

Australia's Gorton Denies Rumor About Liza Minelli

From News Dispatches

CANBERRA, Australia, March 20—Prime Minister John Gorton denied in Parliament today charges of improper conduct with actress-singer Liza Minelli and a 19-year-old girl journalist.

The allegations of misbehavior, which have been simmering for several days, come, however, at an embarrassing time for Gorton. He is scheduled to fly to the United States and meet with President Nixon April 1-2.

Parliament voted first not to investigate scandal charges involving Miss Minelli, 23, the daughter of Judy Garland. The house acted after Gorton said:

"As far as I am concerned, for myself, I am perfectly satisfied with my conduct."

Then Edward H. St. John, a member of Gorton's Liberal Party, rose to say that the 57-year-old Prime Minister took a 19-year-old blond to the residence of U.S. Ambassador William H. Crook in the early morning hours of Nov. 2 and stayed until dawn.

Gorton replied that he was giving the girl journalist a lift home when he called at the residence at Crook's invitation for a midnight drink, and had stayed only 30 minutes.

Crook issued a statement saying he had invited Gorton to drop in for a drink, and that the Prime Minister had stayed only 30 minutes.

The allegations concerning Miss Minelli had been brought up in Parliament by Labor-Party member Albert James, who cited as his source the Australian magazine, *Things I Hear*.

James said the magazine claimed that an English publication, *Private Eye*, had intended running a story written by Miss Minelli about alleged incidents in a Sydney night club, in Ball during a visit by Gorton to Indonesia, and in Canberra last Christmas.

However, according to *Things I Hear*, the Central Intelligence Agency paid \$15,000 for the article and sold it to several publications.

"The kind of approach made by Mr. James can do nothing but good to me and nothing but harm to him,"



Associated Press

Australian Prime Minister John Gorton and singer Liza Minellis both denied charges of scandal.

Gorton declared. "I have a belief in the Australian people and part of this belief is that this kind of political activity will not go down well with them."

The leader of the Labor Party opposition, Edward G. Whitlam, said Gorton had not made a complete denial.

"There is a suggestion that the Central Intelligence Agency bought up the rights to a story by Miss Minelli and the only inference could

be that this could be used to blackmail the Prime Minister," he said.

"If this is true, it would obviously affect not only the Prime Minister and the government but also Australia," he said.

[In Washington, the State Department denied the charges dealing with the CIA. Miss Minelli, through a spokesman in New York, and *Private Eye* in London also issued denials.]