

PRIME MINISTER AT EMAIL LTD.

16 October 1978

....signify any personal moves by you to become more involved perhaps in the youth unemployment problem?

PRIME MINISTER:

I think the Government has been very much involved in the problems of youth and youth unemployment right throughout. This isn't by any means the first visit I've made--the first to an apprenticeship school in Sydney--but in Melbourne to an experimental programme for unemployed youth which is catering for a different category of young people. They are people who, if you look at their family backgrounds, might well have had nobody care for them in their lives and have just given up

QUESTION:

It's one of the major problems confronting the Government. Are you happy with the progress you have been able to make Sir?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the training programmes I think are going well. We have about 110,000 people and many many thousands of those are young people in training at any one time, and tens of thousands of others have obviously gone through the various training programmes. Tony Street introduced a revised apprenticeship programme, which is called CRAFT as you know, and that has been responsible for a lift in the number of apprentices. But he is constantly examining the nature, the basis of the training programmes to see if they can be improved or extended, to see if they are best meeting the needs of young people, and also of course of industry, because the two have to mesh in together, and a greater part of the training, which is being successful, is training on the spot.

QUESTION:

Do you think that private industry is in fact doing enough in this field?

PRIME MINISTER:

We'd like to be able to see private industry doing more, but if private industry is going to do more they have got to be operating in a profitable way. They've got to be getting a larger share of the domestic market and hopefully getting into exports. One of the exciting things about Australia is in recent times I've struck a number of industries that are moving out into the export area, and because they've got stable costs we are exporting goods to the United States again.

QUESTION:

Would your Government be putting more money into apprenticeship schemes?

PRIME MINISTER:

This is one area of the Budget where, in a sense, there was no restraint in this year, because the sums going to the different training programmes under Tony Street's department were enormously expanded. We had said earlier that we didn't want an opportunity for young men and women of Australia to be cut short because of a budgetary restriction. So we've demonstrated by what has happened that much greater funds have been, and are, going into the various training areas. This is something that Tony Street has got constantly under examination and review to see that the programmes are devised best to meet the needs of young Australians. Also, obviously, to see that they are run as economically as possible because it's a question of getting people trained for jobs and the more economically you can do it the more people you can train for the same number of dollars. The programmes are large, and they do cost a great deal, and I think that looking at the sorts of programmes that are operating in Europe, as the Government has, the training programmes we have in Australia I think are better. They are more productive and they give more people more opportunities. That doesn't mean to say we are complacent about it. If we find ways and means, through the training programmes, providing greater assistance to young Australians who find it difficult to get work, then we certainly will.

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