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PRIME MINISTER

7 EX TALKBACK, LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA - LEON BYNER WITH THE PRIME MINISTER
9.30 AM - 23.10.84

BYNER:

HAVE YOU HAD TIME YET TO CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT YOU WILL HAVE A TELEVISION DEBATE WITH ANDREW PEACOCK, MAYBE THE 22ND OF NOVEMBER?

HAWKE:

I THINK THE TIMING IS STILL A MATTER OF DISCUSSION. WHAT WE'VE SAID, LEON, IS THAT WE'RE QUITE HAPPY TO HAVE THE DEBATE. WE THINK IT'S PROBABLY BEST TO BE DONE AT THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB IN CANBERRA AND I THINK REALLY THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB OUGHT TO HAVE ITS VIEWS EXPRESSED TO US. WE'LL HAVE OUR BIT OF AN INPUT AS TO WHAT WE THINK'S APPROPRIATE. BUT I JUST AM QUITE HAPPY TO HAVE THE DEBATE. I MEAN, I DEBATE THE CHAP IN PARLIAMENT REGULARLY, AND EVERYONE KNOWS THE RESULT.

BYNER:

WE ARE A WEEK INTO THE CAMPAIGN. THE STYLE OF THE OPPOSITION LEADER IS STARTING TO COME THROUGH, THE WAY HE INTENDS TO PORTRAY HIMSELF, PRESENT HIS POLICIES, THE ... REPETITION OF WEALTH TAX, CAPITAL GAINS, DEATH DUTIES. NOW, APART FROM A SENSE OF DEJA VU, THIS SORT OF THING HAS WORKED BEFORE, HASN'T IT?

HAWKE:

WELL, I DON'T THINK YOU CAN DRAW COMPARISONS EASILY, BETWEEN 1984 AND EARLIER TIMES. THE BASIC REASON FOR THAT, LEON, IS THAT YOU'VE HAD A LABOR GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE NOW SINCE THE BEGINNING OF '83 AND IT HAS PRODUCED A RESULT, AND THE PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS ON FACTS. YOU SEE, THE PROBLEM WITH THE OPPOSITION ALWAYS, AND PARTICULARLY WITH THIS LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, IS HE TREATS THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORATE AS FOOLS. LET ME BE PRECISE. ALL HE HEARD FROM THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FOR MONTHS WAS ORGANISED CRIME IN GENERAL, AND ATTACKS ON MY CHARACTER IN PARTICULAR. NOW TO DO THAT, IT WAS AN ABSURDITY TO SUGGEST THAT I WAS A CROOK, THAT I'D BE PROTECTING ORGANISED CRIME, WAS MANIFESTLY ABSURD, AND IT INVOLVED A JUDGEMENT ON THE PART OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION THAT THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA WOULD BUY THAT SORT OF NONSENSE. HIS CREDIBILITY WAS ON THE LINE AND THEY'VE MADE THEIR JUDGEMENTS ABOUT HIM, AND IT'S QUITE CLEAR WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT HIM. NOW, CREDIBILITY IS AT THE HEART OF IT AGAIN, AND HE'S TRYING TO INSTIL FEAR INTO PEOPLE, AND SAY LOOK, YOU CAN'T TRUST THIS GOVERNMENT. NOW, I THINK THE PEOPLE ARE SIMPLY SAYING, WELL LOOK WE SAW YOU FOR SEVEN YEARS, YOU HAD SEVEN YEARS FOR TAX POLICY, FOR ECONOMIC POLICY. YOU BROUGHT THIS GOVERNMENT TO ITS KNEES.

WE'VE SEEN MR HAWKE AND HIS GOVERNMENT FROM THE BEGINNING OF '83 AND THEY'VE TURNED THIS ECONOMY ROUND, FROM ONE OF RECESSION TO THE HIGHEST RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE WORLD, INFLATION HALVED, INTEREST RATES DOWN, 260,000 JOBS AGAINST A RISE OF A QUARTER OF A MILLION IN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS WITH YOU MOB. NOW THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THEIR MINDS AND I DON'T THINK YOU CAN TALK ABOUT THE PAST BEFORE WE WERE IN GOVERNMENT. PEOPLE MAKE THEIR JUDGMENTS, LEON ON THE FACTS.

