



PRIME MINISTER

14 May 1974

MARITIME INDUSTRY COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

The Prime Minister, the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, Q.C., M.P., announced today that the Government had received the first report of the Maritime Industry Commission of Inquiry which was presented to the Governor-General on 6 May 1974.

The first report prepared by the Commissioner, Mr M.M. Summers, covers training requirements for sea-going personnel. It consists of two parts. Part I covers principles, broad proposals and conclusions. Part II is an analysis in some detail of the issues traversed in Part I.

The report highlights the shortcomings of the present curricula and the inadequate training facilities now available for sea faring personnel, especially on trading vessels.

To meet the future needs for highly skilled deck, engineering and radio officers, Mr Summers has proposed the setting up of a Central Marine College. This would form part of a College of Advanced Education. Courses would be financed under the Australian Government's policy of free tertiary education.

In view of the difficulties and complexities encountered on different types of vessels, the report recommends that different levels of qualifications should be necessary. To this end, the report recommends the establishment of two levels of courses for both deck and engineering officers. The duration of the courses offered (two or three years) and their intensity would vary according to the qualifications sought. Completion of a full secondary school course would be a prerequisite for entry to the three-year college course.

Academic courses would be reinforced by periods of training at sea.

One two-year course is recommended for the training of radio officers.

Mr Summers has recommended that existing facilities for the training of other maritime personnel (deck and engineering ratings and catering) should be improved and enlarged. Training for these ratings should be co-ordinated by the proposed Maritime College. These facilities should be available to masters of small fishing craft and small boat and pleasure craft owners.

The Prime Minister said that the Government accepted in principle the conclusions of the first report and would begin an immediate examination of the report in order to take decisions on the recommendations as soon as possible after 18 May.

Mr Whitlam said that arrangements had been made for the report, to be printed and published as soon as possible.

CANBERRA. A.C.T