

DÁIL ÉIREANN



ADDRESS
BY

ROBERT J. L. HAWKKE, M.P.
PRIME MINISTER
OF AUSTRALIA

Wednesday, 21 October 1987

DÁIL ÉIREANN

AITHEASC Ó

ROBERT J. L. HAWKE, M.P.

PRÍOMH-AIRE
NA hASTRÁILE

Dé Céadaoin, 21 Deireadh Fómhair 1987

DÁIL ÉIREANN

ADDRESS BY

ROBERT J. L. HAWKE, M.P.

PRIME MINISTER
OF AUSTRALIA

Wednesday, 21 October 1987

DÁIL ÉIREANN

Dé Céadaoin, 21 Deireadh Fómhair 1987.
Wednesday, 21 October 1987.

Chuaigh an Ceann Comhairle i gceannas ar 10.30 a.m.

The Ceann Comhairle took the Chair at 10.30 a.m.

Paidir.
Prayer.

The Taoiseach (Deputy Haughey), the Leader of the Fine Gael Party (Deputy Dukes), the Leader of the Progressive Democrats (Deputy Desmond O'Malley), the Leader of The Labour Party (Deputy Spring) and the Leader of The Workers' Party (Deputy Mac Giolla) conducted The Honourable Robert J. L. Hawke, M.P., Prime Minister of Australia, to the dais, where, Members standing and applauding, he was received by the Ceann Comhairle.

The Prime Minister then took his seat on the dais beside the Ceann Comhairle.

Five

An Ceann Comhairle (Deputy Seán Treacy): A Phríomh-Aire Uasail, cuireann sé gliondar ó chroí agus mórtas orainne tú bheith anseo inniu le labhairt linn. Ócáid mhór, agus ócáid stairiúil, tú a bheith ar cuairt ar ár dtír. Tá céad míle fáilte romhat agus guímid rath agus séan ort féin, ar do bhanchéile, Hazel, agus ar mhuintir na hAstráile.

Mr. Prime Minister, it is indeed a great honour for us as the elected representatives of the Irish people to have you with us in Dáil Éireann today. Since the foundation of the State, this is the first occasion on which a Prime Minister of another country has addressed this House. We welcome you as leader of a nation and of a people with whom Ireland enjoys a unique ethnic relationship arising out of our history of emigration and deportation. As a result approximately five million Australians, a third of your population, have Irish blood in their veins and this binds us together in a very special way. Edmund Burke expressed this sentiment eloquently when he wrote:

The close affection which grows from common names,
from kindred blood;

These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as
links of iron.

Two centuries are a short time in the history of any country but in the case of your country, out of the trials, tribulations, hopes and fears of emigrants and deportees, a country has been forged which has taken its place among the great nations of the earth.

We remember with deep pride the contribution which the Irish and their descendants made to the growth and success of Australia. Moreover, we do honour to their memories by forever cherishing that indomitable spirit which pain and suffering cannot and must not quench. They longed for freedom and dignity, and they certainly were not denied the realisation of their hopes and dreams in your country. In time your shores gave them the assurance of a new life with unfettered horizons.

In the words of Dorothea Mackellar they could say:

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror —
The wide brown land for me.

We all know that this brown land was loved and honoured for 30,000 years in the culture and art of the Aboriginal Australians whose benign heritage is gaining increasing international appreciation. Mr. Prime Minister, your country's recognition of this great heritage enriches us all.

The Irish contribution to Australian liberties has been significant, but perhaps even more significant has been the effect of their activities and perspectives in contributing to the overall liberalising and humanising of the climate of Australian life. Their individual zest, and their vigorous refusal to accept injustice as they saw it, have also been vital to this climate. I may say that the Irish who went and settled in Australia came from all over Ireland, North and South, and from both Irish traditions. The fact that they and their descendants contributed to the creation of a tolerant, liberal and open society has undoubtedly a significant lesson for us in this island today.

The Australia to which the Irish emigrated in the last century, and the Ireland from which they departed, were very different from what we see today. Both our countries have changed very much for the better in economic and political terms, but I would stress that the quintessential spark of what constitutes traditional Ireland with its love of music, literature and sport has added colour and verve to community life in Australia and has helped to form what today is an indigenous Australian culture and lifestyle. Irish names like Kenneally, Durack, Buckley, McCullough and White figure prominently

Seven

in Australian writing, carrying on a tradition set by Marcus Clarke, Christopher Brennan, John O'Brien and others of Irish descent. In the realm of art the names of Sidney Nolan and Arthur Boyd are known around the world. The Irish have also made a significant contribution to the Christian Churches, to the legal profession, to the medical and health care field and, dare I say, to politics. I understand that seven of your Prime Ministers were of Irish descent. That speaks volumes for the role the Irish played in the political life of your country.

