

## ETHNIC MEDIA CONFERENCE, SYDNEY.

Prime Minister:

...matters that are current and of interest to you. But quite apart from your own particular concerns, I would be very happy to try and answer questions on any general matters that you want to put to me. I think one of the things that has been of concern to my Government over the last three years is the adequacy of communication and consultation with different groups and people within Australia and that obviously includes the ethnic communities. I think that that consultation is very important for a Government to have an adequate understanding and awareness of the concerns, of the interests, of the problems of people in different parts of Australia and coming from different groups within Australia. One of the things that we have sought to do in recent times as you know, is to provide much improved services, post-arrival services, for people who have come to Australia. We commissioned the Galbally Inquiry and after very extensive consultation with community groups right around the Commonwealth they made their report and the Commonwealth has adopted that report in total. The general implementation of the report's recommendations I think is proceeding in a satisfactory way and we will be continuing to press on with that. We have established a particular machinery within the Commonwealth itself to make sure that the programmes are implemented as quickly, expeditiously, as we would want. In some areas the process of consultation that we believe to be necessary has to an extent delayed implementation of one or two elements of the programme. But by and large, I think that it is going very well indeed. For example, over the next few months, as a result of the report, there will be two multi-cultural resource centres established; one in Liverpool and one in Wollongong. They ought to improve the services to these areas and I would hope stimulate further efforts to self-help within those particular communities. We envisage that the centres will enable community involvement and also immediate coverage of their purpose and of their establishment will encourage people from those communities to make use of those resource centres. I don't think at the outset I would like to say any more. I imagine we will cover a wide range of topics as a result of whatever questions you might put to me. I do believe, as I am sure you do, that you have a very particular responsibility to the communities that you seek to serve and the responsibility to represent the interests of your readers, I hope also, as you would believe, to help your own readers to understand the decisions of Government especially where they are related such matters as the Galbally Report and its recommendations - which is meant to advance the interests of many people within ethnic communities.

.../2

Question:

As Secretary for the last 25 years of the Association of Foreign Language newspapers I would like to start the ball rolling and to thank you for the fact that at long last, after about five, six years of - you could say - frustration, we have the opportunity to personally speak with you as the Head of the present Government. For the last four or five years there has been little or no contact between the foreign language press and the Government. The previous Federal (inaudible) by the Coalition Government had established, first under the late Sir Richard Boyer, an immigration publicity council which contained nominated members of the various ethnic medias and Australian media - of all media - which met four times a year with the Minister for Immigration, the Head of the Department of Immigration and some of his responsible officers. When the Labor Government came in this was abolished and has never been re-established since. That has created a complete lack of communication between the foreign language press and the Government. During the last five-six years the Association has written numerous letters to the Minister for Immigration, the Minister for Post and Telecommunications and as you may recollect, in despair at the end, to you personally -- trying to get a personal talk about our problems. Now, at long last, we are in a position, thanks to you, to have an open-hearted talk about it; because during the last five-six years the foreign language press, which has started the communication between the Australian Government and the ethnic communities, has been treated, I wouldn't say (inaudible) but certainly as the black sheep of the family, of the unwanted child. I have here, you can have a look at this whenever it suits you, photocopies of all the correspondence during the last five years between the Association and the Minister for Immigration, there is also one letter addressed to you and you replied to it, and nothing has come of that. The Minister for Immigration never had time to see us, even though we put some very great pressure to bear upon him at the end of last year when there was a special meeting, not only of members of the Association, but of all foreign language newspaper editors here and a special petition, a special resolution was sent to him stressing again the great problems and what we may expect from the Federal Government so that we can continue the work we are doing. The main points in it were - I will give you the file so you can have a look at the correspondence - the main items were: (inaudible) re-establishment of regular contact between the Government and the ethnic press; also support in the way of sufficient Government advertising which has been promised, unofficially, and which has come in a haphazard way now and then. For the last 25 years we have tried to get the special concession rate postage for the foreign language press as another way of indirect assistance and that has always been rebuffed with the idea the post office loses all that, so much, on publications - registered publications. Let that be. If there can be millions put into ethnic radio and ethnic television, would it be such a sacrifice to buy a special concession rate, considering the educative purpose and task of the foreign language press, to lose \$20,000-\$30,000 extra on that? The other point, of course, was what we stressed, that if money is made available for the foreign language press in the way of advertising, it is used in

Question: (continued)