BYNFR:

AS YOU KNOW, TASMANIA IS A VERY PAROCHIAL STATE. AND I'M WONDERING WHETHER YOU'RE SURPRISED AT MR PEACOCK'S ACQUIESCENCE TO THE REQUEST FROM AUSTRALIA'S ONLY LIBERAL PREMIER ON THE DAM ISSUE.

HAWKE:

WELL TO SAY I'M SURPRISED IS UNDERSTATING IT, LEON. BECAUSE IT'S ANOTHER QUESTION OF THE CREDIBILITY OF MR PEACOCK AND THE LIBERALS. EARLIER THIS YEAR, ON THE 31ST OF MAY, THE OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN, MR CONNOLLY, WROTE TO THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY, AND LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE POSITION OF THE OPPOSITION WAS THAT THE DAM ISSUE WAS DEAD. HE SAID IT'S OVER, WE EXPECT THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT AND COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT TO ADHERE TO IT. COMPENSATION'S BEEN PAID, IT'S FIXED. AND MR PEACOCK CAME DOWN HERE AND ONE UNDERSTOOD THAT THAT WAS HIS POSITION WHEN HE CAME DOWN HERE. BUT HE RESPONDED TO MR GRAY'S SUGGESTION THAT IT COULD STILL BE ALIVE. NOW THAT IS SOMETHING THAT I BELIEVE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF TASMANIANS DON'T WANT, EVEN THOSE WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY IN FAVOUR OF THE DAM. THEY ACCEPT WHAT MR GRAY SAID ON THE 26TH OF JUNE OF THIS YEAR, THAT MR HAWKE HAS KEPT HIS PROMISES IN REGARD TO JOBS, IN REGARD TO FUTURE POWER REQUIREMENTS. NOW, WORSE THAN RAISING IT AGAIN, HE SAID, WELL WE WANT TO KEEP IT ALIVE AND WE WON'T GIVE YOU BACK MONEY THAT'S BEEN PAID UNDER THE AGREEMENT, IF WE TRY AND RESURRECT THE DAM. NOW I THINK THAT ORDINARY TASMANIANS, AS ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS SAY IF A DEAL IS DONE, AND PARTICULARLY IF MONEY'S PAID UNDER A DEAL, THEN MY HONOUR AND INTEGRITY'S ON THE LINE. THAT'S WHAT THE ORDINARY AUSTRALIAN SAYS, AND I THINK THEY WILL BE REPULSED BY THIS WELCHING.

BYNER:

PRIME MINISTER, THOSE EMPLOYMENT PROPOSALS YOU PUT FORWARD UNDER THE COMPENSATION AGREEMENT, LIKE ABC TELEVISION, COMMONWEALTH BUILDINGS, SURELY YOU CAN SEE MR GRAY'S POINT THAT THEY'RE HARDLY STATE RESPONSIBILITIES? I'M WONDERING WHETHER OR NOT YOU'LL BE WILLING TO SPEAK TO MR GRAY AND MAYBE THRUSS THIS OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL.

/HAWKE: LOOK THE ARRANGEMENT

HAWKE:

