



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 2 MARCH 1983

HOW MR. HAWKE SHIFTS GROUND

Under pressure today Mr. Hawke revealed the shallowness and deception of his campaign rhetoric.

This morning he attempted to wriggle out of his commitment to his massive spending binge by claiming there might have to be modification of his programme if he found bigger deficits than expected.

It is known that the 1982/83 budget deficit will be around \$4,000 million. For 1983/84 a figure of \$6,000 million has been spoken of. Mr. Hawke well knows that his \$4,000m addition to these figures would make the Hawke deficit around \$10,000 million for 1983/84.

When he was confronted this morning on whether the outside limit of his deficit would be \$7, 8, 9, or 10,000 million he avoided the question, even though the figures implied in his statement involved a \$10,000 million deficit.

But we know that throughout this campaign he has not backed away one inch from his open cheque book.

Mr. Hawke is running scared because he knows his spending proposals are utterly irresponsible. He knows the money must come from Australian taxpayers.

A few hours later, addressing the National Press Club, Mr. Hawke even talked of the possibility of some "movement in the tax area" as he quaintly described it.

Again Mr. Hawke was saying that if there were deficit problems he would have to consider increasing tax.

These words come from the mouth of the man who has already promised tax cuts.

On almost every major issue of consequence, Mr. Hawke has tried to shift ground when a bit of pressure is put on him.

He has tried valiantly to shift ground on capital gains after passionately espousing how he could sell it; he has shifted ground on the Sinai - one area where one would have thought he would have had a real commitment.