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Handwritten radio script on Sir Thomas Playford.

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Doc Ref: 3425 (1)

ALP

Monday 20/7/59

Good evening, Tonight I want to pay tribute to a phenomenon in Australian politics, the premier of S.A. Sir Thomas Playford is one of the cutest performers ever to hit the Australian political stage.

It would be well for students of politics to take their noses out of Machiavelli's famous study of the life & tactics of Cesare Borgia, and turn their attention more profitably to an example close at hand.

The Premier could not, of course, have held the position he does unless it had been as the leader of a Conservative party. In this way, with interests of the press on his side, Sir Thomas has been able to keep the necessary votes under the gerrymander system to retain office with minority support. Of course it is true that he has, as a start, the gerrymander on his side. I don't want to say too much about it tonight because I will devote a whole broadcast to this topic shortly. Suffice it to say that under the direction of the Playford Govt., the electoral district of S.A. have been carved up in such a way that some seats have as many as 26,000 people to elect one member of Parliament, & some as few as 6,000 to elect one member. As the Liberals supporters dominate in most seats with a small number of electors, & the A.L.P.s in most seats with a large number of electors,

[END PAGE]

the party which wins the elections does not necessarily command the support of the majority of electors. In practise the LCL has only once since 1938 had a majority of people vote for it – yet it retains office. The A.L.P. has consistently except for that one occasion had the support of between 51% and 56% of the electors – yet it remains the opposition.

Sir Thomas of course, is not troubled by the manifest injustice of this, any more than he is troubled by other manifest injustices. He airily declares – “there is no such principle as that one man's vote should have equal value with any other man's.” He doesn't believe in majority rule, & says so quite clearly. Deciding on who shall govern merely by counting heads is, to Sir Thomas, arrant nonsense - nonsense he doesn't suffer very gladly.

But when all it is has been said, even the gerrymander wouldn't have saved his government if he had not been able by a very narrow margin.

Sir Thomas has put over a story on us – that he has been responsible for an industrial development in this State far in excess of that which has, during his time in office, taken place elsewhere in Australia. This story is untrue, but that most people in S.A. have come to believe it must be accorded a triumph for the Premiers public relations activity.

Let's just have a look at the figures.

[END PAGE]

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These figures are taken from the Commonwealth Year Book.

In 1938, when Sir Thomas took office the figures of value of industrial output per head of population were.

N.S.W	Vic	S.A
£33	35	23

During the war the Labor Govt. in Canberra put many wartime industries in S.A. because of the strategic advantages here. Few other industrial developments took place in that period, so that by 1945, the end of the war, this was the picture:

N.S.W	[Vic]	[S.A.]
£52	59	41

Then it was that the publicity effort about Sir Thomas began. One would think, reading the paper and his own modest statements about his achievements, that S.A. had in the interim far outstripped the rate of development of these two neighbour states.

But in 1956 (the last figure published) the position was

N.S.W	Vic	S.A.
£183	192	145

In fact during the period 1938-1956, without the assistance of the maritime factories put here by Curtin & Chifley, Tasmania had gone from £23 per head to £144 per head – a development almost precisely similar to our own.

What is there in this story of great and unparalleled developments in S.A.

[NEW PAGE]

Several other States have been doing as good or better!

When you place against this the fact this State has consistently been the State with the lowest real wages, the worst individual protection, the worst workers compensation & safety provisions, with a standard of social services far worse than any other State in the Commonwealth, the Premier's reputation must collapse like a pricked balloon.

How does he do it? Well you see he is always making announcements – not merely about things which do happen, but about all sorts of things which don't.

1. Deep sea port
2. Meat works Kadina
3. Meat works Naracoorte
4. Women's block R.A.H.
5. Casualty block R.A.H

Then to stir interest he took a trip to the U.S. Great secrecy attended him. Forecasts appeared as to the expectations of his prowess with the U.S. tycoons. Public was kept in a state of intense suspense. Then nothing came of it. When Mr Cahill had gone to the U.S. and come back with promised investment in his State of some millions – more in fact than the total net if U.S. investment in this country in any previous year, the

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Press of N.S.W. condemned him for wasting public funds & called his trip a failure. When Sir Thomas returned with nothing at all, the Press in S.A. said what a great man he was.

The Premier, however, is never at a loss, even when his imagination fails him. Just recently you may remember he made a speech prominently reported in which he said a great new industry was coming to S.A. but he couldn't say what it was – it's a great secret. We haven't been told yet.

Sunday 20/7/59

RECORDED

Good evening. Tonight I want to pay tribute to a phenomenon in Australian politics, the Premier of S. A. Sir Thomas Playford is one of the greatest performers ever to hit the Australian political stage. It would be well for students of politics to take their noses out of Machiavelli's famous study of the life & tactics of Cesare Borgia, and turn their attention more profitably to an example close at hand.

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suffice it to say that under the direction of Sir Playford Govt, the electoral districts of S. A. have been carved up in such a way that some seats have as many as 26,000 people to elect one member of Parliament, & some as few as 6,000 to elect one member.

As the Liberals supporters ~~predominate~~ in ~~the~~ ^{most} seats with a small number of electors, & the A.L.P.s in ~~the~~ ^{most} seats with a large number of electors,

the party which wins the election, does not ^{necessarily} command the support of the majority of electors. In practice, the L.C. has only once since 1938 had a majority of people vote for it - yet it retains office. The A.L.P. has consistently except for that one occasion had the support of between 50% and 56% of the electors - yet it remains the opposition.

Sir Thomas, of course, is not troubled by the manifold injustices of this, any more than he is troubled by other manifold injustices. He airily declares - "There is no such principle as that one man's vote should have equal value with any other man's." He doesn't believe in majority rule, & says so quite clearly. Deciding on who shall govern merely by counting heads is, to Sir Thomas, a total nonsense - & nonsense he doesn't suffer very gladly.

But when all that has been said, even the giddy man who wouldn't have saved his government if he had not been able by a very narrow margin.

Sir Thomas has put out a story on us - that he was responsible for an industrial development in this State far in excess of that which has, during his time in office, taken place elsewhere in Australia. This story is untrue, but that most people in S.A. have come to believe it has must be ~~credited~~ ^{regarded} a triumph for the Premier's public relations activity.

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N. S. W.	Vic	S. A.
£33.	35.	23.

During the war the Labour Govt. in Canberra put many war-time industries in S. A. because of the strategic advantages here. Few other industrial developments took place in the period, so that by 1945, the end of the war, this was the picture.

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£52.	59.	40.

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But in 1956 (the last figure published) the position was.

N. S. W.	Vic	S. A.
£183.	£192	£149.

In fact during ~~the~~ the period 1938-56, without the assistance of the war-time factories put here by Britain & the U.S.A., Transvaal had gone from £23 per head to £144 per head - a development almost precisely similar to our own.

What is there in this story of great & unparalleled development in S. A.

Several other States have been doing as good or better!

When you place against it the fact that this State has consistently been the State with the lowest real wages, the worst industrial protection, the worst workers compensation & safety provisions, with a standard of social services far worse than any other State in the Commonwealth, the Premier's reputation must collapse like a pricked balloon.

How does he do it? Well you see he is always making announcements - not merely about things which do happen, but about all sorts of things which don't.

- 1. Deep sea gold.
- 2. Meat works & Federation.
- 3. Meat works, Newcastle.
- 4. Women's block R. A. H.
- 5. Cannell's block R. A. H.
- 6. ~~the~~ ~~the~~

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