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SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C. M.P.,
AT THE NEW MELBOURNE HOTEL, SOUTH BRISBANE,
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WHEN I UNDERTOOK THIS CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF PERC TUCKER AND HIS COLLEAGUES I MADE IT CLEAR THAT I WOULD BE FIGHTING THE ELECTION PRIMARILY ON STATE ISSUES. I CAME TO ENDORSE PERC TUCKER'S VIGOROUS AND COMPREHENSIVE POLICIES FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND PROMOTING ITS DEVELOPMENT. I WANT TO SEE THIS RICH, DIVERSE, EXCITING STATE MOVE FORWARD CONFIDENTLY WITH THE REST OF AUSTRALIA. I WANT TO SEE ITS RESOURCES DEVELOPED SPEEDILY AND EFFICIENTLY, ITS PRODUCTS SOLD ABROAD AT THE BEST POSSIBLE PRICES, ITS ENORMOUS AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL DEVELOPED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL ITS CITIZENS, ITS CITIES PLANNED TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE, ITS TRANSPORT SYSTEMS IMPROVED, AND ITS PEOPLE PROVIDED WITH THE BEST EDUCATION, THE BEST HEALTH SERVICES, THE BEST HOUSING AND THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING THAT A MODERN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY CAN AFFORD. IN MY CONCERN AND AFFECTION FOR QUEENSLAND, IN MY KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR STATE AND MY LONG-STANDING ASSOCIATION WITH IT, I YIELD TO NO ONE - NOT EVEN MR BJELKE-PETERSEN OR SIR GORDON CHALK.

I CAME HERE WITH NO GRUDGE AGAINST YOUR PREMIER, AND FOR ALL OUR DISAGREEMENTS, I BEAR NO LASTING ANIMOSITY TOWARDS HIS GOVERNMENT. I HAVE DONE MY BEST TO WORK WITH HIM FOR THE GOOD OF THIS STATE. IF I POINT TO FAILINGS IN HIS GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE I KNOW YOU WILL UNDERSTAND I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BUCKET QUEENSLAND OR ITS CITIZENS.

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO CONDUCT THIS CAMPAIGN WITHOUT RECRIMINATION OR BITTERNESS I WOULD GLADLY DO SO. I AM HAPPY FOR THE FACTS TO SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. TODAY I SHALL CONFINE MYSELF TO SOME SIMPLE FACTS. THEY ARE MORE ELOQUENT THAN ALL THE SLOGANS AND CATCHCRIES WE HAVE HEARD FROM THE PREMIER AND HIS SUPPORTERS.

I ASK THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND TO CONSIDER THE TRUTH ABOUT THEIR STATE, TO LOOK AT THE FACTS CALMLY AND THOUGHTFULLY, TO FACE UP TO THEIR IMPLICATIONS.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS ABOUT INFLATION AND RISING PRICES. THE FACT IS THAT IN QUEENSLAND PRICES ARE RISING FASTER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN AUSTRALIA. THAT IS NO ACCIDENT. IT CAN BE TRACED TO THE POLICIES AND ATTITUDES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT, AND I SHALL RETURN TO THAT IN A MOMENT.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT. AGAIN, THE FACT IS THAT IN QUEENSLAND UNEMPLOYMENT HAS RISEN FASTER OVER THE PAST YEAR THAN ANYWHERE ELSE BY FAR IN AUSTRALIA.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN OFFERS NO SOLUTIONS; HE CERTAINLY OFFERS NO COMFORT TO THE UNEMPLOYED. HIS SOLE REACTION IS TO DEPRIVE THEM OF STATE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND SEEK SCAPEGOATS IN CANBERRA.

AS THE LEADER OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT I ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT OF THIS COUNTRY.

I DON'T SHUFFLE OFF THAT RESPONSIBILITY ON TO MR BJELKE-PETERSEN. AT THE SAME TIME MR BJELKE-PETERSEN CANNOT SHUFFLE OFF HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES ON TO ME. HE KNOWS, AS WE ALL KNOW, THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION ARE NOW AT CRITICAL LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME EVERYWHERE, TO AN UNPRECEDENTED DEGREE, THESE TWO PROBLEMS ARE OCCURRING SIMULTANEOUSLY. MY OWN GOVERNMENT HAS USED EVERY WEAPON AT ITS DISPOSAL, EVERY CONSTITUTIONAL POWER IT POSSESSES, IN THE BATTLE AGAINST INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. WE WILL NOT LET UP IN THAT BATTLE. THE FURTHER ECONOMIC MEASURES I ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK IN PARLIAMENT WILL BOOST BUSINESS CONFIDENCE, SAFEGUARD JOBS AND LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR CO-OPERATION AND RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH INFLATIONARY PRESSURES. WHAT HAS MR BJELKE-PETERSEN DONE? HE HAS DONE NOTHING. HE CAMPAIGNED AGAINST OUR REFERENDUM TO SEEK GREATER POWERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION. HE REFUSES TO USE THE POWERS HE ALREADY POSSESSES.

