



## PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
JEAN CHRETIEN MP, DOORSTOP, PARLIAMENT HOUSE,  
15 NOVEMBER 1995**

### **E&OE PROOF COPY**

**PJK:** Can I begin by saying how delighted I am to see Jean Chretien in Australia. We have become firm friends over time now. But more than that, more than our personal relationship, what is indeed a great pleasure is to see a Canadian Prime Minister here in Australia. Pierre Trudeau came here, I think, in 1970 or there about and our relationship in the world has been so significant over time, right through this century, that our common links and much of our common culture is such that our relationship between us becomes somewhat unremarkable though, of course, the strength of it is quite remarkable. It is time, I think, on these occasions to take the opportunity to underline how much we do have in common and how much we have mattered in the world in various ways when we have acted in concert, in unity in various things, not just the conflicts but in other times.

I think, we have been two countries that have always stood up for good values, for good ideals, for good things and this is still true and I think even this CHOGM meeting where we have had a number of difficult issues, again, Canada and Australia are part of a solid majority for taking decisions that matter and doing things that mean something.

Of course, one of the things we now have in common is APEC and as Australia and Canada looks more to Asia and the Pacific, not only is it good for our trade and our growth, but it is good for the sense of unity it brings to the Asia-Pacific which has strategic implications as well as trade implications. So, we are partners in that and we were partners at Bogor and we will be partners, again, at Osaka this weekend. Again, I think, it underlines the importance of a common view about the way the world is moving and some of the big issues. That is, how East Asia develops, how we keep the resources up to it, how we participate in it. These are all important things.

So, we have had an interesting discussion around those subjects and around some of the bilateral issues. I congratulated the Prime Minister

on his role in the debate in Canada over Quebec and the maintenance of Canada as a cohesive society with an identity of its own because I can't think of another country in the world that has something like the opportunity that Australia has.

Canada is, in fact, a larger country than Australia in terms of its geography. Mostly where we go Australia is a very large or the largest country in discussions and we have a relatively small population here - 18 million - Canada, in that vast land has a relatively small population too and it is a great opportunity given to us and the importance of maximising that opportunity both at home and in the world is, I think, something we both appreciate.

At any rate, it has been a good discussion, but more importantly, some of that discussion we have already had in New Zealand and we have already done things there and we have got more things to do on the weekend. The important thing to say, for my part, how delighted I am that Jean Chretien can be with us on this occasion as a Prime Minister of such a great and friendly country and to be in Australia with Aline who we have come to know well and to like too and to introduce him to the Australian media - always a dubious introduction, but I'm sure they will be on their best behaviour.

JC: Merci beaucoup, Paul. I don't have to add, I think, it was a very good discussion. We have a lot in common, not only history and culture and vast land and so on, but we are both part of the Pacific and it is extremely important for Canada to become more and more a part of the Pacific.

In our discussion we realise that it is extremely important that APEC be a success. We have virtually the same interest and, of course, we can be for Australia a good link with North America. And Australia can be with us a good link with the people living in this part of the world. So, for Canada for example, our trade with the Pacific is bigger than our trade with the European continent by 50 per cent and we have done it in the last five years. So, the Pacific is getting more and more important for all of Canada and it is why I am happy to be able to work with the Prime Minister of Australia to make sure that the goal of 2010 and 2020 be met so there will be freer trade and free trade in this part of the world. And it is where the growth and the people are at this moment and I am sure that working together we will achieve this. On the bilateral basis since we met two years ago, the number of exchanges has increased quite substantially, we have had eight Canadian Ministers visiting Australia and about the same number of Ministers came to Canada from Australia. And, you know, investment is growing and the exchanges are growing and I think that we can be very good partners.

So, I am delighted to be here. It is my second visit, I was here 24 years ago. There are some politicians here too that I met then. I have met with the Governor-General and I had met him many years ago and

it's one politician that has been around longer than I, but he said to me 'we will be both beaten in terms of record by Paul Keating, he is still a young man.'

Any questions?

- J: *[interpreter]* Mr Prime Minister, Mr Keating has a keen interest in Australia becoming a republic. Could you tell us whether Canada has a similar kind of agenda and could you also comment on Mr Trudeau's comments that he made several years ago?
- JC: I can reply in English, okay. The Monarchy is not a problem in Canada at this moment. We have other problems to debate, so nobody is debating this problem. Of course, I have followed with some interest what Mr Keating has been debating here in terms of republics, or the possibility of having a republic. It is an interesting debate that we are following. There are some local reasons to speak about it, but for me I have other problems at this moment. That is, as I said at one time, you know I have to deal with some problems in Quebec with those who want to separate. I don't want to have the Monarchists on my back too. So, you know, one problem at a time and it is not an issue at all in Canada at this moment. As far as Mr Trudeau's comments he made, I said I will comment about it when I have read what he said. Well I can make a comment, yes. That is true that Canada is the most decentralised federation in the world, but perhaps we'd *[inaudible]*. That is all.
- J: Have you been studying in Australia how Australia deals with its secessionist movements, or how Australia has dealt with its secessionist movements - we have got them but they have just about disappeared.
- JC: You had apparently something in the 30s, that occurred in 1935.
- J: *[inaudible]*, at a low level.
- JC: Yes.
- PJK: Very low.
- JC: But it was a low level. It was pretty substantial in 1935 and you are still together. So I studied that you are still together and Canada is still together. So we are all right.
- J: Both Japan and Mexico have sent diplomatic letters expressing concern over Canada's spying activities. What assurances would you give to them?
- JC: You know I make no comment about it because it is an employee who said that something you believe, you might believe. I don't know. I am not commenting on that. So I don't know, on a daily basis, the

operation and you have to act within the law. If somebody accused them of acting outside of the law, fine.

