



PRIME MINISTER

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P. J. KEATING, M. P.,
STATE DINNER, DUBLIN CASTLE, DUBLIN, IRELAND
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Taoiseach, Mrs Reynolds, Kathleen, our distinguished Ambassador from Australia, Terry McCarthy and Margaret McCarthy, distinguished leaders of Ireland, both past and present and distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you very much for the warm welcome, Taoiseach, and the warm welcome particularly from all of you. It's always said in Australia that the warmest welcome you can have around the world is in Ireland and at first hand Annita and I had that experience this evening. We appreciate very much that warmth, the generosity, the sincerity and the fact that so many of you have done us the honour in coming this evening. It's a great pleasure for someone of my background to come to Ireland in any capacity, but to come here as Prime Minister is even a more singular honour than simply coming as a visitor, because one comes representing the Australian nation and one comes with the thought in one's mind of those great traditions and shared values which we in Australia have with you the people of Ireland.

So it's great to be here and no better day than the grand final of the Gaelic football, because just an hour off the plane I was treated to a pageant, and it's the only football stadium in the world, certainly the exception from Australia, where a politician is warmly received. And I know I was beside such a popular fellow and that's why I got the claps. I'm sure if I wasn't with you, Albert, there would have been no clapping at all, but the fact is that it was warm; and when the band broke to the strains of 'Waltzing Matilda' and the crowd sang the words of that famous Australian song, I couldn't help but be deeply touched by that great sense of kinship between us and that understanding of Australian values.

Those Australian values: support for the underdog, had me barracking for Derry all through the day. And they are strong right to the end, and that last ten or fifteen minutes showed their great athletic form, but I'm a member of an Australian rules football club, which has also been the underdog club. A great working class club, one of the great sports clubs of Australia - the Collingwood Football Club. And it had not won a premiership since 1958 and being a Sydneysider - of course I'm not a member of a Melbourne football club, but I joined because I could only join the underdogs club - and the year I joined they won the flag. They won the premiership.

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So there are great similarities between Gaelic football and Aussie rules, as the Taoiseach said. No doubt we're sharing a gene pool, somewhere, because the contortions and the athleticism and the bounce and the ball control and all of the other things which are so common, which we saw there today are common to both games, so there's no doubt, for certain, the Irish have influenced Australian sport in terms of Aussie Rules. So it was a great game, it was more than a game, it was a pageant. To see all those flags and that great roar when the two teams came onto the field and then the singing and the enormous spontaneity of support for Derry at the conclusion was indeed something to behold. And as visitors, Annita and I were charmed that as an introduction to this official visit to Ireland we were able to go to Croke Park today. Thank you, Albert, thank you one and all for that rare privilege.

Australia, of course, has an unbroken relationship with Ireland going back a couple of hundred years but as the Taoiseach said, we are very different countries now. Australia is very much a multicultural country while, I suppose, Ireland is probably a more a monocultural country. But, that said, for all the differences the shared values and traditions and history are still there. The Taoiseach took you through those statistics about Irish immigration to Australia, there is no doubt that Australia is the most Irish of all countries outside of Ireland. It mightn't have had the absolute highest numbers of people from Ireland settling in Australia, but it had the highest proportion of any group settling anywhere in the world. And it's had an enormous influence on Australia, on my country, at every stage of its history, and because the Irish arrived early, relatively early in Australia's history, in my case, my family in the mid-nineteenth century, in the 1850s, we had the opportunity of having an impact on the whole society.

So, rather arriving as of late, as was the case with Irish immigration, say to the United States, the Irish permeated all Australian culture. As the Taoiseach said, through the professions, through teaching, through education, through literature, through the arts - pervasively across our country, and of course most obviously in politics where talking is required of course the Irish have always done so well. They're great talkers, they're passionate talkers, passionate people, and so where there were not natural barriers, where there was an open opportunity, of course, their great sense of passion and skill excelled. And so, the impact was so broad across the whole nation and across the whole society and as a consequence the Labor Party was in many respects influenced by the great democratic traditions of Ireland, that sense of nationhood, folklore, egalitarian values, values of fairness and values of decency.

And it's had a greater impact on my Party than any ideology, any ideology that we could speak of, and there were many of them in the late nineteenth century and they had a big impact in the twentieth century, but none greater than that Irish sense of nation, folklore, egalitarianism, what we now call in Australia the 'fair go'. One of our former leaders, Arthur Calwell, who led the Labor Party, said the Irish were among the great colonisers of the world, but not among the imperialists, the exploiters or the conquerors. And that, of course, is so absolutely true. He said they brought their

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culture and their virtues with them to enrich the heritage of whatever land they chose to dwell in. That's a very large accolade but a true one.

