

AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LUNCHEON



Hotel Canberra, Canberra, A.C.T.

19 September 1969

Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

Group-Captain Nicholls, Mr. Buchan, Distinguished Guests, Mr. Ambassador:-

I think the first thing I would like to say to you is that I welcome this opportunity on behalf of the Government to welcome the new Ambassador from the United States, Mr. Rice, and his wife. We hope that their stay in this country will be thoroughly enjoyable for them and that it will help to cement even further the relations between our two countries. I know they will be welcomed warmly wherever they go in Australia, and I hope they go throughout the whole of this nation.

This gathering is a continuation of an association which had its roots in the trials of the Second World War. It was then, I think, for the first time that there became a really close relationship between the United States of America and our own nation. I know that as long ago as 1908, Commodore Perry came out here with the Great White Fleet and Alfred Deakin, who welcomed that fleet, spoke of "our American cousins". And that was long ago. And there has been a continuing feeling along those lines since that time.

Indeed, one of our most different and most well-known politicians, Mr. King O'Malley, who was instrumental in founding the Commonwealth Bank, came either from the United States or Canada - it's not quite clear. But at any rate, it was quite close to the United States, if it wasn't in it!

But that feeling really came to have far more deep-seated roots in the Second World War. There are perhaps many people in this room, or some people in this room who do not remember this because the years are quick and memories are short, but we were threatened, as we were, with actual invasion of our country, and that was strange to us for we are one of the few countries in the world that has never had to suffer an invasion. And when there was a sweep down of apparently irresistible military power, closer and closer to Australia, culminating in an attack on New Guinea itself at Milne Bay, it was then that there came to our assistance soldiers from the United States. It was then at the Battle of the Coral Sea, which you have celebrated for so long, that the tide was turned back. And those joint operations - for they were joint operations - of our two nations, struck feelings of gratitude from the Australian people

which I think have never withered and which I believe, even though younger generations follow us along, will also never wither away.

This was why for so many years the highlight of the year for the Australian-American Association was what was called the Coral Sea Celebrations, and that was why for so long top admirals and generals and air force officers from the United States were brought out by your Association to tour Australia and to talk to your members. And I think it right, proper and wise that you decided that the years having passed, there should be a wider and deeper and even more significant association than just the memories of the times when we stood together and some of us fell together.

And so you have thought it right, and I think it right, that you should bring out here as your guest distinguished citizens from the United States in all walks of life, that you should seek to broaden year by year the kind of association between our two peoples, that you should seek to see that we do not just look back to the past but accept the present and look to changes in the future. Therefore you seek to broaden out into student exchanges, in which young people from America come here and young Australians go to the United States and you seek to have closer cultural relationships. . . . seeking by these means to get those who are going in the future to be the leaders of our nation, to know more of the United States and those from the United States who may be leaders of that nation to know more about us. And we must never forget that each single student who comes to Australia and spends some time here at one of our schools and goes back to the United States is not just one person but is a person who has a wide range of friends to whom he or she can speak, and by speaking to them of how life is in this country, can do far more in spreading amongst that community a knowledge of our own nation.

We have, of course, co-operation between the United States and the Australian Government on many fronts. You have spoken of defence itself and I am not ashamed to say I believe that the true protection of Australia in the years ahead while it is growing, while it is strengthening itself, while it is strengthening its own defences, depends in the main on the United States and on the ANZUS Treaty.

If it were not for that, we would in the charged circumstances of the world, with Britain's shield having been removed from our North, with the world in ferment, we would probably have to divert far more of our resources than we should to building up to an even greater extent our own defences. It is this Treaty which enables us to build our own defences because as you said, the United States quite properly looks to people to help themselves. But it also enables us, with some security, to build the industrial muscles, to develop the industries, to bring in the population which, in the long term, will be the real basis of our strength. And so this is a sine qua non of our continuing development at the rate at which

history demands we must develop over the next few years. That is one aspect of co-operation.

Just recently you, Sir, from the United States fired the imagination of the world, by sending for the first time men to walk upon the surface of the moon. A science fiction story which would have been labelled, a decade ago, or fifteen years ago, by most people as nothing but a science fiction story yet one which has turned out to be fact. And we played some part in co-operation in that. It was Australian tracking stations which helped in the mission. There was an Australian scientist engaged in the planning. I am informed by reading a speech which you, Sir, made of something which I didn't know before and that is that the sunglasses were designed by Australians! And we even have a sample in this country of moon rocks weighing some ounces - I'm not quite sure how many, but when you think of the distance they had to be carried, you will realise that an ounce is the equivalent of a ton! We have them here, and this is another example of co-operation between us.