an indiscriminate way. Lots of that money is frittered away onto small (inaudible) magazines - little society magazines - and all that kind of thing. We have insisted in previous letters to the Minister for Immigration, which you will find in your pile too, that that should be thoroughly scrutinised so that the money which is available for advertising in the foreign language press goes to bona fide papers. Well you may ask who is going to be the judge. There again, there is no longer a Commonwealth Publicity Migration Advisory Council. There cannot be a judge but certain civil servants of the Department who do not know very much about it, only our names. So the re-establishment of it, the Commonwealth Publicity Advisory Council, with nominated representatives from the various media, not people picked in a haphazard way, willy-nilly, from various groups by the Minister either -- I won't say social-climbers but people who like to hear their own voice. The matter of the ethnic radio and the future of ethnic television, which has been in the news so much and is going to cost the Federal Government millions of dollars, has now developed into a kind of (inaudible)... they are now grabbing in the fields of the foreign language press in that respect that they become unjustified competition in the way of advertising, by announcing social functions from clubs and societies which previously used to be advertised in the foreign language press, even though (inaudible), and this is for most of the ethnic radio programmes, as making obituary announcement, which used to be advertised, and all these kinds of things. This of course, is not in my opinion the task of radio stations but that is not the point. The various European countries, when radio and television started to take part of the income away from the press, a certain slice of what was spent on that was given to the press during a period of years as a kind of compensation and either the ethnic radios stop from giving free advertising or a certain slice of the money spent on them should be spent, as a compensation, on the foreign language press. These are only a very few points. Mr. Prime Minister I have been fighting in the front line of this foreign language press interest for the last 27-28 years and this maybe my swan song, because I am getting a bit old and a bit tired of it. The frustration that we had to go through in the past five-six years has taken a lot out of us because when we write letters like the ones you have there in front of you and there is no reply and there is a flat refusal to come and discuss it with us, well you can understand how the frustration works on us and how the problem costs us years of our lives - which is neither here nor there. We want to be constructive. We want (inaudible) in which a Government can help us financially by a concessional postage rate for which we have been fighting for 25 years and always been put off in an officious way when we are losing already so much money. On the other hand, millions are spent on other things like ethnic radio. Also, a fair deal of Government advertising channelled into the right channels, in the bona fide newspapers and not frittered away in any way. And if, after fighting for 27 years, something can be achieved by this talk with you, well I can put my head to rest in a couple of years (inaud).

Prime Minister:

Thank you for that question. It's my understanding that the Minister, Mr. MacKellar, does make himself available very frequently for discussions with different people, including the ethnic press. I've said at the outset that I have wanted to have meetings with you more frequently than I have in the past, but this isn't the first ethnic press conference that I have had in Sydney, although I think there are more people here than there have been on other occasions. It is not the first by any means and I recognise some familiar faces amongst you.

You raise two problems: the question of postage of ethnic newspapers is not one that it would be easy to confine merely to ethnic press. It really wouldn't. I live in a country part of Australia where, when I first became a Member of Parliament, there were about 14 local newspapers. Now they were small regional newspapers servicing a small country town, small country community - maybe a slightly larger town like Warrnambool or Hamilton, one's 20,000 people the other's 10,000 people. I have had many more representations from them about postage and newspapers than I think you might have made to the Commonwealth in your interests. But the interest and the concern is the same. We've sought to see that changes in postage rates hasn't worked too much against the interests of ethnic press, or small regional newspapers, because we recognise the importance of the papers and recognise that they have a responsibility to serve their own communities or their own regions. I will talk with Tony Staley, the Minister for Post and Telecommunications, about the present position and see what is planned for the future and I will have a look at the position with him. But it is a long-standing position, as you made plain. It doesn't only concern you, it concerns a number of other newspaper proprietors - not the great national dailies but the small local country, or regional newspapers.

The point on advertising is an important one and over a period of six or seven years the sums the Commonwealth spends on advertising quite directly in the ethnic press has gone from I think about \$5,000 a year to about \$250,000 a year. Now you might say that it ought to be much more than that but we recognise the importance of advertising and making sure that Government programmes are understood and to assist you in servicing your own people. Again, I will have a look at future plans for advertising in that area. We have made considerable strides in recent times in quite directly increasing the sums available for advertising in ethnic media. That policy will be continued.

The question of competition between ethnic press and ethnic radio isn't one that I had put to me before. I can see that it has its sensitivities and maybe has its difficulties. I think there was a need, is a need, to encourage ethnic radio and later ethnic television. I can understand your concerns in relation to that and let me say I will talk to both Tony Staley and Michael MacKellar on that particular point.

.../5

Question: ("Unification" - Russian)

Diplomatic and non-diplomatic staff, representatives from the Soviet Union are travelling freely in Australia, completely without any (inaudible). They are visiting centres like Geelong, in Victoria, Newcastle in NSW and other places, and they are communicating constantly with ... (inaudible) of the Soviet... in Australia. My question is, do our Australian representatives, diplomatic, trade, etc., have the same degree of freedom of movement and communication in the USSR and if not, why not? Second question is: Soviet publications of all sorts, and films, are distributed in Australia at very low prices. In fact, it would amount to the dumping of Soviet publication on the Australian market and this is done also without any restrictions whatsoever. The question is; do our Australian publishing and film companies have the same unrestricted access to the market ... in the USSR and if not, why not? Would you not sir agree, that if the answers to the above questions are in the negative, that this situation is in direct contravention of the Helsinki Agreement to which our Government, you sir, are in direct support. The third questions concerns the defence and I am referring to the recent statement of the President of RSL in NSW, (inaudible), who expressed concern for the safety of this country, which is certain when the Soviet (inaudible)... military aggression and revolution. They also called on your Government to increase defence spending and look into the possibility of creating an Australian nuclear deterrent force. Do you agree with Sir Colin's assessment of the situation and if yes, what practical steps may be taken by the Government in this direction?

Prime Minister:

No, our diplomats and officials don't move as freely around the Soviet Union, by any means, as theirs do around Australia and our publications don't get free issue in the Soviet Union as theirs do in Australia. The reason for both these things I think is a very simple one. Australia is a free and it is an open society and we believe that that is one of our great strengths. The Soviet Union is not a free society. It is not an open society. To that extent it is a fearful society. We are not going to change Soviet leaders in these particular matters overnight. With their present philosophy, maybe not at all. But because they do that I don't think is any reason for Australia to move away from its principles of freedom. We know what Soviet officials are, we know what they can do. We know the contacts they try to make. But at the same time I have a great confidence in all Australians, wherever they come from and how ever long they have been here, that they will be able to judge matters in their own right. If we sought to inhibit the movement of Soviet officials, or prevent the publication of Soviet magazines and whatever in Australia, I think we would only be exhibiting a fear and a concern of their influence which would be totally unjustified. As a free people, in these issues, it is not we who have something to fear, it is the Soviet Union in a sense. It is in defiance of the Helsinki Accords. I don't know who ever thought the Helsinki Accords would ever be put fully into effect. They are an ideal, but it indicates the kind of exchange that seems very difficult to achieve in relation to the Soviet, Communism, Eastern Bloc countries. I think we need to live and hope for the day that it will come because it will be

Prime Minister: (continued)

a better world and hopefully a safer and more peaceful one if there is wider communication amongst peoples.

