



PRIME MINISTER

27 August, 1996

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP ADDRESS TO THE OPENING OF STAGE II OF THE BRADMAN MUSEUM BOWRAL, NSW

E & OE.....

Thank you very much Jim; to Sir Roden and Lady Cutler; to Bob Radford; to John, the son of the great man, and to other members of the Bradman and Menzies family; to the British Consul; Mr Morrison, his wife, and a special welcome to the three members of the great 1948 team.

The climate here, I guess, reminds you of the opening match against Worcester and it is tremendous to see so many people who have been a part of cricket over so many years; Jack Pollard, who's contributed so much through writing to our understanding, not only of cricket, but of so many other sports.

I'd have to say that of all the things I've been invited to do since becoming Prime Minister none gives me greater pleasure than to be here today, in a small way to pay tribute to the greatest living Australian, to pay tribute to a person who was not only the greatest cricketer the world has ever seen but by any measure the most accomplished male sportsman this nation has produced in 200 years. But he was more than that. He became an institution which has spanned different generations of Australians. He gave hope and inspiration to a generation of people depressed by the terrible economic devastation of the early 1930s. He straddled the war years and returned to lead the greatest cricket team Australia has sent abroad, and he continues as an inspiration to young Australians.

I only saw him bat once. At the age of ten my father took me to the Sydney Cricket Ground hill and I saw him play in the Kippax Oldfield Testimonial which was the last occasion on which he appeared on the Sydney Cricket Ground. And yet to my own children, almost fifty years later, he is still seen as the absolute icon of what it is to be a good sportsman and what it is to be a great Australian. And I think this museum is a

marvellous tribute to him. But in his modest way he would want it to be far more than a tribute to him, but rather to be an encouragement and inspiration to people who love the game of cricket; to young and older people who can come and reminisce and talk about games they've seen and games they've enjoyed, to look at the memorabilia, to reflect upon their own experiences, and very importantly for the young, to provide a source of coaching and a source of scholarships which I know that the foundation does.

And I want to pay tribute to the work of so many people who've made the foundation possible. I want to pay tribute to the work of Channel 9 and the contribution through the telethon. I want to acknowledge the contribution of Bob Hawke as former Prime Minister and leader of a former government, the contribution that was made by that government as well as the contribution that had been made by the current government. And to all of the numerous commercial donors that have made this museum a reality, and to Bob Radford who's passionate commitment to the game of cricket and great support for the trust in the foundation and for the guiding influence and prestige given to the project by Sir Roden Cutler who has been trustee of the foundation since its inauguration.

It is a sign, ladies and gentlemen, of the way in which sport and most particularly cricket, binds together Australians irrespective of their politics, irrespective of their different views on other issues. Bob Hawke came here in 1989 at the inauguration of it and I am honoured and indeed greatly privileged to be here on behalf of the Government, and I know on behalf of all of the people of Australia.

I want to thank the people who've made the trust possible. I want to thank Sir Donald and Lady Bradman for their continued support and encouragement; to thank Sir Donald for his typically modest but very appropriate words that were read by Jim at the beginning of the proceedings. His unfailing capacity to speak in a language we all understand about a game that we all love and its place in the national life of Australia and its place in the history of Australia is something that has always meant a great deal to me, and I know that it means a great deal to everyone that is present. It is an enormous privilege for all of us to have been touched in some way by the life and the contribution and the abilities of this great Australian who has enriched this nation's experience in the twentieth century so much. And this museum, the second stage and the final stage of which I have great pleasure in declaring open, will not only keep that memory alive, but as he will want it to be. It will provide a constant source of encouragement, a Mecca, for all Australians and for people from all around the world who love our game so very dearly.

I have great pleasure in declaring stage two of the Bradman Museum open.

Thank you.