



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTS, ELECTORATE OF MAKIN, 4 DECEMBER 1986

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: What do you think about the takeover by Mr Murdoch of the Herald and Weekly Times?

PM: Very interesting.

JOURNALIST: Why?

PM: I would think by any criterion you would apply, it is an interesting one. It is going to mean some very significant changes. Mr Murdoch was courteous enough to come and see me immediately after he had lodged his offer. And he did me the courtesy of informing me of the lodging of the offer and indicated, of course, that he would abide by all requirements of the law as it stood or as it would stand.

JOURNALIST: Are those laws strong enough now in view of the takeover?

PM: I think the laws are appropriate.

JOURNALIST: Are you concerned that one media magnate can own so much in Australia?

PM: Let me say this, first of all. I am fascinated by the bleats that are coming from the Fairfax Group. I find it fascinating that this group which owns large numbers of newspapers all around the country say isn't it terrible that someone owns a lot of newspapers. What they really mean is isn't it terrible that someone may own more than us. What we are concerned in the proposals that we are putting to the Parliament is about cross-media domination in regions and if the proposals that we have are passed it will mean that, importantly, in no area will one person or organisation be able to have a monopoly of television, radio and print. And I think that is what is appropriate.

JOURNALIST: But will you have to review your laws in view of this takeover bid?

PM: I don't see that we will have to review our laws.

JOURNALIST: So you are happy with it?

PM: It is not a question of me being happy or not happy. The people of this country and certainly most of the conservative political forces have been arguing, as I understand it for a very long period, the merits of the market place, the forces of competition. I think that is what we are seeing, isn't it?

ENDS