

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH OF THE PRIME MINISTER,
THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES AT THE 71ST ANNUAL
ASSOCIATION DAY BANQUET OF THE COMMERCIAL
TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES, ON
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I would just like to say three things to you.

First of all, as I have already said, and I believe it is true, you represent one of the freshest elements in the nation - competition. Competitive enterprise: a state of affairs in which a man's skill and personality will produce better results than in the case of a man without skill and without personality. That, I think, is very good. The competitive element is one of the great secrets of stability in the country. I hesitate to think what would happen in this marvellous country of ours if we all played the same tune, we all had the same minds. I do not think Australia would present to the world, under those circumstances, the same magnificent and exciting field for interest to the rest of the world as it does as a result of your labours and those for whom you toil.

The second thing that I wanted to say is that the work you do, and I hope it will long continue, is a contributor to the stability in the nation. So do not forget this - stability in this country. Not a dull stability, not a sort of half-dead state of affairs, but a lively, bustling stability, if you can imagine such a thing, is of tremendous importance to us in regard to the rest of the world.

I have travelled, as I said to you before, a great deal and I meet people wherever I go who have considerable interest in this country. Wherever they may be - in the United States or Great Britain - these people are vastly interested in this country, not just because Fidel Castro has been naughty in Cuba. No. Not just because some old source of repository of investment has become politically crazy; not only for these reasons, but because in the long run people will make the investments of their fortunes in a country which they regard as stable and sensible. Stability and sensibility are not monopoly of mind; nor is it a party matter. It is where people, whatever their politics may be, have a sense of responsibility, are fair, where they treat people fairly and more and more they are looking to Australia as a source of inspiration to them and a place in which they can invest their capital. Some people are becoming very anxious and are looking at every dollar, every Swiss franc invested in Australia as piling up obligations for the future. I think it is a very limited way in which to look at it, because all these investments from overseas have tended, I am happy to say, so far to create industries, to create employment and to create production and bring us more into the field in which we will be able to sell manufactured and processed goods to the rest of the world. It has been of tremendous importance to us. Only the other day, metaphorically speaking, my own Government decided to terminate Import Licensing. I do not need to go into the reasons for that, but, of course, one of the chief reasons for this is that the overseas balance has been in a healthy state, and it is all for the good of Australia that we should have more goods and services in this country.

But if we were to abolish Import Licensing and nothing more happened, then the demand for imports would become so great that our overseas balance would run down, and we might find ourselves, at some time in the future, a little embarrassed, by a fall in our overseas balance, which is vitally important to the well being of Australia. At that moment we say 'yes', but one of the great elements to preserve our balances and to keep us healthy overseas, is the most remarkable influx of private investment in Australia and this has become one of the great factors in our economy. I am putting on one side the money

Governments may borrow institutionally overseas from the World Bank or from the Export Import Bank. There has been now for years an influx of private capital investments on private account and for private purchases in Australia something exceeding a hundred million pounds a year and I want you, gentlemen, to say to yourselves: where would we be without it? We have the most remarkable increase in population; we have the most remarkable tasks to perform to further the development of Australia, which, if it succeeds, will give ample accommodation to all the people who may be born here or who may come here.

If we did not have that inflow of capital from overseas, we would be chronically short of capital for our own development. Let us have that clearly in our minds and, therefore, one of the things you have to bear in mind, is that you must help to create - Government, of course, can do a little, but by no means everything - you must create, or help to create, a climate in Australia which will encourage the flow in this country of capital of which we are short and which, added to the capital we generate, will enable us to go along and develop our country. And you won't get this investment unless you have a sense of stability in the minds of people who are concerned.

So you see I started with you, your contribution to stability, the contribution of stability for overseas investment. And the final stage is this: that we are not at any time a remarkably safe country. We have ten million people, and we have all sorts of turbulent and aggressive movements going round in the world. Only the other day a 24 year-old man executed a coup in Laos, one of the countries under the umbrella of the South East Asia Treaty Organization, an Organization which is vital as the ANZAS Pact to our international security. We must at all times so conduct our own affairs as to inspire the confidence of other people and therefore, their friendship and their interest in this country. Now I won't elaborate on these things, because there are six other speakers, but you see my sequence - the kind of work you do in relation to stability and what stability does in its relation to investment and the provision of the capital required in this country.

The principal investor, Great Britain, and the United States of America look at us as a country in which they have invested, in which they are deeply interested, to whose development they are making a great contribution. And that has, I believe, much to do with the security of Australia. The security of Australia is not only dear to us who are grown up. it is even more dear to our children and our grandchildren and the whole future of a nation, which I am quite determined in my own mind, is destined to be one of the great and proud, and free, and responsible, and contributing nations of the world.

That, somewhat tediously expressed - at rather more length than I would have wished - explains why when I come here to the Commercial Travellers' Association, I feel I am among people who are at the very grass roots of these great propositions, which mean so much to me.
