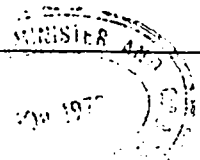




PRIME MINISTER



FOR MEDIA

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ELECTORATE TALK

The recent change of government in South Australia has set the stage for that State to join with the rest of Australia in the surge of investment we are now enjoying. For too long South Australia was the poor cousin. For too long South Australia languished behind her fellow States in investment, and thus in job opportunities.

A century ago South Australia was a major mining State. Today, that State contributes only about three per cent of the nation's mineral production. Much of the blame for that can be laid solely at the door of the former State Labor government. South Australia suffered a decade of Labor stagnation.

South Australia now has the opportunity to be a great State again. It can be, and it will be. South Australia - indeed Australia - needs every cent of investment we can get, every bit of development, every new job.

Look at the way Labor cast a shadow over the development of the great Roxby Downs project. The meaningless gesture of banning the mining of uranium in South Australia achieved nothing more than denying Australians jobs.

Immediately following the South Australian election, we moved quickly under our foreign investment policy to allow detailed exploration of the project. The way is now clear for the Western Mining Corporation to press ahead confidently with the development of this massive project for the benefit of Australia. Jobs will be created.

Let us now look for a moment at the potential of Roxby Downs. The Western Mining Corporation is looking at a capital investment exceeding \$1,000 million in what could become the greatest mining project our nation has seen. In fact, with its known reserves of copper, gold and uranium it could become one of the world's great mines. It would provide between 2,000 to 3,000 jobs in the construction stages. When developed, we would see the employment of 5,000 on a permanent basis. Add to this the multiplier effect of such a huge project. With the infrastructure involved - the spin-off - the total number of new jobs would be many more thousands.

What a boost for our nation that would be.

It is not fanciful to compare Roxby Downs with Mt. Isa - a flourishing mining town of 28,000 people, serving the dynamic port of Townsville, now one of our great growth centres.

All those jobs, all that development, simply wouldn't happen under Labor. A Labor government in Canberra would turn back the clock to the days when development stopped dead in its tracks. Instead of welcoming development of Roxby Downs, instead of welcoming the opportunities, instead of welcoming the jobs, what does Labor do today?

Ironically, they chose Adelaide, capital city of South Australia, as the venue for their supreme policy-making conference which showed them up for all time as the anti-development, anti-investment and anti-job party of Australia.

They said they would have a resource tax. This would kill off profits and stifle enterprise and initiative. It would be a disastrous policy -- Mr Whitlam all over again.

In Adelaide, the Labor Party decided that if in government it would refuse export approval of Australian uranium, other than uranium mined under existing contracts from Mary Kathleen "until all the unresolved problems of the nuclear industry have been satisfactorily attended to".

As the Opposition's spokesman on Minerals and Energy, Mr Keating, said this week: "Companies that invest in uranium mining in Australia do so in the face of that policy". What Mr Keating is saying is that Labor would kill-off Roxby Downs, it would ban uranium exports. It would renege on existing contracts.

Australia's credibility as a reliable and stable world trader would be shot to ribbons. We would never again be trusted around any of the trade-negotiating tables of the world. But on top of that, Labor's anti-development policies would deny Australians jobs. They would destroy jobs.

They did it before, and their policies haven't changed. They haven't learned the lesson of history. They are the discredited Whitlam policies, dressed up under the so-called cloak of Hayden moderation.

Under our policies, Roxby Downs is just one of the many exciting projects in the pipeline for the 1980's. We are poised to make the '80s one of the most rewarding decades in Australia's history. We will see Australia become one of the important middle-ranking powers in the world.

It won't just happen by accident. It will happen because we have the right government policies; because our people have the determination and the skills; because the rest of the world has confidence in us.

We can all look forward to the future of our nation with great and growing confidence.