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**CONFERRMENT OF HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF LAWS ON THE
PRIME MINISTER BY THE CHANCELLOR, THE PRINCESS ROYAL,
AT UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, ON 22ND MARCH, 1961 - SPEECH BY
THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES**

Your Royal Highness, and Chancellor

Have I, M'am, your permission to address this congregation without my hat on? I know that is very well established that one addresses you capped, but a long life of political speech-making has persuaded me never to speak with my hat on - I don't know why, because sometimes it might have been a protection.

When I was listening to that more-than-kind and less-than true speech made about me earlier today, my mind ran back over some of the occasions on which I've been given a degree - not a degree that I'd earned in the normal arduous fashion, but degrees that have since been given to me - sometimes I've thought in a rather light-hearted way. I didn't know what I had done to deserve them, but they are very agreeable all the same; they range right around the world. You, (to look at me) you wouldn't believe that I am a graduate of McGill or that I am a graduate of Laval in Quebec where indeed I made my speech, partly in what I believed to be French; but was regarded, I subsequently discovered, by the French Canadians, to be a brilliant rendering of one of the lesser-known dialects of the Arunta tribe in Australia. I was once given a degree in Malta and I've always remembered that one, because just at the last moment I was presented with a long oath in Latin that had to be taken - it was a very long one, it would have weighed heavily on my conscience in any language. It ran to about 200 words and I had no time to discover what went on in Malta, whether you spoke in the old pronunciation or the new, or in what I call "law-court" Latin which is quite different from any other. And I had to ask the Vice-Chancellor about it at the last moment - the Vice-Chancellor or any university being the fount of all wisdom. He said: 'I wouldn't worry about it, if I were you - none of them will understand it anyhow. Mumble it'.

Well, M'am, here today of course I experienced, among other things, a double pleasure. The first is that you, yourself, your Royal Highness, preside over this University. This is a wonderful thing, I think, for this University. And the second is that your Vice-Chancellor has cost me more money (or my Government more money) than any other person now in this room, or - for all I know now - in the whole city of Leeds. Because not long after I came back into office after a well-deserved journey in the wilderness (these things happen, you know) the spirit moved me to have a look at the universities position in Australia; and very unsatisfactory it was. We have, unhappily, not had - as some American universities have had - enormous private benefactions. There have been some but not so many, and the result is that the difference between the fees that are paid and what it costs to conduct the university became greater, and bore more heavily on the revenues of the State. Well, I've been a Treasurer myself, and I know how difficult it is to defeat the Treasury in a straight-out contest. You must let me give

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this advice to you, those of you who will someday become Prime Minister or a Minister for something. Never engage in head-on collision with the Treasury; you're bound to lose. But you must go about it cunningly, you must sneak on them from the flank, you must engage their attention in other directions, while you get the good work done in the direction that you have selected. This is strictly confidential. I wouldn't want it to be generally known. And so having looked at the problems, and having made up my mind that though the Commonwealth itself, the Commonwealth of Australia, had no direct responsibility for universities - except the University which was established in Canberra - the time had come when we must do something about it. So I went off to England on other matters and, while here, I had a talk with Sir Keith Murray. I persuaded the then Chancellor of the exchequer, Mr. Harold Macmillan, to let me borrow him for a while, and I must say the Chancellor seemed very agreeable on that occasion - most willing to say: 'Certainly, my dear fellow, whatever you ask'. Until, of course, I realised that the more months that Murray was out of England, the less opportunity would there be of getting recommendations in from University Grants Commission, of which he was the Chairman. And so, I got Sir Keith Murray. I got Sir Charles Morris and then I got some distinguished men in Australia and established a Committee of enquiry, and it was only just as it was about to be announced that I broke the news to the Treasury. Even I didn't know what a shattering blow these people would inflict on me. Here we were, we had in minor ways been making grants to the States on university account, relatively small grants totalling perhaps up to a million or a million and a half a year. And this Committee of disarming people - all Vice-Chancellors are disarming (they have to be) they disarm their opponents completely - made a magnificent report. It raised the price that I would have to pay on behalf of the Commonwealth, from (let us say) 3½ million in 3 years, to 21 million in 3 years. I took it to the Cabinet; we sat all morning, we sat all the afternoon, we sat until midnight, and by sheer exhaustion I got my own way. And the 21 million went down on the record.

