RADIO TALK

This will be my final radio talk for this year. The new series of radio talks for 1971 will commence at the beginning of the 1971 Parliamentary year.

This week I would like to talk with you about rural reconstruction plans,...immigration....industrial safety and scholarships.

The Commonwealth has proposed to the States that there should be an early meeting between Commonwealth and State Ministers to discuss debt reconstruction and farm adjustment measures aimed at relieving some of the difficulties of the rural industries, but particularly the sheep industry.

This proposal has been made in telegrams sent by the Prime Minister this week to each of the State Premiers.

My colleagues, the Minister for Primary Industry and the Treasurer will represent the Commonwealth at the first meeting, which the Commonwealth hoped might take place in Canberra about December the 10th.

I have referred on a number of occasions to the problems of the rural industries, including the problems of long-term finance and farm debt.

It is obvious that a programme of debt and property adjustment will be required to help the rural industries together with retraining and rehabilitation programmes, where necessary.

You will no doubt recall that the Prime Minister has said that the Commonwealth will work with the States in developing such measures.

Following a report by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics on the immediate and long-term needs for debt reconstruction and farm adjustment, the Bureau and the Department of Primary Industry prepared - for the immediate consideration of the Government - proposals for measures to assist in this way.

The Commonwealth has declared its willingness to cooperate with the States in a national programme which should provide for measures of debt reconstruction and farm build-up arrangements, as well as assistance where necessary to those leaving the industry.

I have been very conscious that the need of many producers was long-term credit and have been giving Doug Anthony my fullest support in his proposals to help the primary producer.
The Government will also be moving as soon as possible to initiate discussions with financial institutions on the establishment of a Finance Insurance Corporation to insure long-term loans to rural producers when their circumstances justified it.

I am very hopeful that the Commonwealth proposals will be of sound practical benefit to many in the rural sector, but particularly the woolgrower.

You can be assured that necessary action based on Government's plans is getting the fullest possible support from me.

Australia this year will benefit to the extent of some 3,000 professionally qualified people from overseas.

The total is expected to cover a wide diversity of skills and experience in professions such as engineering and teaching, which are in strong demand in Australia.

This immigration flow will be of particular value to Australia at a time when world demand for available trade and professional skills is fast outstripping supply.

In the past 10 years, some 600,000 settlers from overseas have been added to the Australian workforce.

The majority of professionally qualified migrants will come from Britain where the question of recognition of qualifications is not a major problem.

The Government is continuing to take steps to ensure that Australia attract professionally, technically and trade-trained settlers to meet Australia's demands of the 'seventies and beyond.

In conjunction with State Labour Ministers, a national conference on industrial safety will be convened next year.

The conference will review progress made in the past decade in solving problems of industrial safety and will discuss future action.

It will involve those who have major responsibility for accident prevention, including representatives of Government, trade unions, employers' organisations and voluntary bodies.
At present, accidents at work are claiming about 400 lives in Australia each year, and disabling injuries cause a loss of 700,000 man weeks or 3.5-million work days.

The economic cost to individuals and the nation is great.

Compensation payments alone amount to more than $100-million each year.

The Government considers it vital to confer with industry on a matter which involves great cost to human happiness and waste of human potential through avoidable suffering or death.

It is expected that a total of 23 Advanced Education Scholarships at Warrnambool Institute will be awarded for 1971.

Applicants for these scholarships will be able to compete for them on two bases - the Victorian Matriculation examination, and an order-of-merit for Diploma course students at the Institute.

The second base is founded on results by a student in the first year of a Diploma course at the Institute where the Institute itself draws up an order-of-merit list.

The Melbourne office of the Department of Education and Science made a survey of the State-wide demand for these scholarships and calculated the allocation of awards to Institutes.

In round figures, the estimated enrolment for 1970 in approved courses at Warrnambool Institute were 80, although the actual enrolment was considerably lower.

Of the 23 scholarships offered in 1970 to Warrnambool Institute, only 12 were taken up.

Based on this year's experience it is unlikely that there will be any substantial changes for 1971.

Next year the Commonwealth will also make available a limited number of Australian Agricultural Council scholarships.

These scholarships are available for undergraduate courses in the faculties of: Agriculture; Rural Science; Veterinary science and Agricultural engineering.
The scholarships are open to matriculants selected for Commonwealth University Scholarships, and the scholarships are not subject to a means test or carry a bond.

As this is my final broadcast for the year, I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. During the holiday break I will be at home at Nareen, and if you have any urgent problems do not hesitate to call me on Tarryoukyan 47. At the same time part of my staff will be on duty in Canberra and can contact me if I am temporarily away from Nareen. A very Merry Christmas to you all.

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