

PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION CONFERENCE GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE R. G. MENZIES IN CANBERRA  
ON SUNDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1962, AT 3 P.M.

QUESTION: Mr. Menzies, what do you consider were the positive gains of your mission as far as the Common Market negotiations were concerned?

PRIME MINISTER: Separately? The United Kingdom and the United States? The great advantage in the United Kingdom was, I think, to have discussions with the Prime Minister and the other Senior Ministers, and to learn as far as I could the strength of feeling that might exist; on what lines it went, and, of course, to remind them quite vigorously of our own interest in the matter, and the things that we regarded as important. I was following on on a visit by Mr. Mc Ewen, in which he had, with great command of all the details, discussed various commodities very closely and it wasn't my business to endeavour to repeat that, because, quite frankly, I couldn't do it as well. He had been in the United States for similar reasons. What I wanted to do was to get into the broad a little - if I may use that expression - to try to form some political impressions and some political judgments. I think my broad impression in the United Kingdom was that it would be a mistake to think that there is a unanimous mind. There isn't. Various Ministers have various degrees of emphasis in their own minds, but I think there is, broadly, a considerable belief - not by any means universally held - that there is political merit in Great Britain going into Europe - political merit from the point of view of strengthening Europe, of helping to keep Europe outward-looking on the problems of the world and that, therefore, Great Britain inside Europe can exercise a degree of influence in the free world which she could not perhaps exercise outside Europe. That, broadly, is a view I think which is pretty broadly held in Great Britain on both sides of Parliament. There are large minority groups, of course, on both sides on that matter. On the economic aspects of the thing, opinions are quite divided. There are those who think that economically it is vital for Great Britain to go into a European free trade area. I am using that, not in the old sense of the rather abortive attempt to form one earlier, but into the European Economic Community. There are others who think the argument there is no better than 50/50, and there are some who believe that Great Britain will encounter some risks by exposing herself to the custom-free entry of commodities from Europe. It is not for me to say what the majority view may be. I thought when I was there a pretty broad view was fairly expressed by Mr. Gaitskell, when he said, in an excellent debate in the House of Commons, that he was not prepared to form a judgment of the value of the proposed move until he knew what the price was and that he himself would suspend his judgment until these negotiations, which have been going on with the Six, clarify themselves to a point where the price can be reasonably assessed. And that, I would have thought, represented a not uncommon view in London. It is an entirely practical approach to the matter. Against that hesitancy of judgment, I think that it is fair to say that there is a considerable volume of opinion which is impressed by the political advantages that I have just referred to. In the case of the United

States, I really wanted to find out, in my own fashion, whether the United States was, first of all, strongly persuaded, and when I say the United States I mean the Administration - whether it was strongly persuaded - of the political value of Great Britain being in Europe, and, secondly, whether it had a sort of dogma in its mind against the Commonwealth special relationship and that it would be disposed to use pressure to give it fillip - and it could - to produce a bargaining result which was unfavourable to us. Now that is what I wanted to find out. I came to this conclusion after talks with the President and with all the senior Administrative people concerned that the approach of the United States is broader than that. I don't doubt for one moment that the Administration would like to see Great Britain in Europe. I think that what the President said in a communique which we issued, and in which he expressed his strong belief in the importance of the Commonwealth as a source of stability and strength to the free world, is quite right. I was very greatly impressed by his lively and friendly interest in the Commonwealth, and, indeed, by his knowledge of it, what it stood for. I was also impressed by this, that he and his - I was going to say "Ministers", I'll use the Australian term - he and his Ministers, do not want to see the price for the Commonwealth too high. They recognise that we have interests. They recognise that, like themselves, we want to grow, want to develop our business and want to have the best possible access to the expanded European Common Market. Indeed, one of the things that was said to me quite frequently in the course of discussions was, "Well, look, after all, if Great Britain goes into the Common Market, you and we will be outside of it. We will both want to have access to that Market to the best possible extent. We will both want to have the European Common Market trading policies so as to enable us and you to expand our business. And, therefore, we have much in common. And, far from being dogmatic about the matter, they exhibited complete willingness to discuss with us, commodity by commodity with our experts, ways and means of achieving that broad result. I thought that was very helpful, and, in consequence, we arranged that Dr. Westerman, who is in London, to go over and continue, in the light of my own talks, some of these discussions. Well, in both of those respects, or in all of those respects, in both of those countries, I thought some usefulness was achieved by the visit. Don't take me as overplaying this business, because nobody can tell until the end result comes out.

