

SPEECH AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER GIVEN BY THE NORWEGIAN
GOVERNMENT IN HONOUR OF H.M. QUEEN ELIZABETH II AND
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH IN AKERSHUS CASTLE ON
7 MAY 1981

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness,

We have been looking forward with pride and
pleasure to the honour of welcoming Your Majesty and
Your Royal Highness to Norway.

This State Visit will further emphasize the
well established goodwill and friendship between our
Governments and peoples. There is no doubt whatever
that our two countries are eager to maintain the lines

2.
of contact and communication across the North Sea.

The warm relations between our countries go
back many centuries. This evening I shall make just
two references to history. Firstly, that the
commercial treaty signed between England and Norway
in 1217 is the oldest of its kind in the history of
either nation; and, secondly, that it is from the
marriage between Princess Anne of Denmark-Norway and
King James VI of Scotland that all later British
sovereigns are descended.

Even closer ties, nearer to our own times,
have bound our Royal Houses and our two nations
together. These were never so important as during
the dark years of the Second World War when Your
countrymen, as comrades in arms, extended unforgettable

hospitality to His Majesty the late King Haakon, to His Majesty The King, to the Norwegian Government in exile and to thousands of Norwegians in the armed forces and the merchant fleet.

In his speech at the Palace on Tuesday His Majesty The King referred to this solidarity in his comments on the international situation, and stressed our commitments within the Atlantic Alliance to the pursuit of a credible defence and genuine detente. I should additionally like to stress our bilateral relations and the common ground we have in some of the major issues facing our two countries at home.

Domestically, no task can deserve higher priority than our endeavours to improve the welfare and the economic base of our peoples. Our problems in this field are partly the same, particularly in

4.

relation to stagflation and unemployment. Views as to how these ills can be cured differ within each country. But I think we agree that the aim is to create a community with work for all, especially for the young generations who are to carry our societies forward. They must not lose faith in the ability of our democracies to provide people with meaningful work. I think we also agree that it is difficult for each of us to solve these problems on our own and that we need extended international cooperation directed towards this vital goal.

Petroleum has created yet another sphere of important and fruitful bilateral cooperation, reflecting our relationship as neighbours, and a common responsibility for the safety of workers and the

environment. These new ventures in oil and gas have not however in any way reduced the importance or scope of cooperation in the many more traditional fields, such as shipping and trade. The United Kingdom has long ranked among Norway's top trading partners, and this status has even been strengthened in recent years.

In the shipping sector there is a constant interchange of information and ideas. Safety at sea is a concept both countries understand and respect. The tragedy of the Alexander Kielland disaster was therefore all the harder. We must do our utmost from both sides of the North Sea to rule out the possibility of any such tragedy ever occurring again.

Just as we have links at sea, both in shipping

6.

and in the offshore industry, we have many close contacts in the social and cultural fields, where there is constant movement in both directions. As T. S. Eliot wrote: "Culture may be described simply as that which makes life worth living." In both our countries we want life to be worth living and worthwhile for everyone.

Here in Norway we are fortunate to have the British Council with all its helpful services in our midst. There is also the lively and creative Institute of English Studies, the "Britisk Institutt", at the University of Oslo, which does much to encourage research in the fields of English literature and language and the British heritage.

We hope that this State Visit will be the source of many pleasant memories. May the bonds of friendship between our two Governments and peoples be ever stronger! With these words I raise my glass to the prosperity and happiness of the people of the United Kingdom, and propose the health of Her Majesty the Queen, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh and the British Royal Family., that in the near future will celebrate the happy event of marriage between His Royal Highness Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer.