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THE SPRINGBOKS' TOUR

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr William McMahon

The Prime Minister said tonight it was desirable once again to set out clearly and precisely the Government's attitude to the tour of the Springboks in Australia.

"The Government is deeply concerned", Mr McMahon said, "that three principles of the greatest importance for the proper functioning of responsible government in Australia should be preserved. These principles are :-

- (i) that the Australian people must have freedom of choice within the law at all times. Nobody has the right to deny them that freedom.
- (ii) that no group or organisation should be permitted to intimidate the lawful government of the country. The Government rejects absolutely any attempt by elements in the trade union movement to achieve their objectives - industrial or otherwise - by force and intimidation.
- (iii) that politics and sport should not be tied together and that sporting organisations should not be under duress from any source for political motives. A few trade union leaders have no right to attempt to interrupt sporting arrangements."

"I believe the great majority of Australian people shares the Government's view - forcibly expressed by me - that apartheid is a repugnant political and social philosophy.

"Elements of the trade union movement are merely using apartheid to mislead the public about their real motive which is to impose their views on the Government and the Australian people by force and intimidation.

"I believe Australians value the principles I have stated and I also believe they will jealously guard their world-wide reputation as sportsmen.

"I hope the Springboks' tour will continue to be treated for what it is - an international sporting event which interests a tremendous number of people.

CANBERRA,
27 June 1971