Q. Before you went to London - in this room at a Press Conference - you made reference to the political aspect of the Common Market. I am just wondering whether or not the Queen's visit to Australia may be related in some way to that.

P.M. Well, I have been reading, only today since I got up, some highly-engaging theories about the Royal Visit being associated with the Common Market. Well, it's picturesque, and I don't want to deny people the pleasure of their own ideas, but it's quite untrue. As a matter of fact, I discussed with Her Majesty over a year ago the possibility of a Royal Visit. At that time I had in mind this year, 1962. At that time, the Common Market discussion hadn't in any way reached the headlines as it has since. Her Majesty told me that there were great difficulties about 1962, but she had hopes of doing it in 1963. But we allowed it to rest there, because I knew I would have further opportunities of discussing the details. As a matter of fact, my first discussion with the Queen on the question of a Royal Visit preceded this time any of my discussions on the Common Market. In my very first talk with her we discussed it. To see in this some Machiavellian technique by which the Crown is going to soften the blow for us is, I think, quite unreal. The Queen was very keen on coming here when I discussed it over a year ago. She is still very keen. Indeed, the one mistake I appear to have made about

the matter was that, instead of reserving the announcement of the Royal Visit until I got home, which I suppose would have been good politics, I said to the Palace, "Well, just let it go when you are ready." And, of course, I have only realised today that I almost killed my own story about the communique with Mr. Kennedy. But it shows how stupid you can be - or I can be, anyway. But, don't think of this visit by Her Majesty as some manoeuvre by which she tempers the wind to the prospectively shorn lamb. The two things are not related. The Queen likes this country and she is looking forward to coming here.

Q. In your discussions with the Queen, was it made clear by you that this tour should be a very informal one?

P.M. We agreed about that - as I say, it was well over a year ago. My view on that, and Her Majesty shares it, is that if each Royal Visit becomes a full dress journey State by State, locality by locality, then it will become pretty tedious and will become, inevitably, pretty rare. You can't go in for that kind of thing very frequently. We have been trying for some time now to try to achieve the result of a special visit for a special purpose. Prince Philip has been here already once for the Olympic Games, a special visit, Princess Alexandra was here; she didn't go to all the States, the Queen Mother was here; Prince Philip comes out towards the end of this year to open the Commonwealth Games - he'll come to Canberra, no doubt, but it won't be a Continent-wide tour. On this occasion, the Queen, I think, would like to visit each State, but not just as a sort of State visit in which people are arguing about, "Why don't you come to our town, because you went to another town last time?" But perhaps some particular occurrence in a State will attract a Royal Visit. We are going into that this week to see what can be worked out. But a visit which is directed to occasions, and not simply to localities, is the type of visit that I had in mind, and I know that that is what she would like. And if we can do that, then I think we may have more visits by members of the Royal Family on a simpler, shorter basis, than we would have if they were all on an elaborate basis. I think the people of Australia will appreciate that and respond to it.

Q. It has been suggested that one of the members of the Royal Family may come out with the Royal couple. Can you comment on that?

P.M. No, I can't. We don't know about that yet.

Q. Can you give us some idea of the date of the arrival in Canberra of the members of the Royal Tour. It has been suggested as February 10th.

P.M. Well, the dates that I was discussing when I was in London have been altered since, because I think that they decided that they would like to make it a little earlier, so I am no authority on the date. But the Canberra date - the fifty years Canberra date - is what, March 12th. Yes. Well I would think that that would probably be about it. I am reminded that the Australian dates will probably be about mid-February to mid-March and that would cover the period of this Canberra event.

Q. Do you know which order the tour will take? Which order of States?

P.M. On no.

Q. You have no idea of those things?

P.M. Those are the things that now have to be worked out.

Q. Will Her Majesty take part in an opening of Parliament?

P.M. Don't ask me any of that. These things have all to be worked on. Whether you can have an opening of Parliament between the middle of February and the middle of March depends on many circumstances.

