

NEW ZEALAND TOUR 1967

LUNCHEON GIVEN BY MR. HOLYOAKE, PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND IN HONOUR OF MR. HOLT, PRIME
MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA

WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

3RD FEBRUARY, 1967

Text of Speech Made by Mr. Holt

Prime Minister: that distinguished Australian emigrant, Mr. Watt: Your Excellencies: Mrs. Stevenson and other Parliamentary colleagues: Ladies and Gentlemen:

First, Prime Minister - and I do not know that I will go on saying "Prime Minister" because I am liable to lapse into something more familiar through force of habit, but first, Prime Minister, may I thank you very warmly indeed on behalf of my wife and myself for what you have said so generously and in such warm and friendly terms about us and about the people I have at this time the honour to lead. I stand in this room recalling memories which do not seem all that long distant in point of recollection although it was about 16 years ago in point of time, because my first and only previous visit to this beautiful country of yours was as the leader of the Australian Delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and I recall us having eaten in this room and hearing oratory no less extensive than that to which you are to be subjected here today, and I have always held very pleasant recollections of New Zealand from that visit. You were kind enough to see to it that I then was able to visit some considerable part of this northern island, and that is really my justification for spending so much time in the South on this occasion. I hope in the years to come there will be many more visits and that I shall see very much more of this country than will be possible even through the length of this particular visit.

It is always good to come amongst friends, and it is even better to come amongst friends who have common interests, common purposes to serve, who can themselves act in a way that is beneficial to you and give you the opportunity to act in a way which is beneficial to them.

And I must say in passing, Mr. Watt, following your reference to trade between our two countries, that it is the desire of my Government that any agreements we make on matters of trade should serve not just the interests of one country, but should be mutually beneficial for both our countries, and if you find, or if experience proves that this is not the way the Agreement is working out, if it does not serve our common purposes as fully as we would both hope, then you will find a helpful and constructive Australian attitude in order to make that possible, and my colleague, the Minister for Trade, will be over here to confer with his opposite number, your Deputy Prime Minister, very shortly, and it will be in that spirit that he will do so: and that is largely because of the feeling that we have for each other, but it is also attributable to the recognition that a growing, prospering, developing, strengthening New Zealand is of advantage and strength and help in promoting the prosperity of the country I represent. So here is enlightened self-interest given an opportunity to express itself, and express itself in an environment of friendship and co-operation together.

You spoke, I think, Prime Minister, of the historic fact

that in 1901 some consideration was given to a closer union politically with our two countries, and there have been people in our Parliaments since that time - there may have been one or two in yours: they have been less vocal so far as I have been aware - who have continued to advocate this. I view that prospect of course with rather mixed feelings. I don't in fact regard it as a practical prospect in the future that I can look to, because you very properly have stressed the New Zealand identity which means so much to you, and your independence which means so much to you, but I have sometimes thought of your situation - and I am speaking in particular of you, Prime Minister - as being a very happy and lucky one - to be head of a Government in a country which has only one House of Parliament, whose Government is drawn from only one political party, and which has a unitary system of Government. Now, I lead a coalition, and I am on very good terms with the members of my coalition, but it is a coalition. I lead it in a Parliament that has two Chambers and in a Federation which has six States. Now, if there were to be other members of that Federation with the strength of mind and independence of spirit that I have gathered is revealed in this country, those problems would be very much more complex than they are at the present time. What you were saying, Mr. Watt, about the difficulty you have in getting people overseas to recognise the separateness of our countries is in one sense, I think, fortification and confirmation of this degree of friendship that exists between us, and confirms what you have been saying, Prime Minister, that our situation is, so far as I could ascertain it around the world, unique. I don't know any two peoples, any two independent countries, that are closer together in appearance, in manner, in habits of life in identity of interests, than we find exist between Australia and New Zealand. And that, of course, is the prime reason, or certainly one of the prime reasons, of my visit here on this occasion. As I said yesterday, I felt it was my first duty if I could go abroad, to go abroad to see our own troops serving Australia in the countries where they were located, and this developed into something of a South East Asian mission in the result, because these became formal visits, although the original purpose was for me to make contact with our own people and have them feel how proud we were of them, how grateful we were for the services they were rendering us and the common cause of freedom. And then, of course, there was the conference of Prime Ministers - the need to establish early contact with those two great leaders who mean so much to both our countries, President Johnson and Prime Minister Wilson. You and I were together then, later at the Prime Ministers' Conference, and then the quite historic Manila Conference, the fruits of which we expect to see of benefit certainly to this area of the world and to the free world as a whole as the years go on. But when I was planning the tasks ahead for 1967, having got the election out of the way, the first priority on my list was to make contact with my friends here in New Zealand, and I am very glad that this has been possible and you were so kind as to open that invitation up to me.

