

Mr. Lynd

FOR PRESS

STATEMENT BY MR. E. G. WHITLAM, Q.C.

I am informed by the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Ley, that it may well be the end of next week, i.e. Friday, 15 December, before the counting can be completed in certain electorates where the voting is close. In the light of this, it would not seem possible or proper for the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party to meet before Monday, 18 December.

There are certain things which I believe must be put in hand by the incoming government before then.

One example is action on abolishing conscription.

Another is the reference to the Tariff Board covering colour television.

A third is an application to the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission to reopen the Equal Pay Case so that the new government can support the claim.

There are also several matters in foreign affairs, including votes in the United Nations General Assembly.

Each of these is urgent. There are other examples.

Accordingly, consideration has been given to ways in which administration could be taken up immediately by the incoming government.

Therefore, I have today recommended to His Excellency the Governor-General that he swear my Deputy, Mr. Lance Barnard, and me to all existing ministerial offices. His Excellency has agreed and the swearing will take place this afternoon.

This allocation of portfolios is, of course, temporary. It will operate only until such time as the full Ministry is selected and can be sworn. I have given His Excellency an assurance on this point.

Attached is a list showing the allocation of portfolios.

Where decisions are to be taken, Mr. Barnard and I shall, of course, continue to consult with our appropriate colleagues as necessary.

I have told Mr. McMahon that he and his ministers and their staffs should feel free to use their present offices and facilities till the end of next week.

Canberra

5 December 1972

Portfolios to be administered by Mr. Whitlam

Prime Minister
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for External Territories
Treasurer
Attorney-General
Minister for Customs and Excise
Minister for Trade and Industry
Minister for Education and Science
Minister for Shipping and Transport
Minister for Civil Aviation
Minister for Housing
Minister for Works
Minister for the Environment,
Aborigines and the Arts

Portfolios to be administered by Mr. Barnard

Minister for Defence
Minister for the Navy
Minister for the Army
Minister for Air
Minister for Supply
Postmaster-General
Minister for Labour and National
Service
Minister for Immigration
Minister for Social Services
Minister for Repatriation
Minister for Health
Minister for Primary Industry
Minister for National Development
Minister for the Interior