

TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION
GENEVA

10 JUNE 1983

President, Delegates,

When the distinguished President of the French Republic, Francois Mitterrand, so memorably addressed this Assembly just a year ago, he drew attention to the paradox that he was the first President of France to come to the International Labour Organisation since it was founded in 1919.

Given Australia's record of firm support for the ILO, and the recognition of its importance by successive Australian Governments irrespective of political persuasion, and given the strength of the labour movement in Australia, it is hardly less a paradox that I should have the honour of being the first Prime Minister of Australia to address this august Assembly.

Not, of course, that this is by any means my first address to you in other capacities.

Our excellent reporters and translators have had the task of writing column after column of the Record from me - not always, I am afraid, without difficulty, but always splendidly.

And while many of the important and even historic debates in which I have been privileged to take part here have involved vigorous and forceful exchanges, I know that today I come among friends - not just many of those with whom, at times and on important issues, I have felt bound, in all conscience, to disagree strongly.

I thank you, Mr Director-General, for your most generous words of welcome.

This is, for me, a kind of homecoming.

You have been kind enough, Mr Director-General, to refer to my contribution to the work of this Organisation during the decade that I was privileged to be the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions and as a Worker Delegate and a Worker Member of the Steering Body of the ILO.

We received from my association with this great Organisation a world-wide cause it represents, have richly repaid me for such as I may have been able to render.

It has been an association which I value as highly as any in my public career.

Above all, I value the enduring friendships I have made, transcending differences of opinion and differences of political, philosophical, or national allegiance.

Mr President, although I now have the honour to address this Assembly, not as a Delegate or as a member of the Governing Body, but as Prime Minister of Australia, I was tempted to begin my remarks in the following terms:

"As I was saying, delegates, before I was so rudely interrupted..."

Because, Mr President, Delegates, much of what I wish to say today continues the themes I have raised on many occasions during my membership of this body.

The three principal matters I wish to raise are of fundamental importance to us all.

They are:

- . freedom of association;
- . the importance of ratifying ILO Conventions;
- . and thirdly, within the context of the world economic situation, Australia's response to its current economic problems with particular reference to the fundamental issues of employment and unemployment.

Australia has been a member of the ILO since its creation in 1919. We became a member then and we have remained a member because we believe that the ILO has a major role to play in upholding the inalienable rights of humanity - life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and that the ILO has a major role to play in the pursuit of

... and human rights in the twentieth century. Indeed, it has many times been referred to as the social conscience of development, a description I entirely endorse.

The Preamble to the ILO Constitution recognises - and I quote - "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice". The ILO proclaims as a fundamental principle that labour is not a mere commodity. Labour is not something which is simply bought and sold in the market place. It is not just a means by which individual workers earn a living. Work is a fundamental part of human life. For the greater part of the human race, the quality of life depends very largely on the dignity and security which comes from the opportunity to work and on the quality of the working conditions and environment which they either enjoy or endure - and, it must be acknowledged, in all but the most privileged nations, mostly endure.

It follows, therefore, that there is also a fundamental human right to speak out on the many issues which determine the availability of work and the conditions under which work is performed. And that is what freedom of association is all about.

The International Labour Organisation proclaims this fundamental and universal right. We have reaffirmed and worked tirelessly towards the objective of freedom of expression and freedom of association for all mankind for more than six decades.

We in Australia have fully supported the tenets of the ILO, but none do we guard more vigilantly than freedom of association. We support the work of the ILO which aims to further foster freedom of association, and we support the work of the Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association in identifying and seeking to rectify breaches of this basic human right.

While the existence of human rights is not dependent on the existence of Conventions or their ratification by governments, the Conventions of the ILO do set exemplary standards to which the nations and peoples of the world should aspire.

The Conventions relating to freedom of association are of the highest importance.

Yet we must note with concern that there are still fifty-member States who have not ratified Convention Number 87; and forty-eight who have not yet ratified Convention Number 98.

I also note with considerable uneasiness the statement in this year's Report by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, as follows:

"Ever-increasing economic problems confronting States tend to create real difficulties for the promotion of freedom of association."

This passage seems to me to carry very serious implications.

The fundamental right of freedom of association is not something conditional. It should not be qualified or deferred by reason of economic difficulties.

This body surely cannot endorse any proposition or lend its authority to any opinion which could be interpreted as justifying a denial of freedom of association in the name of economic problems or for the sake of economic expediency.

Freedom is indivisible.

