

BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.  
SIR ROBERT MENZIES, AT PORT MORESBY, NEW  
GUINEA, AT 7.15 p.m. ON 6TH SEPTEMBER, 1963

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Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I want to say something about the attitude of the Australian Government to these territories.

We regard ourselves as trustees for Papua-New Guinea.

We are not colonialists in the old and now rejected sense.

We are certainly not exploiters - we put into these territories far more than we get out, or perhaps are ever likely to get out. This year Australia will provide, by way of direct grant, over £25M towards the cost of developing Papua-New Guinea - 25 per cent. more than last year.

We are not oppressors. On the contrary, our dominant aim is to raise the material, intellectual, social and political standards and self-reliance of the indigenous peoples to a point at which they may freely and competently choose their own future.

There are some modern fashions of thought that I have encountered -

- (1) that political independence should precede economic viability;
- (2) that democratic self-government is something that can be created, artificially, from the top, and that it will then find its way down to the grass roots; and
- (3) that speed is much more important than certainty or security.

Now I think that you will agree that it is important that I should say something about each of these propositions.

(1) I say freedom is an inborn right, and not a concession by power. This means equality before the law, a free choice of occupation, freedom of association and so on.

But people who are, taken as individuals, free, are not necessarily, taken as members of a community, ripe for political independence. In a community sense, genuinely free institutions of government are essential for the preservation of individual freedom.

Recent years have produced instances - we all know them - in which the grant of self-government has led to a form of dictatorship or oligarchy, government by a few, in which the freedom of the individual has been suppressed or gravely limited.

"Individual freedom" and "political independence" are therefore not synonymous. They can, by the careful cultivation of the various local and national means of organised self-government, be made to co-exist - individual freedom and political independence made to co-exist. This is our policy in Papua and New Guinea.

But, when considering political factors, we cannot sensibly ignore the economic ones. To give a former colony or territory political independence, while leaving it economically dependent upon the actions of others, is to expose it to grave risks

of "loaded" assistance, undue political pressure from outside nations or interests, a temptation to barter its freedom of political action for cash or goods in hand.

That is why we regard the economic development of Papua and New Guinea, along lines which they can successfully follow when political independence has been granted, as of vital importance.

What kind of economic development do we envisage, and what are its problems?

First, we must carry on, with all the speed which human and material resources will permit, the basic work of educating the people, not only for political citizenship, but also for increased economic capacity; better knowledge of agricultural and pastoral production, better technical skill, administrative capacity at all levels.

Second, we must take all steps to make improved techniques available to what I may call, in the well-known phrase, the "man on the land". Not trying to convert every small sustenance tiller of the soil in some remote valley into a "cash crop" producer; but at the same time increasing the number and capacity of those producing cash crops, not only for improved living at home, but for exports to earn some of the money needed for imports and investment.

Third. On the economic side, we have to consider what I will call the three T's - Transport, Trade and Tariff.

The marketing capacity of the Territories' producers, be they agricultural, pastoral, mineral, or processing, will be profoundly affected by the means of transport. And, in this country, that means roads, air services, coastal shipping facilities. Much has been done; much more must be done in the future.

Export trade must be developed, with new markets, particularly in the countries of the South-West Pacific and South East Asia. This is tremendously important. The Commonwealth Department of Trade is constantly active in this field, but I agree much remains to be done.

Trade with Australia, as distinct from these other countries I've been mentioning, involves Tariff considerations which are never simple. Yet they must be solved, as must be the problem of non-Australian markets, if there is to be industrial development in Papua and New Guinea. Much thought is to be given to the pattern of such development if we are to see a proper economic growth in these Territories on terms and conditions - I want you to mark this - on terms and conditions which will be sustainable by an independent and self-governing community in due course.

Fourth, we must encourage those settlers who have, over the years, done so much to help the growth of the New Guinea economy in production and commerce. Australia herself - the mainland - needs and obtains much useful capital investment from overseas. How much more do these Territories need it. Yet I know that we here encounter a reluctance which proceeds from a feeling of uncertainty. Can the man who invests the capital be reasonably sure of a proper opportunity to secure the fruits of his enterprise? For myself, I understand these doubts, though I cannot say that I share them in any substantial sense. Now, why do I say this? You may say it is easy enough to say it.

