



PRIME MINISTER

EXTRACT - PRESS CONFERENCE, PERTH, 29 September 1983 - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, the building workers award, what they're seeking, what the Government can do - what is your attitude to their present case?

P.M.: Are you talking in respect of the agreement?

JOURNALIST: Yes, I'm talking particularly in respect of the \$7.50 per week.

P.M.: The Cabinet, as you know, made a clear decision as to submissions that we'll make to the Tribunal and it's appropriate that they be put there. But in broad terms I say that we've made it clear that the agreement must be considered and in our judgement by the Commission within the framework of the National Wage Case decision. There's some idea that it might be considered outside that and we made it quite clear that that cannot be the case. We think there are some parts of it which clearly you can say are justified within the guidelines of the decision. We think there are parts, the B.I.R.P. agreement, which is very difficult to justify within those guidelines. And there are others which it is appropriate to have considered under the anomalies conference proceedings. And that position will be detailed by counsel before the Commission.

JOURNALIST: Will you be opposing B.I.R.P. outright?

P.M.: I think it's appropriate that what we're going to do before the Tribunal be said in the Tribunal. But I've given an indication of the general position.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, the pilots proposal of a national strike on Monday Can you say what efforts the Government is making to avert this event ...

P.M.: Well, I've had Ministers talking with representatives of the pilots and they declare that we're prepared to talk but not under threat of industrial action or in a situation where they believe that the Government is going to change the basic structure of our decision in regard to superannuation. I repeat, as I've kept saying, that it's a tragedy that this highly privileged, highly paid section of the workforce, more privileged than just about any other section of the total Australian workforce in terms of hours worked and remuneration received, cannot see the same sense of responsibility which should rest upon it as the total trade union movement has done. The ACTU constituents are overwhelmingly made up of people that are less fortunately placed than the pilots. They took the course, the responsible course

P.M. (cont.): of action, of working with the Government, of talking with the Government, and in that process as in earlier discussions with the pilots we were prepared to amend as we indicated we would do certain elements of the announced intention to meet specific problems that were raised by them. Now it didn't meet all the requirements of the ACTU unions, but they took the view that they had a sense of responsibility which ought to be discharged and the Congress of the ACTU accepted the position that industrial action should not be taken. Now let the pilots' leaders understand that they are (a) out of step with the trade union movement as a whole, (b) they are out of step with the community. And I believe increasingly if they pursue this suicidal action they'll be seen to be out of step with their own membership.

JOURNALIST: How do you propose to deal with the strike?

P.M.: Well there is no strike yet.
