

from the Press Office

SUMMARY OF NEWSVOICE

Regulations under which the Federal Government may prevent the export of wool will be signed into law later this afternoon and come into effect tomorrow. The regulations drawn up under the Customs Act will effectively close down the wool trade throughout Australia. The Government's aim is to force wool handlers in NSW and Victoria to end their 11 week strike by denying them strike relief donated by fellow unionists in other States. To this end, dismissal notices were today handed to 1400 members of the Storemen and Packers' Union in wool stores across the country. The notices have effect from tomorrow week. In Melbourne, crucial talks between the storemen and packers and the wool brokers, broke up this afternoon. The wool strike was a major item before Federal Cabinet in Canberra this afternoon and, afterwards, Duncan Fairweather spoke to the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Nixon.

Question:

You have just come out of Cabinet, can you tell us what the Government's attitude it today? Has it changed at all?

Mr Nixon:

No, the Government's attitude has not changed. Indeed, it has hardened. Yet the Government is determined that this matter ought to be settled. The Government hopes it will be settled around the conference table before the Arbitration Commission as it ought to be, but the Government has set on a course to try and increase the pressure to go back to work.

Question:

But don't you run the risk of jeopardising those talks in the Arbitration Commission by taking this tough attitude?

Mr Nixon:

Look. People always accuse us of being too soft when we do nothing, and we start to do things, people start using the words provocative and things of that nature. The fact is that this strike has been going on for 11 weeks. The fact also is that this union has refused to honour a Full Bench decision. Now, I can't recall that having occurred in history. It may have occurred where a Full Bench decision has been rejected by a union. I can't recall it. So it is a very serious matter, and I think we are reaching a new stage in industrial relations in this country. The Government recognises that. It also recognises the difficulties for the wool industry and for the wool growers, and for the exporters of wool, indeed for manufacturers of wool overseas. So the Government has no options left to it now, but to stand up to this particular issue.

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The Federal Secretary of the Storemen and Packers' Union, Mr Crean, would not comment on what happened in today's negotiations in Melbourne but he said that progress was being made.

Mr Crean:

So long as the parties are talking, yes, I am hopeful.

Question:

Question:

Did dismissal notices bog the talks down at all today?

Mr Crean:

Yes, they certainly didn't assist, and I think it is fair to say that anyone who is realistically assessing the position would agree with that. Dismissal notices don't take effect until Tuesday and one would hope if we are talking towards settlement, they won't have effect anyway.

Question:

Do you think you have made any progress at all today?

Mr Crean:

In the sense that we are continuing to talk, yes, I think much progress

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Following the break up of the meeting, a spokesman for the wool brokers Mr Barry Purvis, was asked why the dismissal notices were served on the unionists.

Mr Purvis:

The reasons have been given to the employees and I think that is between their employers and those employees.

Question:

Could it be said though, your action is provocative given that talks are still continuing to try and find solution?

Mr Purvis:

No, it is just inevitable in the situation. The Government has taken steps to bring in the control over the export of wool, and wool sales, as you may well know, wool auctions have been at a stand still for quite some time, and that is a simple commercial reason why the industry can't continue to operate.

Question:

When was the decision taken to issue those notices?

Mr Purvis:

I'm not going to discuss that.

Question:

So are you in fact saying that the Government forced you to do what you have done today?

Mr Purvis:

No, I am not saying that at all. We made our own decision.

Federal Cabinet is concerned about Amoco's decision to stop supplying petrol to the independent distributor, Mr Leon Laidley. Ron Sinclair in Canberra says Cabinet is also examining the controversial legislation on secondary boycotts, known as Section 45D.

Ron Sinclair: Today's Cabinet agenda is obviously a busy one but the oil dispute, I am told, is high on the list. A few minutes ago the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Street, emerged briefly from the Cabinet room but had no comment to make on whether any decision had been made as to Section 45D of the Trade Practices Act. That is the section under which Mr Leon Laidley, the NSW independent distributor gained his injunction against the TWU which led to last week's chaos in Sydney. From what I am told, one of the things worrying the Government is that Amoco by now refusing to supply Mr Laidley with petrol has undermined the effectiveness of Section 45D. Mr Street has today held discussions with Amoco representatives but was unable to give any promises as to further Government relations with the company. Whether that means the Government is considering a boycott of Amoco tenders for future contracts has not been revealed, but it is certain that there is a full scale Government investigation going on. Senior officials from the Department of National Development and Energy, the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs, the Attorney General's Department and the Department of Industrial Relations itself, are all examining last week's oil dispute in the hope of making any changes necessary to ensure that the Federal Trade Practices Act can't be so easily side stepped next time should a similar dispute rise again".

