



PRIME MINISTER

LIBERAL PARTY
FUND-RAISING DINNER, BARTON ELECTORATE
SANS SOUCI, NSW.

31 JULY, 1972.

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. William
McMahon, C.H., M.P.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I accepted the invitation to come here without any hesitation at all. There is a very simple explanation why I wanted to come.

I want Barton back into the Liberal fold as I want St. George back, too. I want Vince Bruce to take his place with us on the Government benches, and with your help I believe he is a certainty. He is an excellent candidate. Everyone who knows him will vouch for that. He will be an excellent member, because he is young, talented and a good Liberal.

Most of you already know - and if you don't - I am telling you now that he will do a first-class job representing the people of Barton as well as representing the Liberal Party and I believe when he represents you, you will find that Australia as a whole is proud of him. The experts say we need a swing of about 3 to 4 per cent to recapture this electorate. With the candidate and the organisation we have got, that's easily attainable, provided we can all get the truth driven home to the voters in this and in all other electorates.

It is of critical importance that the Government's achievements should be better known and its programmes better understood.

We have a first class team of Ministers, who are giving this nation sound and effective administration. But from now on, as we move into the election period, we will all need to redouble our efforts to get our message across, and counter the propaganda of our opponents.

In the last eighteen months, I've been to every state in Australia - to some of them several times and recently I've toured the Northern Territory.

In that time, I've seen the country pause and adopt a "wait and see" attitude. In recent months, too, I've seen it putting caution aside and getting into its stride again and the pace is steadily quickening in response to government measures deliberately taken during the last eighteen months -

- . to stimulate growth
- . to create employment
- . and at the same time to keep the brake on inflation

Not one single area of government activity has been left out of our continuing process of reviewing our policies, overhauling them and developing them in new directions.

Our policy thinking goes on in the knowledge that Australians are individuals and fiercely individual in the values they hold dear, and the kind of society in which they want to live.

In today's world, there is an increased awareness of the individual's responsibilities to his society. The Australian people have delegated to us, as their Government, some of those responsibilities, and before long, they must decide at the polls whether we have kept faith with them.

Therefore it is important that we, as Liberals, should be articulate in restating for the nation what we, as a Party, see as our objectives and how we, as a Government, are going about the business of achieving those objectives.

The Liberal Party shares with other parties of goodwill the desire to create a society in which the individual can live in peace and dignity, can enjoy the liberties which our civilisation prizes and in which his enthusiasm and energy can find full expression and potential. But unlike others, we are not a Party representing sectional interests. Our concern is to build Australia for all Australians.

In doing this, we look primarily to individual initiative and enterprise as the dynamic force of progress. Of course, if experience shows the Government intervention is necessary to protect the Australian people against exploitation, from whatever source, then we stand ready to act and will act.

But the progress achieved since World War II, in the development of this country within the private enterprise system, vindicates our confidence in this approach.

Let us look at how our Party's objectives and its pragmatic political philosophy relate to the issues of our time.

Take first our foreign relations. Proud as we are to be Australians, we are also conscious that we are members of a world community. All Australians want to assist in creating and preserving for others the same freedoms and prosperity as we seek for ourselves.

Our concern naturally focusses on the hunger and strife affecting the countries of our own region. It is for them alone to decide the road they wish to follow in seeking to better their lot. But we think Australians are anxious to nurture their efforts.

Liberal Governments have assisted with material aid and training, and by participating in joint economic and defence endeavours. Following my recent visit to Indonesia, for example, we are arranging naval exercises between the two countries. We already play our part in the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Malaysia and Singapore. During my recent personal discussions with President Soeharto, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore and Prime Minister Tun Razak of Malaysia, the single fact that stood out above all others was the degree of confidence they have in us: That is the degree of confidence they have in you the Australian people.

They know they can trust us. They know the part we have played and that we will continue to play in the region and I am confident they also know that if we were to leave, if we were to lose our interest in this region, a vacuum would be created, which might well be filled by another influence not as friendly, nor as trustworthy. So that our efforts to contribute to the stability and prosperity of countries in our region are not only a moral responsibility. They help to lessen tensions and misunderstanding. They also represent an important contribution to our defence.

Regrettably, tensions and misunderstandings still persist. For these reasons, our policy is to continually strengthen the capability of our defence forces and to effectively maintain our own defence alliances, as for example, our alliance under ANZUS and with the United States and New Zealand. Our policy is also designed to protect the liberties of others - whilst emphasising the primary effort must be our own defence, and then the contribution we can make to world stability and prosperity.

Another important issue of our time, and one that is of immediate importance to us is the maintenance of public law and order. One of the basic freedoms is the right of the individual to build his life within a stable framework of just laws. No individual can rest secure, or confidently plan his own and his family's future outside of such a framework. We in Australia have been fortunate in the stability of our society, but we would be unwise to assume it is an inevitable feature of Australian life. Like all worthwhile things, it must be protected and preserved. Today we see it threatened by a growing disregard for the observance of our laws and the processes by which we arrive at them, whether in the industrial or the political sphere.

