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PRIME MINISTER

AND MEMBER FOR WANNON, MR MALCOLM FRASER

FOR PRESS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1975

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1975

ELECTORAL TALK

Ladies and Gentlemen, since I last spoke to you, the Labor Party Leader, Mr Whitlam has been dismissed as Prime Minister by the Governor General and I have been commissioned as Prime Minister.

This would not have happened if Mr Whitlam had been prepared to accept the decision of Parliament. What the Opposition Parties wanted were general elections, to enable the people of Australia to pass judgement on a government which we believe had by its conduct forfeited the trust of the nation.

There is no great need to dwell now on the incompetence of Mr Whitlam's administration in the economic management of the Australian economy.

The importance of that task was something which Mr Whitlam and his succession of Treasurers never seemed to grasp.

Instead, as Mr Crean was succeeded by Dr Cairns and as Dr Cairns was replaced by Mr Hayden, Australians suffered - housewives on tight budgets, farmers, small business firms, young people leaving school and finally 300,000 people who are out of work.

While the administration which Labor provided pursued its impracticable objectives the hope which had been raised vanished like mirages as inflation, unemployment and crippling inflation destroyed the basis of former prosperity.

For many Australians it was a sad and tragic spectacle as credibility drained from the Whitlam administration.

On top of the massive incompetence of the former administration there were the improprieties.

Over the three years of Labor government four men acted as Prime Minister of this nation. All four have been sacked one way or another.

The dismissal of the third ranking member of the Labor cabinet, Mr Rex Connor, last month on top of all the incompetence and disillusion left the Opposition with no choice but to act.

Twice men who had been entrusted with responsibility for conducting the affairs of the nation during Mr Whitlam's many overseas journeys have been dismissed for misleading the parliament or Prime Minister.

The Opposition had no alternative but to defer the budget and call on Mr Whitlam to agree to elections.

For Mr Whitlam, the sensible course of action was to hold elections immediately the decision to defer supply was taken.

The second sensible course would have been to accept the compromise which we offered publicly, and the opportunity we gave for private discussion.

But Mr Whitlam refused to seek an election and refused to give the people of Australia the vote which was needed to resolve the situation.

If he had done this he would have faced the electors as Prime Minister.

Mr Whitlam would not acknowledge that his administration never had command of the Parliament because it never controlled the Senate. That is the basis for his unconstitutional behaviour which eventually led to his dismissal.

Knowing quite well the Liberal and National Country Parties did not have a majority in the House of Representatives, I accepted the commission as Prime Minister on the basis that I would immediately recommend to the Governor General a double dissolution.

As soon as the Appropriation Bills had received the royal assent I did so.

The double dissolution was on the most favourable terms possible for the Labor Party.

The 21 bills which had been held up in the Senate because they contained arbitrary and dictatorial powers were cited in the petition dissolving Parliament.

They can thus be put to a joint sitting of the two chambers of Parliament after December 13 if the new Government chooses to use that device. We certainly would not do so because the bills contain arbitrary and unreasonable powers.

~~The double dissolution is thus in the~~ fairest possible form.

The course of action we chose was a proper one. It was open to Mr Whitlam.

Under the terms of my commission from the Governor General the Opposition Parties are pledged to introduce no new policies until after the December election.

But we have ready a full programme of policies to revive Australia and we seek the approval and support of the Australian people to put those policies into effect.

Our policies will provide jobs.

They will help small businesses and firms.

They will provide stability and the sense of direction Australia so badly needs.

These policies have been developed over the last several months.

The main points of our approach will be announced in the policy speech on November 25.

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