

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.  
R.G. MENZIES AT COWRA ON THURSDAY, 3RD  
NOVEMBER, 1960

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Wallace Meares and ladies and gentlemen:

I think I should begin by thanking the Mayor for his very flattering remarks at the beginning of the meeting.

Everything he said about other people was quite true. I'll discount what he said about me for cash at 50% (Laughter) and still feel quite happy about it. Sir we're very, very grateful to you indeed for your generosity.

I am delighted to have the chance of supporting Wallace Meares. Perhaps I ought to make one or two things quite clear at the beginning. He is my candidate: he is the Liberal Party candidate for Calare. And I hope he wins. And I'll be very, very disappointed if he doesn't.

But everybody who votes for him should take infinite pains to see that the second preference goes to the candidate of the Country Party which is a partner of mine, and has been now, for 11 years, in the Government of Australia.

And in the same way, if there are Country Party supporters here I urge them to see that their second preferences don't go astray.

There is always, in a by-election, a little disposition on the part of enthusiasts, when you have three or four candidates, to have little disputes on the side. I just want to remind you, that for a longer period than has ever been recorded in the history of the Commonwealth, I have been the leader of a Government which includes a majority, of course, of Liberals, having regard to our numbers, and a minority of Country Party ministers; and we have lived in complete amity and, I believe, to the great advantage of the people of Australia. Now don't let that be interfered with in Calare. There is no reason why it should be.

Wallace Meares is a Liberal and has been a member of the Liberal Party since I had the great honor of taking steps to found it 16 years ago. And of course I want him to win. And without being a prophet, or the son of a prophet, I think he will. (Applause)

All I want to remind you about is this. It is worth recalling and retaining this fact. There is a good deal of argument about whether members ought to be in their electorate or whether some member has been out of his electorate, or whether the man on the land is adequately represented. I hope everybody realises that if Wallace Meares wins this seat - when he wins this seat to be more accurate on Saturday - he will be of all the men who have represented Calare in the Federal Parliament, easily the most experienced in the practical work of a farmer on the land. (Applause)

So, you wouldn't be able to say about him what you might say about me if you felt that way disposed, "Well he's only a city slicker". Because he's not a "city slicker". He is - I was going to say "earthy" of the soil, except that that, of course, would be a better description of my friend Khrushchev (Laughter) than it would be of Wallace Meares.

Now, I do beg of you to remember that. I think that we want more and more people in Parliament who not by way of

theory, but by way of hard and intelligent experience, understand the great rural problems. Because we have great rural problems. I'm going to say something about that a little later on.

But at this stage, might I just remind you that the prosperity of Australia, the very high prosperity, almost threatening to become a boom at present, that prosperity is still, to a vital extent, bound up with the success of the great, rural exporting industries. And, if they fail, either in terms of market, or in terms of price, or in terms of costs of production, then the prosperity of Australia could become a pretty sketchy thing, pretty quickly.

So don't let us take anything for granted. And let us understand that Parliament, if it is to be rich enough in talent to discharge its responsibilities, must at all times contain somebody of this kind representing a seat of this kind. I think you have a great opportunity here, and I am sure that you will take it.

Now, I wonder if, for not too long a time, I might talk to you a little about what I believe to be the main tasks of Government and a little about how we try to approach them. I think that it is a good opportunity for putting yourself in my position, so to speak, looking at the world, looking at your own country, knowing, inevitably, a great deal about the problems of the world and the problems of the country, what is our objective.

Because if we have an objective, if we know what we are after, and we are normally intelligent, and above all things honest and industrious, we will make headway towards those objectives.

Well, externally, we want security. I made a long speech - I'm not going to repeat it, or even summarize it - at Orange the other night. But I understand, Mr. Chairman, that somebody, as usual, wanted to know afterwards, "What that had to do with us?".

I hope that Australians, who have been involved twice in a great war which began many thousands of miles away, will not fall into the error of thinking that the affairs of the world are not our concern.

