

I'M SO GLAD TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS YOU HERE THIS AFTERNOON - AND THE MANY OTHERS WATCHING AND LISTENING AROUND THE WORLD.

ALTHOUGH MOST OF YOU HERE TODAY ARE FROM AUSTRALIA, WE DO HAVE GUESTS WHO WERE SENT AS CHILDREN TO CANADA, ZIMBABWE AND NEW ZEALAND. LET US NOT FORGET THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD WHO WERE SENT FROM THE UK.

AND LET US ALSO REMEMBER THOSE CHILD MIGRANTS NO LONGER WITH US. THOSE FOR WHOM THESE EVENTS COME TOO LATE - SOME OF WHOM DIED FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM IN THE GREAT WARS OF THE LAST CENTURY.

I DO NOT INTEND TO SPEAK FOR LONG. INSTEAD THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BE HEARD - BECAUSE TODAY IS YOUR DAY. ONE DAY AMONG THE MANY YEARS LOST, I KNOW. BUT AN IMPORTANT AND MOMENTOUS DAY BOTH FOR YOU AND FOR OUR COUNTRY. FOR TODAY YOUR PAIN IS RECOGNISED; YOUR SUFFERING UNDERSTOOD; YOUR BETRAYAL ACCEPTED.

I STAND HERE HUMBLLED BY YOUR DETERMINATION TO HAVE THE FAILURES OF THE PAST ACKNOWLEDGED AND INSPIRED BY YOUR REFUSAL TO BE VICTIMS. AND I STAND HERE AS PRIME MINISTER - ON BEHALF OF THE NATION - TO APOLOGISE TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES.

A FEW YEARS AGO - AS AGAIN TODAY - I HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO MEET SOME OF YOU, TO LISTEN TO YOUR APPALLING EXPERIENCES FIRST-HAND AND TO READ THE HARROWING TESTIMONIES OF OTHERS.

I WAS TROUBLED THEN, AS I AM PAINED AND SADDENED NOW AT THE CHILDHOOD'S DESTROYED.

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