I'm looking forward to the next couple of days as I rarely look forward to anything. The Taoiseach has said, we have our formal discussions but as well as that, apart from getting to know Dublin better, and having the opportunity of speaking at the Dail, I'm also having the opportunity to see rural Ireland and Tynagh in Galway, from whence my family came. And I was deeply moved and very honoured tonight that so many members of the Keating family from Galway have come tonight. I'm looking forward to seeing them and to meeting them in Tynagh in the next day or so.

But before I do that, of course, we do have a chance to discuss our relationship. As the Taoiseach said, we have more in this relationship than so far we have taken from it. There's so much warmth and generosity and good feeling between the Australian nation and the Irish. And I hope this blossoms into a larger economic relationship than so far we've been able to manage. It's true for many nations that their sons and daughters, as they've gone to other countries, have managed in some ways to build a tight relationship which has had social and economic manifestations. We've had the social but not much of the economic. This is not entirely true of course because we are now doing it much more than we've ever done and Australian companies are now developing in Ireland and Irish companies are developing in Australia. And some very famous ones among them who are represented here tonight. But we need to do more, because I think there's a very natural backdrop there to... for the Irish doing business in Australia, and I know with the openness and warmth of this relationship for Australians doing more in Ireland.

The Taoiseach said we've got things to settle in world terms and we have. We've got the GATT round now about to complete after seven years, to provide for what all of us will get most and that is to provide a really good backdrop for multilateral trade. The thing that lifted the incomes world wide in the post war years for countries, great countries like Japan and Germany was a free trade in goods. We're now trying to do that in services, in intellectual property rights and in agriculture. And that guarantees us the best opportunity ever to actually participate in the world and through the velocity of trade lift incomes world wide so that we can have a period of wealth and growth in prospect unparalleled at any time because in the world today we've last seen the world like this before the First World War, with great nations rejoining the world economy and society like the old Soviet Union, Russia and the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States. And China and India and South America, who are now in the world economy as they've never been in the post war years. So if we get this right in the GATT, we can turn this world into a place where incomes really do go up sharply and where many disadvantaged societies open themselves up to some bounty and advantage.

Now, in Europe, of course, Ireland's focus has been in Europe and on the Community which is entirely natural and good and correct, as Australia's has been

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in the Asia/Pacific. But, these opportunities abound for us but nothing greater than the wider one of an international agreement on trade and services and agriculture etcetera. We'll both go our ways in our respective areas of the world, in the Asia Pacific with this enormous weight of population and this huge rate of growth. It's not just for us to participate in but also for countries like Ireland as well, as we are participating in the European Community. So I look forward to discussing these things with the Taoiseach in the next day or so.

The other thing we have in common is the blight of unemployment, and this is the thing I know which touches the hearts of the people of Ireland, as it does the people of Australia. We're determined that we will not consign a generation of young people to unemployment, that we won't accept the damage, the generational damage of a generation impacting on the fabric of our society, with unemployment. And we're in a world today where, through higher productivity and mechanisation we're getting more output from fewer people. But we can't be content to say we live in a more productive world, we're getting more output from fewer people. We have to say therefore we must produce more products that means we must grow more quickly.

And that means we have to deal with inflation and all these other things in a more novel way. Now we've done it in Australia with a wonderful accord between the Australian trade unions, and this government and I know in your country this is your hope too. That is, to develop a long standing relationship with your trade union movement so that there is a national commitment and consensus to growth and to employment, so large numbers of people are not left unemployed, bearing the brunt and carrying the load themselves, of economic change and productivity so that only those who are unfortunate enough to be unemployed should carry the burden, and of course, most particularly the young.

This we can never accept. Because if equality, and fairness, and egalitarian values start in any place, they start with employment. The way in our societies you get a piece of the action is through employment. And we can never accept high levels of unemployment as part of, "Well, that's that, we have have to live with it." We can never have a bar of that attitude. So we're now looking at novel ways to deal with unemployment. We've got a task force looking at our experience and hoping to pull something novel from it and I know that you're thinking in the same terms too, and let's hope we can share some experience there.

The Taoiseach mentioned Mary Robinson's visit to Australia last year, it was, I think, one of the most successful trips by a Head of State in recent times. And for Australians, I think, a persuasive illustration of how a Head of State can be an ambassador for her country and for her people. I enjoyed very much that visit. It gave further expression to this great relationship which we have together and reminded so many Australians of the democratic values and traditions of Ireland

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which were expressed in your President and expressed by your President while she was with us.

I know at the moment she's in New Zealand, back down in the Antipodes, a long way from here. And no doubt having the same impact there as she had with us. So, she invited me here but I'm pleased to say she's there doing her good work in the Antipodes, while I'm here, trying to do mine. So Taoiseach, ladies and gentleman, it gives me very great pleasure to remember your President's visit to Australia. To remember, with it, the great warmth in that relationship. Again visible here tonight in the warmth of the welcome you've given my wife and myself. And so can I propose a toast to the President of Ireland and the people of Ireland and to another two hundred years of Irish Australian friendship.

The President and the people of Ireland.

Thank you.

Ends.