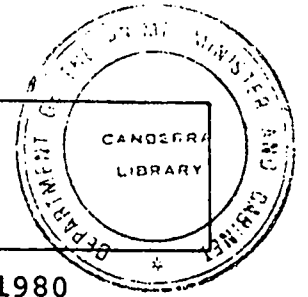




PRIME MINISTER



FOR MEDIA

THURSDAY, 24 APRIL, 1980

PAINTERS AND DOCKERS' UNION

I have written today to the Premier of Victoria proposing the establishment of a joint Royal Commission by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments to investigate allegations of illegal activities by members of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers' Union.

I have also proposed the establishment of a joint police task force, comprising members of the Australian Federal Police and the Victoria Police, to investigate concurrently allegations of illegal activities involving the painters and dockers.

If the Victorian Government agrees with our proposals, questions relating to the choice of a Royal Commissioner and the terms of reference for the Royal Commission will need to be discussed by representatives of the two Governments. I would not expect these preliminary discussions to take much time.

The allegations against members of the Union which have been reported in the media are grave, and are worthy of the most thorough investigation. For its part the Commonwealth intends that this shall be done.

Certain allegations are already being looked into by the Australian Federal Police and by the Victoria Police so far as they may involve offences against Commonwealth and State laws respectively.

We believe that a joint police task force, working concurrently with a joint Royal Commission, is the best method available to us of ascertaining the degree of truth in the allegations which have been made.