I spoke of our similarities. You chose to find some distinctions between us in our manner of speech, and I suppose that is so. We Australians are far less conscious of the fact that we have a different and not particularly attractive national accentuation which is observable to others but which so frequently passes us unobserved amongst ourselves. I had early evidence of that when I went on my first visit to the United Kingdom, again with a Parliamentary Delegation, the C.I.A. of those days, in 1948, and on my first night at the Savoy I asked for a whisky and soda. The waiter brought along a mixture which, while interesting in appearance, didn't seem quite to suggest the specification I had proposed. I tasted it. It was very agreeable, but certainly was not what I had requested. So I said, "Hey, what's this you've brought me". "What you asked for, Sir, a whisky cider". I am quite certain that Keith would have no such trouble with the A.B.C. or B.B.C. accents that we hear so effectively from him.

Right Hon. Keith Holyoake - Mine's a whisky and water.

Right Hon. Harold Holt - Well, he is safer with whisky and water perhaps, but if he ever did ask for a whisky and soda, he would get it in ample measure and correctly to specifications. There is one matter which does not seem to have altered much. Perhaps I should hesitate to mention it. When I was in this room before, I seem to recall explaining to us then that this really was not typical of Wellington weather and that the good weather would follow later. Well, I have no problems on that score. Coming from Australia, any rain is welcome. When I was asked what I thought about the climate this morning as we went to the War Memorial, I said "I only wish I could transfer some of this rain across to my own arid continent." This perhaps has some bearing, Mr. Watt, on what you were saying about how this Trade Agreement was working out. I don't want to harp on this thing, but I would like you to have this special factor in mind. We have just been coming out - and these processes of full restoration are not always speedy - from what has proved to be one of the most serious droughts in part of Australia that we have ever experienced. It intrigues me that when some other country has fire, or flood, or some other natural disaster, the word goes out around the world and the hat goes round to well disposed countries, and we are all happy to help a neighbour in distress. Well, I don't say that we have been in all that distress, but nobody seems to see drought in quite the same light, and yet in our country drought can have consequences far more serious financially and in relation to the smooth running of the economy than any of these natural disasters elsewhere. I illustrate this for you by pointing out that in this most recent drought we lost 14,000,000 sheep, and in the State of New South Wales we lost 25 per cent of the cattle population of that State. Now the economy went on. Some people seem surprised and disappointed that it did not make the same rate of progress that we had made in more favourable years. I think we did very well to keep the economy running along as successfully as we did, despite these great national and natural losses. But I do think that this has had some bearing upon the buoyancy of trade between our countries, and I hope that with more favourable conditions now restored there should be some improvement in that respect.

You have referred, Prime Minister - and Mr. Watt echoed this - that we have a great deal in common and we have many mutual interests to serve. We really are a very fortunate set of peoples in these two countries. We have both been the inheritors of that splendid British tradition of democratic institutions and Parliamentary Government and the acceptance of the principles of freedom and justice, the dignity and individual liberties of our citizens. This itself was a great heritage, and we have been the inheritors together of a rich European culture which we have been able to apply to the circumstances of these countries "Down Under". And we have been favoured by resources which have enabled each of us to build up a standard of living which ranks amongst the highest to be found anywhere around the world. Despite our short histories, we have built these standards, and that of course has a bearing upon our significance, certainly in this region of the world, and in the world at large. You feel perhaps even more acutely than we do the fact that in terms of population we are small countries in the world scene. We are still pushing on to our first 12,000,000: you are moving on, I gather, to your third million. But we would be treating ourselves with less than the significance that is due to us if we were simply to look at this matter in terms of population. First of all, there is the well known fact that great countries are the countries which produce great men. They are not to be counted in heads of population. They are to be counted in the quality of the people that they produce, and New Zealand need bow its head to no country in the quality of the people it produces and the contribution which these people have made to the world in many fields, of science, of culture, of endeavour. You have produced your Rutherfords, your Mellers, your Hillarys, and scores of others whom if time permitted me I could mention, and we, your closest

