

PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF  
THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

THE RT. HON. KEITH HOLYOAKE, CH, MP.

CANBERRA, ACT

5 JUNE 1970

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. J. G. Gorton, MP



Mr Prime Minister, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen :

We have welcomed many Heads of Government at Parliamentary Luncheons, but I think that none has been more welcome than our Guest of Honour here today. In one way, because we know him so well and we have had such close associations with him and with New Zealand, this official function may seem a little peculiar; for after all, Mr Holyoake, the Prime Minister has been virtually a commuter to Australia over the years, constantly coming in and out. But this is the first occasion on which he has paid us an official visit, and we are delighted that you have done this, Sir, because it gives us the opportunity to provide an official welcome and to underline the relationship between our two countries in this way.

You have, Sir, been Prime Minister of New Zealand for ten years which have brought new problems to your country as it has to all others and you are not only the Prime Minister of New Zealand, but the doyen of all Commonwealth Prime Ministers.

We have, in Australia, a special affection for you and a special family feeling for New Zealand and for all New Zealanders. I remember with pleasure that the last occasion you and I were at a Parliamentary Luncheon was in Wellington when you gave an official welcome to myself and this is a delightful chance to return that on behalf of all Australians.

Although Captain Cook, in a way, discovered both of us two hundred years ago, it was not really until 1944 that our two countries entered into the first comprehensive bilateral agreement that has been between us, an agreement for co-operation in defence, for consultation at Ministerial and other levels in many other matters. We had formal trade treaties dating back to 1922, but the Canberra Pact of 1944 was the first broad, direct agreement, out of which our association and the relationship between our two countries has grown and strengthened over the years since then.

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Yet we had already fought together in one World War, and we were fighting in another at that time, and we had together immortalised the name of ANZAC.

But since that first formal agreement almost thirty years ago, we have continued that partnership and sat side by side in world councils and in regional councils. Together we spoke with the same voice for the smaller nations at San Francisco when the United Nations Charter was drawn up. Together we joined our Pacific partner, the United States of America, in the ANZUS Pact. We are in SEATO and ANZAM together, in the Colombo Plan, in ECAFE, in ASPAC and in the Asian Bank.

We have both played our part in the Commonwealth of Nations. We have been in Korea and Malaysia together, and we are now together in Vietnam. More recently in Djakarta, our Foreign Ministers sat together at a conference which, I think for the first time, indicated the interest of the Asian countries of this region and of ourselves in seeking to find a political settlement to the problems of Cambodia, a diplomatic break-through and again, one in which we both shared.

We have had our Free Trade Agreement which has worked well for both our countries. We have had our discussions on defence standardisation and have declared our readiness to share military commitments in Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal.

There is ahead of both of us in this decade of the seventies, as the points of power and pressure around the world shift and change, and have different effects, a new opportunity for doing things together for our own national interest, and for the security and advancement of the region in which we both find ourselves.

It may be possible to make a greater impact with aid to developing nations in our region if some of it is given jointly by Australia and New Zealand. This is one matter that you have raised already, and we look forward to examining it more closely and sympathetically.

But Australians and New Zealanders, living on the perimeter of Asia, are becoming more involved in that region as each year goes by. There are changes taking place there which will shape the whole course of our future and, as I think, the future of the world. These changes there, and in the South Pacific, are changes which offer to your country and to my country, further opportunities of that joint interest, that joint assistance which we have given over the years just past.

Together we are providing substantial aid already, but perhaps the contribution we can make can be measured not just in terms of physical aid but by example, the example of democracy at work in a stable environment where progress, material progress is joined to the higher values of the individual happiness in a society, where the imperatives of youth are understood and given their proper place alongside but not superseding the judgment and wisdom of older generations.

I think that our two countries can together be a bridge between the old civilisations of Europe and the new civilisations - or not new civilisations but the developing countries of our own region. I am sure we can do more things together than we could do apart.

And, therefore, this visit, as an indication of our intention to do things together, gives the opportunity to welcome you, but not only to welcome you, but to welcome the fact that these two countries, with so much in common, so close together, have the same outlook, share the same determination to do what we can for ourselves and our neighbours as we have in the past. This is another great reason, Sir, why I am delighted to welcome you on this occasion.

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