

VISIT TO US, CANADA AND UK



OTTAWA, CANADA

RESPONSE BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD HOLT
TO THE OFFICIAL WELCOME BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OF CANADA

4th JUNE, 1967

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Pearson, distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a very great personal pleasure for Mrs. Holt and myself, and a privilege in which my Government and my countrymen share, to be with you on a period of your national history which has such significance for you.

This is my second visit to your country and I regret the interval which has elapsed since I was last here. But that also was an occasion of some historic significance for Canada. It was the year 1952, in which in this distinctive Parliament building you were host to the Parliaments of the Commonwealth through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. It was my great honour to be Chairman of that notable conference. I have long wished since then to be able to see something more of your country and to meet more closely with your people.

Although I had heard and read much of the great economic and cultural development which had occurred over the years, I confess to still experiencing some surprise at the remarkable growth which has occurred in this capital city of yours, at seeing how imaginatively you have developed your architecture and the beautification of the city. This I believe symbolizes the notable growth which has been occurring throughout Canada, strengthening your economy and making you a more significant member country of the United Nations.

Your contribution there, of course - and this has been particularly marked during the period of office of your distinguished Prime Minister - has been influential well beyond the numbers of your people. We like to think that as you, with populations that are not large as world populations are marked these days and as the populations of many other countries can demonstrate, that we do have a performance out of relation to our numbers and even an influence going well beyond our numerical strength and I welcomed very warmly, Mr. Prime Minister, the things that you have said in your short but very meaningful speech here this afternoon of the desirability of the closeness of our two countries, which have so much in common, which have built a friendship in the comradeship of war and in the pursuits of peace, in the growth of trade between our two nations.

With so much in common, if we pursue them as closely as we can, our policies together can make a contribution growing in significance with the years ahead of us. You and I have already talked of this in an informal way. I hope that in the years ahead, not only as our populations increase and our economic strength develops, but as our own contribution to a peaceful and progressing world is enhanced, that our discussions together, the better knowledge we shall I hope develop of each other, will contribute more significantly to the peace, to the progress and the prosperity of the world.

You have spoken of our participation in EXPO '67. It has not been in the Australian tradition to take part in these great international expositions. We have felt that we could make a more significant contribution in relation

to our own national situation if we took part by ourselves from time to time in the expositions of individual countries. But when we took into account the significance for Canada, our historic Commonwealth partner, in the celebration of its centennial, then we came unhesitatingly to the conclusion that Australia should be there. And it gratifies us indeed, Mr. Prime Minister, to feel that you have judged our contribution to be a worthy one.

Certainly the attendances already have more than flattered our expectations and we hope that this experience will continue throughout the period of the Exposition. As to the talking chairs, I must confess that while at one time rabbits were regarded as the principal plague in Australia, there are fellow countrymen of mine who think that talking politicians now rank in the same category and it is perhaps not without some appropriateness that, as you recline in a comfortable chair in the Australian pavilion, one of our more notable citizens, sometimes in the political field but I hope more frequently in other fields of science or culture, will address you on some matter of national moment.

You were good enough to say that we had established some degree of international supremacy in the fields of tennis and swimming. We hope to maintain that. But being an ambitious people, we think that before the year is out we may have chalked up another notable gain by taking for the first time in its history, I believe, the Americas Cup back from that country to Australia. If we can get it there, I think our American friends and allies will find it even more difficult to regain outside the Heads of Sydney Harbour than the Davis Cup on one of our tennis arenas.

However, I am sure that, despite the friendship you have with your great neighbour, you will be wishing us well. We smaller countries always like to see the other tackle the bigger fellow and succeed. It is a commendable ambition and one in which I am sure we shall have your good wishes.

Now I don't want to add another chapter to the record of long-talking Australian politicians by abusing your patience on this warm afternoon. Your record for hospitality has been evidenced again today in that, after a period of cool weather, you have turned on a sunny Australian day with a temperature that must be very uncomfortable for that handsome guard I have just had the honour to inspect. And so I must not detain you at length.

But thank you again for the warmth of your welcome to Mrs. Holt and myself and our party representing as we do in your eyes the Australian Government and people. We are greatly looking forward to the remainder of our stay with you and we are delighted to have an opportunity of contributing by our presence to the success of the ambitious and imaginative project which you are so successfully carrying out.

Long may Canada prosper, long may it strengthen in its influence and its economy, long may the friendship between our two countries be successfully sustained.
