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SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,  
TO THE TASMANIAN STATE A.L.P CONFERENCE  
LAUNCESTON, 23 FEBRUARY 1975

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JUST OVER TWO WEEKS AGO WE ENDED A SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARTY IN TERRIGAL. THAT CONFERENCE REKINDLED OUR SPIRITS AND STRENGTHENED OUR DETERMINATION TO CARRY ON WITH LABOR'S PROGRAM AND PUT US BACK ON THE ROAD TO VICTORY. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT OUR OPPONENTS PREDICTED ALL SORTS OF DISUNITY AND DISSENSION IN TERRIGAL. IT WAS TO BE A CONFERENCE STEEPED IN GLOOM AND WRACKED BY CRISIS. AND OF COURSE IT WAS NOTHING OF THE SORT. AT TERRIGAL WE RALLIED OUR STRENGTH AND GATHERED OUR RESOURCES TO MEET WHATEVER CHALLENGES, WHATEVER THREATS, WHATEVER OBSTACLES MAY FACE US IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD. FOR WE CAN NO LONGER HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT OUR OPPONENTS. THE EVENTS IN THE TWO SHORT WEEKS SINCE TERRIGAL HAVE SHOWN ONCE AGAIN HOW DESPERATE AND UNSCRUPULOUS THEY ARE. THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT THE UMPIRE'S VERDICT AND THEY WILL NOT ABIDE BY THE RULES OF THE GAME.

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I TOLD THE DELEGATES AT TERRIGAL:

"WE NOW KNOW THAT OUR OPPONENTS WILL TEAR UP THE RULE BOOK AND WRITE NEW RULES WHENEVER THEY THINK IT SUITS THEM." HOW TRUE THOSE WORDS WERE SHOWN TO BE. WITHIN DAYS THE LIBERAL PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES HAD TORN ANOTHER PAGE FROM THE RULE BOOK. WE SAW THE LENGTHS TO WHICH THE LIBERALS WOULD GO TO OVERTHROW AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT, TO FRUSTRATE ITS PROGRAM, TO OBSTRUCT THE PEOPLE'S WILL. WE KNOW THIS, AND IN EVERYTHING WE DO, IN EVERYTHING WE SAY, WE MUST KEEP THIS FACT IN MIND. OUR OPPONENTS ARE OUT TO DESTROY US BY ANY MEANS THEY CAN. THE COMING YEAR WILL PUT ENORMOUS STRAINS ON OUR RESOURCES, OUR ORGANISATION, OUR LOYALTY AND OUR VIGILANCE.

THIS TASMANIAN CONFERENCE IS THE FIRST STATE CONFERENCE SINCE WE GATHERED OUR FORCES AND REDEDICATED OUR EFFORTS IN TERRIGAL. IT WILL CARRY FORWARD THE MOMENTUM AND THE GREAT SPIRIT OF RESOLVE WHICH TERRIGAL SET IN TRAIN. OUR PARTY HAS A UNIQUE STRENGTH IN TASMANIA AND A REMARKABLE HOLD ON THE CONFIDENCE OF TASMANIAN VOTERS. WE HOLD ALL FIVE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE SEATS IN THIS STATE. WE HAVE FIVE LABOR SENATORS. WE HAVE A VIGOROUS STATE LABOR GOVERNMENT. ALL THESE ARE TREMENDOUS ASSETS AND A GREAT SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE FOR THE PARTY AT THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS. WE MUST DEFEND IT RESOLUTELY. I WANT THIS CONFERENCE - FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE LABOR MOVEMENT - TO CONSOLIDATE OUR UNITY AND SAFEGUARD AND STRENGTHEN OUR DOMINANCE IN THIS STATE.