Because they are: they are our vital concern - just as much our concern as they are the concern of the people who happen to be living in France or in Great Britain, or in the United States of America.

And what we have done as a Government has been to take every step within our power to improve our external security by getting and holding great and powerful friends.

When we came into office the relations between Australia and the United States of America were, to put it quite simply, very poor. All that had happened with my predecessors had been that they had succeeded in having a quarrel with the United States over Manus Island, and had refused the United States the opportunity of establishing a powerful base as close as that to Australia, and our stocks were, quite frankly, pretty low.

I venture to say that our stocks today are the highest that they have ever been with the United States. (Applause). So high, that the two most important engagements to which we are parties in relation to our external security embrace the United States each time.

You have the ANZUS Pact - a pact between the United States, Australia and New Zealand. We promoted it. And we ultimately secured it.

When you consider what a long period of time there was in American modern history, when that country was isolationist;

when you remember that in the First War, and in the Second, they had a period of neutrality before they became involved, because of this tradition of standing aloof from the conflicts of the world;

when you remember those things you will realise what a great thing it was in time of peace, to get the United States to join in with Australia and New Zealand in what is, in substance, a pact of mutual security in the Pacific.

This is a fact frequently overlooked. But as an item of foreign policy I regard it with some pride as one of our greatest achievements.

And similarly, we have the South-East Asian Treaty. And there we have a combination of countries - Pakistan, Thailand, Philippines, United States, Great Britain, France, New Zealand, Australia. This is a barrier in the path of the advance of Communism in the north and north-west of Australia of enormous potential importance.

I say "potential" because, as yet, it has to grow, it has to develop its strength. And anybody who imagines that Communist China has no territorial ambitions, that aggressive Communism in South-East Asia has gone to sleep, has gone to sleep himself.

Because as we stand, or sit, here tonight there are Communist disturbances in Laos; there are always a few troubles in Cambodia; there is a growing threat in North Vietnam to South Vietnam - the old French Indo-China of our school maps - Communist activities in Singapore; powerful Communist movements in Indonesia.

These are of tremendous significance to us. I should not sleep comfortably at nights in the face of these events if I had not, with my Government, gone to infinite pains to help to establish the South-East Asian Treaty and the ANZUS Pact. (Applause)

Now, Sir, I say no more about that because as I tell you, I have been warned that people are not interested. I don't believe it. I don't believe it. I think what I have been talking to you about is perhaps the most vital matter, today, in our lives.

But let us turn away from that, external security. Let us turn to our internal affairs. Now, our internal policies inevitably find themselves confronting two great problems, enormously difficult ones to reconcile.

First of all the problem of developing the country.

And second, the problem of how to prevent a great movement of development from producing such inflationary pressures that prices and costs go into the sky.

This is the practical business of government, of a Commonwealth government.

It is quite true that every now and then one hears, or reads, how simple it is. It is extremely simple - except to people who understand it. But as a problem of Government, it is the all absorbing one. It far surpasses any particular application.

I was asked this afternoon by a highly intelligent citizen of this town, what could be done about the small farmer. The answer to that is not some particular answer about a particular farmer, or a particular group of farmers. The answer to that is, "How can we so handle our general policy that the country develops, our markets increase, our population rises, but our costs don't get out of hand?"

I don't profess that this problem is solved. But looking back over the last ten years I can remember, I hope not without pride, going through a few pretty sticky patches on this matter, and coming out with the country in pretty good shape.

But it is not easy and it is not to be laughed off by people who don't know about it.

You take the problem of development. Now, in the last ten years we have had well over a million migrants to Australia, well over a million. It is almost fantastic to think what that has involved.

People of my generation in this hall tonight will remember how, in our youth, we used to read about the United States of America and the great movements of population into the United States from Europe. In terms of percentage on the base population we have had a greater movement into Australia than the United States of America had in the great flush days of immigration in the 19th and the first ten years of this century.

