

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, RT. HON. R.G.  
MENZIES, ON ARRIVAL AT LONDON AIRPORT, SEPTEMBER 4th, 1962

A few years ago at a meeting of Prime Ministers, not on such an important matter as the one we're going to discuss next week, I proposed that we ought to form a Prime Ministers' Union with one rule - no press or television interviews within twentyfour hours of arrival after a journey of more than 3,000 miles.

Mine was 13,000 but I put that in for the benefit of the Prime Minister of Canada.

I did not get a supporter, but I think the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals - if not Dumb Animals - ought to do something about it.

Now quite obviously I'm not going to start talking about what may turn up one way or the other in this Conference about the Common Market. That, I think, would be quite foolish.

As a matter of fact, I made a statement which I wrote myself with loving care and with an economy of language and delivered it in the Australian Parliament a few weeks back. It took fiftyfive minutes but unfortunately it doesn't appear to have been reported in Great Britain.

Still, if you care to get hold of it you will see the full statement of the views of the Australian Government on the broad issues that will present themselves.

I don't want to try to concentrate into three minutes what took fiftyfive minutes to expound with some care.

Of course, it's a very important conference and indeed, in some ways, a very remarkable one because there will be more Prime Ministers here this time than ever before.

I'm rather an old hand at these things. I remember that the first time I attended a Prime Ministers' Conference, which was then called an Imperial Conference, was when I wasn't Prime Minister. That sounds a little bit paradoxical, but I attended as Deputy to Mr. Lyons who was then Prime Minister.

That was in 1935 - 27 years ago - and I've been to a great number of them since.

But this time we will have more Prime Ministers - considerably more - than we've had before, and we'll be discussing not a problem but a nest of problems connected with the Common Market, in which some of us may have some particular interests in common, others quite different interests and, therefore, we may well expect that we'll have fourteen or fifteen rather different views put forward in the Conference in the first instance and that, of course, is quite right. Each country has a right to speak its own mind in the broad.

I don't know, but I imagine that at a certain stage, we'll need to go into some form of Committee business.

I will be seeing Mr. Macmillan, who is an old friend of mine, and I'm seeing him, as a matter of fact, tomorrow, and I'll be seeing him later on in the week. I will see other Prime Ministers.

I noticed that somebody thought that Canada, New Zealand and Australia were going to "gang up". This is a delightful expression. It takes me back to the bushranging days in Australia. We're "going to gang up". Well, that if I may say so, is quite foolish. We always discuss things with each other. I discuss things with other Prime Ministers. Not infrequently we stay at the same hotels. You don't suppose we cut each other in the corridors.

Of course we talk to each other, and when it comes to such commodities as wheat, dairy products and meat - all right, we have a good deal in common. It would be pretty remarkable if I didn't want to have some talks with Mr. Holyoake about those matters, or with Mr. Diefenbaker, about wheat, etc., or with any other Prime Minister whose country has a particular interest in these matters.

Now, this is going to be a remarkably important conference. It may not be the last conference on this matter - I don't know - but it is going to be a very remarkably important one, and it is not going to be assisted if all of us start to announce what is our minimum demand and put our hands on the table.

This is going to be a conference that will require a great deal of mutual understanding and considerable patience and very few slick off-the-cuff remarks. I said "very few" but I habitually understate things. What I mean, of course, is none.

And now, I think that having failed to establish the Prime Ministers' Union, and having a head that's going round in circles after 33 hours of this flying business, I'll call it a day, or at any rate a morning, because I strongly suspect that since I can't form a Union, at least I can be an individual and go to bed this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

---

LONDON,

4th September, 1962.