LOOK THE ARRANGEMENT IS QUITE CLEAR, AND I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF CLARIFYING THE WAY A COUPLE OF MY REMARKS WERE INTERPRETED YESTERDAY, IN REGARD TO THE WYNYARD AIRPORT. I SAID, HERE'S MR GRAY PUTTING UP OUR MONEY IN RESPECT OF THE PROPOSAL. NOW I JUST SHOULD ELABORATE ON THAT. UNDER THE ARRANGEMENTS THAT HE WILLINGLY ENTERED INTO BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT, MR GRAY, WE SAID TO FINALISE THE EMPLOYMENT GENERATION PART OF OUR UNDERTAKING, IT WAS \$15 MILLION. THAT WAS COMMONWEALTH MONEY UNDER AND THAT'S THE SENSE I WAS REFERRING TO OUR MONEY, BUT THE ARRANGEMENT WAS THAT HOW THAT MONEY WAS SPENT WOULD BE A MATTER OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN MR GRAY, THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT AND MYSELF, THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT. NOW WHEN I SAY OUR MONEY, I WAS SIMPLY SAYING IT'S THE COMMONWEALTH'S MONEY THAT'S BEING PROVIDED BUT IT'S A JOINT DECISION AS TO HOW IT SHOULD BE USED. NOW PICKING UP YOUR SPECIFIC POINT, MR GRAY PUT UP CERTAIN PROPOSALS, AS HE WAS ENTITLED TO, AND HE'VE PUT UP CERTAIN PROPOSALS. NOW IF WE CAN'T GET ORIGINAL AGREEMENT, WELL THEN WE'VE JUST GOT TO HAVE FURTHER NEGOTIATION AND IT WILL BE WORKED OUT. NOW, TWO POINTS ABOUT IT, ONE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO TASMANIANS AS A WHOLE, AND ONE OF VERY PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE PEOPLE OF LAUNCESTON. WHERE THERE'S BEEN REFERENCE TO A CERTAIN WORKS PROGRAM, WHICH ATTACKS JUST SAY ABC TELEVISION, ALL THAT WAS SAID THERE IS THAT THESE PROJECTS ARE SIMPLY NOT ON THE PROGRAM FOR THIS FINANCIAL YEAR UNDER THE NORMAL PROGRAMMING OF FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS, BUT BECAUSE IT WOULD BE SOMETHING THAT COULD PROVIDE JOBS IMMEDIATELY AND COULD BE OF IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE, WELL WE NOMINATED THEM, BUT AS FAR AS LAUNCESTON IS CONCERNED, WHAT MR GRAY IS KNOCKING BACK, AND THIS AMAZES US, IS THAT WE PUT UP \$4 MILLION FOR UPGRADING THE SEWERAGE SYSTEM IN LAUNCESTON. NOW THE PEOPLE OF LAUNCESTON HAVE BEEN TO US, THROUGH MR UREN WE'VE SENT ENGINEERS DOWN HERE TO STUDY THIS SYSTEM. WE KNOW IT'S A REAL PROBLEM BECAUSE OF ITS OUTDATED SYSTEM IN OPERATION AND WE'VE BEEN PREPARED TO MAKE \$4 MILLION AVAILABLE.

BYNER:

BUT THAT WAS ACTUALLY PART OF THE COMPENSATION FUND?

HAWKE:

THIS IS \$4 MILLION OUT OF THE \$15 MILLION FOR EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS. WE WILL SAY OK HERE'S \$4 MILLION, UNDER THAT SCHEME, SO WE CAN GET GOING IMMEDIATELY ON THE SEWERAGE PROBLEMS IN LAUNCESTON.

BYNER:

WHAT ROBIN GRAY IS SAYING, I THINK, PRIME MINISTER, IS THAT WE SHOULD HAVE GOT THAT \$4 MILLION OUTSIDE THE \$15 MILLION, BECAUSE YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE IT

/AS/CLAY.

ANYWAY.

HAWKE:

BUT EVERY PREMIER AROUND AUSTRALIA IS SAYING IN RESPECT OF THEIR OWN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY. AFTER ALL SEWERAGE IS A STATE MATTER. NOT SOMETHING - THE COMMONWEALTH DOESN'T ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEWERAGE ALL ROUND AUSTRALIA. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT. BUT WHAT WE'RE SAYING IS ALRIGHT, HERE IS A REAL PROBLEM IN LAUNCESTON. WE'VE SENT ENGINEERS DOWN HERE TO MAKE THEM AVAILABLE UNDER MR UREN'S DEPARTMENT, TERRITORIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, AND THE PEOPLE OF LAUNCESTON AT THE COUNCIL WERE RESPONSIVE TO THAT, SO WE'RE WANTING TO FOLLOW THAT UP IMMEDIATELY, WE'RE SAYING LOOK HERE'S THE MONEY THAT'S AVAILABLE, LET'S USE \$4 OF THAT. NOW I WOULD THINK THAT THE PEOPLE OF LAUNCESTON ARE NOT GOING TO BE TOO PLEASED ABOUT MR GRAY SAYING NO HE DOESN'T WANT TO HAVE THAT AS A PRIORITY.

BYNER:

WELL SPEAKING OF HIS NIBS, PREMIER GRAY, HE AND THE CABINET ARE ON THE WEST COAST AT QUEENSTOWN, DOUBTLESS TELLING THE PEOPLE OF THE WEST COAST THAT YOU WANT TO SPEND WHAT THEY SEE AS THEIR MONEY IN OTHER PARTS OF TASMANIA. DO YOU THINK THIS COULD REALLY HARM YOUR PARTY'S CHANCE OF PICKING UP OF TASMANIAN SEATS?

