

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, PAUL KEATING, - DOORSTOP
22 DECEMBER 1991

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J: When will you be announcing the new Ministry?

PM: As soon as I can, but I want a chance to talk to my colleagues and that will be afforded to me in the next few days.

J: Do you plan big changes?

PM: There's no point in speculating about it - let's just wait and see. But between Christmas and New Year, I'd say at the latest.

J: Who'd make the best Treasurer?

PM: Well that's something ... the whole Ministry will be announced at once.

J: Will people see a return to high airfares now that Compass has dropped out of the race, Mr Keating?

PM: I think you're going to see a competitive airline system. I'm not sure whether the Compass targets could have been sustained. It looks as though probably they couldn't have. But we will see a competitive airline system, which we never had in the old days of regulation.

J: And what about Mr Grey? He's blaming the Federal Government.

PM: Well I think that's unfair, but our principle interest now is the Compass passengers and their families. And we've arranged now for, I think, another seven or eight thousand Compass passengers to be taken up today by the two airlines which have now chartered new capacity. Qantas is also involved in a 767 charter, and Ansett and Australian Airlines have chartered large aircraft from Qantas, and we've got the Airforce's 707s on standby if we need them. But we think that most passengers will be able to be lifted, and if they are taken to their destination before the 15th of January, we pretty well guarantee they'll be taken back at the same deep discounts.

J: Just on another issue, are you happy at the level of pressure that Senator Evans put on the Indonesians on his visit this week?

PM: Well I have got to speak to Senator Evans. I did have a brief conversation with him the other day, and before I comment on that I'd prefer to speak to him directly.

J: Can we expect a bit of a reshuffle at the top level of the public service, as well as the Cabinet?

PM: I'm looking at the Departmental structures as well as the Ministry.

J: When do we expect an economic statement?

PM: Well, that you'll have to wait for. We've got to decide our schedule on that. Thank you.

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