



PRIME MINISTER

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JOURNALIST: Does this hit at the right to strike, this decision?

PM: No, and I haven't had the chance of reading the total transcript of the Judge's decision but I've seen some reference where he refers to the right to strike as fundamental. Well, get this in perspective that the trade union movement has operated in this country for the last six years now under the Accord. They've been able to negotiate wage increases within that system and this sort of situation has arisen because the pilots deliberately decided against the pleas which I made to them and others made to them - including Kelty and Crean - don't go outside the system, here is a system within which there is a means for handling disputes, including where there is a withdrawal of labour. Here is a system the Conciliation and Arbitration system, within that you can hand in your claims, advance your claims, there can be withdrawal of labour. But they said - no, we're going to withdraw from the protective apparatus which exists within that system and go out into the American style straight bargaining system, use our muscle, go for 30 percent. Now I pleaded with them and I said - look that's silly. Don't do that. Stay within the system because if you go outside the system then you get exposed to all the dangers of that. I get no satisfaction at all and I deeply regret that the Federation of Air Pilots didn't accept the advice that was given, not just by me, but by the trade union movement and by the airlines to process their claims within the system. If they'd done that, they could have got significant salary increases, they would have had the opportunity of arguing, within the system, for how their conditions should be adjusted to the demands of a changing industry. They could have done all that, but they said at the beginning of the year - and it's in writing - they were going to enter into a battle with their employers. They said this - we're going into a battle with the employers, with the Government and with the arbitration system. We're

going to take them all on outside the system. Now, it was a silly decision and I regret that they have done it. I repeat, as I've been saying now for weeks and weeks, there is the possibility of a place for them if they do what the Commission has said. The Commission has said - you accept these conditions, not special for the pilots but it applies to everyone else. That is you withdraw your embargo on your members being employed by the airlines, I mean, they're not employed well then where are you? Secondly that you accept the decisions of the Commission. Thirdly you accept the National Wage Case guidelines. They said - if you do those things which is not special to you, but it applies to every other organisation of workers, then you can apply to be bound by the award which is now the contract and if you then become bound by the award, you can then lodge an application to argue about that contract, as to whether it should be changed. So the pilots have, in the first place, chosen to say - no, damn the system. We're going out into that big rough world on our own. OK. We wanted them not to. Now the position is that they have a method of seeking to get back into it which the Commission has given to them. It's up to them, but they seem not to have accepted the well intended advice of myself, of the trade union movement, of everyone else. They haven't accepted that advice for so long now I don't know whether they will at this point.

JOURNALIST: What would you say to Brian McCarthy

PM: I've said it all.

JOURNALIST: What did you think of yesterday's decision, damages decision?

PM: Well, it unfortunately is the inevitable result. Once you've made, as the leadership of the Federation did - see, they are supposedly - and I don't mean that derogatively, they're not just supposedly - they are people of intelligence. They deliberately made a choice. There is a system there, industrial relations system in which provided for a method for everyone to process claims for increased wages. There is that system or they could go out into the common war system. So when you ask me what do I think about it, all I can say is, as a result of their decision to go out of the system where they had the protection, where they could argue and they could even withdraw their labour and so on and they said no we're out of that. I can't have an opinion about that other than the one I've expressed.

JOURNALIST: So it serves them right.

PM: That's your words and you could read the whole of my transcript and you wouldn't read anything out of that.

JOURNALIST: I'm asking do you think it serves them right?

PM: No, I don't want to express that view. I mean, my view is in what I've already said and that is that I deeply wished that they'd stay within the system. I mean, everything on the record shows that Hawke, the conciliator, the person who's built his whole life, whole public life on trying to get conciliation, consensus, negotiation, that was why I pleaded - stay in the system. So, I don't talk about serving them right or anything like that. I am deeply hurt that this situation has arisen. It's not the Hawke style. The Hawke style is negotiation, discussion, argument if you like, but argument within a framework which provides for a peaceful resolution of disputes. That's the whole of my life and that's why I pleaded with them not to go this path. So that's why I get no glee, no satisfaction, no pleasure out of that decision. The only satisfaction, the only satisfaction Hawke gets out of it is that having had the issues exposed before an independent judicial authority, that judicial authority has repudiated the AFAP's monstrous misrepresentation that there was a conspiracy between Hawke and the airlines - that's what they've been saying. The Judge has said - that's a nonsense and those that were spoiling for a fight were the Federation. That's the only satisfaction I get, that after having all that aired, the evidence given, the Judge has said no conspiracy, as there never has been on my part because I wanted them to stay in the system and that they were the ones spoiling for a fight. I get satisfaction out of having that established, out of nothing else.

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