

NEW ZEALAND TOUR 1967

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD
HOLT, ON ARRIVAL AT WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

2ND FEBRUARY, 1967

Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I bring to you a very warm and friendly greeting - to you, Prime Minister, to your Government, and to the people of New Zealand from the Government and people of Australia.

I am sure there is in my own country a strengthening feeling that our two countries should be closer together in terms of physical contact, in our policies, and in the mutual beneficial trade that can develop between us, and as I made in my first year of office visits to our own Forces abroad, I felt that my next priority, having got our Prime Ministers' Conference and the Manila Conference and matters of that sort, in which both your Prime Minister and I were directly and personally involved, that high on the list of priorities - indeed, the first journey of the year in this year after re-election - should be a visit to New Zealand. I was delighted to accept the invitation which my old friend, your Prime Minister, Keith Holyoake, extended to me.

My wife has had the most fleeting contact only with New Zealand. She was on a journey to America and had lunch in Auckland, I think, some years ago. It is sixteen years since I was here, leading the Australian delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference at Wellington.

(Mr. Holyoake : Too long.)

It is much too long, as you say, Keith. I think one of the reasons why you have not seen more of Australian Prime Ministers is that we do meet, and my predecessor did meet with you frequently, at the Prime Ministers' Conferences abroad and at other gatherings of that sort, but there is no substitute, if one wishes to understand a country and get to know it, for the physical contact with the people and with the country. I think I have learned more about New Zealand in the last seven days as I tried to brief myself on what I might find here and on what we might discuss here than I have learned in all the earlier years I have had in public life. And there have been some very interesting revelations for me coming from that. I knew that we had won Davis Cups together. I did not realise that the first time we ever won a Davis Cup was an Anzac combination, or before there was an Anzac in those days - in 1907, and I learned too.....

(Mr. Holyoake : I will have to learn this, too)

Oh, yes, Norman Brookes and Wilding. They were a very successful combination. I learned, too, that your cadets - and this is one reason why I would have been glad to see your guard of honour - your cadets have so frequently won the sword of honour at Duntroon. And this year at the Officer Cadet School at Portsea where I have a seaside house, my wife tells me that two New Zealanders were the two senior boys in that particular year, one getting the sword of honour and the other the Queen's Medal. So that we respect you not only as worthy friends but as worthy

competitors in fields of sport and other areas where we come into contact one with the other.

I am looking forward tremendously to this visit and learning more about your beautiful country, having talks which will be of value I am sure to us all, with your Prime Minister and Members of his Cabinet. And I am quite sure that this visit will be fruitful for all the purposes that I expect from it, and that with so much in common to serve, that our joint interests can be assisted by interchanges of this kind.

My colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister, will be with you quite shortly for the periodical discussions on trade matters, and I would hope that my own visit is itself a symptom of a desire for much more frequent exchanges at all levels of Government between our two countries.

MR. HOLYOAKE:

I would just say briefly - I am not going to make a speech - unfortunately the weather has upset the earlier arrangements - but again a very warm personal welcome, Harold, and I know you know we are so close. You know New Zealanders very well, but it is grand you should have this opportunity of meeting them and getting to know them on their own ground. With those few words, I warmly re-echo our welcome.
