

EMBARGO: 9.30 P.M. ON SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 1969



"THIS WEEK"

TELEVISION INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE
PRIME MINISTER, MR. JOHN GORTON, ON
CHANNEL 7, MELBOURNE

Recorded on 16 October for release on 19 October

Interviewers: John Boland and John Fitzgerald

Q. Prime Minister, what is your reaction to the latest Gallup Poll figures favouring Labor?

PM. Well, one is always much happier when the Gallup Polls are running in one's favour than when they are running against one, and at the moment, the Gallup Polls are running against one. They are usually accurate within two or three per cent, and therefore one is much happier. We can't detect it in the electorates, but nevertheless, it is there, and it would be silly to pretend one was happy about the way they are running.

Q. Did you expect it to be as big as it has been in the last two..... I think something like 7 per cent.....

PM. No, I don't know..... I can't imagine actually what is the basis of the poll. I didn't expect it. The people in the electorates don't seem to sense it but there it is, as a poll, and it would be much nicer if it were going the other way. I didn't believe them when they went our way completely, but, still, it is much pleasanter when they do. The major thing is to see what happens on the 25th.

Q. Prime Minister, one gets the impression, reading the reaction, particularly newspaper reaction that the Prime Minister is almost on the floor and everybody is standing around waiting for him to get up again after the Gallup Poll. Now, are you on the floor?

PM. Well, I don't think so. We have had a couple of good meetings in Adelaide and Hobart.....

Q. You would always draw as Prime Minister, though, wouldn't you? You would always draw the crowd?

PM. Not necessarily the kind..... when I say a good meeting, I don't mean a large meeting. I mean a meeting at which people sought to put one on the floor, and instead, I think, were put on the floor themselves; the kind of Labor Party supporters who came along to try and shout you down, to try and prevent our arguments being heard. This is what I mean.....

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Q. What type of meeting do you prefer? Do you prefer one where you have a number of interjectors?

PM. On the whole, yes, I do. I think it is much nicer to have something to fight against than a whole hall full of people who either agree with you or don't say anything at all. I don't mean the sort of organised stamping and shouting and chanting that goes on... although I don't mind that in the very least. It is an indication of the approach of the Opposition. But I do mean that there needs to be a liveliness in a meeting, I think.

Q. You raised this point. Were you disappointed with the "yes" type of crowd which listened to your policy speech on television? What did you think of your policy speech on television? It has been criticised.

PM. I thought it was all right myself and there have been good reports about it. The only reason we had anybody in the studio at the time was because I like to talk to people. I like to have some people in front of me to talk to, to look at, to move one's eyes round about. I thought I made that quite clear at the outset of the policy speech. This was a studio speech. There were a few people there. I wanted them there because I like some human contacts to talk to rather than just a television camera which is pretty inhuman when you look at it.

Q. Now, Sir, I wonder if we can get down to the crux of your policy. I think you have made defence and foreign affairs the two keys in your whole policy.

PM. Yes.

Q. Now, a lot are saying that you have bowed to DLP pressure here. What is your answer to this?

PM. I'd like people to look at the record to see whether... to make their own minds up. This is what they are supposed to do in an election. But if they do look at the record, they will see that the first speech made by the Governor-General when we became a Government said that we felt we needed to build up our defences, that we would be spending more each year on our defences - not necessarily in terms of GNP but in terms of money. This is on record. This is what we said. I have made it clear on a number of occasions in the House in reply to questions that we felt it was essential to retain National Service Training. I made it clear that we are not going to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty until we are sure it does not damage Australia's future security. I have made it clear we believe it right and proper to continue with joint defence arrangements and bases with the United States in Australia. All these things are on the record for a long time back.

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Q. You certainly have brought the DLP more around to your way of thinking, since you have decided to make this the key to your whole policy.

PM. I thought you were asking had something been done especially as a result of DLP suggestions, and all these things are on the record as having been done long ago. There are only two things which could lend any colour to this at all. One is the beginning of a base in Western Australia, a naval base in Western Australia.....

Q. Which is what they wanted. They wanted that, didn't they?

PM. Of course they wanted that. And we had started investigations into that two years ago. We put Maunsell & Partners on to report how the thing should be gradually built up, and it is going to be gradually built up. We had the report from them. I had been questioned in the House as to whether we had turned it down. I had said quite definitely we hadn't, and it is the beginning of something which I think Australian defence needs. It wasn't suddenly brought out of a hat. For more than two years we have been considering this. So there it is. You asked me a question. That is the answer I give you.

Q. Well, now what about your attitude to the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean? Now, the interpretation is that you changed your tack here.

