



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, KIRRIBILLI HOUSE, SYDNEY
3 DECEMBER 1989

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: How are you Sir?

PM: I'm very very well indeed thank you. I'd obviously like to take this first opportunity of extending my sincere congratulations to Wayne Goss and his team there for their historic victory in restoring Labor to government in Queensland for the first time in 32 years. They ran a magnificent campaign which Wayne Goss led with singular success. He was able, properly, to persuade the people of Queensland that that election was about restoring integrity to government in Queensland, to provide what Queenslanders increasingly wanted to achieve - the elimination of corruption and its replacement by clean and efficient government. And what Queenslanders saw was that the only way that could be done was by Goss and Labor. The alternative was a continuation of the coalition of inefficient and corrupt forces which have darkened Queensland politics for more than a generation. I look forward to working in close cooperation with an outstanding leader and a new, good, clean, efficient government in Queensland.

JOURNALIST: Some Queenslanders are saying they now know how the East Berliners must feel.

PM: I saw the analogies that were drawn. That may be overdrawing the situation. But there is no doubt that there has been a darkness in politics in Queensland. We've seen the dark side of politics and it's come from the conservative forces. I think it's not just for Queensland but I think for all of us in Australia it's going to be a lifting of a dark veil in that very very important part of Australia, because Queensland is a very very important part of Australia despite the attempts by some of the conservative leaders to try and give an impression that they're not part of Australia.

JOURNALIST: Do you think it will do much for Labor Party morale around Australia.

PM: I think a simple question - would you rather from the Labor Party point of view see us win up there or lose? Answer simple - you'd rather win. I don't want to overdraw the situation because we've said that the issues were State issues and they predominantly were. The only respect in which people may project the election of the campaign and the result in Queensland in some sense federally is on the question of the unity of purpose of the competing parties and of leadership. Up there you had a united Labor Party and you had bickering, incompatible conservatives. That situation that characterised the Queensland election is true of the federal picture.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, do you believe you can take any credit for Labor's win ..?

PM: No, not essentially. The overall picture in Queensland in the election was State issues. I said that from the beginning. I'm not going to be a hypocrite afterwards and having said that they were State issues turn around and say 'no, heap the praise on me'.

JOURNALIST: Do you think it will lead to recriminations within the federal coalition?

PM: I think at the end of this last week in federal politics they had so much that they had to worry about, a leader who simply doesn't understand his own policies, understands no economics, is incapable of handling a press conference and responding to any questions which have any economic implications at all. That's set in train its own set of problems. But added to that you will have some difficulties created by the Queensland result because the intensity of the hatreds in Queensland between the Liberals and Nationals were perhaps best indicated by that ferocious attack that Innes made on Sir Robert Sparkes of the National Party in his last speech there at the end of last week. They hate John Moore. That's heartily reciprocated. So that must have some federal implications.

JOURNALIST: Is it going to mean anything in terms of federal elections?

PM: No. I repeat the point I made that this was essentially about Queensland issues. As I say, I'm not going to be hypocritical and switch around and say now this is for us. But clearly in the post-election situation it has advantages for us in that to have a decent, clean, efficient administration up there which is concerned about issues rather than political point scoring means that we're going to be able to have a much more effective cooperation between the Federal and State Government. Now that must be an advantage for the people of Queensland and then in a sense that must be an advantage for us politically. But most importantly that advantage comes to us because the people are going to be better off.

JOURNALIST: Do you expect a positive spin-off in a federal election?

PM: I would think it's much better to be campaigning in the State up there with a friendly, cooperative State Labor government than the alternative, yes. It means that the base will be stronger and there will be a greater sense of purpose I think and of positive thinking on the part of the whole Labor organisation up there. It must in that sense be a plus.

JOURNALIST: It's been stated that the National Party lost in Queensland because it wasn't listening to its electorate on issues that concerned the electorate. The same thing has been said about the Federal Labor Government, that it is not listening to the electorate with respect to interest rates and other economic-related -

PM: Well it's totally wrong. I can assure you I'm listening very much to the electorate and I'm talking very much to the electorate. I'll just make the simple point again, which I think is increasingly being understood, that Hawke is an intelligent Prime Minister, hasn't got interest rates up there because he's a masochist wanting to hurt himself or a sadist wanting to hurt the people. I will have interest rates down as soon as I responsibly can do it. But we have had to have them up there, high, to try and level off the tempo of economic activity so that we can get a sustainable level of imports. I think increasingly people are coming to understand that. Also it's important to say that we are now starting to see some signs which give us the confidence that we will be able to do that. But I repeat, we won't be doing it a day earlier than is economically responsible. Nor will they be kept on a day longer than is necessary.

JOURNALIST: Any idea when we'll be going to a federal election as yet?

PM: I have some idea but I didn't think that this beautiful Sunday morning on the steps of Kirribilli was the time to announce it.

JOURNALIST: Do you think last night's result will have any bearing on when that election is called?

PM: No.

ends