

QUEENSLAND BROADCAST NO. 12

ACHIEVEMENTS

SUNDAY 8 JUNE 1975

THIS WEEK WE CONCLUDED A BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. WE'VE SAT FOR 432 HOURS SO FAR THIS YEAR - THAT'S JUST THREE TIMES THE SITTING HOURS OF THE QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY THIS YEAR. SO I THOUGHT TONIGHT I'D TELL YOU SOMETHING OF WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN THAT PERIOD. YOU HEAR AND READ SO MUCH IN THE MEDIA THESE DAYS ABOUT CRISES AND SPLITS AND PROBLEMS IN CANBERRA - MOST OF IT PRETTY FANCIFUL AND HIGHLY COLOURED STUFF - THAT IT'S EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF THE SURE, STEADY PROGRESS YOUR GOVERNMENT IS MAKING TOWARDS A BETTER AND FAIRER AUSTRALIA. FOR ALL THE DISTRACTIONS AND DIVERSIONS WE HAVE FACED IN PARLIAMENT AND OUTSIDE, FOR ALL THE PROPAGANDA OF OUR OPPONENTS, FOR ALL THE OBSTRUCTION OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS, AND VESTED INTERESTS, FOR ALL THE DENIGRATION OF THE PRESS, THIS HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF GREAT AND POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. I ASK YOU TO KEEP THOSE ACHIEVEMENTS IN MIND, TO KEEP THE RECORD IN PERSPECTIVE, TO REFLECT ON THE BASIC STRENGTH AND PROSPERITY OF THE NATION, THE UNDERLYING STRENGTH OF THE ECONOMY, THE REAL GAINS WE ARE MAKING IN SOCIAL REFORM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND IN THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE.

WE BEGAN THE YEAR IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE DARWIN CYCLONE - THE GREATEST NATURAL DISASTER AUSTRALIA HAS KNOWN. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY A SECOND CALAMITY IN HOBART INVOLVING APPALLING SOCIAL DISRUPTION AND LOSS OF LIFE. THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THESE CALAMITIES WAS PROMPT AND GENEROUS. IN PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY I PAID TRIBUTE TO THE NATURAL DISASTERS ORGANISATION FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE DARWIN CRISIS, AND TO THE DARWIN PEOPLE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR FORTITUDE AND UNDAUNTED SPIRIT. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT THE GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY ESTABLISHED A DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION COMMISSION AND ENTRUSTED IT WITH THE MASSIVE TASK OF REBUILDING THE CITY. WE AGREED TO ESTABLISH A JOINT TASMAN BRIDGE RESTORATION COMMISSION. WE HAVE COMMITTED MORE THAN \$58 MILLION TO THE DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND AN INITIAL GRANT OF \$6 MILLION FOR HOBART.

I DON'T NEED TO TELL YOU THAT IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY, DISASTERS OF THIS KIND PLACE UNPRECEDENTED DEMANDS ON THE NATION'S MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES. AS IN ALL OTHER COMPARABLE COUNTRIES, OUR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE STILL WITH US. STILL, WE CAN TAKE HEART FROM THE SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT ALREADY APPARENT IN THE ECONOMY. OF COURSE IT'S NO TIME FOR COMPLACENCY; THERE IS STILL A NEED FOR STEADY JUDGMENT AND A CALM, RATIONAL APPROACH TO OUR DIFFICULTIES. BUT THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS UNDERWAY. CONSUMER CONFIDENCE, REFLECTED IN RISING RETAIL SALES AND HIGHER DISPOSABLE INCOMES, HAS SHOWN SIGNIFICANT GAINS. PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE BASIC AREAS OF THE ECONOMY IS RISING. UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUES TO FALL.

