

Strike Causes Traffic Chaos In Sydney

Sydney traffic, already disrupted by a 24-hour transport strike, was thrown into chaos on Monday night when one of the city's main road bridges was closed. Thousands of cars and trucks massed in Sydney and suburbs for three hours while Pyrmont Bridge, across an arm of Sydney Harbour, was lifted to allow two ships through.

The New South Wales Transport Minister, Mr. Milton Morris, who had asked that the bridge should not be closed to traffic, has asked for an immediate inquiry. All N.S.W. Government and bus services stopped at midnight on Sunday when 56,000 transport workers struck over pay claims.

P.M.G.'s Test On Mail Thefts

The Australian Postmaster-General's office posted 600 letters containing banknotes—to test percentages of mail thefts. Forty-eight did not arrive and Postmaster, Mr. Alan Hulme, called the figure alarming. It showed eight percent of unregistered mail carrying banknotes was filched.

DRUG HAULS AT AUST. PORTS

Large hauls of heroin in Sydney and in Melbourne have confirmed customs' suspicions that Australia's main ports are being used for trans-shipping drugs. They believe narcotics smuggled into Australian east coast ports on ships plying Asian routes are being transferred to American bound vessels.

Australia will provide X-ray equipment worth more than £A250,000 for a new teaching hospital at the University of Malaya.

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Aborigine Made Union Official

An Aboriginal unionist has been elected to the position of Aboriginal organiser with the North Australian Workers' Union at Darwin. He is Mr. Dexter Daniels, an orderly at the Darwin Hospital.

Union officials say he is the first aborigine ever to be elected to an official position in any union in Australia.

Australia's Birth Rate Falls

Australia's birth rate in the first three months of this year dropped to its lowest level since the war, according to official figures released this week.

The rate for the first quarter per 1,000 population was 19.47—lowest since the same period in 1943 when it was—19.10.

Medical authorities attributed a gradual decline in the birth rate since 1962 to the introduction of the oral contraceptive pill.

However, despite the falling birth-rate, the population increase continues. Australia's population at the end of March was estimated to be 11,312,577, an increase of nearly 62,000 from the end of 1964.

The excess of births over deaths was more than 33,000. To this was added an intake of more than 28,000 people from overseas, mainly migrants. The marriage rate in Australia was about 8.69 per 1000, the highest since 1950.

N.Z.'s Big Decimal Order

New Zealand will order 200 million decimal coins from the Royal Mint. These will comprise 120 million one-cent pieces, 75 million two-cent, 11 million five-cent, 5.5 million 10-cent and 4.5 million 20-cent—a total face value of £3.35 million and costing £600,000.

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