We in Ireland look forward in anticipation to being closely associated with your bicentennial celebrations next year. You can truly look forward to 1988 with deep pride. We share that pride, and we will rejoice with you on that great occasion.

In conclusion, Mr. Prime Minister, perhaps I could briefly quote Professor Patrick O'Farrell with whose writing you are well acquainted:

Ireland in Australia was both fact and dream. Its dimensions of fact coincide with the boundaries of the continent, but its dreams were unbounded, spanning the world — and more than the world. No man can fix the boundaries of the nation, of the mind and heart. Least of all the soul.

With these sentiments, Mr. Prime Minister, it is now my privilege and great honour to call on you to address this House.

ADDRESS OF PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

The Honourable Robert J. L. Hawke, MP, Prime Minister of Australia, then delivered his address.

Prime Minister Hawke: A Cheann Comhairle, when I arrived at Dublin Airport on Sunday, I told the Taoiseach that I felt as if I had arrived home. The friendly welcome you extended to me then has been borne out in all that I have been shown by all whom I have met over the past few days. I have seen the beauty of your country and felt the spontaneous warmth of your people. Indeed, I do feel at home.

The Australian and the Irish people share so many values and so much history that our kinship could hardly be closer. Today, however, in this place, we celebrate perhaps the most important of those shared values. For this place is a tangible expression of the right of the people to govern themselves and of every individual to speak his mind. Many great Irishmen — Daniel O’Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell among them — fought for the right to do what I am doing now: to speak in the free Parliament of a free Irish nation.

Of course, many of those Irish nationalists who were never permitted to achieve their aspirations for liberty in their own homeland came to Australia to enrich our social and political life. Charles Gavan Duffy, for example, became Premier of Victoria and lived to see Australia become a united, independent nation, after spending half his life in Ireland fighting for representative Government. What an irony it is then that Australia, after just over a century from the time of its European settlement, should have achieved independence a generation before Ireland.

The struggle of Irish patriots over centuries is fulfilled in this building, in the parliamentary service given to it by such national leaders as de Valera and MacBride, and in the vigour of your parliamentary life.

I do not need to remind you how precious an achievement

that is or how fundamental to political life are the liberties of free speech, inside and outside parliament — or how infinitely superior a means of government is the process of free and fair democratic election to the alternatives of violence and authoritarianism which we see around the world today.

As members of democratic parliaments we have the gravest of responsibilities, not just to our own constituents and to our own nation but truly to the whole world. For there are all too few parliamentary democracies in the world, and all too many forces seeking to limit or even to snuff out those that do exist.

It is not inappropriate in this context that I pause to make particular mention of Fiji, one of Australia's closest and most important South Pacific neighbours and a nation where the democratic flame burned brightly for the 17 years since it became independent. Fiji has recently succumbed to military rule. I am sure I speak for all of us when I express my deepest hope that all the people of the nation of Fiji will quickly secure once more their democratic rights which have been taken from them.

A Cheann Comhairle, I know it is a rare event for a foreign leader to be invited to address the Dáil and I want to assure you that I am grateful for and deeply honoured by the motion passed unanimously on 14 October to extend this privilege to me. You have placed me in distinguished company, since my only predecessors as foreign leaders on this podium are President Reagan and the late President Kennedy. The choice of two Americans and one Australian reflects the historical truth, and, may I say, the paradoxical truth, of this most anti-imperialist of nations and that historical and paradoxical truth is that Ireland is the head of a huge empire in which Australia and the United States are the principal provinces. It is an empire acquired not by force of Irish arms but by force of Irish character, an empire not of political coercion but of spiritual affiliation, created by the thousands upon thousands of Irish men and women who chose to leave these shores, or

who were banished from them, to help in the building of new societies over the years.

It seems appropriate, with hindsight, that President Kennedy opened his address to the Irish Parliament in June 1963 with a story about the remarkable Thomas Meagher. Meagher led the Irish Brigade into battle at Fredericksburg in the American Civil War but his life story, in fact, spanned three continents — he was born in Waterford; he died in America; but he also spent time in Australia as a convict transported for his involvement in the 1848 uprising.

