

FOR PRESS :



P. M. No. 69/1967

POSTAL DISPUTE

Following are texts of further telegrams exchanged late today between the Prime Minister and the General President of the Union of Postal Clerks and Telegraphists, Mr. L. J. Benaud.

Mr. Benaud's telegram was in reply to the one sent earlier today by Mr. Holt (text already released).

Telegram from Mr. Benaud:

"YOUR TELEGRAM OF THE 29TH JUNE IS THE FIRST POSITIVE INDICATION FROM GOVERNMENT CONCERNING OUR CAMPAIGN FOR A FIVE DAY WEEK FOR POSTAL OFFICE WORKERS STOP WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THIS WAS NOT MADE CLEAR TO US WHEN FIRST A MEETING WAS ARRANGED WITH THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL ON THE 2ND JUNE AND LATER AT OUR MEETING 19TH JUNE WHEN IT WAS MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT OUR RESOLUTIONS FROM MASS MEETINGS STILL HELD CONCERNING OUR STOP WORK ACTIVITY ON JULY 1ST STOP AS THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL MADE NO MENTION FOR WITHDRAWAL OF OUR INTENDED ACTION AND AS HE ACCEPTED OUR JOINT DEPARTMENTAL UNION SUBMISSION FOR CONSIDERATION IN ABSENCE OF THE MINISTER WE UNDERSTOOD THAT HE WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT BETWEEN 19TH JUNE AND 1ST JULY TO AT LEAST INDICATE SOME POSITIVE ANSWER TO OUR SUBMISSION STOP I MUST ADVISE THAT THE THREAT BY GOVERNMENT TO A MOST LOYAL GROUP OF AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVANTS IS MOST DEEPLY FELT AND RESENTED STOP WE ARE STILL ANXIOUS TO AVERT A STOPPAGE AND BELIEVE THIS POSSIBLE EVEN AT THIS LATE HOUR STOP GENERAL SECRETARIES BAKER AND SLATER WILL BE IN CANBERRA THIS EVENING ADDRESSING POSTAL WORKERS AND IT IS STILL POSSIBLE FOR THE ASSURANCES WE SEEK TO BE CONVEYED TO THEM STOP CONTRARY TO ATTITUDE OF GOVERNMENT IN TELEGRAM FROM ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL ANDERSON ON 28TH OUR SUBMISSION FOR A FIVE-DAY WEEK FOR POSTAL WORKERS DOES NOT MEAN SATURDAY WITHOUT SERVICE."

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The Prime Minister tonight replied to Mr. Benaud as follows :-

"I REFER TO YOUR TELEGRAM OF THIS AFTERNOON. A NUMBER OF THE STATEMENTS IN YOUR TELEGRAM DO NOT ACCORD WITH THE FACTS. IF YOUR UNION AND THE APWU CANCEL THE STOPPAGES PROPOSED FOR 1ST JULY AND WITHDRAW ALL OTHER THREATS OF DIRECT ACTION THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL WILL RESUME THE EXAMINATION OF YOUR VARIOUS REPRESENTATIONS AS HE PROMISED AT THE MEETING ON 19TH JUNE. THEREAFTER I WOULD BE WILLING TO ARRANGE FOR THE MINISTER AND THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE TO MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUR UNION, THE APWU AND THE POSTMASTERS' ASSOCIATION FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO THIS MATTER BEING CONSIDERED BY THE CABINET."

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CANBERRA, 29th June, 1967