

~~184~~  
26

SPEECH NOTES FOR PRIME MINISTER FOR CIVIC RECEPTION, TUMUT,  
26 JULY 1975

---

1. I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE TODAY WITH MY WIFE TO SHARE THE WARMTH AND HOSPITALITY OF TUMUT SHIRE. IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY THAT WE WERE IN THE AREA TO HELP CELEBRATE THE TUMUT AND DISTRICT SESQUI-CENTENARY WHICH EVERYONE ENJOYED SO MUCH.

ON THE WAY DOWN FROM CANBERRA THIS MORNING I HAD ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SPECIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAM WHICH WAS PREPARED LAST YEAR FOR THOSE 150 ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, AND IT CONTAINS QUITE FASCINATING INFORMATION ON THE EARLY YEARS OF SETTLEMENT HERE, ESPECIALLY ON THE PIONEERING FAMILIES WHOSE TIRELESS EFFORTS FULFILLED THE VISION OF HUME AND HOVELL.

2. I WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO READ THE ARTICLE BY MY OLD AND VERY DEAR FRIEND, THE LATE FRANK GREEN, ON THE ORIGINAL BATTLE FOR CANBERRA. MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN AUSTRALIA, TUMUT FELL AN EARLY VICTIM TO SENATE OBSTRUCTION. BUT IT TOOK TIME, AS SENATE OBSTRUCTION ALWAYS DOES. IN THESE HEADY DAYS OF ENTHUSIASM FOR APPOINTING ROYAL COMMISSIONS, IT'S INTERESTING TO RECALL THAT AS EARLY AS 1903 A ROYAL COMMISSION WAS APPOINTED TO EXAMINE SITES AT ALBURY, ARMIDALE, BOMBALA, LAKE GEORGE, ORANGE AND TUMUT AND TO REPORT ON THEIR SUITABILITY AS POSSIBLE SITES FOR A NEW NATIONAL CAPITAL. AND TOWARDS THE END OF THAT YEAR, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DECIDED ON TUMUT, AFTER AN EXHAUSTIVE AND DOUBTLESS EXHAUSTING VOTE.

I WAS THAT CLOSE TO BEING ABLE TO LIVE AT THE LODGE, TUMUT.

3. BUT THE SENATE, IN THE WAY SENATES HAVE, DECIDED AGAINST TUMUT AND SUBSTITUTED BOMBALA INSTEAD. THE HOUSE IN TURN DECLINED TO AGREE TO THE CHANGE AND THE BILL LAPSED. DOUBLE DISSOLUTIONS WERE A LONG WAY OFF. IN 1904, A BILL WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE SENATE, NAMING BOMBALA AS THE SITE BUT WHEN IT WENT TO THE HOUSE, THE MEMBERS DECIDED AGAINST BOMBALA AND SUBSTITUTED DALGETY. AND PRESUMABLY BECAUSE NEITHER BOMBALA NOR TUMUT HAD WON, AND HONOUR WAS VINDICATED, THE SENATE GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO DALGETY.

THAT IS WHEN THE BATTLE REALLY STARTED OF COURSE BECAUSE DALGETY WAS OVER 200 MILES AWAY, AND QUITE BEYOND THE PALE. THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT OFFERED SITES ONLY AT TUMUT, LYNTHURST AND YASS AND CONVINCED MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE THAT THE 1904 ACT HAD TO BE RECONSIDERED.

4. IT TOOK UNTIL 1908 FOR ANOTHER BILL TO BE INTRODUCED PROVIDING FOR EXHAUSTIVE BALLOT ON NOMINATED SITES, AND TUMUT WAS BACK IN THE RUNNING, ONLY TO BE DEFEATED BY CANBERRA IN THE END. BUT THE BATTLE CONTINUED IN THE PRESS, IN THE HOPE THAT THE SENATE WOULD REJECT CANBERRA. PLUS ~~GA~~ CHANGE, AND THE SENATE SUCCUMBED TO THE PRESS, AS IS ITS WONT, AND LOOKED LIKED DEADHEATING ON CANBERRA.

SENATOR McCOLL SUDDENLY NOMINATED TUMUT, WHICH WOULD HAVE SECURED CANBERRA'S SELECTION, SO THE DALGETY SUPPORTERS VOTED FOR TUMUT, RESULTING IN 18 VOTES EACH FOR CANBERRA AND TUMUT. IN A SECOND BALLOT, SENATOR McCOLL - AS SENATORS SOMETIMES DO - CHANGED HIS MIND, DESERTED TUMUT AND CAME BACK TO CANBERRA.