THE IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES HAVE PUT MONEY IN THE POCKETS OF AUSTRALIANS. ORDINARY PEOPLE ARE MORE PROSPEROUS TODAY THAN THEY HAVE EVER BEEN. WHENEVER YOU HEAR CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES REMEMBER THIS: THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER OFF - BETTER OFF IN THE MONEY THEY HAVE TO SPEND, BETTER OFF IN THEIR REAL INCOMES, BETTER OFF IN THE RANGE OF SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO THEM FROM THIS GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMS. SINCE DECEMBER 1972 INCOMES OF WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS HAVE GORWN MUCH FASTER THAN THE COST OF LIVING.

AVERAGE MINIMUM WEEKLY AWARD RATES FOR MEN HAVE INCREASED BY 53 PERCENT; FOR WOMEN BY NO LESS THAN 75 PERCENT. REAL AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS AFTER TAX FOR ALL WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS HAVE INCREASED BY 7.3 PERCENT SINCE THIS GOVERNMENT CAME TO OFFICE. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE TACKLED THE GREAT AND DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF WAGE INDEXATION. IN ITS HISTORIC JUDGMENT FIVE WEEKS AGO THE CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION COMMISSION ACCEPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE FOR A RESTORATION OF QUARTERLY COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS. WITH REASON AND GOODWILL WE CAN MAKE INDEXATION WORK - WORK TO SAFEGUARD REAL INCOMES, WORK TO CURB INFLATION.

WE HAVE SEEN THIS YEAR A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS BROUGHT TO FRUITION. WE HAVE SEEN THE CREATION OF MEDIBANK, A GREAT PIONEERING REFORM WHICH THE RELUCTANT STATES HAVE BEEN DRIVEN TO ACCEPT, BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY WILL BENEFIT FROM IT, AND ABOVE ALL THAT THE PEOPLE WILL BENEFIT. WHAT A LESSON OUR OPPONENTS HAVE LEARNED FROM MEDIBANK! AFTER ALL THE OBSTRUCTION IN THE PARLIAMENT, AFTER ALL THE ATTEMPTS TO DELAY THE MEDIBANK BILLS, THE ANTI-LABOR STATES ARE NOW SEEKING TO JOIN THE SCHEME, AND IF THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS CAN BE BELIEVED, EVEN TAKING SOME OF THE CREDIT FOR IT.

ONE OF THE THEMES OF ALL OUR REFORMS HAS BEEN TO ASSERT THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPETITION - FREE AND FAIR COMPETITION IN A MIXED ECONOMY, PRODUCTIVE COMPETITION BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISE. WE HAVE SEEN THE BENEFITS OF SUCH COMPETITION IN THE AIRLINES AND THE BANKS. WE SHALL EXTEND IT TO OTHER FIELDS. WE HAVE PASSED LEGISLATION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO ESTABLISH AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INSURANCE CORPORATION. IT WILL PROVIDE THE WIDEST POSSIBLE COVER FOR HOMES AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE PREMIUMS AND OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF INSURANCE SERVICES. WE HAVE DEVELOPED AND EXTENDED OUR LEGAL AID SERVICE - AND THIS WEEK WE INTRODUCED LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH THE SERVICE IN PERMANENT FORM. SIX REGIONAL OFFICES OF THE AUSTRALIAN LEGAL AID OFFICE HAVE BEEN OPENED THIS YEAR AND MORE THAN 60,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HELPED. WE HAVE SET UP AN AUSTRALIAN HOUSING CORPORATION TO TAKE ACTION IN AREAS WHERE THE EXISTING HOUSING SYSTEM IS UNABLE TO MEET EXISTING HOUSING NEEDS; ALREADY THIS YEAR WE HAVE FUNDED THE CONSTRUCTION BY STATE HOUSING AUTHORITIES OF 13,580 HOMES FOR LOW-INCOME EARNERS - 5,000 MORE THAN WERE BUILT LAST FINANCIAL YEAR. THEN AGAIN, WE'VE PASSED LEGISLATION - IT WENT THROUGH PARLIAMENT ON WEDNESDAY, BUT I DOUBT IF IT GOT MUCH PROMINENCE IN THE MEDIA - WE'VE PASSED LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A CHILDREN'S COMMISSION, A BODY TO ADMINISTER A WHOLE RANGE OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, INCLUDING PRE-SCHOOL, DAY CARE AND HOLIDAY SERVICES.

