

From the Press Office

SUMMARY OF ABC'S "P.M."

You have heard that the Federal Treasurer will announce that the Government will amend taxation legislation to allow Royal Commissions access to taxation files of individual and companies under investigation. The decision follows a request from the current Royal Commission of the activities of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union.

Helen O'Neil

The Government's decision breaks a very long standing tradition that income is supposed to be a private matter between the individual and the Taxation Commissioner. The reason according to the Treasurer, Mr John Howard is the Government believes the Royal Commissions might be able to come up with information that will prove of special benefit to the community. Until the interim report of the Royal Commission into the Painters and Dockers, the Government had shelved the decision on similar requests for access which had been made by two drug inquiries. The Painters and Dockers Report by the Commissioner, Frank Costigan QC said that Mr Costigan believed that members of the union were involved in multi-million dollar tax rackets and that its investigations were ineffective without that added power to look into information held after all, by another Government agency. The Commissioner said it would be a scandalous waste of taxpayers time and money if he was denied access. -But the Government has imposed a series of boundaries how the information can be used in a bid to preserve some privacy. Firstly, the Commission will be able to disclose information only if they do not identify individuals or companies. Secondly, the only way which the Commission will be able to pass on information they find disturbing is through a Minister with a recommendation to pass the information on to the Federal Police. Therefore, the final decision on who will gain access to the information remains in the hands of the Government. The taxation information obtained in this way by the police won't be able to be used in any prosecutions and the Government has also warned that the decision should not be assumed to be a precedent for any other relaxation of the secrecy provisions. It has also rejected a recommendation of the Australian Royal Commission of Inquiry into drugs to allow disclosure of tax information to law enforcement agencies inquiring into serious drug offences. Therefore, the degree of access will depend on how the Government interprets whether the Royal Commission has relevant terms of references which give it the right to open up the taxation office.

AS the British Navy Task Force gets closer to the occupied Falkland Islands the American peace bid seems to be faltering an Australian historian has called for a closer inspection of Argentina's claim on the Islands. Dr Miguel Bratos (?) a Cuban American Lecturer in Spanish studies at the University of NSW is interviewed by Steve Sailoh.

A report that \$2.7 billion had been wiped off the the Australian resources boom has prompted widespread sole searching today about the state of the Australian economy and the policies the Government is following. The Financial Review devoted an editorial and a large front page article to the subject under the banner recession, it is here and serious. And its editorial called in particular for a freeze on money wages as a step towards improving profitability. Other economic indicators released today showed a record capital inflow attributed to borrowings overseas by Austrlian companies unable to get finance at home, an increase by the ANZ bank of 1% on its rates for large overdrafts and a continued slump in the building industry. Interview with Rod Nettle, South Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Phil Riven business strategist.

Senator Neville Bonner today described the Queensland Government's aboriginal land legislation as a continuation of the Government's paternalistic control of aborigines. Senator Bonner told Queensland delegates to the National Aboriginal Conference in Brisbane the deed of grant in trust gave no security of tenure and was unacceptable to aborigines. Report from Margot Stevens.

A by-election is on for the State seat of Drummoyne in NSW vacated by Mr Michael Maher. This time however, the boot could be on the other foot. Labor Premier Mr Wran has taken out some early insurance by acknowledging that he expects a kick in the pants from the electors of Drummoyne. Interview with Malcolm Mackerras.

A Perth doctor's house has been attacked in what some claim is a disturbing counter measure in the undeclared war between tobacco and an anti smoking group. The doctor has been publicly linked with the group which alters cigarette advertising posters. Report from John Mills.