



OPENING OF EXMOUTH TOWNSHIP,
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

16th SEPTEMBER, 1967

Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt

Colonel Murdoch; Mr. Premier and Mrs. Brand; Mr. Ambassador; Fellow Ministers of the Commonwealth Government and State Ministers; Members of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and of the State; Distinguished Forces representatives of the Australian and United States Forces and so very many Distinguished Guests around me; Ladies and Gentlemen; Boys and Girls:

I really, despite that rather imposing introduction, have a relatively minor part to play in this particular ceremony, because very properly this is the occasion in which the Premier of the State is the star - both attraction and personality. But having come so many miles and speaking for so many of our fellow Australians, I know the Premier will allow me to indulge myself for a few minutes with you, the more particularly as I think that what I feel or have to say is not without some continuing advantage for the State which he so ably represents.

It is not very often that I have the opportunity to come to an official opening in the North West of Australia. This is only my second visit in a long public lifetime. I hope that thanks to the facilities which an improving V.I.P. fleet provide for me I'll be here more often. But it has been several years in between visits and in '60 or '61 I made my first, and there was nothing, of course, of this development here then, nothing of the development which I have been witnessing in the last few days at Kambalda, at Mount Tom Price, at Dampier, even Port Hedland was in those days not a very exciting port for one to visit. But over these few days of this week I have developed a new feeling of encouragement and inspiration about the future of this country, and it is to people like yourselves, to a Government such as that led by Mr. Brand with his team of able Ministers, that the rest of Australia which depends so largely upon the efforts of people who live more remotely from the great capital cities, who accept their remoteness cheerfully, who put up with hardships and conditions which would not be accepted in many instances by those in the capital cities, that so much of our prosperity and growing national strength have become due. And so I say first a word of appreciation to you all.

There is a disposition, perhaps, to think of Australia's pioneering stage as an era of the past. But anybody who has been around the areas of this State that I have visited in recent days, is made very conscious that there is a new pioneering spirit abroad and one which is enriching the nation, strengthening its capacity to grow in so many different directions. I only wish that those who are critical of the participation of people from other countries.....and after all when you dwell on it most of that participation comes from the United Kingdom and the United States, two countries with which we have a great feeling, of warmth, of kinship and a friendship and whose ability to merge successfully with us has become a matter of experience beyond challenge. But if they could sense, as I have sensed, the growing national strength arising from these developments, the way in which Australian industry, Australian enterprise, the technical skills of our country have been promoted as a result of this process of development, stimulated by people with, in some instances, a larger vision and a larger courage in the developmental field than we have shown ourselves and contributing from their knowledge and experience to what we can put to good advantage here in Australia.

Now, in this particular town of Exmouth, you have a quite unusual combination. I have been speaking of development where we are dealing in matters that come to us from a primeval past, the mineral resources which have been down for untold centuries of time but here in Exmouth you are reaching out to the modernity of an outer space era and yet combining it in circumstances in which you have had to do a pioneering job in this township itself. For Mr. Premier it is no novel experience to attend an opening of some new area of significance in his State. To me it is a quite exciting and comparatively rare event, and I rejoice to be with you here today and take part in these celebrations because dotted around the State, particularly the northern part of this State of Western Australia, are names which were formerly unknown or non-existent but which have now become part of Australia's story of development and from which Australia, and an increasingly large body of admiring observers outside this country, can derive some interest and some satisfaction.

I understand, Mr. Premier, that my principal task today is to plant a time capsule. Somebody gave me a list of the items contained in this capsule. I hasten to add that I did not make the selection myself but I've no doubt it is of a discriminating kind and for those who are able to open the capsule at some future point of time, I hope they will derive both inspiration and interest from our quite energetic endeavours that have been made to bring this fine township into existence. It will spell out the history of the town and of the communications station, the plans of the town and station, it will contain a letter of goodwill from the Commanding Officer and from the Civil Commissioner and to Captain Friedman and to Colonel Murdoch - Colonel Murdoch being of course so directly responsible for the welfare of the town itself. We are delighted to know that they are going to be immortalized in this way. There will be the names of the residents - I hope they have all earned a place and will behave themselves in the future to merit it including the schoolchildren, although we would not want to curb their normal ebullience or exuberance. There will be copies of today's newspapers. I suspect that mostly they will contain leading articles criticising the Commonwealth Government for not doing enough in one direction or another. There will be a copy of the Western Australian telephone directory and by the time this capsule is opened, we will probably need a battery of telephone books like they have in New York. There will be private letters from residents to descendants, seeds of local plants with planting directions and some shells which will probably be rare in 100 hundred years' time. So altogether those who open up this capsule should find much to interest them.

But the final comment I wish to make is that here in this township we have an embodiment of the partnership between our two democracies - the greatest democracy in size, in power and economic strength the world has ever known, the United States, and our own young, thrusting, thriving democracy which we in our confidence and in our ambition believe will have a major role to play in this area of the world and perhaps by a force of our own example with the kind of life we can build together as a people, provide some encouragement and example for others who are struggling to achieve the standards which it has been our good fortune already in Australia to attain.

This is a symbol of a friendship between two peoples of common heritage of similar ideas in so many aspects of life, particularly in the great principles of human freedom, of justice under the law, of democratic institutions, and of a desire to live peacefully with our neighbours, thrive and prosper together, and a willingness to contribute from our own good fortune to

assist others to better standards in the future. And this quite small township measured in terms of the capital cities of the nation, embodies that partnership, it maintains a spirit which I hope in times of difficulty - and they will arise even between two friendly nations - will remind us that here is a part of Australia where our countrymen have shown they can live together in happiness and to mutual advantage.

May Exmouth long continue to symbolize the Australian/American alliance and all that our friendship the one with the other can stand for in relation to the peace, progress and prosperity of the world.
