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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

22 FEBRUARY, 1981

BY-ELECTIONS - McPHERSON, BOOTHBY, CURTIN

I congratulate Peter White, Steele Hall, and Allan Rocher on their election to the House of Representatives, and look forward to the contribution I know each of them can make to the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

The results are a clear demonstration of the continuing support in Australia for the Government's responsible approach to national policy.

I would like to thank all those members of the Liberal Party who have worked so hard to win these three seats, particularly considering that the by-elections have occurred so soon after the general election last year.

The fact that the Labor Party's share of the vote has been reduced in at least two of the seats is a remarkable achievement. Voters in three States have once again decisively rejected the high tax, centralist policies of the Labor Party.

They have also rejected those who have rushed forward with ill-prepared and impractical schemes for change. The McPherson result is particularly pleasing in this regard. Voters have shown that they will not support the introduction of divisive tactics into Federal Coalition politics.

The attempt of the State National Party in Queensland to undermine coalition principles has been condemned by the people of McPherson in their vote.

I hope that the National Party in Queensland now realises that there is no future in divisive politics. Its clumsy and divisive approach to the McPherson by-election has failed. It is important for the National Party in Queensland to learn the lesson of that failure.

Let it take note when I say quite plainly that I will not at any time allow the Federal Coalition to be disrupted by such tactics.

The voters have made their judgement.

Australia is making tremendous progress under the Fraser/Anthony coalition. The unity of that coalition has never been stronger and is the firmest security for Australia's prosperity and progress.