



**CONSERVATIVE**

PRIME MINISTER

This is the line  
that the Chairman  
will be taking

JMW

19th October, 1990

**EASTBOURNE BY-ELECTION - LINE TO TAKE**

1. This is a very disappointing result.
2. There were a series of factors which can explain this:
  - a) Ian Gow had a strong personal vote, he always ran ahead of the Party;
  - b) The Labour vote had clearly been squeezed. Now down to 5 per cent. Many Labour voters must have voted Liberal Democrat. This is not good news for Labour, who once polled 20 per cent in Eastbourne. They cannot claim that they are making steady progress across the country as a whole.
3. The turnout was well down on the General Election and some 10,000 fewer people voted at the by-election than in the last General Election. Many of these were likely to have been Conservative.

**THE RIGHT HON. KENNETH BAKER MP  
CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY**



4. There is an element of a protest vote in the result which one would expect in the third year of a parliament. The comparison is Ryedale in the summer of '86 which had a Conservative majority of 17,500 which converted to a Liberal once of 5,000. We won it back in the '87 Election.
5. There was a exit poll done at the count where people were asked how they would vote at a General Election in Eastbourne, and the result was 50 per cent Tory, Liberal Democrats 29 per cent, Labour 12 per cent. This emphasises the element of protest vote in the result. This is a seat we must and will win back.
6. Although this was a disappointing result for us, it was a triumph for democracy. The IRA wanted to subvert our public life and we showed by having a contested by-election that the normal democratic process continues. That is a triumph for democracy and not for the bullet and the bomb.
7. The parrot has twitched!!