Thinking back in this space programme to the first time when men circled the earth and in order that they shouldn't lose their way, the citizens of Perth turned on all the electric light available so that they would know where they were, much to the subsequent fury of the Perth electric light ratepayers! These are merely some examples in the field of scientific advancement in which we are co-operating.co-operating well in that so many of the inventions we make in Australia are developed in the United States, and co-operating indeed in other ways.

We are co-operating on the far-flung frontiers in Australia - and we are a nation with frontiers still. Those of you who have at any stage been in the newly-developing towns in Western Australia or the Northern Territory or Queensland will agree with me that there is there a feeling of excitement in the air, a feeling of endeavour. There is a feeling of pride when the length of railway line laid in a day breaks a world record, a feeling of enthusiasm which goes with frontiers. Mind you, they aren't the old frontiers of the West - the West as we have seen it on television. Nor are they the frontiers that many of us, including my wife and myself came to, when we came back to Australia from abroad, because those were, in my case - and you can duplicate it in yours - the sort of frontier in the North of Victoria. There was no electricity and you had something called a Coolgardie safe if you wanted to keep anything cool. This was a contraption in which you put a lot of water at the top and which was supposed to keep your food from going bad, but I was never able to discover in fact that it did! But these new frontiers are not like that. In these places, there are shopping centres.houses with air-conditioning.swimming pools.community centres. The development going on is superb and the advantages to this nation are immense and the advantages to those United States citizens who provide some capital towards it are also immense - a co-operation there to the benefit, I think, of both of us. A

co-operation in bases such as the North-West Cape base, such as the other joint defence arrangements that we have. You could go through a whole field and we would find, I think, as we went through that there have probably not been any other instances where two nations have so closely co-operated for what they believe to be the good of all.

Indeed, I would like to cast your minds back to something I once said in the White House when I was being entertained by President Nixon because it came in for a little comment in Australia at the time. And having considered it, I think it was quite a reasonable thing to say. I refer to something about "Waltzing Matilda With You" and I would like to tell you the background of that. I had been talking about the difficulties that former Presidents of the United States had had to encounter, difficulties which Lincoln had had to encounter in his problems over State/Federal financial relations, and which in many respects, because there was so much division in the country then, bore some relation to the problems and difficulties that President Johnson and President Nixon had to bear on Vietnam. But I finished up saying - and I still believe this is true - whenever there is an attempt by the United States or the United Kingdom or any other country to try to raise the living standards of the underprivileged peoples of the world, to try to improve the economies of underdeveloped countries, to try to ensure that countries will retain their independence against attack, whenever there are such endeavours and such approaches by such countries, then we will go "A-Waltzing Matilda" with you. Perhaps it should have been phrased "for we will then endeavour to follow the same road" because I think we would and have endeavoured to follow the same road of trying to lift the living standards by trying to develop the economies and by trying to see that people govern themselves in independent states.

All these things of which I have spoken are areas of closer co-operation. We have no doubt whatever that should we ever need assistance in time of danger to us, the United States would provide that assistance to us as we would help in our way in troubles she might have. We believe that the basic desires of our people and the United States people and our Government and the United States Government are the same, both for the widening of the horizons of life for our citizens and both for attempting to bring peaceful conditions and better living conditions to peoples in the world outside our countries.

In all these matters, there is a basic sameness, a basic unity between our countries. This is something your Association can help to further and this is why the Government takes such an interest in your Association and what it is doing.

There are, of course, other fields in which co-operation between our countries is not as entirely close as perhaps we would like it to be. For example, it would be very nice if the United States, having an insatiable appetite for meat, were to enable us to export, in order to

meet this appetite, some of the meat which at the moment we are not allowed to send there. There are other areas such as sugar which seems to be engraved on the heart of my friend - and I say that genuinely - my friend, Senator Fulbright, as deeply as Calais was engraved on the heart of Queen Mary. There is the long-standing question of whether it might not be good and strengthening for both our countries if the kind of wool which we can produce in Australia were allowed in to the United States of America without such a crippling duty on it. But these, Sir, are merely passing thoughts and introduced into this gathering in the hope and the belief that all the areas of co-operation I have spelt out and which this Association so strongly supports will be able to spread over in time into these other areas of co-operation.

But having said all that, and having at times endeavoured to be not too deadly serious in saying it, it still remains completely and irrevocably true that if this world is to be, in time, the kind of world that we would like it to be, then the co-operation of men and women of goodwill in the United States and Australia and in other countries must be fostered. It must be furthered and the men and women of each of these countries must learn more of each other, must learn more of their ideals, must learn more of their problems. This you are doing. For this we give you our thanks. And because of this I have been proud and honoured to have been asked to talk to you today.
