

CHAMBER OF MANUFACTURES OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
ANNUAL DINNER HELD AT THE AUSTRALIA HOTEL  
SYDNEY, ON 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1963.

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Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

Sir, Your Excellency and Gentlemen :

I am in a very difficult position tonight. In the first place, I am not accustomed to making speeches (Laughter). In the second place, I am in the presence of a bunch of fellows who have almost counted me out on one or two occasions in the past (Laughter) - which I must say I enjoyed. In the third place, I learned at the last moment that the man who has the great advantage of being the second last speaker who is proposing the toast of "The Guests" is unhappily not here - John Walker - and his place is being taken by my favourite pupil, John Hurley. (Laughter)

And perhaps, therefore, I ought to begin with John Hurley, because, last week I think it was, I was in Papua and New Guinea and when we got up into the Highlands of New Guinea, we saw a great number of people whose garments were slightly sketchy. (Laughter) They looked rather like Bondi or Manly, and as I was taken around, I said to my friends who, I hope, understood me, I said, "You know, John Hurley would do no business in this country." (Laughter) Then as I thought what might be done if we do our duty by Papua and New Guinea, I thought that I would like to be out of office by that time and take a few shares in John's business. (Laughter) Well, I just leave that to you, you understand these things so much better than I do.

That after all is a minor trouble. I knew that I was coming down here this week and I knew that my old and bitter enemy, Bob Heffron, would be here (Laughter), flushed with success from an overseas journey (Laughter) and I opened my paper -- you know, you chaps who just go on making profits, you don't understand this, but there is nothing a politician likes more than to enjoy the miseries of other people (Laughter) -- and every now and then you encounter a state of affairs in which the other fellow is able to do something that you can't do. Now, here am I - there's no news, there's no novelty about this remark - I have a majority of one (Laughter), a state of affairs to which all of you, in your various ways, contributed. (Laughter) And I opened my paper - I hesitate to say which one because they are all here (Laughter)-and I read that my old and friendly enemy, Bob Heffron has stood up on the floor of the House and has said to a supporter, a somewhat doubtful supporter perhaps - I don't know (Laughter) - I mean, we all have those (Laughter) - and with a sweeping gesture has also said to the Leader of the Opposition, "You can have him" (Laughter) I didn't feel too good about this. (Laughter) I didn't think I had quite come to the point of living on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table (Laughter). He has got a majority of X plus Y plus Z; I have a majority of one. (Laughter) If you wake up some morning and you open your favourite journal and you see - "Menzies said to So-and-so : 'Leave and join the Opposition'" - then you will know that I am going to have an election (Laughter) (Applause)

Therefore, Mr. Premier, I really felt that in spite of the happy personal relations that you and I have had that this was rubbing it in a bit. (Laughter) Don't you think so?

All of those of that opinion say "Aye" (Voices - "Aye") To the contrary "No" - the "Ayes" have it.

Well, of course, this is politics, when you have an enormous majority - as before you got to work, I had (Laughter) - you assume a rather gloomy attitude. Well, you know, you fear the worst when you have a majority of 32, but when you have a majority of one, you assume a euphoric appearance. One - a marvellous majority! Marvellous! And everybody says, "Isn't it wonderful to have a majority of one?" Now, I refer this question, not necessarily to a Royal Commission (Laughter) but for some domestic investigation, to the Premier of New South Wales, the simple question, Doctor, being: What does it feel like to have a majority of one? And when we are both kicked out, old boy, if I am still alive, I will write you a little essay on that matter. Anyhow, that's enough of that kind of nonsense.

My job tonight is to propose the Toast of Australian Industry. I must say, gentlemen, that I admire the skill with which you use these general terms - Australian Industry - because if you print it with a capital "I" then, of course, it includes primary industry, secondary industry, tertiary industry, public industry, private industry, and my task is to propose the toast of the lot which means, in reality, that I am up here to propose the toast of Australia and this, I think, is a very honourable task.

But having mentioned all the capital "I's", I might perhaps be allowed to add a small "i". I also propose the toast of "personal industry" in Australia because in reality, when we have got over all the political arguments, the truth remains, doesn't it, that the future of this country - your country, my country - the present and the future both depend on how far the primary industry, secondary industry, tertiary industry, public industry, private industry and personal industry conspire together for the future of the country. This is quite right, because unless all of these things march together, then the development and growth of Australia will not be what it should be.

