

(ADDRESS TO BE GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER)

NOTES FOR LABOR DAY DINNER SPEECH  
VICTORIAN TRADES HALL COUNCIL  
LOWER MELBOURNE TOWN HALL  
SATURDAY 8 MARCH, 1975

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EIGHT YEARS AGO THIS WEEKEND I FIRST RESPONDED TO THIS TOAST AS LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY.

WE <sup>WERE</sup> AT A CRITICAL STAGE IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT AND THE PARTY.

I SAID THEN: "POLITICAL OPPOSITION IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL POWER. THE REAL TEST OF WHAT WE CALL OUR PRINCIPLES IS NOT THEIR PRESUMED PURITY BUT THEIR PRACTICAL APPLICATION."

EIGHT YEARS LATER THE CONTEXT IS VERY DIFFERENT BUT THE RELEVANCE OF THOSE REMARKS REMAINS.

EIGHT YEARS AGO AFTER THE DEBACLE OF 1966 THERE WAS A VERY REAL QUESTION OF WHETHER THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY WOULD EVER FORM A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGAIN.

THERE WERE POWERFUL FORCES AT WORK FOR THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE PARTY. THEY WERE STRONGEST IN THIS STATE.

- NOW WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN TWO NATIONAL ELECTIONS WITHIN 18 MONTHS OF EACH OTHER.

THE TWO-YEARS-AND-THREE-MONTHS WE HAVE HAD IN OFFICE HARDLY CONSTITUTE THE DEFINITIVE TEST OF OUR ABILITY TO CARRY OUT OUR PROGRAM, TWICE PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE ON THE BASIS OF A THREE-YEAR PROGRAM.

- OUR DIFFICULTIES HAVE BEEN COMPOUNDED BY THE UNREMITTING OBSTRUCTION IN THE SENATE AND THE UNRELENTING HOSTILITY OF AN OPPOSITION WHICH JUST WON'T ACCEPT THE PEOPLE'S VERDICT.

AND FURTHER - NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME - AN AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT FINDS ITSELF IN POWER AT A TIME OF PROFOUND INTERNATIONAL DIFFICULTY.

- DESPITE THESE FACTORS, DESPITE THESE PRESSURES FROM HOME AND ABROAD, I BELIEVE WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE TRUTH OF WHAT I SAID EIGHT YEARS AGO - THE OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE OF OUR ABILITY THROUGH PARLIAMENT TO PUT OUR PROGRAM INTO PRACTICE.

- WE CAN LOOK AT IT TWO WAYS.

- THERE IS THE NEGATIVE WAY - TO THINK OF THE APPALLING ALTERNATIVE.

THERE IS THE POSITIVE WAY - WHAT OUR PROGRAM AND OUR POLICIES MEAN FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF AUSTRALIA.

- ONE MUST GIVE SOME SORT OF CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE; AND THIS MUCH AT LEAST MUST BE SAID FOR OUR OPPONENTS. WE'VE HAD THE SIDE-EFFECT OF MAKING THEM COME CLEAN ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS.

- TO PROVE HIS TOUGHNESS, TO PROVE HIS ORTHODOXY, MR SNEDDEN HAS DECLARED THAT HE WOULD UNDO MOST OF WHAT LABOR HAS DONE.

TO PROVE HIS OWN PARTICULAR BRAND OF TOUGHNESS; MR MALCOLM FRASER, MR SNEDDEN'S RIVAL, HAS REVEALED HIS INDUSTRIAL PLANS - A RETURN TO THE PENAL CLAUSES, JAIL SENTENCES FOR MEMBERS AS WELL AS OFFICIALS, A COMPLETE WAGE FREEZE, A NETWORK OF INFORMERS AND INTIMIDATION WITHIN THE UNIONS.

YOU CAN'T SAY WE HAVEN'T BEEN WARNED.

- IT IS TRUE THAT LIBERAL POLICIES CHANGE WITH THE OPINION POLLS.
- AFTER THEIR DEFEAT IN 1972 THEY MADE SOME TOKEN ATTEMPT TO RECOVER THE MIDDLE-GROUND. THE TRENDIES HAD THEIR LITTLE DAY. HAMER WAS GOING TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN BUT WHEN IN THE FACE OF OUR ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES THE POLLS BEGAN TO CHANGE, IT WAS A DIFFERENT STORY.
- OUR OPPONENTS BEGAN TO THINK THAT THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING. THEY STOPPED WORRYING ABOUT THE PUBLIC AND BEGAN DEVOTING THEIR ENERGIES TO THE BATTLE FOR THE LEADERSHIP.

- THIS BATTLE IS NOW REACHING DECISION POINT;

THIS WEEK IN CANBERRA THE DOGS WERE WERE WOOF WOOFING IT - SNEDDEN MUST GO.

