



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP,
DOORSTOP, SOUTHERN CROSS HOTEL, SYDNEY 29 MAY 1992

E&OE PROOF ONLY

- J: Mr Keating, two and a half years jail for Alan Bond - any sympathy for him?
- PM: I'm not here to comment about Mr Bond, that's for the appropriate authorities to make a judgement about.
- J: Do you have any concerns, as Treasurer, about the closeness to the Prime Minister at the time to Mr Bond?
- PM: I've got no discussion. Mr Bond is, obviously subject to these proceedings in Western Australia and that's a matter for the authorities involved.
- J: Could you elaborate a bit more on the pamphlet released by the Coalition?
- PM: I think this pamphlet shows just how desperate John Hewson is and it will also reveal to the Australian people that while he's pretended he's been thinking about thoughtful policy, that when it gets down to the bottom line it is just a bit of shabby politics that he's on about. The notion that he's going to first of all ascribe to the Commonwealth Labor Party the violence in Australia and the Australian states since 1983 and say this has happened under Labor, and then to make the unbelievable leap and distortion that a consumption tax can do anything about it, must reveal to all Australians that this man is bereft of any decent strands of serious policy and he ought to be dismissed by serious people of having any answers to Australia. This is a very shabby piece of politics.

- J: Mr Keating, what are you going to do about the NSW factional fight that's going on at the moment?
- PM: We've just been watching the Liberal Party factional fight last week. Mr Fife, the Leader of Opposition business in the House of Representatives was in a position of being defeated in his seat and he's had to stand down as had Senator Durack in Western Australia, the Shadow Attorney-General. Dr Hewson has had to replace both of them in the last week. Obviously pre-selection battles are not something which the Labor Party alone has a problem with, so does the Coalition. For my part, the best thing my party can do is resolve these quickly.
- J: Is it about time the Labor Party in fact changed the nature of its factional politics?
- PM: You may as easily direct the question to the Liberal Party, why is the Leader of Opposition business in the House of Representatives now required to stand down and not contest his seat? Mr Fife, who was a serious and senior person, is now obviously on the back bench. Senator Durack will be a Senator for not much longer. There are factions - he was a victim of the Crichton-Browne faction of the Western Australia Liberal Party. There are points of view in all parties and one of the healthy things about Australian democracy and Australian politics is there are such views and that people can actually get their opinion heard and can secure public office as a result. The important thing I think for us as a Party, for the Labor Party as a party, is to get these selections over with.
- J: Are you going to stand by and watch Mr West go, when he says he has worked very hard for your party?
- PM: It's not a matter of me standing by any one person. The best thing in all of this for us is to have them resolved quickly. But I just make the point to you that pre-selection battles are obviously always a matter for both major parties whenever an election is within some proximity.
- J: Could his boycott undermine the 'One Nation' Statement?
- PM: Come on now, don't be absurd.
- J: It's being claimed it can.
- PM: Oh well yes, yes.

J: What about the question of Ministerial responsibilities Mr Keating. What are you going to do about, in particular, Ros Kelly?

PM: It's a matter of the orders and gravity of things, that's the thing that matters. These are the sorts of things which hardly get a line some weeks, but in other weeks do. I've spent my week on the big issues including, as I've just come from the tourism industry looking at, at the Cabinet level, a national strategy for tourism. So the Government was in its Cabinet room looking at serious policy while the Opposition was throwing silly questions in the Senate.

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