



PRIME MINISTER

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT, MORNING EXTRA, SYDNEY

26 APRIL 1984

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

P.M.: It's very hard to make any comments upon Dr Caldicott's own comments because they are so emotional and many of them false. Obviously Dr Caldicott received some different advice after her initial outburst because she was reported as saying quite different things at the rally - subsequently about myself and what I could do and so on. I think that the subject is such an important one that it warrants rational discussion and not emotional falsehoods and that's why I am rather pleased at the nature of the debate that has developed actually within the Labor Party - which had previously tended to be highly emotional and has now reached a more sensible level.

QUESTION: A quarter of a million, or approximately a quarter of a million Australians marching on the issue must mean something then.

P.M.: Well, what does it mean to you?

QUESTION: Well, how do you look at it electorally?

P.M.: Well, a quarter of a million marching - what's the Australian voting population?

QUESTION: But do you discount that then?

P.M.: It's not a question of discounting, I simply try to be rational and calm about these things. If I find that there are a quarter of a million people or 200,000 or 150,000 - whatever the number is - and there are great varieties in the estimate. You've got to put that in the context of a lot of people who weren't marching. If you talk about that particular issue - uranium mining, it seems to me to be much more rational to look at the latest scientific poll that we've done on it. And that shows a very, very clear majority of Australians in favour of the policy of the Government - not only a majority of Australians, a majority of Labor voters. Now, ask me the question about that, what's the significance of that for the election. Is that the more significant thing to look at than 'x' number of people marching?

QUESTION: But does it

P.M.: Look, are we here to have a debate about uranium and the Government's policies on it?

QUESTION: Well, we are looking at the uranium question, yes.

P.M.: The ABC has tackled this question once already, in a way in which it put its line. Now, if we are going to be here in a situation of you putting the anti-uranium line then that's O.K. with me, but I didn't think that's what this is about.

QUESTION: Well, we are here to discuss many issues..... with Labor Party policy.....

P.M.: Good, well let's get on with it then.

QUESTION: This is one of the latest issues that has come up, and uranium has concerned a lot of people, enough people to march - 250,000 people to march.

P.M.: Look, let's be quite clear about this. We've handled that you talked about it, you put the argument about 250,000 people. I put the proposition to you about a poll. Now, you want to keep coming back and saying there is something that is significant and decisive about a number of people that marched. Now I've put the overall poll figure to you. Now, if you want to keep arguing the anti-uranium case and implications of marching - do so and it will be another example of the way in which on this program, this institution is going to push a particular line.

QUESTION: Mr Hawke, ABC biased questions, you've mentioned the ABC. In recent weeks you've criticised the ABC for bias against the Federal Government, and the Labor Party. Can you give us specific examples of that line?

P.M.: Again, it's a pity you couldn't get your facts straight. I wasn't talking about bias against the Labor Party. I talked about bias - I am certainly not going to engage in a discussion with you about bias on the ABC. I believe that Mr Whitehead may be meeting with me. If he wants to raise the question, I'll talk about it with him if he wants to.

QUESTION: You asked the ABC to approach you to talk about the question of bias?

P.M.: No, I didn't.

QUESTION: How did the proposed meeting you just mentioned come about then, or the possibility of it....

P.M.: I think that's a matter for the management of the ABC and myself. It's not a matter for discussion on your program.

QUESTION: You said that we didn't get our facts right concerning bias, you mentioned bias on the ABC, then what were the facts?

P.M.: I am not here to discuss the issue of ABC bias with you. If Mr Whitehead wants to discuss the matter with me, that's where I'll discuss it. I'm not going to discuss it on your program.

QUESTION: You don't think the ABC is biased or you do think it's biased?

P.M.: I don't know whether you want to achieve a situation similar to something that occurred before - it seems as though you want to. I'm not going to satisfy your desire in that regard. I have answered your question on this twice, do you want me to answer it again or are we going to occupy the time between now and 10.45 with you asking the same question and me answering it. Isn't twice enough?

QUESTION: Perhaps you'd prefer some calls Mr Hawke.

* * * *