



LIBRARY -
spano 14

PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

FRIDAY, 24 JULY 1981

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE ACTU, MR DOLAN

The Government, represented by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Acting Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Fife, met today in the presence of the President of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, Sir John Moore, with representatives of the Australian Council of Trade Unions - Mr C. Dolan, President; Mr C. FitzGibbon, Senior Vice-President; Mr P. Nolan, Secretary; Mr W. Kelty, Assistant Secretary; Mrs J. Marsh, Advocate.

The meeting was called at the suggestion of the President of the ACTU in the face of growing industrial disruption from disputes some of which are associated with transport workers, Telecom clerical officers and employees of the Port of Melbourne Authority.

There was a useful and wide-ranging discussion about the serious state of industrial unrest in Australia and about its causes.

Both parties agreed that the matter is very serious and that there are obligations for everyone to do all they could to lessen the industrial disruption now present in Australia and to work for industrial stability.

As a result, the parties have agreed to take certain action and to accept certain moral responsibilities.

The ACTU, for its part, will recommend an immediate resumption of normal work and will use all its influence to achieve this without bans or limitations in each of these disputes.

The Government, for its part, will not pursue action under section 143A for a declaration from the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission concerning the Transport Workers' Union. It will revoke suspensions of its own employees taken under the Commonwealth Employees (Employment Provisions) Act.

The Government agreed on the Telecom clerical officers dispute that it would be appropriate for early discussions to be held between the Ministers for Industrial Relations and Communications and the ACTU, together with the ACOA and APSA. It is expected this meeting will take place on Sunday.

Both parties agreed that a contributing factor in the industrial situation was the way in which the current wage fixation principles were seen by unions to inhibit proper consideration of the merits of their claims.

Both the Government and the ACTU officers agreed that the principles should not operate to prevent a resolution or prevention of industrial disputation by inhibiting the examination of claims on their merits.

Specifically, they accepted that in recent times the anomalies and inequities provisions of the principles have not provided the safety valve that was originally intended and therefore they hoped that deficiency would be rectified through the procedures the President of the Commission had unfolded in his statement this morning. The Government and the ACTU agreed to work co-operatively in efforts to overcome that deficiency.

If the ACTU is unsuccessful in achieving an early return to work, the Government will of course have to review its position.