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FAILURE TO SUSTAIN A QUORUM

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon

It is the responsibility of the Government Parties to have sufficient Members in the House to maintain quorums when the division bells are rung, in order that the business of the House should proceed.

I am informed that this afternoon on the ringing of the bells, the House was two short of a quorum.

The fact that there were enough Government Members in the Parliamentary precincts to sustain a quorum was not a satisfactory reason for their failure to promptly answer the bells.

I regret that the quorum was not maintained and I treat the matter extremely seriously both from the point of view of the business of the House and of sustaining the prestige and authority of the Parliament.

I take the matter so seriously that I have instructed that this be the first item on the Business Paper of the Joint Parties at the next meeting.

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CANBERRA,  
26 August, 1971.