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STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE BY THE PRIME MINISTER

I inform the House of the following Ministerial changes. The new Ministers were sworn in by His Excellency the Governor-General earlier today.

Senator the Hon. J. L. Cavanagh has been appointed Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. The Hon. Gordon Bryant has been appointed Minister for the Capital Territory. The Hon. Les Johnson has been appointed Minister for Works and the Hon. Kep Enderby has been appointed Minister for Secondary Industry and Minister for Supply.

I inform the House also of the following additional Ministerial changes not yet in effect but intended to be given effect in the near future.

The Hon. Rex Patterson, who is at present representing the Australian Government at the International Sugar Agreement Conference and who will return to Australia during next week, will after his return be sworn in as Minister for the Northern Territory. Also, after my visit to Japan where I am to represent the Government as Minister for Foreign Affairs as well as Prime Minister, and my visit to China, Senator Willesee, who is himself now abroad representing Australia at the United Nations General Assembly and other international meetings, will be sworn in as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The new arrangements will produce a more even and better balanced distribution of the workload within the Cabinet. In particular, some portfolios having common interests will be brought together under one minister and the ultimate amalgamation of the departments concerned thus facilitated. I have already in one instance - the Department of Supply, foreshadowed to the House a proposal for its amalgamation with another department. The rearrangement will also reduce the heavy burdens previously falling to some senior Ministers.

As honourable members will be aware, the Minister for Repatriation Senator Bishop, is ill. During his absence the Minister for the Capital Territory, Mr Bryant, is acting Minister for Repatriation. Mr Bryant is also representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in this House.

Canberra, 9 October, 1973