



PRIME MINISTER

OCCASIONAL ADDRESS
BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA
THE HON R.J.L. HAWKE
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA,
19 APRIL 1984

CHANCELLOR, VICE CHANCELLOR, FELLOW GRADUATES, FELLOW STUDENTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT IN ACCEPTING THIS HONOUR CONFERRED UPON ME BY THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, I DO SO IN NO MERE FORMAL WAY.

NOR CAN MY DEEP APPRECIATION OF THIS HONOUR AND OF THIS OCCASION BE ADEQUATELY EXPRESSED BY ANY MERE FORM OF WORDS.

I CANNOT, HOWEVER, HELP BUT REFLECT THAT IF, 30 AND MORE YEARS AGO I HAD CHOSEN A DIFFERENT PATH, I MIGHT JUST HAVE ACHIEVED A DOCTORATE IN MY OWN RIGHT.

AS IT IS, I ACCEPT IT AS YET ANOTHER OF THE RICH PRIVILEGES BESTOWED UPON ME BY THIS UNIVERSITY AND THROUGH MY ASSOCIATION WITH IT.

I ENTERED THIS UNIVERSITY IN 1947. THAT WAS THE SAME YEAR I JOINED THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY. SO TWO OF THE GREAT FORMATIVE AND ENDURING ASSOCIATIONS OF MY LIFE BEGAN TOGETHER HERE.

I ACCEPT THIS HONOUR AS COMING NOT ONLY FROM THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF BUT, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, FROM THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

FOR, MORE THAN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIA, THIS UNIVERSITY WAS THE CREATION OF THE PEOPLE AND THE COMMUNITY - CREATED AS A FREE UNIVERSITY AND DEDICATED BY THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA TO THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

AND SURELY THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE UPON WHICH THIS UNIVERSITY WAS FOUNDED FINDS A PHYSICAL REFLECTION IN THE CAMPUS ITSELF - BOTH THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND THE MOST AUTHENTIC AUSTRALIAN CAMPUS IN THIS COUNTRY.

IT IS A MATTER OF HISTORICAL RECORD THAT THIS UNIVERSITY SERVED AS THE MODEL FOR ALL THAT WAS TO COME LATER THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, AS THE COMMONWEALTH MOVED, UNDER SUCCESSIVE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS, TOWARDS ACCEPTANCE OF FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION IN OUR NATION.

THUS, IT WAS THE FORTUNE OF MY GENERATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIANS TO ENJOY A PRIVILEGE NOT EXTENDED TO OUR FELLOW AUSTRALIANS IN THE OTHER STATES FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS AFTER.

BUT THAT WAS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF OUR GOOD FORTUNE.

IT WAS EASY FOR THOSE OF US WHO GREW UP IN POST WAR AUSTRALIA TO BELIEVE THAT THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES BEFORE US, AT LEAST IN THE MATERIAL SENSE, WERE WIDER THAN THOSE OF ANY PREVIOUS GENERATION OF AUSTRALIANS.

THE WORK OF POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION, WITH ITS CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF FULL EMPLOYMENT, HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE CHIFLEY GOVERNMENT WITH A SUCCESS UNMATCHED ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

THE PLANNING FOR RECONSTRUCTION HAD IN FACT BEEN SET IN TRAIN BY JOHN CURTIN WELL BEFORE THE END OF THE WAR. AND THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF THE RECONSTRUCTION, UNDER BOTH CURTIN AND CHIFLEY WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST GRADUATES OF THIS UNIVERSITY AND ONE OF THE GREATEST PUBLIC SERVANTS IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA - DOCTOR COOMBS IN THE OFFICIAL RECORDS, "NUGGET" COOMBS EVERYWHERE ELSE.

SO, BY THE END OF THE FORTIES, AUSTRALIA, WITH THE WESTERN ECONOMY AS A WHOLE, WAS ON THE THRESHOLD OF TWO DECADES OF UNPRECEDENTED AND ALMOST UNINTERRUPTED ECONOMIC GROWTH.

NOBODY OF THAT GENERATION - IN SO MANY WAYS, THE LUCKY GENERATION - AT LEAST, NOBODY OF THAT GENERATION WITH ANY SENSITIVITY OR ANY SENSE OF HISTORY OR RESPONSIBILITY COULD IGNORE, IN 1984, THE CONTRAST WITH THE SITUATION OF THE PRESENT YOUNG GENERATION OF AUSTRALIANS, AND THE TREMENDOUS PROBLEMS AND PRESSURES WHICH THE TIMES AND CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE IMPOSED UPON THEM.

YET THIS GENERATION IS, ON THE WHOLE, THE BEST QUALIFIED AND BEST EDUCATED GENERATION WE HAVE SO FAR PRODUCED IN AUSTRALIA.

SO IT IS, I BELIEVE, A TASK OF THE UTMOST URGENCY AND HIGHEST PRIORITY THAT THIS GENERATION SHOULD BE ENABLED TO ENJOY THE FULLEST MEASURE OF OPPORTUNITY, OF EXPECTATION, AND OF SELF-FULFILLMENT, AS WE PRIVILEGED STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA TOOK, ALMOST FOR GRANTED, A GENERATION AGO.

AND JUST AS AFTER THE SUPREME CRISIS OF WORLD WAR II, THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW ERA OF GROWTH AND PROGRESS WERE LAID BY THE FAR-REACHING PROGRAM OF POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION, SO THERE HAS TO BE A NEW NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION, AS WE EMERGE FROM THE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF THE LAST DECADE.