~~Chairman~~
Mr ~~President~~, denial of freedom of association on political or economic grounds in many countries around the world remains a source of conflict and tension and of potential disaster.

In this context, I sadly note that the Director-General has found it necessary to withhold an ILO Mission from Poland in the current circumstances in that country.

It is also to be regretted that as a result of the Polish Government's recent decision, Poland is not represented at this Conference. This decision cannot but heighten international concern about the situation in Poland. We can only hope that it does not foreshadow even harsher times for the Polish workers or set back still further the prospects for freedom of association in Poland.

Poland's record of co-operation with the ILO might not always have satisfied all members of the Organisation, but I am sure of the over-

100 200/10
aiming sense of the Conference when I express the hope that Poland, before long, will resume contact with the ILO and participate and cooperate fully in its activities.

Also let us express the hope that the visit to Poland next week by His Holiness the Pope will help heal the wounds and improve prospects for national reconciliation in that country.

While the situation in Poland remains of great concern, it is of course by no means the only country in which basic trade union rights are demonstrably and unacceptably denied.

In all ILO regions, political, economic and social difficulties have been used as a pretext for severe measures against trade unions.

Basic trade union rights have been withdrawn and the authority of this Organisation blatantly defied.

Once-free and independent unions have been usurped by governments and manipulated to impose political and economic controls.

Workers are prevented from forming independent unions, refused the right to negotiate better conditions and are suffering detention or imprisonment without trial as a result of legitimate activities on behalf of their fellow workers.

All of us here today have a duty to work to reverse this trend and to encourage governments to restore basic rights and freedom to the union movement in their nations.

One of the most serious examples of this trend and one which calls for urgent action, is South Africa. In that country, the repression of trade union rights is a keystone in the monstrous edifice of apartheid.

This Conference has before it the Report on Apartheid. Also, today, the Workers Group is holding its Third Special Conference on apartheid. I take this opportunity to express my fullest personal support and the support of my Government for their efforts.

ions and Australia's ratification record.

It is my Government's belief that the major function of the ILO through its Conventions and Recommendations has been the development of a comprehensive set of international labour standards which serve as guidelines for member countries seeking to put into action policies and programs which will improve working and living conditions, enhance employment opportunities and promote basic human rights. It is appropriate to reflect upon the wisdom and the foresight of those who founded the International Labour Organisation and those who have shaped its development over the years.

In the early years of the ILO, its concerns were to tackle fundamental problems such as child labour and hours of work. Our concerns over the years have evolved, right through the establishment of basic human rights such as freedom of association, elimination of discrimination, and the abolition of forced labour to the point now, where you have before you at this Conference issues such as vocational rehabilitation and employment policy. Clearly, through this process of evolution, we now have to address ourselves not simply to basic standards which member countries should be seeking to adopt; but rather we are talking about the interdependence of governments, workers and employers in the development of coherent policies which will put into effect the provisions of the instruments now being adopted.

The Federal nature of the Australian Constitution presents certain difficulties in the process of ratification of ILO Conventions.

We in Australia have adopted the policy that ratification can only occur when we are satisfied that existing law and practice in both the Federal and State jurisdictions are fully compatible with the provisions of the Conventions.

As a Federal State, we have particular difficulties in arriving at that point where all States and Territories and the Federal Government can agree to ratification.

Australia has ratified 43 of the 158 Conventions and I must say that in recent years our record has not been one to be particularly proud of. Between the years 1972 to 1975, the years of the Whitlam Labour Government, Australia ratified no less than nine Conventions.

g the fundamental Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 111 -
tions which deal with the basic rights of freedom of association
elimination of discrimination. Since that time only one Convention
as been ratified by Australia.

I am advised that we are now very close to ratifying two
more Conventions - No. 150 on Labour Administration and No. 151 on
Public Service Labour Relations. Ratification of these two Conventions
should occur before the end of this year.

Two further Conventions which are not quite so close to
ratification but which my Government has committed itself to ratifying
as a matter of priority are No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health
and No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities.

In the case of No. 155, although it is a recently adopted
Convention, it is nonetheless of fundamental importance because it
goes to the very heart of working conditions and the basic need for
safety and security in the workplace.

In order to ratify this Convention, Australia needs to adopt
a coherent national policy on occupational safety and health and I am
pleased to be able to say that a policy of that kind was formulated by
my party, the Australian Labor Party, before coming to office three
months ago. I am most anxious that no time is lost in obtaining the
full agreement and co-operation of all of our State Governments so
that we can ratify this fundamentally important Convention as soon as
possible.