PM. I think the interpretation is wrong. If you look at what Mr. Freeth said, there was never any suggestion in it for one minute that we wanted to have or would have or would contemplate any military alliance with the Soviet Union, or that we would want Soviet Union bases there or that we would want the Soviet Union military presence there. Never any suggestion of any kind.

Q. He said: "It is natural that a world power, such as the Soviet, should seek to promote a presence and a national influence in the Indian Ocean". Now how else could they do that?

PM. They could do it by assisting in the economic rehabilitation of those nations..... in building them up. They could do it, for example, in the case of the Soviet Union by renegotiating the debts which Indonesia, for example, owes them, and giving Indonesia a chance to build up its own economy instead of having to drain off to the Soviet Union for war material which they bought in the days of Sukarno. This is one way they could go about it.

Q. And is this the sort of thing which we could have practical dealings with them in?

PM. We would be happy to see a situation in which steps were taken, as long as there were not a lot of technicians involved in going into the country or a lot of so-called experts or military people going in, in which.....take that Indonesian example.....in which the Indonesian economy was helped as a result of a renegotiation of the foreign exchange which had to be paid by Indonesia.

Q. Well now, Mr. Prime Minister, let me lay it straight on the line. Weren't we in fact, with the Freeth statement, following the American lead in announcing our willingness to get along with the Russians? Didn't Secretary of State Rogers ask that we do this?

PM. I don't remember Secretary of State Rogers asking me to do this. When you say "get along with the Russians" this is quite a different thing from wanting to have a Russian military presence in our own area. Surely it is. Clearly we have things on which we must talk to the Russians. We have things like fisheries agreements for example, which are quite important. We have things to do with trade. We have things to do with civil aviation. This is not to be interpreted as wanting to have a military presence. I think that the Freeth statement was misinterpreted.

Q. Isn't it State Department policy that the only way we can get extricated out of Vietnam is to use the Russians to put pressure on Hanoi, and the only way we can prevent insurrections in South East Asia is to have a Russian presence in South East Asia?

PM. I don't believe it is for a moment. I don't believe the United States wants to have a Russian presence, if by that you mean a military presence in South East Asia. If they did, I believe that a Russian military presence there would be against our interests and dangerous to us.

Q. Now, Prime Minister, linked dramatically with our defence policy is the F-111. Now, can it be said beyond all doubt we are finally committed to this aircraft?

PM. As long as the latest tests on the new wing boxes or modified wing boxes show that it will give the length of service which we require it to have. The interesting thing on this F-111 and indeed our whole defence policy is that we have a policy and our opponents don't. Perhaps they do. Their policy is to alienate our allies, to cut our Army and to deny our Air Force the strike aircraft which our Air Force and our military advisers say they want to have. Now if our Air Force says this is the best strike aircraft in the world, this is what Australian defence needs, surely that should be taken some notice of rather than vague suggestions that some other aircraft not recommended should be obtained by Australia.

PM. I don't believe there is. I don't believe there is anything in it. The United Kingdom makes up its own mind as to where it should be and it decided that for reasons of its own it should withdraw.....

Q. But did Mr. Healey put a \$50 million fee on staying?

PM. No, he didn't. Never, ever. It has never been suggested.

Q. Finally, Prime Minister, on defence. Is Cockburn Sound now a firm plank of your Government's policy?

PM. Yes, it is. We are going to build it up gradually. We are taking the first step of a number of phases recommended by our consultants and that is the building of the causeway. And gradually we will be building up the other requirements for naval facilities so that there can be as our fleet grows in the years ahead as it will, some elements of that fleet based in that area.

Q. Well, now getting around to your personal image, Prime Minister. Mr. St. John has campaigned against your credibility and the personal conduct of your office. Now what do you say in reply to him? Are you prepared to reply to him?

PM. I don't think so. Anybody can make any allegations against anybody else. I understand the shipping line, for example, was supposed to have been brought in without consultation with Cabinet, and yet all Cabinet knows there were at least four meetings on it. This theory of dictatorship and so on, I think, is refuted by some suggestion that was made to me in Launceston the other day that I was overruled in some other matters. I believe that there are other reasons why Mr. St. John is conducting this campaign. But something that decides the future of Australia and the conduct of a government of Australia seems to me to be something that ought to be decided on the policies put before the people and the good or ill of those policies for the future of Australia.

Q. Except that you have campaigned on a personal image. The Gorton image has become something in this country.

PM. I haven't campaigned on a personal image. I have campaigned on ideas. I have campaigned on achievements and the achievements have been pretty considerable. I don't believe I campaigned on a personal image at all. It wasn't a personal image that led us into the entry into overseas shipping. It wasn't a personal image that led us into doing more for social welfare than has been done by any other government in a comparable period of time. These were things one wanted to get accomplished. I could go on with the list but you haven't got the time for it.