LET'S BE QUITE CLEAR WHAT OUR OPPONENTS ARE TRYING TO DO. THEY WANT TO DRAG THIS COUNTRY BACK - BACK TO THE STAGNATION AND COMPLACENCY THAT WE BROUGHT TO AN END AFTER 23 YEARS OF CONSERVATIVE RULE. THEY WANT TO MAKE AUSTRALIA SAFE FOR THE FANATICS, THE STATES RIGHTERS, THE REACTIONARIES, THE VESTED INTERESTS, THE OVERSEAS COMPANIES WHO HAD IT SO GOOD FOR SO LONG. THEY WANT TO TEAR DOWN OUR PLANS FOR BETTER SCHOOLS, OUR PLANS FOR CHILDREN, MIGRANTS, WIDOWS, MOTHERS, ABORIGINES OUR PLANS FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE, FOR NATIONAL COMPENSATION, FOR DECENT CITIES WITH DECENT TRANSPORT. THE CLOSER THESE GOALS COME TO FRUITION THE MORE DESPERATE THEY ARE TO DESTROY THEM. THE NEARER WE GET TO MEDIBANK OR A PROPER LEGAL AID SERVICE, OR AN EFFECTIVE PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY, THE MORE FRANTIC AND RUTHLESS ARE THEIR METHODS. ANY TACTICS WILL DO - FROM OBSTRUCTION IN THE SENATE TO OBSTRUCTION IN THE COURTS.

OF COURSE THEY ARE COY ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD DO THEMSELVES. ONLY LAST WEEK, IN AN UNGUARDED MOMENT, MR. SNEDDEN LET SLIP ONE OF THE LIBERALS' LESS ATTRACTIVE PROMISES - THE RESTORATION OF FEES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION AND A CUTBACK IN STUDENT ALLOWANCES. THAT'S THE SORT OF LIBERAL ECONOMY MEASURE THE YOUTH OF AUSTRALIA COULD EXPECT. BUT THE LIBERAL AXE WOULD FALL MUCH WIDER THAN THAT. IT WOULD CHOP RUTHLESSLY INTO THE CONSUMPTION AND LIVING STANDARDS OF THE POOR AND UNORGANISED. WE KNOW WHO WOULD PAY THE PRICE FOR THE RESTORATION OF SO-CALLED LIBERAL 'PROSPERITY' - EVERY WAGE EARNER, EVERY EMPLOYEE, EVERY PENSIONER, EVERY WORKING MAN AND HIS FAMILY.

HERE IN TASMANIA YOU HAVE HAD VIVID EVIDENCE IN RECENT WEEKS OF THE CONTEMPT WITH WHICH OUR OPPONENTS TREAT THIS STATE. TASMANIA HAS BECOME THE LATEST COCKPIT FOR COALITION SQUABBLES AND PERSONAL FEUDS. THE HATRED AND BITTERNESS AMONG THE FORCES OF THE RIGHT IS NEVER SO EVIDENT AS WHEN THEY FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES. FIRST WE HAD SENATOR TOWNLEY SHEDDING HIS THREADBARE MANTLE OF INDEPENDENCE AND EMERGING IN HIS OLD LIBERAL COLOURS. FOR THIS, IT SEEMS, HE WILL BE REWARDED WITH FIRST PLACE ON THE NEXT LIBERAL SENATE TICKET. I CAN ONLY SAY THAT HE HAS MANAGED TO CONCEAL HIS INDEPENDENCE VERY WELL IN RECENT MONTHS.

THEN WE HAD THE CELEBRATED VISIT BY BJELKE-PETERSEN TO TASMANIA IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESUSCITATE THE NATIONAL PARTY. HE AND MR ANTHONY MADE IT A TWO-MAN CRUSADE. THEY HAD A DUSTY RECEPTION FROM THE LIBERAL LEADER IN THIS STATE, WHO ACCUSED THE COUNTRY PARTY OF "EMPIRE-BUILDING" AND WENT ON AT LENGTH ABOUT ITS "UNSAVOURY PAST". BJELKE-PETERSEN SPENT SEVERAL DAYS IN TASMANIA PROCLAIMING THE BENEFITS HIS PARTY WOULD BRING. THEN HE RETURNED TO QUEENSLAND AND THREATENED THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT WITH REPRISALS UNLESS THEY STOPPED BUYING BEEF FROM TASMANIA. YOU WILL REMEMBER HIS WORDS ON AN INTERVIEW ON THE ABC LAST MONDAY: "JAPAN SHOULD THINK IN TERMS OF THEIR GOOD FRIENDS AND GOOD CUSTOMERS IN THIS AREA WHERE THEY BUY THESE VAST QUANTITIES OF COAL THAT IS SO VITAL TO THEM THEY SHOULD THINK OF US TO BUY THEIR MEAT, NOT NEW ZEALAND AND NOT TASMANIA. THAT IS THE MESSAGE I'M TRYING TO GET OVER TO THEM."

