

LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF THE PRIME MINISTER
OF CANADA, MR P. TRUDEAU, AT PARLIAMENT
HOUSE, CANBERRA

19 MAY 1970

Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton.

Mr Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is my great pleasure on this occasion to propose the toast of our distinguished guest and I do this for a variety of reasons. One, Sir, is because we are very glad indeed to welcome you here as a person, and because we are very glad indeed to welcome you here as the Prime Minister of Canada.

It is a long time - I think 1958 - since we last had a visit from the Prime Minister of Canada, and Sir, this is far too long a time to intervene before there are reciprocal visits from Prime Ministers of Australia to Canada and of Canada to Australia.

We have a great deal in common. Your country, Sir, I think became - officially at any rate - a British country on September 18, 1759 when the surrender of Quebec to Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham took place. If it had not been for that little disagreement which was settled in that way, Australia might not have had to wait so long before our East Coast was discovered in 1770 because the discoverer of our East Coast was a Captain Cook who was in the boats which took the soundings to decide how the army of Wolfe could get to the Plains of Abraham in order to deal with Quebec. But at least we have that in common.

Some other things we have not had in common. We have never been invaded by the hardy colonials who cut their way through the Maine wilderness in order to invade Canada. But you have repelled on every occasion both then and in 1812, the incursions from your neighbour to your South. We, on the other hand have been delighted to welcome them when we needed their help in order to remain a country.

But this is not all that we have got. This is only the beginning. If you take the two countries - Canada and Australia - the physical way in which you see them on a map must immediately strike your imagination. The size is roughly the same... you are bigger, I know, but the size is roughly the same. Then there are large areas in both our countries which are underpopulated and which because of the climatic and other conditions which exist are likely to remain underpopulated.

We both have populations which, on a world basis, are not large but are growing, and we both have a vibrant economy, we both have a feeling of excitement and development in our countries. We also have a great number of problems in common.

I think you, Sir, have to deal as a Federal Government with what are called provinces in Canada and there are some difficulties about arranging things about taxation and other matters. We have much the same here except, of course, we are not dealing with provinces. We are dealing with States. But there is that same difficulty, that same awkwardness in making a Federal system work which your country and our country both have.

There is, too, the desire that you have and which you have expressed and which we have, to try and see that as much of the ownership as possible of the development inside our countries is retained by the citizens of those countries. Rumour has it, Sir, that there will be established in Australia something called an Australian Industry Development Corporation, and rumour also has it that there will be established in Canada something called a Canadian Development Corporation both with the same objective in mind. So there is another instance of the approaches to the problems we have in common.

Who is going to pay for the infrastructure for the mineral developments in your country and in our country? It is extraordinary how closely our problems parallel each other. This applies even when we come to the problem that both of us are growing grains of various kinds which the world does not wish to buy in the quantities we wish to grow them at the price which is payable for them to be grown. All of this indicates that what we decided this morning - that there should be, if possible at intervals of not greater than two years, consultations between Ministers and officials of our two countries on these various problems, on how we would compete with each other in the world, but compete in a way which did not allow one to be used against the other, of how we would explain to each other the approaches we took on the problems we had and perhaps learn from each other; of how in the field of science where we have a unique opportunity in the Barrier Reef to set up an Institute of Marine Biology, and you in the Arctic have unique opportunities for scientific investigation in that field - will be of benefit to both our countries.

But ~~even more~~, may I express our very great delight that Canada, a country which has naturally in the past been more oriented towards Europe than towards the Pacific, should now under your leadership be showing increased interest, increased desire to understand, increased desire to help those countries whom you have described as countries which live on the rim of the Pacific. We are delighted that this interest is extending to the Pacific and to the countries of South-East Asia, because here is another great opportunity for two countries such as ours to help, to the top of our bent, in a region which must be of interest to us both. For our own part, what happens in South-East Asia is of continuing concern for us for we live on the perimeter of it. For your part, you are now showing an interest there too, and if I may say so, Sir, I believe that in doing that you are playing the part of a world statesman for what happens in Asia in the future and what happens to their people in the future could well decide the future peace and progress of the world as a whole.

For all these reasons, Sir, for the things we have in common, the problems we have in common, the ways we can help each other, the interests we are now having in common in this part of the world, we are delighted to welcome you, we hope you will come back and I believe that this visit will show that during the decade of the seventies, our two countries will, in a region of interest to both of us, help other people, and by doing that, help the world in general. So you are welcome, Sir.