Now this, you might think, was a great enough shock for anyone to sustain. But not at all; one of their recommendations was that we should appoint a Universities Commission of our own. So we did; and I picked out, of course, the most frugally-minded man of standing that I could find in Australia. And they have just brought in their report for the second Triennium - the first, remember, was 21 million - this one is 40! There's a little moral in all this - there's a moral, and it's a good one. Before the war the number of people wanting a University training was not unlimited. Universities were relatively small. But since this last war, what has been happening here, has been happening in Australia as well. Thousands of people come along, wanting to have University training - whether this is due to improved financial circumstances or whether it is due to a new conception of the need for higher training, or both, I needn't determine. All I know is that when Sir Charles was sitting on this Committee and writing a report, only a few years ago - very few - estimates were made for them for future populations, under-graduate populations in

various universities. They've all been falsified since. It's quite clear that wherever somebody thought 'Well there'll be 50,000 undergraduates at a certain time' there'll be 70. And if somebody thought that there'll be 70,000, at some time there'll be 90. The demand is rising so rapidly. My own University of Melbourne had about 14,000 undergraduates in my day and now has about 20,000. It has been found necessary in the State of Victoria to establish a second university, known as Monash University, named after the great Australian General, and that University already has what you might call advanced entries running into very large figures. Investigation is in hand about a third. The University of Sydney is now accompanied by what was the University of Technology and is now a full University of New South Wales. And so you can go round Australia and find this enormous demand. It presents many great problems, because to create a University you need more than capital for building and equipment - though those things, of course, run into fantastic sums - but you need staff. One of the great problems, from my point of view, is how we are to cope with this very proper but enormous demand for university education, with the teaching assets we think we can see in the future. A tremendous task! Some people think we can get them from other countries and, of course, every now and then a university here enriches itself, lives itself up, by getting somebody from New Zealand or even somebody from Australia. But really, the problem of having university teachers of the necessary eminence so that their students, in turn, will be among the great men in their field of knowledge, is, I think, even a greater problem than the problem of bricks and mortar, and of finding the money with which to pay for all these things. I don't under-estimate that task, but I do feel rather appalled by the other. We have in Australia just begun, through our Universities Commission, an investigation into the future because - let us confess it - most of our universities are on the 19th Century model. They have a certain element of orthodoxy about them; it has been a very good thing - none of us will complain about it - but perhaps the time has come when the whole matter of tertiary education will have to be divided up, looked at in a new way; looked at perhaps in a series of different types of schools, or universities or colleges, or whatever they may be. And we are having a look at that; and I believe, sir, that it is Keith Murray's Committee itself, or some committee established under it, is looking at it here.

But I don't want to weary you on this matter, I merely want to say that from my own point of view, I've been privileged to have been Prime Minister of Australia at a time when so much could be done for universities. I am, I confess, proud of having had a hand in it. But, what we all have to do is to direct our minds as to how we can maintain this growth, and how we can maintain it on the highest level of competence. There is nothing worse than a second-rate university, unless it be a third-rate university. We must aim at the highest possible standards, and the great reason for that is a great national, as well as individual, reason. This is a pretty hard, competitive world. We have a lot of people in it who ally technological skill - take an example - to ideas we won't care for; and ideas that rather frighten us, in the future of the

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world. Under all these circumstances we must increasingly make up our minds that nothing second-rate will do. We must aim at the best. We won't all achieve it, but we must all have the opportunity of achieving the best in whatever field we may be engaged in. I think that is the great lesson of this world - this post-war world. You can't afford to be second-rate. Some other country may be bigger; some other country may be richer; some other country may have more bombs, more engines, or more something; but in spite of all that, we - you in your country, I in mine - can't afford to be second-rate; because it is quality that is counting more and more in the world. Therefore I regard this great influx of students, this great stirring of demand for higher education, as a good thing because to me it expresses that instinctive feeling (we are rather an instinctive race), that instinctive feeling that we can't be second-rate. We must do better, and better, and better. It will be the duty of statesmen (as we may call them for this purpose), it will be the duty of statesmen to play their part, it will be the duty of the universities themselves to play their part. Neither of them will be able to play their part unless our people - who are in the long run our masters - are more and more conscious of the challenge and conscious of the fact that that challenge is coming more particularly in places like this, in the universities of the English-speaking world, than perhaps in any other field.

And so, your Royal Highness, and Chancellor, I'm very proud to be here. I haven't been in Leeds since 1948 when I came here (you will be surprised to know) to have a look at the Test Match. And it was a very good one - a beauty - down at Headingley. I watched this exciting Test Match with the greatest of interest. But on one occasion during it the English captain - a Yorkshireman - made a bowling change which I didn't understand. With a slight feeling of despair I walked out back from where I was sitting, and encountered Herbert Sutcliffe who was uttering to himself - as it turned out - about the same problem. I mention that (not that I need tell you who Herbert Sutcliffe is) because I'm delighted to say that as I looked down on this audience sitting in this room this morning, the first familiar face I saw was his.