PRESS STATEMENT

FEBRUARY, 1959.

It is now some time since I've reported to the men and women of this Electorate, but these reports will be made weekly from now on. They will continue at least until the end of the present Session. I may stop them again for a short while in the Winter recess, when I will be spending my time in the Electorate, visiting those places I had hoped to get around this Summer.

Unfortunately, as you probably know, I've been out of action and am still not allowed to accept any Electoral engagements. I hope to be at Canberra for the opening of Parliament on February 17th, but even this is not certain.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone publicly who has sent me messages of goodwill of one kind or another. I appreciate them all. I'm sorry I've had to refuse so many invitations to attend different functions in the last few weeks, but hope people realise that it has been outside my control. I trust that where the functions have been of an annual nature that I will be given an opportunity of attending next year.

It is often said that difficulties never come singly. About the time of the Election, my permanent secretary fell and cracked a hip bone. She managed to find a replacement for me, but she, too, unhappily, had to be rushed to hospital just after the Xmas holidays. Apparently she had been sickening for some time, and affairs in my office were in considerable disorder. As a result of this, some people who had written to me did not get answers as quickly as they should have. One or two letters that had been put away by themselves had, I'm ashamed to say, gone unanswered for several weeks. I want to apologise to the people concerned for any delays or inconvenience that may have been caused through this. It's something that I like to avoid at all costs, because acting as a contact between members of this Electorate and Government Departments of one kind or another is something I regard as one of the most important functions of any job as your Member in the House of Representatives.
I'm glad to say that many people who would probably have seen me on my usual tour round the Electorate have written to me at Nareen on many different subjects.

Parliament reassembles on 17th February for what I am sure will be a busy year. Quite apart from any new things that may occur in either the local or the international scene, the Prime Minister's policy speech foreshadowed a wealth of variety and discussion on many subjects. This month there is a controversial conference on road finance to discuss; in particular the petrol tax formula which came up for renewal or alteration at the end of the financial year.

In March at the Premiers' Conference, Mr. Bolte will be bringing the Uniform Tax position to the fore once again.

In the Federal Parliament, the Banking Bills incorporating the great new Development Bank will be reintroduced, and suggested constitutional changes will come in for close examination.

In my weekly reports, I'll be dealing with these subjects, together with many others, but for now ---

Goodbye.