It is true that more of your fellow-countrymen and forefathers became American than Australian. But it is true, too, that the Irish form a greater proportion of the Australian population than of the American. Indeed, almost one-third of Australia's population — more than five out of 16 million people — proudly claim Irish ancestry.

Outside Ireland itself, Australia is the most Irish of nations, and we are proud of it. Moreover, I assert that those who came to Australia — from Ireland as well as from Great Britain and elsewhere — found a society which presented them with opportunities that were not available in older societies where rigid hierarchies and orders of social class were already established. The Irish found in Australia a congenial and egalitarian environment where their talents were welcomed and rewarded. That spirit of egalitarianism remains one of the distinguishing characteristics in the make-up of both our countries.

I had the pleasure yesterday, in an address to University College, Dublin, of outlining my thoughts about the extraordinary way the Irish took up the opportunities presented to them and contributed in almost every field to the creation of the Australian nation and the Australian identity. In particular, I called attention to the Irish commitment to justice and equality of opportunity, a commitment which has been the central theme of your struggle for nationhood in this

Eleven

country and which underpinned so much of the Irish contribution to Australia.

I mentioned in passing that a new eminent personage is expected to arrive in Australia soon from Ireland. A worldwide search was instituted some time ago for a statue to grace the newly refurbished Queen Victoria building in Sydney. The statue sought was of Queen Victoria herself but in none of the many former British colonies of the Victorian era could a town hall or city plaza or private royalist be found who was willing to part with a suitable statue of the Queen. Until the search came to Ireland — and to this city. I am pleased to report that a statue of Queen Victoria was found not far from this very building and is to be — if I can use this term in other than its former sense — transported to Sydney and placed on public display.

A Cheann Comhairle, as a leader of one of the oldest and proudest Labour parties, the Australian Labour Party, I acknowledge the seminal role the Irish played in the formation of that party and of our trade union movement, and in our struggle for a fairer, more compassionate, more prosperous society.

A number of my predecessors as Labour Prime Minister — including the incomparable John Curtin and Joseph Benedict Chifley — were of Irish extraction. In the way Curtin devoted himself to the task of leading Australia through the Second World War, the Irish attributes of dedicated and selfless commitment, determination, character and courage shine through. It is equally easy to see an Irish-derived compassion and vision in his successor Chifley's sweeping reconstruction of the Australian economy to equip it for the challenges of peacetime.

Among today's generation of Labour leaders, the Irish tradition is still strong and if you looked at a list of my Ministers you would see enough names like Bowen, Keating, Hayden, Kerin, Walsh, Young, Ryan, Duffy and Kelly to satisfy even the most nationalistic among you. Indeed, half of

my Ministry claims Irish origin — so now you may understand even more clearly why I said at the outset that I feel at home.

In 1985 we were privileged to receive an official visit by President Hillery and last year the Australian Parliament played host to the first visit of a delegation of Irish parliamentarians. We will be sending an Australian delegation here next year in honour of the millenium of the City of Dublin. I can assure you that it is a delegation which poses a major problem of selection from the long list of bids that are in to join it.

A Cheann Comhairle, it would not be appropriate if I dwelt today solely on the historical elements of our relationship, as important and enduring as they are. As political leaders we must turn our attention to the ways in which we can address the many contemporary issues we confront. As medium sized western industrial economies, which share and nourish the same commitment to democratic principles and practices, Australia and Ireland bring vitally important perspectives to the resolution of these problems.

Neither Australia nor Ireland is a large country compared to the super powers and the economic giants. By ourselves, our capacities to effect great international change may seem slight. What we can do is by force of example, and by the persuasion we can apply to others. Australia, through its alliance relationship and through our many bilateral links with other countries, and Ireland through in particular its membership of the European Community, and both of us through our membership of the United Nations and other international bodies, can take positions that advance our goals and keep faith with our principles. And, of course, many of those goals and principles we share, and many of our aspirations we hold in common.

Australia is an aligned nation, Ireland espouses neutrality; but from these different vantage points we both work for a world in which conflict and tension are lessened, and in which the arms race can be brought under control and reversed. We

both share a sense of expectation and satisfaction that the United States and the Soviet Union are about to agree to limit their intermediate nuclear forces. That agreement will be the first occasion on which the super powers have agreed to reduce their nuclear forces, not merely to slow down the rate of growth.