I did see those statements about defence. I don't say I entirely agree with them. We do spend significant sums on defence each year and in spite of some of the recent publicity, we are spending, each year in our budgets, we have been giving a real increase in expenditure to the defence forces. In one of our predecessor's years they spent something under 6 percent of the defence vote on new capital equipment, for example. Now we've that up to something approaching 15 percent. We think it is not high enough but it is important that Australian forces be as well equipped as possible with the best possible most modern equipment. Therefore, we want to increase further the proportion of the defence vote spent on equipment. That does mean, to maximise that objective, that we have had to squeeze if you like, some current activities. The defence forces are tremendous consumers in current terms, in terms of their activities. A large military exercise is a very expensive thing to mount. Some current activities have been made more restrained with the objective of getting a larger total vote going into capital equipment. I think that is a sensible course to take under present circumstances. I think you will also know that, because I've said this publicly before, that quite recently I ordered a new analysis of Australia's strategic position having in mind the changes in Afghanistan, in Iran, in Indochina and having in mind Soviet activities in the horn of Africa. We have also taken decisions which will involve the defence vote growing at a slightly faster rate than was envisaged at the time of the last Budget. We are conscious of these concerns. I don't believe Australia opting for a nuclear option would really make Australia safer, not at the present time. In that area we need to understand the major international objectives of non-proliferation. If more and more countries come to possess nuclear weapons the chances of somebody unfortunately or irrationally or unreasonably putting their hands on a nuclear trigger at the wrong time would be increased. I am not in favour of that. We have our alliances, as you know. We have confidence in those alliances and we work in close and harmonious relationship with our near neighbours in Southeast Asia and not only with the United States across the Pacific, but with Japan and China. All in all, I think the direction of Australia's foreign and defence policy is a sensible one and a constructive one. I recognise the concerns that you express and anyone would need to when you have one of the major superpowers spending 12 percent of its gross national product on defence purposes year after year after year. That is a cause for concern.

Question:

(inaudible)

Prime Minister:

No, 14 percent of its gross national product, or 12% to 14%. That's about as much as Germany was in 1938 so in a sense that puts it into perspective. We are not the only country to express concern. I did first on behalf of the Government in June 1976 but the concerns I then expressed have been repeated many times by the Liberal, Conservative, or Socialist countries of

Prime Minister : (continued)

Western Europe - the NATO countries. They have expressed the same concerns at the Soviet military build-up which would seem to be out of all proportion to the self-defence needs of the Soviet Union.

Question: (Ethnic Newsweek)

I don't know whether we are member of the ethnic press or the foreign language press. Our magazine is an English language magazine but it specialises in ethnic affairs. Since the invitation is for ethnic press, we decided to come. My question relates to the area of participation. In the Galbally Report it is very strongly recommended that ethnic, or people of ethnic origin, basically be given the opportunity to serve in the areas of ethnic affairs. Would the Government consider seriously, in the future, that participation is of so much importance to this nation that the areas of ethnic affairs, and for that matter other areas, that migrants, people of non-English speaking backgrounds, be considered in the policy making areas whether it be Government, or semi-Government institution and so on.

Prime Minister:

I think we already seek to do this and if there are deficiencies in the present procedures I would certainly like to have your views about that. The Galbally Report itself was a result of very extensive communication, consultation, with ethnic communities. The fact that the Report was born out of that consultation and that it has been accepted by Government, I think has been widely welcomed by those communities and indeed where one or two programmes under the Galbally general programme are not quite up to scratch - the original timetable - its as much as anything because of the nature and extent of consultation that its been necessary, not only with ethnic communities but also sometimes with State Governments and with other groups who are involved in the delivery of services. Continuing consultation is a very important part of that programme. There are ethnic community councils being established in the States and in other areas - the Northern Territory and right around Australia. There is the National Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Committee - NEBAC - and State ethnic broadcasting advisory committees. What we are seeking to do is to establish a wide network of communication and consultation and that will be a continuing policy. If there are particular areas where you think there has been not adequate communication, not necessarily but afterwards or whatever you like, I would like to hear that. I recently announced that the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs is going to be assisted in terms of general communication by members of Parliament coming from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and whatever, and their purpose is a very direct liaison one between the Minister and ethnic communities and most of the members of existing consultative bodies -- ethnic advisory councils and the other bodies I mentioned; are people themselves who have ethnic backgrounds. The Migrant Settlement Councils in the State and the Settlement Committees at hostels will help communication again, at that level. Again, on those bodies, our purpose is to have as many people as possible with ethnic backgrounds and two-way flow of information is very essential.

Prime Minister: (continued)

If there are areas where the network of communication is proving to be inadequate, I would certainly like to hear about it and I am sure the Minister would.

Question:

I will, if you don't mind, later on send you a letter, because my question would be much longer than that, to draw your attention to probably some of the areas I mentioned.