AND THAT'S THE BJELKE-PETERSEN MESSAGE TO TASMANIA: JAPAN SHOULDN'T BUY BEEF FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES LIKE TASMANIA AND NEW ZEALAND! I MUST SAY I WAS RELIEVED WHEN MR SNEDDEN CONDEMNED THE QUEENSLAND PREMIER IN THE SAME, BRAVE FORTHRIGHT AND PRINCIPLED FASHION THAT HE CONDEMNED THE LEWIS TACTICS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

SO THESE ARE THE MEN WHO OPPOSE US. WE ARE DEALING WITH MEN WHO WILL SCRAP THE RULES WHEN IT SUITS THEM, MEN WHO WILL CHEERFULLY THREATEN THE WHOLE BASIS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, MEN WHO CARE NOTHING FOR THE SENSITIVE CONVENTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE, MEN WHO WILL JEOPARDISE AUSTRALIA'S STANDING ABROAD FOR A QUICK POLITICAL ADVANTAGE, MEN TOO WEAK TO BRING THEIR FOLLOWERS INTO LINE OR DEFEND A COURSE OF ACTION WHICH THEY KNOW IS RIGHT.

WE HAVE HAD ANOTHER GOOD EXAMPLE OF THEIR DESPERATION IN RECENT WEEKS. THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA, CASTING OFF THE TRENDY IMAGE WHICH ONCE SERVED ITS PURPOSES, HAS MOUNTED A HIGH COURT CHALLENGE TO TWO OF OUR CURRENT PROGRAMS - THE REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN. OF COURSE THESE PROGRAMS ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THEMSELVES, AS PIONEER ATTEMPTS TO INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THEIR WELFARE. BUT THE VICTORIAN CHALLENGE, SUPPORTED BY OTHER LIBERAL STATES, DOESN'T JUST JEOPARDISE LABOR'S PROGRAMS: IT THREATENS LEGISLATION ON A RANGE OF MATTERS WHICH HAS STOOD FOR 22 YEARS OR MORE.

IT WILL JEOPARDISE SCHEMES WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY AUTHORISED BY THE PREVIOUS LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY GOVERNMENTS - GRANTS TO THE BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE, PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL RESEARCH AND CHILD CARE, PAYMENTS UNDER THE NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME, GRANTS TO THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE.

IT'S WORTH LISTING THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES WHOSE EXISTENCE OF LEGAL STANDING ARE THREATENED BY THIS CHALLENGE. THEY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN, PRE-SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION ALLOWANCES, COMMONWEALTH TECHNICAL SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS UNDER THE NEW PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE AND PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION, NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEMES, GRANTS TO COMMUNITY AGENCIES INVOLVED IN MIGRANT WELFARE, LOCAL AID FOR ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, PROTECTION OF ABORIGINAL SACRED SITES, ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES, AGED PERSONS' HOMES AND HOSTELS, SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE, HANDICAPPED CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE, HOMELESS PERSONS' ASSISTANCE, MEALS ON WHEELS, HOME NURSING SUBSIDIES, NURSING HOMES' ASSISTANCE AND MANY MORE. IN ALL, SOME 56 SEPARATE PROGRAMS OF ASSISTANCE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT COULD BE AFFECTED IF THE CHALLENGE SUCCEEDS. IN THE LONG HISTORY OF LIBERAL OBSTRUCTION, THERE COULD BE NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF FANATICISM AND BLOODYMINDEDNESS THAN A LEGAL CHALLENGE WHICH THREATENS, NOT ONLY LABOR PROGRAMS, BUT MANY OF THE THINGS THE LIBERALS STARTED THEMSELVES.

