

from the Press Office

Summary of "Newsvoice"

A meeting of combined railway unions this morning agreed on a 48-hour strike by Victorian trains, trams and buses. The State transport minister told Parliament this afternoon the Government would not allow the men to strike for two days and then return to work to collect weekend penalty rates. He said the strike could well last for a longer period than even the unions realised, but he estimates a return to work on Monday.

A NSW union official Mr Jim Walsh warned today that if the Victorian transport minister carries out any threats of longer periods of no work for the strikers, the Australian Railways Union might have to consider a blockade of Victoria in retaliation next week. Trains from NSW would be halted at the border, but preferably such action should be taken at a national level, he said.

There has been strong trading in Ansett shares on the Sydney and Melbourne stock exchanges today. A total of about 325,000 shares changed hands in this morning's trading. At the moment about 6% of the shares are owned by Mr Rupert Murdoch, and a further 14% by Mr Holmes a Court.

The Head of the new Australian Federal Police revealed today he would like to have greater powers in fighting organised crime in Australia, including the right to tap the telephones of suspects. Commissioner Sir Colin Woods, addressing the National Press Club in Canberra, said he intended to make the Federal police as accountable as possible in its operations.

The Federal Government this afternoon signed its controversial fishing agreement with Japan. The signing took place in Canberra between the Japanese Ambassador to Australia and Mr Nixon. This afternoon questions were still being asked in Parliament as to whether the agreement for Japanese long-line tuna trawlers to operate inside Australia's 200-mile fishing limit contained adequate safeguards for black marlin and other game fish.

A warning has been issued to people travelling to tropical areas such as Papua-New Guinea and South East Asia to take precautions against malaria. This follows news today of a dramatic increase in the incidence of malaria in Queensland. In the first nine months of this year 102 cases were reported.

People intending to buy a new car in the United States have been given something to think about. Authorities in Washington have just finished carrying out safety tests on 20 new American cars, and only seven of the models met the standard required.

The President of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, Sir John Moore, is to discuss the Federal Government's proposed amendment to the country's industrial laws with the Federal Government. This follows a meeting Sir John held in Sydney today with representatives of Australia's 25 Arbitration Commissioners to discuss their objections to the proposed

amendments which went before the Senate in Canberra this afternoon for a second reading. Sir John this afternoon announced that he would discuss the government's amendments with Mr Street, and he issued a brief statement about the meeting they held:

"An informal discussion took place this afternoon about the consultative provisions of the proposed new legislation. Those present were a number of senior presidential members of the Commission and the executive of the Commissioner's Association. As a result of this discussion, it was agreed that the president would seek an opportunity to discuss those provisions with the Minister."

The consultative provisions about which Sir John speaks are the Government's plans that Commissioners must consult with their deputy president before making or varying an award dealing with wages or conditions. The 25 Commissioners have complained about these and other provisions in two telex messages they sent to Mr Street, the texts of which were leaked to the media in Canberra this week. The Commissioners also told the Minister that they were not happy with union deregistration proposals in the amendments.

---o0o---