With this agreement signed we must, as nations with a vital interest in both the preservation of peace and the advancement of human development, continue to work towards further reductions in the nuclear arsenals. Our goal must be that one day the world's resources may be concentrated not on the needless accumulation of weapons which could obliterate mankind but on the essential humanitarian tasks of caring for the elderly, sheltering the homeless and feeding the hungry.

Australia and Ireland are also working in harmony towards the enhancement of human rights around the world. Neither of us should ever be diffident or apologetic about supporting in other countries the rights and freedoms which we fought and worked so hard to achieve at home. We advocate and support decolonisation and the principles of national self-determination. We both stand for the elimination of the evil of apartheid and the expunging of racial discrimination.

Last week I attended the meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government in Vancouver, Canada. Over recent years, Australia has been at the forefront of those in the Commonwealth who see the need for measures to place pressure on the racist Government of South Africa in the direction of negotiations with the black majority. Australia and Ireland have been active and willing participants in the efforts of the United Nations, through its peace-keeping forces, to contribute to peace and stability in many of the world's areas of tension. May I pay, on behalf of the people of Australia, particular tribute to Ireland's efforts in this regard.

The commitment of successive Irish Governments to the enhancement of the prospects for international peace is, of course, entirely consistent with your efforts over the years to

achieve peace and stability on your own borders. The troubles in Northern Ireland pose one of the most heartrending issues facing not just Ireland, and not just countries like Australia that have Irish connections, but the whole world. Australia strongly supports the efforts by the Irish and British Governments, through the Anglo-Irish Agreement, to end the communal strife in Northern Ireland. Above all, it is clear that violence can only worsen that communal strife and can only hamper the progress towards peace which is being made. I assure you that the Australian Government will do all within its power to discourage any Australian citizen from adding in any way to the violence in Northern Ireland. We believe that reconciliation and the search for understanding provide the only way forward. And we recognise that this is precisely Ireland's approach.

A Cheann Comhairle, ultimately peace and the enhancement of human rights depend on economic growth and prosperity. If as political leaders we have not understood the inter-relationship of economic policy and political stability, then we have learned nothing of the lessons of this century. The world paid a heavy price in the Second World War for the failure of the major economies in the twenties and thirties to control the tendencies towards protectionism. As horrendous as that price was in the Second World War, it would be as nothing compared to the results of unbridled conflict in the nuclear age.

Both our countries have undergone an historic transformation in their economic orientation. In Australia, beginning in the fifties, we came to the recognition that our future lay in the Asia-Pacific region. My Government have done everything they can, through the redirection of our external policies and domestic restructuring, to promote the enmeshment of our economy with the Asia-Pacific region, the fastest growing economic area of the world. Fourteen years ago, Ireland too made a fundamental decision to link its future with Western Europe, through membership of the EEC. For

both of us, these changes have led to great achievements.

Your President, Dr. Hillery, noted in his address to a parliamentary luncheon in Canberra in 1985, that the Irish economy has developed in a relatively short period into a highly sophisticated, modern, industrialised one. But we both now face major new challenges. It is my firm belief that hard decisions are best made with the active understanding and co-operation of those who are most affected by them.

In my talks on Monday with the Taoiseach, we discussed strategies of consensus and co-operation through which our nations can create the self-discipline needed to meet our economic challenges. We also discussed the advantages inherent in the removal of domestic barriers which can produce uncompetitiveness, low productivity and inefficiency.

We found common ground on all this. Countries like ours cannot afford to live beyond their means. The tough political task of responsible economic management requires us to re-order our priorities, reduce deficits, attack indebtedness, tighten spending and question the assumptions of the past. Between us we may have differences about how we do that, but those things must be done. We must do this not by creating confrontation in our communities but by actively seeking to inform and involve all members in making the decisions which are necessary. Short-term costs will inevitably ensue in this process, but Governments, I believe, have the obligation to take the right and tough decisions now in the long-term interests of their people.

One of the central factors facing economies of medium size is that domestic adjustment, however essential, is not enough in itself to maximise growth. All the hard decisions and all the efforts to adjust will avail a nation little if it must swim against an international tide hostile to economic growth and development. In a world of vast external imbalances among developed countries and enormous debt problems, particularly in the Third World, the strength of the world trading system can no longer be taken for granted.

