

Official Talks: High Commissioner James George, the Prime Minister and Mr. Ivan Head, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister.



Prime Minister Indira Gandhi: State Luncheon

It is a pleasure to have you, Prime Minister, with us this afternoon. A vast distance separates our two countries. In history and tradition, we do not have much in common. But the political objectives of our people are similar. We stand unflinchingly for the causes for which we in India have been striving. Like you, we seek to build a multi-lingual, multi-religious society based on participatory democracy. But the people can be persuaded to keep alive their faith in democracy only if it gives a promise of results; otherwise they will feel compelled to look elsewhere. Time does not wait, nor do vast numbers who are emerging from the apathy of ages.

You have been quoted as saying that you dream all the time, dream of a society—and I quote—"Where each person should be able to fulfil himself to the extent of his capabilities as a human being, a society where inhibitions to equality would be eradicated." We can understand you for we share this dream. Much that has happened in India is proof that dreams do come true and that dreams are the stuff of what is most worthwhile in life. But dreams have to be made real.

We are here faced today with unprecedented social change. The question is not merely of fully utilising our resources, or augmenting our production, but of ensuring that the benefit from these has the widest possible distribution, so that social and economic justice reaches down to the weaker sections of our society. It is our endeavour to narrow the disparities in our society, against which you also have expressed a feeling of repugnance, and the discrimination which have caused so much hardship to vast numbers of our people and which have prevented us from sharing in man's progress towards a better world.