Convention No. 156 dealing with Workers with Family Respon-
sibilities is another Convention with pressing human relevance in my
country. To pursue ratification of this Convention is a logical
extension of our commitment to eliminate discrimination in all its
forms from employment and occupation, as embodied in the historic
Convention No. 111.

My Government recognises the need for a more equitable
sharing of family and domestic responsibilities, the provision of
support services, and recognition in working conditions of workers'
family responsibilities to enable women to participate in employment
on an equal basis with men.

Including the fundamental Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 111 - Conventions which deal with the basic rights of freedom of association and elimination of discrimination. Since that time only one Convention has been ratified by Australia.

I am advised that we are now very close to ratifying two more Conventions - No. 150 on Labour Administration and No. 151 on Public Service Labour Relations. Ratification of these two Conventions should occur before the end of this year.

Two further Conventions which are not quite so close to ratification but which my Government has committed itself to ratifying as a matter of priority are No. 155 on Occupational Safety and Health and No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities.

In the case of No. 155, although it is a recently adopted Convention, it is nonetheless of fundamental importance because it goes to the very heart of working conditions and the basic need for safety and security in the workplace.

In order to ratify this Convention, Australia needs to adopt a coherent national policy on occupational safety and health and I am pleased to be able to say that a policy of that kind was formulated by my party, the Australian Labor Party, before coming to office three months ago. I am most anxious that no time is lost in obtaining the full agreement and co-operation of all of our State Governments so that we can ratify this fundamentally important Convention as soon as possible.

Convention No. 156 dealing with Workers with Family Responsibilities is another Convention with pressing human relevance in my country. To pursue ratification of this Convention is a logical extension of our commitment to eliminate discrimination in all its forms from employment and occupation, as embodied in the historic Convention No. 111.

My Government recognises the need for a more equitable sharing of family and domestic responsibilities, the provision of support services, and recognition in working conditions of workers' family responsibilities to enable women to participate in employment on an equal basis with men.

My Government is also pleased to ratify the UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the legislation outlawing Sex Discrimination which was introduced into the Federal Parliament last month will go a long way towards ensuring that Australia meets its obligations under that Convention.

As I said, the nature of Australia's Federal system raises difficulties in the way of ratification of certain Conventions. These difficulties call for an elaborate process of consultations between seven governments - national and State - usually of differing political complexions.

And as, by the process of evolution to which I referred earlier, ILO Conventions move beyond basic rights and standards, the process of consultation must be broadened to include unions and employers, if the ratification of a Conventions is to be made fully effective.

This process of consultation is something which the new Government of Australia wishes to develop over a wide range of economic and social issues. We wish to move from the concept that exclusive wisdom resides within government and a closed bureaucracy. A more open democracy will be a better democracy and a more equal democracy - and the goal of genuine equality of opportunity remains for us, the ultimate goal and expression of our social-democratic faith.

Mr President, the noble doctrine of open covenants, openly arrived at, was the foundation stone of the League of Nations, of which this Organisation was the off-spring. That human folly and human evil destroyed the League does not invalidate the doctrine as the basis for peace and amity between nations. And as between nations, so within a nation, we believe that the open society will best be able to reach consensus, co-operation and unity of purpose if it proceeds on the basis of open covenants, openly arrived at.

In our relations with business and unions, my own Government is deeply committed to the principle of tripartitism - a commitment which, in my own case, has been nurtured by my long association with this Organisation, itself unequivocally based on that principle. It is our belief that no major economic policies in our country should be devised and implemented without first consulting with those groups who

ill be most affected. Immediately upon assuming office in 1973, my Government convened a National Economic Summit Conference, consisting of representatives of Australian industry, the Australian workforce and other significant economic and social interests. Its purpose was to create a climate for common understanding of the scale and scope of our present economic crisis, to explore policy options and to ensure that the whole community appreciates the role all will have to play in coping with the present economic crisis.

Our summit conference achieved a considerable measure of success in attaining those objectives. It proceeded on a basis of knowledge-acquiring and knowledge-sharing on a scale never before attempted in Australia.

It had specific objectives, of which the establishment of an agreed basis for a prices and incomes policy was the chief. It achieved that accord.

The Summit was marked by a spirit of co-operation and a desire to establish consensus probably unprecedented in Australia in peace-time.

The contributions of employers and unions were equally constructive. Many notable presentations came from employers representatives.