friends, your allies, and your partners salute a great people here in New Zealand.

But the other thing is that you and we, by virtue of the capacity we have shown to increase the production of our countries, do have a rating internationally out of all proportion to our numbers, and I can illustrate this for you, I think, quite simply in this fashion. Let us take India and Indonesia for my first two examples. Indonesia has just on nine times the population of Australia. It has one-third the value of gross national product of Australia. India, with 42 times the population of Australia, has just about double the value of gross national product of my country, and you can translate these illustrations into New Zealand terms. You can see that when you have only got something under 12,000,000 people but you rank with one of the highest standards of living in the world and you rank amongst the first 10 or 12 trading nations of the world, then you do possess a significance out of all relation to your numbers. But the matter goes even deeper than that. It is my firm belief that if your country and mine together are to have a greatness of destiny in the not too distant future - I am not speaking of any point of time close ahead or even in our lifetimes, but in historical terms, in not too distant a future - it will be because of the influence, the assistance, the encouragement, and the example that together we have been able to exert in relation to the area in the world in which we live, and in particular in South East Asia and the Pacific region, and we do have an influence beyond all relationship to our numbers. I know that your views are welcomed and respected by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and the President of the United States. In my first week of office, I was invited both by the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain to continue the personal and intimate correspondence with them which they had developed with my distinguished predecessor. Now, Sir Robert was, as you know, a man of international stature, and he was so recognised around the world, and one could understand the great men of other countries seeking his views and respecting them, but when they put that same invitation to a fledgling Prime Minister little known outside his own country and only recently confirmed in office, I think that established that it was the views of the Australian people that they were anxious to have, the judgment of an Australian Government, a judgment and view which would be expressed frankly, honestly, forthrightly, and with every intention to help in finding solutions which were acceptable to us all. This happens to us, it happens to you, and we are so placed by Providence in this area of the world and with our background of democratic traditions and with our high standards of economic achievement, to be able to help people in this part of the world. And we are finding, as I am sure you are finding, that increasingly our advice is being sought by the countries of the region. We don't have to muscle our way into institutions like the Asian and South Pacific Association of Countries, or the Asian Development Bank, or other organisations of that sort. We are sought quite eagerly, we are welcomed fullheartedly, and we know that we have a contribution there which we can make.

Australia and New Zealand, because of all these things which lie open to us, because in the Commonwealth of Nations, this great multiracial gathering which becomes more complex and difficult to hold together as the additions are made to its numbers, you and we think so much alike about the problems that arise there that our joint strength can make a significant contribution there. And so it goes around the world where we meet together for these international purposes. We have a common interest in helping to build satisfactory trading arrangements so that the primary products of our two countries can be marketed on the basis of a reasonable return to the producer and in an orderly way, avoiding, if we can or as far as we can, not the hazards of the season - only Providence can look after that for us, and we must as realists accept the fact that there will be these fluctuations - but avoiding as far as it is humanly practicable to so organise matters, these sharp fluctuations on world markets for primary staples, so as to avoid all those dislocations which occur