- Q. What about the appointment of a public relations officer to your secretariat?
- PM. I haven't appointed a public relations officer.
- Q. Your secretariat has.
- PM. No, it hasn't.
- Q. Well the Liberal Party has.
- PM. No, it hasn't.
- Q. Well who has?
- PM. Nobody has.
- Q. But he is working there.
- PM. There is a man who has been lent to do research and background notes for speeches for a fortnight and this is not in any way at all anything to do with a public relations.
- Q. But it is on the basis of your personal association with a PR man.
- PM. It's not on the basis. oh, you mean because Eric White is a friend of mine and said, "Would you like somebody to do speech notes or research for you?" and I said, "Yes." All right, but it is not doing public relations work.
- Q. Well the interpretation has been that the Prime Minister is.
- PM. Oh, I can't help the interpretation. He is doing no public relations work.
- Q. He is not trying to swing the country in ten days to follow the Prime Minister at the poll?
- PM. No, he is trying to help me in the same way that, for example, Mr. Whitlam's large staff - which I haven't got - helps him. You see, I have never delivered a speech that I haven't written myself. I doubt very much if Mr. Whitlam has ever delivered a speech he wrote himself. I need some research assistance, some background speech notes and this is what this man is doing and that is all he is doing.

Q. Returning now to points on your policy. I think since you have become Prime Minister, you have been very keen to express concern about the middle and lower income groups. Now particularly from the point of view of taxation, you have made promises that over three years there will be some relief for middle income earners. But I think - or do you feel there has been a certain amount of disappointment that you haven't been able to offer anything immediately to these middle income earners and that you are going to wait until the end of this financial year which is July 1st.

PM. I don't know whether there has been any disappointment or not. I don't know whether people would have expected us in present circumstances to make some large step - to introduce a whole lot more of purchasing power, a whole lot more of money into the economy. I don't think any thinking person would expect or would have expected that we should have taken the first steps before the next Budget. But I would imagine and I would hope that the thinking Australian would realise that we are going to take these steps over this period to reduce the burden of income tax on the lower income earner, the middle income earner, the man with the family to bring up and the man paying off his home. And that if we are to believe the suggestions put forward by our opposition there would be no hope of doing this with any effective benefit to the people so helped.

Q. You don't think you can come in a bit earlier than the end of the financial year?

PM. No, I don't. I think that the latest employment figures, for example, show that our economy is fully employed at the present moment; for the first time in Australia's history there are more jobs offering than there are applications for employment. We have our resources fully employed. Now don't you think, wouldn't any reasonable person think in those circumstances, throwing more money into the economy would not provide any single person with any more employment?

Q. I think, I think Prime Minister, if I get taxed, I would like some sort of relief on this. . . .

PM. Sure, but you wouldn't like to have immediate tax relief with the result that inflation cut it out straight away. I don't think.

Q. I'd like immediate relief. . . .

PM. As long as it didn't have the other aspect in it.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from initial identification of a transaction to the final entry in the accounting system, ensuring consistency and accuracy throughout the process.

3. The third part of the document addresses the role of internal controls in the recording process. It explains how these controls help to prevent errors and fraud, thereby safeguarding the company's assets and ensuring the integrity of the financial data.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of regular audits and reconciliations. It highlights how these activities provide a check on the accuracy of the recorded transactions and help to identify any discrepancies or errors in a timely manner.

5. The fifth part of the document focuses on the use of technology in the recording process. It explores how modern accounting software can streamline the recording process, reduce the risk of human error, and provide real-time access to financial data.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of training and education for the accounting staff. It emphasizes that ongoing training is necessary to ensure that the staff is up-to-date on the latest accounting practices and technologies, which is essential for maintaining high standards of accuracy and efficiency.

7. The seventh part of the document addresses the importance of clear communication and collaboration between different departments. It explains that effective communication is key to ensuring that all transactions are recorded accurately and that any issues are resolved quickly.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining a strong internal control environment. It highlights that a robust internal control system is essential for ensuring the reliability of the financial statements and for protecting the company's interests.

9. The ninth part of the document focuses on the importance of regular reviews and evaluations of the recording process. It explains that these reviews help to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the recording process remains efficient and effective over time.

10. The tenth part of the document concludes by emphasizing the overall importance of the recording process for the company's success. It states that accurate and timely recording of transactions is a fundamental requirement for any business, and that it is essential for making informed decisions and ensuring long-term growth and stability.

Q. On the social services question, now, this has been something you have taken a considerable time over. There appears to be... medical and hospital benefits... your plans mean increased weekly payments here. Also, of course, we had last Friday the Hospital Benefits Association raising, even for the lowest family unit, their fees from something like \$37.80 to \$52.20 a year.