And this, of course, produces at once an asset and a liability. An asset, because we have had more and more scores of thousands of people willing to work, willing to work in heavy industries, willing to work to develop industries in Australia. And at the same time, of course, the same people have set up demands for houses, schools and hospitals which are not very easy demands to meet because there is a limit to manpower and a limit to materials, and sometimes, though people don't believe it, a limit to money.

Now, Sir, that movement of immigration has been phenomenal in its effect. I went to a big factory, not in Cowra I regret to say, but in one of those bloated cities further down, a very big factory. And I said, "How many new Australians, as we call them, employed here?". Sixty per cent of those employed were new Australians. They have made, and are making, a tremendous contribution to our development. But at the same time there is a constant pressure on materials, a pressure on manpower.

In New South Wales and in Victoria today we have obvious over-full employment. And that means a rapid turnover of labour and less efficiency and higher costs. So that you have the problem all the time - you must develop the country, but you are not to ruin the currency and value of the currency in the country in the process.

The development itself has been, I think, phenomenal. We're a very cheerful people in Australia, and that's a very good thing. We're very optimistic. This is Cup Teck and I may safely say that we are very optimistic people. (Laughter)

(Applause) We are broad-minded. We don't mind whether the New Zealanders come over and take all the prizes. We're cheerful people.

But, we have one defect of our cheerfulness; we do rather want to have everything at once. If it's Television, well we want to have television - now. If it's something else, we want to have the best, and we must have it now.

Well ten million people doing as well as we are in Australia still can't have everything that 180 million people in the United States could produce, or become entitled to. We just go on getting the best that we can.

And I must say that I am astonished as I look back over the last ten years to see the enormous development that has gone on in the country. But of course whatever it may be there will be somebody who has, particularly if he is in Opposition, some reason to complain.

Why, back in 1949, when we were coming up the straight to the 1949 winning election, blackouts were the regular thing, particularly in the big cities; there was a tremendous shortage of coal, a tremendous shortage of power.

All these shortages had become as familiar as the town clock. People had learned to live with them, just as a dog learns to live with a flea. (Laughter) I thought the Mayor was going to rebuke me; but he agrees with me.

What is the position today? The development of production has been enormous, but the production of power has gone on in Australia phenomenally beyond anybody's imagination, and we are at long last a substantial exporter of coal to other countries.

These are dramatic changes. And I do want everybody to realise they don't happen by accident. They will happen only if there is a bit of sense, and a bit of judgment, and determination among those who are responsible for the general direction of affairs.

Over the same period we have had wonderful developments in Australia by the importation of capital. I want to say a word about this, the importation of capital in Australia. I don't mean borrowing by Government; though nobody has any reason to complain about the value of the money that we have borrowed overseas for Australian development. Because unless we had done what they told us was impossible, our predecessors, and borrowed hundreds of millions of dollars, a lot of the developmental work done in Australia would not have been done at all, for sheer shortage of equipment.

But putting all that on one side we have had a flow of private investment capital into this country without which we could not possibly stand where we do today in terms of prosperity. A few years ago I was able to say to people that private capital was coming into Australia at the rate of £100 millions a year. In the last 12 months it has come in at the rate of £200 millions a year.

These are enormous sums of money. The only person who would think that was, as we say, "chicken feed", would be the leader of the Opposition making a speech on the Budget. (Laughter, applause)

And the result of all this has been, of course, the most tremendous irrigation of enterprise in the country. Wherever you go in Australia, particularly, I agree, in the manufacturing field, and so on, but sometimes in other fields than that, you will find the result of this investment - some of it from the United States, perhaps 40% of it, and about 60% of it from the United Kingdom.

Now, isn't that valuable? I wouldn't like to see anything happen that cut it off. It is valuable in two ways. First of all it actually does provide the wear-with-all to expand. And in the second place, it is the most glorious proof that people, shrewd people, hard-headed people outside of Australia, have confidence in our stability, our integrity, and our future. (Applause) That is the great importance of this matter.

