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PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER
THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES AT CANBERRA ON
FRIDAY, 5TH AUGUST, 1960, AT 10.30 A.M.

QUESTION: Any decision yet, Sir, on Australia's contribution to the Hunger Campaign - Food and Agricultural Organisation? I think you mentioned earlier in the year you would consider some contribution.

PRIME MINISTER: I cannot answer that off-hand. I have a vague idea something has happened about it, but it is not clear in my mind. I will find out.

QUESTION: Mr. Calwell has suggested a Parliamentary Committee on New Guinea, Sir - a joint committee to investigate the position there.

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, I noticed that. I thought that perhaps when he comes back and when we are in touch with each other, I might have a word with him about that just to see the shape of what he has in mind. It will need, of course, to be discussed with the Cabinet then.

QUESTION: Have you any other observations on New Guinea at the moment, Sir, that you can make?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't think so. Except that since there has been a lot of artificially created confusion about our policy with allegations of differences between my policy and Mr. Hasluck's - there being no differences whatever - he and I have in hand the preparation of a short statement of policy which we will submit to the Cabinet with the idea of making it available quite early in the forthcoming session.

QUESTION: For debate, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: I won't have any objection to it being debated. I think that will be useful. Nor will there be any novelty in the statement, because as I say there are no differences about it.

QUESTION: Will the statement by the one, Sir, in which the target dates will be set?

PRIME MINISTER: No. This will be one on the broad policy that we have in relation to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

QUESTION: There have been suggestions, Mr. Menzies, of discrimination between the natives and whites in New Guinea. Would you care to ...

PRIME MINISTER: I have seen them only in one or two sections of the newspapers, particularly in one newspaper which spares no pains to create the impression that these discriminations exist in Australia.

QUESTION: How about Mr. Clyde Cameron's activities?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I would have to rely on hearsay if I said what I would like to say about them. Get

that down accurately - that's a good sentence.

QUESTION: Do you wish to elaborate further on that ..?

PRIME MINISTER: No.

QUESTION: What sections of the Press are you referring to, seriously?

PRIME MINISTER: Oh, now, come, come. What's the next question?

QUESTION: Anything on the Congo, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No nothing more.

PRESSMAN: It looks pretty sticky.

PRIME MINISTER: Yes. Well it is a fine example of an unprepared country getting self-government.

QUESTION: Does it pose any lesson for New Guinea, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: It does not I think, have any particular bearing on that. The British colonial policy has always been somewhat different from the colonial policy of some other countries, and the whole idea has been to prepare the indigenous populations for ultimate self-government by steady stages so that they don't find themselves plunged into responsibilities that they are not trained to discharge. That is the tragedy of the Congo: this is going back to tribal warfare, very largely.

QUESTION: You said a month ago, Sir, that the Prime Ministers had decided about the question of technical economic aid for the African countries. Has that taken on any specific form?

PRIME MINISTER: Not yet.

QUESTION: Are we contemplating doing anything for the Congo?

PRIME MINISTER: The Congo is in the hands of the United Nations and I have no doubt that they are examining both the economic as well as the military aspects of it. It is a tremendous problem. Incidentally a lot of white people have been killed in the Congo, as well as many others.

QUESTION: Has Australia received any request from the United Nations to supply any troops at all for the Congo?

PRIME MINISTER: No. Unless there is some Staff Officer or somebody from some other force, but you had better ask Mr. Townley about that. But "troops" in the sense that you mean it, No.

QUESTION: Will we be sending a Minister to the General Assembly this year, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: I do not know. I have not settled the team yet. But I think that having regard to certain developments - you know certain problems that are current - it will be necessary to send a Minister.

QUESTION: Will you go yourself, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No.

QUESTION: Could you give me a lead on who will go?

PRIME MINISTER: No, I cannot.

QUESTION: Is there anything you can tell us about legislation for the coming Session, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No. You had better ask the Attorney-General about that; he can answer those questions. Or Mr. Holt - Holt would know what he is contemplating in the legislative programme. I Haven't discussed anything with him yet.

QUESTION: Mr. Menzies, assuming your Government is going to bring down a balanced budget, will many people get hurt in the process?

PRIME MINISTER: You may make no assumption whatever about the Budget except that it is not yet disclosed.

QUESTION: Is it going to be a good one, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: What's the next question? (Laughter)

QUESTION: The Constitutional Committee? What is the progress that has been made on that, Sir, since your return? Have you given any consideration to it? Has Sir Garfield?

PRIME MINISTER: We have had no Cabinet on it. He is examining it, and so am I. But I don't think you need anticipate any legislation in this Session.

QUESTION: Anything further on the restrictive trade practices and monopolies mentioned in the Governor-General's speech earlier this year, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: Well I cannot answer that off hand. I have not got around to that: we have had other matters in Cabinet. If anything is to be said about that it will no doubt be said in the course of this Session.

QUESTION: Imports are running at a level which is alarming manufacturers again, Sir. Do you think that there is any...?

PRIME MINISTER: It is to be anticipated that there will be some fall in our overseas reserves in the course of the financial year. That was contemplated at the time Import Licensing was, in substance, lifted. That is not to say that it is contemplated that that is a process which goes on indefinitely. It seemed to the Government to be clear that the first effect of raising import restrictions would be to produce a quickened demand for imports which might form a sort of hump in the import graph. But the whole policy has been based on the assumption that there will be some decline in overseas reserves.

QUESTION: You do not see anything for concern in the situation, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No. There is nothing unexpected about it.

