



## PRIME MINISTER

### DECLARATION OF WILLS POLL - MONDAY 21 MARCH, 1983

Firstly, of course, I'd like to thank all of those who took part in the electorate of Wills during the election period, especially in the circumstances when I could spend virtually no time here at all ... and their magnificent efforts, as well as campaigning for the Party as a whole, are reflected in the words that have just been read out. I thank you all most sincerely for the work that you did on my behalf and on behalf of the Party.

Just a few comments about the election generally. All I can say is that if the election were being held today, I think we would have done even better. We had a magnificent result. We've got a record majority in the House of Representatives and the actual vote seems to be about the best since 1914. It's an unusual experience to go into the Caucus room now as we did the other day, and be sitting there with more than 100 people ...

The results that we expected on the 5th March have continued to be reflected here on Saturday in the Springvale By-election. It's quite remarkable to be there, after so many elections the Labor Party going ahead again by a further 5%. It's not surprising that this is the case because I believe that what I was saying during the election campaign is being now reflected in the truth. And that is that I expressed the view that the people of Australia were going to revolt against the insult to their intelligence which was involved in the campaign of the Liberal Party. They tried to say that the people of Australia who were concerned about unemployment, and concerned about the real issues which were affecting their daily lives - the best the Liberal Party could do was talk about communists under the bed and talk about the banks collapsing, and talk about money leaving the country. They did a lot of damage to our country in that campaign. But the greatest damage they did was to themselves in making the people of Australia realise that they couldn't be trusted if they were going to talk like that.

With those things behind us we are going to be sure that in the government of this country, with what is left of the Liberal Party in Opposition - that they have the facilities provided to them to play some part in the proper processes of the Parliament. We are not going to be vindictive, we will give them the benefits that they made available to us. And all I can say is that I hope now that they will respond to what we're doing and to what the verdict of the Australian people is. And the verdict of the Australian people is clear. They understand very clearly what the great economic problems that we've inherited from the Liberal Government. They are expecting us to approach these constructively. We're doing that and it's up to our conservative opponents now to take up and to live in 1983 and not to believe, as they did in the campaign, that they can just behave as though they are a Party born to rule.

All the events here in Victoria ... have shown that the natural party in Australia is the Labor Party. We now govern in Western Australia, in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and federally. And we will show by the way we govern at both State and Federal level that we are the natural party of government to the people of Australia. We will address ourselves to their problems. We, within the very, very severe limitations that have been put upon us by the deception of the previous government, will move gradually to make this country a fairer and more decent place so that the ordinary people of Australia are going to have the opportunity of sharing in the great wealth of this country, so that their children can have an opportunity for the fulfilment of the talents within them.

So, I conclude, as I began. I thank the members of my Party - the people of around here in Wills/<sup>who</sup> have been so good to me and the Party - I thank you who are not in the party who have supported us so much. And I give you the pledge that in respect of this electorate Wills - you have now a representative in the person of the Prime Minister of the country - I will assure you, the electorate of Wills, that I won't let you down and that the Government that I have the great honour of leading, will do great things for this electorate, for this State and for this country. We are looking forward to a long period in Government to do the sorts of things that you want us to do.

Thank you.