Prime Minister:

I would welcome that very much and this is one of the purposes of this kind of press conference, so that if you think there are deficiencies in communication or in the nature of programmes I can understand what you feel about it.

Question:

I was mainly interested in the policy-making area of Government appointments in areas which relate to ethnic affairs and ethnic services.

Prime Minister:

Within the Public Service itself?

Question:

Within the Public Service itself.

Prime Minister:

I would certainly support that objective.

Question:

Within the Public Service and without.

Prime Minister:

I would certainly support that objective and I would like to see more people with an ethnic background breaking through into higher reaches of the Public Service. I have not the slightest doubt about that. This is something that I can bring to the attention of the Chairman of the Public Service Board. I think you know in our system, I wouldn't want to change it in this context, the Public Service makes its own appointments and they are subject to appeal and all the safeguards. I don't believe in a system that would lead to politically-based appointments and therefore the Government doesn't say that a particular person must be in a Public Service position. The general objective of trying to get more people with an ethnic background involved in the (inaudible) of the Public Service I think is a very good objective and one that I would want to see implemented.



Question: (Polish News)

I have just recently come back from living in England for two years, or just under two years, and its a slightly different ethnic problem in the sense that the Australians in England. There are two newspapers there, there London-Australian Magazine and the Australasian Express, which is often the only means of (inaud.) news of what is happening in Australia. I was in the lucky position that I got information from Australia so I could get (inaudible) but the journals are extremely biased and coloured in reporting the news and what is happening and what is the purpose of various Government policies - (inaud) restrictions and so on. It is not only read by Australians in London but it is read by a great majority of English people. There is such an influx of tourists. These magazines are given out free so obviously they are going to pick these journals up. They are picked up by Germans, they are picked up by the French and so on. This is a very important way of communicating matters and if people get it in a biased way, and one example I can give is that if I may so, there was a picture of yourself and it said 'What has Fraser done for Australia - turn to Page 16'. And you turn to page 16 and there is a blank column. It got me mad. Is there anything one can do or can something can happen. I am sure you get communications from Australia (inaud).

Prime Minister:

I think getting adequate news of Australia overseas is a very real problem. I think the reporting, not only in those two journals, but also in the British press generally of Australia is minimal and is often biased. When you look at the byline and find out who wrote the bit, you generally find somebody in Australia who you wouldn't (inaudible) might have written it. I don't know what you do about those two journals. I would like to know who sponsors them and funds them. It would be interesting to find out I think.

Question:

Is the Australian Government considering the relocation of the present Australian Embassy in Beirut, to Damascus, Syria. If so, have they given strong consideration to the inconvenience and hardship that this may cause some 140,000 Lebanese people, of Lebanese origin in Australia and their first and second generation families -- considering that the Syrian population is only (inaudible).

Prime Minister:

We are very much concerned with the problems that have been present in Lebanon and the difficulties that has caused and the concern that that has caused for many thousands of Lebanese who are living in Australia; concerns not only for their relatives and families but concern also for their friends in Lebanon. The circumstances haven't always been very easy in maintaining Australia's own embassies and offices opened as you know, and there have been troubles in the past. I am not aware of any present move or decision to alter the location. I will make some inquiries to see if at any other level that has been suggested. I do know that there has been concern about

Prime Minister: (continued)

the capacity of Australia's offices in Lebanon to be able to carry on their job effectively and to be able to provide the very kinds of services that you are talking about so that there can be adequate liaison and adequate servicing of people who have friends or relatives, or people who potentially might want to come to Australia, to migrate. I am afraid you will have to forgive me. I will see if I can get you any more precise detail and let you know.

Question:

Would the Prime Minister give strong consideration to consultations ...(inaudible).

Prime Minister:

Yes, certainly. That can be done. During some of the particular difficulties in Lebanon, both the Foreign Minister and Michael MacKellar, on at least one occasion, myself - I was personally involved in direct communication with leaders of the Lebanese community about their concerns. That will certainly continue.

Question:

Prime Minister:

If the plane lands I suspect it wouldn't be. The point you put would seem to be reasonable and I will take that up with Peter Nixon and get you a fuller reply in relation to it. I think the question that you put recognises the point but if the cheap fares are to be a reality and are to be maintained, that does depend upon keeping the loadings in the aircraft up. That's why we've had to reconstruct international air fares policy, to get higher loadings so that we can at the same time get cheaper fares. In the areas where agreements have already been made the policy is working well. The fares have been cut very greatly, as you know, between Britain, Germany and Yugoslavia. Fares have been cut by a third and in some areas by up to 50 percent. There are very substantial additional bookings, in tens and tens, even up to a couple of hundred thousand additional bookings as a result. We are in the process of negotiating cheaper air fares with other countries. There are negotiations proceeding at the moment with Greece, Italy, France and the Netherlands. I think the negotiations with Greece are fairly well advanced, maybe one or two problems still to be overcome. We are conscious, in particular I think, of the benefit that the lower air fares at certain times of the year can be to members of ethnic communities in Australia, again, to their friends or relatives in their country of origin. We will be pressing on with the programme with as many countries as possible. The particular point that you asked about a person being allowed to get off if the plane is stopping at a certain point, if they are prepared to pay the full fare right through from the end point to end point, it is an interesting question which I will follow up and again, I will write to you in a more detailed way about the answer.

Question:

...we heard the story about some passengers being disallowed to disembark in Damascus and they had to go to Europe because they bought cheap tickets...

Prime Minister:

Let me follow that up and I will get a more detailed answer for you.

