

OPENING OF THE MONARO SHOPPING MALL, CANBERRAON 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 1963Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

Sir, Your Excellencies and Ladies and Gentlemen :

This is a marvellous place, but the acoustics are contemptible. (Laughter) I have been sitting behind Mr. Dusseldorp this morning and I have heard very little of what he said. I have had to judge its character by looking at the eager faces in front of me, but I did hear one thing Sir, very, very clearly and that was that profound observation of yours that every minute we talked, business was being lost (Laughter) and therefore I won't talk very long. I must say that the next time that I have a political meeting, I won't have it in a building where they have escalators and strange noises to be heard all around you. (Laughter)

Sir, it is a long time since I came to Canberra. Many of you won't recall it. I was a very, very respectable Attorney-General. Since then I have declined in grace and in favour. But at that time, twenty-nine years ago, the population of Canberra was about 6,000. Only thirteen or fourteen years ago, although the population had grown, I think I am right in saying that there had not been a new shop built in Canberra for a long time. Since then the development has been quite fantastic. People have realised more and more that we can't have a city of 60,000 - which is going to be, so the pundits tell me, 100,000 in a few years' time, and a quarter of a million before very long after that - growing at this pace without establishing tremendous demands for shopping facilities, for schools, for a host of matters required for a full civic life. And in a city like Canberra, the people are entitled to have the last word in shopping facilities. And, believe me, in this place, I think they have them. In fact, I regard the whole purpose of the displays I've seen here today as practically immoral. Your wife goes along innocently thinking that she is just a spectator, and everything is so engagingly displayed that she comes home, having spent a lot more money than her husband can afford. This is what I call wonderful, immoral, tempting and very satisfactory. (Laughter)

I congratulate everybody concerned in evolving this place. I have driven around it two or three times in the making of it. I am most impressed. I had no idea of the enormous space inside this building. When somebody said, "Well, there will be sixty shops apart from these big ones," I found it difficult to believe, but I find they are all quite roomy, airy, adequate shops. This is in a marvellous position and this is a marvellous community service.

Now the only other thing I want to take up with you seriously is what this place is to be called, because I looked in at television the other night and it was called the Monaro Mall (mawl). I didn't believe it. I said, "Everybody knows it is a 'mal', but then I looked it up in the Oxford Dictionary, and it turned out I was wrong. (Laughter) But I want to make it clear that there are three ways of pronouncing this word - "mawl", "mal" and, of course, the other famous street in London which is always referred to by fine old Anglo-Indians retired as "Pell Mell". Take your choice - "mawl", "mal" or "mell". In fact, another dictionary I looked up quite

recently gave it a fourth pronunciation "moll". (Laughter)  
Well, I have elected in favour of "mal". But it is a free  
country and as far as I am concerned, you may call it what you  
like. All I know is that it is a jolly good place and it is  
going to be of great advantage to the citizens of Canberra.  
It represents a wonderful piece of co-operative enterprise and  
is one more contribution made to this city by Mr. Dusseldorp  
who, after all, in 1951 was arriving in Australia for the  
first time. This is an astonishing record and I congratulate  
you on it and thank you for it. (Applause)

And now, time marches on. You are all requested  
as the doors are opened to observe the queue, not to knock over  
the fittings and not to remove any small portable articles.  
(Laughter)

I have the greatest pleasure in the world in  
declaring the Mall open.

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