HAWKE:

NO, IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF US WANTING TO SPEND THEIR MONEY IN OTHER PARTS. LET'S TAKE THE WEST COAST. I WENT OVER THERE VERY EARLY IN THE PIECE. IT WAS ALL SORTS OF SUGGESTIONS I WAS GOING TO BE THE NEXT, IN FACT I WAS GOING TO GOVERN TASMANIA. BUT I GOT A VERY WARM RECEPTION FROM THE PEOPLE OVER THERE. I GOT SUCH A WARM RECEPTION THAT IT LED MR GOODLUCK TO SAY, AND ISN'T THIS REMARKABLE, IT LED MR GOODLUCK TO SAY HE WAS ASHAMED TO BE A TASMANIAN I HOPE THE PEOPLE OF TASMANIA REMEMBER THAT ABOUT MR GOODLUCK. HE WAS SO INCENSED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA GOT A GOOD RECEPTION IN TASMANIA THAT HE SAID HE WAS ASHAMED TO BE A TASMANIAN. NOW THAT WAS THE REACTION I GOT. I WENT OVER THERE AND WE HAVE PUT A LOT OF MONEY INTO THE WEST COAST OF TASMANIA ALREADY, INCLUDING STRAHAN AND OTHER PLACES. AND THERE'S BEEN TOTAL AGREEMENT. I JUST ASK LISTENERS TO REMEMBER THAT ON THE 26TH OF JUNE WHEN HE SIGNED THE AGREEMENT, MR GRAY SAID UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT MR HAWKE HAD HONOURED HIS PROMISES AND HIS UNDERTAKING. YOU SEE, HE'S GETTING INTO AN ELECTORAL SITUATION NOW, AND ALTHOUGH HE'S NO GOOD FRIEND OF MR PEACOCK, AS WE ALL KNOW, THERE'S A CERTAIN, I MEAN THEY'RE BOTH LIBERALS AND SO HE'S GOT TO PLAY A BIT OF POLITICS. BUT THE PEOPLE OF TASMANIA WILL SEE THROUGH THAT.

/BYNER: WHILST WE'RE TALKING

BYNER:

WHILST WE'RE TALKING ON THE WEST COAST, WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE PROBABLE CLOSURE OF MT LYELL MINE?

HAWKE:

WELL I NOTICED THE STATEMENT OF CONCERN BY THE RENISON GOLDFIELD CORPORATION WHO RUN THE COMPANY. ALL I CAN SAY IS, AS OF COMING HERE TO TASMANIA, WE HAVE RECEIVED NO COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMPANY OR THE STATE GOVERNMENT ABOUT THIS, SO THEY HAVEN'T BEEN IN TOUCH WITH US ABOUT IT AT ALL. IF THEY SHOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH US, WELL OF COURSE WE'LL LOOK AT WHAT THEY'VE GOT TO SAY. I EXPRESS MY DEEP CONCERN THAT THERE MAY BE THIS PROBLEM, AND I THINK THERE'S SOME 640 PEOPLE EMPLOYED AT THE MINE, THE BASIC PROBLEM AS THE COMPANY HAS INDICATED IS A LOW AND CONTINUING LOW WORLD PRICE FOR COPPER. I'VE RECENTLY BEEN HAVING DISCUSSIONS WITH PEOPLE IN THE INDUSTRY AND - ON THE MAINLAND - MT ISA MINES PEOPLE WERE TALKING TO US AT SOME LENGTH - AND THEY WERE SAYING THAT THE RATHER UNUSUAL FEATURE OF THE WORLD PATTERN AT THE MOMENT, THAT IS THAT THERE'S BEEN A LIFT IN WORLD ACTIVITY AND DEMAND, BUT BECAUSE OF THE VERY CONSIDERABLE ACCUMULATED STOCK ON THE WORLD MARKET, THAT THEY MAKE THE JUDGEMENT THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE A FURTHER RUNDOWN OF STOCKS TO ABOUT 300,000 TONS FURTHER, BEFORE YOU'LL SEE THE IMPACT OF INCREASING DEMAND BEING REFLECTED IN HIGHER PRICES. NOW I EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT RENISON GOLD MAY TAKE THE SAME VIEW THAT WITHIN A RELATIVELY SHORT PERIOD THERE WILL BE AN UPLIFT IN WORLD PRICES AND THAT THEY WILL BE PREPARED TO CARRY ON ON THAT BASIS. I MEAN OBVIOUSLY NO COMPANY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CARRY ON FOREVER CARRYING SIGNIFICANT LOSSES, BUT I WOULD SUGGEST TO THEM, ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO ME THAT THERE IS SOME REASON FOR OPTIMISM IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE AND I HOPE THAT GIVEN THE DEDICATED SERVICE OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE COMPANY OVER MANY YEARS, THAT THEY'LL TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT.

