

FOR PRESS :

PM. No. 10/1971

FLOOD ASSISTANCE

The Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton, today sent the following telegram to the Premier of Victoria, Sir Henry Bolte :-

"ON BEHALF OF THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT I EXPRESS SYMPATHY WITH THOSE AFFECTED BY THE FLOODS IN VICTORIA. WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE BUT ARE READY TO JOIN WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT IN THE USUAL WAY IN FINANCING SCHEMES FOR THE RELIEF OF PERSONAL HARDSHIP AND DISTRESS IN THE AFFECTED AREAS. "

Mr Gorton also sent the following telegram to the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Askin, but the text of this telegram is embargoed until 9 pm (unless released before that time by Mr Askin) :-

"WILL YOU PLEASE CONVEY DEEPEST SYMPATHY ON MY BEHALF AND ON BEHALF OF THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SO GRIEVOUSLY AFFLICTED BY THE FLOOD DISASTER. I HAVE ARRANGED FOR TWO SENIOR COMMONWEALTH OFFICERS TO CONFER WITH YOUR OWN OFFICIALS IN SYDNEY ON THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DISASTER AND THE STEPS WHICH WE MIGHT JOINTLY TAKE TO OVERCOME ITS EFFECTS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE. "

The Commonwealth has already agreed to provide \$50,000 to the New South Wales Government, on a dollar-for-dollar basis, to assist with personal hardship and distress in the New South Wales floods.

CANBERRA,
8 February 1971