

FOR PRESS :

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RESIGNATION OF SIR WILLIAM SPOONER

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

The front page story in the "Sydney Morning Herald" referring to the resignation of Sir William Spooner is entirely false and in all its implications malicious.

The story states that "only two months ago he refused Sir Robert's offer to appoint him Australian Ambassador to Washington", and that I resented his "refusal". This is completely untrue, since no such offer was made. It was, I thought, pretty well understood in Cabinet circles that Sir William had no ambitions to go to Washington. In any event, I knew three months ago, when he first approached me, that he wanted to secure relief from his Cabinet work. It would have been very strange for me, under these circumstances, to have endeavoured to talk him into taking on the exceedingly arduous labours of Ambassador to Washington. The whole basis of this story is false.

Furthermore, the story is wickedly unjust to Sir William Spooner. I would have thought that an honourable man with fifteen years of continuous Cabinet service, interrupted by very few holidays of any kind, might be entitled to reach the conclusion that he would like to go back to private life without being gratuitously pursued by the groundless allegation that he had been dismissed.

CANBERRA,

3rd June, 1964.