PM. Are you talking about hospital alone or are you talking about hospital and medical?

Q. I am talking about both. I would like to bracket them both if I can in the period of time. For this increased medical help which you are suggesting, the obvious thing here is that you have to pay more to get it. Now where is the relief here?

PM. Where is the relief? Well there are two alternate plans that are placed before the public at this election. Let's take the State of Victoria because we are speaking in Victoria. Yes, a person would have to pay more in order to get... pay more for their medical table in order to get the medical benefits which we offer, but we have taken care of all families who have incomes of \$39 a week or less. Now, in Victoria, it would cost to get public ward cover and to get the medical facilities that are offered, it would cost a single man more immediately he reaches a wage of \$40 under the Labor scheme. It would cost under the Labor scheme more for \$40 and above for a single man. For families a Labor scheme would cost more for families earning between \$60 and \$70. I can't tell you exactly where between there but somewhere between \$60 and \$70. It would cost them more. It is not a question of have people got to pay more because the Opposition's plans are going to take $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent not of the tax at present paid but of the total taxable income compulsorily. That is going to require people to pay more. That is going to require people to pay more than our scheme requires. But the great benefit of our scheme as I see it is that it will (a) have the AMA co-operating with it, whereas they won't with the Labor scheme - and you may remember back in 1949 when Labor tried to bring in a scheme and the doctors wouldn't co-operate with it. (a) it will have the doctors' co-operation with it (b) people contributing to it will know that they will be relieved from the fear of very expensive illness, because however expensive it may be, the medical fees will not require them to pay more than \$5.

Q. Have you been assured of AMA co-operation?

PM. The Minister for Health has been assured of AMA co-operation in this line. The proposal is that there should be a common fee known and that the policy of the AMA is that that common fee should be told to any patient who asks, and the patient if he wants to choose a doctor who charges more will have to bear the extra himself. But he can get this treatment at a common fee, and

statistics show that more than half the doctors charge the common fee or less already. This is quite different from Whitlam's commonly-charged fee. This is going to be a common fee known to people and publicised by the Commonwealth Health Department so everybody knows what it is.

Q. Well, you reject Labor's argument that you will have to shop around for a fee that is acceptable?

PM. Yes, I think that that is a spurious argument. I suppose it is based on this that if a patient went to a doctor and said, "Are you going to charge the common fee which I know to be the common fee because it has been made public" and the doctor said, "No, I am going to charge more", you don't take that doctor. I suppose that is what this is based on. But of course the alternative is the nationalisation of medicine which, of course, is what Labor is after.

Q. Prime Minister, I would very quickly like to turn to education and ask you two questions here now. On your State aid proposals, and the Government's proposals, it would seem that the richer schools are getting richer and the poorer schools are getting poorer. Now there is a comparison here with Mr. Whitlam's promises, of course, of a schools commission. That is the first part of the question. The second part of the question is: What do you feel or what do you think is against Mr. Whitlam's \$12 million proposal for free universities?

PM. Well, the first part of the question you asked me is a proposition put forward by the Opposition to set up a central commission in Canberra to examine the needs of 10,000 schools throughout Australia. Our proposition, on the other hand, is already in train, in which each State Education Department is examining the needs of the schools within its own State, and we think that is a better way to go about it. That is already in train. And they are not only examining the needs of the State schools but also co-ordinating into it the needs of the independent schools. People sometimes call me a centralist, but if there is anything I could see designed to take completely out of the control of the States the running of the education system, then this schools commission, so called, would be the one designed to do it.

Q. Don't you feel, though, that with this schools like Wesley, Xavier, these schools that don't really need grants and money are getting a lot of money.....

PM. They don't get the grants. Who gets the grants are the parents who send children to schools. Now there are a lot of parents who want to send their children to a particular school and who are not rich people. But who for reasons of their own, and they are entitled to have these reasons, scrape and save and deny themselves other things in order to pay school fees. I don't see why those people should have a means test put upon them which is what in fact is inherent in the suggestion you made.

Q. Free universities. Can we afford them? Can your Government afford them?

PM. Yes, I think you could afford free universities. At the moment it would cost \$14 million a year from your pocket. You wanted some relief from taxation. It would cost that much or a part of that much extra out of your pocket for the extra taxation. But why should you pay it? We seek to reduce the burden of taxation, not to increase it for this purpose and we have got to remember that some 25 per cent, around 25 per cent of all the university students have their fees paid by you and other taxpayers anyway. Now I don't really see why the ordinary taxpayer who has say his own children to bring up, his own house to pay off should be charged extra in order to provide for those who can't get Commonwealth scholarships. It is a matter of where you levy your imposts and for what purposes.

Q. Thank you Prime Minister.
