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MR. WHITLAM'S SUPPORT OF MATAUNGAN ASSOCIATION

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

Mr. Whitlam has reached new heights of arrogance.

He went to speak to the Mataungan Association - a section of the Tolai people who had used violence, who were refusing to pay taxes, who were refusing to abide by a legally elected council. He told them - according to newsmen whom he admits "faithfully reported" him - that he admired this Association, its expression, and its spokesmen and was impressed by the patriotic fervour with which they expressed their feelings.

If he does not feel that this supported and encouraged that organisation he must be the only one who doesn't. Certainly the responsible leading natives of New Guinea, who told him to go home and stop fermenting trouble, don't agree with him. I fear he has increased the risk of violence in the area.

If any apology is required it should come from Mr. Whitlam to the Australian people for stating he had undertaken this journey on their behalf, and suggesting he was their spokesman, when the Australian people had so recently refused him the right either to govern them or to speak for them.

CANBERRA
13 January 1970