J: What will you say to Mexico and Japan who are concerned?

JC: I don't think they will complain because, for me, I don't know if it is true or it is not true. So that is what I will tell them.

J: [inaudible] wants an inquiry. What kind of an inquiry should it be?

JC: This is the second time that somebody working for that organisation is talking and I don't know exactly .... there is mechanism for surveillance and they have to respect the law. So that is the only thing I can say.

J: Mr Keating, could you just explain for Canadian readers the benefits of becoming a republic and then, Mr Chretien, could you ever envisage Canada becoming a republic? Maybe I could put it that way.

PJK: Well, I think, Australia as an island continent with a multicultural society - which has got of course a very large derivative component from Britain and Ireland and from Europe - we have developed a culture here which is changing as post-war migration has changed it. And now, I think, in the culture of the new Australia, an identity and a sense of identity, an independence of identity has emerged here quite strongly. We live near very large and old societies which are different from us - such as Indonesia, 190 million people, the largest Muslim country in the world - and to approach them and to be a member of the community of nations in this direct part of the world, I don't think we can be there as some sort of constitutional derivative of Britain. To say that, you know, here we are the Australians of new, those with a culture they have developed here, representing the things we have done here, but by the way our Head of State is The Queen of Great Britain. It is not going to work here anymore. It has been useful in the past and we have developed a strong country here and a good culture here. But I think it is past. That we live in a group of countries which are demonstrably, by their geography and culture, Asian countries and now that we have such an opportunity in this very large and vast continent to create something of our own here. It has to be the full expression of the Australian sovereignty and Australian identity which could only really come from our Head of State being one of us.

J: Mr Chretien, do you ever see those reasons pushing Canada towards a republic?

JC: There was a special problem here a few years ago when the Governor-General decided to sack the Prime Minister, if I can use that word, and it is still a controversy because I was reading this week Mr Whitlam was commenting on that and is still not very appreciative of what happened that day. But we have the problem here of an elected Senate that we don't have in Canada. So, the institution is not creating any problem in Canada, the other state is the Queen of

England, but she is represented by a Governor-General, and we have managed to alternate between a French one, and an English one, and we have managed to be above controversy. There was a problem in the 20s - you were not there, I was not there - but...(inaudible)...was sacked more or less by the Governor of the time, and eventually there was an election and since that time the Governor-General in Canada has always acted on the advice of the Prime Minister. So, we don't have the type of problems that was caused here 20 years ago, so, as I said, there is no controversy, and no great gain, or no great losses to be seen at this moment with that problem.

J: Sir, a question about Canadian politics.

JC: Yes.

J: Would you - in Canada - retain in your Cabinet a Minister who was found by a Royal Commission to have lied?

PJK: That's a trick question.

JC: Very tricky.

PJK: It's not very tricky, really.

JC: It depends, you know - you're asking me a question that it is absolutely political, and after 32 years in Parliament, I don't answer to all political questions that are addressed to me.

PJK: I'll put it in the vernacular - it was a duffed up, tricked up Royal Commission, who brought down a dodgy finding, and it's being treated with the contempt it deserves by the Prime Minister of the day.

JC: Some nice words.

J: *(Interpreter)* Mr Prime Minister, have you - in your discussions with Mr Keating - have you reached an agreement on how to maintain Canada and Australia's position - ...(inaudible)... position - in the APEC discussions?

JC: *(interpreter)* During our discussions we have made a lot of progress on discussions with relation to Indonesia. We hope to maintain that progress through discussion, and that Australia and Canada will maintain a strong position in APEC through our mutual discussion together.

PJK: Can I just add to that, and just say that Bogor set with clarity - declared with clarity - what the objectives were. And there was a full commitment to those objectives. What Osaka is about, is laying down a plan of action for those objectives. So, this is an important

meeting to back in the Bogor Declaration. I think the fact that Jean Chretien and I were very much in support of President Soeharto's initiative and declaration - the content of the declaration at Bogor - it's important that we now round that out in Osaka, and that's why I think we see this meeting as being a significant one.

J: *(interpreter)* Mr Prime Minister, you have spoken about reform and reconciliation in Canada following the recent referendum?

JC: *(interpreter)* We have formed a Committee to examine these two aspects, and we have to work towards solutions before Christmas. This Committee will certainly look at working towards reconciliation, and correct certain assertions that were made which were false during the referendum campaign.

PJK: Maybe one last question, and then we will leave it, thanks.

J: Mr Keating, you have described 2010 and 2020 the other day as important yardsticks - is that an indication that there is some flexibility in those end dates?

PJK: No. They are end dates, and I think our position - I think I would probably speak here for Prime Minister Chretien, too - is that we don't mind flexibility within the dates, but we don't want flexibility outside the dates. And I think that has been - generally - most people's position.

JC: And it is kind of complicated because it is a long period of time - 25 years - and some countries might become quite advanced in their development, who are not at this moment, because the progress in some Pacific nations is fantastic. And from a period of 3-4 years, we have a country that could claim that it's a have-not, and suddenly become a pretty prosperous nation. So, its wide flexibility is absolutely needed.

PJK: Thank you very much.

ends.