

FOR PRESS:



P.M. No. 8/1968

PMG MOTOR DRIVERS' DISPUTE

Statement by the Prime Minister, Senator John Gorton

I gave directions that I should be kept fully informed on the postal dispute during the week-end, and was kept advised of developments by the Postmaster-General and by officials.

I discussed the matter with the Chairman of the Public Service Board, Sir Frederick Wheeler, at my home this afternoon.

At midday today I had received a telegram from the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union (Mr Slater). The telegram said :-

"FEDERAL EXECUTIVE APWU OF AUSTRALIA STRONGLY URGE YOU REQUEST SIR FREDERICK WHEELER, CHAIRMAN COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD, TO CONFER WITH APWU REPRESENTATIVES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. REPRESENTATIVES IN CANBERRA TOMORROW. WILL RECEIVE ANY MESSAGE FORWARDED HOTEL KURRAJONG"

I replied this afternoon as follows :-

"I UNDERSTAND THAT AFTER YOU GAVE ASSURANCES TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO STOPPAGES THE BOARD HAD AGREED TO CONFER WITH APWU ON MOTOR DRIVERS PAY CLAIMS NEXT FRIDAY. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF YOUR TELEGRAM I HAVE ASKED SIR FREDERICK WHEELER TO BE PREPARED TO CONFER WITH THE UNION AS SOON AS THE MOTOR DRIVERS HAVE RESUMED NORMAL WORK AS DIRECTED BY THE ACTU. MATTER IS THEREFORE IN YOUR HANDS AND CONFERENCE COULD BE HELD TOMORROW AFTER RESUMPTION OF NORMAL WORK."

CANBERRA,
14 January, 1968.