



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

3 APRIL 1977

ELECTORATE TALK

The Jubilee Year Royal Tour of Australia has been an outstanding success. The Queen and Prince Philip have been greeted with warmth, genuine affection and friendship. I cannot recall a more open and warmer reception on any previous Royal Tour.

In a real sense, the tour to all states, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Capital Territory plainly has illustrated just how Australians feel about the Monarch. It has proved beyond any doubt that Australians want to continue their links with the Monarchy. It proves Australians value its great role.

The Monarchy, with the Queen as its head, is an intrinsic part of our Constitutional process. There is an inbuilt importance attached to the Executive Council, which comprises the Governor General, the Queen's representative, and senior members of the Government. The Monarchy is in a sense the last area of appeal. It is the last bulwark, the last safeguard to make sure that all the processes are being properly and constitutionally carried out. The Monarchy is also important because Australians want stability in institutions, so that they can plan ahead with a real degree of security.

Of course, stability does not mean there is no requirement for change. What it does mean is that progressive policies can be applied and developed with a stable Government framework. Policies do and ought to change as requirements alter. But it is important that the framework of Government remains stable and predictable.

During the tour, some media prominence was given to demonstrations that sought to draw attention to the Republican cause. I believe there are very few Australians who want anything to do with a Republican form of Government. Surely, the central message from this tour is that the overwhelming majority of Australians have great loyalty to the Crown and to the system of Government it embodies. I see no cause to move Australia along a Republican path. I do not agree with those who say it is inevitable. It would be a tragedy for Australia, for I believe we would be less well governed.

In a farewell message, the Queen made the point that the right to dissent was a freedom we enjoy in Australia - a freedom which sadly does not exist in other countries. I believe that signs of dissent in a country as vigorous and individualistic as Australia is a healthy sign. It is healthy as long as it is non-violent, and does not interfere with the rights of others. If there was no dissent in Australia, I think it would be fair to ask what has been wrong with our spirit. There has always been argument and dissent publicly displayed in Australia. It is one of the fundamental privileges that we strive to maintain.

In the Federal Parliament this week, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations introduced legislation for the establishment of an Industrial Relations Bureau.

This Bureau is a central feature of our industrial relations policy, which sets out two clear principles: each member of our community has both rights and obligations; individual rights can be protected, equally, obligations can be met.

The one point about the legislation that I want to stress is the protection it gives to individuals. The Industrial Relations Bureau will protect the rights of individual men and women against the wrong actions of either employers or unions. It will be able to act on its own initiative to protect those rights without having to wait first for a complaint.

The Government regards the protection of individual rights as both fundamental and inalienable. This Bureau will strengthen that commitment.

The legislation will not become law immediately. It will lie on the table of the House to give ample time for full and constructive debate. I believe, however, that many who had criticised the Bureau without seeing the legislation will understand the considerable personal benefit it brings to men and women throughout Australia.
