



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 1 OCTOBER, 1980

"UNIONS AND WAGES" EXTRACT FROM ADDRESS AT ROCKDALE TOWN HALL

The Labor Party's "hands-off" policy towards unions would be the recipe for economic disaster in Australia.

Unions would be allowed to run riot; to do what they wanted and get what they wanted.

It would be 1972-75 all over again.

Mr. Hawke has made it quite plain that Labor's irresponsible approach to unions and wages has not changed one iota from the Whitlam years.

If the Labor Party were in Government there would be no responsible argument put by the Government in the Arbitration Commission for the public interest against the unreasonable demands of extreme unions.

We would have the same massive escalation in wages that occurred in 1972-75, and with it the same massive inflation push.

That was at a time when Mr. Hawke - as President of the ALP and the ACTU - was presumably a person of some influence in the union movement and the Labor Party.

That was at a time when time lost through industrial disputes rose to 6 million man days.

That was at a time when award wages rose 38 per cent in a single year.

That was a time of total irresponsibility by the trade union movement because they expected, and knew, that the Labor Government would acquiesce in their demands.

Labor in 1980 has the same scenario for its industrial relations.

Mr. Hawke wants it all over again but from a different position.

Coupled with Labor's plans for massive increases in Government spending, we would again see inflation pushed towards 20 per cent.

It has happened before. It must not happen again.