



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTS AT COBURG, MELBOURNE
SATURDAY 14 FEBRUARY 1987.

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Do you feel comforted that Ian Sinclair and Sir Joh haven't been able to resolve their differences at a meeting yesterday?

PM: You may have noticed I haven't been spending much time or talking about them. I am just getting on with the job of running the country which is what people want me to do. And I am leaving them to their own devices. It is quite clear that the nature of the hatreds and differences between them within the Liberal Party, within the National Party, between the National Party, between the Liberal Party, are so profound that they are not going to go away ... and I leave it to them.

JOURNALIST: Is it good news for your Government though?

PM: The good news for our Government is that we are a good government and we are going on with doing the job that the people of Australia want. We had very difficult circumstances last year. We were prepared to make the tough decisions. It got a little bit of unpopularity at the time but people are realising that that is what is required. They want stability in government and they want a government that has policies and can make decisions and that is what we are giving them.

JOURNALIST: Does it give you the chance to make more tough decisions this year?

PM: I don't make tough decisions for the sake of making them and saying 'look at my hairy chest, what a tough decision maker I am'. I take the decisions which I believe are necessary. In 1987 the economy is going to be in better shape than it was in '86. To the extent that tough decisions are necessary, I will take them.

JOURNALIST: Joh attacked the Liberal tax policy again today. What does that mean for their tax policy?

PM: What is very interesting is that Howard and Joh say that their policies are very similar. Mr Howard there is virtually no difference between my policies and Sir Joh's. And so when you realise just how inept and irrelevant Sir Joh's policies you realise that you are also making the same criticism of Mr Howard. I don't really want to spend very much time on them. They are manifestly incompetent. They are incapable of formulating policies. As I said when I got back from overseas, we have waited four years for the production of a policy and what have we got - incentivation.

JOURNALIST: Sir Joh is making clearer sounds today that he will form his own political party. Does that pose a greater threat than him as part of the coalition forces?

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, have you been able to persuade Mr Scholes to resign from the Ministry?

PM: I have got no comment about that - there are some discussions going on but that is an internal matter. I have got nothing to say publicly about that.

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