And anybody who wants to mess that up, anybody who wants to lower the reputation of the Government for integrity and stability in the world, or for that matter mine, is not doing much of a service to Australia. Because, wherever I go in these places, it is a certainty that at some stage some of the most influential men in the investment world will make a point of speaking to me and saying: "We are all fascinated by the way in which Australia has preserved an even keel, and has developed at such speed at the same time".

That always gives me great pleasure. And I hope it gives all Australians great pleasure.

And yet, since this is a by-election, and since I am told - on not very good authority - that the Labor Party expects to win it, it might be desirable for you to consider what the Labor Party says on this point. Because, for the last two years in the Federal Parliament it has made no bones about it. It is against investment from overseas. It takes the greatest exception to it. If it finds that one company, like the General Motors-Holdens, not to advertise one particular car, comes here, establishes a motor car industry, and makes a lot of money, and ploughs back most of it into expansion into Australia, they rave about it on the Opposition Benches. 'It's a scandal! We ought not to allow this kind of thing. These people bringing their own money here, actually daring to make profits in Australia and taking some of the profits out! This is anti-Australian activity'.

I had great fun at the last General Election: I went down to Geelong to that very distinguished enterprise, the Ford Company, at Geelong where they are always kind enough to allow me to make a speech from the tail-end of a lorry. (Laughter) (And there are worse places than that too, if you keep the engine running). (Laughter)

And, just at that time my then opponent, my then Leader of the Opposition, had "gone to town" I think is the expression, in a big way about overseas capital. And addressing about fourteen hundred employees of the Ford works, I just said to them: "Do I take it that you are in favour of preventing overseas capital being invested in Australia; going back home to mother without a job?". Well, of course it is too ludicrous.

I welcome investment from overseas. As far as I am concerned it is difficult to see how we could have too much of a good thing. And don't forget this: where a man's treasure is, there shall his heart be also.

And if other countries, great and powerful, and rich countries have some of their treasure in Australia, who am I to be displeased about it? Because they will have an interest in this country, and in its security, and in its future, and in its prosperity, that perhaps no other would provide so quickly.

And yet Labor doesn't like it. How it is going to replace this capital, where it is going to get it, it doesn't say. Because although I have the deepest affection for them as individuals, the fellows sitting opposite me in the House - why shouldn't I? I have a deep affection for them - but they don't know anything about these problems. They are willing to shrug off a couple of hundred million pounds coming from other countries, but when you say, "Well, what about it; where are you going to get it?" all they can think of is that you go to the Commonwealth Bank. (Laughter)

Just let me say one more matter about internal problems which has caught my eye in the course of this by-election.

I think, and I speak as an experienced politician, that if you are disposed to be inconsistent you really ought to have a good memory; you ought to try to remember what you said on some occasion; you ought even to try to remember what your Party did when it had the chance.

Now, I don't want you to listen to the tiresome reminiscences of an old politician, but in 1946 to 1949, well after the war, I was the Leader of an Opposition which numbered 17 in a House of 74. So that we weren't, numerically, very strong. But we had a handsome majority at the end of '49.

But there we were, a miserable, small - well small, if not miserable - Opposition. And, at that time, the Labor Party was in office with this handsome majority, able to do whatever it wanted to do; nothing to prevent it from putting its financial or economic ideas into practice; nothing to prevent it, at that time, if it had wanted to, for example, from taking the whole of the Petrol Tax money and distributing it to the States for roads.

But it didn't. And so I read with great interest a placard, or whatever you might call it, of the respected ALP candidate for Calare who says this, I must read it to you:

"Last year the Liberal and Country Party Government pretended it had a generous plan for road assistance to the States. The fact is, however, that at the end of the planned five-year period, the Federal Government will have collected in Federal tax about £100 million more than it will have paid to the States in road grants. Labour believes (this is in double type) that all petrol tax should be made available for road use. For better roads in Calare, vote Labour on the 5th November".

Now I've read it to you. That is a free advertisement, you see. (Laughter) But I read it to you because I want to demonstrate to you what utter nonsense this is.