Well, I will refer to the defence of the territory later on. I want to indicate that we, Australia, are not going to be hurried out. We have a long job ahead of us - and you have - and we intend to complete it. One of our great objectives is that, when Independence Day arrives, it will come in a spirit of friendship and good will, in which the indigenous inhabitants will appreciate the

investment and work of what I believe are called the expatriate settlers, will realise how these have contributed to their social and economic growth, and will wish to preserve them. Whether concrete guarantees or supports can be given to investors is, I need hardly tell you, a most complex matter. My colleague, Mr. Hasluck, whose devotion to his difficult office we all admire so much, has given this problem a lot of attention. A group of leading businessmen from Australia recently visited you. It has furnished a valuable report which, as I saw it just a few hours before coming up here, I have not yet had time to consider, but I know that it is valuable and suggestive. The World Bank's Mission I hope to see in Canberra not long after my return. I can tell you that, in addressing ourselves to this problem, we will have in our minds a clear belief that without more investment for development and production, these Territories will just not have an economic strength to sustain political independence; that it is our duty as a government to seek out and apply whatever practical and reasonable measures can be devised - orthodox or novel - to encourage and sustain confidence and growth through willing and co-operative investment and effort.

In short, we want to work with you. We certainly will not run away from you.

In spite of superficial critics, who know little or nothing of the vast complexities of a country with a fringe of modern economic activity and a deep hinterland of primitive civilisation and activity, our tasks cannot be performed in a year or two. However great our activity, it will be a long haul. There are hundreds of tribes and languages, each with its own pattern of life. The job is not to destroy those patterns, but to adapt and modify them against the background of better health and medical services, better education, better means of transport, better knowledge of production.

Not one of these elements can be dealt with in isolation, nor can they be forced upon distant and perhaps unreceptive people. We have, all of us - that means you as well as myself - a lot to study and a lot to learn about the ways and means of raising the standards of primitive people while not blindly or stupidly assuming that they will ultimately resemble, in social and economic structure, Australia herself.

(2) Democratic self-government - I now turn to the second fashion that I referred to - the peculiar contribution of the English-speaking people to social and political history, took centuries to develop. With all the benefits of history and experience, such processes can of course, nowadays, occur much more rapidly. But it is still true that you cannot create effective self-government merely by setting up, by statute or otherwise, a form of parliament. Democracy, my friends, is neither artificial nor easy. We have, I think, been approaching this matter in the right way in the development of local government and an increasingly representative Legislative Council. At all stages, we maintain contact with informed local opinion. We are determined to pursue these sensible processes, "without fear, favour, or affection." We will at all times be ready to receive advice and assistance in these tasks. But, as the paramount consideration, one which it is our absolute duty not to forget, is the welfare of the people of these Territories, we will be unwilling to accept orders to take some hasty step which would cut across that duty. We will, in due course, take the decision of the people whose trustees we are.

Nothing, of course, is more damaging to the growth of independent institutions than armed attack or invasion. These Territories have had bitter and devastating experience of that. Well, on this aspect of the matter, I repeat what I said recently in Canberra, that: "We will defend these Territories as if they were part of our mainland; there must be no mistaken ideas about that." In that attitude, my friends, we have, as you know and as you have recently been reminded, the staunch backing of our ANZUS partner, the United States of America.

(3) Now, it follows from what I have said that, in moving towards self-government, speed is not more important than certainty or security. This does not mean that we are to have a "go-slow" policy. I once said that, if and when we reached a point at which we felt that the people were approaching, getting very very close to readiness for self-determination, but we were not sure, still had a lingering hesitation, it would be better to act then too soon than too late. But we are as yet a long way from that stage, as the leaders of the indigenous peoples have frequently agreed and as indeed they have stated to me in the highlands in the last thirtysix hours. We want a sound feeling about the wishes of the people of these Territories. We want security for those who are now there, and for those who are to come.

Meanwhile, nobody but a pure theorist could say that the pace of progress is too slow. In the field of education, which is by common consent very important, I will just give some facts - you know them but other people may not.

By 1958 the number of registered and recognised mission schools was 274. By 1962 - this is only four years later - this number had increased almost five-fold. Administration schools have increased from 44 in 1951 to 431 in 1962, and of course much is being done in secondary and technical schools. We are also having an investigation at present about university possibilities. Meanwhile, there are 88 post-primary and secondary schools, of which 20 are technical.

Here are the proofs of great headway under the helpful administration of a nation (our own) which, in the case of Papua and New Guinea, rates its duty much higher than its rights.

And, I repeat, it is resolutely determined to do its duty by the whole of the people of the twin territories, indigenous or otherwise.

Now let me end up by saying this to you. In speaking to you, one of the things I like to remember is that, while I speak as the head of a Liberal and Country Party Administration with, as you all know, a narrow majority, the Parliamentary approach to the future of these Territories is not marked by deep differences. Some of those who are listening to me tonight may, exercising a proper privilege, say "A plague on both your Houses!" Well, please don't think that this sentiment makes you unique. I understand it, and (if I may make a confidential remark, not to be repeated) have occasionally thought so myself. But we are all, in a real sense, and whatever our differences of race or politics, members of the family. The neighbours cannot and should not settle our domestic problems for us. But, with sense and fortitude and understanding and some imagination, we can. I want all of you to see this; to see our common interests clearly, and to serve them faithfully. For in this way, my friends, we shall come to a happy and prosperous future.

Good night and good luck to you all.

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