BYNER:

PRIME MINISTER, THE FREIGHT EQUALISATION RATES HAVEN'T BEEN ALTERED SINCE YOUR GOVERNMENT'S ENTIRE TERM SO FAR. I KNOW THERE IS AN INQUIRY ON AT THE MOMENT TO DETERMINE THE WHOLE SITUATION RE THE FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME. THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ERODED VALUE OF THE AMOUNT WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS ACTUALLY PUTTING INTO THE SCHEME. WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE ANY COMMENT?

HAWKE:

I CERTAINLY WOULD. WE'VE PROVIDED \$29.3 MILLION THIS FINANCIAL YEAR FOR THE TASMANIAN FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME AND IF YOU LOOK AT ALL THAT WE'RE PROVIDING IN RESPECT OF TRANSPORT, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING ABOUT \$2 MILLION A WEEK TO TASMANIA'S TRANSPORT NEEDS. THAT'S MADE UP OF \$29.3

MILLION FOR THE

MILLION FOR THE FREIGHT EQUALISATION SCHEME, THERE'S \$51 MILLION FOR ROAD FUNDING THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, AND THAT'S A 42% RISE SINCE 82-83, THE YEAR BEFORE WE CAME INTO OFFICE. HISTORICALLY HIGH INCREASE BY THIS GOVERNMENT IN ROAD FINDING. WE'VE PROVIDED \$18.1 MILLION TO THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS COMMISSION TO SUBSIDISE THE OPERATING LOSSES OF THE TASMANIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM, AND \$3 MILLION TO HELP THE REHABILITATION OF THE TASMANIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM AND \$5.6 MILLION TO PROVIDE AIR FARE SUBSIDIES BETWEEN THE MAIN TASMANIAN PORTS AND MELBOURNE. SO THAT'S ABOUT \$2 MILLION A WEEK TO MEET THE TRANSPORT NEEDS OF TASMANIA. BUT MORE THAN THAT, AND I JUST WANT TO MAKE THIS POINT IN REGARD TO PARTICULARLY I GUESS THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN TASMANIA, WHAT WE ARE DOING AS DISTINCT FROM THE OPPOSITION WHO FOR YEARS AND YEARS TALKED ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA. THEY TALKED AND TALKED, WORDS ARE CHEAP WITH THE OPPOSITION PARTY, THAT'S THEIR STOCK IN TRADE, AS DISTINCT FROM WORDS WE ENGAGE IN ACTION AND WE PROVIDED \$26 MILLION, \$26 MILLION AS A NON REPAYABLE GRANT TO TASMANIA TO ENABLE THEM TO PURCHASE AND MODIFY THAT OVERSEAS VESSEL, THE 'NILS HOLGERSSON' TO REPLACE THE EMPRESS OF TASMANIA(?). NOW THAT'S A MILESTONE IN THIS AREA OF TRANSPORT. AS I SAY THE OPPOSITION IN GOVERNMENT FIDDLED AROUND WITH IT FOR YEARS AND DID NOTHING. AND WE'VE GIVEN TASMANIA THIS ENORMOUS OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THE TOURIST TRADE. NOW AGAINST WHAT WE'VE DONE THERE, AND OUR VERY FIRM AND ... ACTION, JUST ASK YOU AND YOUR LISTENERS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE PROPOSALS OF THE OPPOSITION ARE AND THEIR ATTITUDE TO TASMANIANS AND WHAT THEY WOULD DO. THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT SELLING OFF. IF THEY WERE TO GET INTO POWER, THEY WOULD SELL OFF ANL, JUST LIKE THAT. NOW YOU JUST IMAGINE WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN TO TASMANIA. BUT YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT VERY SURPRISING TO SEE THAT THEY'D DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE TRANSPORT AREA BECAUSE, I JUST ASK YOU AND THE LISTENERS TO GET SOME IDEA OF WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE OPPOSITION IS TO TASMANIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE TRANSPORT AREA. I'D LIKE TO, IF I COULD, TO READ OUT A QUESTION THAT WAS PUT IN PARLIAMENT BY THE EXISTING SHADOW TRANSPORT FOR TRANSPORT, THAT'S MR LUSHER. NOW THIS IS WHAT HE ASKED ON THE 2ND OF APRIL 1981. IT WAS A QUESTION TO MR HOWARD WHO WAS THEN TREASURER. 'SHOULD I ASK THE TREASURER WHETHER IT'S NECESSARY FOR DEFENCE PURPOSES THAT SOME AUSTRALIANS OCCUPY TASMANIA? IS THIS THE ONLY REASON WHY SOME AUSTRALIANS LIVE IN THAT STATE?' NOW THIS IS THE OPPOSITION SHADOW MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, IN THIS HYPOTHETICAL PEACOCK/HOWARD GOVERNMENT. THIS IS THE MAN WHO WOULD BE THEIR MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT. HE SAID 'WILL THE TREASURER TABLE A COST BENEFIT STUDY INDICATING HOW MUCH MAINLAND AUSTRALIAN TAXPAYERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF A POPULATION OF TASMANIA? WILL THE TREASURER CONSIDER TRANSFERRING ALL TASMANIAN SUBSIDY APPROPRIATIONS TO THE DEFENCE VOTE? FAILING THIS, CAN THE AMOUNT BE TRANSFERRED TO THE SOCIAL WELFARE VOTE. FAILING THAT, CAN SOVEREIGNTY OF TASMANIA BE TRANSFERRED TO NEW ZEALAND AND IF ANY SUBSIDIES ARE STILL REQUIRED, CAN THEY BE PAID UNDER THE FOREIGN AID VOTE?' NOW THAT'S MR LUSHER'S QUESTION.

