PRESS STATEMENT:

June 22nd, 1964

MALCOLM FRASER'S SECOND REPORT FROM OTTAWA

DEFENCE RE-ORGANIZATION:

I spoke with the Canadian Defence Minister Hellyer and with other officers in Canada about the revolutionary organization that Canada is beginning to institute in its armed services. Defence Minister Hellyer says that the objective is one service, one uniform. The changes are going to be radical even though they will be introduced gradually. One of the reasons for this is, I think, that Canadians will have much less integration of the higher command than we have had in Australia. I believe Australia has developed a pretty reasonable line of authority to the Government through the various departmental, service and cabinet committees. There seems to be no such line of communication in Canada. Indeed, six different authorities have the independent right of approach to the Defence Minister and he has to try and decide between all six.

Whether the Canadian experiment, and they freely admit it is an experiment, is a success or not it will certainly provide a great deal of interest for defence forces in other countries, and other Services will be keenly watching the results of this Canadian experience. Whether they succeed or fail in the full objective of having one Service one uniform the lessons that they will learn will provide useful examples for other countries, especially ones of the same order of size like Australia.

I found the Canadian official view on South-East Asian problems a relatively cautious one but not really greatly different from the view that I had been experiencing in the rest of the North American Continent. Because of French influence the Canadians have always been most concerned to show their independence from the United Kingdom and from Europe. Despite this, in many things I found the British influence which, on the surface seemed to be greater than in Australia. I can go to Parliamentary examples to show this. During an argument in the Parliament the Speaker was called upon to make a difficult decision. He had done his homework well and he had various parliamentary authorities open on the desk before him and before giving his ruling he quoted from them at length.

The parliamentary authorities were the traditional Rules of Procedure written by people in the United Kingdom about the United Kingdom House of Commons. In Australia I don't think our Speaker would have done any more than refer to our own Standing Orders or Rules of Procedure, but in Canada the reference to Britain and British rules was clearly made. This may be a small example, but it was symptomatic of many other things that I noticed which pointed in the same direction. Their political pre-occupation with Europe and with what goes on in Europe instead of looking towards Asia is another example of this. One might say that concern with Europe is natural for Canada, because of her ties with that country, but Canada is not much further from Asia than it is from Europe, and her giant neighbour to the south - the United States - finds no difficulty in looking in both directions. Canada appears to look only in one direction insofar as she looks at all beyond her boundaries at this present point of time.

It may perhaps be a little unfair to stress too much the pre-occupation with domestic issues that I have mentioned, because this could result partly from the fact that the Prime Minister is ruling with a minority Government, depending upon the support of three other small Parties.
The position is that there is a Liberal Party, which is in power. The largest Party in the Opposition is the Conservatives under ex-Prime Minister Diefenbaker. Then there are three small Parties which, if they combine with the Conservatives, could defeat Prime Minister Pearson. These small splinter Parties however have not done this, they find they have more feelings in common with the Government than with the Diefenbaker Party. This does mean, however, that the Government is particularly concerned with the feelings and attitudes of these small Parties and these Parties are themselves concerned with domestic issues.