Question: (Turkish co-ordinator, Ethnic Radio)

The matter I would like to raise with you deals with radio - ethnic radio. We have a problem. The time that is given to us, for all languages, starts from 6:00 am until midnight and there is no possible way to accomodate all languages to their satisfaction... I know that the Government has made available money and the frequency will be changed in July and we will have a higher, or more powerful, transmittor. When that thing happens the frequency will change. My suggestion, if you could consider this matter, that the present frequency which will be left when the new frequency will become available, could it be re-allocated to ethnic radio hence giving better distribution of time...

Prime Minister:

You want two ethnic radios - two frequencies?

Question:

Two frequencies. The same radio. It will not cost the Government more than, at an educated guess, roughly around \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year and I can assure you that it will not cost you more than that.

Prime Minister:

Let me take that up with Mr. Staley also.

Question:

The second matter I would like to raise with you deals with a similar problem to the previous...but not quite the same, because Damascus is served by Qantas airlines. But no city in Turkey is served by Qantas airlines, therefore the Turkish traffic would have to go via another place and whilst in the off-peak period somebody pays \$566 to go to London, at all times the minimum amount of money to be spent is \$1,140, which is two-thirds of the distance. I think that's a terrible anomaly and the only reason why Qantas will be coming to the party is because Qantas doesn't fly through Turkey.

Prime Minister:

The cheaper air fares are only possible when you get a high loading on an end point to end point so that the aircraft is being used. We need to understand also that those cheaper are only available for part of the year and then they rise depending on how busy the season is. When you haven't got a great deal of traffic to a particular location it is very difficult to provide the same sort of service. This is one of the real problems.

Question:

I have figures supplied by the Department of Transport which justify an end to end traffic to Turkey...

Prime Minister:

77 passengers?

Question:

Yes, an average of 77.

Prime Minister:

Yes, but with a 747 they want about 400 don't they?

Question:

That's not for end to end, that's stopover, and that justifies the international airlines...

Prime Minister:

Let me take that up with Mr. Nixon. I will again advise you.

(TAPE TURNED)

Question:

...Community Relations, Mr. Grassby, might be about to seek re-endorsement for his old Federal seat of Riverina. Any reaction to that?

Prime Minister:

Not really, no. Did you expect one?

Question: (Time of Lebanon)

I am President of the Australian-Lebanese National Liberal Party in Australia and in New Zealand. I have a very ... problem. The problem is my husband has...because we have here a lot of ...Australian ... and the family is here expect the one in Lebanon. He has no home, no money and you know what is happening now in Lebanon. He has come to Immigration ... (inaudible)... Immigration does not give him any form...

Prime Minister:

He wants a tourist visa, does he, to come...

Question:

Tourist...(inaudible).

Prime Minister:

Can you give me the name and address of the person.

Question:

Yes, I have a lot of names and addresses, and we have a problem with these people, really.

Prime Minister:

I thought it was one person - it's several people?

Question:

I will give you one - my brother-in-law and we ...  
...we are all here. We have houses, we have the money, we can look after him and his family. He has no house, he has no work he is a sick man...I have a problem. I cannot bring him from Lebanon.

Prime Minister:

You give me his name and address and I will look into that for you.

Question:(Australian Chinese Community Association - Kip Fong)

Recently the Community has been asking these questions regarding the (inaudible) system on selecting migrants. A lot of people in the community feel that it is rather an unfair sort of system because the method of selection - they have got to be fluent in English and so on - some of these people who came from a country in which English was not taught, so therefore would be minimising their chances of migrating to Australia although they might be qualified in other fields. Some other aspects people are looking at ... although the White Australia policy is supposed to be abolished, but it seems to be to these people now that the (inaudible) system in some sort of a way is introducing this policy again -- ...similar to the education test.

The other point the community also raises ... regarding family reunions. Some people having their families back in China, for instance, they try .. for those people to come over here and the Australian Government's attitude is this: you go and get a visa from China before we consider at this end. But over in China, the other end, they say right, you get approval from Australia before we give you an exit visa. So this sort of a ... is getting nowhere and also people are getting rather frustrated about it.

Prime Minister:

The last point is in relation to people in China?

Question:

Yes, in China.

Prime Minister:

And getting a visa from China before they get permission to come to Australia?

Question:

The Australian Government requires an exit visa from the Chinese Government before they would consider the application in Australia to ... entry permit. So the other says you show the approval from the Australian Government before we give you an exit permit. So how are we going to solve this...

Prime Minister:

Are you trying to say that you need approval from us before they will give you an exit permit?

Question:

I have seen those problems, yes.

Prime Minister:

Well let me look into that because if both Governments are saying that somebody has got to move first.

Question:

I have already raised that sort of a question with the Ambassador of China.

Prime Minister;

Let me look into that and see, because quite plainly it won't work if both Governments are saying somebody else has got to move first. So let me look into that for you. NUMAS, as you know if a new system of assessment. On all the advice available to us we were led to believe that it would be a fairer system overall and a more just system. English ability has always been given some weight in migrant selection and it continues to be a factor, but I am not aware that it is given a greater weight than it has in the past. Fluency is not required, certainly. English is the language spoken by most people here and to the extent that one can speak English you are going to be able they are going to be able to settle in and beat problems there are better. I am advised that there are some cases where the new system doesn't seem to accurately reflect the acceptability of people and there is discretion from senior officials in such cases. In a sense, there are exemptions in certain areas; for aged parents. Refugees don't have to reach the minimum pass rate to be able to come to Australia, for example. I think, quite plainly, it is a new system and we are going to have to reassess it. But you've got to know - or look at the source of migrants to Australia in recent years to know that what was called the White Australia Policy is totally and absolutely dead and that's the way it is going to remain.