Q. Will you announce the appointment of a Minister in charge of the Royal Tour soon?

- P.M. Yes, fairly soon. If I decide to have one. I mean the method of running this tour has yet to be worked out. I have had some preliminary discussions, but I wouldn't take it for granted that the old technique will necessarily apply.
- Q. In saying that, do you mean that is because the tour will be more informal than on previous occasions?
- P.M. Well, no. For other reasons. But I will deal with those when we are in a position to announce what the arrangements are.
- Q. In other words, we should not take for granted that there will be a Minister in charge?
- P.M. No, not for granted. I don't say there won't be, but don't take it for granted, and don't embarrass the prospective Ministers by offering them knighthoods in advance.
- Q. Will you be in a position soon to announce the name of the Director of the Royal Visit? Have you anyone in mind at this stage?
- P.M. I have nobody in mind at present, but I have a specification in mind, that's all. Naturally, we will announce all these things just as soon as we can. Whether it is in a week's time or a fortnight, I just don't know.
- Q. Has any planning at all been undertaken at this stage?
- P.M. Only in a very general way as the result of cables. But it can't be undertaken in detail till I have a chance of discussing with my own people here the kind of talks that I had with the Queen and with the Prince.
- Q. How long do you think it will be before you are in a position to announce at least a preliminary itinerary?
- P.M. Oh, I would hope - oh, an itinerary - I don't know. Look, as soon as I am in a position to announce what machinery there is, the general idea, I will do so. There will be no occasion to be mysterious about it, but the order of events - well, that may take a few weeks to work out. I don't know.
- Q. Coming back to the Common Market, do you now regard it as inevitable that Britain will enter the European Common Market?
- P.M. No, I don't think that could be regarded as a certainty.
- Q. Any particular reason for that?
- P.M. Well, I think I have. Just after I arrived in London, I had a talk with Mr. Marshall of New Zealand, and we made a statement which I thought was fairly commonplace, but we woke up the next day to find ourselves famous. But the gist of what we were saying was this - There had just been announced on the very day that I flew in to England, a tentative agreement between the United Kingdom and the Six on hard manufactures, as they are classified. And this agreement amounted to this, that the existing preferences enjoyed by the Commonwealth countries into Great Britain would be phased out by 1970, 1970 being the date on which the Common Market becomes, under the terms of the treaty, completely established. They would be phased out by two steps and then disappear in 1970. This has been called "The Precipice Solution" in various quarters, and that's not a bad description. We felt very strongly that if that principle was applied down the line to matters of greater importance to us, such as temperate foodstuffs, through all these commodities, so that it became the established practice that the conditions of Great Britain going into the Common Market were that by 1970 all our

P.M. (Contd.) preferences, right down the line, disappeared. We felt that if that happened that would be disastrous and that would give rise to most violent protests on the part of the Commonwealth countries. And I am sure it would. If Great Britain, in the negotiations, can do no better than that, as the negotiations proceed, so that in September, the position is that the best you can get is the 1970 termination, then, I for one, think there is great doubt as to whether the United Kingdom Government would go, or whether the House of Commons would approve going in. Very great doubt. Because, you see, that would present the problem, the dilemma in its most acute form. You now choose, as from 1970, your special relations with the Commonwealth or your new relations with Europe. And this is a pretty stark choice. And I don't know - it is anybody's guess - but I would doubt, myself, very strongly, whether under those circumstances Great Britain would go in. And, indeed, you have probably seen the communique. It refers to the fact that I said to the President that it would be a grave misfortune if, after the negotiations, it turned out that the conditions laid down for Britain's entry were unacceptable to Commonwealth countries on the grounds that they damaged Commonwealth trade and expansion. This, in reality, is one of the key things I wanted to put to the American Administration - "If you want to have Great Britain in Europe, then don't allow your influence to make the price an unpayable one".

Q. But sir, isn't it almost certain that the Six and America will seek to make the price reasonable?

P.M. I come back, feeling that they probably will. I don't assume that the Six are going to play this game too hard. I happen to believe that what was put to them first of all by my colleague, Mr. McEwen, and then by Dr. Westerman, at the Brussels conference has had some effect on their minds. It certainly has affected some of them. You can't lump them altogether, because the French view is not necessarily the same as the Italian view.

Q. Following that up, do you get the impression that America is willing to lower her tariffs so that we could perhaps sell more on the American market, and, on the other side, the Six and America will agree to some kind of international agreement on bulk commodities?

