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Title:

Statement: Budget debate

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STATEMENT

from the Premier

Date.....September 17, 1975. State Administration Centre,
Victoria Square, Adelaide,
Embargo..... South Australia 5001
228 4811

BUDGET DEBATE.

The disgracefully irresponsible behaviour of the Opposition in Parliament forced the Government to guillotine debate on the Budget, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, said today.

The Liberal Party has deliberately tried to obstruct and disrupt the business of the Assembly and make the administration of the State as difficult as possible, Mr. Dunstan said.

"The timewasting was so severe, the obstructionism so obvious and the trivialities so petty that it was quite obvious there was no way the Budget would pass through the Parliament this week if the Opposition continued to carry on in such fashion.

"It was so obvious that they were determined upon obstruction that the Government had no alternative but to apply the guillotine. This is the first time we have done so since the Standing Orders were changed and up until now we have been very reluctant to do it. But obstruction as deliberate and irresponsible as that systematically put into effect by the Opposition on Tuesday means there is no other course for a Government to follow.

Mr. Dunstan said that by Tuesday night the Opposition had been given more time to debate this year's Budget than was taken up for the whole Budget last year. But the time had been deliberately wasted with trivialities and fillibustering.

The Premier refuted claims that he had broken an agreement with the Liberal Movement leader, Mr. Millhouse, that the time for the debate would be extended.

"I made no arrangement for the extension of time beyond midnight. Mr. Millhouse and Dr. Tonkin approached me at the Law Society dinner they were both attending with me, and Dr. Tonkin suggested that because the guillotine had been imposed he would break a written agreement with the Government on pairs for members from both sides who are absent from Parliament.

Mr. Dunstan said in the discussion which followed he had offered to suggest to the Parliamentary Labor Party that if the Opposition Parties behaved more responsibly the guillotine might be extended beyond midnight.

"I stressed to Dr. Tonkin that I could only suggest to my Party and that I could give no undertaking. Dr. Tonkin rejected that proposal and said the guillotine must be withdrawn immediately and then the Opposition would consider being less obstructive".

"I put this proposal to the Leader of the House, the Deputy Leader of the Labor Party, Mr. Corcoran, but he said the Opposition were behaving so disgracefully so persistently that he could not agree to the suggestion.

"I told Dr. Tonkin the arrangement was not on and he then withdrew my pair, contrary to his own undertaking. The only matter I then discussed with Mr. Millhouse was whether he would remain at the dinner, so that my vote was not needed in the House and I could do the Law Society the courtesy of remaining to address them, as they had invited me to do.

"There was no arrangement made with Dr. Tonkin, Mr. Millhouse or anybody else that the time for debate would be extended beyond midnight. To say there was is completely wrong and quite dishonourable.

"The responsibility for the use of the guillotine lies with the Opposition. If they try to sabotage the Government's administration by wilful and destructive disruption of Parliament the Government must ensure that Parliament is not brought to a halt."



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