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NAVY DISASTER

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

My colleague, the Minister for the Navy, is making a statement about the sinking of the "VOYAGER" and the great loss of life which has occurred.

It is a shocking disaster unparalleled in the peace-time history of Australia. The Government and the Naval Board extend their very deep sympathy to the bereaved families who have sustained so sudden and tragic a loss.

I want to announce at once that there will be a prompt and thorough investigation into this tragedy. I have decided that the normal machinery for Naval investigations is inadequate for the present purposes. There will therefore be a full public investigation conducted by a judge. I cannot, of course, yet say who the judge will be. I will also discuss with my colleagues whether he should be assisted by Naval experts acting as assessors. But the main thing I want to make clear at this early stage is that the investigation is to be prompt, thorough, public and conducted by a judge.

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CANBERRA,

11th February, 1964.