QUESTION: Are you satisfied, Sir, with the capital inflow that occurred in the last year and this one.

PRIME MINISTER: I am, and I do not see any reason why it should not continue.

QUESTION: Is the width of that import hump, Sir, a bit wider than Cabinet may have first anticipated back in February?

PRIME MINISTER: I do not think so, no.

QUESTION: The Director of the Associated Chambers of Manufacturers suggests that Australia may be flooded with second-hand cars from the United States as a result of the removal of import restrictions. Has that been brought to your notice Mr. Menzies?

PRIME MINISTER: No. Unless there is something quite uncommon, I would not necessarily know about it. You might ask Mr. McEwen about that.

QUESTION: Sir, it has been reported from London that Britain will send a Minister to Australia to discuss the possible development of the Blue Streak Rocket as a space research vehicle. Sir, could you give us any indication of the timing of those talks or "put us in" on the Blue Streak.

PRIME MINISTER: I am at present in communication with Mr. Macmillan about it, and I think it is quite clear that he is going to send a Minister, probably with some expert people. But as to 'when' and 'what work' ought to be done in advance, well those are matters that we are discussing by communication with each other. As to who the Minister will be, I do not know, but I expect that he will be a fairly senior Minister.

QUESTION: Sir, have you reached any decision on the programme for Australian Space research put forward by the Academy of Science?

PRIME MINISTER: No, there is nothing I can say about that.

QUESTION: It was announced in the Commons, Sir, in respect of this visit that Britain was completing and would shortly send to you a technical appraisal on the prospects of space research here. Have you received it yet?

PRIME MINISTER: We have had some papers from them, but we anticipate that we will have more before we arrive at any conclusions with the visitors.

QUESTION: Sir, the Indonesian Government, through its Embassy here, has made some rather strong statements on the visit of the Dutch warships to West New Guinea. Does the Australian Government have any misgivings at all about the

presence of the Dutch warships going to West New Guinea?

PRIME MINISTER: We think the Dutch have a perfect right to send a warship there if they wish to. It would be a very strange thing if our attitude was that the Dutch were not to maintain a posture of defence in respect of West New Guinea. At the very best their forces in West New Guinea are a tiny fraction of the forces available to Indonesia. I am perfectly certain that the Dutch are not proposing to do anything provocative, nor will their warships, I am perfectly certain, enter Indonesian waters. There is no reason why the Dutch should be provocative.

QUESTION: Anything, Sir, about the visit by Dr. Soekarno?

PRIME MINISTER: No. The next move, I think, is at their end. But it does not appear to be on the cards this year.

QUESTION: Wasn't there an announcement from Djakarta, Sir, shortly before you returned that it had been cancelled?

PRIME MINISTER: That could not have been right, because it had never been made, so it could not be cancelled.

QUESTION: Let us put it this way, then, Sir: ---

PRIME MINISTER: Yes; but he had never said he would. I remember hearing about that but it was just "tosh". You do not cancel an arrangement if you have not made one. The position is that I invited him to come. I said I thought there would be advantages in it and that I thought he would find it a very useful journey - just as I had found my journey through Indonesia - and that in contact with our own Ambassador if his people could fix a convenient date for his visit, we would be delighted. Well he has not been able to.

QUESTION: That will stand for next year?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes. It is an open invitation. But that earlier story rather suggests that he, having agreed to come, has now decided not to come. Well that is quite wrong: he has not broken any arrangement, because no arrangement was made.

QUESTION: Sir, there has been some surprise expressed at the re-construction of the floor in King's Hall. Did the Cabinet authorise it?

PRIME MINISTER: This is not a Cabinet matter. Presumably the Parliamentary authorities who have a vote for repairs and maintenance arranged this. It certainly did not ever come before me or the Cabinet. But then, it would not. I suppose it will be just as slippery as the old one: we will all have to practise walking with bended knees and rubber heels. You can tell a Canberra man anywhere in the world by his gait.

QUESTION: How long do you expect Mr. Holt to be away, Sir? I think it is during the Budget Session.

PRIME MINISTER: I think probably about six weeks; but you had better ask him that.

QUESTION: Who will be acting Treasurer, then, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: I will.

QUESTION: Will you be rather loaded down, Sir, with External Affairs, too?

PRIME MINISTER: Oh, I am not without experience of these things.

QUESTION: Any indication, Sir, of how long you will maintain the Foreign Affairs portfolio.

PRIME MINISTER: No. So far I am doing rather well, I think. (Laughter)

QUESTION: Do you expect to go travelling on it, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No, thank you. Somebody else can do that.

QUESTION: Sir, it has been announced officially that the Queen and Prince Philip will be going to India next year - and the next year the Empire Games will be held in Perth. Has the West Australian Premier had any talks with you about a Royal Visit for 1962.

PRIME MINISTER: Yes.

QUESTION: Can you say what the result of it is, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No. I never make any statements about those things. I think it is fairly 'notorious' that he did have a word with me about it.

QUESTION: Is there anything more we can say, or advance anything further, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: No, you just engage in your usual guess work.

PRESSMAN: Oh! No! I never do that, Sir.

PRIME MINISTER: He is under new management: he has given up guessing.

QUESTION: Could you say whether a visit is actually being arranged.

PRIME MINISTER: I cannot say anything about it.

QUESTION: When do you think you will be in a position to say something, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: I do not know.

QUESTION: Can we take it that you have not wiped the suggestion, Sir?

PRIME MINISTER: You can take nothing. You cannot get a headline out of this.