

INTERVIEW WITH LAURIE POWER

Question: Did you know about the Senator Withers' thing on January 17?

Prime Minister: ...statement about this at the appropriate time in Parliament. The Report will be tabled and I have had very deliberate reasons for not speaking about these particular matters once they were first raised in the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission was in progress and once the Royal Commission wasn't in progress we've been waiting for the Royal Commission to report. I felt that the appropriate and proper place for me to say anything is in the Parliament when I table the Report, and I will be. It will be a very plain statement.

Question: Do you expect to be able to placate the Senators this afternoon?

Prime Minister; Oh, I think we will have a good discussion. I hope it will be a relaxed discussion. I can understand, I think anyone can understand, people being concerned about these particular matters. I certainly know all Ministers were vastly concerned, but against the background of that Report, the Government believed it had no option but to accept it. It was a Royal Commission the Government had itself commissioned to inquire into matters that the Government believed serious enough to warrant a Royal Commission's report and Ministers in examining the Report believed that there was no basis of rejection of the Commission's findings. Those who argue that the Report ought to be rejected I can only say to them, read the Report and also look at the evidence.

Question: Have you lost any support as a result of it?

Prime Minister: I would think that outside there is a very widespread understanding that the right course has been aken by the Government. I really do and I think the reaction from that is very plain.