LOOK AT THE CONTRAST WITH OTHER STATES. IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WHERE THERE IS A LABOR GOVERNMENT, THE STATE HAS USED ITS POWERS EFFECTIVELY TO CHECK THE LAND PRICE SPIRAL. THIS IS SOMETHING EVERY STATE CAN DO. IF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT CO-OPERATED WITH US IN SETTING UP A LAND COMMISSION, AS THE THREE LIBERAL STATES ARE DOING, WE COULD REDUCE THE PRICE OF LAND FOR THE HOME BUYER. IF THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ALLOWED THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL LINE TO OPERATE BETWEEN QUEENSLAND PORTS IT COULD CUT SHIPPING FREIGHTS.

IF HE CO-OPERATED WITH OUR PLAN TO REDUCE ELECTRICITY COSTS IN QUEENSLAND WE COULD CHECK PRICE RISES OVER A VAST RANGE OF GOODS. HE REFUSES TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH OFFICIALS FROM OTHER STATES IN FORMULATING ANTI-INFLATIONARY POLICIES. THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT ANY GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO CHECK PRICES IN A WORLD-WIDE INFLATIONARY SITUATION, BUT MR BJELKE-PETERSEN - I REPEAT - DOES NOTHING.

LET ME DEAL WITH SOME PARTICULAR ISSUES.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS ABOUT TRANSPORT. THE SAD FACT IS THAT BRISBANE HAS THE WORST, THE MOST DELAPIDATED URBAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA. MY GOVERNMENT WANTS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. WE HAVE OFFERED ALMOST \$20 MILLION OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO ELECTRIFY YOUR SUBURBAN RAILWAYS AND UPGRADE BRISBANE TRANSPORT SERVICES GENERALLY. NO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS EVER MADE FREE GRANTS FOR URBAN TRANSPORT BEFORE. PERC TUCKER'S GOVERNMENT WILL WORK WITH US IN IMPLEMENTING THESE PLANS.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN'S GOVERNMENT WAITED A LONG TIME BEFORE ACCEPTING OUR PROPOSALS. AS FAR BACK AS 1957 HIS PARTY SCRAPPED THE PREVIOUS LABOR GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR ELECTRIFICATION. THEY HAVE DONE NOTHING SINCE. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF HOUSING. THE FACT IS AGAIN THAT QUEENSLAND'S RECORD IN WELFARE HOUSING IS THE WORST IN AUSTRALIA. THEY HAVE DONE LESS THAN ANYONE FOR THE PEOPLE MOST IN NEED OF HOUSING, AND EVEN LESS THAN LABOR DID IN QUEENSLAND IN ITS LAST YEAR IN OFFICE IN 1956-57. IN THAT YEAR LABOR BUILT 1900 HOUSING COMMISSION HOMES.

LAST YEAR THE BJELKE-PETERSEN GOVERNMENT BUILT 1400, YET HAD ALMOST \$12 MILLION UNSPENT IN HOUSING FUNDS FROM CANBERRA, DESPITE A 40 PER CENT INCREASE IN POPULATION SINCE LABOR WAS IN POWER.

MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS ABOUT THE MEANNESS AND WICKEDNESS OF CANBERRA. THE FACT IS THAT QUEENSLAND HAS RECEIVED MORE IN HARD CASH FROM THE PRESENT NATIONAL LABOR GOVERNMENT THAN IT HAS RECEIVED FROM ANY PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT IN HISTORY. NO AMOUNT OF HEDGING OR QUALIFICATION, NO TALK OF RESTRICTIONS OR STRINGS OR THE VALUE OF MONEY, CAN ALTER THE FACT THAT WE HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY GENEROUS. IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR OUR TOTAL PAYMENTS TO QUEENSLAND TOTALLED \$739 MILLION. NOT ONLY DOES QUEENSLAND GET MUCH, MUCH MORE THAN SHE DID FROM THE LIBERALS IN CANBERRA; SHE GETS CONSIDERABLY MORE PER HEAD OF POPULATION THAN OTHER STATES GET NOW. QUEENSLAND RECEIVED MORE THAN \$382 PER HEAD OF POPULATION IN 1973-74 COMPARED WITH \$343 PER HEAD IN AVERAGE PAYMENTS TO ALL STATES. LAST YEAR OUR GRANTS FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION WERE UP 145 PER CENT ON THE YEAR BEFORE, TERTIARY EDUCATION WAS UP 165 PER CENT, TECHNICAL EDUCATION 110 PER CENT, WELFARE HOUSING 20 PER CENT, ABORIGINAL ADVANCEMENT NEARLY 30 PER CENT. HEALTH AND WELFARE, ROADS AND URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN QUEENSLAND ARE ALL GETTING RECORD AMOUNTS FROM MY GOVERNMENT.