/HOWARD GOVERNMENT WOULD BE THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT. THAT'S HIS ATTITUDE TO TASMANIA. WHAT WAS MR HOWARD'S RESPONSE TO THAT QUESTION? THAT REALLY YOU SHOULD DENUDE TASMANIA... IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, GIVE TASMANIA TO NEW ZEALAND. MR HOWARD'S RESPONSE QUOTE I THINK THAT THE BEST ANSWER I CAN GIVE TO THAT QUESTION IS TO SAY THAT I WILL ANALYSE IT THOROUGHLY." NOW THAT'S THE ATTITUDE OF THE LIBERALS TO TASMANIA. THE FELLOW WHO WOULD BE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT IN THEIR GOVERNMENT WANTS TO GET RID OF TASMANIA, GIVE IT TO NEW ZEALAND AND THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY DOESN'T DISMISS IT WITH CONTEMPT, AS IT DESERVES, BUT SAYS I WILL ANALYSE THE QUESTION THOROUGHLY. SO THERE'S YOUR CONTRAST. WHAT WE'VE DONE, WE'VE ACTED, WHERE THEY FIDDLED AND TALKED IN REGARD TO A REPLACEMENT FOR THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA, \$2 MILLION A WEEK UNDER OUR GOVERNMENT FOR TASMANIA'S TRANSPORT NEEDS, AND UNDER A PEACOCK/HOWARD GOVERNMENT, A MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT WHO WOULD GET RID OF TASMANIA TO NEW ZEALAND AND HOWARD SAYING YES I'LL HAVE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THAT THOROUGHLY.

BYNER:

THERE'S ONE ISSUE THAT I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS YOU ON AND THAT IS THAT OF THE INCENTIVE TO WORK, BECAUSE THERE ARE A LOT OF BUSINESS PEOPLE, SMALL BUSINESS PEOPLE AROUND AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING TASMANIA, WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FACT THAT THEY'RE ALL PAYING HIGHER TAXES, THAT YOU WORK OVERTIME AND YOU END UP LOSING HALF OR MORE TO THE GOVERNMENT. NOW I KNOW THAT YOU'RE CONDUCTING A REVIEW OF THE TAX SYSTEM AT THE MOMENT. IS THERE ANYTHING AT ALL THAT YOU CAN SAY SPECIFICALLY THAT CAN GIVE SOMEBODY HOPE, THAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET TAXED

HAWKE:

