

PRIME MINISTERTUESDAY 24 MARCH 1981

From the Press Office

SUMMARY OF ABC'S 7.45 am NEWS

The British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher has asked for a full report on allegations that a former British intelligence chief was a spy for the Soviet Union. The man was named as Sir Roger Hollis who was head of the counter espionage service MI 5 from 1956 to 1965. He died in 1973. Sir Roger was a leading light in the formation of ASIO.  
Report from Tim Clark

Permanent building societies have expressed disappointment with the boost in the interest rate on the new series of Commonwealth Saving Bonds. The Treasurer, Mr Howard has announced the interest rate on the bonds available today, they will rise by three quarters of one per cent, to 12½%. Mr Howard said the rates on previous bond issues had made them uncompetitive and the Government wanted to attract money to them as part of its monetary policy. The Executive Officer of the Building Societies Association said last night the societies already had been under a great deal of pressure from other Government policies. He said that if society interest rates did not rise there would be a shortage of mortgage money forcing home buyers to go elsewhere for loans. Federal Opposition Spokesman on Economic Affairs, Mr Willis, said Australia already faced record high interest rates and the savings bond rates would damage what prospects there were of economic growth. The Director of the Australian Bankers Association said it was a matter of waiting to see what effect the savings bonds interest rate would have on the rate set by banks and building societies. He said he did not believe bank and society rates would necessarily rise automatically.

The Old Guard ALP administration in Queensland said they are cautiously optimistic about the Federal Executive's latest move to heal the split in his branch. The settlement involves the Old Guard dropping legal action. After the Federal body intervened in Queensland last year the Old Guard took out Supreme Court writs challenging the National Executive's power to appoint a new administration. The Old Guard said they could agree to drop the charges if the total package offered by the ALP Executive was acceptable. The Federal ALP President, Mr Wran, said with the Old Guard's co-operation he hopes to have a fully representative state conference in June.

The South Australian Government says it will not act to prevent the take over of Elders GM by the West Australian Bell group but will let the free market decide the outcome. The Acting Premier, Mr Goldsworthy says the Government has received assurances from the head of the Bell group that if the take over bid succeeds Elders GM would retained as a separate public company with a separate identity, and the company would continue to provide a broad based service to the state and that employment opportunities would be retained and possibly increased. Trading in Elder's shares

was heavy yesterday in Adelaide and Melbourne. The Chairman of Elders says the South Australian Government's decision not to intervene amounted to approval of a foreign takeover.

Queensland's Mines and Energy Minister, Mr Gibbs, says the pioneering days for resource developers in the State are over. He said super levy on resource developers would be included in guidelines soon to be outlined by the Queensland Government.

A woman and her three sons died in a house fire in Melbourne last night and the woman's husband is in hospital with burns to 65% of his body.

The former world champion racing motor cyclist, Mike Halewood, has died as a result of a car crash.

The Soviet dissident, Dr Andre Sukarov, has accused agents of the KGB of stealing the manuscript of his autobiography and personal papers.

Taiwan has been re-admitted to the Olympic Games fold after agreeing to stop calling itself the Republic of China. It has also agreed to stop using the Chinese flag and team emblem.

The Federal Government is planning to set up a system to compensate authors and publishers whose books are frequently photocopied at universities and other educational institutions. Mr Fraser said yesterday the system should be operating by July 1.

The Burmese Government has given details of a major military drive last week against heroin trafficking in which 30 people were killed.

A sculpture which cost Melbourne City Council \$70,000 is to be removed at a cost of \$29,500.