First of all, it's all right to talk about us "pretending" that we had a generous plan. I don't mind telling you that not only did we have a generous plan, but we put it into operation. And the effect of it is that over the next five years the States will get from the Commonwealth for road purposes, irrespective of Federal Tax revenue, £250 million instead of the £150 million that it would have been on past figures.

In other words we put into operation a plan which adds, over a period of five years, £100 million to an already very substantial sum going to the States for roads. Fifty million pounds a year from the Commonwealth is not a bad sum. So I reject the idea that we haven't carried out our ideas.

But do let me go back to - what did I say it was? - 'Labour believes that all petrol tax should be made available for road use'. I wonder when they came to believe it.  
(Laughter)

I sat in Opposition in the Federal Parliament for eight years. It might not have seemed long to you, but it seemed an awful long time to me - eight years in Opposition, looking at a Government that had a copper-bottom majority, and looking at a Government which for four or five years after the war had all the opportunity in the world of putting its beliefs into operation.

So, I got the figures taken out. In 1946/47, that's the financial year, in their time, with a full majority, they collected £16 million odd from Tax and they distributed to the States, £4 million odd. That was odd wasn't it? (Laughter)  
"We believe that you ought to have the lot - we stand for this - but this year let us off with a quarter of it".

So they collected £16 million and paid £4 million. The next year they collected £16 million and they paid £6 million. The following year they collected £17 million and they paid £7 million. The following year £19 million and they paid £9 million.

The highest percentage of the Petrol Tax that the Labor Government ever distributed to the States for roads was 47%.

This year my own Government, collecting £58 million, distributes £44 million, or 78% (Applause)

And now this optimistic gentleman who is a candidate for the ALP comes along and says, "Ah, yes, well it's a pity that when we had the chance we paid 47%; and it's a pity now you come to mention it, that we have to admit that you pay 78%; but give us our chance and we'll pay over the lot".

I don't know if it's supposed that if the ALP won Calare, if I may indulge myself in a flight of fancy, the effect of this will be to alter the whole history of road legislation. It's a great pity that people don't know about these things.

The whole of this roads grant was thrashed out by us with the States, all of the States, some of them are Labor, some of them are not, only two years back, rather less than that I think. And we said at that time, 'We don't want to be tying what you get to a particular tax because, after all, we might for some reason or other want to reduce a particular tax and if you are only to get a percentage of it, you will find your road expenditure is reduced. We would much prefer to forget all about the source of the money we pay you, and put down a five-year plan so that every shire engineer whose shire or municipality gets a share of this from the State, will know where he stands; and every State will know where it stands'.



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You can't have a road policy that lasts for six months or has to be changed every year. We saw this, and we put it to them: "Let's have a five-year scheme on this matter, with a provision that will give you an increasing amount each year of the five".

We made certain arrangements about the distribution of the amounts between the States; we put in the whole proceeds of another tax that had been proposed on certain vehicles. And, in the result, as I say instead of getting these varying, and sometimes, in earlier years, sketchy amounts, the average amount to be found over the period of five years is £50 million - £250 million over a period of five years.

I venture to say that if anybody had gone to an election just before we made this agreement, and had said on behalf of a Commonwealth party, "My policy is to find £250 million for the States for roads over the next five years", it would have been received with enormous applause all over Australia.

So that if that is an issue in Calare I wish our opponent joy of it, because he won't get very much comfort from it.

Now, Sir, the other matter that I wanted to say something about is the problem of reconciling development with control of inflation. Now, there is a great deal of inflationary pressure going on. I announced on behalf of the Government back in February, four points of a policy.

One was that we would go into the Arbitration Court in breach of all our own precedents, and resist an increase in the basic wage. And we did that most deliberately. We submitted to the Arbitration Commission a fully documented case on it; and the Commission unanimously agreed with us and made no change. Because coming on top of a very large increase in the basic wage in the previous year, and a very large increase in margins, - do you remember? - towards the end of that year, we felt that this would put such a strain on the economy that costs would be going up, and that they would, as usual, come right back home to the man on the land who for the most part can't pass them on.