I am sure you would not expect me to visit a member of the European Community without mentioning in this context the damaging impact on that trading system of the Community's policies of agricultural subsidisation. Australia believes high levels of protection and subsidisation in the centre of world economic powers — Europe, Japan and the United States — will in the end only hurt all consumers and producers, whether they live behind the protectionist walls of the major economies or outside them. It would be shortsightedness of the most dangerous kind to adopt policies which fail to recognise that all would be losers in the end.

A Cheann Comhairle, next year Australia is to celebrate the bicentenary of the arrival of the First Fleet on Australian shores on 26 January 1788. Dublin, this great seat of European civilisation, will celebrate its millenium in 1988. It is appropriate to recall here that before the First Fleet was ever conceived of, and before even the foundation of Dublin itself, there was a living civilisation in Australia — that of the Aboriginal people — a civilisation which stretches back at least 40,000 years. For all that our bicentenary celebrations must focus on the achievements of the last 200 years, it will be my intention that due recognition be paid to the obligation Australians owe to the original Australians.

For Australians, 1988 will be a milestone in our national development and will give us cause to reflect seriously on the progress we have made. It will also focus our attention on the way in which Australia has relied on and been immeasurably enriched by the constant influx of new peoples, new cultures and new ideas, to sustain the momentum of that development. It is in this context that we in Australia will have special cause to recognise the contribution of the Irish people over the last 200 years.

During my visit I have been pleased to hear at first hand of the plans being made, both Government sponsored and private, to participate in our bicentennial celebrations in Australia. I say on behalf of all Australians that we are deeply grateful

for the contribution you are making. And may I say how much we are looking forward to seeing the Taoiseach in Australia next March during Irish week.

The Irish Government are helping generously, in a number of important ways, with the celebration of the bicentenary. We look forward to welcoming *Asgard II* when she joins the parade of Tall Ships on Sydney Harbour next January. She and her crew, I assure you, will be made to feel at home.

The Irish Government have also assisted with a number of scholarly projects investigating the Irish-Australian connection. And of very great value — not just at the scholarly level but for the whole Australian community — the Irish Government are making available in microfilm the convict records of the 40,000 Irish men and women who were transported to Australia in the 18th and 19th centuries. This will enable us to answer with more precision a central question of Australian history: who were the convicts? Where did they come from? What were their crimes? Most of us, in our minds, use that word in inverted commas. I can answer you that when we get these details many Australians will try to establish that they are members of a very great élite. But this much, my friends, is already crystal clear. Whether it was politics or poverty which forced the Irish out of their homes and across the seas to Australia, the new arrivals invested our new society with lasting and invaluable qualities.

Australia is very much the richer for having been able to draw on the generous influx of Irish aspirations, Irish traditions, and Irish spirit. We would not be the country we are today were it not for you. It is those bequests which are the durable and over-arching bicentennial gifts from Ireland to Australia. They are the debts Australians for their part owe to the Irish.

I thank you again for your invitation to address you and for the warm hospitality you have extended during my visit, not only to myself and Hazel, but to all those travelling with me. It has been a privilege to renew in this way the ties —

the already close and friendly ties — between Australia and Ireland. I look forward to a future in which Australia and Ireland can play an even more co-operative role with each other and a more constructive role together in world affairs.

A standing ovation was accorded to the Prime Minister on the conclusion of his address.

An Ceann Comhairle: Mr. Prime Minister, it is now my privilege to offer you the profound thanks of this House for your inspiring address which we shall long remember and for your kind and generous remarks about us. As you and your wife Hazel will be leaving us shortly, you can rest assured that you carry with you the warmth and affection of the members of Dáil Éireann and of all the Irish people.

Go n-éirí go geal libh agus le muintir na hAstráile.

The Prime Minister, amid applause, then withdrew from the Chamber, accompanied by the Taoiseach, Deputy Dukes, Deputy Desmond O'Malley, Deputy Spring and Deputy Mac Giolla.

Cuireadh an suí ar fionraí ar 11.15 a.m.

Sitting suspended at 11.15 a.m.

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN ISOLATHAIR

Le ceannach díreach ón
OIFIG DHIOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS, TEACH SUN ALLIANCE
SRAID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
no trí aon díoltóir leabhar

DUBLIN
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased through any Bookseller, or directly from the
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE, SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE
MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN 2.

£1.25

Cahill Printers Dublin