WHEN WE LOOK BACK ON THE MANY REFORMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER A LABOR GOVERNMENT, THERE IS ONE THING WE CAN LOOK TO WITH THE GREATEST PRIDE. WE HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT A MARKED SHIFT IN THE WEALTH OF THIS COUNTRY. REAL LIVING STANDARDS FOR THE WAGE-EARNER - ESPECIALLY THOSE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SCALE - HAVE BEEN RAISED AS NEVER BEFORE. THIS FACT MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE - THIS RAPID INCREASE IN THE SHARE OF GNP GOING TO WAGES AND SALARIES - IS INTOLERABLE TO OUR OPPONENTS. IN OUR FIRST TWO YEARS IN OFFICE AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS INCREASED BY 40% - AGAINST AN INCREASE IN THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX OF 30%. MINIMUM AWARD RATES FOR MEN INCREASED BY 47% AND FOR WOMEN BY NO LESS THAN 70%. REAL AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS AFTER TAX HAVE GONE UP BY 7.5%.

I SHALL HAVE MORE TO SAY ABOUT THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TREND, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS LOOKED AFTER THE PEOPLE WHO NEED US. AND THERE IS ANOTHER THING; WE HAVE LOOKED AFTER THOSE WHO CAN'T SPEAK UP FOR THEMSELVES. WE KNOW THE MIDDLE CLASS AND THE LABOUR UNIONS CAN PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS BECAUSE, IN THE LAST RESORT, THEY CAN ORGANISE THEIR STRENGTHS AND ARTICULATE THEIR DEMANDS. THE ABORIGINES, THE MIGRANTS, THE WIDOWS, THE DESERTED CHILDREN, THE PENSIONERS, ARE NOT SO FORTUNATE. THEY ARE NOT SO VOCAL. THEY ARE NOT SO ORGANISED. THEY NEED A GOVERNMENT THAT WILL HEED THEIR PROBLEMS AND SAFEGUARD THEIR NEEDS. AND IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE DONE SO THAT VAST NUMBERS OF FORGOTTEN PEOPLE, NEGLECTED AND UNDERPRIVILEGED PEOPLE, HAVE HAD A BETTER DEAL;

THE LIBERALS KNOW THIS. AND THEY KNOW WHEN PEOPLE FEEL THE BENEFITS OF OUR PROGRAMS, THE REAL GAINS IN THEIR LIVING STANDARDS, ALL THE LIBERAL TALK ABOUT CENTRALISM, STATE RIGHTS AND THE CONSTITUTION WILL BE REVEALED FOR THE CLAPTRAP IT IS. YOU HEAR A LOT ABOUT LABOR ATTACKS ON THE FEDERAL SYSTEM. HERE IN TASMANIA THE SMALLEST STATE, YOU HAVE A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM, A SPECIAL CONCERN TO ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM OPERATES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE. I ASK: WHO IS MORE CONCERNED TO MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK - THOSE WHO WANT TO PRESERVE ITS MANIFEST INADEQUACIES OR THOSE WHO WORK TO IMPROVE IT? I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE FEDERAL SYSTEM CAN WORK BUT I KNOW IT WILL WORK BEST WHEN WE ESTABLISH THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN THE THREE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT - LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DOING. THE LESSON OF THE PAST DECADE - THE LESSON TO BE DRAWN FROM OUR OWN ELECTORAL SUCCESSES - IS THAT MANY OF OUR PRESSING PROBLEMS DEPEND ON A GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. I HAVE POINTED OUT THAT IN THE TWO AUSTRALIAN STATES WITH THE LARGEST POPULATIONS, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT ONLY THROUGH THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD THE PEOPLE BE PROVIDED WITH ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES LIKE HEALTH, TRANSPORT AND EDUCATION. IN THE STATES WITH THE LARGEST AREAS ONLY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD SAFEGUARD AUSTRALIAN CONTROL OF THE VAST NEW NATURAL RESOURCES DISCOVERED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS.



IN TASMANIA, WHO BUT THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD DO ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR SHIPPING AND RAILWAYS? ONLY AN AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS THE WILL, THE RESOURCES, THE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP THE A.N.L. AND THE NATIONAL RAILWAYS. ONLY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CAN RELIEVE YOUR STATE GOVERNMENT OF THE CRIPPLING COSTS OF ITS RAILWAY SERVICES. AND WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS TOWARDS THAT GOAL IN THE PAST FEW DAYS.

