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Speech at Rotary Club Luncheon

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ROTARY CLUB LUNCHEON, 9/10/68.

LABOR DAY.

LABOR DAY WAS ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED TO CELEBRATE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE RESTRICTION OF HOURS OF LABOR AND THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE HOURS OF REST AND RECREATION, BUT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA IT SHOULD MEAN MUCH MORE THAN THIS. IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WE HAD A TRADITION FROM THE EARLIEST DEVELOPMENT OF TRADES UNIONS THAT MANY EMPLOYERS AND POLITICAL LEADERS SAW THE REAL ADVANTAGES THAT WOULD FLOW FROM PROVIDING REASONABLE CONDITIONS FOR THEIR MEN, HAVING A CONTENTED WORK FORCE IN CONSEQUENCE, AND ESTABLISHING A MEANS OF SETTLING DISPUTES ABOUT PAY AND CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD APPEAL TO ALL REASONABLE PEOPLE, EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER ALIKE. SOUTH AUSTRALIA DEVELOPED THROUGH THIS A UNION SYSTEM WHERE THE LEADERS OF THE TRADES UNIONS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE AND SENSIBLE IN

PAGE 2.

NEGOTIATION AND WHERE NUMBERS OF EMPLOYERS ACTED ON THEIR SIDE SIMILARLY. AT THE SAME TIME, RADICAL POLITICAL LEADERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA IN THE LAST CENTURY NOT ONLY ENCOURAGED THIS SITUATION, BUT ENDEAVOURED TO PROVIDE RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS AND SOCIAL AMELIORATION IN A WAY WHICH LED THE BRITISH SPEAKING WORLD. THE DIGNITY OF MAN MEANT MUCH TO THEM. IT HAS BEEN BECAUSE OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS THAT SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS THE MOST STABLE WORK FORCE IN AUSTRALIA AND THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF SENSIBLE ADVANCEMENT, REASONABLE COMPROMISE, PROTECTION AND CONSIDERATION FOR EMPLOYERS HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTANT ASSAULT FROM THOSE WHO HAVE THE MISTAKEN VIEW THAT THE WAY TO INDUSTRIAL ADVANCEMENT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS TO OBTAIN IT BY HITTING THE POCKETS AND IGNORING THE CONVENIENCE OF THE WORK FORCE.

DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS, SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS HAD A RECORD IN AUSTRALIA OF HAVING BY FAR THE LEAST MAN-HOURS LOST IN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES. THIS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED UNLESS

IMPROVEMENTS IN CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS OCCURRED. THERE WAS A VERY REASONABLE CASE FOR IMPROVING CONDITIONS OF WORKERS SO THAT THEIR ANCILLARY BENEFITS WERE IN INDUSTRIAL PROTECTION, IN COMPENSATION FOR INJURY, LONG SERVICE LEAVE AND SERVICE PAY AND THE LIKE, AND PARTICULARLY CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN WORKERS AND MARRIED WOMEN SHOULD BE IMPROVED. THIS COULD BE DONE WITHOUT ADDING MARKEDLY TO COSTS THOUGH AT THE SAME TIME VERY REAL BENEFITS FLOWED TO THE WORKERS.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA IS A STATE WHICH HAS TO SELL ITS SKILLS. THE ONLY REASON THAT WE HAVE THE MOTOR CAR AND HOME APPLIANCE INDUSTRY HERE IS THAT WE HAVE A STABLE FORCE OF SKILLED ARTISANS. WITHOUT THEM, AND WITHOUT INDUSTRIAL PEACE AND STABILITY, THERE WOULD BE A VERY SORRY STATE IN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA TODAY.

WHAT WE CELEBRATE BY LABOR DAY THEN IN THIS STATE IS THE GOOD SENSE OF CITIZENS IN REALIZING THAT TRADES UNIONS AND WORKERS

MUST GET SATISFACTION FROM THEIR JOBS, REASONABLE CONDITIONS, SECURITY AND LEISURE, AND THAT THIS IS THE WAY TO HIGHER PRODUCTION AND INDUSTRIAL ADVANCE. THIS INVOLVES, I BELIEVE, A REJECTION OF THE ATTITUDE THAT EMPLOYERS MUST BE "MANAGEMENT MINDED" WHICH IS A PHRASE VERY OFTEN USED TO INDICATE THAT ANY REQUEST OF THE WORKERS IS TO RECEIVE A SUMMARY REJECTION. WHAT IS MORE, IT IS VITAL TO REALISE THAT IN LARGE INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS, MUCH BETTER WORK WILL OCCUR IF PEOPLE AT THE BENCHES FEEL THAT THEY ARE PART OF THE WORK SHOW AND ARE KEPT INFORMED, AND, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, ARE CONSULTED ABOUT THE TARGETS OF THE UNDERTAKING. THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT CONSULTATION, OF THE GREATEST POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF THE MEN ON THE JOB WITH THE AIMS OF MANAGEMENT IS NECESSARY IN AN AGE WHERE THE SCALE OF PRODUCTION TENDS TO IGNORE HUMAN VALUES AND TO DEPERSONALISE DAILY ACTIVITY.