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## PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
INTERVIEW WITH FRAN KELLY, ABC RADIO, THURSDAY, 11 MAY 1995**

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**FK:** Paul Keating, Democrat Leader, Cheryl Kernot, is calling for a Senate inquiry into the figuring of the Budget and the integrity of the figuring - what's your response to that?

**PM:** Well, it's just a waste - a waste of time and a waste of money. I mean, the Senate is running around having inquiries - they're a dime a dozen, a dime a dozen. There are very few countries around the world that produce Budget documents of this level of transparency. But there is some sort of implied notion that the Budget documents are not the Government's, you know, somehow they belong to the bureaucracy and that the Government is sort of shop-soiling them. They've got the Treasurer's name on them, every line in there belongs to the Government.

**FK:** But given the whole thrust of the Opposition's attack on your Budget as being the credibility of the figures and whether they are believable or not, wouldn't an inquiry like this clear that up?

**PM:** But that's what they said last year, that the investment numbers were too high and the growth numbers were too high, and we doubled the investment numbers and the growth numbers were exceeded by a quarter of a percentage point of GDP. I mean, these claims come every year but the notion that the Senate should go, you know, with a further, sort of, abuse of its functions and wasting its time and its money into the Budget's preparation is only something to get, I'm afraid on this occasion, Senator Kernot a quick line in a newspaper.

**FK:** Well, Senator Kernot said that she will support your Budget ultimately, the bottom line of your Budget. If her job is as they see it, and many of the people see it, is to keep the bastards honest, why not give an inquiry and that will show that you're there to be kept honest, and you're willing to be kept honest?

**PM:** But this is the Executive Government of Australia, we won the election, not the Democrats. For my part, I've presented eight Budgets and seven May Statements and the Treasurer's presented now two, and you already had a note from the Secretary to the Treasury saying that the forecasts were the Treasury's exclusively - the rest of the documents are the Government's, so it's not a matter, so what's she trying to establish? Are these the Government's documents or are they not? Well, they are, I can tell her.

**FK:** Prime Minister, just before you go, we've just seen the latest unemployment figure, it's down .4 to 8.3 - what's your response to that?

**PM:** Well, at the time of the election it was 10.5 per cent - it's the largest fall in unemployment we've seen since we've been keeping the records. It means that the Government has kept faith with the unemployed and it's kept its fidelity to its principal commitment in the election campaign - to restart growth and to get unemployment down. And, this gives the lie to the John Howard line that there was only five minutes of sunshine. We've now had three years of growth, the Treasury is saying we've got three sustainable years coming up and you can see in today's numbers how could there be simply five minutes of sunshine with tremendous employment growth like this? It leaves Mr Howard without a feather to fly with.

**FK:** Should you be preparing to revise your Budget forecast already which is only 8 per cent for the year?

**PM:** No, we're saying 8 per cent for the year, it's a conservative estimate, but again if we can drop unemployment from 10.5 per cent to 8 per cent over the course of this three year period, it will be the biggest fall we've ever recorded. Now, the participation rate jumps around but I think in these numbers, about 90,000 job growth for the month, as I said, the Australian people should be very happy with this. But I make the political point, it leaves John Howard without a feather to fly with.

**FK:** Prime Minister, thank you.

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