

SIXTH PLENARY MEETING OF THE WORLD POWER
CONFERENCE HELD AT MELBOURNE
ON 20TH OCTOBER, 1962.

Speech by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies

Sir, Your Excellency, and ladies and gentlemen :

It is my very simple task to offer a warm welcome to the members of the Conference on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

As one who occasionally has to go around the world and become involved in arguments in the world, sometimes fruitful and sometimes fruitless, I want to tell you in a minute or two that to my mind two of the great problems in the world today, as you survey the whole globe, are, first of all, the enormous and growing pressure of population on resources and second, the maldistribution of the benefits of modern life between the highly developed countries and the lesser developed countries. These are two enormous problems.

In the first place, how can the world provide a decent standard of living for the thousands of millions of people who will be living in it by the turn of the century, unless something is done to bring the benefits of modern discovery to the service of all people in all countries?

And this is where you come in, because there is no single element so significant in raising the standards of living, in increasing production, as the use of power, the diverse use of power, the ultimate cheapening of power, the putting of power behind the man who works in the factory and the man who works on the farm.

This is a tremendous task and, unless it is accomplished by the end of this century, we will find a mass of problems produced by pressure upon limited resources that can lead to disaster in the world.

And, in the second place, Sir, this gap that exists between those who have and those who have not, the gap between the highly industrialised countries and those that are still living on the soil, this is not a gap that is closing; and it will not be closed merely by kindness or good will or monetary help. This is a gap that tends to widen and the right way to close it is to devote more and more talent and occasionally a flash of genius to the bringing to the service of people the benefits of power, its applied use, its availability on terms that can be accommodated by the country concerned.

Now, I mention those very briefly. They are two very, very great problems. They will not be very far from your minds as you go on to consider the changing pattern of the world's problems in your field. I am confident, as I have been here this afternoon and as I have read your preliminary documents, that this conference itself and the work that stems from it may well turn out to represent a very great contribution to the solving of problems including those to which I have briefly made reference.

Sir, I think you will understand how warmly indeed, as the head of the Commonwealth Government, I welcome you all from overseas or from here to this Conference and to this country.