This did not mean that either section was asked to sacrifice any basic viewpoint. The search for compromise in its practical meaning did not involve any compromise of principle.

What was involved was a recognition by all participants of the magnitude of Australia's economic problems and an acceptance of the need for restraint on all sides if those problems are to be overcome.

Machinery is being established to put the work of the Summit on a permanent basis.

We have established an Economic Planning Advisory Council, representing governments, business, unions, farmers and community groups, to advise on economic developments and provide a forum for community consultation on national economic and social strategies;

we agreed to establish a surveillance mechanism to assess pricing decisions made by the strategic price setters, in both the private and public sectors.

But beyond specific purposes, the Summit achieved a major general goal - and that was to create a wider public understanding of the gravity of Australia's economic situation and of the restraints and sacrifices which will have to be accepted if we in Australia are to work together to overcome our difficulties.

I now wish to deal with some other aspects of contemporary economic problems as they affect Australia, along with so much of the rest of the world.

The international economy is currently suffering the deepest and most prolonged recession since the 1930s. A cyclical downturn beginning from the 1979/80 oil price rise is superimposed on a longer term situation of high unemployment combined with high rates of inflation.

In 1982 world trade declined by 2.5% in real terms following 10 years of virtual stagnation.

While the oil importing developing countries have had the pressures upon them eased somewhat by the more recent alleviation of the worst of the high oil prices and interest rates, the depressed international environment has resulted in growth rates for these countries which barely keep pace with their population growth.

Moreover, the length of the recession, combined with high interest rates, has led to a problem of international indebtedness.

There are, however, some signs of improvement. Inflation has fallen markedly in a number of countries, although I cannot yet include my own in this category. Indeed, seven years of economic policies which purported to "fight inflation first" have achieved an inflation rate only marginally lower than at the beginning of the period - and twice as high as most other high-income countries. There are signs of a gradual, and emphasise gradual, recovery in the United States.

However even with an early resumption of strong economic growth the effects of almost a decade of rising unemployment cannot be quickly unwound.

We need to think about unemployment not only in terms of numbers unemployed at a point in time but also the duration of unemployment for each unemployed person.

Australia has seen the emergence of groups of people, particularly older male workers, who have been out of work for extended periods since unemployment began to rise rapidly in the mid-1970's. There are over one quarter of a million people who have currently been unemployed for at least six months, including some 140,000 who had been unemployed for more than a year.

We have to face the fact that there are disadvantaged groups who would not benefit automatically from any recovery and, without special assistance, would continue to amass lengthy periods without work experience, despite a general recovery.

In Australia, we have addressed this need by a community employment program, designed to provide some work training and experience to enable these disadvantaged workers to take up their rightful place as members of the working community.

For the individual, long periods out of work lowers self esteem and generally affects both physical and mental well-being. Lack of work experience damages employment potential; problems of suicide, marital breakdown, crime and mental disorder become much more likely.

For society, a long-term unemployment problem heightens social and class tensions through increased questioning of the work ethic and the structure of our political and economic system.

My Government sees a prices and incomes policy as providing an essential part of the framework and mechanism for achieving economic recovery. Such a policy will embrace collective restraint by all parties. This policy, underpinning macro-economic policy, is specifically designed to allow the reduction of unemployment and inflation simultaneously.

The prices and incomes policy of my new Government has its genesis in the demonstrable failure of the previous Government's economic strategy which relied entirely on restrictive fiscal policy and monetary policy which, by its very nature, is clumsy, indiscriminate

... approach of ... at the same time highly discriminatory in its effects. The policy of fighting inflation first through total reliance these indirect instruments could only work, and was only intended to work, by battering Australian labour unions into submission through the creation of ever higher levels of unemployment. This confrontationist approach has contributed greatly to our current economic difficulties.

On the other hand my Government also acknowledges that any attempt to fight unemployment first simply by means of an expansionary economic policy would most likely result in balance of payments problems, increased inflation and eventual curtailment, if not collapse, of the expansionary policy itself.

We seek therefore, a policy for sustained and sustainable growth which will simultaneously attack the twin problems of unemployment and inflation.

This alternative of influencing income claims directly, and in particular a consensus approach to achieving greater consistency of income claims, was endorsed at the Economic Summit by the major participating groups.

The Summit recognised that there is no quick remedy for our current problems. No policy can be expected to deliver substantial and lasting reductions in unemployment unless it commands the community support necessary for its consistent application over several years.

