



**PRIME MINISTER**

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THE WEST AUSTRALIAN STRIKE

Australia faces the possibility of a national strike towards the end of this week and of bans being placed on Western Australia that would isolate it from the rest of this country.

Whatever the issue, that degree of destruction, of damage and of harm to the nation cannot be justified.

I ask all trade unionists and their leaders in the trade union movement, to think very carefully before they participate in a national stoppage - before they participate in wider bans which could damage their own industries, their own livelihood, their own families and the national economy.

We need to understand that Sir Charles Court has said that the provisions of his own Police Act will be reviewed.

We need to understand that while the case will come before a court next Thursday it is unlikely to be finally dealt with on that date. If the normal course of events is followed, a decision in the case will be deferred for some time.

We should also have in mind that there is a certainty of debate on this issue in the West Australian Parliament, when it resumes towards the end of July.

I am aware that the West Australian Government is reviewing its industrial laws. It may well be reviewing the adequacy of the protections needed for its tribunals against disruption. The West Australian Government may wish to consider the Commonwealth Government's experience in this area.

Against that total background, a national dispute and the possibility of bans against Western Australia become all the harder to justify.

I am certain that a great majority of Australian working men and women do not want disruption, difficulty and conflict. The price they pay in wages lost is very great indeed and in many disputes wages lost are never regained.

Australia is moving forwards strongly in economic recovery. It is the task of all of us to build on that, to strengthen this nation, to increase our productivity, to export more, to take a pride in ourselves, and in what we do, so that we can overcome our problems and difficulties.

The Australian economy at the present time is delicately balanced. Great economic progress has been made and the economy is moving forward. But that is something we all need to work on. It can so easily be destroyed by industrial disruption, by harmful and damaging disputes. It is in all our interests to put conflict and disputation aside. This is a time when we need to think of Australia first, to make quite sure that our actions contribute to the well-being of this country, and to make sure that they do not damage it.

In addition, I ask all trade unionists to keep in balance the nature of the dispute and the potential consequences of great harm to the whole nation.

Processes of the law have still to be followed. We don't know what the result of those processes will be. We need to weigh the enormous harm to Australia as the result of a national dispute, or as the result of bans placed on trade and commerce and communication with Western Australia, against the nature of the dispute itself, and its origins.

Against the background of the review of its laws promised by the West Australian Government, I ask everyone to put aside disruption and to stand back and examine the issues quietly and thoughtfully. That is the way we can advance Australia.

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