in our economic circumstances. In these, in so many ways, we have common interests to serve. In this area of the world we can make a joint contribution to security, as we do through the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, as we are doing in our joint contributions in the conflict in Viet Nam - looking like you, not as people who seek the field of war because of an appetite for conflict, but searching for a just and enduring peace which will enable us all to get on with the job of building a better world order in the countries of Asia. So that there is every good reason, apart from kinship, apart from natural identity of habit of life and attitude of mind, for us to remain close together in relation to these common purposes. And a visit of this kind and visits of your people back to us, not merely Prime Ministers but others, can help to serve those purposes. I would mention, Mr. Watt, that we have tried to assist this in another direction in my country by making one of the perquisites of the Member of Parliament a journey to New Zealand at Government expense if he will choose to make that journey. This is the only country outside of the territories under our own immediate control to which we extend this privilege. Someone rather unkindly suggested this morning to me, "Well, this looks as if we were regarding New Zealand as one of our own territories," to which I could only answer "Well, you can't win: that's clear." But I had hoped it would be seen as another manifestation of our intimacy, of our friendship, and of our recognition that we do have so many common interests to serve.

Now, Prime Minister, as you know, there were two gestures I wish to make, but just before I come to that, which is the concluding part of what I want to say, let me make a special reference to tourism, because you will recall I said something on this in the course of our discussions here together this morning. I believe that both our countries have a great deal to offer to the tourist from other parts of the world. You have long had a Minister of Tourism, and you have long had a highly successful tourist traffic. We have had, of course, some and it has been growing quite steadily. When I reconstructed my own Government recently, I appointed a young and promising Minister to look after this special field under the general supervision of the Minister for Trade, my Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister for the Navy, Mr. Don Chipp as part of his ministerial duties is now Minister in Charge of Tourist Activities. But thinking about this, without any special knowledge of what is now being done - and something of this may already be done - it did seem to me that we could help each other in this direction if we used our own facilities and our own resources to encourage the tourist to each of our countries to include a visit to the other country as part of the tour. The American who comes here might be encouraged to go on to Australia rather than back to Honolulu. The Asian who comes down to us as the nearest point for him or for her might be encouraged to see something of the beauties of New Zealand. I am sure there is room for some fruitful co-operation in this particular field. I have raised it with your Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and I hope that this matter can be followed up quite fruitfully.

I was thinking, Prime Minister, of what little gesture I could make as a guest, with my wife and my party on your shores, to express the good will and the friendship symbolically of the Australian people for your own, and one thing which came to mind was that I might be permitted to make a gift to the Government and people of two pictures - quite large pictures. One of them is a picture which has a strong historical association with your country. Indeed, I believe it was on loan to New Zealand over the period of The Queen's visit here, and that is the picture drawn in chalks of the murder of Marian Dufresne back in 1770 or thereabouts a picture by Meriam. Some of you who saw it when it was over may recall it. It seemed to us that this was a part of your history and that this could be back with you in New Zealand. But to balance things out a bit, I thought you should also have an example from one of our most distinguished of the younger school of Australian painters, Sidney Nolan, who now, of course, has an international reputation -

and almost an international price I might add - a picture of the Kimberleys in Australia. This will endure as your history endures. I hope for Sidney Nolan's sake his work endures, and also to make the gift more enduring, I hope you, Prime Minister, will accept these from us as a symbol of the good will and affection of the Australian people.

The other matter which seemed to me to be worth discussing with you arose partly from the fact that as I knew I was coming here I devoted more time, I suppose in seven days, to a study of New Zealand, its climate, its geography, its economy, and its people than I had in the previous 30 years of public life, and I found many things in my reading and in discussion about your country with which I was not familiar, and indeed of which I had been previously ignorant, and it pointed up to me really how much better we do need to know each other, having so much, as I have said earlier, in common. What you said, Mr. Watt, about more space being occupied in the Australian Press by news from New Zealand struck a responsive chord with me, and I would willingly surrender a good deal of editorial space in my own country to you for that purpose. But quite seriously, I think that, too, is a matter which the press of my country might very well examine, and I shall look for an opportunity of raising that matter with them. But this being the case, I thought "Now what way is there that we could encourage a better knowledge", and I thought we might make a quite modest commencement on this out one which I felt confident would appeal to your Prime Minister and his colleagues, and I have suggested that we invite to Australia under a system of scholarships, if you could call it that, each year, two New Zealanders to be selected appropriately by representative people - a man and a woman: I am sufficiently conscious of the vote of the ladies in my State, Mrs. Stevenson, to see that we deal evenly on this - to come to Australia for, say, 12 months, if that seemed an appropriate length of time, to have some study perhaps at the Australian National University, of our history, our economy and our institutions, but also to spend a good deal of their time going around Australia, no matter how remotely they may wish to proceed, and there to see some of our institutions in operation, to see some of our development projects as they come to fruition, and to return to New Zealand perhaps to go into public administration, the Department of External Affairs, the field of journalism, or the teaching profession, somewhere preferably where the knowledge that they had absorbed could be passed on to their fellow New Zealanders. I would like to call them Anzac Scholars, because the Anzac spirit is still strong in the hearts and minds of our people. We do have a National Day on 26th January, but there is no day in the Australian Calendar celebrated with more solemnity and with due observance than this day which commemorates the forging of that wonderful tradition between our two countries, and if it did not seem inappropriate perhaps they could be called Anzac Scholars, but the name is less important than the fact. I mentioned this matter to your Cabinet this morning. I am glad to say that the suggestion was warmly received, and if it has the approval of your Government I shall see that effect is given to it.

