



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 368

14 November, 1974

PLAGUE LOCUSTS

The Prime Minister today released the text of a letter of appreciation from the Queensland Graingrowers Association.

This follows Mr. Whitlam's announcement on Monday that the Australian Government would participate on a dollar for dollar basis in a \$720,000 scheme for locust control in Queensland.

The letter reads as follows: -

Dear Mr. Whitlam,

On behalf of the Grain Industry in Queensland I wish to express appreciation for your Government's offer of financial assistance to aid locust control in Queensland.

The control programme proposed by the Queensland Government is a most realistic plan and we feel that it is a good chance of achieving effective control over our very serious locust infestations this summer. Your Government's financial commitment to assist this plan is most welcome and will make a really constructive control effort possible.

My association looks forward to working with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries in making the best possible use of available funds.

The Central Highlands Locust Destruction Committee and the Near South West Region Locust Co-ordinating Committee have asked me to express their thanks also for the significant assistance effort by your Government.

L.V. Price,
General President,
Queensland Graingrowers Association.

Mr. Whitlam said he was pleased to have such a response from an organisation so much affected by the locust problem.

He said he was surprised that the Queensland Premier had not yet responded to the Australian Government's offer to set up an Australian Plague Locust Commission as recommended by the Australian Agricultural Council.

Mr. Whitlam said that his letter to Mr. Bjelke-Petersen on the matter had outlined proposed funding for such a Commission. The Australian Government was prepared to provide 50% and had suggested that Queensland's share of the remaining 50% should be only 2½%

Mr. Whitlam said he could not understand the Queensland Premier's delay in responding to this initiative which was clearly of great potential benefit to Queensland's grain growers.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.