WELL LET ME TALK ABOUT THE POSITION OF SMALL BUSINESS UNDER OUR GOVERNMENT COMPARED TO OUR PREDECESSORS-GENERALLY, AND THEN COME TO YOUR PARTICULAR POINT. THE BEST THING THAT CAN HAPPEN FOR SMALL BUSINESS IS THAT YOU HAVE A GROWING ECONOMY. NOW I ASK THE SMALL BUSINESS MAN OR WOMAN JUST TO BE TOTALLY OBJECTIVE AND ASK THEMSELVES HOW THEY WERE DOING UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT AND HOW THEY'RE DOING UNDER THIS ONE. UNDER THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY WENT INTO ITS WORST RECESSION SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION OF THE 1930'S. YOU HAD THESE THINGS HAPPENING, ECONOMIC GROWTH HAD HALTED, YOU'D GOT INTO RECESSION, YOU HAD IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS A GROWTH IN UNEMPLOYMENT OF QUARTER OF A MILLION, YOU HAD INFLATION AT DOUBLE THE RATE, MORE THAN DOUBLE THE RATE OF THE REST OF THE INDUSTRIALISED WORLD WITH WHICH WE COMPARE OURSELVES. AND YOU HAD RECORD HIGH INTEREST RATES. NOW THAT'S THE ENVIRONMENT UNDER WHICH SMALL BUSINESS WAS STRUGGLING, UNDER THE PREVIOUS

GOVERNMENT. UNDER MY GOVERNMENT, THAT'S BEEN TURNED ROUND FROM ECONOMIC RECESSION TO THE POINT WHERE AUSTRALIA, THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS UNDER MY GOVERNMENT, HAD THE HIGHEST RATE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE WORLD. THE CREATION OF MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A MILLION NEW JOBS, HALVING, MORE THAN HALVING OF THE INFLATION RATE TO BRING IT BACK TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AND A REDUCTION IN INTEREST RATES. NOW THAT'S THE ENVIRONMENT UNDER WHICH SMALL BUSINESS DOES VERY MUCH BETTER, AND IT HAS DONE VERY MUCH BETTER. AS IS REFLECTED IN A WHOLE RANGE OF STATISTICS. SO THAT'S THE FIRST POINT. NOW, SECONDLY, IN REGARD TO TAX, IT IS THE CASE THAT UNDER THE LAST TWO BUDGETS, OF THE CONSERVATIVES, THEY HAD THE RECORD HIGH TAX TAKE AS A PROPORTION OF THE COUNTRY'S PRODUCT, AND HIGHER THAN IN OUR BUDGET, IN OUR LAST ONE. WHEN YOU TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE MEDICARE EFFECT WHICH WAS JUST A TRANSFER FROM WHAT PEOPLE WERE PAYING UNDER PRIVATE INSURANCE, NOW IF YOU TAKE THAT INTO ACCOUNT, OURS WAS LOWER IN PROPORTION TO THEIRS. NOW WHAT HE'VE PROMISED NOW FOR THE FUTURE IS AN OVERHAUL OF THE TAX SYSTEM. BUT WE'RE NOT WAITING FOR THAT OVERHAUL. WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS ALL TAXPAYERS WILL GET A SUBSTANTIAL REAL TAX CUT IN THEIR PAY PACKETS. THEY'LL BE GETTING THAT. ON AVERAGE THAT WILL BE EQUIVALENT TO AN \$11 A WEEK WAGE INCREASE. IT WILL BE MUCH LESS INFLATIONARY THAN A WAGE INCREASE. NOW WE AREN'T HYPOTHESISING ABOUT THE FUTURE. HARD REAL TAX CUTS NOW, IN A NON INFLATIONARY WAY, WE'RE SAYING TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA THAT AFTER 84 YEARS AS A FEDERATION, THE TAX SYSTEM IS NOT PERFECT, SO WE WILL HAVE A REVIEW, NOT IMPOSING IT FROM THE BACK ROOMS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, AS WOULD BE TALKED ABOUT BY THESE PEOPLE, NO CONSULTATION. LOOK AT ALL THE NEW TAXES THEY BROUGHT IN WHEN THEY WERE IN GOVERNMENT. DID THEY EVER TALK TO THE PEOPLE IN ADVANCE AND SAY, WE'LL IMPOSE A \$3 BILLION TAX SLUG ON YOU THROUGH THE CRUDE OIL LEVY, DID THEY TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE TAX ON NEWSBOY EARNINGS, DID THEY TALK TO THEM ABOUT THE VAST RANGE OF INCREASES IN SALES TAX? WE'RE NOT POTTERING AROUND AND FIDDLING AROUND LIKE THAT. WE'RE SAYING THAT AFTER THE ELECTION WE WILL HAVE FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA INCLUDING THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO SEE HOW THE RANGE OF TAXES WHICH IMPACT UPON INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES CAN BE IMPROVED, SO THAT THEY'LL BE FAIRER AND MORE EFFICIENT. NOW THAT'S THE DECENT THING TO DO, IT'S THE WAY THAT WE'VE MADE THIS ECONOMY TURN ROUND FROM RECESSION TO GROWTH BY CONSULTATION, AND THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO IN THE TAX AREA AND I LOOK FORWARD, AS I'VE TOLD THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY, TO A VERY SIGNIFICANT INPUT FROM THEM AS TO HOW THEY THINK WE CAN IMPROVE THE SYSTEM TO HELP THEM.

