

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

THURSDAY, 12th NOVEMBER, 1959.

As Honourable Members know, our present Governor-General, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, will be returning to England towards the end of January next after what we all feel to be a very distinguished term of office in our country. Before he leaves we will have an opportunity of saying to him some of those things that are in our hearts and minds and I will therefore not anticipate them tonight.

The immediate purpose of my intervention is to say that after communications with Her Majesty the Queen, orally when I was in London and subsequently in writing, Her Majesty has been graciously pleased on my advice as Australian Prime Minister to name as the new Governor-General of Australia, the Right Honourable William Shepherd Morrison, the retiring Speaker of the House of Commons.

Mr. Morrison has served as Speaker for nine years with capacity and dignity and, as is well known, to the great satisfaction of all political parties. He therefore has had a rich experience in a great office which has called for marked ability and impartiality.

He was born and educated in Scotland. He served in the First World War in the Royal Field Artillery. In the course of his service, he was awarded the Military Cross; he was wounded and he was three times mentioned in despatches. He practised at the English Bar from 1923. He became one of His Majesty's Counsel in 1934. He entered the House of Commons where, between 1935 and 1945 he had considerable ministerial experience. He visited Australia some years back as a member of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which met in New Zealand and subsequently had meetings in Canberra.

All who know him will agree with me that he is a man of remarkable character and talent, of singular devotion to public duty, and of a personality which will be widely appreciated in Australia. I am, therefore, privileged to be able to inform the House that Her Majesty is this evening announcing his appointment. I should add without, I hope, impertinence, that Her Majesty is herself most happy about the appointment, which has given her great personal satisfaction.

I should add that Her Majesty has been pleased to raise Mr. Morrison to the peerage under the name and style of VISCOUNT DUNROSSIL.

Canberra,
12th November, 1959.