



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

23 MAY 1978

### SIR ROBERT MENZIES MEMORIAL TRUST

The question has arisen as to the way in which, as a nation, we might best mark and commemorate, now and for posterity, the great contribution of the late Sir Robert Gordon Menzies to the nation.

There has already been enthusiastic and helpful discussion on this by some public figures and by some newspapers, and I am indebted to them.

A preparatory Committee has already begun work, directed to the creation of a special appeal and fund to be known as the Sir Robert Menzies Trust and I am happy to announce to the House the general direction and scope of the arrangements that are in mind.

The Appeal will be established on an Australia-wide basis and the funds resulting will be applied to objectives of a practical and continuing kind within the particular interests of Sir Robert Menzies. He had no static view of Australia and he would wish, as those who contribute will, that the funds should be spent in terms of future benefit to Australia.

The objectives are still to be finally determined but it can be said already that the fund will be designed to assist Australians of all ages - but especially the young, to obtain in serious and worthwhile directions, academic training or practical experience or opportunities to compete which they might otherwise be unable to obtain.

Some of the particular interests identified with Sir Robert Menzies and which might therefore be drawn within the purposes of the fund are the law, with particular reference to constitutional matters and Federal/State relationships; studies concerned with Australia's role within the British Commonwealth and with Australia/Britain relations; studies of Australia and the United States; studies of relations between Australia and the Pacific Nations.

Another possibility which would have been of interest to Sir Robert Menzies and from which major benefit would accrue is to bring to Australia, for public meetings or special consultations, speakers of distinction or young persons of promise and interest to us.

And there are two other matters at least, one is the development of skills in the use of the English language, since we all know he loved the English tongue. The other is sport of many kinds because as he watched it and took interest, it gave him a particular and agreeable relaxation and companionship.

Although much more discussion will be needed, I am able to say now that the Appeal and the fund will be under the authority of a National Committee and a series of State Committees.

It is my honour to have been asked to accept the office of National President. Leading Australians will be invited to accept office with me in connection with the Trust. It will be necessary, in addition, to have a strong and operative executive National Committee and a series of State executive committees.

I am pleased to announce that Sir William Vines has accepted office as Head of the National Committee with the title of National General Chairman. Sir William Vines has a high record of achievement in Australian commercial and agricultural communities and of service to Government, both Commonwealth and State, involving all political parties over a long period. He will be assisted as Deputy National General Chairman by Sir Walter Leonard.

The other members of the Executive Committee will be similarly distinguished people, representative of the States as well as the Commonwealth, and, it is hoped, form a variety of callings and backgrounds. To assist this Committee, a distinguished public servant and close confidant of Sir Robert's for many years - Sir John Bunting - will be co-ordinator.

Sir Robert Menzies was the Leader of one political party. But he was, at the same time, a representative and a Leader of all the people. He sought to serve the whole community - as the fund now in mind will do and in fact must do.