P.M. The President of the United States has, as you know, promulgated a law giving him a discretionary power in relation to tariffs within certain limits in the course of making trade treaties. He undoubtedly attaches great importance to this and thinks that, armed with the new powers, it may be possible to make agreements and arrangements with the Six - then the Seven perhaps - which would tend to encourage trade from outside to inside the Common Market area, which, of course, would help us. But how that will work out I don't know. All I know is that the American Administration attaches importance to it and it looks as if the Congress will accept it.

Q. Do you think that the terms will be clear by the time the Prime Ministers meet in September?

P.M. I think they'll be clear and unclear. Let me put it this way. When I went over, one of the reasons I went was that I was afraid that June and July might be the months of decision and it was better to be there when minds were being formed, than to be there when minds had been formed. I'm not sure now. At that time, I thought that by the

P.M. end of July, the package would be fairly tied up. But  
(Contd.) now I have doubts. I rather think the negotiations won't  
be complete when we meet in September .....

Q. Does that mean .....

P.M. Well, wait a moment. Let me say what I want to say. I  
rather think that the negotiations will not be complete.  
I may be wrong, but there will have been a sufficient number  
of negotiations, on a sufficient number of commodities, to  
give us the broad shape of what is going on. It may be  
that the September conference will therefore deal with  
something which is not complete but which is sufficiently  
formed to enable us to offer useful opinions.

Q. So you see no need to postpone the September conference?

P.M. I don't think so, no.

Q. Has the British Government given any undertaking to bring  
these matters to the September conference for discussion  
and decision rather than as a complete package?

P.M. Oh, yes, that is something that is completely established.  
I went to some pains to have it established. Although  
we read about certain matters as agreements, like the one  
on manufactures, the fact is that they are not agreements.  
They are tentative arrangements put into suspense, so to  
speak, designed to be brought together in a package,  
nobody being committed and the Commonwealth countries being  
completely uninhibited in what view they may offer.

Q. American officials here during your absence have said the  
basis of an agreement has been put to our government about  
the U.S. attitude on this in three parts - firstly that  
the U.S. would not withdraw its opposition to a transitional  
arrangement only for preferences; secondly, that if the  
Trade Expansion Act is passed, the U.S. Government would  
take steps to reduce, for example, the wool tariff, and,  
thirdly, that the U.S. Government would use its best offices  
to promote world commodity stabilisation agreements.  
Has that been .....

P.M. Well, I haven't seen this communication, so I make no comment  
on it. One or two aspects of it would surprise me.

Q. Did you ask for any specific quid pro quo from the Americans  
for giving up special rights in Britain?

P.M. I engaged in no detailed argument about any commodity.  
That wasn't my business.

Q. Will Dr. Westerman try to negotiate any quid pro quo?

P.M. I don't know. Look, there is nothing more dangerous than  
to talk like that, really. I would not talk like that.  
When you sit down to negotiate with people you don't go  
along and say "I want a quid pro quo, you want this".  
He will sit down with them and discuss commodity by  
commodity what is the best kind of result we think we  
can achieve satisfactory to them, satisfactory to us. If  
I were to sit here talking about any individual commodity,  
I would be destroying the prospects of success. And I  
am not going to. I am interested in Australia.

Q. Mr. Menzies, Mr. Macmillan was reported yesterday to have  
told a Conservative Party rally that Britain was determined  
to join the Common Market despite criticism, but that the  
Government recognised its obligations and aimed to make

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Q. arrangements for the Commonwealth's temporary and  
(Contd.) permanent needs. He went on to say that .....

P.M. Look: What are you reading this to me for? I did not hear it. You know my attitude on these matters. Years and years ago when I was a boy, I was prepared to comment on what some man was supposed to have said. I grew out of that years ago.

Q. Sir, in your discussions with Mr. Macmillan, did the question of Britain's preferences in the Australian market arise at all?

P.M. No, not specifically.

Q. The impression seems to be growing that your efforts on behalf of Australia could put you in the position where you could be used up as a champion by those who are opposed to Britain entering the Common Market. Could you comment on the dangers of that?

P.M. I would not agree with that comment at all. I merely happen to have put as clearly as I could our own views on these matters, I thought very mildly and, I hope, clearly.

Q. Would you say, sir, that you have the support of any other Commonwealth countries apart from New Zealand in the general line of thinking about the strength of the Commonwealth and so on?

P.M. I would have thought the views I have been uttering on this matter would have general acceptance in the Commonwealth. In fact, I would be surprised to know they were violently opposed by any British Minister.

