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5-KA BROADCAST - BY THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN)

28/10/70:

GOOD EVENING:

LAST NIGHT IN PARLIAMENT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY VOTED THROUGH A BILL WHICH PUT INTO EFFECT THE WISHES ON UNIFORM SHOP TRADING HOURS OF THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA. AND THIS WILL MEAN THAT IN THE NEW YEAR ALL GENERAL MERCHANDISE SHOPS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA WILL CLOSE AT 5.30 PM, MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS, AND WILL BE ABLE TO OPEN UNTIL 12.30 PM ON SATURDAYS. THE HOURS OF SHOPS THAT ARE PRESENTLY EXEMPTED FROM EARLY CLOSING, SUCH AS CHEMISTS, GREENGROCERS, AND DELICATESSENS, WILL NOT CHANGE. IN ADDITION THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SELL A GREATLY ENLARGED LIST OF GOODS. PEOPLE WILL NO LONGER BE INCONVENIENCED IN THE BUYING OF HANDY ITEMS AT NIGHT OR ON SATURDAY AFTERNOONS AND EVENINGS, AND SUNDAY AND SUNDAY EVENINGS. FOR THE REST, THE PRESENT UNCOORDINATED AND CONFUSING SITUATION WILL NO LONGER APPLY - UNIFORM TRADING WILL APPLY THROUGHOUT THE METROPOLITAN AREA, GIVING EVERYONE A FAIR AND EQUAL GO.

THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, OF COURSE, HAS BEEN THE ONLY GOVERNMENT PREPARED, IN GOOD FAITH, TO ACTUALLY GRASP THE NETTLE OF SHOPPING HOURS AND ENDEAVOUR TO RATIONALIZE THE TOTAL SITUATION. IT RECOGNIZED THE FACT THAT SMALL TRADERS ON THE EDGE OF THE OLD METROPOLITAN BOUNDARY - WERE SERIOUSLY AND UNFAIRLY TREATED EACH WEEKEND, BECAUSE SOME OF THEIR CUSTOMERS COULD JUMP THE BOUNDARY INTO THE UNCONTROLLED SHOPPING AREAS. FURTHER, IN SOME OF THE UNCONTROLLED AREAS, PRICES WERE BEING JACKED UP BY SOME TRADERS SO THAT THEY COULD AFFORD THE OVERTIME THAT HAD TO BE PAID TO COVER EXTENDED HOURS. AND FINALLY, ANOTHER POINT WAS THAT THE 40 HOUR WEEK WHICH PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA ACHIEVED AFTER A CONSIDERABLE STRUGGLE WAS BEING WHITTLED AWAY BECAUSE OF A SITUATION WHICH ALLOWED NOT MORE GOODS TO BE SOLD, BUT RATHER LONGER HOURS TO BE WORKED, WITH A LOSS OF INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS ALL ROUND. THE ARGUMENTS FOR UNIFORMITY OF SHOPPING HOURS WERE OVERWHELMING - ON THE TRADING LEVEL, ON THE PRICE LEVEL, AND ON THE LEVEL OF INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS.

THE GOVERNMENT GRASPED THE NETTLE BECAUSE IT WAS CLEAR THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE. THE POSITION HAD TO BE REGULARIZED - EQUALITY HAD TO BE ACHIEVED. EITHER ALL SHOPS SHOULD OPEN FRIDAY EVENINGS OR NO SHOPS SHOULD OPEN. THE STATUS QUO COULD NOT CONTINUE. BUT BECAUSE OF THIS POSITION, IN WHICH NO MATTER WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DID, SOMEONE WOULD COMPLAIN, IT DECIDED TO HOLD A REFERENDUM SO THAT EVERYONE'S

WISHES COULD BE CLEARLY ASSESSED. AND THE OVERWHELMING VOTE WENT AGAINST A UNIFORM TRADING POSITION IN WHICH ALL GENERAL MERCHANDISE COULD BE SOLD ON FRIDAY NIGHTS. THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA DO NOT WANT LATE NIGHT SHOPPING ON FRIDAYS. AS I HAVE SAID, NO MATTER WHAT THE GOVERNMENT DID, SOMEONE WOULDN'T BE HAPPY. AND THERE ARE A FEW PEOPLE WHO ARE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO PUT THE RESULT OF A DEMOCRATICALLY HELD REFERENDUM INTO LAW. AND YET, ONE THING IS CLEAR: DESPITE ALL THE SOUND AND FURY THAT HAS BEEN INJECTED BY MEDIA INTO THE SITUATION, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA DO SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION. EVEN IN THOSE AREAS WHERE A STRONG FORMAL YES VOTE OCCURRED IN FAVOUR OF FRIDAY NIGHT SHOPPING, THE PROTESTS AGAINST THE REFERENDUM HAVE ALMOST ENTIRELY BEEN AT PARTY POLITICS LEVEL, IN THE NORTH, IT HAS BEEN WAGED BY EX-LCL PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES IN THE LOCAL COUNCILS. (SO MUCH FOR THE LCL'S ARGUMENT THAT POLITICS SHOULD NOT ENTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT.) IN FACT, THE OPPOSITION IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, HAVE BEEN PLAYING A MOST DISGUSTING AND CYNICAL GAME WITH THE SHOPPING HOURS LEGISLATION. SO MUCH SO, INDEED, THAT THREE OF THE OPPOSITION MEMBERS HAVE VOTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON THE ISSUE - AND ONE OF THESE INCLUDED MR. COUMBE, A PREVIOUS MINISTER OF LABOUR & INDUSTRY.

THE FACTS ARE QUITE CLEAR, AS MR. COUMBE OBVIOUSLY KNOWS, THE SHOPPING HOURS SITUATION HAD TO BE UNIFORM - AND ANY GOVERNMENT WORTH ITS SALT HAS TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE WISHES EXPRESSED IN A REFERENDUM HELD AMONG ALL THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE DECISION. BUT ONE THING NEEDS TO BE CLEARLY STATED. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT THE NEW UNIFORM TRADING HOURS AND THE EXPANDED LIST OF EXEMPT GOODS, WILL PRESENT THE PEOPLE OF ADELAIDE'S METROPOLITAN AREA WITH ONE OF THE MOST CONVENIENT SHOPPING SITUATIONS IN AUSTRALIA. IT WILL BE CONVENIENT. IT WILL KEEP PRICES DOWN. IT WILL ALLOW FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER ON WEEKENDS. AND IT WILL PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF SHOPKEEPERS AND WORKERS GENERALLY.

GOODNIGHT.