LABOR HAS A GOOD RECORD IN TASMANIA - A RECORD OF POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT - AND WE SHOULD MAKE SURE THE PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF IT. CERTAINLY WE HAVE A SPECIAL PROBLEM WITH UNEMPLOYMENT WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. BUT OUR MEASURES HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO TACKLE UNEMPLOYMENT NATIONALLY AS WELL AS REGIONALLY. THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE FOR TASMANIA THAN ANY GOVERNMENT BEFORE US. WE HAVE BEEN UNSTINTINGLY GENEROUS IN OUR FINANCIAL PAYMENTS. OUR GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE ASSISTANCE TO TASMANIA AMOUNTED TO \$131 MILLION IN OUR LAST BUDGET - 31.6% MORE THAN 1973-74. SPECIAL PURPOSE PAYMENTS FOR UNIVERSITIES, HOSPITALS AND THE LIKE HAVE SHOWN AN EVEN MORE SPECTACULAR RISE. THEY AMOUNTED TO \$109 MILLION IN OUR LAST BUDGET - 80% MORE THAN THE YEAR BEFORE. AND BEAR IN MIND THAT OUR PAYMENTS IN THE PREVIOUS BUDGET WERE THEMSELVES FAR IN EXCESS OF ANYTHING PROVIDED BY OUR PREDECESSORS. SO WE HAVE NOTHING TO APOLOGISE FOR IN OUR FINANCIAL TREATMENT OF TASMANIA. EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD IN THIS STATE RECEIVES AN ESTIMATED \$790 PER HEAD FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT COMPARED WITH \$466 PER HEAD FOR THE SIX STATES COMBINED.

AND THESE FIGURES TAKE NO ACCOUNT OF THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS GRANTED TO TASMANIA AT THE PREMIER'S CONFERENCE LAST FRIDAY WEEK.

THE MESSAGE WE MUST KEEP IN MIND IS THIS: WE MUST NEVER ALLOW THE THUGS AND WRECKERS IN THE OPPOSITION TO RATTLE US OR SHAKE OUR NERVE. THERE IS A CONSTANT ATTEMPT TO DO SO - IN THE MEDIA, FROM THE MORE STRIDENT VESTED INTERESTS, FROM THEIR SUPPORTERS IN PARLIAMENT. I KNOW WITH OUR PROBLEMS OF INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT, AND WITH THESE CONSTANT THREATS OF AN ELECTION, WE CAN EASILY LOSE HEART. BUT THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT ALONE WITH INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. THEY KNOW THAT ALL THE WORLD'S MIXED ECONOMIES, ALL THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES, ALL OUR TRADING PARTNERS ARE SHARING THE SAME EXPERIENCE. MANY OF THEM ARE MUCH WORSE OFF THAN WE ARE. INDEED, ON MY RECENT VISIT TO EUROPE I CONCLUDED THAT AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMY IS BASICALLY MUCH SOUNDER THAN THOSE OF MOST OF THE COUNTRIES I VISITED. NO SENSIBLE PERSON, IN AUSTRALIA OR ABROAD, IMAGINES FOR A MOMENT THAT UNEMPLOYMENT OR INFLATION WOULD BE ANY BETTER IN AUSTRALIA TODAY UNDER A SNEDDEN-ANTHONY GOVERNMENT. THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE WORSE. MR ANTHONY WOULD SEE THAT PETROL PRICES WERE A GOOD DEAL HIGHER FOR A START. MANY OF OUR MEASURES TO RELIEVE UNEMPLOYMENT AND RESTRAIN PRICES - THE P.J.T., THE R.E.D.S. SCHEME, WAGE INDEXATION - WOULD BE SCRAPPED OUT OF HAND.