Draft resisters are encouraged by individuals and groups who themselves aspire to the responsibilities of office, protesters resort to violence and vandalism in the name of goodwill. Unionists blackmail the community and threaten the livelihood of their fellows when arbitral decisions are not to their liking. The whole basis of public law and order within our community is threatened by these actions.

Unfortunately, many of the people responsible are well-meaning individuals who fail to see the grave consequences which can flow from these actions. Liberal Governments - and you who are Liberals will know - are committed by our Party platform to the principle of "Parliament controlling the executive and the law controlling all". My Government has stood firm and we will continue to stand firm, to ensure respect for all constitutionally valid laws.

I should not let this opportunity pass without referring in this context to the critical situation that has been reached in the oil industry strike. On television last night I stated that we as a Government would not permit any one person or group to determine who will or who will not receive fuel: We hold to that. We are also determined that the arbitration system will be upheld. The alternative, I repeat, is industrial anarchy.

Today's events have shown that the emergency proposals under which only some of the strikers return to work are not good enough. And to show clearly how political this is, Mr. Hawke has now allowed free access to petrol in South Australia because it happens to be a Labor-dominated State. The men on strike have already received in an interim decision from the commission, a wage increase of \$4.80 per week for tradesmen and \$3.60 for trades assistants. Some of the strikers still refuse to accept the umpire's decision.

I ask those still on strike to return to work so that their outstanding claims can be dealt with by the Arbitration Commission. There is still time.

We are not seeking confrontation. The confrontation is in the defiance of an arbitrated decision by a diminishing number of union members.

Turning to the economy, we see an area where our philosophy puts us furthest apart from our political opponents. Our primary concern is with the creation of wealth in which employer and employee can share as co-operators - not with the re-distribution of the community's wealth at the risk of economic stagnation.

We see our success not only measured by gross national product, but also in terms of our objectives of full employment and improved living standards.

Running a government is just like running a business. In any financial enterprise, one must expect some setbacks. This also applies in the national context, where some of the difficulties are not within our own national control.

Economic problems overseas have reacted to the detriment of our own economy. There have been severe difficulties in the rural economy which are being steadily overcome, due in part to the fall in overseas prices.

Our difficulties have been compounded by inflationary pressures, due in part to irresponsible demands for unrealistic wages and conditions. But I assure you now recovery is well under way. With a continuation of the same prudent management, Australia in 1973 will see a continuation of the prosperity which has been a feature of successive Liberal Governments.

Finally, I want to speak about the wonderfully descriptive, but ill-defined term, the "quality of life". Our Party objectives have long recognised that a government's responsibilities go far beyond simply protecting the individual's freedoms and creating conditions of material well-being. We view the availability of comprehensive educational opportunities for all as an essential element in the society we are working to create. We do so, because it is essential to provide the skills and knowledge needed by industry, and because we know education develops the spirit of true citizenship, and provides a basis for a fuller and a more meaningful life. Liberal Federal Governments have been responsible, together with the states, for the great expansion of tertiary education over recent years.

Now we are becoming increasingly involved in secondary education. Policies designed to encourage cultural activities are a logical extension of our educational objectives. We look ultimately to the time when community interest in the arts is sufficient to provide the finance necessary to sustain and encourage national cultural activities.

Meantime, we are continuing to provide modest support and broadening the base of Australian artistic endeavours, by initiatives like the national film school.

We have also been responsive to the recently awakened national concern for the protection and improvement of the environment in which we live. With the States we have established the Australian Environment Council for consultation and co-ordination between us in environmental matters. We are concerned to maintain the fine qualities which have characterised life in our great country. We take pride in our whole Australian heritage - both the country and its people. We will work to protect and nurture both.

Time alone prevents me giving further examples of how our dedication to political liberty and the freedom and dignity of man guides our policies. But the matters I have touched on demonstrate the continuing relevance of Liberal Party objectives to our national destiny. Neither time nor events have outmoded them. Moreover, our Party has the human resources and the purpose to lead the Australian nation forward towards the goals the people themselves have chosen - I certainly have an abundance of confidence. We are confident that a majority of the Australian people share our appreciation of the important issues of our national life and will yet again place their confidence in our Government when the elections occur towards the end of the year.

My personal and my wholehearted belief is this. With a candidate of the kind we have in our presence here tonight, with the support I know we can expect and will in fact get from the people who are here representing as they do Liberal thought, Liberal ambitions and Liberal ideals, I feel absolutely certain that you

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will put Vince Bruce back there and you will make certain of a magnificent victory in this election.

Give us the opportunity to govern, and I can assure you that we will carry on the tradition of the last twenty-two years. But above all, we will do more than carry on in that tradition. With an economy as soundly-based as ours is, with increasing diversity and increasing strength, we will be able to do all the things that you want us to do - better health, better education, better transport, and above all, a feeling of confidence in the community.