AND THAT IS WHAT MY GOVERNMENT IS NOW UNDERTAKING.

THE TASK OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, THE TASK OF NATIONAL RECOVERY AND THE TASK OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION CANNOT BE PLACED IN SEPARATE COMPARTMENTS. THEY ARE EACH PART OF AN INDIVISIBLE, TOTAL ENDEAVOUR.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE A YEAR AGO SYMBOLISED THIS APPROACH. AND WHILE, PERHAPS, I SHOULD NOT CLAIM THAT THE CONFERENCE ACHIEVED MORE THAN A BEGINNING - A NEW BEGINNING - TO OUR NATIONAL APPROACH TO OUR PROBLEMS, I THINK I AM ENTITLED TO POINT OUT THAT SINCE THEN, 210,000 NEW JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED IN AUSTRALIA.

APART FROM ITS INTRINSIC VALUE, THIS TURN-AROUND IN THE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION HAS HELPED BUILD A NEW SPIRIT OF CONFIDENCE IN AUSTRALIA - CONFIDENCE IN OURSELVES, CONFIDENCE IN EACH OTHER AND OUR NATIONAL CONFIDENCE IN WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE TOGETHER.

AND IT ALLOWS US TO ADDRESS OURSELVES AS A NATION TO MANY FUNDAMENTAL, BUT LONG-NEGLECTED STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IN OUR ECONOMY AND IN OUR SOCIETY.

THIS LONGER TERM NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION WHICH WE, ARE NOW ABLE TO UNDERTAKE REQUIRES A BRINGING TOGETHER - A CO-ORDINATION - OF NATIONAL POLICIES ACROSS THE WHOLE RANGE OF OUR NATIONAL ACTIVITIES - INDUSTRY POLICIES, EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL SECURITY, TRADE POLICIES AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS.

NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION - AND, INDEED, IN A WAY NOT CONSTITUTIONALLY POSSIBLE OR POLITICALLY FEASIBLE IN THOSE DAYS - WE, AS A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE STATES, THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT OF AUSTRALIA, ARE ADDRESSING OURSELVES TO THESE PROBLEMS IN A CO-ORDINATED WAY.

BUT THE NEW RECONSTRUCTION IS BEING CARRIED ON IN A SOCIETY, A NATION, A REGION AND A WORLD INFINITELY MORE COMPLEX, MORE CHALLENGING, MORE DIFFICULT AND, SOMETIMES MORE DANGEROUS THAN THAT WHICH EXISTED - CERTAINLY IN OUR PERCEPTIONS - A GENERATION AGO.

ALTHOUGH THAT WAS THE GENERATION OF THE SO-CALLED "COLD WAR", THE SUPREME QUESTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE, THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR, THE PREVENTION OF THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, ARMS LIMITATION AND DISARMAMENT WERE THEN PERCEIVED AS NEITHER SO URGENT, NOR SO DAUNTING AS THEY ARE TODAY.

NOR, IN THOSE DAYS, EVEN IN A WORLD WHERE ENERGY WAS CHEAP, ABUNDANT AND APPARENTLY LIMITLESS WERE THERE THOUGHT TO BE INHIBITIONS AGAINST DEVELOPING NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY. THE QUESTIONS OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER WERE SEEN - AND, I BELIEVE, RIGHTLY SEEN - AS SEPARATE QUESTIONS ALTOGETHER.

NOTHING COULD MORE SERIOUSLY REDUCE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUSTRALIA'S EFFORTS - THE DEEP DETERMINATION OF MY GOVERNMENT - TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT AND INDEED A LEADING ROLE IN THE CAUSE OF DISARMAMENT AND THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR THAN THAT THESE TWO SEPARATE AND DISTINCT ISSUES SHOULD BECOME CONFUSED.

INDEED ARTICLE 4 OF THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY - THE VERY BASIS OF OUR EFFORTS - SPECIFICALLY IMPOSES ON RESOURCE-RICH COUNTRIES LIKE AUSTRALIA A MORAL OBLIGATION TO SHARE OUR ENERGY RESOURCES, INCLUDING URANIUM, WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

THUS AUSTRALIA AND ITS ELECTED GOVERNMENT HAS A
DOUBLE OBLIGATION - THE OBLIGATION TO BEND ALL OUR
EFFORTS TOWARDS DISARMAMENT AND THE OBLIGATION TO
SHARE OUR RESOURCES.

WE ARE DETERMINED TO FULFIL THOSE OBLIGATIONS EQUALLY.

AND IN SO DOING WE OF MY GENERATION - AS I SAID, IN
SO MANY WAYS, THE LUCKY AUSTRALIAN GENERATION - CAN
FULFIL, IN PART, ITS OVER-RIDING OBLIGATION AND
RESPONSIBILITY TO THIS PRESENT GENERATION AND THE
FUTURE GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIA.

AND IT IS IN THAT SPIRIT - WITH A REAL SENSE OF MY OWN
OBLIGATIONS TO THIS UNIVERSITY AND TO THE PEOPLE OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA WHO BUILT IT - THAT ONCE AGAIN I
EXPRESS MY DEEP APPRECIATION OF THE GREAT HONOUR YOU
HAVE DONE ME TONIGHT.

