



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 400

8 December 1974

QUEENSLAND ELECTION

The results in Queensland will disappoint all Labor supporters and disillusion all believers in a healthy Parliamentary democracy.

I very much regret that Perc Tucker, an able leader and a close friend has lost his seat in Townsville. He fought a clean, honourable and vigorous campaign.

It is unhealthy that with 36.4% of the vote Labor seems likely to hold only 10 or 12 seats out of 82.

The Liberals under Sir Gordon Chalk won 4% more votes than the National Party under Mr Bjelke-Petersen and the increase in the Liberal vote since the last State election was much greater than the increase in the National Party vote. Nevertheless, thanks to Mr Bjelke-Petersen's gerrymander the National Party will hold at least 5 more seats than the Liberal Party in the new Queensland Parliament and Mr Bjelke-Petersen will remain Premier.

Throughout the campaign the Liberals showed a much greater willingness than the National Party to co-operate with the Australian Government in the development of Queensland. The continued eclipse of the Liberals will do nothing to heal the deep division in the coalition. I regret that Queensland electors have been exposed to emotive tactics and inflammatory slogans that would win little attention in other parts of Australia. There are dark currents of intolerance and extremism at work in Queensland. I am convinced that honest policies of co-operation will eventually prevail over bitterness and division.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.