BUT HOWEVER IT TURNS OUT WE NOW KNOW FROM THEIR OWN DECLARATIONS THAT THE LIBERAL ALTERNATIVE IS BENT UPON DISMANTLING AND DESTRUCTION , BENT UPON A COURSE OF SOCIAL REACTION AND ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL REPRESSION.

SO THAT IS THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF WHY IT IS SO CRUCIAL.

- THE DAMAGE THREATENED BY OUR OPPONENTS' RETURN GOES BEYOND THE THREAT OF OBSTRUCTION OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAMS - EDUCATION, CITIES, WELFARE, HEALTH. THEY WOULD THREATEN THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF EMPLOYEES, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIAN MEN AND WOMEN WHO ARE IN EMPLOYMENT.
  
- A REPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION PUBLISHED LAST WEEK SINGLES OUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WORKERS AS THE RECIPIENTS OF THE BIGGEST INCREASE IN REAL WAGES IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN THE WORLD IN 1974.

AUSTRALIA IS ONE OF ONLY SIX COUNTRIES WHERE THE BUYING POWER OF THE PAY PACKET IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY LAST YEAR. THE OTHERS ARE BELGIUM, KOREA, NORWAY, POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA.

- FROM THE DECEMBER QUARTER 1972 TO THE SEPTEMBER QUARTER LAST YEAR PRICES ROSE 27 PER CENT BUT AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS ROSE 40 PER CENT. IN THAT PERIOD MINIMUM WEEKLY WAGES FOR MEN ROSE BY 47 PER CENT AND FOR WOMEN 68 PER CENT. REAL WEEKLY EARNINGS BEFORE TAX ROSE BY 10.4 PER CENT AND AFTER TAX BY 7.5 PER CENT.

- EVERY COMPARABLE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD HAS  
- SUFFERED RISING UNEMPLOYMENT AND RISING PRICES.  
CERTAINLY THE PRESENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS  
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND WE ARE FIGHTING IT ON  
ALL FRONTS, BUT AUSTRALIA AMONG THE COUNTRIES  
SUFFERING THE SAME PROBLEMS HAS BEEN OUTSTANDINGLY  
SUCCESSFUL IN MAINTAINING AND INCREASING THE  
REAL VALUE OF WAGES FOR THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT.
  
- THAT IS WHAT IS BEHIND THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY  
JIM CAIRNS AND ME ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF  
EXCESSIVE WAGE CLAIMS THIS YEAR. IT'S NOT A  
MATTER OF BLAMING UNIONS OR UNION OFFICIALS.  
WE DO WANT, HOWEVER, TO SEE THAT THE VALUE OF WAGE  
INCREASES IS A REAL ONE NOT JUST A PAPER INCREASE.  
AND WE DO WANT TO SEE THAT WORKERS DO NOT PRICE  
THEMSELVES OR THEIR FELLOW-WORKERS OUT OF JOBS.
  
- DON'T LET'S HAVE ANY OF THIS NONSENSE THAT  
EITHER THE AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM OR THE  
ECONOMIC SYSTEM MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR A LABOR  
GOVERNMENT TO APPLY LABOR PRINCIPLES.  
I KNOW HOW FRUSTRATING THE SYSTEM CAN BE.  
IT IS DOUBLY SO WHEN WE HAVE AN OPPOSITION SUCH  
AS THE PRESENT ONE, DETERMINED TO OBSTRUCT AND  
DESTROY BY WHATEVER MEANS AT ITS DISPOSAL.

- YET DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES THE LABOR  
GOVERNMENT IS WORKING.

WE HAVE USED THE SYSTEM TO SECURE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
RE-DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH EVER TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN  
AUSTRALIAN HISTORY.

WE HAVE USED IT TO SECURE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT  
INCREASE IN REAL INCOMES FOR THE OVERWHELMING  
MAJORITY ACHIEVED SINCE THE WAR - THIS DESPITE THE  
WORLD-WIDE INFLATION, DESPITE THE WORLD-WIDE UPWARD  
TREND IN UNEMPLOYMENT.

ABOVE ALL, WE HAVE USED IT TO IMPLEMENT OUR PROGRAM,  
WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED AN EXTRAORDINARY PROPORTION OF  
THE PROGRAM ON WHICH WE WERE TWICE ELECTED - AND  
THIS DESPITE THE UNPARALLELLED OBSTRUCTION IN THE  
SENATE AND THE LACK OF CO-OPERATION FROM THE STATES.

- TRUE THE FEDERAL SYSTEM CREATES EXTRAORDINARY  
DIFFICULTIES FOR A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT GOVERNMENT.  
YET WE ARE MAKING REMARKABLE HEADWAY. THERE IS  
CERTAINLY NO CAUSE FOR LOSING FAITH IN OUR CAPACITY  
TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES, TO IMPLEMENT OUR  
PROGRAM, TO APPLY OUR PRINCIPLES, ANY MORE THAN  
THERE IS CAUSE TO LOSE FAITH IN OURSELVES AS A  
PARTY, AS THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED  
BY THE PEOPLE WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS NATION.