Question:

The ethnic radio -- you might be aware -- they are using very often materials supplied by various consulates, or foreign affairs, the embassies, from behind the iron curtain. They are used as material which is broadcast, through the ethnic radio in various languages. That material, as you can suspect, ... disguise or just direct propoganda material - very biased. How can we ... and what can be done to stop the influence of foreign embassies or consulates .. to interfere with the activities of the ethnic radios which are run by the Government... funds.

Prime Minister:

They are run by Government funds but not run by Government because we believe that...

Question:

But...using the funds ...

Prime Minister: °

They are using the funds, but it is not the Government that determines the programmes. I think it would be a very bad thing if it was a Government that determines the programmes. To the extent that a particular community is not satisfied with the nature of the programmes in that community's language time, I would have thought then, through consultation with those responsible for ethnic radio, that they should try to seek to influence that -- through your own ways. The special broadcasting service has been created as an independent statutory body to do a job. We don't want Government day-to-day decision making. I could think of nothing worse, for example, and the Government have to resolve the very difficult question as to which communities are to get which time and how much time. Now, that's a matter that...

Question:

It is not a question of time.

Prime Minister:

I know it's not but I'm just giving an example of how I think it would be a bad thing is a Government was interfering and I think it would be a bad thing if a Government was interfering with the material that is used. ...from ethnic radio. I don't know if any of you who are from ethnic radio want to help me answer the question.

Question:

(Inaudible)...ethnic radio...serves the purposes of the community residing in Australia. It pays not attention to Governments.. no interest in relating any Government, or any consulate or embassies' information. ... The concern we have within ethnic radio is to serve the communities as they reside here. They are not divided into programmes for nationalities. There is no French programme because...there is a French language programme, or Arabic language programme - the subdivision of cultures... this is the tradition and divisions within Australia as such. There are instances...where possibly some material being issued by consulates or embassies, or cultural attachés may reach particular broadcasters who think that it is valuable material and they may decide...to use it. I would suggest, from my experience ... this is certainly not a very frequent occurrence and would suggest that any safeguards which are needed ... We agree with the principle. We agree that we are not working for any country or any government overseas. Governments change, may change, political, geographical boundaries may change -- we are concerned with the cultural definition of ethnic groups within Australia .. so any safeguards they may wish to have are welcome, but from my experience I can assure you that this is not -- I have ...

Question:

I am a member of NEBAK and this subject was brought before NEBAK on several occasions but unfortunately there was not evidence as to what was put on that was supplied by different type of governments, and unfortunately this was not ... If there are evidences, I am sure they will be taken care of.



Prime Minister:

The statement of objectives and purposes which we had from the back of room, is one that I would certainly support.

Question:

The answer to all that lies in the system; the ethnic radios... and when we ... we know that militants - they are the ones that are active on a voluntary basis. What we call moderates usually are self... and that is the whole crux of the problems. They are either militants or people who like to ... the answer is in the wholesystem when...

Question:

I am from the German newspaper and I must say that I am 28 years, nearly 29 years in Australia and I am sick and tired always to be called ethnic and foreigner ... I think we should sit together one day and work how can we do a good Australia -- not to bludge this country -- we have so many bludgers here already. \$60 million for bludging the country -- who is listening to the radio (Inaudible)...

Do we need this. We came here to live in peace and we would like to live in peace. If we could ask the community what the community says about the Australian public, we spend Australian money - not our money -- it's all our money together because we have to pay very high rates for people to get \$50 or \$60 to produce one hour, plus all the ... comes together.

Prime Minister:

I think there are many people who have come here from many places who only want to be known as Australians. But at the same time I think Australia is made a richer place and a better place if the cultural heritage that people bring with them when they come to Australia can be preserved, enhanced, and mingles in and produces something distinctively Australia. I agree with you wholeheartedly. Arguments from other lands ought to be left behind. We don't want them in Australia.

Question:

We did this for 28 years. We have our German clubs here, we have our German Saturday school, as most of the countries have their own. I am born in Rumania as a German in Rumania. ... we used to keep our culture but we used to be very good Rumanian citizens. This is what we can be - Polish, German or anything in this country. You have a lot of German people here - of German descent - people in the country. They are good people but they don't come to the country "please can we have something" because they are paying their rates.

.../18

Question:

Could I ask you a question in relation to amnesty. There has been a lot of comment in Australia, in various States, that an amnesty can be considered, or should be considered for what is called -- there are about 30,000 - 40,000 illegal migrants. These people have come out here under different circumstances and there is an argument for and against on the fact that by giving them amnesty they can start a proper new life with the possibility with more rewards in the nation's...(inaud) -- it causes the problem of having to send them back. I'm sure that the majority of migrants believe that an amnesty should be considered. Would you be able to consider -- what are your comments on that?

Prime Minister:

..Can certainly consider, but I think there are some real problems. There was an amnesty shortly after we came into office and therefore anyone who has come here - or who was here then as an illegal migrant could have come forward. Anyone who has come here since could have come here, or sought to come, under the immigration rules as they are. With unemployment as it has been in Australia, migration intake has necessarily had to be restricted. We have tried to do that in the fairest way possible, giving priority to family reunions and other matters-to people who have particular skills in short supply in Australia. For every, if you like, illegal immigrant or somebody who comes here trying to jump around the rules that have necessarily been established when you have a limitation on the overall number, it means somebody who sticks with the rules is not able to come. I think there are very real difficulties and we have a second amnesty now, in two or three years people will say, "oh, they will have a third", and this will tend to encourage illegal immigration - with people saying well, we can come out to Australia and hide around for a year or two until the next amnesty comes. It is not as simple as just having an amnesty and then you get rid of the problem. I don't think you do. It is a very difficult one in times when economic circumstances cause us to have a limitation on the overall programme.