THERE IS GOOD REASON TO HOPE THAT OUR ECONOMIC CONDITIONS WILL SOON BEGIN TO IMPROVE. IN SAYING THIS I DON'T WANT TO RAISE UNDUE HOPES OR GENERATE COMPLACENCY. WE LIVE IN TIMES OF RAPID AND SOMETIMES UNPREDICTABLE CHANGE, BUT I AM CONFIDENT THAT OUR RECENT ECONOMIC MEASURES WILL SHORTLY SHOW THEIR EFFECTS. LATER THIS YEAR WE CAN EXPECT SOME MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN THE LABOUR MARKET. THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US AND OUR PARTY SUPPORTERS TO BEAR IN MIND IS THAT THIS IMPROVEMENT CAN ONLY BE SUSTAINED IF WAGE-EARNERS EXERCISE RESPONSIBILITY IN THEIR PAY CLAIMS. I KNOW THERE ARE SECTIONS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT WHO ARE RELUCTANT TO FACE THIS FACT. THEY ARE QUITE OBSTINATE IN IGNORING IT. I SHALL NOT MINCE WORDS. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD WAGE GAINS IN THE YEAR AHEAD LIKE THOSE IN THE YEAR JUST PAST. I DON'T TAKE ANY PLEASURE IN POINTING THIS OUT. I STATE IT AS A FACT. WAGE EARNERS HAVE MADE UNPRECEDENTED GAINS IN THE PAST YEAR. IF WE WANT TO PRESERVE THE REAL VALUE OF THOSE GAINS, IF WE WANT TO BUILD ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS WE HAVE MADE TOGETHER, IF WE WANT TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR FURTHER GAINS IN FUTURE YEARS, WE CANNOT PUSH THE SYSTEM TOO FAR TOO FAST. IF WE OVERLOAD OUR DEMANDS AT PRESENT WE RUN THE RISK OF CANCELLING OUT OUR GAINS. WE WILL CERTAINLY POSE A THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S SURVIVAL WHENEVER THE NEXT ELECTION COMES.

DON'T FORGET THAT OUR TAX CUTS ARE MAKING IT MUCH EASIER FOR THE WORKING MAN AND GIVING THE GREATEST BENEFIT TO WAGE EARNERS WHO NEED IT MOST. OUR OPPONENTS HAVE BEEN IN A LATHER OF INDIGNATION ABOUT SOME OF THE LURKS AND CONCESSIONS WE HAVE CUT. TAKE OUR REDUCTION IN EDUCATION EXPENSES. A DEDUCTION OF \$400 BENEFITS A MINORITY OF PEOPLE WHO LEAST NEED HELP. ALWAYS WITH SUCH CONCESSIONS THE MAN ON THE HIGHEST INCOME RECEIVES THE GREATEST BENEFIT. I SUPPOSE THAT OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM I WOULD HAVE THE HIGHEST SALARY. I COULD AFFORD TO SPEND MORE ON MY CHILDREN'S EDUCATION THAN ANYONE ELSE. WOULD ANYONE CONSIDER IT JUST AND PROPER ON THAT ACCOUNT THAT I SHOULD ALSO GET THE GREATEST BENEFIT IN TAX CONCESSIONS FROM MY EDUCATION EXPENSES?

TASMANIA HAS HAD AMPLE PROOF OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN FOR ITS PEOPLE. WE HAVE GIVEN SPECIAL HELP TO TASMANIA'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND MADE SPECIAL EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TRANSPORT LINKS WITH THE MAINLAND. OUR RESPONSE TO THE TASMAN BRIDGE DISASTER WAS PROMPT, EFFICIENT AND GENEROUS. THE OBJECT OF ALL OUR REFORMS, ALL OUR PROGRAMS, IS TO ENSURE THAT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIANS TO LEAD RICH AND FULFILLING LIVES ARE MADE MORE ABUNDANT AND MORE EQUAL. IN TASMANIA YOU FACE SPECIAL PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF YOUR STATE'S SIZE AND ISOLATION. NO ONE IN TASMANIA SHOULD SUFFER ON THAT ACCOUNT. I BELIEVE YOUR CONFERENCE WILL BRING US CLOSER TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR GOALS, AND ENABLE OUR TWO LABOR GOVERNMENTS - IN HOBART AND CANBERRA - TO CO-OPERATE IN FURTHER EFFORTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE OF TASMANIA AND OUR NATION.