SO MUCH FOR THE HARSH TREATMENT OF QUEENSLAND BY THE SOCIALISTS IN CANBERRA. WHAT OF OUR ATTITUDE TO QUEENSLAND'S DEVELOPMENT? YOU HAVE SEEN HOW MR BJELKE-PETERSEN REFUSES TO CO-OPERATE WITH US IN MAKING TOWNSVILLE A REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE - ONE OF THE GREAT FUTURE CITIES OF AUSTRALIA, COMPARABLE IN SIZE AND IMPORTANCE WITH THE BEST PLANNED CITIES IN THE WORLD. I HAVE GIVEN MANY INSTANCES IN THIS CAMPAIGN OF HIS FAILURE TO CO-OPERATE WITH US IN INITIATIVES FOR THE PROGRESS AND ADVANCEMENT OF YOUR STATE. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS QUEENSLAND HAS MISSED OUT ON AT LEAST \$50 MILLION IN FUNDS FROM MY GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF THE ATTITUDE OF THE PREMIER. THAT IS THE COST OF MR BJELKE-PETERSEN'S OBSTINACY. THE FACT IS - AGAIN UNPALATABLE - THAT NO STATE IS MORE IN NEED OF BALANCED DEVELOPMENT THAN QUEENSLAND. THE DRIFT FROM COUNTRY TOWNS TO THE CITIES IN THIS STATE HAS REACHED A RATE UNPARALLELED IN QUEENSLAND'S HISTORY. MR BJELKE-PETERSEN REGARDS THIS TREND AS LESS IMPORTANT THAN HIS DISLIKE OF THE ELECTED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT.

FINALLY, MR BJELKE-PETERSEN TALKS OF THE THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN THIS STATE FROM MY GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA. IN ONE REMARKABLE PHRASE HE TRIED TO PERSUADE YOU THAT THIS ELECTION WILL DETERMINE WHETHER QUEENSLAND "CONTINUES TO EXIST". WHAT IS THE REAL THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN QUEENSLAND? THE RIGGING OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN THIS STATE IS NOT A THREAT BUT A FACT OF LIFE. YOU KNOW THE STORY. IT IS A SHAMEFUL ONE. LABOR WON MORE VOTES IN THE 1972 ELECTIONS THAN THE LIBERALS AND THE COUNTRY PARTY BUT WON FEWER SEATS THAN EITHER OF THEM. A PREMIER WHO HOLDS OFFICE WITH 19 PER CENT OF THE VOTE IS HARDLY QUALIFIED TO LECTURE ABOUT THREATS TO DEMOCRACY.

MY GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MUCH FOR QUEENSLAND AND HAS OFFERED TO DO MUCH MORE. WITHOUT CO-OPERATION FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT WE CANNOT ACHIEVE OUR GOALS FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE. I HAVE SHOWN YOU THAT THE PROBLEMS YOU FACE ARE IN MANY CASES WORSE THAN THEY ARE IN THE REST OF AUSTRALIA, AND THAT YOUR DIFFICULTIES ARE INCREASED BY THE NEGLECT, THE COMPLACENCY, THE PIG-HEADEDNESS OF YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT WHOSE ATTITUDES ARE REJECTED BY EVERY OTHER STATE GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA - INCLUDING THE LIBERAL STATES OF NEW SOUTH WALES, VICTORIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT THAT CLINGS TO OFFICE BY A FLAGRANTLY UNDEMOCRATIC VOTING SYSTEM.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT THAT WANTONLY FORFEITS \$50 MILLION FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT WHOSE RECORD IN MANY FIELDS IS THE WORST IN AUSTRALIA.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT THAT TOLERATES THE STEEPEST RATE OF PRICE INCREASES AND THE STEEPEST RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT OF ANY STATE.

IT IS A GOVERNMENT THAT REFUSES TO DISCUSS, TO TALK, TO NEGOTIATE, TO CO-OPERATE.

I TAKE NO PLEASURE FROM THIS SORRY RECORD. I SUSPECT THAT IT ALARMS AND DISILLUSIONS MANY OTHER AUSTRALIANS AND MANY FRIENDS OF OUR COUNTRY ABROAD. I HOPE QUEENSLANDERS WILL FACE THESE FACTS. ON 7 DECEMBER THEY HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR A CHANGE OF DIRECTION AND A CHANGE OF HEART. IT WILL BE A CLEAR CHOICE - A CHOICE BETWEEN CO-OPERATION OR CONTINUING CONFRONTATION, A CHOICE BETWEEN PROGRESS OR CONTINUING BACKWARDNESS, A CHOICE BETWEEN RATIONALITY OR DOGMATISM, A CHOICE BETWEEN GOODWILL AND GOOD SENSE OR A CONTINUATION OF ONE MAN'S HATREDS AND OBSESSIONS, A CHOICE BETWEEN MATURITY AND ENLIGHTENMENT OR THE FORCES OF EXTREMISM AND MALEVOLENCE. FOR THOSE WITH QUEENSLAND'S BEST INTERESTS AT HEART, FOR THOSE WHO RESPECT THE ENERGY AND IDEALISM OF HER PEOPLE, IT SHOULD NOT BE A DIFFICULT CHOICE TO MAKE. .