# From the Oral History collection: Wallace Brown Audio transcript

Wallace: The first Prime Minister, of course, that I came across was Menzies. He, in fact, was more accessible than people would think, in that he had fairly regular press conferences, and he put the Canberra press gallery above the Sydney press gallery. When he came back from overseas, he almost invariably said, “I'll talk to people in Canberra,” and he would come back here and have his press conference.

Menzies was also reasonably testable in that the building made him so. There was one notable occasion which led to what I regard as quite a menacing little scoop actually, which means he gave it to me without saying a word. One night we … I was going home. I came down the steps in the government lobby, just out here where the Prime Minister's office was, and as I came down the steps out of the Prime Minister's office came Harold White, the National Librarian, followed about 20 yards behind by Harold Holt, who was then Treasurer, and Menzies.

Harold White, of course, was lobbying madly to get a proper National Library built. He was the Parliamentary Librarian and the National Librarian, but he only had his library here in Parliament House. He was lobbying for a proper building.

Anyway, as we went out there was… the procession was Harold White looking fairly angry, Harold Holt and then Menzies, and about ten yards behind came me. I came down the steps, Menzies looked at me, slight nod of recognition, and on he went. As we walked along in this progression out into the King's Hall, Menzies said to Harold, “For Christ sake Harold. Give him his bloody library and get him off my back, will you?” [laughter].

Harold then went out into the night, Harold White. Menzies and Holt went into the Treasurer’s office, presumably for a night cap, and as I went past, Menzies didn't say a word. He just turned and gave me a wink and walked in with Harold. I could tell from that what Menzies was doing. I wrote a story the next day saying the Federal Government was likely to build a National Library, and Menzies said not a word [laughter]. The story proved correct. The Cabinet approved it the next week.