

OPENING OF THE MOORE SHOW BY THE RT. HON.  
THE PRIME MINISTER (SIR ROBERT MENZIES)  
BY LANDLINE FROM HIS OFFICE IN PARLIAMENT  
HOUSE, CANBERRA ON 17/5/1963

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Mr. President and Ladies and Gentlemen and Parliamentary  
Colleagues:

I must begin by saying that this is the first time in my public life, which is now a fairly lengthy one, that I have ever been asked to open a function by transmission over a landline. Now you, Mr. President, I am credibly informed by my friend, Mr. Ian Allan, M.P., conceived this novel idea and I am pleased and honoured to do what you have asked. It is indeed one of the miracles of modern communications that I, sitting as I am in my office in Canberra, should be able to speak to you on the spot in Moree and, I hope, be heard. But still, that's entirely up to the technicians.

I certainly wish I could be with you but if I were with you, I would come back later on and find that the pile of work on my desk, which is already too high, had become rather higher, and so I must say something to you from a long distance.

Now, of course, your district is a celebrated one. You conduct your operations in the middle of some splendid country. You have your own problems. You have your own ambitions for future development. You are devoted, as I know, to improving the quality of production and to the development of your area and through it, Australian production generally.

Now, Sir, this is a wonderful thing. Those who have come to regard me as essentially a city fellow might perhaps be reminded that I was born in the wheat country in Victoria. I grew up there to a certain stage in my life. I am not unfamiliar with the problems of the man on the land, and even in that area in which I was born, I had seen the most tremendous changes and the most tremendous developments in the course of my own lifetime. This is as it should be, because we can begin all our thoughts on this problem by saying, "Well, Australia cannot develop as she should develop unless she attracts people and unless she attracts money to her service." She can't attract either people or money unless she, herself, has a vigorous and growing export income, because a lot of these things depend on the state of our international solvency.

Now, it is quite true that we have had some very happy developments of recent years in the export of manufactures and I hope that will go on because that will enable us to stand on two feet. But it is still overwhelmingly true and will continue to be so for many years that the solvency of Australia, internationally, and therefore her capacity to attract both people and capital will continue to depend very powerfully on the exports of primary products from Australia. And we just can't go on having a great volume of primary export income just by wishing for it, because the primary industries are facing, as they always do, great problems. They require two things if they are to continue to succeed. They require an expanding market overseas, the kind of thing that my colleague, Mr. McEwen, is now discussing in London and in Geneva and they require a stability of costs which, added to improved efficiency, will enable their industries to grow and to be prosperous. Well, now, stability of costs is something that we have devoted a considerable amount of attention to, and not without success, since the cost

level, broadly, has been stable for the last two years.

On the question of efficiency, well, I think you will agree with me that this depends on a combination of circumstances. First of all, scientific research and technological research of a high order. Well, we have a good deal of that in Australia. Second, the extension of the results of that research to the actual man on the farm. That is of tremendous importance and, perhaps up to this stage, that process has been rather too slow. We are giving a good deal of thought to it at the present time. And third, we need - and this is where you, as an organization, come into the picture - we need a genuine and growing interest in both of these matters on the part of the man in the country and the man in the city. Now in the city, I am happy to say, there is an increasing interest in this problem. I find in Parliament an increasing interest in the problem. So far as the country is concerned, I don't think it is always realized how great a part is played in this enlivening of interest in these problems by the agricultural and pastoral societies of Australia.

Your Show, which I am about to open, is not just a holiday, not just a form of entertainment for the children, though it is, of course, both of those things. It is essentially an opportunity for all of you to get together to see what you are doing, to see what somebody else is doing, to recapture the vision of greater and greater efficiency in the future, and what an agricultural and pastoral society does all over Australia and in your place in particular is to bring together, not only people but ideas, bring together not only reasoning but results, bring together for the benefit of people who live in a town and the benefit of people who live on the farm some understanding of how much they really depend upon each other.

If there is one thing I have learned in the course of my political life, it is that not one of us in Australia can live to himself. The old days when you were either in favour of manufacturing or you were in favour of farming because you couldn't be in favour of both, those old days have gone. We are one country. We must remember at all stages the rights of each of us and I, speaking as a man who was a lawyer before he became a politician, repeat with the greatest pleasure that to me nothing surpasses in importance the preservation of the great rural industries, their development, their increasing efficiency, so that in years to come they can meet troubles, if troubles arise, and survive them.

Sir, I congratulate your Society on its long and honourable record in this field. I congratulate the town of Moree on having celebrated its centenary last year. I congratulate all of you on what I believe to be your lively achievements in the national field of development and growth.

And, therefore, Sir, having said a little of what I have in my mind, I have pleasure in telling you, with all good wishes, that I now declare the Moree Show open and bid you good afternoon.

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