Well we announced that; we did it. And we did it with success.

We said that we were not going to budget for a deficit; that in a time of inflation you should budget for a surplus because you ought not to be increasing the supplies of money when the supply of goods is not increasing at the same rate. And so we budgeted for a surplus.

We said that we would get rid of import licensing. That was a bold stroke. The main purpose of it was to increase the supply of goods available so as to damp down the inflationary pressures, to match high purchasing power with more and more goods, and services to be bought.

We put all these propositions up and they have all gone into operation. Well it can't be said that so far they have had a hundred per cent of success because, unfortunately for the country, the market for wool has been far from satisfactory. And we live so much on wool that fluctuations in that wonderful commodity will perhaps determine the whole economic color of the country.

But we are always watching those things. We are constantly alert to know whether this change, or that change may have to be made in order to restrain a wild boom of inflationary growth.

As for the Opposition and, after all, you must remember that elections present a choice - you may not like me and I don't blame you - but if you dislike the other man more you probably vote for me. That seems reasonable. (Laughter) Perhaps that is how I have got in so many times in the past. But you are always bound to say, "What's the other man going to do about this kind of thing?".

I tell you there is no symptom that the Australian Labor Party recognises the existence of an inflationary trend, is interested in the costs of production of our great commodities. Not a symptom!

Because every time that they condescend to speak about these matters, which is usually on the Budget, their proposals for new expenditure on the part of the Commonwealth are so phenomenal that today's inflationary pressure would be a mere circumstance if they were adopted.

It's an old, and perhaps dull expression to say that what the people require of a national government is a sound, financial outlook, a steady financial outlook, and a clear objective of preventing the country from pricing itself out of the markets of the world upon which it so vitally depends.

Now, on all these matters you may say to me, "Yes, there are some aspects of life on which I might claim to have expert knowledge and a great deal of expert experience". But we will always be better off, in Parliament, always, if we can turn to a man with vigour and experience, and practical knowledge of a great number of these problems and say to him, "Come in and have a talk with me and tell me what you think about this matter".

And that is why, Sir, coming down here tonight, or coming up here, I felt delighted to think that I might just have one more opportunity of saying a word on behalf of a man whom I regard as one of the outstanding country candidates I have ever supported on the platform.

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Question: Mr. Chairman I would like to direct a question to the Prime Minister which is in three sections. The first one deals with Bank credit, or rather the lack of it, I should say. I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he can inform us what instructions, if any have been given to the Trading Banks as related to primary producers in particular? And also if any similar instructions have been given to Hire Purchase companies?. If not is it your intention, Sir, to give such instructions?

Chairman: I think it's rather a long question. It's going to be one that no one is ever going to be able to remember.

All right, I'll let it go at that.

Prime Minister: I don't quarrel with it at all. The question as I understood it fell into two parts. First of all bank credit to primary industries and what directives have been given on that matter?

The Reserve Bank has, right through the piece, urged upon the Trading Banks that they should continue to find proper advances for their rural customers. And in order to give some further protection to those customers, as you probably know, Sir, the interest rate chargeable by the banks on overdrafts has been calculated on an average so that advances for rural purposes can be at the lowest rate of interest and not at the highest.

That directive stands. It may very well be that we shall have to take some steps to strengthen it. But that depends on some examinations that we happen to be making at this very time. I've been engaged in them myself, to an extent, this week.

But you may take it from me, on behalf of the Government, that we think that whatever movements in credit policy may occur, and whatever restrictions may have to be put upon advances - and of course they have to be put from time to time - there should always be preferential treatment for those industries which are the export industries of the nation. That is a clear statement of what we believe to be the position.

In the second part of your question you asked me whether similar directions are given to the hire purchase companies.