5. THE DEAKIN GOVERNMENT WAS TOTTERING AT THE TIME THAT VOTE WAS TAKEN ON 6 NOVEMBER 1908, AND A WEEK LATER WENT OUT OF OFFICE, TO BE REPLACED BY ANDREW FISHER'S LABOR GOVERNMENT. FISHER AND BILLY HUGHES THOUGHT THE ARGUMENT HAD GONE ON LONG ENOUGH, AND PROBABLY SAW NO JOY IN ANY MORE UNNECESSARY TRIALS OF STRENGTH WITH THE SENATE. EIGHT DAYS AFTER TAKING OFFICE, PRIME MINISTER FISHER SENT A COPY OF THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT ACT TO THE NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER, WHOSE CO-OPERATION WAS IMMEDIATELY FORTHCOMING, STRANGE, ISN'T IT, THAT LESS THAN TEN YEARS AFTER FEDERATION, WHEN STATES RIGHTS WAS A VERY GENUINE PREOCCUPATION, A NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER SAW FIT TO PUT THE NATIONAL INTEREST FIRST, REPLYING:

"THIS GOVERNMENT IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE THE LOCATION OF THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT DETERMINED WITHOUT DELAY AND WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER IN A LIBERAL MANNER ANY PROPOSAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN THAT DIRECTION. TO SECURE FINALITY CONCESSIONS MAY BE NECESSARY. THIS STATE IS NOT LIKELY TO INSIST ON A RIGID INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND I FEEL SURE THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH WILL RECIPROCATE THE GENEROUS SPIRIT IN WHICH WE ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE SUBJECT."

PEHAPS I SHOULD SEND A COPY OF THAT GRACIOUS MISSIVE TO MR LEWIS.

6. I CAN'T SAY NOW THAT I REGRET THE DECISION TAKEN BY OUR PREDECESSORS EIGHT YEARS BEFORE I WAS BORN. TUMUT IS A MUCH MORE RELAXING PLACE FOR NOT BEING THE FEDERAL CAPITAL, AND I'M SURE ITS CITIZENS LIVE LONGER. THIS AFTERNOON I'M TO MEET THREE RESIDENTS - TO - BE OF BLAKENEY LODGE. THEIR COMBINED AGES ADD UP TO 253 YEARS. I'M SURE THEY RECALL THE CAPITAL CONTROVERSY; I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THEY WOULD HAVE WANTED TUMUT TO CHANGE TOO MUCH IN THE LAST 80 YEARS.

7. ALTHOUGH TUMUT HAS NOT LOST ANY OF ITS CHARM, IT HAS BEEN CLOSE TO AND AFFECTED BY ONE OF THE GREATEST ENGINEERING UNDERTAKINGS OF THIS CENTURY, THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS SCHEME. BEGUN BY BEN CHIFLEY'S LABOR GOVERNMENT IN 1949, THE \$800 MILLION SCHEME HAS PROVIDED STIMULUS AND EMPLOYMENT IN AND AROUND TUMUT CULMINATING IN THE COMPLETION LAST FINANCIAL YEAR OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF TUMUT 3, THE LAST AND LARGEST OF THE SNOWY PROJECTS. BUT THAT FACT SHOULD NOT BE THOUGHT OF AS AN ENDING ONLY, RATHER IT IS THE END OF THE BEGINNING, BECAUSE TUMUT IS ONE OF THE GATEWAYS TO THE SCHEME AND TO ALL THE TOURIST AND RECREATION FACILITIES IT HAS OPENED UP.

I KNOW THE SHIRE COUNCIL IS ANXIOUS TO PURSUE NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF TUMUT, AND THAT MUCH THOUGHTFUL WORK HAS BEEN DONE IN THIS REGARD. I HAVE READ WITH INTEREST, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CASE YOU HAVE PREPARED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF LOCATING A PULP AND PAPER MILL FOR TUMUT. I UNDERSTAND YOUR RESERVATIONS AS WELL AS YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN THE AREA, AND YOUR POSITION IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT CLIMATE FOR RURAL INDUSTRIES, INEVITABLY AFFECTED AT PRESENT BY WORLD ECONOMIC TRENDS. I LOOK FORWARD TO MEETING AND, IN MANY CASES TO RENEWING ACQUAINTANCE WITH COUNCILLORS AND THEIR WIVES WHO CAN GIVE ME THE MOST UP TO DATE INFORMATION ON THE PROBLEMS AS WELL AS THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TUMUT SHIRE.

8. I MUST SAY I AM ALWAYS PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE BROADER ISSUES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT GRASS ROOTS LEVEL. I TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE FACT THAT MY GOVERNMENT, THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT, HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO DEMONSTRATE ITS REAL INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR THE THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT, THE ONE CLOSEST TO THE PEOPLE, THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT MOST IGNORED BY OUR COALITION PREDECESSORS. ONLY LAST YEAR WE LEGISLATED TO PROVIDE FOR THE ALLOCATION OF DIRECT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DIRECT GRANTS BASED ON THE CASE ADVANCED IN EACH INSTANCE AT THE GRANTS COMMISSION HEARINGS, AND, SIGNIFICANTLY, WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED. I BELIEVE TUMUT SHIRE COUNCIL RECEIVED \$126,000 LAST YEAR AND I AM QUITE SURE YOU HAVE PUT UP A SOUND AND PROPER CASE FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR.

*\$165,000 This year*

9. I KNOW THAT TUMUT, LIKE THE REST OF AUSTRALIA, HAS SUFFERED FROM THE WORLD-WIDE ECONOMIC RECESSION AND SUBSEQUENT UNEMPLOYMENT.

