practices. In fact, in country areas, football matches involving senior League teams took place from time to time on Sundays, and this was also the case with senior soccer teams. It had not been found that this gave rise to any difficulties for people in the area, and the Government was reluctant to interfere with what was a current practice particularly where those involved desire to continue that practice.

Some submissions had suggested that games in which gain was involved, and major tennis and cricket fixtures should not occur on Sundays. The Government, on investigation, could not agree that this would lead to large concourses of people which would be disturbing to the peace, and, consequently, felt that they should not be prohibited. Some submissions had suggested that games of major teams should be prohibited on Sundays as there would be some involved who were keen sportsmen but whose religious beliefs were such that they would not be able to take part on Sundays. On examination of the practice in other States, the Government did not feel that it could impose on the majority a restriction of that kind in favor of what was likely to be a very small minority of those involved.

"As to the general permission to engage in games other than those prohibited, and in public entertainment generally on Sundays, the Government feels that the hour of 1 p.m. is a suitable one, and it is not necessary to make the hour later at 1.30 p.m. As to evening entertainment, there are suggestions that this should be prohibited prior to 8.30 in the evening. This would cut across existing businesses to a very large extent. There are 70 registered cabarets in South Australia which now open at the times it would be sought to prohibit them, and at this stage of proceedings it does not seem that they are markedly interfering with the general tenor of Sunday activity. However, if they are to continue, other forms of entertainment of a comparable nature will need to be allowed if we are not again to be faced with moves for evasion of the law. We do agree, however, that it is desirable that motion picture theatres and live theatres should not be open at a time when normally people are at the evening religious services, and accordingly the Bill before the House proposes to prohibit this between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., which is a substantial modification of the Tasmanian proposal."

Mr. Dunstan said that it had been suggested that entertainment in places licensed by or under permit from the Licensing Court should not be allowed on Sunday. However, it would be impossible to prohibit entertainment of this kind when other places of public entertainment were open on Sundays. There was no prohibition under the Licensing Act. He said

that he wished to emphasize that the entertainment would have to be only in those areas specifically permitted by the Licensing Court, and these were the places where it was necessary for meals to be eaten.

Mr. Dunstan concluded by saying that if the Tasmanian Bill were to be enacted without modification, it would prohibit some existing practices as to playing sport on Sundays by major League teams in country areas. It was therefore intended that provision be made for the Minister to grant exemptions in proper cases after consideration of existing practices and the need to preserve the peace of residential areas on Sundays.
