



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

TUESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER, 1980

COMPENSATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE DEFENCE FORCE RESERVES

The Government has decided to pay certain assurance premiums for members of the Defence Force Reserves to overcome concerns that have been expressed over recent months about the level of compensation payable to Reservists who suffer injury while on part time service.

Reservists are covered under the Compensation (Commonwealth Government Employees) Act. Broadly, the Act provides payment of the individual's normal weekly earnings for the first 26 weeks of incapacity, and then weekly payments of \$105 for the claimant, \$27.50 for a dependant spouse and \$13.10 for each dependant child. There are also lump sum payments for certain specified disabilities and for death, and other special payments. Medical and hospital expenses are also paid.

Assurance company schemes are available for Reservists to enable them to receive additional accident benefits after the first 26 weeks incapacity. While individuals are not obliged to participate, the assurance companies require 80 to 100 per cent participation from a unit before its members are eligible to participate. Units have therefore been encouraging members to join the schemes.

In the present strategic environment, the Government attaches considerable importance to the level of the Defence Force Reserves. On 15 June I announced the Government's decision to reduce, from five years to one, the time for achieving the target strength of 30,000. Indications so far are that the campaign is having success and that the strength of the Reserve is increasing.

The Government has taken its decision today in order to further accelerate the rate of recruitment and to increase the rate of retention in the Reserve.

Details, including precise levels of payments, will be announced as soon as the necessary arrangements are completed.

This will do away with the need for individuals to take out their own insurance.