



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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ADDRESS AT CHINESE DELEGATION FAREWELL DINNER

Mr Vice-Chairman, since we first met you, just a week ago you have travelled across part of our country. You have seen the cities of Sydney and Melbourne and some of our rural areas. In this respect your trip somewhat resembles my own visit to China last year when I saw, not only your great cities, but also more remote areas, including Urumchi.

You will have gained some impressions of our people, our way of life and our countryside. But Australia, like China, is a vast country. When I visited China I was struck by the distances involved and the diversity of the countryside. I am sure you have had a similar experience over the past week. I hope you will come back again to see some of the things your limited time here prevented you from seeing.

Mr Vice-Chairman, I spoke last week of the excellent way in which relations between Australia and China are developing. The Australian Government will continue to foster this development. I believe, especially, that we have much to share and build in our economic relationship.

As you said last Tuesday, China is now embarked on a great plan to modernise her economy by the end of this century. You have seen some of the best examples of our agricultural and pastoral industries during your visit to the Royal Melbourne Show and to Wagga Wagga, one of our flourishing rural centres. In Sydney you have seen the port facilities where many of the projects which make up the expanding trade between our two countries are handled.

I look forward to, and indeed firmly believe that there is much scope for, further expansion in our economic exchanges. I note in particular the prospects in the agricultural field which have presented themselves during your visit.

When I was in China, I looked upon your agriculture with a farmer's eye, and although the farming practices of our two countries are different, the care with which the Chinese people tilled their fields and tended their crops was apparent. The capacity to feed and house 800 million people, to banish the spectre - and the reality - of famine is a great achievement.

Australia as a significant farming nation can well appreciate the magnitude of this achievement and its significance.

I know that your visit, Mr Vice-Chairman, will have stimulated the interests of many of my parliamentary colleagues in visiting China. It will also have strengthened the attitude of friendship which Australians hold towards China, and their interest in contributing to the growth of mutual understanding. This understanding was strengthened by the family reunion arrangement reached between Australia and China shortly after my visit to China last year.

Chinese settlers have made a significant contribution to the development of Australia and it is important that our two countries should have arrangements for family reunion.

Mr Vice-Chairman, our two countries have many interests in common and on many matters we see eye to eye. On some matters there are differences in our points of view, but our relationship now has enough depth and substance to it that it is not put at risk by plain speaking on such issues of importance.

As you prepare to leave, may I ask you to convey the greetings of the Australian Government and people to the Government and people of China.

Your visit, Mr Vice-Chairman, has been a great honour for us and has given us much pleasure. We have enjoyed having you and your delegates as we have enjoyed your gracious hospitality tonight.