RED SCHEME GRANTS HAVE GONE SOME WAY TOWARDS ALLEVIATING IMMEDIATE LOCALISED UNEMPLOYMENT. IN ALL \$ 325,000 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO 26 PROJECTS INVOLVING 162 JOBS. MAJOR SHIRE COUNCIL UNDERTAKINGS HAVE INCLUDED ROAD REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORK FOR 20 MEN FOR 16 WEEKS (\$30,000), AND \$24,000 FOR WORK ON REPAIRING AND EXTENDING THE TUMUT BOYS CLUB HALL. ANOTHER GRANT OF \$25,400 MEANT 15 WEEKS WORK FOR 8 MEN EMPLOYED ON RECREATIONAL PROJECTS OF CONTINUING BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY.

10. THE NATIONAL RURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL SET UP BY SENATOR WRIEDT IS KEENLY AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE MAN AND WOMAN ON THE LAND, AND IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A DETAILED STUDY OF HOW TO ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE INTO FARMING, AS WELL AS LOOKING INTO EMPLOYMENT ALTERNATIVES WHICH WOULD ENABLE OLDER PEOPLE TO LEAVE THE LAND EARLIER, IF THEY SO WISH. THE QUESTION OF FARMER CO-OPERATIVES IS ALSO BEING STUDIED. ALL THIS WORK TOUCHES ON SOME OF TUMUT'S RURAL PROBLEMS.

11. THE AUSTRALIAN APPLE AND PEAR CORPORATION SET UP LAST SEPTEMBER HAS RECEIVED A GRANT OF \$200,000 TO FINANCE MARKET RESEARCH PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCT PROMOTION ACTIVITIES. IN ADDITION TO SEEKING TO DIVERSIFY EXPORT MARKETS, THE CORPORATION HAS MOUNTED A 1975 SEASON PROMOTION CAMPAIGN TO STIMULATE CONSUMER DEMAND FOR APPLES. WE CAN EXPECT THIS TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON APPLE PRODUCTION HERE IN THE BATLOW TUMUT AREA. ALTHOUGH FRESH APPLE PRICES IN SYDNEY THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY BELOW COMPARABLE 1974 LEVELS, THEY ARE SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE COMPARABLE 1973 LEVELS, OBVIOUSLY A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

AS FAR AS THE FRUIT CANNING INDUSTRY IS CONCERNED, THE PICTURE IS BRIGHTER, BECAUSE THE 1974/75 TOTAL QUANTITY OF CANNING FRUIT HAS INCREASED BY 12.5 PER CENT, AND PRICES FOR APRICOTS ARE UP 32 PER CENT, PEACHES ARE UP 36 PER CENT AND PEARS ARE UP 12 PER CENT OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR. THE INCREASE IN BOTH PRICES AND PRODUCTION INDICATE THAT GROSS RETURNS TO GROWERS WILL BE UP ON LAST SEASON.

A NEW NATIONAL PANEL OF VEGETABLE GROWERS AND PROCESSORS OF PEAS AND BEANS HAS RECENTLY BEEN ESTABLISHED TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY AND CONTRACT CONDITIONS. STANDARDISATION OF CONTRACTS, PRICE RELATIVITIES, PRODUCTION AND MARKETING WILL ALL BE DISCUSSED BY THE PANEL WITH OBVIOUS BENEFIT TO PRODUCERS IN THIS AREA.

12. ALTHOUGH THE FOREST INDUSTRIES AT TUMUT, AS ELSEWHERE IN AUSTRALIA, ARE AT PRESENT SOMEWHAT DEPRESSED AS A RESULT OF SOME DOWNTURN IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY, THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ASSURES ME THAT THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF THOSE INDUSTRIES IN THE TUMUT REGION IS CONSIDERED TO BE QUITE BRIGHT.

BEEF PRODUCERS CAN TAKE HEART FROM THE FACT THAT WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP MEAT MARKETS AND REDUCE ARTIFICIAL TRADE BARRIERS. YOU MAY RECALL THAT IN APRIL THIS YEAR, SENATOR WRIEDT ANNOUNCED AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION OF \$19.6 MILLION TO MATCH THE STATES IN CARRY-ON FINANCE FOR AUSTRALIAN BEEF PRODUCERS. THIS IS AVAILABLE TO FARMERS AT 4 PER CENT INTEREST WITH NO INTEREST ON CAPITAL PAYMENTS FOR THE FIRST TWELVE MONTHS, AND OF COURSE IT WILL BE A GREAT HELP TO VERY MANY PEOPLE. BUT CERTAINLY IN THE SHORT TERM BEEF PRODUCERS ARE GOING THROUGH A DIFFICULT PERIOD.

13. BUT, LIKE THOSE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WHO OVER SEVENTY YEARS AGO EXPRESSED THEIR BELIEF IN TUMUT, I AM CONVINCED THAT THE LONG-TERM FUTURE OF TUMUT IS EXCELLENT. I THINK YOU ALL FOR THE MARBLE GIFT WHICH WILL REMIND ME OF YOUR KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY TODAY IN TUMUT.

\*\*\*\*\*