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PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ALICE SPRINGS  
1 NOVEMBER 1975.

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Ladies and Gentlemen: I've had a long standing engagement this week down in Port Augusta, but I thought that in the present circumstances, the time when the Senate is on strike, when it's holding the whole of the country to ransom, when there is going to be an election in the next few months for the Senate, and because despite all Country Party obstruction the people of the Territory will at last get a vote for Senators in the National Parliament, it is the people in the Northern Territory and in Canberra who will break to strike by the Senate. And I'll give you some of the consequences of this strike. Because the two Territories, the Northern Territory and the Capital Territory, depend more than any other parts of Australia on what is in the National Budget. And for the first time in the country's history the Budget is being stalled. It's not been rejected; it's been stalled. The Senate hasn't gone on record against the Budget; as a matter of fact, they see nothing wrong with the Budget. They say if there is an election they'll pass the Budget - the Budget must be beaut. But they've tried. But they've gone on strike. They won't vote on the Budget. And they've stalled it on one particular dirty Country Party trick. Three months ago, a Labor Senator died in Queensland. And a Country Party Premier appointed an anti-Labor man to succeed the deceased Labor Senator.

Now don't blame the Liberal Ministers in Queensland because they voted to do the right thing. Every Liberal Minister in the Queensland Parliament voted in favour of a Labor replacement for the deceased Labor Senator. But it was the Country Party Ministers, the Country Party Premier, the Country Party and Liberal rank and file who perpetrated this dirty trick. They chose an anti-Labor Senator to succeed a Labor Senator and accordingly when a motion was moved in the Senate to put off voting on the Budget, to defer the Budget, to stall the Budget, to go on strike, the motion was carried only because a Labor Senator had died. If the Labor Senator had still been there, if, as he had throughout his life, voted in favour of Labor principles then the attempt by the Country Party to defeat, to defer, to stall the Budget would have been frustrated. As Senator Steele Hall said, a former Liberal Premier of South Australia, the motion to go on strike in the Senate was carried over a dead man's corpse. If a Country Party Premier had done the right thing and had appointed a Labor replacement for a deceased Labor Senator, then the plot to go on strike would not have been carried in the Senate. The Senate would have had to vote for the Budget. And if there is a vote on the Budget itself, then it will be passed in the Senate. Because on T.V. last weekend a Liberal Senator, from Tasmania - you might never have heard of him, his name is Bessell - Senator Bessell said that he would never vote against the Budget and he also said that there were a number of other Liberal Senators of the same mind. That means that the Budget would be passed if it ever came to a vote. But it's not being passed for the sole reason, that the Senate has gone on strike.

Now let me show you the results of this strike by the Senate. Because in the Budget there is a total for the Northern Territory of \$439 million, \$439 million will come to the Northern Territory as soon as the Budget is passed. And this \$439 million is being held up, it's being denied to the Northern Territory

because the Liberal and Country Party Senators have gone on strike. Now up in the top, in Darwin, there is \$102 million waiting to reconstruct Darwin. It's being held up by the Senate strike; \$102 million. And then for housing and construction throughout the Territory, on top of that, housing and construction which in the Territory depend principally on Federal Government funds, there is \$58 million being held up by the Senate strike. Once the Senate passes the Budget then this year there will be \$58 million available for housing and construction in the Northern Territory. It's being held up by the Senate strike. And then for schools and colleges in the Territory, there is a sum of \$45 million being held up by the Senate. The Senate strike is denying the Territory \$45 million for education. Then for health services, hospitals, health centres, there is the sum of \$40 million being held up by the Senate strike. Once the Senate calls off its strike there will be 40 million dollars available for hospitals and health services in the Territory. And then for all the rest of the functions which the Department of Northern Australia provides in the Territory there is a sum of \$113 million being held up by the Senate strike. And then for Aboriginal welfare and advancement there is a sum of \$32 million being held up by the Senate strike.

Now Ladies and Gentlemen, the strike may finally be broken by having elections for Senators in the Northern Territory and the Capital Territory. And I will give to you the long-protracted fight we've had to have in the Federal Parliament over the last three years to get the right for people in the Territories to elect people to the Senate and to have votes for the people in the Senate. The Country Party and the Liberal Parties have put up the longest battle against this reform that they've put up on any issue whatever.

Now first, you'll remember that back in my 1972 Policy Speech I promised that if we became the Government there would be Senators for the two Territories with full voting rights. Two Senators for the Northern Territory. Two Senators for the Australian Capital Territory. And I'm on the platform here with Labor's candidate as Senators for the Northern Territory, Ted Robertson and Kevin Frazer. Now this is one of the good Fraser's. I don't think the other Fraser has ever been to the Northern Territory. Well I don't think Billy Snedden—you remember Billy Snedden, he was once Leader of the Liberals—And I don't think he came here. And I don't remember Billy McMahon coming here. And I don't remember John Gorton coming here, or Harold Holt, or Bob Menzies; that is, Liberal Prime Ministers, Liberal Leaders never came to the Northern Territory. I don't think Menzies or Holt, or Gorton, or McMahon, or Snedden or Fraser. I'm sick of the constant change.

