

TEXT OF SPEECHES

Following are the texts of speeches by President Johnson and the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, at lunch on 24th June at the White House, Washington.

PRESIDENT JOHNSON ;=

"Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Chief Justice, My Friends : This is a delightful and very happy and heartwarming occasion for me today.

It is one to which I have looked forward with great anticipation.

We here in Washington know our guest as a good and great friend of America

I hope that Sir Robert and all of his countrymen know equally well that the President is both an old and good friend of Australia and a very great admirer of the Australian people.

As many of my personal friends and associates have heard me say through the years, I lost at least a part of my heart to the Australian people a long time ago.

I will never forget their warmth when I was stationed there in the early and anxious days of the war in the Pacific, and just to illustrate why our guest of honor has been Prime Minister for 17 years and why he has been an astute and expert parliamentarian for more than 35 years, before we came downstairs I was telling him of the graciousness of a great lady whose name I could not remember, but with a very slight description of her qualities and her assistance to me during the early days of the war, the Prime Minister, without any difficulty, called her name and located her and brought back to my memory many other good things about her.

I long for the day to come, and hope it can come between now and November, when I will have my constituency as well in hand and know them as well as he does.

Some of you may be familiar with the accounts of one episode that occurred when the plane in which I was riding as a member of the Navy was forced to land away from our Base.

Several writers later filed stories that my contacts with Australians in the area indicated that I might have had a promising political future down under.

I can only say that in considering his extraordinary success for many years, the Prime Minister obviously has much to teach the elective officials in America, and I am so proud that I have been privileged to sit and visit with him and to learn from him.

We are grateful, Sir, that you honor us with this visit this year.

We remember with particular favor your visit to our country last year when you sat here at this chair by the side of our beloved President John Kennedy.

At that time you made a statement which I think expresses so well the feeling between our lands.

Then you said, "We work for the same kind of free world."

In the geography of freedom, all areas and all corners and all regions of the free world are important, and they are all vital.

For us here in the United States it has been a source of great strength to know that there stands a nation so dedicated to freedom's defense as Australia.

I don't know when a news announcement has given our country more comfort or been received with greater satisfaction than the announcement made last week by your Minister of External Affairs concerning the additional contribution that the people of Australia were ready and anxious to make to contribute men and materials and equipment along the side of our men who are now fighting for freedom in South Vietnam.

So we are proud and we are very grateful, Mr. Prime Minister, to have you stand by our side.

We are glad to have you stand with us as members of ANZUS.

We are happy to work with you in the United Nations.

We are assured to know that you are with us wherever freedom is in danger.

Australia and the United States do really, truly, as you say, work for the same kind of free world.

I am sure that brief as your visit now must be, this friendly meeting with you, will help us to work together in even closer understanding.

I am grateful that you have come here.

Our discussions have been fruitful.

Our understanding has been improved.

My desire to return your visit has increased, if that is possible.

So to my good friends who have assembled here with us today in this house, I should like to ask you to join with me in a toast to Sir Robert Menzies, The Prime Minister of Australia, and to the enduring bonds of friendship and freedom between our lands.

Mr. Prime Minister."

SIR ROBERT MENZIES :-

Mr. President, Chief Justice, and Gentlemen : I have been reminded by you, Sir, that last year I spoke in this room, I think, in the presence of and as the guest of that great man, the late President Kennedy, and I should not wish to begin even the briefest of speeches without paying a tribute of respect and affection to his memory.

But, Sir, the world goes on, and you now have the responsibilities of this enormous office.

I think perhaps the one thing that prevents a man occupying one of the very greatest offices in the world from becoming subject to delusions about himself is that he is usually so conscious of the task and of the responsibility that he has no time left for showing off.

This is so true.

You have this enormous responsibility, and you would be perhaps surprised to know how many people, so many thousands of miles away from you, and whether they would be on your side or another in your own country, they pray for you and wish you well in the discharge of this immense human responsibility.

And so, Sir, I am greatly honoured to be here as your guest.

There is another thing about it.

I am here as Prime Minister of Australia, a British country.

I myself am British, and some people might say insistently so, but here we are in one place, at the one time.

When I saw you last time here, Sir, and you were Vice-President, I was beginning to turn over in my mind whether I shouldn't have a premature election, and I decided that I should.

Most people were confident that I would be beaten, but I won.

Now I don't know whether there is a moral in this, Mr. President, but everybody I have spoken to so far in the United States is confident that you will win.

I hope this is not a bad omen.

