

25 SEPTEMBER 1978

PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVIEW WITH SYDNEY JOURNALISTS, SYDNEY

QUESTION

What did you think of the Centre (Youth Job Centre, Sydney) Prime Minister?

PRIME MINISTER

I think it is a very good centre. Quite plainly a number of young people are coming in and finding jobs and I think the success rate is quite a reasonable one. There is obviously hope for improvement.

QUESTION

Do you think there is a need for more centres like this?

PRIME MINISTER

This is something that the Government will be reviewing. It is a relatively new development, as you know, that has come in over the last year - they have centres of this kind in virtually each capital city. Tony Street will be surveying the effectiveness of these kinds of offices. I know all the reports that I have had so far have been enthusiastic. When I was having lunch down here I thought I would stop in and have a look for myself.

QUESTION

Was it merely a PR exercise for the Government or do you think you could give the young people some advice, and perhaps promote the Centre?

PRIME MINISTER

It is not a question of a public relations exercise. It is a matter of coming down and seeing for yourself what happens. Just in exactly the same way I was in one of the classes for what is called the Experimental Programme for Unemployed Youth. These are kids who have virtually never had a chance in their lives, who are not well motivated and have no idea really what they want to do. The kids in this office did know what they wanted to do, did know what sorts of jobs they wanted to go for. Quite a number hadn't been out of work long - they might have left a job last Friday or whatever. In the other programmes, to see people being given a bit of enthusiasm, having a concern and interest in the future, maybe for the first time in their lives, I think is quite an exciting experience. The EPUI scheme, as it is called, is generally helping people who have never had a chance, coming from broken families, difficulty families - maybe the teachers in the classes are the first people who have ever shown any interest in their future and well-being.

QUESTION

Did you discern any one thing from the Centre?

PRIME MINISTER

I don't think any one thing. I have discussed these Centres, and the workings of the Centres with Tony Street on a number of occasions and I have an impression which is very much the same as his and that is that the people going into this Centre are better motivated and in many cases, I think, better educated than some of the young unemployed. Therefore, they have more chance of getting jobs and keeping jobs.

QUESTION

Have you revised your opinion of some of the young people being dole bludgers?

PRIME MINISTER

I think we all know that there are some young people who want jobs and find it difficult to get them. We also know that there are some people who abuse the system. I have never had an omnibus opinion of any group. It is perfectly plain that in Australia at the moment there are a significant number of young people who haven't got a job and who would like to work and contribute to society.

QUESTION

How do you attract people who are less educated to these Centres. You mentioned that they were better educated...

PRIME MINISTER

I think these are but the normal Commonwealth Employment Service offices provide the general service. This office, and others like it in the other capital cities, provide a very particular service to young people. We all know that there has been a special problem in that area. A number of the training schemes are designed especially to help people up to 25. One of the initiatives we took last year was to establish offices of this kind. From all appearances I think it has been a great success.

ENDS