



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP, JOHN CURTIN HOUSE, 10 MARCH 1989

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JOURNALIST: Was there any progress last night Sir, on the Airport question?

PM: There was progress. We went very late but it's an extraordinary, complex issue and a lot of figures have to be examined, tested and I think this is an issue of such importance that the public will expect us to take our time in making sure that we get it right and that's what I want to do. So it'll be up for consideration again next week.

JOURNALIST: How much time do you think it'll take?

PM: Well as I said yesterday I hope we'll be able to get it next week, it may take a little bit longer. I hope we can get it done next week. And of course we've got another issue on our plate to consider next week too. The question of the Wesley Vale Pulp Mill so it's a pretty substantive week.

JOURNALIST: Will you be discussing Wesley Vale Pulp Mill today?

PM: In here? At the Executive? No.

JOURNALIST: Are you concerned about ASIO's latest assessment of the level of spying in Australia?

PM: Well they're saying that given the expansion of the region that the number of countries may be increasing their recruitment amongst the community. All I can say is that I have total confidence in our relevant security organisations, total confidence.

JOURNALIST: Does it concern you nevertheless that there seem to be more spies in migrant groups, in emigre communities?

PM: It is, I guess, more likely in any - this is not a phenomenon of Australia. In any community where you have migrant groups that's you know a possibility and this mustn't be used - and I hope it's not implicit in your question - of tarring migrants. It's just a fact of life in any country that that may be the case. ... our migrants overwhelmingly have a commitment to this country and as I say on the other hand I have total confidence in our relevant organisations.

JOURNALIST: If spying is on the increase do you think we need to increase ASIO?

PM: Don't let's get carried away that we would be suddenly overwhelmed by spies. I mean you really want to get these things into perspective. The resources of our relevant organisations are appropriate. If there were any need for change it would be made.

JOURNALIST: What's your reaction to the Auditor-General's report which was severely critical of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission?

PM: Well let me say two things about that. Obviously I haven't had the chance to read it in detail but that is in the process of being examined by the relevant Departments. I will also certainly read it myself as soon as I get the time, read it in full. But I must say I'm very interested to see the media reaction, given all the hype that was going on before, I mean there seems to be the general conclusion that there's not much gold in it for those who were seeking to make great ore body out of this.

JOURNALIST: inaudible

PM: Let me finish, let me finish. The other thing to say is of course this is one of a number of reports that have been commissioned by the Government and it's not appropriate therefore to make a detailed response until we've got all those reports. Now we'll have those I hope before the Parliament resumes and it'll be my intention to make a comprehensive statement about this and all relevant reports then. It's inappropriate to go any further at this stage and I don't intend to.

JOURNALIST: Do you think it clears Charlie Perkins to any extent?

PM: Well I think it's fair to say in that respect that Charlie Perkins on that report is cleared but I'm not making any further comment about it for the reasons I've just said.

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