



VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND

ARRIVAL STATEMENTS BY NEW ZEALAND PRIME
MINISTER, MR. HOLYOAKE, AND PRIME MINISTER
JOHN GORTON OF AUSTRALIA AT WELLINGTON AIRPORT

27 MARCH 1968

MR. HOLYOAKE:

I want to say how delighted I am that Mr. Gorton has come to visit us and has also brought his wife with him.

You all remember, and I do particularly, John, that it is just a little over a year ago that we had Harold Holt here. We were very fond of him, and I know we will be of you as well. This is a wonderful gesture that you have come over here so soon on your first overseas visit, to this your sister dominion.

I do not know what new I can say because the press have been asking me, and asking you the other side of the Tasman, but we will of course, gentlemen, be discussing everything that I can imagine of mutual interest to our two countries. Don't ask me what the agenda is. We have no formal agenda. It would be much easier to enumerate the things we might not talk about, because we will have a lot of opportunity in the coming two or three days we are travelling together, but our talks are bound to cover trade, defence, our common interests in the Commonwealth, the United Nations, and all the subjects that are of current world interest at the present time.

John, a very warm welcome, and I hope you enjoy these three days with us.

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MR. GORTON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister. For my own part, it is a delight for me to be able to be in New Zealand so soon after becoming the Prime Minister of Australia.

One of the first things I did when I became Prime Minister was to ring up the Prime Minister of New Zealand to let him know that this had happened, because we had known each other before and because of the particular closeness that our two countries have, and this very kind invitation of yours to follow that up is something which I appreciate and which I think the people of Australia appreciate.

We will be talking about a whole variety of matters, but these will I think perhaps better be dealt with at the formal press conference that is going to be held tomorrow, and questions can be asked about particular matters. But quite apart from any specific things that we may discuss, there is over and above that, I think, the advantage of the general meeting - for myself the particular advantage of meeting yourself and your Ministers who were so kind to come out to the aerodrome today.

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You spoke of an overseas visit, and indeed it is an overseas visit because we flew across a lot of sea to get here, but really it was not as far in miles for me as it would have been if I had gone to Perth in Western Australia, and it was not as long in time as it would have been if I had gone to Perth in Western Australia. So though overseas, this, I think, emphasises the neighbourliness that we have, and I thank you for the invitation, Sir, to come here.

I believe there will be benefit to both our nations, and I think this will be the forerunner - indeed, it is not so much a forerunner as a continuation of a situation where your Ministers visit us and our Ministers visit you so frequently that it occasions no particular comment, and then I think we will have reached an even closer stage than we have at present.

Thank you very much.

CANBERRA
28 March 1968