Question:

Can I add a question. At the time when the amnesty was announced, it was claimed that there were about 50,000 illegal migrants... only 7,000 or 8,000 of them came forward and the others didn't. Would it be possible to reconsider the same amnesty with the same conditions, except with a different deadline?

Prime Minister:

So that anyone who has come since wouldn't qualify?

Question:

No.

Prime Minister:

Why would you think that people who didn't come forward then would come forward again? They've already had one chance to come forward.

Question:

The reason why I am putting this is because of the fact that I don't know what reasons they had...but since these people are here in our society and they have been here long enough, they are in hiding and they are not taking anything more than what have...wouldn't it be more humane to give them another chance to come forward. They would have qualified in 31 December 1975, so could they, and only them, be given another chance? It's not another amnesty -- it's ...

Prime Minister:

In a sense it is. It's another amnesty because it is different in time scale and if you did that people would say, why is this a restricted amnesty for some illegal immigrants and not for others. I think it, again, would be in difficulty. I don't rule this approach out completely but I do say there are difficulties and make the point that when you have a restriction on the total number that you think you can take during a period of relatively high unemployment, that breaches of the rules, or amnesties, can pose very real problems. One of the things that we seek to do in Australia is make sure the migration programme remains something which the broad general community can and does support. If a programme is too large at a time of high unemployment, it would soon be something which became divisive within the Australian community and then that would be bad. That would prejudice the interests of those who have a continuing concern for migration programmes and hopefully as economic circumstances improve, for a larger programme. I hear what you are saying, I will discuss it with Michael MacKellar but I don't want to unduly arouse hopes because I think there are difficulties.

Question:

Could I add one point to the last question...why didn't they come out at the time, why would they come out now? ...there was an enormous fear amongst these people that this was just an excuse to bring them out of hiding and then ...(inaudible). You might say it was unjustified fear because the Government has always been fair in treating them, but when people are in hiding for a long time they tend to develop a number of... for this reason a great number of those who could have and would have at the time come out, did not take the chance... ...when it was seen afterwards, the result of the fact that those ...(inaud) . This is one of the reasons why it did happen at the time and one of the reasons why it could...

Prime Minister:

I'm glad for the implied vote of confidence in our attitude to Australians in relation to that.

Question:

In the last years some publicity has been given to the so-called rift between the Maltese Government and the Australian Government. In this year, a member of Parliament, namely Mr. Allan Cadman, visited Malta in an unofficial capacity. I believe he managed to establish good contact with both sides of the Parliament in Malta. Are there any plans for the Australian Government to help Malta in its endeavour to become fully an independent nation, regarding economy, etc.

Prime Minister:

I'm not quite sure what role Australia could play in that. As I understand it one of the problems was because the Government of Malta I think expected Australia to provide a good deal of foreign aid to Malta. Now, foreign aid, as you know, has been concentrated in other areas geographically closer to Australia, and my Government didn't believe that supplying Malta with substantial foreign aid was really a foreign policy objective of the Government - the resources are limited and the needs in a number of countries closer to Australia was of more importance, largely because they come from our own region or geographic area. Now, as I understand it, this was at the basis of much of the concern of the Government of Malta with Australia. So far as I am concerned, the argument is all one way. I have no quarrel with the Government of Malta at all. For some reason they seem to have had a quarrel with us. I'm not quite sure why.

Question:

I understand, sir, that Malta was being opened to the Australian Government, as far as concerned, to use it as a base for Australian goods - for the shipment to Europe. Say, for instance, establishing factories in Malta, say, like exporting butter from here, going to the Common Market...

Prime Minister:

That that was our policy or their policy?

Question:

No - Malta's policy. One of the talks that we -- I'll let you go on.

Prime Minister:

We would certainly be very attracted if Malta could help us to get into markets in Europe.

Question:

...was there ever any, ... (inaud).

Prime Minister:

I haven't heard of that but I will certainly follow that point up.

Question: (Croatian Weekly)

You mentioned earlier that your Government has increased expenditure from \$5,000 to nearly \$1/4 million. I presume you meant for the ethnic press. My question is, what criteria is being used by the Government for its...system, in allocating advertisements to the various ethnic newspapers. As the facts can prove that some of the newspapers get quite a large amount, in number, of Government paid advertisements, where the other newspapers (inaud)...

Prime Minister:

The only criteria I would be aware of is the relevance of the programme being advertised or the substance being advertised to the community served by the newspaper.

Question:

(Inaud)...what is of interest to one community is just of the same importance to the other part of the ethnic community of Australia and therefore....

Prime Minister:

In some programmes, yes, but in other cases no. I mentioned two centres being opened - one at Liverpool and one at Woollongong. Well, advertising the opening of those centres is obviously only of relevance to the people in those communities and to the newspapers servicing them. It wouldn't be much good advertising in Melbourne about the Woollongong centre.

Question:

Yes, but in general terms - not only in local newspapers - but in general terms of the (inaudible)... irrespective of what ethnic background that particular newspaper might represent.

