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PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
DOORSTOP, PALAIS THEATRE, MELBOURNE, 13 AUGUST 1995**

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J: Are you happy with the way the preselection process was resolved?

PM: I think that Theo Theophanous and Jenny Mikakos made a very important gesture to the Labor Party and to Martin Ferguson. I think they, in the best traditions of the Party, made a decision which they think will be good for Labor and good for the government and I certainly salute their decision and to endorse Martin Ferguson.

J: Mr Keating, how much pressure did the Federal Executive put on Mr Theophanous?

PM: The Executive hasn't met as you know and he had to make a decision about whether he ran the gauntlet of that process or not. But, for my part, I made clear my support for Martin Ferguson. He is the leader of the industrial movement in Australia and it has been somewhat of a traditional thing that the leader of the labour movement came to the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, in his case, when he thought it would be worthwhile. Bob Hawke did this. Simon Crean did it. Now, he has that opportunity. We will be stronger for having him.

J: Do you see him as a leader of the Left or as a potential leader of the Party?

PM: That is for people in the Parliamentary party to decide, but I certainly see him as a clear addition to the Caucus and, of course, representing working Australia, the millions of working men and women in this country. It could only make the Labor Party stronger and more relevant.

J: And for the people of Batman, what can they expect?

PM: I think a first class, experienced representative who already understands the process of government and will be taken into the government and into its processes.

J: Were you surprised by today's decision?

PM: Pleasantly surprised.

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