

GOULBURN LILAC TIME FESTIVAL

CIVIC RECEPTION

GOULBURN, N. S. W.

4 OCTOBER 1968

Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

Mr. Mayor, the Mayoress, Members of Parliament and Distinguished Guests:-

The first thing I must do, Mr. Mayor, is to thank you for being kind enough to extend to me this civic welcome and to give me the opportunity to meet some of the leading citizens of Goulburn and its surroundings.

I must make clear though, Mr. Mayor, that this is by no means my first visit to this city, although it is my first visit as Prime Minister. On more than one occasion in the past, I have been here and have had a chance to tour the city and have had a chance to see it. One occasion that stands out in my memory was when the State Member and myself attended the opening and dedication of a science laboratory at - if I remember rightly - St. Patrick's College. This also gave us an opportunity to learn something of the city of Goulburn. But this is the first visit as Prime Minister, and it is therefore doubly important to me.

I should have liked to have been able to come earlier today. In fact it was possible, but extremely difficult. After all, my wife and I have just spent three days over in Western Australia, during which I think we had one fifteen minute spell to ourselves. We arrived back at about half past five last night in a state of almost utter exhaustion, and I really did have to do some work in the office today before I could come. Nevertheless, I do apologise for having passed up the opportunity to come earlier and to see Supertex and the other industries here.

It was a pleasure to me, for a variety of reasons, when Dugald Munro asked me would I come to attend the Lilac Time festivities. One of them, of course, is that it is so pleasantly named. Lilac Time has got some aura of nostalgia about it for all of us - or for most of us, particularly those who were born about the same time as I was when we remember Schubert and "Lilac Time" and the songs that came over and we used to bash them out.

But also for another reason, because it seems to epitomise a community spirit which is so utterly necessary in towns such as Goulburn or in towns such as the one in which I grew up. That was where, for a while, I was Shire President - Kerang - a smaller town, but nevertheless

one that needed this kind of community spirit. Because what it means is that you began - how long ago? - fifteen years, sixteen years - a long time ago to work towards attaining something for the town and the citizens who live in it. You began building that which you now have, the Festivities Hall, which I haven't seen, but which, judging from the pictures of it, is a real addition to this or any other community.

Rather than just say, "Well, we hope someone will give us the money for this" - whether it be a state or whether it be a Commonwealth Government - you did something about it yourselves. You began to get together as a community and to raise the funds and to build a hall, and you have been doing it ever since, and. . . . I can't remember. . . . but \$70,000 or \$80,000 or something of that order has already been raised. Here is this concrete result in this city of the effort that is being put into it. Really, I think perhaps a manifestation of a community spirit of this kind means more than the mere bricks and mortar which are seen in the form of a building. It means, I would have thought, great satisfaction to all those who over the years have given something of themselves, something of their time, in order to see that the community in which they live can be improved.

For these reasons, it appeared to me pleasant to be asked to attend on this occasion.

I don't know, Sir, that I can comment very much on your remarks about the development of Canberra and the development of Goulburn because I haven't had the chance to study them, and therefore anything I said would be just an immediate reaction.

But what I would hope would be that as the National Capital develops, and develops as it will to a quarter of a million people before very long, then it would be inevitable, whether some kind of light industries were established in it or not, that all the region would benefit if it were only as a market for what the region surrounding it could produce, if it were only as a provider of opportunities for employment of young people at a centre closer to the region than Sydney or Melbourne. I would think that kind of development must have complementary development in the region around it.

Other than that, Sir, I can do nothing more than join in your general approach that regional development is good. And when I say that, I am not just talking because I do claim. . . . I don't know whether credit is the right word. . . . I do claim some involvement with the decision which led to the building of a teachers' college in this city of Goulburn. I was the Minister at the time, and if you remember there was some question as to whether it should go here, or whether it should go somewhere else, or whether if it went here it would upset going to Canberra, or if Canberra built one it would upset this one. But it didn't. There is one being built here, and that will bring undoubtedly, not only those who will be attending it as students and people who will be teaching the students, but the others

who will be required to meet their needs - to maintain their motor cars, do their laundry and provide what they eat. . . . and all the other things which follow when an accretion of population happens in any particular district.

So at least one small act has been done before these words were spoken.

I finish because I was told I must not talk too long, and I probably have already. I finish by thanking you once again for the opportunity of meeting the citizens of Goulburn. I finish by expressing the hope that in Goulburn and in the centres like it throughout the length and breadth of Australia, there will be a growth, there will be a fostering of community pride, of community service. . . . and through that, pride and service to the nation. This nation is being built as the centres are being built, and the centres are being built to a large degree by community effort by people such as you. And I thank you for that.
