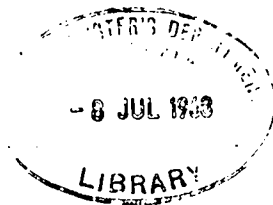


FOR PRESS :



PM. NO. 70, 1968

LAWLESS DEMONSTRATIONS

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

The Commonwealth Government will not permit lawlessness, violence and destruction by mobs to occur in Australia.

Violence and disruption in the streets such as we have seen in the last few days seriously interferes with the rights of ordinary citizens. These rights must be protected and interference with them by a minority is a direct attack on the only basis on which a democracy can operate.

The Attorney-General is examining all the courses open to the Commonwealth to impose severe penalties on any persons convicted of such action. He is consulting with the States and when this has been done, I shall announce the results to the Australian people.

We will not interfere with, but will defend the right of dissent. We will not interfere with publicly-expressed dissent. But we do not recognise violence, intimidation or interference with the rights of other citizens, or the invasion of public or private property as a right which a dissenting minority possesses but as a wrong which cannot be tolerated by the community.

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CANBERRA,  
5 July 1968