

LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HAYATO IKEDA,
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

at

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA,

ON 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1963

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. SIR ROBERT MENZIES

Sir,

You are the Prime Minister of a nation which has such a great part to play, not only in the Pacific Area, but in the world. You are, therefore, on that ground alone, welcome in this country (Hear, hear) (Applause), and it is my pleasure, Sir, on behalf of the Australian Parliament, to express that welcome in words.

It would, Sir, as I am sure you will agree, be idle to pretend that the war did not leave grievous wounds upon Australia's feelings towards Japan. It is the basis of friendship that we should recognise that fact. There were and there are bitter memories in many hearts.

But, Sir, it is in the Australian character not to prolong hatreds, or to live on past events. (Hear, hear) (Applause) We are essentially a forward-looking people, with a great instinct for optimism and friendship. We want to live not only in peace, but in the widest co-operation with other nations. Your predecessor in your great office, Mr. Kishi, made us a successful visit a few years ago. I myself have visited your country twice during my term of office. You have sent us a series of most distinguished Ambassadors (Applause), whose work, not only in the re-establishment of good will, but also in the handling of the practical problems of trade and commerce, has been of immense value to both our countries. Our own Ambassadors to Japan, I do not doubt - I have one of them here today (Applause) - have performed similar services at your end.

Some years after the echoes of the war had died away, we decided, in this country, as a considered matter of policy, that security and co-operation in the Pacific should be preferred to the prolongation of enmity; that we should learn to live with each other; that we should concentrate upon our common interests and be aware of our common dangers. In the achievement of all these great objectives, Japan has shown herself a willing co-operator. In the world atmosphere of recent times, Japan has resumed her place as a great power, with remarkable economic development and skill, and with a growing willingness, I am happy to note, to play an effective part in the solution of the world's economic problems. Australia herself, a small nation but a large trader, has been developing commercial relations with Japan which, in absolute as well as in relative terms, have been of great value to both our countries. Our Trade Treaties with you have marked our close relations with you. Their efficacy - and I point this out with some satisfaction - has depended, not only upon the letter of the deal, but upon genuine good faith. (Hear, hear) But, Sir, trade, though important, is not all. Our contacts with you at all human levels have been growing. Whatever the torments of an earlier period, I think we can all agree here today that we can now look back upon a decade of most civilised association. We want this association to continue, and to grow stronger and I am sure, Sir, that you share this desire.

Now, Sir, may I turn from this to look very, very briefly at some of the problems of the present and the future. We are all concerned with the expansionary threats of Communist politics, philosophy - destructive philosophy. Neither you nor we have any aggressive intentions, but we must stand ready to protect our own freedoms. This readiness does not simply connote military preparedness. It involves the establishment, in the eyes of the world, of the fact that free communities can provide for their citizens growing living standards and swift national development without the sacrifice of individual freedom in the interests of a dictatorship or a powerful few. (Applause)

We believe that you, Mr. Prime Minister, and your nation, share these ideas. We believe, if I may say so without impertinence to a welcome and distinguished guest, that Japan must and will play a great and constructive part in this historic drama.

One of the great causes of tension in the world is the economic differences which exist between the great industrial powers, on the one hand, and the relatively underdeveloped countries which depend upon primary production and therefore suffer from instability of prices and some uncertainty of markets. These differences, unless a conscious effort is made to reduce them, will tend to increase, and for the very good reason, or the very bad reason, that the rate of growth in highly industrialised countries, thanks to the rapid improvement of technologies and plant, tends to be faster than it is in countries following farming and pastoral pursuits.

We believe that these facts call for far-reaching policies on the part of the great industrial powers, designed not only to assist development in newer countries, but also to assure reasonable, stable and profitable markets for the products of that development.

Sir, Japan is one of the great industrial powers. After a necessary period of re-adjustment, you have made enormous strides forward, with immense skill and the most admirable industry. You have, for us, a special significance in the South-West Pacific, in which your influence, a great and growing one, can do much to assist political and economic stability and the elimination of old or new animosities. In short, Mr. Prime Minister, we believe that in this new political and social world, a world which is in the making, Japan has a new and historic function and destiny.

Small and remote as we may seem in Australia when viewed against the world background, we have the resources and the skill and the energy to grow and become a powerful co-operator in the common cause of humanity. But, great or small - you great, we small - we all need friends with common interests and common ideals. The world does not need, nor should it tolerate or encourage, the perpetuation of differences. Let us rather build upon those good things that we have in common. If the nations are to be free and prosperous, friendship and co-operation and mutual understanding must be our common aim.

Mr. Prime Minister, your visit is a powerful contribution, in itself, to this end. We are delighted that you are here, both giving and receiving good will.