The cornerstone of this prices and incomes policy is to be a centralised system of wage fixation operating through national wage cases. These cases provide the opportunity for assessment by a well established and independent Tribunal of the scope for increases in wages, principally on the grounds of increases in the cost of living and, when sustained economic growth justifies, on national productivity growth. A simultaneous and equitable treatment of all wage and salary earners is fundamental to the effective operation of a centralised system.

The general adjustment of wages for prices and productivity through national cases means that the scope for other wage increases must be strictly limited - indeed, increases in labour costs for whatever reason outside the national cases must be negligible. The Australian trade unions are committed to this centralised wage system and all unions must be part of that system.

Australian labour traditions are particularly well suited to acceptance of a centralised system. Within this system, there can be no room for an industry-by-industry approach with the "strong" operating outside the system and exercising their industrial muscle in the market place, while the "weak" attempt to catch up through sectional wage cases. With such an approach, it is easy enough to identify winners and losers in the short-term. Initially, the strong get stronger and the weak get weaker. But ultimately there are no winners, in terms of sustainable growth.

The Australian Government's attitude to sectional claims and procedures to deal with anomalies and inequities is being spelt out and will ensure that increases outside national wage cases are negligible. The Government will stress that procedures must be rigorously observed and only genuine and tightly defined anomalies and inequities will be allowed. In developing the system the Government will encourage the maximum degree of consensus between the interested parties.

The prices and incomes policy, as indeed all areas of economic policy, must seek to balance short and medium-term considerations. Ultimately, a successful long-term policy will be essential for sustained economic and employment growth in Australia. Short-term policies must be consistent with longer-term goals.

In addition to wage restraint, initiatives are currently in hand in regard to price surveillance and containment of non-wage incomes to ensure that the exercise of restraint is universal and equitable.

Only with such restraint can there be scope for greater stimulus to the economy.

The success of the prices and incomes policy will be reflected in slower growth in money wages, which will be matched by a fall in the rate of inflation and will allow the Government to stimulate the economy.

And, at all times, policy-makers and decision-makers and all who participate in those processes must keep to the forefront the realisation that the economic environment in which our economies operate will continue to change significantly.

In particular, to achieve over an extended period the growth rates of output necessary to get unemployment down, economies suffering from high unemployment will need strongly growing industries. Much of this growth will take place in the non-traded service sector, which has the bulk of Australian employment growth in the past. However, these economies will also need internationally competitive manufacturing and service industries both to create new job opportunities directly and to ensure that our ability to purchase imports does not constrain growth elsewhere in the economy. More protection is not a solution to creating the large numbers of jobs necessary to reduce our unutilised unemployment.

Given the lengthy time periods involved we must look to the major factors which influence competitiveness. These will vary from country to country with ^{their} ~~the~~ resource endowments and traditions, and particularly with ^{their} ~~the~~ stocks of human skills. A strongly developed skill base enables relatively high cost economies such as the Australian to adjust to the developing competitiveness of lower labour cost economies over the lengthy time period necessary to get unemployment down. A strongly developed skill base enables economies to expand into activities which are complementary to developments in their trading partners and, indeed, to capitalise upon these developments to create more jobs at home.

To further emphasise the point, in high labour cost economies the employment prospects for the less highly skilled sections of the labour force, and those in the non-traded service sector, depend in no small measure upon our ability to produce sufficient skills to maintain international competitiveness.

Although there are now grounds for optimism that the world economy is headed towards recovery, there are no grounds for expecting its recovery to bring back the full employment enjoyed in the advanced industrial countries in the 1950s and 1960s. Governments in all advanced countries have had to face the unpleasant reality that the conventional labour market is unlikely to expand rapidly enough to supply jobs for those who want them. The reality is all the more unpleasant when we reflect that new entrants to the work force, especially youth and women, are disproportionately damaged by this failure of the conventional economy.

This disastrous prospect of high unemployment even in the course of economic recovery requires innovative policy responses. Part of the response can be directed at increasing the number of jobs supplied in the conventional economy, especially to disadvantaged groups of workers, at any given level of economic activity. The new Australian Community Employment Program which I mentioned earlier in my address is an example of this type of response.

But the unemployment disaster is of such magnitude that even this will not be enough. We must ^{look for additional ways to} bring the supply of conventional jobs into balance with the demand for them. Increasingly over recent years we have come to the view that we should do what we can to reduce the demand for conventional jobs, at the same time as we do everything we can to increase the supply.