Now, of course, people like to hear you say what ought to be done, but a great deal has been done. I know that in any country like our own - a marvellous country - there are builders and there are "knockers". I make no expression of disrespect to my old friend whom I have never met, Mr. Whelan the Wrecker (Laughter) .... "Whelan the Wrecker was Here".... because I know a certain amount of wrecking is necessary before a building goes up. But really, I think we all ought to take a little time off occasionally to ask ourselves whether we are "knockers" which is easy, rather clever, quite simple. I have always been afraid that when I finally get out of my present discontents and can sit in an armchair in the corner of a club and say, "I don't understand what these fools are about" - well, I hope I shall understand how simple it will be to achieve a reputation as a critic. But what goes on in Australia and what has gone on in Australia is not to the credit of the "knockers" but to the credit of the builders, to the credit of the co-operators, to the credit of the people who have looked forward and who have done their stuff and have seen a vision of what can occur in Australia.

Somebody on my staff, some faithful chap - because we all have a few faithful chaps - reminded me only yesterday that not long ago I went up to the North-West of Western Australia to the Ord River to the opening of the Kununurra Dam, and this is a fascinating affair. It is still, in a sense,

experimental. It is experimental on a large scale. Here is a part of Australia in which a great river which from time to time becomes rather exuberant can be dammed and can be distributed over the countryside, over land which normally wouldn't grow very much. And there you are - you can see acres and hundreds of acres and thousands of acres of land under cotton, under all sorts of various crops - safflower and so on, and you begin to realise what happens in a dramatic way in Australia when water is applied to an otherwise unpromising soil.

This, I found rather exciting, and if you will allow me the rare privilege that I have of quoting myself in my own favour, I will quote what I said on that occasion, and that was, and I commend this to everybody - that the whole history of Australia is the history of the impossible becoming the possible, of the possible becoming the probable and of the probable becoming a living certainty (Hear, hear) (Applause). Whenever I read, some months afterwards, something that I said, I am not like the fellow who said, "What a genius I had when I wrote those lines." I usually say, "Take it away and burn it". But on this occasion, I repeat it, and this might very well be our text, because here I am proposing the Toast of Industry - Industry - with particular reference, of course, to manufacturing industry which has had so much to do with Australian development and will have more and more to do in the future. But Industry.

Why do we take so much time off to argue with each other about matters which are of no great importance when, in reality, what you and I have the great privilege of engaging in is the task of building a young country, in terms of population a small country, in such a fashion, so generously, so ambitiously, that in a hundred years' time, the people who then live in Australia and who have a population of 60 to 70 million people - a great nation, a great people, a great race - will look back on us and say, "Well, at any rate, they had imagination. They laid the foundations. They got together." Whenever I read the history of another country - the United States if you like, and I have read a great deal of the history of the United States in my time - I am not so much interested in the things they disagreed about - except to identify them - as I am about how far their ideas coalesced to produce an immense result.

You know, gentlemen, the other day by some error on somebody's part, I was invited to deliver the Jefferson Lecture at Monticello in the United States at Charlottesville, Virginia, and on behalf of my country, I took this as a compliment because it is the first time anybody outside the United States has ever been invited to do it. And so I brushed up my recollection of the legal history of the early part of the United States and its general history and it suddenly dawned on me that there was one singular fact : Thomas Jefferson, a very great man by any measurement, great enough to incur hostility in any quarter today (Laughter) - Thomas Jefferson had been the American Minister (they didn't have an Embassy in those days) in France. He came back. He was the Draftsman of the American Declaration of Independence. He was the First Secretary of State in Washington's administration and, by any measurement, George Washington was one of the great men of modern history, full of courage, fortitude, understanding - and Thomas Jefferson was his Secretary of State. And then later on he was Vice President of America and then for two terms, he was President of the United States. When he first became President of the United States, he presided over a United States of 5½ million people. Please remember that. Five and a half million people.

I, for some reason or another that you may analyse in my absence, have been Prime Minister of Australia for some years and today, we have 11 million people. Eleven million people. We sometimes feel, don't we, that eleven million people is a very small number of people. We are a small country. Compare us with the vast masses of people. We are no great shakes after all. If Jefferson had said that, if Jefferson had written off the United States because it had 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  million people, the whole history of the world would have been altered. Make no mistake about it. We, in Australia, with 11 million people, with all the advantages that we have in life, with all the prospects that we have in the future, have a tremendous opportunity, provided we are prepared as individuals to apply industry to work, to sweat, not to ask too much for too little, but to feel that we are building a nation which will someday be as important in the world as the United States of America is today. Look, if we could only understand this, this is something tremendous.

I know there are a lot of people who say, "Well, we live, we die, we are buried and so what." You know, if we really all thought that, if we really all thought that, it would be a pretty dyspeptic sort of life, wouldn't it? Here today and gone tomorrow. I am not engaging in arguments about theological matters, whether people believe in a future life or not is their own business. I do. But it is their own business. But the greatest disbeliever in a future life in some astral sphere must still believe that what we are doing today in Australia must have some effect on what happens in Australia in fifty years' time; in other words, that we have our contribution to make whether we know about it from some other place or we don't, whether we are recognised for it or we are not. These things don't matter all that much.