Q. While you were away, Mr. Townley has been in Indonesia and a certain controversy has arisen because he either wore an Indonesian uniform or something close to it. Have you any comment to make?

P.M. No comment. No comment at all.

Q. Do you intend to ask him for an explanation?

P.M. No comment.

Q. Did you discuss with the Canadians while in London any combined Commonwealth attitude?

P.M. I had some valuable discussions with Mr. George Drew, the Canadian High Commissioner, but it wasn't possible to have discussions on the political level because of the Canadian election.

Q. You have no intention, have you, sir, of trying to get a cohesive Commonwealth attitude to the Common Market?

P.M. Well, if you mean by that, do I intend to set out on some campaign with other people, no. I am a great believer in speaking for my own self, and the Government here.

Q. Australia, then, is looking after its own interests?

P.M. We identify our own interests with the interests of the Commonwealth. I decline to believe that they are different.

- Q. The announcement of a Royal Visit seems to have knocked suggestions that the Governor-General will not be returning.
- P.M. The Governor-General has every intention of returning. Certainly, and I have every intention that he should.
- Q. You have spoken about the dangers you see in a "precipice" solution. If you were faced with such a solution, have you considered what our policy would be?
- P.M. I think that's a matter on which you engage in concrete thinking when you see the time coming.
- Q. Sir, would you care to comment on Mr. Killen's proposed visit to London?
- P.M. I have no comment.
- Q. Is it quite clear that you will be going to the September conference?
- P.M. Well, no, I think it is full of doubts. We might be kicked out in August, and that would rather put me out of the running. I might step under a bus. But subject to these accidents, political and physical, yes, I intend to be there.
- Q. Will Mr. McEwen also go?
- P.M. I hope so. That's my present intention.
- Q. Can you give us any later information about the West New Guinea situation following your discussions abroad?
- P.M. No, the impression of U Thant, whom I saw in New York, is that the parties will resume their conference, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Bunker and if that is so, well we hope some good will result.
- Q. Did you discern any hardening in British or American attitudes to the West New Guinea situation as the result of paratroops being dropped by Indonesia?
- P.M. I think there's been great resentment in both places against the continued use of force, and I have no doubt that that has been conveyed by both administrations.
- Q. Did you see Lord Gladwyn when you were in London?
- P.M. No.
- Q. On South East Asia - In view of the new agreement with the new Government in Laos, do you consider that Australia's commitment in Thailand will need to continue?
- P.M. I think that would be rushing it a good deal. It is quite true that an arrangement has been made in Laos, but it remains to be seen that it settles down into something that is durable. We all hope it will; but the essence of it is that there should be a neutral and independent Laos not interfered with by people from outside. And, as it has lacked any stability of government for some time, for a long time, I think that we are all hoping that the new arrangement will work. If it does work and Laos in fact becomes a pretty settled community, then it may be that the potential threat to Thailand as a SEATO country will diminish and that, of course, will be taken into account.



- Q. Coming back to Indonesia, Sir Garfield Barwick will be there in a few days, I think. Will he indicate quite plainly to the Indonesians that we also resent their activities in Dutch New Guinea?
- P.M. Well, I've no doubt that he will. He can speak for himself. I spoke for myself in answer to a question on this matter in Washington.
- Q. One more question on South East Asia. This row between the Philippines, or what looks like becoming a row, and Britain, over the future of British North Borneo, which is more or less pledged to the Federation of Malaysia. What is going to be the future of SEATO if SEATO partners are warring among themselves? Have you any comment on this?
- P.M. No. You must work that out for yourself.
- Q. Will you be making a statement early in the Budget Session on your trip abroad?
- P.M. Yes.
- Q. For a debate?
- P.M. Yes.
- Q. Mr. Menzies, while you were away, Mr. McEwen asked the Americans to "get out of our hair" on the issue of preferences. After your visit to America, do you think that they are likely to take a more conciliatory or constructive attitude towards getting out of our hair?
- P.M. Look, I'm not here to be using phrases. One of the things I was discussing in the United States, and I hope it will be allowed to remain there, is that we are not going to argue about words or about dogmas or these ideas. We agree to disagree about those things. What we want to do is to have some constructive, co-operative discussions with each other to see what result we can get. And all that I have to say on that matter is, with the authority of the President, said in the communique. The greatest disservice that you could do to Australia on this matter is to take this, which is a useful document, and try to tear it up by harking back to other arguments. I'm not going to.
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