Now, Sir, I don't want to detain this distinguished audience, but I think that it would be appropriate, if you don't mind, for me to say something about the position of your great country in the world, and particularly in the free world, and in particular with us in Australia.

It is one of the issues of history, something that I have referred to before today, that nations which have immense power, and, therefore, accumulate immense responsibilities, are seldom terribly popular.

Great Britain, you know, was the Great Power in the world in the 19th Century, and enjoyed a supply of epithets of an abusive kind in Europe which has perhaps never been equalled since.

Great Power doesn't give you great friendship. ↗

Indeed, great gifts to other nations don't buy friendship.

Gratitude is a scarce commodity, and yet all great nations, and none more so than yours, perhaps none so much so as yours, have been conscious of responsibility and have done things materially and spiritually for other countries in the world, and very frequently have received small thanks for it.

That doesn't matter.

What matters is that these things are done.

What matters is that people are given an opportunity of standing on their own feet, of developing their own national and individual characteristics.

This I am sure in the long run is a good thing for the world.

But when it comes to a country like Australia, well, we are a small country.

I preside over a country which is about twice as large in point of population, and perhaps ten times as large in point of physical resources as the country which was presided over by Thomas Jefferson.

It is worth recalling because we go on as you went on, and we may some day in the wisdom of providence and by some strength in our right hands and courage in our own hearts and minds be one of the great and powerful countries in the world.

But that is a long way off.

What is present with us is that we have a relationship with the United States which is not the relationship between a benefactor and a pensioner.

It is, I am happy to say, a proud relationship between friends, one immensely powerful and the other, ourselves, much less powerful.

Why are we friends ?

People will say to me in a skeptical sort of mood, "Yes, of course, you keep in with the United States because you want them to defend you."

This is said as if we regarded the problem of our defence as something for somebody else to attend to, and for us to neglect or ignore.

Don't you believe it for one moment.

We shall defend ourselves in Australia, wherever the circumstances, to the very last gasp that we have, but we will defend ourselves with all the greater success if we know that we have great friends like yourselves who will be defending us or helping to defend us not because there is some statutory obligation, or not just because of some treaty between us, but because we both happen to believe in exactly the same things, the same attitudes of mind, the same patterns of behaviour, the same great attributes of character and quality.

These things we have in common.

It is because we have them in common that we will defend them in common.

Sir, there may be people around the world, I dare say there are, who fall into the deplorable habit of thinking that the United States should be regarded as a sort of Gendarme to keep the peace of the world, and true it is that you have accepted enormous responsibilities, but don't you think for one moment that in my country when we consider problems of international peace and war we say "Leave it to the United States".

We may be small, but we are friends, and it is a good thing to have friends, great or small.

It is a good thing, above all other matters, to have friends who are not going to resort to questioning when the day of trial comes, but who will be there, and there for all purposes of the survival of those things that you stand for and that we stand for.

I am always completely at home in this place, in this city, always capable of having an argument with an American.

Not with the President.

I wouldn't dare to do that.

And not with the Chief Justice, although I would enjoy it.

But with Dean Rusk, who I want to tell you at once, I don't care what side you are on in politics, but Dean Rusk is persona gratissima with us in Australia.

But still capable of having an argument, of course.

It will be a poor day, won't it, when we can't ?

It would be a very poor day when little Australia won't be able to summon up its traditional impudence by looking at the big United States and saying, "What do you mean, you big stiff ?"

This, of course, will happen.

You wouldn't believe it, but there are people in my own country who have been heard to make rude remarks about me, and I don't mind that a scrap as long as they are in the minority.

But, Sir, I have enjoyed meeting you today.

I had met you before, but in a highly formal sense.

I am very glad to know that from now on we will be able to communicate with each other in terms of personal friendship.

I do hope you will be able to come to Australia, and I believe that you want to come to Australia.

But whether you succeed in the near future or, as one might say, in my time, or not, the fact remains that in Australia you have friends, little friends, friends you may chide, friends you may encourage, friends to whom you can hold out all of the usual appurtenances of friendship which run from chastisement to approval, but still friends, because I want to make it clear to you that however small it is, the thing that we do, we will always be found to do it because we know that everything that matters for us, and everything that matters for you, is at common risk in this strange world, and must, therefore, be defended - explained and defended in common.

Sir, I thank you very much, indeed, for your great courtesy.

I regret very much to find that your congress is under no better discipline than my House of Parliament, and some of the ones who were here whom I was hoping to persuade about something or other have gone off, not to persuade or to be persuaded but to vote.

So thank you very much.

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ISSUED BY : The Press Secretary
to the Prime Minister.