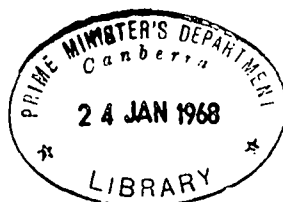


FOR PRESS:



PM. No. 9/1968

POSTAL DISPUTE

Statement by the Prime Minister, Senator John Gorton

This evening, I sent the following telegram to the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Postal Workers' Union (Mr Slater) :-

"MY TELEGRAM OF JANUARY 14 HAS ALREADY TOLD YOU THAT A CONFERENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD WILL BE ARRANGED AS SOON AS YOUR UNION WISHES AFTER THE DRIVERS HAVE RETURNED TO NORMAL, REPEAT NORMAL, WORK.

"THE BOARD WILL GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO ALL THE MATERIAL WHICH YOUR UNION PUTS FORWARD ON WAGE CLAIMS STOP I CANNOT GIVE AN ASSURANCE THAT A DECISION BY THE BOARD WILL BE GIVEN WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE BUT THERE WILL BE NO DELIBERATE OR UNDUE DELAY IN GIVING A DECISION."

This was in reply to a telegram which I received from Mr Slater this afternoon, which read :-

"YOUR TELEGRAM OF 14TH JANUARY CONSIDERED BY FEDERAL EXECUTIVE APWU STOP MY EXECUTIVE SEEKS AN ASSURANCE FROM YOU THAT IF A RETURN TO WORK TAKES PLACE THAT A CONFERENCE WITH THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD WILL BE HELD FORTHWITH AND THAT AN ASSURANCE BE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD THAT A DECISION BE GIVEN ON THE DRIVERS WAGE CLAIMS WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE CONFERENCE TAKING PLACE."

CANBERRA,
15 January, 1968.

Background Note :

The Prime Minister was kept fully informed today of all developments in this dispute. He had telephone discussions with the Postmaster-General, Mr Hulme, in Brisbane, and had talks at Parliament House with the Chairman of the Public Service Board, Sir Frederick Wheeler.
