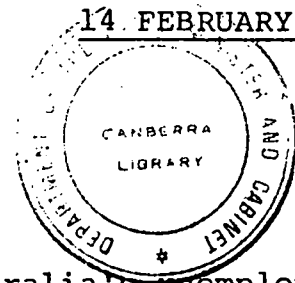


PRIME MINISTER

14 FEBRUARY 1980

From the Press Office

SUMMARY OF NEWSVOICE



The latest jobless figures out today put Australia's unemployed last month at 382,000, about 6.8% of the full-time workforce. The Bureau of Statistics says a jump of 27,000 on the December figures was caused mainly by school leavers. There was a slight improvement against the January figures last year. According to Mr Viner, the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, Australia is starting 1980 on a much better basis than last year. In Perth, Chris Hunt asked Mr Viner what he thought of Government critics who predicted  $\frac{1}{2}$  million unemployed.

Mr Viner

Well here we are, the peak figure for the season at 382,000, so I don't think those critics could read their crystal ball let alone their statistics very well. There's no way we'll reach 500,000.

Chris Hunt

Would you go so far as to say that we've definitely reached a bottoming out and that perhaps we're on the edge of a distinct improvement.

Mr Viner

In Sydney the other day, I pointed out that there are very strong indications within the economy, that the economy will improve throughout 1980 and that that will reflect itself into a continually improving employment market. In 1979 we had a very strong rise of 122,000 in the employed labour force, at the beginning of the year I don't think anybody really anticipated that and that reflects the growing strength of our economy.

Labor's spokesman on employment, Mr Mick Young, said he wasn't surprised by January's figures. He told Alister Young in Melbourne, he'd expected no improvement and there virtually was none.

Mr Young

We said last year unless the Government spent some money on job creation programmes we'd be heading into a record of high unemployment and that's exactly what we've got. You've got to add these figures to the figures put out by the Bureau of Statistics on those people who have given up hope for a job altogether. There's no doubt that we'll have well over 500,000 now that would like to go to work.

Alister Young

The figures do indicate there has been some small drop over the same period last year, what's your reaction to that.

Mr Young

A drop in these figures of about 3,000 out of a total of about 450,000 odd so it's insignificant as far as the improvement is concerned. It just exposes the rhetoric of Mr Viner and Mr Fraser and how false that is. The fact is the Government doesn't give a damn about those people

who are unemployed and intends to do nothing about it.

Wool handlers in 3 cities began walking off the job today in protest over the upholding of an appeal lodged by the Wool Brokers Federation against wage rises of up to \$15.90 awarded by the Arbitration Commission. The latest reports show more than 700 wool handlers in Sydney, Melbourne and Newcastle are now on strike and more are expected to go out tomorrow. This report from Alister Young in Melbourne. A federal secretary of the storeman and packers Union, Simon Creen, predicted last night the upholding of the appeal would spell the end of wage indexation. His argument is that no matter what evidence is presented in support of wage rises through work value exercises, the amount awarded is preset the community standard between \$8 and \$9. In his opinion, this makes a mockery of the wage fixing system. And that's the matter being discussed at present by union heads at a meeting now underway in Melbourne. The meeting is expected to draw up a plan of action to firstly consider ways of overturning the appeal benches decision and secondly, how best to pursue the claims for its members in the oil, tobacco, container terminal and paint industries. If the Storeman and Packers Union decides to pursue the claims outside the wage indexation system, they are hoping for support from the ACTU at its executive meeting next week. Meanwhile the wool workers are expected to meet around the country tomorrow to decide where and how they can reverse the appeal benches decision and win back the \$15.90 awarded by Deputy President Mr Justice Staples. Alister Young, Melbourne.

Hundreds of firefighters in Victoria are battling two big bushfires which are burning out of control.

Hopes seem to be growing daily that the 50 American hostages in Tehran are close to being released. They've been locked up now for 102 days, but Geoff MacMullan says the latest news conference given by President Carter reinforces the view that a breakthrough in negotiations isn't far off.

The Deputy Opposition Leader, Mr Lionel Bowen, says Australian security is threatened more by events in Kampuchea than in Afghanistan. Mr Bowen returned to Australia today after an Asian visit which included Hanoi and refugee camps in Thailand. Mr Bowen told Richard Palfreeman why the Kampuchean situation posed a greater threat than the Russian invasion in Afghanistan.

#### Mr Bowen

Because you could get big power and super power involvement there immediately. You could get a Russian base established in the region. You have a war there already in Kampuchea, you have massive flights of people known as refugees or as other people call them illegal migrants. Everyone of those factors would not only affect the world it would affect Australia first.

#### Question

Why then is not Mr Fraser paying attention to this area of the world.

#### Mr Bowen.

I think he's frightened of it so he'll pay attention to some other area that might suit Australia and the United States. But this is a region which we were involved militarily in 1960 due to Mr Fraser's own philosophy at that time, maybe it's a guilty conscience but if he went back there today he'd see the horrific results of our involvement in those regions. Genocide in Kampuchea, millions of people displaced,

armies actively involved in warfare and no peace and stability in sight.

### Question

What positive action then should Australia be taking to bring a degree of peace and stability to Kampuchea.

### Mr Bowen

The only way to get peace and stability in any region is to have dialogue with the people concerned. And I would think Australian Governments should immediately initiate some form of conference between those parties that would include, not exclude, Vietnamese, the Asian and anybody else we think that would assist. The idea is to neutralise Kampuchea, its important we don't recognise the horrific regime of Pol Pot, a well known communist whose responsible for the deaths of at least 3½ million Kampuchians.

Australia's largest mining house, CRA, has announced a record profit. CRA said today it made a profit of 135 million dollars in 1979. Booming world prices for copper, gold, lead and zinc were the main reasons. However the CRA result has also been kicked along by healthy rises from some of its other subsidiaries and associates. Bouganville Copper made a profit of 110 million dollars, Calmalco earned 59 million dollars, Hamersley Iron made \$31 million and Mary Kathleen Uranium \$17 million.

The Opposition leader Mr Hayden has criticised the ABC for its decision not to allow him full time to reply to Mr Frasers address to the nation last night. Mr Hayden put out a statement in Canberra describing the ABC's decision as dispicable. Barry Cassidy reports. Mr Hayden who is campaigning in Western Australia said that Mr Fraser had clearly lent on the ABC Commissioners to avoid an open debate on an embarrassing issue. Australian participation in the Olympic Games. He said it was hypocritical absurdity to pretend that Mr Frasers address last night did not impinge on party political debate. He said it called for serious analysis on some important points. Mr Hayden said he wanted to make it plain to the ABC that it could not muzzle the Labor Party, he had approached all three commercial networks asking for equal time. One network had already agreed to telecast his address, he was confident the other stations would do likewise. He said it was a matter of national shame that the ABC did not have the integrity and respect for fair play that commercial stations had shown. Barry Cassidy in Canberra.

The Winter Olympics have begun at Lake Placid in the United States. But an agency reports says they may become a fiasco because of chaos with the transport system.