I regret to say they are not within our jurisdiction. They do not fall within the banking system. They can't receive directions from the Reserve Bank, and they can't receive directions from us. The hire purchase companies are operating under State law and under State control. The whole position of the Hire Purchase companies is, as I don't need to tell you, very complex. But certainly no Commonwealth Government can deal with the problem in a satisfactory way.  
(Applause)

Question: Mr. Chairman I should like to direct another question to the Prime Minister, one about which many of us are concerned, and that relates to the question of overseas balance. Of course you are no doubt aware Sir that having regard to the existing drift in these balances it is likely that they constitute a force of some £400 millions. Assuming that that basis is correct would you please, Sir, tell us what action your

Government is going to take in this matter?

Prime Minister: Now, Sir, with very great respect I don't propose to tell you that. Of course everybody knows who studies these matters that there has been a down turn, a down movement in the overseas balances. But for me to get up, casually, on a platform, and say what I am going to do about that over the next few months - when it is plainly a matter that is going to involve the closest examination by the Cabinet - would be completely irresponsible. And if any candidate tells you that he knows the answer I wish you would write a letter to me about him.

Question: Is it a fact that the Bureau of Agricultural Economics put out certain figures regarding the income derived from capital invested by primary producers? Do you consider that those figures are high enough to encourage primary production development at the rate that has been maintained over the past?

Prime Minister: Sir, I hope you will excuse me for not carrying in my mind any figures that have been taken out by the Bureau. But if the figures were taken out by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics they have a very strong chance of being right. I quite agree.

And there is no doubt about it, that for various reasons that we are familiar with there was, over the last couple of years, a very serious fall in rural income. That is a matter that has given us a great deal of concern.

We have adopted various expedients in the past to help, so far as we can. But, of course we regard it as serious. But I don't regard it as something which will induce me to adopt a calamity outlook on the future of the country. I don't think there is any occasion for that. There is occasion for a lot of hard thinking and flexible policy, and doing what you can, where you can. But on the whole I am an optimist about the future. (Applause)

Question: I should like to ask the Prime Minister another question. If my memory serves me correctly, at one stage, Sir, you said 'better', this may not be the exact words, 'to give self-government' - something of that sort - 'too early rather than too late'. Sir, I wish to ask you, having regard to developments in the Congo and the lack of confidence, I am sorry to say, in those words of yours in relation to New Guinea, can you do anything to allay that lack of confidence which has developed in New Guinea we feel, and I in particular feel, Sir, as a result of that statement which I believe you made?

Prime Minister: Well, Sir, I can ease your mind at once. I am sure you read the wrong newspaper. (Laughter) I am sure you did. Now, let us be fair about this matter. If you have any interest in what I said it happens to have been printed in a pamphlet typed from a tape-recording machine, so that there is no chance of being mis-reported, and it was put on the table of Parliament some time ago, and if you are interested in this matter I'm sorry that you haven't taken the opportunity of getting a copy of it. But if you will be good enough to give me your address afterwards, I will see that you get a copy of it; I'll have it posted to you.

What I said about New Guinea was this: that we obviously could not go out of New Guinea in a hurry. I have said repeatedly, though you haven't noticed it, that nobody could do a greater disservice to New Guinea than to create an atmosphere that we are leaving quite soon.

Because New Guinea can't reach a period of proper self-government development without the aid of expert people and money, particularly from this country. And that to cut off investments by foolish promises of being out in a few years would be folly. Nobody has said this more clearly than I have, publicly. And it is all in print. I must send you a copy of it.

What I did say - and this is the piece that is torn out of context that you referred to, and was torn out by one newspaper in particular, with its usual desire to damage me - was that if some time in the future the country of New Guinea and Papua had reached a stage of development in which we had just the slightest hesitation in our minds as to whether it was just too early or just too late, the experience in most countries, modern countries, indicated it was better to be a fraction too early, and give them self-government with friendship than to be too late, and give them self-government with hatred.

And that I believe is jolly good sense. (Applause)  
And I have never had any occasion to alter it. (Applause)

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