I'm in the process of doing over the fifth successive Liberal Leader. And I don't think any of them ever bothered to hold a meeting in Alice Springs. We did last last election in May, '74, but they never came here. Because they didn't have elections for the Senate. They didn't have to worry about you. But we promised at the last election that we would see that the Northern Territory got representatives in the Senate. Because you have to obey laws which are passed by the Federal Parliament, both the House of Representatives and the Senate. But according to the Liberals and the Country Party you weren't entitled to have anybody in the Senate which had to make those laws. And because you will now have members in the Senate you will be able to break the log jam that the Senate has presented over the last three years. Because in the last three

years, the last three years, the Senate has rejected more Bills than it had in the previous 72 years. In all the years between 1901 and 1972 the Senate had rejected, all told, less than 70 Bills. In the last three years the Senate has rejected over 90 Bills. So they've been more obstructive than any Senate in history. Three years; they've done more to throw out than they had in the previous 72. But this is what they've done about the Territory. Is there anybody in this audience who doesn't think the Territory should have representatives in the Senate? Will you please raise your hand if you think that the Northern Territory shouldn't have a Senator? There's 2 people; there were 3 hands and 2 people. Is this the best you can do? Aren't there any people who'll support the Liberals and the Country Party in denying the Territory representation in the Senate? I just want to go back, that is, I want to tell the House of Representatives next week that in this, the largest political meeting ever held in the Northern Territory, there were only 2 people that were prepared to say that the Northern Territory shouldn't have members in the Senate. Because this is the history, this is the history of our attempts to get representation in the Senate for the Northern Territory. We brought in the Bill on the 30 May 1973; two and a half years ago in the House of Representatives we passed the Bill to give the Northern Territory two Senators. That is, two and a half years ago. The Liberals voted against it. Gorton, McMahon, Snedden, Fraser, they all voted against you having representatives in the Senate. The Country Party voted with us in favour of the Northern Territory having Senators. It's the only time the Country Party has ever voted for you to have representatives in the Senate and when it went to the Senate every member of the Liberal Party, every member of the Country Party and the DLP - you remember the DLP? - they voted against you having representatives. So that was the first time.

On the 7 June 1973 the Opposition in the Senate denied you having representatives in the Senate. Then three months later we brought the Bill in again and on the 27 September 1973 it went through the

House of Representatives; for the second time the House of Representatives said you should have Senators from the Northern Territory. It went up to the Senate and on the 14 November 1973 all the Liberal and Country Party Senators, all of them, voted to defeat the Bill. That meant the next election, the election in May last year for the House of Representatives and the Senate, you couldn't get Senators because the Liberal and the Country Party voted against you getting them. And you remember in May 1974 in this town I repeated that if we were returned once again we would try to get you Senators for the Northern Territory. And we won the election. We won the second time. And then we brought the Bill up again and in the House of Representatives it was passed for the third time. And for the third time the Senate rejected it; every Liberal, every Country Party Senator, on three occasions has voted against the Northern Territory having Senators. So then we had a Joint Sitting and at the Joint Sitting all the Liberals and all the Country Party, with one exception your Country Party member never speaks; silent Sam never has a word to say, but for once in his life he did the right thing; he voted for you to have representatives in the Senate. And such influence does he have on his Country Party colleagues that they all left him alone and voted with the Liberals against you having Senators for the Northern Territory.

If the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory had had Senators, then the Senate would not have gone on Strike. Because this is what the strike is costing the Northern Territory: \$439 million is being held up for the Northern Territory; \$439 million is being held up for the Northern Territory by the Senate strike. And \$58 million is being held up because the Senators from the States have gone on strike and \$45 million is being held up because the Liberal and Country Party Senators from the States have gone on strike. And aboriginal welfare and advancement in the Northern Territory is being denied \$32 million; the Liberal and Country Party Senators have gone on strike. And hospitals and health services in the Northern Territory are being denied \$40 million because the Liberal and Country Party Senators from the States have gone on strike. And schools and colleges, Government and Church schools and colleges, in the Northern Territory are being denied \$45 million because the Liberal and Country Party Senators from the States have gone on strike. All help and all the affairs of the Department of Northern Australia are being held up because \$113 million for administrative services to pay employees, to pay contractors, to pay suppliers, is being held up - \$113 million being held up for the Department of Northern Australia because the Liberal and Country Party Senators from the States have gone on strike.

All told there's:                   \$439 million                   waiting to come to the Northern Territory between now and the end of next June because the State Senators, the Liberal and Country Party Senators from the States have gone on strike.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know perfectly well the attitude of the people of this Territory. Never again will you allow the Senate to go on strike. Never again, never again will the Senate be able to hold the Territories up to ransom. Because the Territories more than any other parts of Australia depend on the National Budget for their welfare, their prosperity and their progress. If the Liberals and the Country Party had not prevented the Northern Territory having Senators since May last year, if you'd had Senators from the Northern Territory, the Senate would not have gone on strike. The Northern Territory would be getting the \$439 million to which it is entitled without interruption.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when the election comes don't forget to make Ted Robertson and Kevin Frazer the first Senators from the Northern Territory. Never again allow the Senate to hold up the welfare, prosperity, and progress of the Northern Territory. Never again allow State Senators to go on strike.