

PRESS RADIO AND TV INTERVIEW GIVEN BY THE
PRIME MINISTER, MR WILLIAM McMAHON AT
LIBERAL PARTY HEADQUARTERS, CANBERRA

12 MARCH 1971

Q. Prime Minister, can you confirm any rumours or speculation about Ministerial appointments, for example Mr Fairbairn as Foreign Minister?

PM: I can't confirm anything yet because I have not made up my mind. I can't say that I cannot, but you will this afternoon be getting a statement on administrative changes - that is, the changes in the structure of Departments. There will be the abolition of two Departments and the formation of two new Departments. As soon as this matter is cleared with the Governor-General, you will get a statement.

Q. Having in mind, Sir, that we will be going to air at 6.30, could you outline them for me now?

PM: No, I can't. You will get it in time to go on air at 6.30.

Q. Sir, can you say what will be the main topics you will be discussing here at the Liberal Party?

PM: Mainly the organisation, because I believe the organisation has to run in parallel with the Parliamentary Party. I want them to be independent, completely independent and to be able to give us independent advice as to what they think we ought to do, their evaluation of what the public is thinking, and the best advice they can give us in the interests of the Party as a whole.

Q. Has the machine itself been rather run down, low morale.....

PM: I never like to look at the past and I am not interested in the past. What I am interested in is making certain that it is part and parcel of the Liberal Party and has an equal right to express its opinions together with the Cabinet and the Parliamentary Party.

Q. Prime Minister, you said last night that you may not be announcing changes in the Ministry for possibly another two months now. Isn't there a risk that this will cause some dissent within the Ministry, that people won't know what their situation will be?

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PM: You can't do the impossible, and I will have to explain it to the Party, and if there is any forecast or any attempt to try to create trouble, then I will immediately state my opinion, I will immediately say whether their forecasts are right or wrong. But most of the time it will be that they are wrong because I won't make up my mind and convey my decisions to anyone else until I am ready to make it available to the Press and to the other media.

Q. Sir, could I address a question to Mr Southey?
 What would you like to talk to Mr McMahon about?

Mr Southey : I also have organisational matters to discuss with him . I called on him yesterday morning to offer him the undivided loyalty of the Party organisation throughout Australia. This I will reaffirm today and we will go on from there.
