

FOR PRESS

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SUSPENSION OF PARLIAMENT

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

The House of Representatives tonight witnessed the most shocking behaviour in the history of Parliamentary government in Australia.

The Opposition, under the direction of Mr. Whitlam, resorted to planned disruption verging on riot, refused to obey the rulings of the Chair, refused to leave the service of the House when named, shouted, rose in a body to defy the Speaker, and prevented the business of Parliament from proceeding.

They have served notice that they believe in mob violence, not in the role of the Parliament elected by the people, and in so doing, have struck at the very existence of Parliamentary rule, and have sought to prevent the Government from governing and the Parliament from functioning, by the use of force.

I am sure that the Speaker of the House of Representatives cannot permit this behaviour to continue and will take all measures necessary to see that it does not.

CANBERRA
9 April 1970