Hello Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is to be hoped that the call for a cease-fire by the United Nations General Assembly in the war between India and Pakistan will be quickly put into effect.

However with the Soviet Veto in the Security Council and the announced intention of the Indian Government to disregard the United Nations request, it is likely that hostilities will ... unfortunately ... continue further.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bowen, pointed out this week the Australian Government has made repeated efforts to influence the leaders of India and Pakistan to avoid armed conflict.

The Prime Minister has sent a number of messages to both Mrs Indira Gandhi and President Yahya Kahn urging a political settlement of the East Pakistan question.

The Australian Government will continue to take a position of neutrality in this conflict, offering assistance to both India and Pakistan. This does not include the supply of arms or war materials.

Although the Indian Government has now officially recognised the Bangla Desh as the rulers of East Pakistan, Australia recognises the Government of Pakistan as the legal government of both east and west sections.
While we are aware that the United Nations general assembly resolution calling for a cease-fire may not be enforced Australia will continue to do all it can to urge the two countries to comply with the UN request.

In the meantime steps are being taken to protect or evacuate Australian nationals from danger zones in Pakistan and Northern India.

I would like to deal now with the new measures announced by the Government to assist employment in country centres.

As you know an estimated 36 million dollars will be made available to country centres throughout Australia over the next 18 months for employment-creating projects.

This will be welcomed by those cities and towns in Western Victoria which are experiencing unemployment problems through the decline in some sectors of the rural industry particularly wool.

A number of measures have been introduced to help meet these problems. The wool industry itself is at present examining proposals to put before the government, and a wool study group has been established under Sir Richard Randall, a former Secretary to the Treasury and an experienced wool classifier.

At the same time it is necessary to take steps to alleviate unemployment without impeding the long-term adjustments necessary to meet changing economic conditions.

Full details of this scheme are now being determined in consultation with the State Premiers. In broad terms it will be similar to that provided under the drought-relief programs in recent years and will be brought into effect as soon as possible.
The subject of metric conversion is one which is coming into prominence with many conversion programs due to begin next year.

Last week I submitted to the House of Representatives the first annual report of the Metric Conversion Board which is included in the Ministry of Education and Science.

This states that the main change-over to metric measurements in Australia will occur in the years 1973 to 75. By the end of 1976 an estimated three quarters of all our general activities will be converted to the metric system.

In recent years there has been a very marked move towards the universal use of the metric system, to such an extent in fact that nearly all countries of the world will soon be using these measurements.

Together with Australia countries such as Britain, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa are presently getting ready to go metric.

Following an official inquiry in the United States of America the Secretary for Commerce has now recommended to Congress that the metric system be introduced.

This first report of the metric conversion board describes the establishment of a structure within which planning for conversion can take place. To this end more than 100 committees covering all sections of industry, commerce, and the community are being formed.

It is most apparent that these committees are tackling their task of preparing for metric conversion with a great deal of enthusiasm, and it is fairly likely that the change-over will go as smoothly as the switch to decimal currency six years ago, although the change-over period will be considerably longer and it may take us all a little longer to get used to litres instead of pints.

GOODBYE FOR NOW
Library Digitised Collections

Author/s:
Fraser, Malcolm

Title:
India and Pakistan war, rural employment, metric conversion

Date:
12 December 1971

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/40547

File Description:
India and Pakistan war, rural employment, metric conversion

Terms and Conditions:
Copyright courtesy of Malcolm Fraser. Contact the University of Melbourne Archives for permission requests.