



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTS, MOORABBIN - MELBOURNE,
SUNDAY 29 MARCH 1987

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what is the likelihood now of an early election following the Coalition decision to stay together?

PM: I haven't got anything to add to what I said before about that. I have said all along my preference is that we go full term. I will have a look at the situation but I believe the Parliament will go the full term.

JOURNALIST: Do you think the fact that the Coalition has stayed together changes matters at all?

PM: Stayed together? Haven't you read the weekend news? They are in total disarray. The most remarkable thing in Australian politics has happened this weekend. Remember what the story of the conservatives in the past has been - that the Parliamentary Labor Party is not independent, it is controlled by faceless men outside. We have now got the position where the National Party is not only controlled by the people outside - they are telling it what it will do and when it will do it. But they have gone one step further now, they have put it my hands. They have left it to Bob Hawke to determine the future policy position of the National Party. They will withdraw from the Coalition when Bob Hawke makes up his mind about an early election. Now isn't that something?

JOURNALIST: So Mr Hawke are you saying that May 9 won't be an early election?

PM: I have never said it would be, so why should I say it is not. That is marvellous. Someone else creates a proposition and says it is going to be on May 9. And now I have got to say that what someone else has said is not going to happen. You will have to do better than that.

JOURNALIST: Can you say that it won't happen on May 9?

PM: I never said it would happen.

JOURNALIST: There has been a lot of speculation.

PM: If I spent my time denying or indulging in comments upon the speculations of others I would never be able to get on with the business of running the country. And that is what we are doing.

JOURNALIST: Can you end speculation that there will be an early election?

PM: I can't stop people speculating. They have spent the whole weekend there at the Nationals' conference speculating and, as I say, putting the future of their party in my hands. I think that is fantastic. Leave it to Bob Hawke to decide when the Nationals will pull out of the Coalition. Isn't that something? Marvellous.

JOURNALIST: What about talk of the Party booking the Opera House?

PM: I must say that came as a surprise to me. I honestly didn't know that they had done it. But still, I suppose that is a conscientious secretary looking after all possibilities. I didn't know it had been done.

JOURNALIST: What do you think of Joh's push now?

PM: Joh's push, how do you spell that - p-u-t-s-c-h or p-u-s-h?

JOURNALIST: P-u-s-h.

PM: I think it is still there. And Mr Sinclair thinks it is still there. Did you look at Ian Sinclair and Ralph Hunt on the television while Joh was speaking. When Joh stood up and said "I bring you good news", he announced to the National Party, with his hands like the messiah, "I bring you good news, the Coalition is finished". And did you look at Mr Sinclair. Marvellous. They are a happy little bunch of pilgrims, aren't they?

JOURNALIST: So has this weekend been a time to weigh pros and cons of an early election?

PM: No. I went to the football and saw the Swans have a magnificent victory. I was doing things other than thinking about politics. Did you see them? Marvellous victory.

JOURNALIST: So do you still hope to be the Prime Minister to take Australia into its bicentennial year?

PM: Yes, I will be.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, I understand there is a Government meeting in Canberra today finalising details of the mini-budget. Can you say what areas -

PM: That is absolutely wrong. Finalising the details? There is a meeting of the ERC, but that would be going on at any rate. They are meeting, they will be meeting for days and days. And I noticed amongst this early talk of speculation that I had summoned a full meeting of the Ministry to discuss the early election. That meeting of the Ministry was called some time ago and for other matters. And I saw one fervid piece of speculation that I had told them all to turn up in dark suits to look serious and responsible. If I had told them all to turn up in dark suits you know what

Bill would do - my mate Bill Hayden. He would deliberately come along in that beautiful yellow checked suit of his. People are letting their imaginations run a bit wild. It is a normal meeting - to call the full Ministry together to consider other matters. I don't think they will all be in dark suits. Some of them might even come in open-necked shirts.

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