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Title:
Speech at SA Industrial Safety Convention Dinner, Adelaide

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT S.A. INDUSTRIAL
SAFETY CONVENTION DINNER, ADELAIDE.

8.8.72

MY PARLIAMENTARY COLLEAGUES, MR. McKEE AND MR. WELLS,
MR. ^{BIRD}~~BUD~~, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

MAY I FIRST OF ALL REPEAT DAVE McKEE'S WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS. I KNOW HOW BUSY MANY OF YOU ARE AND IT'S EVIDENCE OF THE CONCERN WE SHARE IN PROMOTING INDUSTRIAL SAFETY IN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SENSE THAT YOU'VE MADE THE TIME TODAY TO ATTEND THIS CONVENTION.

CERTAINLY FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD THIS EVENING IT HASN'T BEEN TIME WASTED. I'M SURE THAT ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL RETURN TO THEIR JOBS - EITHER ON THE EMPLOYER OR EMPLOYEE SIDE - WITH NEW IDEAS AND RENEWED ENTHUSIASM TO PROMOTE SAFETY AT WORK.

2.

SIR, IT'S A PRIME TENET OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT SOUTH AUSTRALIA CAN LEAD THIS NATION IN IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES.

IT'S MY BELIEF TOO THAT OUR INDUSTRIAL RECORD IN THE NEARLY TWO AND A HALF YEARS THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN OFFICE THIS TIME SHOWS THAT WE ARE WELL ON THE WAY TO DOING SO.

MEASURES SUCH AS THE REVISED WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION ACT AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY - SOON TO TAKE LEGISLATIVE FORM - AS WELL AS IMPROVED CONDITIONS IN OTHER AREAS ARE PROOF OF THIS.

WE WANT TO DO ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE THAT SAFE WORKING IS A WATCHWORD IN ALL OUR PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT AND TO PROVIDE THAT, IF MEN OR WOMEN ARE INJURED, THEY DON'T SUFFER FINANCIALLY AND CAN - IF NECESSARY - BE PROPERLY REHABILITATED.

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY MEAN IMPROVED LIVING STANDARDS AND GREATER PRODUCTIVITY. BUT WE'D ALL - GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS AND UNIONS - BE NEGLECTING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IF WE FAILED TO ENSURE, TOO, THAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCE IS ALSO RELATED TO GREATER SAFETY AT WORK.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION IS AN AREA IN WHICH THERE SHOULD NEVER BE ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND UNIONS. AND THE PRESENCE HERE TONIGHT OF SO MANY REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE INDUSTRIAL FENCE IS PROOF THAT THIS IS IN FACT A COMMON CONCERN.

THIS IS A MATTER OF QUITE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE TO US ALL, BOTH IN ITS HUMAN DIMENSION AND IN THE EFFECT IT HAS ON PRODUCTIVITY.

ONE SET OF FIGURES ALONE TELL THE STORY.

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID IN RECENT DAYS ABOUT INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (IN FACT I AND OTHER PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM HAVE DONE QUITE A BIT OF THE SAYING!) AND OBVIOUSLY THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE A VERY HARD LOOK, NATIONALLY, AT OUR PRESENT CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION SYSTEM.

BUT IT'S REVEALING THAT IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR FOR WHICH WE HAVE COMPARABLE FIGURES - THE YEAR TO JUNE 30, 1971 - SOUTH AUSTRALIA LOST 71,500 MAN DAYS BECAUSE OF INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES.

IN THE SAME YEAR, SERIOUS INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS WHICH RESULTED IN ABSENCE FROM WORK FOR A WEEK OR MORE PRODUCED A LOSS OF 181,000 MAN DAYS.

AS I SAID EARLIER, I THINK THAT AS A GOVERNMENT, OUR INDUSTRIAL RECORD IS A PROUD ONE.

BUT WE ARE ANXIOUS TO DO MORE. ONE OF THE THINGS WE CAN DO - AS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER - IS TO SET AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS.

IT'S FOR THIS REASON, AS WELL AS THE INTRINSIC MERIT OF THE SCHEME, THAT STATE CABINET RECENTLY APPROVED THE FORMATION OF AN INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH FOR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND INSTRUMENTALITIES.

MEMBERS WILL BE THE PERMANENT HEADS OF THE MAIN DEPARTMENTS AND TOP MANAGEMENT OF THE INSTRUMENTALITIES UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD.

THE GROUP'S JOB WILL BE TO PROMOTE AND CO-ORDINATE CONTINUOUS ACCIDENT PREVENTION AMONG EMPLOYEES OF THE STATE.

6.

IT WILL PREPARE A DRIVE TO CORRECT UNSAFE WORKING CONDITIONS AND PLAN A SAFETY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR EMPLOYEES.

OTHER TASKS FOR THE COMMITTEE WILL BE TO CONSIDER PROPOSALS FOR A STANDARD DEPARTMENTAL SYSTEM OF RECORDING OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND DISEASES AND TO FOSTER THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT IN THE FIELD OF JOB HEALTH AND SAFETY.

ANY FINDINGS BY THE COMMITTEE WHICH HAVE APPLICATION BEYOND THE GOVERNMENTAL AND SEMI-GOVERNMENTAL FIELDS WILL, OF COURSE, BE AVAILABLE TO MANAGEMENT AND WORKER ORGANISATIONS.

SIR, THERE IS A GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS IN AUSTRALIA THAT WE NEED TO DO MORE TO IMPROVE JOB SAFETY.

THE PRESENCE AT TODAY'S CONVENTION OF SO MANY MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATIVES IS EVIDENCE OF THIS HEIGHTENED AWARENESS. BUT WE ARE STILL A LONG WAY FROM THE IDEAL.

WE CAN AND MUST DO MORE.

THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE CONSULTATION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS ON ACCIDENT PREVENTION AT PLANT, INDUSTRY AND STATE LEVEL.

PROPER TRAINING OF WORKERS IS ANOTHER AREA IN WHICH WE'RE NOT DOING ENOUGH.

THIS APPLIES TO JOB INDUCTION TRAINING FOR NEW EMPLOYEES AND IT APPLIES, TOO, TO THE TRAINING OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN THE PAST HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN THE PRIORITY IT DEMANDS.

AS I SAID, THIS IS NOW CHANGING. CONVENTIONS SUCH AS TODAY'S WILL DO MUCH TO ENSURE THAT THE CHANGE COMES AT AN ACCELERATING PACE.

THANK YOU.

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