



**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR PRESS

24 APRIL 1978

The Prime Minister announced today that on the recommendation of the Government His Excellency the Governor-General had appointed Mr Justice McGregor to conduct a judicial inquiry into allegations made about the Minister for Finance, the Honourable Eric Robinson, M.P. in connection with the last electoral redistribution in Queensland.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

"To inquire into and report upon whether any breach of a law of the Commonwealth or any impropriety occurred in the course of the redistribution in 1977 of the State of Queensland into Electoral Divisions for the election of Members of the House of Representatives, including the change of the name of a proposed Division from "Gold Coast" to "McPherson", by reason of -

- (a) anything said or action taken by or on behalf of the Honourable Eric Robinson,
- (b) any action taken by the Distribution Commissioners or any of them as a result of anything said or action taken by or on behalf of the Honourable Eric Robinson, or
- (c) any communication by the Distribution Commissioners to the Honourable Eric Robinson."

The Prime Minister said that the Government had taken this course upon receipt of a report by the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General additional to their joint opinion which was incorporated in Hansard on 10 April. The terms of this joint report are attached.

The Prime Minister also released today a copy of a letter he had received from Mr Robinson.

The Prime Minister said that Mr Justice McGregor would be asked to report as soon as possible and until his report is received, Mr Howard would be Acting Minister for Finance and carry out Mr Robinson's ministerial responsibilities.

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ATTORNEY-GENERAL  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

23 April 1978

Prime Minister,

Electoral Redistribution of Queensland

We refer to your request for an interim report herein.

We have considered the material which appears in Hansard and certain further matter sent to us by the Honourable the Minister for Finance.

We have written to and received a letter from the Member for Fadden who has neither yet made available to us the Statutory Declaration incorporated into Hansard nor any further declarations.

We have also been recently informed of the existence of further evidence which bears upon our previous report to you.

It is our view that further investigation is required. The investigation would need to establish the correctness of conflicting allegations and is therefore of a nature we are unable to undertake. Whilst it is our view that the form any investigation should assume is a matter for the Government to determine, we consider that a judicial inquiry would be preferable.

Yours sincerely,

Attorney-General

Solicitor-General

The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, C.H., M.P.,  
Prime Minister,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA . . . . A.C.T.



MINISTER FOR FINANCE

PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

24 APR 1978

The Rt Hon J.M. Fraser CH MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

My dear Prime Minister

I refer to the accusations that have been made against me by the Member for Fadden in respect of the 1977 Electoral Redistribution in Queensland.

The personal explanation by the Member for Fadden on 7 April and my statement to the House on 10 April 1978 have canvassed the issues which broadly are:

- generally, that I allegedly, directly or indirectly sought to influence the decisions of the Electoral Commissioners in the proper discharge of their duties under the Electoral Act; and
- specifically, that I allegedly so acted to my own advantage and to the detriment of others including the Member for Fadden.

I know now that statements to this effect by Mr Cameron at the Declaration of the Poll for the Seat of Fadden were made by innuendoes against me and that following certain other events my knowledge was affirmed in discussions held in your Office in January 1978 and referred to in Mr Cameron's speech to the House on 7 April 1978.

I gave to you on that occasion in January 1978 and subsequently by my press statement of 7 April and to the Parliament by my statement of 10 April 1978 my personal assurance which I now reiterate that I deny without equivocation the general and specific import of these allegations.

It is not necessary for me to repeat the specific terms of those denials. I should only mention that when they were made I was conscious of the fact that at all times I was and remain an elected Member of the House of Representatives and a Minister of State in the position of the utmost good faith.

A stain has been set upon my integrity. I continue to be incredulous that, having given the assurances mentioned above, I should be seen to be in the position where I must justify or prove my innocence.

I am anxious that these allegations concerning me and involving others should be disposed of as soon as possible.

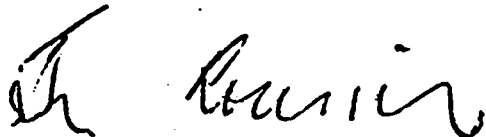
Since the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General have indicated that they cannot resolve this matter and advised that further investigation is required, I repeat to you the assurance that I initiated and gave the Acting Prime Minister in Sydney on 21 April 1978 that I willingly agree to any enquiry which may be found to be desirable in order to dispose of the matter speedily.

I am, and have been conscious of the standards of propriety and good faith required of me as a Minister of the Commonwealth.

Being secure in the knowledge that these allegations are without foundation, I do not see the mere raising of the allegations in any way renders me less fitted to undertake the duties of my office.

If however it is determined that a formal enquiry be embarked upon and if it is your wish, I will seek Ministerial leave during the period of any such enquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Eric L. Robinson'.

Eric L. Robinson