

FOR PRESS

Statement by the Prime Minister

COMMONWEALTH SERUM LABORATORIES

On Tuesday last Dr. Cameron, the Federal Health Minister, stated that -

1. Certain overseas drug manufacturers were making "feelers" for taking over the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories.
2. No specific offers had been made.
3. The Commonwealth had not put the laboratories up for sale.
4. The Government had not yet considered the proposals.

These statements were, of course, correct. The names of the firms making the enquiries were not disclosed. It would be contrary to proper and normal practice to do so. I should add that before answering any enquiries on such a matter, Cabinet's views would need to be obtained. The reason for this is that an important question of public policy is involved; under such circumstances it is our practice to secure the views of Cabinet.

One Melbourne morning newspaper, on Wednesday last, said that the matter had already been discussed in Cabinet, and actually claimed to quote my own views. Both statements were untrue. As it happens, the item has been listed in the normal way, on a submission prepared by Dr. Cameron last week, for the next Cabinet meeting, when it will be dealt with.

I should add that the only consideration to be taken into account will be the best health interests of the Australian people.

CANBERRA.

1st February, 1960.

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