

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS STATEMENT TO BRISBANE PRESS CONFERENCE  
15 NOVEMBER 1974

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I SHOULD EXPLAIN WHY I INTEND TO TAKE SUCH AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THIS CAMPAIGN. I DO SO BECAUSE I HAVE KNOWN AND ADMIRERD PERC TUCKER FOR MANY YEARS. I KNOW HIM AS A GREAT QUEENSLANDER AND A GREAT AUSTRALIAN WHO WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT PREMIER AND STAND UP FOR THE INTERESTS OF THIS STATE AS EFFECTIVELY AS DON DUNSTAN STANDS FOR THE INTERESTS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA OR ERIC REECE FOR THOSE OF TASMANIA. I DO NOT EXPECT THAT WE WILL ALWAYS AGREE ON THE APPLICATION OF ALL POLICIES BUT I DO KNOW THAT WE CAN TALK TO EACH OTHER, THAT WE RESPECT EACH OTHER AND THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE INTERESTS OF THIS STATE.

I DO NOT COME HERE TO DISCUSS FEDERAL ISSUES. THE ISSUES THAT I WILL DISCUSS IN THIS CAMPAIGN ARE STATE ISSUES. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT QUEENSLANDERS WILL BE FOOLED BY THE PREMIER'S TACTIC OF INTRODUCING COMPLETELY IRREVELANT ISSUES IN A STATE ELECTION. QUEENSLANDERS MUST DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANT A STATE GOVERNMENT THAT CAN WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PRESENT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT - CO-OPERATE WITH IT BUT NOT NECESSARILY ALWAYS AGREE WITH IT. AT PRESENT YOU HAVE IN QUEENSLAND - AS THE PREMIER HAS ALREADY INDICATED IN THIS CAMPAIGN - A GOVERNMENT WHICH CONTINUES TO OBSTRUCT, WHICH REFUSES TO CO-OPERATE, WHICH ON SOME OCCASIONS EVEN REFUSES TO DISCUSS MATTERS AND ON OTHERS FAILS TO FULFIL THE ELEMENTARY COURTESY OF REPLYING TO CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT.

THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND MUST DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANT A CONTINUATION OF THIS POLICY OF NON-CO-OPERATION, OBSTRUCTION AND INDEED VILIFICATION. IT IS A POLICY WHICH I BELIEVE ADVERSELY AFFECTS THE WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE. THIS IS A STATE ISSUE - NOT A FEDERAL ISSUE - AND I COME INTO THIS CAMPAIGN TO SHOW YOU HOW FAR THE WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS STATE HAVE BEEN IMPEDED BY THE STAND OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT OF QUEENSLAND.

THINGS HAVE COME TO A SORRY STATE INDEED WHEN THE PREMIER OF THIS GREAT STATE AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF THIS COUNTRY CANNOT EVEN MEET TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF IMPORTANCE BECAUSE THE PREMIER REFUSES TO DO SO. THE PREMIER REFUSED TO COME TO A PRIVATE ROUND-TABLE DINNER WITH MYSELF AND ALL THE OTHER FIVE PREMIERS TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, AND MATTERS CONCERNING THE CONSTITUTION. THE PREMIER SIMPLY IGNORED A LETTER WHICH I WROTE TO HIM VERY EARLY IN OUR GOVERNMENT PROPOSING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OUR OFFICIALS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES FOR GROWTH CENTRES AND STABLE LAND PRICES. AND WHEN THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS SOUGHT TO CONFER WITH STATE MINISTERS ABOUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF A ROYAL COMMISSION ON ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS, THE QUEENSLAND MINISTER REFUSED TO EVEN DISCUSS THE MATTER, UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO. WHEN I WROTE TO THE PREMIER OFFERING TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STATE RAILWAYS AND REMOVE THE FINANCIAL BURDENS THEY IMPOSE ON THE STATE, THE PREMIER REPLIED NINE MONTHS LATER THAT HE WAS NOT EVEN PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. AND YET DISCUSSIONS ARE PROCEEDING ON A NO COMMITMENT BASIS WITH OTHER LIBERAL STATE GOVERNMENTS.

