



FOR PRESS:

P.M. No. 10/1968

POSTAL DISPUTE: UNION'S CONDITIONS UNACCEPTABLE

Statement by the Prime Minister, Senator John Gorton

At approximately 9 p.m. tonight the Government received a telegram from the Executive of the A.P.W.U. stating that the Executive would instruct its members to resume normal work but only if the Government would agree to four conditions.

The first condition is that the mail driver previously dismissed should be reinstated and this has been agreed by the Government days ago.

The second condition is that immediately after the resumption of normal work the Public Service Board would hold a conference with the Union on their pay claims and the Union has already been told that this would happen.

The third and fourth conditions were that the Public Service Board would give a decision before the conference concluded and that if their decision was unacceptable to the Union the Government should direct that the matter be referred to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commissioner.

No Government could accept dictation that the Public Service Board be directed to give a decision before the conclusion of a conference on pay claims although we have given an undertaking that there will be no deliberate or undue delay in reaching a decision.

Nor could any Government accept the proposition that existing legislation be ignored and that the dispute should bypass the properly constituted authority namely the Public Service Arbitrator and go direct to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

If the Union is dissatisfied with the Board's decision the matter should go, in accordance with existing legislation, to the Public Service Arbitrator after which the full process of arbitration becomes available.

The Government hopes that the Union will adopt this course, which has always been and remains open to it.

But in the meantime the mails must begin to move and the Postmaster-General and the Minister for Labour and National Service, who are handling this dispute, will take whatever steps are necessary to this end.

---

CANBERRA  
18th January, 1968.