



VISIT TO US, CANADA & UK

MONTREAL, CANADA

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR HAROLD HOLT
AT MAYCRAL DINNER, CITY HALL, MONTREAL

5TH JUNE, 1967

Mr. Mayor and Madame Drapeau :

It was a very happy decision of the Australian Government to decide to be represented at the Montreal Exposition. Our motives were largely stimulated by the friendship over so many years with the people of Canada and our desire to join in celebrating the centennial of this great country of yours.

You mentioned some of the origins we have in common and you brought to mind a little jingle that was originated about the early period that you mentioned in the history of my own country:

"True patriots we, for be it understood
We left our country for our country's good."

But I think that our Mother Country, if it could look at the results that the offspring have produced, would be sorry to have lost them and be very proud of the achievements through those years. It is also, I understand, not merely the centennial of Canada but the 325th anniversary of this beautiful and historic city of Montreal. I say you have cause for a double celebration.

Although the principal purpose of my own visit here was to join in celebrating Australia's special day, I feel that already there has been added benefit for us from the very valuable discussions we held with your Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, the new knowledge that we have acquired of the remarkable growth which has proceeded in Canada since my own first visit here for the Parliamentary conference in Ottawa fifteen years ago.

I scarcely recognised Ottawa. I found it equally difficult to see in the Montreal I had visited for only a short and inadequate few hours on that occasion the beautiful city you have here today. But we have a strong feeling, and I was delighted to find your Prime Minister echoing this sentiment that our two countries ^{are} growing in strength with their economies burgeoning, with their populations growing rather more rapidly than those of other countries and with a special relationship with some of the major powers of the world - you oriented principally as you have been in the past towards the North Atlantic and the North America, we with a growing and special place in Asia and the Pacific. If we can contrive to keep closer together in the years ahead than we have in the past, if we can think closely together on the great international questions which will affect the future of mankind, then I am certain that Canada and Australia together will be able to make a significant impact for constructive and useful purposes on the thinking of other countries of the world, and it is with that object in mind I have pressed your Prime Minister to come and visit our country.

I hope there will be an increasing stream of Canadians who will find if they attempt the journey that it is not so formidable an undertaking as they might have imagined. There are some very agreeable stopping points along the way: Tahiti, if you must practice your French; there is Honolulu, if you wish to see how a multi-racial community has turned that lovely island into a thriving economy and a very enjoyable place to stay; and then Australia, the oldest continent but with some of the youngest and the liveliest people that you will find on the earth.

Je regrette profondément, monsieur le Maire, que je ne peux parler français bien. Mon français, mon professeur a mon école était un écossais. Ainsi ce'est difficile pour moi parler en français a vous. Mon secrétaire, however, in order to meet this situation, has given me these lines which I am very happy to adopt. Vous avez une ville ancienne et gracieuse et vous en avez fait cadeau a toutes les nations pour cette exposition brillante. Au nom de l'Australie, je vous apporte nos meilleurs souhaits et nos congratulations les plus cordiales et chaleureuses.

You must be tremendously gratified with the success which has already become evident for this imaginative, courageously planned, ambitiously projected exposition. You, Mr Mayor, have become something of an institution in your own right. I became very envious when I learned that of the 48 members of your council, you can count upon the regular support of 45 of them. That is a majority which any politician like myself would very much envy but I am sure that it is due to your own drive, your own courage, your own enterprise that this marvellous exposition has been brought into being and has become a success to be admired around the world.

We are greatly looking forward to visiting it ourselves. We are proud that Australia should be accorded its own national day of celebration. I hope we shall prove worthy of it. I am told that just about four times as many people have visited our pavilion as was estimated for us, in advance. I don't claim that it is because those who want to rest there find themselves addressed by people like myself as they recline in those chairs; indeed, it has been cut down quite considerably. Well, if that is a mark of popularity, perhaps I should take that hint myself and content myself with saying on behalf of all my party here with me and indeed on behalf of Australia, which is proud to be represented here with you and I am sure will derive advantage from our presence with you, the best wishes for the continuing success of the Exposition and our warmest congratulations, Mr Mayor and your gracious wife, and to all associated with you in this marvellously conceived project.
