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AUSTRALIA

John Malcolm FRASERMinister for Education
and Science

On 19 August 1971 Prime Minister William McMahon named Malcolm Fraser to succeed David Fairbairn as Minister for Education and Science, a position Fraser had previously held during 1968-69. The highly intelligent and capable Minister subsequently served as Minister for Defense until March 1971, when he resigned from the Cabinet in protest over former Prime Minister John Gorton's leadership.



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Relations with Gorton

Formerly one of Gorton's strongest supporters in the Liberal Party (LP), Fraser was instrumental in bringing about his fall from and McMahon's rise to the Prime Ministership. In March 1971 a newspaper correspondent revealed that he had shown to Gorton, prior to publication, a report alleging that Defense Minister Fraser had used a civilian organization to investigate the role of the Australian Army in Vietnam because he did not trust the information received from army sources. A later press article reported a conversation between Gorton and the Chief of the General Staff, Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Daly, in which the latter had been highly critical of Fraser. Gorton, who had privately sided with Daly and who was keenly aware of Fraser's apparent ambition to become Prime Minister, did not refute these reports. Fraser then resigned, charging Gorton with extreme disloyalty to a Cabinet member. He declared that Gorton had imposed strains on the LP, the government and the public service because of his unreasoned drive to get his own way and, therefore, was not fit to hold public office.

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Federal parliamentary members of the LP held an emergency meeting to hear Fraser's reasons for resigning and Gorton's reply. Despite Gorton's admission of his mistake in not refuting the press reports, he failed to receive a vote of confidence. The LP members then elected McMahon party leader (and Prime Minister) and Gorton deputy leader; Fraser returned to the backbenches of Parliament. (Gorton, who was then named to succeed Fraser as Defense Minister, was dismissed from the Cabinet in August 1971. He is publishing his rebuttal to an extremely critical book, *The Gorton Experiment*, which covers his 38-month tenure as Prime Minister.)

Relations with McMahon

McMahon remained silent throughout the confrontation between Fraser and Gorton.

 Following McMahon's election as party leader, Fraser publicly approved of McMahon as Prime Minister and pledged his continued support to the party and the government.

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Attitudes on International Issues

Fraser agrees with traditional party and government foreign and defense policies. Strongly anti-Communist, he has fully supported the US efforts in South Vietnam and has clearly indicated his desire to have a continued American presence in Asia. A longtime advocate of having Australia become more involved in Southeast Asian affairs by contributing to regional military security, he rejects any ideas of isolationism for his country.

Fraser approves of his government's attempts to open a dialogue with the People's Republic of China for possible future diplomatic recognition.

Personal Attributes

The Australian media endorsed Fraser's reappointment to the Cabinet, pointing out that



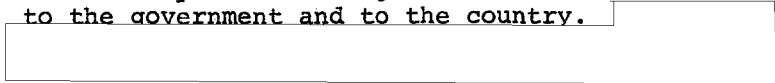
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his ability and intelligence should not be lost to the government and to the country.



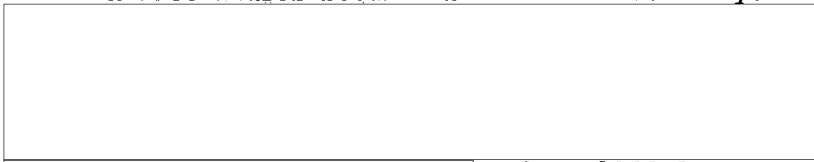
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he has earned a reputation as a hard-working, pragmatic Minister and a capable administrator. He is an ambitious, aggressive and responsible leader who must be regarded as a potential Prime Minister.

Early Life and Career

John Malcolm Fraser was born on 21 May 1930 in Melbourne. He received a master's degree in philosophy, political science and economics from Oxford University in 1952. The following year Fraser lost his first bid for a seat in the House of Representatives, but he was successful in 1955. He has served as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs (1962-66), as chairman of the Government Members of Defense Committee and as a member of the Council of the Australian National University.

In 1966 Fraser became Minister for the Army.



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In late 1966 Fraser drew criticism even from conservative newspapers for using a security report to attack a private citizen. He used the report to discredit the motivations of a mother whose 15-year-old son had refused to participate in a military training program at a private school.

During his first term as Education and Science Minister, Fraser demonstrated considerable knowledge of problems within the Ministry. Even before he assumed that post he had revealed an interest in education. For instance, several years ago,



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in a paper on tertiary educational goals for Australia, he advocated proposals that have since been put into effect in the local universities-- creation of colleges for postgraduate studies and increased government commitment to the universities.

While serving as Defense Minister during 1969-71, Fraser actively participated in the formulation of Australia's defense policy and the administration of his Department. He acknowledged that although Australia could not confront the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean, it must take account of Soviet presence there. His plans to locate an army task force in Western Australia to meet this threat did not materialize, however; this caused some observers to suggest that Fraser was probably fulfilling political promises to Western Australian LP members rather than meeting any real strategic need. He was the first Defense Minister to take an interest in the apparent deep-seated unrest throughout the military services.

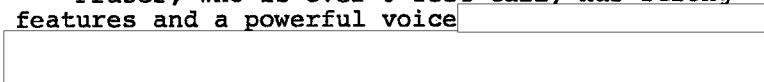
Travel

Fraser received a 60-day Foreign Leader Grant to visit the United States in 1964. He subsequently made several trips to various countries in South-east Asia to meet with senior officials. He returned to the United States in 1970 to confer with Secretary of State William Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird.

Personal Data

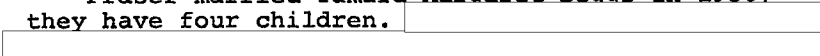
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Fraser, who is over 6 feet tall, has strong features and a powerful voice



His hobbies include fishing and photography.

Fraser married Tamara Margaret Beggs in 1956; they have four children.



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Fraser owns an 8,000-acre estate



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at Nareen, Victoria. The property, a showpiece of modern agricultural methods, supports a large number of sheep and prime cattle. The couple also owns a large home in a fashionable district of Canberra.

October 1971

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