BYRNER:

PRIME MINISTER, SINCE YOU'VE BEEN IN OFFICE, YOU'VE GONE THROUGH A HELL OF A LOT, BOTH PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY. WHEN YOU LOOK BACK, WHEN YOU SIT DOWN AT NIGHT WITH YOUR WIFE, AS OFTEN YOU PROBABLY DO, EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T SEE

IT A LOT..

HAWKE:

I HOPE YOU DON'T SEE A LOT.

BYNER: . . .

HAS IT BEEN ALL WORTH IT?

HAWKE:

YES INDEED. YES INDEED. I'VE BEEN IN PUBLIC LIFE FOR A LONG TIME. AND SO I'M USED TO THE PRESSURES OF PUBLIC LIFE. BUT THE BIG DIFFERENCE OF THE LAST TWO YEARS, AND IT'S AN IMMEASURABLY IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IS THAT WITH MY GOVERNMENT, I'VE BEEN IN A POSITION TO DO THINGS, BEFORE - WELL WHEN I WAS PRESIDENT OF THE ACTU, YOU COULD DO THINGS TO HELP THE COMMUNITY IN MANY WAYS AND I TRIED TO DO THAT, BUT THEN AND IN OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT, THERE IS A DISTINCT LIMIT TO WHAT YOU CAN DO. NOW IN THESE TWO YEARS I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DELIVER THE PROMISE TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE THAT WITH MY COLLEAGUES I MADE. I SAID AT THE BEGINNING OF '83, THIS SOCIETY IS SICK, MORE DIVIDED THAN IT'S EVER BEEN BEFORE, THE ECONOMY IS IN STAGNATION AND I SAID I BELIEVE THAT TOGETHER WE CAN TURN THIS COUNTRY ROUND. NOW I THINK WE HAVE. IT'S NOT JUST HAWKE AND THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, BUT IT'S THE HAWKE LABOR GOVERNMENT WORKING WITH THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA. AND ALL OF US HAVE BEEN PUTTING AUSTRALIA FIRST. AND AUSTRALIA'S WINNING AGAIN AS A RESULT OF THAT. NOW, THAT'S A GREAT FEELING TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH TURNING AUSTRALIA ROUND.

BYNER:

IS BEING PRIME MINISTER GOOD OR BAD FOR A MARRIAGE?

HAWKE:

WELL IT'S BEEN GOOD IN THE SENSE THAT HAZEL AND I NOW SEE MORE OF ONE ANOTHER. WE HAVE MORE TIME TOGETHER THAN WE DID BEFORE, BECAUSE WHEN I WAS PRESIDENT OF THE ACTU AND THEN WHEN I WAS AN OPPOSITION MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, I WAS TRAVELLING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, ALL THE TIME. HAZEL WAS IN MELBOURNE WITH THE FAMILY. NOW WE LIVE THERE IN CANBERRA. WE ACTUALLY SEE MORE OF ONE ANOTHER NOW THAN WE DID BEFORE.

BYNER:

PRIME MINISTER THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SPARING THE TIME TO VISIT ME. I HOPE THAT WE'LL GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK AGAIN BEFORE THE 1ST OF DECEMBER.

HAWKE:

I HOPE SO TOO AND I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES TO ALL YOUR LISTENERS TOO. THANK YOU.

/BYNER: THANK YOU VERY MUCH