SOME 165,000 CHILDREN HAVE ALREADY BEEN CATERED FOR UNDER THIS PROGRAM. SO THESE AREN'T JUST PIPEDREAMS - THEY ARE LIVING, WORKING PROJECTS, ALREADY HELPING AUSTRALIANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

ANOTHER AREA OF OUTSTANDING PROGRESS THIS YEAR HAS BEEN RAILWAYS. MORE THAN ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS, MY GOVERNMENT HAS RECOGNISED THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL APPROACH TO RAILWAYS. WE ARE BUILDING THE NEW LINES NEEDED TO LINK EVERY MAINLAND CAPITAL, AS WELL AS ALICE SPRINGS, TO THE STANDARD GAUGE. WE HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND TASMANIA TO TAKE OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR RAILWAYS. WE HAVE CREATED THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS TO BRING THESE TRANSFERRED STATE RAILWAYS AND THE OLD COMMONWEALTH RAILWAYS TOGETHER INTO A SINGLE SYSTEM, EQUIPPED WITH THE VERY LATEST ROLLING STOCK. AND TO HELP THE STATES IMPROVE THEIR OWN RAILWAYS, WE ARE LEASING TO THEM BRAND-NEW WAGONS AND OTHER VEHICLES. ALL THIS WILL HELP DEVELOP A TRULY MODERN, EFFICIENT, NATIONAL RAIL SYSTEM.

THE OPPOSITION LIKE TO TELL YOU THAT THEY ARE BEHAVING MORE RESPONSIBLY THESE DAYS THAN WHEN MR SNEDDEN WAS THEIR LEADER. CERTAINLY THEY HAVE BEEN LESS ROWDY AND DISORDERLY IN THE CHAMBER. BUT BEHIND THEIR FACADE OF RESPONSIBILITY THE OLD CAMPAIGN OF OBSTRUCTION HAS CONTINUED. LISTEN TO ALL THE THINGS THEY'VE CONTINUED TO BLOCK IN THE SENATE - OUR BILL TO MODERNISE AND SIMPLIFY THE ELECTORAL LAWS, OUR BILLS TO ABOLISH APPEALS TO THE PRIVY COUNCIL, TO ESTABLISH A SUPERIOR COURT OF AUSTRALIA, TO DEAL WITH LURKS AND MALPRACTICE IN THE SECURITIES INDUSTRY, TO ESTABLISH A GOVERNMENT PURCHASING COMMISSION, TO PROVIDE SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS FOR THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. AND OF COURSE, THE CAMPAIGN OF OBSTRUCTION HAS BEEN PURSUED BEYOND THIS PARLIAMENT, IN THE COURTS AND IN THE STATES.

I LEAVE YOU TO JUDGE THE OPPOSITION TACTICS FOR YOURSELVES. THEY WON'T DETER US FROM OUR GOALS. THE PAST SIX MONTHS HAVE SHOWN WHAT A DETERMINED GOVERNMENT CAN ACHIEVE IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING OBSTRUCTION. THIS WEEK, WITH THE CHANGES I HAVE MADE IN OUR MINISTERIAL TEAM, I BELIEVE WE HAVE AN EVEN STRONGER GOVERNMENT - A GOVERNMENT THAT WILL GET ON WITH THE JOB THE PEOPLE ELECTED US TO DO. DESPITE OUR DIFFICULTIES IN THE SENATE, DESPITE THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH WHICH EVERY NATION HAS TO CONTEND, WE HAVE BROUGHT NEW AND PERMANENT REFORMS TO THE STATUTE BOOKS; WE HAVE ENHANCED AUSTRALIA'S STANDING IN THE WORLD; WE HAVE PRODUCED A SOCIETY WHICH HAS NEVER ENJOYED GREAT INDIVIDUAL PROSPERITY, GREATER OPPORTUNITIES, GREATER PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE.
