

6:30 p.m.
(Brisbane Time)

TRANSCRIPT OF CHANNEL O INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER
BRISBANE, NOVEMBER 22, 1974

INTERVIEWER: Sir, the big, burning issue in Queensland at the moment is Mr. Crean, which was announced yesterday. Can I ask you a few questions. When did you take the decision to relocate Mr. Crean?

PRIME MINISTER Oh, about three or four weeks ago.

INTERVIEWER Why did the public not know about it till yesterday?

PRIME MINISTER For two reasons. Dr. Cairns was away a week ago and a week before that and when he got back the Governor-General was away until yesterday.

INTERVIEWER Dr. Cairns was reported as saying he would not accept the position as Treasurer. What changed his mind?

PRIME MINISTER He was referring to just after he was elected Deputy Leader of the Party, Deputy Prime Minister, last June. At that time of course, I asked him if he'd like it, and he wasn't anxious at that time.

INTERVIEWER Do you think he'll make a better Treasurer though, than Mr. Crean?

PRIME MINISTER I appoint people to the jobs that I think they can do best. Quite obviously, in my view, Dr. Cairns is the man best able to be Treasurer. Now that's obvious, surely.

INTERVIEWER Well, there seems to be a considerable difference of opinion about that in Caucus.

PRIME MINISTER No, there isn't .. it's my job to allocate portfolios, and I would have thought that was a very obvious question to ask.

INTERVIEWER Do you take complete responsibility?

PRIME MINISTER Of course I do.

INTERVIEWER What happens if Caucus now, and the ACTU ...

PRIME MINISTER It won't. It's none of the business of the ACTU and the Caucus, of course, operates under very well established rules where it is the Prime Minister's job to allocate portfolios. I've done my job according to well-known, well established rules.

INTERVIEWER It seems to me, Sir, that there are two main criticisms. One, that this has taken an awfully long time...

PRIME MINISTER I've given you reasons.

INTERVIEWER And that was the only reason?

PRIME MINISTER Exactly.

INTERVIEWER Was Mr. Crean aware ...

PRIME MINISTER I couldn't finalise this matter while Dr. Cairns was away, and then after he was back the Governor-General was away for two or three days. The Governor-General came back to Canberra yesterday about midday. I saw him in the afternoon.

INTERVIEWER Was Mr. Crean himself aware of this three weeks ago?

PRIME MINISTER Yes.

INTERVIEWER And he went along with it, at that time?

PRIME MINISTER You've read the announcement.

INTERVIEWER It says here that Mr. Crean, in the Financial Review today ...

PRIME MINISTER Well, look, I'm not going to comment on other people's interpretations. If you don't mind, I will not do it.

INTERVIEWER It says he was dismissed..

PRIME MINISTER I will not discuss other people's interpretations. You can ask for my interpretation. I've given it to you.

INTERVIEWER But at this point in time/^{if}you get a very strong criticism coming forward from the ACTU....

PRIME MINISTER There will not be. You're asking me to speculate. There hasn't been. There will not be.

INTERVIEWER There are a number of reports of criticisms ..

PRIME MINISTER They are not accurate reports, obviously.

INTERVIEWER Well Sir, thank you very much.