Prime Minister:

Most general policies would clearly be of concern to all members of ethnic communities, I agree with that. I think there would be some judgement on the numbers of people serviced by particular papers also.

Question:

...(inaudible) Vietnamese community here, being a new community to Australia and ... we need a lot of information; news and so on and instructions about people. The (Inaud) has been established to serve ... and because we are a new community and we are not... we do not have enough funds to run it. If...stops until we get more money and we can run again. Already twice I have had the opportunity to contact, to meet, Mr. MacKellar and I submitted the matter to him. This is not my own idea but this idea has been proved in America -- that such a mechanism is needed for the newcomers to this country, especially the refugees.

Question: (continued)

Twice I submit to Mr. MacKellar and so far we haven't got any ... from his Department for this new ... I would like to take this opportunity to ask you, the Prime Minister especially, to consider the policy to set up some information leaflets to us every month -- at least in the...of our settlement in Australia. If the Government is not capable of doing so, we would appreciate it if you give us some assistance financially, that you can donate continuously, not like .. now ... few months we stop, a few months we run again. (Inaud) aware that we spent so much money on the Galbally Report and you paid so much and I believe without the ethnic radio, without ethnic magazines or ethnic radio the people cannot appreciate it. So I suggest policy to help us in this matter, particularly on the information and... news...

Prime Minister:

There is a great deal of information available in the Government service. A good deal of it is put together in a form which is meant to be of service and help to the media. I will make some enquiries to try and make sure that whatever we do have available is sent to you so that you can use what you want.

Question:

We (inaud) every week the news from the ethnic affairs department. They are all in English but our difficulty is the money to buy paper, to buy ink, to run it..

Prime Minister:

You've approached Mr. MacKellar about that have you?

Question:

Twice.

Prime Minister:

How long ago?

Question:

It would be about eight months ago. I even gave to him a sample of the newspaper in America - (inaudible). In America it is published in two languages, English and Vietnamese. Somehow, until today, we have heard nothing about it, and I believe this...

Prime Minister:

Let me take that up with Mr. MacKellar and see what's happened about it.

Question: (Greek newspaper)

Thousands of people come to Australia, they have tourist visas.

Question: (continued)

You know the last trouble two weeks ago in Melbourne, the Greek people, the woman and girl married in Australia and their children born here -- (inaud).. and ... sent back. I want to ask one question: if the people come here and make ... (inaud) come Greece to here but have tourist visas - can stay here?...

Prime Minister:

If people break the rules in coming here and plainly so, I think they - especially when there is a limit to the total number of migrants who can come to Australia in any one year - they really need to understand there is a very difficult task in front of the Department if the rules are not applied because if somebody comes here on a tourist visa, or a visitor's visa, or if somebody comes here on a visa wanting to marry one girl and ends up by marrying another -- I think that's what happened in this case.-- then that means somebody who has applied through the normal channels for permanent residence doesn't get here. Is that fair to them?

Question:

The mother and father are here - they are Australian citizens.

Prime Minister:

I was talking about the parents and is it really fair to bend the rules for people who have deliberately bent the rules to get here and to try and stay here when there are others who apply, and taking some time to apply - or to get into the country - and do it in accordance with the rules. Every time we make an exception we are virtually saying somebody who wants to stick with the normal procedures and stay with it, well "sorry, you can't come, because we broke the rules for somebody else who themselves broke the rules". I think that if the rules had not been applied you would create a very considerable injustice for many other people. This creates difficulties, but the lesson out of it all is surely; look, we can understand there are rules, we can understand that there have to be limitations because of the number of people unemployed at the moment and therefore we ought to do what we can to discourage people to come here with the intent of breaking the immigration rules. Personally I would much sooner have the economic circumstances when we can say we love you all and want you all to come and stay here. But we haven't got that and if we did do that we would soon get total opposition from the trade union movement to additional migrants coming here, because they would say it is a threat to Australian jobs. We don't want that. We want to maintain the circumstances so that as the economy starts to pick up we are going to be able to build up and expand the migration programme again. When you get people breaking the rules, as that young couple did with the young baby, they are making it hard for other people, they are making it hard who stay by the guidelines. They are making it hard for the administration and I don't think they serve their own community well by really trying to put pressure on the Government or the Minister to breach the rules. I really don't.

.../24

Question:

But if the parents are here...

Prime Minister:

The parents?

Question:

Yes.

Prime Minister:

These two broke the rules. Quite plainly.

Question:

A thousand people break the rules every day coming to Australia...break the law?

Prime Minister:

Break the law? Well basically if they break the law in coming to Australia they don't stay here.

Question:

...can stay here. Thousands come...from everywhere.

Prime Minister:

That's a refugee situation and I think the judgements in a refugee situation are different. We've got a stated and public policy in relation to refugees. You do exert different standards, different rules, then. These are people who are just put out in boats, expelled from Vietnam with nowhere to go and there is an obligation on us and on other countries to try and do something there about a very real human tragedy.

Question:

The Government must ... thousands of complaints everywhere... (inaudible)...

Prime Minister:

The rules are plain and in the case you've quoted, the couple had broken the rules, very plainly. Some people say, I don't make the charge, but some people say the rules were broken deliberately. I just don't think it's fair to people who stick with the rules. If we didn't have a limit on the migration programme these matters wouldn't be so important but the rules are known and one the things that we are seeking to do is to make sure that people who come here under visitor's visas, or whatever else, know the rules before they come and know that they don't get deceived by travel agents in some other country, for example, and don't get given wrong information which can lead them into difficult when they get here. That sometimes happens also.