

## **THE REMOVAL OF WHITLAM**

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1. There is an incident in Australia when a Prime Minister was removed by the Governor-General. ([read here](#))

2. I quote below an account of the incident:

*"The first duty of a Government, even a reforming Government, is to govern well. The Whitlam (Prime Minister Gough Whitlam) Government was a blundering, poorly disciplined government. Whitlam himself was so committed to the platform and his mandate that he refused to change course when Australia along with the rest of the world entered an economic recession in 1974. He continued to spend big money on his reform program when he should have been cutting back on spending. The Government's biggest blunder was to enter into a dodgy scheme to raise a huge loan overseas so that the State could become the owner of mineral and gas resources. The Government pretended that this was a loan for "temporary purposes" so that it did not have to tell anyone about it."*

3. When this became known, the liberal leader Malcolm Fraser said that the Government was so bad and so damaging to Australia that he would force it to go to the people.

4. Whitlam declared he would never give in and hold an election.

#### DEADLOCK IN THE PARLIAMENT, 1975

The Senate will defer a vote on the budget until the Government calls an election because of:

- the continuing incompetence, evasion, deceit and duplicity of the Prime Minister and his Ministers as exemplified in the overseas loan scandal which was an attempt by the Government to subvert the Constitution, to by-pass Parliament and to evade its responsibilities to the States and the Loan Council;
- the Prime Minister's failure to maintain proper control over the activities of his Ministers and Government to the detriment of the Australian nation and people;
- the continuing mismanagement of the Australian economy by the Prime Minister and this Government with policies which have caused a lack of confidence in this nation's potential and created inflation and unemployment not experienced for 40 years.

The House of Representatives responds:

- This House affirms that the Constitution and the conventions of the Constitution vest in this House the control of the supply of moneys to the elected Government.
- This House asserts the basic principle that a Government that continues to have a majority in the House of Representatives has a right to expect that it will be able to govern.
- This House condemns the threatened action of the Senate as being reprehensible and a constituting a grave threat to the principles of responsible government and of parliamentary democracy in Australia.

5. Whitlam said again and again that the Governor-General would act only on his advice. In normal times that was true. But in times of crisis, a Governor-General does have special powers. Kerr (Governor-General Sir John Kerr) began to think he would have to use them.

6. So Kerr acted secretly without any warning, on 11 November 1975, he dismissed Whitlam as Prime Minister, installed Fraser as caretaker Prime Minister.

7. After Kerr had made up his mind to sack Whitlam, he checked with Sir Garfield Barwick (Chief Justice of the High Court) to see whether he was doing the right thing. Barwick said he was.

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