The idea of seeking balance between the number of people seeking conventional jobs, and the capacity of the economy to provide them, by reducing the demand for jobs as well as their supply, is not new to people from developing countries. It is widely understood that unemployment arises in developing countries when more people from rural areas want urban jobs than can be accommodated by the urban economies. Over the last decade it has been recognised in many developing countries that urban unemployment can be combatted by improving income-earning opportunities in rural areas, so that less rural people prefer urban to rural employment, as well as by increasing urban employment. Studies sponsored by the ILO have contributed a great deal to this new understanding of urban unemployment. The well-known employment studies of Kenya and the Philippines are two of many examples.

There seemed to be little need to adopt parallel approaches

the advanced industrial economies when full employment along the lines of the early postwar decades remained within reach. In today's happy circumstances, we should ask whether we should be seeking to influence the demand for as well as the supply of conventional jobs in the industrial societies.

I should hasten to say that what I have in mind is quite the opposite of the reduction in the demand for jobs through demoralisation and discouragement that has led work force participation rates to fall in many countries through the recent recession. Certainly high unemployment discourages potential job seekers from attempting to join the paid workforce. In my own country at present there are some 80,000 hidden unemployed, who have stopped wanting a job because they have given up hope of finding one. Ninety percent of this 80,000 are women, and few of them have had any employment in the conventional economy over the last six months.

The hidden unemployed are a part of our modern unemployment tragedy. The reduction in demand for jobs could only be counted part of the solution if some citizens saw alternatives to conventional employment positively as offering a life of similar or greater quality.

In recent years, some young people in all countries have responded to the crisis in conventional employment by building alternatives of their own. Some of these have been dead-ends, that have ended up closing down rather than opening up opportunities and choices for people involved in them. But some have been built on socially constructive as well as economically productive activities.

Government budgets in the advanced industrial countries are now heavily burdened by the consequences of the demand for jobs greatly exceeding the supply. The most obvious costs are the huge outlays on unemployment benefits. But part of the charge on society for welfare, housing, health and law and order are properly attributable to the unemployment crisis.

I find challenging the possibility that governments can help reduce demand for conventional jobs by assisting some citizens to build alternative types of socially constructive employment. Provided there are proper safeguards against the obvious opportunities for abuse, governments should be able to apply money that would otherwise be used

or unemployment benefits to assist groups of citizens to build alternatives to conventional employment.

In Australia we are still thinking through the possibilities of tackling the unemployment crisis, not only by doing all we can to increase the supply of jobs, but also by reducing the demand for jobs by helping to provide socially constructive alternatives.

Accordingly my Government will be consulting with the trade unions, the business community, voluntary organisations and other interested parties with a view to identifying ways in which the demand for jobs might be reduced in Australia through initiatives outside conventional avenues.

I hope that in a few years I shall be able to report worthwhile progress in Australia in addressing what I believe has become a question needing urgent attention - the demand side of the employment equation.

President, Delegates,

In the final analysis, the success or failure of the various policies I have outlined will depend on the maturity and intelligence of the Australian people. In particular, it will provide a test and a challenge for the Australian trade union movement as severe as any in its long history. And it is certainly a long and honourable history. Its formal institutions and structures are well over a century old. For example, the Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales was formed 112 years ago. The political wing - the Australian Labor Party

... the creation of the great union movement - celebrates its
anniversary in 1991, ten years before the Commonwealth of Australia
itself. No Labour Movement in the world can claim a longer or a
greater share in the life and history of the nation to which it
belongs.

It is this remarkable movement whose political wing I now
have the privilege of leading. All my knowledge and understanding of
that movement convinces me that it will meet the challenges and respon-
sibilities now before it, as it has so often in the past, in war and
peace.

I have no doubt that many nations with problems similar to
those of Australia, and union movements which share experiences and
background similar to the Australian movement will view with interest
the progress of our policies and the success of our experiments in
the months and years to come. And if, as I deeply hope will happen in
later years, I should again have the honour of addressing this
assembly, I hope it will be possible for me to say not only that we
Australians, particularly those of us committed so deeply to the
Australian Labor Movement, solved our problems by our exertions, but
also that other nations and other ^{labor} movements were able to profit by our
example. And if that were to come to pass, it would give me personally
a profound satisfaction that my own part in the process had enabled
me, in some small measure, to repay a part of the debt which I owe,
through all that I have gained, from my long and close association
with this great International Labor Organisation.

ENDS