ABORIGINAL  
AFFAIRS

Railways

TO BE QUITE FRANK, IT SURPRISES ME THAT THE LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY STATE GOVERNMENT OF QUEENSLAND FINDS IDEOLOGICALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND BERATES IN THE MOST VIRULENT TERMS MATTERS WHICH OTHER LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY STATE GOVERNMENTS FIND PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE. IF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS STATE WERE WILLING TO SIGN PRECISELY

THE SAME AGREEMENTS ON PRECISELY THE SAME TERMS AS THAT

WHICH I'VE SIGNED WITH THE LIBERAL PREMIERS OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA, THEN THE GROWTH CENTRE IN TOWNSVILLE

GROWTH CENTRES

WOULD BE ABLE TO PROCEED AS RAPIDLY AS THE GROWTH CENTRE IS PROCEEDING IN ALBURY-WODONGA. IF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS STATE WERE WILLING TO SIGN THE SAME AGREEMENTS IN PRECISELY THE SAME TERMS AS THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENTS IN NEW SOUTH WALES, VICTORIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA, ALL THE OTHER LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY GOVERNMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY, HAVE EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO SIGN OR HAVE ALREADY SIGNED ON LAND COUNCILS, THEN WE WOULD BE ABLE TO ENSURE THAT HOME PURCHASERS CAN AFFORD THE PRICE OF LAND.

THESE TWO EXAMPLES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS STATE REFUSING TO DO WHAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS OF THE SAME POLITICAL COLOUR ARE WILLING TO DO HAVE ALREADY COST QUEENSLAND TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN FEDERAL GRANTS AND LOANS. I AM NOT

HERE TO ARGUE THE MERITS OF OUR GROWTH CENTRE POLICY OR OUR LAND COMMISSION POLICY. THAT IS A MATTER FOR A FEDERAL ELECTION. I AM HERE TO SAY THAT QUEENSLANDERS SHOULD NOT

LAND COMMISSIONS

ACCEPT A STATE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS WILLING TO IMPEDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE IN THIS WAY. THAT IS PROPERLY A MATTER FOR A STATE ELECTION.

I DO NOT BELIEVE QUEENSLANDERS DESERVE A GOVERNMENT WHICH, WHATEVER ITS DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WITH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, REFUSES TO EVEN ANSWER LETTERS FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA TO THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND. SUCH UNANSWERED LETTERS CONCERN A PROPOSAL TO STUDY THE MEANS OF REDUCING ELECTRICITY COSTS IN QUEENSLAND; A PROPOSAL TO ASSESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF BEACH SAND MINING; A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF AMENDMENTS TO QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION FOR ABORIGINES; A REQUEST TO THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEENSLAND FOR THEIR VIEWS ON MY GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS CONCERNING ABORIGINES. WE OFFERED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR LAND STABILISATION AND GROWTH CENTRES. I WROTE IN AUGUST 1973 CONCERNING OUR FINANCIAL PROPOSALS FOR THAT YEAR AND AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER 1974 CONCERNING OUR PROPOSALS ARISING FROM THE MOST RECENT BUDGET. I HAVE RECEIVED NO REPLY TO THE FIRST AND THE MOST CURSORY REPLY TO THE SECOND. AS EARLY AS DECEMBER 1972, WHEN THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN IN OFFICE FOR LESS THAN TWO WEEKS, I WROTE SEEKING THE AGREEMENT OF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL LINE TO OPERATE BETWEEN QUEENSLAND PORTS. IN MAY 1973, THE PREMIER TOLD ME THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING THE MATTER. DESPITE SUBSEQUENT LETTERS IN APRIL AND JUNE 1974, THERE IS NO REPLY. I WROTE SEEKING THE VIEWS OF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ON THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN. I HAVE RECEIVED NO SUBSTANTIVE REPLY. I WROTE SEEKING THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE PROPOSAL RELATING TO THE MUTUAL REFERENCE OF POWERS, WHICH WAS BASICALLY AGREED UPON AT THE MEETING WITH MYSELF AND THE FIVE PREMIERS WHICH THE QUEENSLAND PREMIER REFUSED TO ATTEND.

ELECTRICITY

BEACH SAND MINING

ABORIGINES

NATIONAL SHIPPIING LINE

ASSISTANCE PLAN

THIS LETTER WAS SENT IN APRIL OF THIS YEAR AND I HAVE RECEIVED NO REPLY. IN AUGUST A SPECIAL PREMIERS' CONFERENCE WAS HELD ON INFLATION. IT SET UP JOINT WORKING PARTIES ON WAGE INCREASES, THE MULTIPLICITY OF WAGE FIXING TRIBUNALS, ON THE JURISDICTION OF THE PRICES JUSTIFICATION TRIBUNAL, ON TAX PENALTIES AND ON GOVERNMENT TENDERING PROCEDURES. I FORWARDED COPIES OF THESE REPORTS TO ALL STATE PREMIERS FOR THEIR COMMENT TWO MONTHS AGO. ONLY THE PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND HAS FAILED TO REPLY IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER.

*Premiers  
Conference  
Aug 74*

THIS IS NOT THE WAY THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN AN AUSTRALIAN AND A STATE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE CONDUCTED, WHATEVER THEIR POLITICAL PERSUASIONS MAY BE.

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