

FOR PRESS :

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GREY BY-ELECTION

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

Grey has been regarded as a Labour stronghold. Even since the general election of 1961, many voters have been added to the roll in the industrial centres like Whyalla. In 1961, Labour had an absolute majority of 7,000 over the Liberal and D.L.P. candidates combined.

We threw ourselves into the by-election campaign, hoping to reduce the absolute majority to 3,000 - a result which would have shown considerable movement in party support. By the time the campaign finished, I found myself hoping that the absolute majority might fall to 2,000. Mr. Dyason was easily the best candidate in the field and making obvious headway.

On the voting so far, it seems clear that the Labour absolute majority will fall to under 2,000, and this in a by-election. By-elections have a long history of tending to go against the Government in power.

I notice that Mr. Calwell is whistling hard as he pretends to enjoy what he himself would call a Pyrrhic victory.

So far as the votes have been counted, the by-election has given great encouragement to the Government.

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CANBERRA,

3rd June, 1963.