



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RANALD MACDONALD, TOKYO, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1990.

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MACDONALD: Yesterday afternoon I met our Prime Minister in his hotel room here in Tokyo. I'm talking to the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, about our bid. Are you confident, Prime Minister?

PM: Well I'm not being brash about it Ranald, but I must say that since I've been here, all the reactions I've got are very positive. There hasn't been any knocking of Melbourne and there's been a recognition of the very strong intrinsic merits of the Melbourne candidature.

MACDONALD: Well could we perhaps put out in front what are the strongest points you believe Melbourne has and Australia has against the other candidates?

PM: I think the intrinsic merits go to the quality of the facilities. Eleven of the thirteen major sporting complexes are ready, we have a stadium, a major stadium which will take a hundred and two thousand people already in place, which is bigger than any other candidate city has. We have the centrality of the facilities, all the great majority of the facilities are within six kilometres of the centre of the city, we have an excellent village proposal, we have all the infrastructure which is necessary, like communications, transport and security. We have a sports-mad nation and Melbourne the sports-maddest population, so you're going to have great local enthusiasm. All levels of government, Federal, State and Melbourne City Council totally committed and across the political spectrum. We also have security, I mean Australia is just about the most secure country in the world and we have an ideal environment, clean atmosphere, particularly at that time of the year it's an ideal atmosphere so if you look at all these intrinsic I think that Melbourne has a stronger case than any other.

MACDONALD: What about in the spirit of the games moving around to different parts of the world and the fact that it's only been the southern hemisphere once before in the last hundred years. How important do you think that has been?

PM: Certainly it's a matter that's been raised positively with me by a number of members of the committee. I didn't push that point originally, I was going to go to it, but a number of them spontaneously raised it. I think they feel that with a hundred years of modern Olympics as it will be in 1996, for in a hundred years only to have been to the southern hemisphere once, would be a pretty significant imbalance.

MACDONALD: You've also indicated that this is an Australia-wide effort. We've got Sallyanne Atkinson from Brisbane and all the others, Dr John Hewson, so it covers all political banners too. Will the benefits though, come to Australia as a whole or just to Victoria or Melbourne?

PM: Oh certainly to Australia as a whole. I believe that Australia as a whole owes a great debt of gratitude to the people and the organisations of Melbourne for the way in which they have organised this bid, it's been first-class. But reciprocally, Melbourne owes a debt of gratitude to the whole of Australia for the way in which they have come behind the bid. As I've said before, that's typified for instance by Sallyanne Atkinson who has come here and is really working very hard and has been working very hard. But that's typical of the way Australia has said, this is an Australian bid and not just Melbourne, and it will be to the benefit of the whole of Australia as well as just to Victoria.

MACDONALD: What about those who perhaps are still unconvinced about Victoria's ability to afford it first of all, and secondly the benefits flowing right throughout the community?

PM: Okay, let me go to each of those points in turn. Of course Melbourne and Australia can afford it. When you are making assessments of these kinds you've got to look at nett benefits. True it is that there'll be a cost to both the Victorian Government and the Australian Government, but there'll be great benefits will flow and in nett terms Victoria and Australia will be significantly better off. Australians, not only in enterprises but individuals in the whole of Australia will benefit because when you have what will be tens of thousands of people coming to Melbourne for the Olympics, if we win, then you will get the multiplier effects in the economy of a very considerable expenditure of money. But they will also come back, Australia has got so much which is attractive and it's such a secure place, that once people have come and tasted the delights of Australia and when they've seen the range of what's available they'll want to come back.

MACDONALD: I spoke earlier today to Clive Lloyd and it's rather ironic that he is now leading a second contest against Australia, representing or being part of the delegation representing Manchester and of course captaining the West Indies against Australia. He spoke well of Australia, but he did also say that no country really loses if they're not selected, the benefits of even challenging remain with the country. Do you believe that's true?

PM: I think that's true to an extent, but in life second's never as good as first. But it is true, Australia will have been benefited by the quality of its presentation.

MACDONALD: Now what about a place like Manchester and certainly let's talk about Atlanta, as one of the strong challenges. Do you believe that it's logical for somewhere like Atlanta to be considered again so soon after Los Angeles?

PM: One of the things that's impressed me about the way the Melbourne representatives and their supporters have put their case is it's been very positive, and I've tried to do exactly the same thing myself. I'm not here to knock Atlanta, let me say in fact that I think Atlanta has a very good bid. Having said that, I think that it would be unfortunate if, as I say, we go into 1996, one hundred years of modern Olympics and at that stage it had only been once in the southern hemisphere, that would be an imbalance. That's not said against Atlanta, I repeat that, but I think that decision would be unfortunate.

MACDONALD: I spoke also to Debbie Flintoff-King and her emotional commitment is quite substantial and yet Greg Norman is not an athlete who's going to be in the Games is also supportive. Just a word about the athletes and their contribution.

PM: They've been superb. You mention those two, Debbie is magnificent, Greg has been brilliant, he went out and played golf on Sunday morning with a number of them and I think he said he was prepared to miss a few putts. So for a professional like Greg, greater love hath no man than this. And one other sportsman who perhaps hasn't got the same profile of exposure in this, but who I respect very much, is Murray Rose, who's been living in the United States for so long but still regards himself as an Australian and wants to back to Australia. He's been superb, the way he's been moving around and arguing our case.

MACDONALD: Alright, just a last question Prime Minister, and thanks for spending the time with us.....

PM: It's a pleasure.

MACDONALD:but you're going to be the main person in this presentation, you're going to have forty-five minutes in front of a jury as it were. How important is it, and is it one of the greater times when you've been put under pressure?

PM: I don't feel under pressure, and I say that for these reasons. One, we've got a good case. When you're under pressure, as if you've got some doubts about your case, but I feel so confident of the case. And of course I won't be speaking for that sort period of time. I'll speak for about four minutes and then very, very briefly a second time. I will be surrounded by a great team, from John Ralph as Chairman, right through they have been superb, so that gives you a feeling of confidence.

And thirdly, I will have had the opportunity by then of meeting a large number of the members of the Committee and I respect them, so I feel it'll be two-way communication rather than a piece of advocacy.

MACDONALD: Alright, well thank you so much Prime Minister, and we wish you well.

PM: Thank you very much indeed Ranald.

ENDS.