The truth of the matter is that we are doing something, we are building something for the future. And our great-grandchildren may not think about us at all except when they go and see some plaque - in my case - and say, "Well, old great-great-grandfather, he laid a foundation stone." Well, that doesn't matter very much. Foundation stones don't matter very much. I'd like them to feel that you and I, in our generation, had laid more than foundation stones, that we had done something to build industrially, in all its aspects, a great country. Then we will, from wherever we are - you in Heaven, I in Hell (Laughter) - we will, in some mysterious fashion, perhaps, become conscious of it. But this requires not only great faith and great energy and very little narrowness of mind, very little dwelling on the particular interest at the moment; this requires a broad mind and a constructive sense.

Sir, I was up the other day in Papua and New Guinea and here is a country which presents us with a challenge. We have been tremendously assisted in our consideration of our problems in that country by a group of men led by Jim Kirby (Sir James Kirby) who went up there not long ago and had a look at it; and only the other day by a professional group from the World Bank who went there and will in due course present us with a report on it.

We can't look at ourselves as if we were in a water-tight compartment. Are we to look at Australia and say, "Well our great ambition is to be purely self-contained; nobody else need apply; nobody else need compete"? Are we to say that to Papua and New Guinea? Are we to say to this country for which we have accepted the greatest international responsibilities in

our history - a task which is overlooked by people, many of whom would love to see us fail - are we to say, "Well, what happens to Papua-New Guinea doesn't matter very much. They can grow rubber, they can grow tea" - and I think they'll grow more and more of it - "they can grow coffee, they can grow coconuts, copra, they can grow cattle." Well, all these things are at their very beginning, but you can never think of the problem of Papua-New Guinea as if this country were isolated from us, as if we could treat it for all purposes as if it were a foreign country because it is not a foreign country. Papua-New Guinea is the greatest responsibility that this country of ours has ever taken on in the eye of international judgment. And therefore I was delighted when distinguished members of your own from Sir James Kirby down went and had a look at this business, went and made valuable reports on it. Never let us get too bedded down on the immediate problems that we have, although they are important. Of course they are important. But let us - all of us - you, I, all the rest of us - feel that the judgment that will be applied to us is not the judgment of the shareholders at your next general meeting, or the judgment of the electors at my next general election, but will be the judgment of people, in the long run, who say, "What did these ancestors of ours, what did these predecessors do as builders not only in Australia but elsewhere."

Now, the only other thing I want to say to you is this, Sir. I have spoken too long, but this exercises my mind - or what passes for my mind. There has been a great deal of hurroosh - I don't know how to spell that word but it sounds all right (Laughter) - about the problem of restrictive practices, of trade practices. (Laughter) That's right, this rings a bell. (Laughter) And of course all this problem evokes two classes of people who don't matter. One, the people who say, "I'm against it, whatever it is." Well, that's silly. There are others who say, "I don't understand what it is but I am in favour of it" and that doesn't matter. What I have been interested to discover, in the last year, is that very, very few people come along and say, "I'm against anything." The people who count on this matter are the people who say, "Well, yes, there are some things that are done that ought not to be done but a real important problem is to discover what they are, how sensibly a scheme may be developed on these matters," and I like those people for the very simple reason that I think they are very sensible and I would like to tell you that in the middle of all the hurroosh, we had last week a discussion - no, it was this week, last Monday - with representatives of the Manufacturing Industries Advisory Council, their spokesman being Mr. Irish, and we had put to us the most balanced, sensible and impressive body of ideas on this matter that I have yet heard and I would like to say that on behalf of the Government we are very grateful for this.

We are not dogmatic on this matter, we are not doctrinaire on this matter. Indeed, we are like you. We want to preserve competition and, so far as we can, with good sense, eliminate unfairness and injustice. Well, it is easy enough to say that in the broad. When you come down to the point as to how you are to do it, you get to a problem which will, in due course, exercise the Governments of the States who have exactly the same interest as we have on this matter and whose co-operation is essential in this field, and all I want to tell you is that what has been said to me and to my colleagues in the last few days has been so constructive and so helpful that I think it may well determine the future course of action. (Applause)

Sir, when I was coming here tonight, my wife said to me - because she has gone to see somebody else - "How late do you think you will be?" And, I said, "Oh, I don't know. About half past ten" and the driver, who knows me of old, said relevantly, though perhaps impertinently, he said, "Well, Sir, ....." (one of the great advantages of life is that the driver calls you "Sir" (Laughter) .... he said, "Sir, the year before last it was a quarter to twelve and last year it was a quarter past twelve." So I said to my wife, "All right, my dear. When you have seen as much as you want to see of Earthy - or whatever her name is - (Laughter) you go home. And, therefore, in the meantime Sir, thanking you for your usual and marvellous hospitality, I will invite all my temporary collaborators (Laughter) to stand up and drink with me the Toast of Australian Industry.

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