



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF COMMENTS, PARLIAMENT HOUSE - MONDAY 6 APRIL 1987

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

PM: You've been waiting since when?

JOURNALIST: 9.00 o'clock.

PM: Are you getting a bit hungry?

JOURNALIST: Not really. How do you feel about four year terms Prime Minister?

PM: I've made it quite clear all along, I think four year terms make a lot of sense.

JOURNALIST: Are you going to speak to Mr Howard about it soon?

PM: Is he the one to speak to, or is it Mr Elliot?

JOURNALIST: Do you think Mr Elliot is going to make it?

PM: I don't know, I really don't know, but there is time for these things and I'll speak to the Leader of the Opposition, whoever that is, at the appropriate time.

JOURNALIST: You must think he'd be a formidable opponent?

PM: No I don't.

JOURNALIST: About the four year term, would you be considering it as a fixed term, or would the Prime Minister still have the option to go early?

PM: Well I think there are arguments both ways. I notice that in the proposal put by the Business Council of Australia they were not suggesting it be a fixed term, that there should be still some options there for a prime minister. They made the judgment, that I guess is valid, that with four year terms you'd be getting at least three years, but I'm a full term man, as you know.

JOURNALIST: What are the benefits of going long term?

PM: Having four years? Well the obvious ones that I think are recognised right around the world, with three years it gives the Government not enough time normally, I think, to be prepared to take all the decisions, the hard decisions that are necessary.

The Government gets in, it is settling in, it has a year or so and then it's thinking about the next election. Unfortunate for this Government because we've been prepared to make the tough decisions from the word go and keep on doing it. But for any government, including my own, I guess there is a greater sense of confidence if you've got the longer period of four years than three.

JOURNALIST: Would you like to see a referendum on this at the next election?

PM: Well obviously I'll give consideration to that.

JOURNALIST: Would you consider clouding the issue by throwing -

PM: I never cloud any issue.

JOURNALIST: several referendum proposals in one, instead of just the one?

PM: No. Why would I do that? That would be silly.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, on another issue, the plumbers' union building up a campaign, demanding the repeal of 45D. How do you feel?

PM: I've got no sympathy for the plumbers' union. I've got a lot of sympathy for members of unions, but I've got no sympathy for the leadership of the plumbers' union which has misled its membership very badly.

JOURNALIST: One final point Prime Minister, the reaction to the Aids commercial. Sir, there has been a lot of criticism that it is too shocking, that it is too brutal.

PM: I also notice that there has been some criticism that it hasn't been shocking enough, so it just goes to show that you can't win them all.

ends