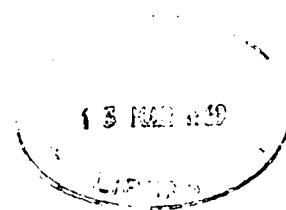


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PM. No. 24/1969

MRS. HOFFMANN'S STORY

Comment by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

In accordance with established practice, the Government has consistently refused in Parliament either to confirm or deny that Mrs Hoffmann did any work for ASIO at the Japanese Embassy eight years ago.

Again, in accordance with that practice, I do not propose either to confirm or deny the truth of Mrs Hoffmann's published story.

But the reported comments of Mr Whitlam and Senator Murphy on the matter appear to me to be both hysterical and ludicrous. If the story is not true, it can be disregarded. If it is true, then it shows that as a result of attempted espionage and bribery against Australia's interests, Mrs Hoffmann engaged in counter-espionage in Australia's interests.

Surely no Australian could object to that - except apparently Mr Whitlam and his Parliamentary colleagues of the Labor Party.

By their objections I think that they do Australia a disservice.

But this is neither to confirm nor deny Mrs Hoffmann's story itself.

CANBERRA,
8 March 1969