



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4 1982

COMMONWEALTH RECEPTION, BRISBANE

I am very happy for all Australians to welcome all our guests to Australia. The Games have grown enormously since they were first held in Australia, in Sydney, in 1938. Then there were only 15 nations and I think 500 athletes came across by ship. In Perth in 1962, there were 35 nations and 1,000 athletes. Now there are 45 nations and over 2,000 athletes.

The Games have grown as the Commonwealth has grown. The opening ceremony I believe says something about Australia. I hope it says something about Australia to all Australians as well as to our guests. The fact that so many different cultural groups, people from countries or different countries of origin took part in that opening ceremony says something about the modern Australia which is so different from the Australia of years ago. Perhaps not all our visitors and our guests know that many of those different groups, came to Australia for one very simple reason, they wanted to come to a country in which they could be free, and they came to Australia.

The Commonwealth stands for values that are of great importance, that help to advance those values. The Commonwealth Games also advances those values and in doing so the Commonwealth is strengthened and the Commonwealth Games are strengthened. I think we have had people who have predicted doom and disaster in past years about Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings. They have said they will not get through the agenda, they will blow up, they will fall apart. There were even people saying there would not be a Commonwealth Games, but mostly in the newspapers and not anywhere else.

I would like to thank you all for coming to demonstrate if nothing else that our newspapers are not always right. But really, I know there are a great many people who have worked to make these Games a success. I know there are many people who have worked to avert the dangers and difficulties and the sensitivities that could have upset the holding of these Games.

I think it may be invidious to mention any particular participating team, or any particular participating country, but I am going to run the risk of mentioning one country because I think one country, athletics and cultural team that is here epitomises so much of what the Commonwealth stands for, and I believe it stands for something of very great value. I would like to welcome, and I hope you would all join me in welcoming our visitors from Zimbabwe. The presence of our

our guests from Zimbabwe demonstrates that the Commonwealth not only can be, but has been when put to the test, thoroughly successful in what it sought to do, and that it can contribute to finding peaceful solutions and that it is relevant to the modern world and can contribute to the solutions of some of the problems of the modern world.

I would like to thank all of those who made the Games possible. I am glad to see that they meet difficulties about their constitution, which I am told are going to be solved easily in a day or so. I know a great deal of work is going into that. That again is a practical example of the Commonwealth working to find the solutions because its members have wanted to find the solutions - ones that would work.

I would like to wish all good fortune to competitors who still have to run their race. I hope you won't mind if I am mildly pro-Australian where Australians are competing, but if there are no Australians in a particular race or contest, I am prepared to be totally impartial as I am in my politics. Thank you all for coming and I hope you will join with me in giving a warm welcome to the Duke of Edinburgh who is amongst us at the present time.