PRESS STATEMENT:

MALCOLM FRASER: Washington, June 1st, 1964

WHERE TO LOOK FOR FUTURE LEADERS - AUSTRALIA & UNITED STATES COMPARED:

The last few days have been particularly busy ones. The State Department, that's what the American's call their Department of External Affairs, has arranged a great number of appointments for me with people in their own State Department, in their Department of Agriculture and at the Pentagon - which is what they call their Department of Defence. There is no special reason for that, but the building was built in the shape of a Pentagon, so when anyone refers to the Defence Department they now just say the Pentagon.

Some of these interviews are repetitive because in many instances I find that I am talking about the same problems to many different people who perhaps deal with a slightly different aspect of it. This is useful, especially when important issues like South Vietnam or Indonesia are raised, because it means that the matter is examined from every possible point of view.

There is one thing which is immediately striking to an Australian in the American system, and this is because our parliamentary system is so different and perhaps we don't realise the extent of the difference from afar. In Australia we look for future leaders from the Parliament. These will be the future Ministers and the future Prime Ministers of our country. If they are not in the Parliament now they will join the Parliament at some future time because this is the training ground and the breeding ground of the future leaders. This is because of our Parliamentary system in which Ministers and the Prime Minister must be of the Parliament. In the United States it is quite different and although we know and understand the difference we don't realize the significance that this has and the effect it has upon the American House of Representatives and the American Senate. It is very rare for future American leaders to go up through the ranks of their House of Representatives. It is not quite so rare but it is still rare for American leaders to come through the Senate - that is, of course, the American Senate. This means that the American Congress attracts to some extent a different sort of person. I guess this is perhaps a difference of degree rather than a difference in kind. If you are looking for future leaders in the United States, if you are looking for a future Secretary of State - who in our terms would be the Minister for External Affairs, you don't look or it would be unusual to look in Congress itself. You may look amongst other people of the Administration who have been appointed by the appropriate President; you may look amongst people who have worked energetically and enthusiastically for the Party - the political party that is in power, you may look in the Universities. President Kennedy was notable and outstanding in that he appointed people of high university and academic distinction to many important administrative posts. It would be unusual to look to Congress. This means that an American who has the highest ambition to serve his people and to serve his country may well think twice about going into Congress, because while there are no actual limitations that membership of Congress may place upon his future career it is not necessarily the best place to further his career, to get into a position of greatest influence so that he could be of greatest service to his country.

This is an immediate and striking difference in the American and the Australian or British systems, because in our country there would be no second thoughts. A person with these ambitions, with these hopes for the future of his country would obviously enter our Federal Parliament.
because the opportunities to serve are greatest in this particular forum.

It is again because of the nature of the American systems that it is perhaps more difficult to pick future potential leaders. Before President Kennedy seriously entered in their primary contests to get the Democratic nomination there were few and perhaps no expert observers in the American scene who really believed that President Kennedy would become President. He was a member of the Senate with a record that, in many ways, was not outstandingly different from a record of other notable Senators. He is, in many respects, the exception that proves my point because he was a Senator who went on to the highest office in the land. This is a most unusual thing to happen.