So Mrs. Stevenson and Gentlemen, here we are bound together by inheritance of institutions, traditions, democratic practices, cultures, by the geography in which we find ourselves, inspired and stimulated together by the possibilities that lie open to us for positive and constructive achievement in this area of the world in which we live, and while these things persist - and they must persist as long as our independence endures for our two countries - then who can doubt the strength and warmth of the friendship between the people of New Zealand and Australia. And if in my term of office as Prime Minister of my country I can do anything to serve that friendship and to strengthen the ties between us, you can confidently rely upon this being my purpose.

Concluding Remarks by Mr. Holyoake

Well, I'm sure you would all like me to say how much we have enjoyed that comprehensive and quite inspiring address from our Guest of Honour. I am sure you will also be pleased to know that our Cabinet has already approved in principle of the two proposals, both imaginative, that Mr. Holt has himself produced - the question of co-operation in the tourist industry, and reciprocity in Anzac scholarships. We have approved this principle, and we will certainly follow it up. Thank you for all these things that you have said to us Harold.

Now, of course the occasion is for giving gifts, and on behalf of the Government and the people of New Zealand I want also to make a gift to the Prime Minister of Australia. I decided upon this gift before I knew of the munificence and the imagination behind the two gifts which he has made. Those pictures are really priceless, they are invaluable. To add to the magnificence of the gift, the Firestone, the Maori picture - I have forgotten the name now - it was until now part of a very valued collection in Australia. It is not just an odd picture they have picked up somewhere. It is part of their own collection, and so it is of tremendous significance that Mr. Holt should say today "It is a part of our collection but we thought rightly it belonged in New Zealand", and he is giving it to our nation. I am quite sure that our National Art Gallery, or wherever it is decided that it shall repose, will be delighted and excited, and so will all the people of New Zealand, about both of these pictures. Also the painting by Nolan. I have not had a close study. I have asked that they should be displayed along a table somewhere. I understand they are just outside: if you wish to have a closer study they will be there.

Now the gift I propose - it will not be displayed right now, but here is a copy of it. Some of you will have seen it, most of you will have heard of it. This is a publication by one of our noted publishing firms, A. H. Reed entitled "The New Zealanders", an exact copy of the Folio which Her Majesty The Queen gave to us as her gift to the New Zealand Nation when she was last here in New Zealand - the original from the library of Windsor Castle from amongst her Collection. She thought this was something we would like, and we treasure it, of course. A. H. Reed have made an exact copy of this. It is a beautiful piece of work: we think so anyway: and I am asking Harold Holt to take this back as a very humble gift compared with this gift to the people of New Zealand, to their collection of New Zealand treasures in Australia. It is a collection of prints by George Angus. They were made in 1846 or around that time. They were given to Her Majesty The Queen. They really were in the first place - I think it is shown in the script in the Folio - dedicated to His Royal Highness Prince Albert at that time. It is quite a treasure, and I would ask you, Harold, to accept this rather humble gift, alongside yours, as a token of our esteem for you and the people of Australia, and also as a mark of our deep appreciation of your visit to our country so early in your long tenure of office of Prime Minister.