Earlier today, the Minister for Industrial Relations met Amoco representatives, and Mr Laidley in Canberra. After the talks broke up this afternoon, the only comment came from Mr John Bowen who is president of the NSW Fuel Agencies Association, representing Mr Laidley. Mr Bowen was asked whether Amoco petrol would soon be flowing again to Mr Laidley's agency.

Mr Bowen:

No, I don't believe that we could answer that, but we are hopeful that our discussion will assist the case.

Question:

Was there any suggestion that Amoco would at least review its position?

Mr Bowen:

No, none whatsoever at this stage.

Question:

It would appear that Mr Laidley may have an action under the Trade Practices Act leaving aside Section 45D against Amoco for refusing supplies to him. Is there a possibility that such an action is in contemplation?

Mr Bowen:

I am sorry, but we have to get back to Sydney now, and have discussions with our legal advisors before we can make any further decisions.

Question:

So as far as you are concerned, the trip down today proved nothing?

Mr Bowen:

Quite the contrary. The trip down has been beneficial. The Minister now understands much clearer our point of view in the matter. We have been given certain information that will be of great assistance to us.

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Despite the end of the petrol strike, Sydney motorists who can find a service station with petrol are having to join long queues. Report.

The Australian Olympic Federation says the public is giving strong support to its appeal to send Australia's team to the Moscow Olympics. The Federation says the money flow picked up after the International Olympic Commission decided that the Games should go ahead. Report. Says the Commission has to raise more than \$3/4 million. It has already raised more than \$½ million, and the appeal is more or less on target, despite a lapse of two months when very few people donated money. Mr Patching says a majority of the letters he has received contain money and support for an Australian team to go to Moscow.

The Labor Party's interim administrative committee began moving into its new offices in Brisbane this afternoon, and Mr Tom Burns said it was already well on the way to raising \$100,000 which was needed to fight the coming election. After accepting a cheque from the Shop Assistants Union for \$9,000, Mr Burns talked with reporters.

Mr Burns:

The enthusiasm is unreal. In fact, it has amazed me the sort of support that has come forward. The concrete evidence of course this morning is a \$9,000 cheque. Another union secretary turned up while we were meeting here and said I will have \$2,000 for you tomorrow night. We have another 10 unions that have said they will put money in totalling about another \$40,000. We have evidence now of about 95% acceptance of the Federal rules and the Federal decisions that have been made which means that the rank and file in the branches are going to be forwarding their money to us. We have just got public support. You can feel it. People ringing up, people bringing in furniture. We don't even really know where it has come from. We were looking for typewriters and then somebody turns up with a typewriter. It is remarkable.

Question:

What sort of money are you going to need to fight elections this year?

Mr Burns:

I think, properly based, and using the two campaigns, hand in hand, so that you don't have a really completely separate federal and State campaign. I reckon that on \$200,000 I could base a good campaign. I wouldn't be as rich, like the Bjelke Petersen fund is going to be able to put into the National Party, it will be the sort of campaign that can get votes. And believe you me, when Mr Knox said there is about a 4-5% swing to the Labor Party, he wasn't making a mistake. I think he was being very practical. I think his friends who are attacking him now

ought to look again, because I believe that that is there, and there is a lot more to come if we are properly organised.

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Australians need not worry about Kangaroos being threatened with extinction according to the Federal Environment Minister, Mr Thomson. In fact, he says, three species of 'roo are in plague proportions. The Australian Conservation Foundation is strongly opposing the export of Kangaroo products to America, but Mr Thomson told reporters the opposition was not well founded. Interviewed.

Ansett Airlines today signed a \$400 million contract for the purchase of 21 Boeing aircraft including five 767 wide-bodied planes. The president of Boeing who was in Melbourne for the signing of the contract said he thought the TAA airbus against which the 767s had been bought to compete was too large to be economical for most air route in the world.

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