



**PRIME MINISTER**

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
DOORSTOP, RAAF FAIRBAIRN, CANBERRA, 16 NOVEMBER 1995**

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**J: Mr Keating, are you concerned with the maritime strike and the coalminers strike following that?**

**PM: Well I spoke to the principals overnight - Mr Davis, Mr Kelty and Mr Pallas from the ACTU - and I think we may have a resolution of it. I am optimistic that we might be able to tidy it up by midday or thereabouts.**

**J: Are you aware the strike kicked off early in Melbourne at 7.00 am this morning?**

**PM: Well I think the main issues in the dispute are likely to be settled and they are that all the civil actions that CRA was going to mount against the individuals and the organisations be taken off and that the principle of equal work for equal pay and the right of people to bargain collectively without discrimination against that being offered by a contract - I think these are the issues which are likely to be agreed. What has been at issue here is contracts being offered at prices and at wages above what the award is being offered at or any collective bargain and then, of course, when there is no union well the fear is the wages then go down. So these are weighty issues being debated. But, I think, the parties are close to an agreement and I am optimistic we can get it settled.**

**J: The ACTU says that there needs to be changes to the IR legislation. Will you be looking at that?**

**PM: Well I don't think there needs to be changes in this matter and CRA has been one of the few companies doing this and I think if it can be settled, it would be good for everybody. Good for the IR system, good for the economy.**

J: Who is going to pay Carmen Lawrence's legal bills if it's not passed by the Senate?

PM: Well, look, the Royal Commission is the most vicious political stunt that has been mounted in Australia probably since the War. And, I think, before the Liberals take it any further, they ought to recollect that both Mr Howard and Mr Court have very faulty memories about this - both of them - when asked about their own recollections, they were decidedly faulty and dodgy and I just say this, that the Australian people recognise a hypocrite in a fog ten kilometres off. And they can see the hypocrisy here and for the Commissioner to have said that professionally he could only judge things on half the evidence and then bring down such rock solid recommendations calls into question his own credibility.

J: [inaudible] perjury contempt charges?

PM: Well I am just saying I think they should consider carefully before they go any further with these vicious stunts because Mr Court made it very clear that he couldn't recollect his matters when asked and Mr Howard made it clear he couldn't recollect what he said to Mr Court. So before they start now going back to the courts, they all should remember that all governments have these powers - all governments, including the Federal Government.

J: Is Carmen Lawrence something of a liability?

PM: No, none whatsoever. I mean I think the public support for her has been manifest and, of course, the intellectual drivel which the Commissioner engaged in, when the press wrote the Commissioner and his Commission off, saying "the quicker the inquiry should be round up the better" - "you have got to wonder what the point of Royal Commissions are" - "I can't make a judgement on half the evidence". What does he do? He brings down these findings as though they were all a matter of, you know, tablets from a mount. I mean it is just disgraceful.

J: There are suggestions that President Clinton is unable to attend APEC? Will that devalue the summit and do you remain confident that ....

PM: Oh, it wouldn't devalue the summit, but I would very much like to have him there. But, of course, he has essentially a budget crisis on in the United States and no doubt that is attracting his attention.

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