

# OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR AUSTRALIA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM



Australian News and Information Bureau, Australia House,  
Strand, London, W.C.2 Telephone: TEMple Bar 2435

PRIME MINISTER'S ARRIVAL AT LONDON AIRPORT,  
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 1961. INTERVIEW, B.B.C.,  
I.T.V. AND PRESS. 3.30 P.M. APPROXIMATELY.

QUESTION: Sir, you are a very senior member of the Commonwealth. Do you think that the Commonwealth can keep its present character if South Africa continues to be in the Commonwealth with her racial discrimination?

ANSWER: You are now inviting me to say something in public about a matter which will be discussed in private by the Prime Ministers. I have nothing to say in public.

QUESTION: Well, you've recently been seeing Mr. Kennedy, the President of America, Mr. Prime Minister.

ANSWER: I have indeed.

QUESTION: Did you come to any conclusion with him about the major problems of disarmament, peaceful co-existence, and so on?

ANSWER: No.

QUESTION: Can you give any impression of Mr. Kennedy?

ANSWER: I was very impressed by him. I thought that - I'd never met him before, except once, rather informally - and so I was very anxious to find out what he was like, if that was not an impertinence, and I must say that, in the course of two hours or more with him, I was very impressed. I think he has a lively mind, and I think we can look for active, positive policies from him.

QUESTION: Can you say, Sir, what you think will be the most important question that will come up at the Conference?

ANSWER: I would expect that we would have major discussions on disarmament and on the future of the United Nations. I mean by that that there is twice as many nations now belonging to the United Nations as there were, and arguments are going on as to whether the Security Council ought to have its structure altered, because you have so many more countries in. There have been these arguments that have gone on about the Secretariat, largely promoted by Mr. K., of course, at the last Assembly, and broadly, I think that it is an appropriate time for Prime Ministers to discuss the relations between the Commonwealth and the United Nations, they being two utterly different bodies, but their members having a good deal of relationship with the others. Those, I think, are two great things - the important question of the future of the Commonwealth, of course, is there - South Africa, of course, is one point that has been tremendously canvassed in public, but there are other questions about the Commonwealth, - its future - we have more colonies that will achieve independence. Are they automatically to be members of the Commonwealth? Are there to be any rules about this matter? This problem has engaged a good deal of thought, both here and in my own country.

QUESTION: Would you like to see some sort of Bill of Rights drawn up among the Commonwealth countries?

ANSWER: You know, I've a very great respect for the Bill of Rights of this country, largely because it passed its way into the, what I regard as the common law inheritance of Australia. I don't go nap on new Bills of Rights - I think if the people run their Parliaments, they'll see that their rights are protected.

QUESTION: What do you think, Sir, - what's your attitude towards Britain, supposing we join the Common Market?

ANSWER: Now, look, I'm not going to make a kerbstone statement on that, because, the other day, some views were attributed to Mr. Heath on the question of the relationship between, if not the Seven and Six, at any rate, the United Kingdom and the Six, and they seem to me to be, possibly, very important. But I want to know far more about them than I know now - no doubt, I'll have an opportunity in London to find out what the directions are, what the possible developments in contemplation are, but Australia will need to know all about them and have proper time to consider them, before we offer a view, but none here.

QUESTION: What will be your attitude if the question of decimal coinage comes up at the Conference?

ANSWER: But will it?

REMARK: There seems a possibility.

P.M.: What a horrible thought! We've just had a Decimal Currency Committee in Australia making a report, and we're still, you know, grappling with it. I hope you're not going to ask me to grapple with theirs, too. Are they?

QUESTION: Changing the subject, Mr. Menzies, what do you think of Australia's chances in the next Series?

ANSWER: Now, that question can be answered only in the light of patriotism, not in the light of knowledge, because I don't know what your young ones are like. All I know is that we've had to go for our lives this year against the West Indies, who played magnificent cricket, and the result of the Series was in the balance two or three times.

QUESTION: You don't think you're going to spin out this Conference sufficiently long to see a bit of it here, Mr. Menzies?

ANSWER: I think that's one thing about which I can be positive. I will not be here for the Test matches.

REMARK: Pity! Thank you very much indeed.

---