

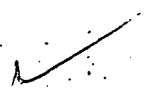
SPEECH NOTES FOR PRIME MINISTER, FOR OPENING OF ST BASIL'S HOMES,
LOURANTOS VILLAGE, LAKEMBA, N.S.W.

23 AUGUST 1975

1. IT GIVES ME VERY GREAT PLEASURE INDEED TO BE PRESENT FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING AND BLESSING OF THIS MAGNIFICENT LOURANTOS VILLAGE WHICH OPERATES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH FIFTH LARGEST DENOMINATION IN AUSTRALIA. YOU HAVE AS YOUR PATRON HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS WHO HAS ONLY BEEN IN THIS COUNTRY SINCE APRIL THIS YEAR, BUT WHO FEELS SO FIRMLY COMMITTED TO THE PASTORAL NEEDS OF GREEK-BORN AUSTRALIANS THAT HE INTENDS TO SEEK AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP. AUSTRALIA IS HONOURED BY HIS INTENTION. I CAN ASSURE THE RESIDENTS, THE DIRECTORS, THE SUPPORTERS OF ST BASIL'S HOMES THAT YOUR PATRON IS HERE TO STAY.

2. I WAS ANXIOUS TO MEET ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, BECAUSE I FELT I HAD SO MUCH TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT FOLLOWING MY VISIT TO CRETE IN JANUARY THIS YEAR. QUITE APART FROM ALL THE TIES OF AUSTRALIA TO GREECE THROUGH OUR IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS, I HAD LEARNED THIS HIS FATHER HAD SERVED ALONGSIDE AUSTRALIAN SERVICEMEN IN CRETE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

WHILE I WAS RETURNING FROM DARWIN, MY WIFE VISITED THE SITE OF THE BATTLE AND CEMETRY AT RETHYMNON WHERE THE TOWNSPEOPLE ARE ERECTING A MEMORIAL TO THAT AUSTRALIAN PRESENCE, AND SHE WAS DEEPLY MOVED BY THE EVIDENCE OF THE CONTINUING TIES OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES.



3. ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS, ACCOMPANIED BY MR SAMIOS, A DIRECTOR OF ST BASIL'S HOMES, LUNCHEDED WITH ME AT THE LODGE AT THE END OF MAY. IT WILL NOT SURPRISE YOU TO LEARN THAT THEY TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT THIS GREAT SOCIAL UNDERTAKING HERE AT LOURANTOS VILLAGE.

I EXPRESSED MY OWN INTEREST IN THE PROJECT, BECAUSE OF MY OWN CONCERN AT THE NEED TO PROVIDE LOVING CARE AND ACCOMMODATION FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPENT THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR FAMILIES, OF THEIR COMMUNITIES, OF THEIR HOMELANDS, AND WHO DESERVE THE ATTENTION AND CARE OF THE COMMUNITY. I KNEW THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOURANTOS VILLAGE UNDER THE AGED PERSONS HOMES AND HOSTELS ACTS.

BUT I REALISED ESPECIALLY THAT THIS GREAT UNDERTAKING TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR OVER 80 ELDERLY PEOPLE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - ALTHOUGH IN ITS CHARITY IT IS NON-DENOMINATIONAL - REPRESENTS THE COMMITMENT OF THE GREEK COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA TO ALL THOSE WHO NEED CARE IN OUR COMMUNITY, WHATEVER THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OR CHOICE.

4. SO I WAS DELIGHTED TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION EXTENDED THROUGH YOUR DIRECTOR, MR SAMIOS, AND YOUR PATRON, ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS, TO SHARE THIS OCCASION WITH YOU. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT WE ARE HERE TOGETHER, CHURCH AND STATE, BECAUSE OF THE CO-OPERATION THERE IS BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE IN THIS COUNTRY IN ALL AREAS OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BUT ESPECIALLY THAT OF CARE FOR THE AGED.

THIS IS THE FOURTH OLD PEOPLES HOME I HAVE OPENED IN NEW SOUTH WALES IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS. ALL HAVE RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL GRANTS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH IS ANXIOUS TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE TO THOSE PHILANTHROPIC AND CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS BEST FITTED AND MOST COMPASSIONATELY MOTIVATED IN THIS AREA OF CARE FOR THE AGED.

5. I AM SURE THAT LOURANTOS VILLAGE WILL BE A PLACE OF COMFORTING AND COMFORTABLE INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL THOSE WHO COME TO LIVE HERE. I KNOW THAT THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT OF THOSE CONNECTED WITH ST BASIL'S HOMES WILL EASE MANY OF THOSE INITIAL FEELINGS OF ISOLATION WHICH CAN MAR THIS PARTICULAR KIND OF "MOVING HOUSE", AND WILL PROVIDE INTERESTED COMPANIONSHIP IN THE YEARS AHEAD. CERTAINLY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S GRANT OF \$1,234,000 IS JUSTIFIED AND CAN BE SEEN AS AN INVESTMENT, NOT IN MONETARY TERMS, BUT IN THE SERENITY AND HAPPINESS OF THE RESIDENTS AT THEIR NEW ADDRESS, IN THEIR NEW HOME.

6. IT MUST BE A GREAT JOY FOR MR NICHOLAS LOURANTOS TO BE HERE TODAY TO SEE SO MANY OF HIS OWN DREAMS REALISED, BECAUSE HE HAS BEEN SUCH A GREAT BENEFACITOR TO THIS CHARITY. AND IT IS FITTING THAT THIS COUNTRY SHOULD NOW HAVE A LOURANTOS VILLAGE TO COMMEMORATE A MAN CALLED NICHOLAS LOURANTOS WHO LEFT HIS HOMETLAND, THE ISLAND OF TSIRIGO, TO COME TO A NEW LAND OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AGO. THAT NEW LAND, AUSTRALIA, HAS BEEN ENRICHED BY HIS COMING, AND MEMORIES OF HIS HOMETLAND LIVE ON

THROUGH HIS PART IN THE ENDOWMENT OF THE CHAIR OF MODERN GREEK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY. IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR ME OF COURSE; I STILL CLING TO THE CLASSICS. BUT GENERATIONS OF YOUNGER AS WELL AS OLDER GREEK-SPEAKING RESIDENTS OF AUSTRALIA WILL REMEMBER NICHOLAS LOURANTOS FOR HIS PHILANTHROPY, FOR HIS CHARITY.

7. IN THIS CONTEXT IT IS INTERESTING TO REFLECT ON THE TIES BETWEEN THE OLDER GENERATIONS OF OUR HOMELANDS. IN THE YEAR 1974-75, 3,334 AGED OR OTHERWISE DEPENDENT PARENTS WERE NOMINATED FOR ENTRY TO AUSTRALIA FROM GREECE, AND 4,837 WERE NOMINATED FOR ENTRY AS NON-DEPENDENT PARENTS. THE URGE FOR FAMILY REUNION IS IMMENSE AND GRATIFYING. IT IS AN INDICATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS BECOME HOME FOR A YOUNGER GENERATION, BUT ALSO A REMINDER OF THE PHYSICAL DISTANCE SEPARATING US FROM OUR EUROPEAN HERITAGE. I WAS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF THIS ON MY VISIT TO GREECE AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES EARLIER THIS YEAR.

IT MADE ME ALL THE HAPPIER FOR MY GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO INTRODUCE PORTABILITY OF PENSIONS OVERSEAS. AT PRESENT AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS ARE GOING TO 571 AGED PENSIONERS LIVING IN GREECE, 316 INVALID PENSIONERS, 149 WIVES AND 149 WIDOWS AND 7 SUPPORTING MOTHERS. OF THIS TOTAL OF 1,192, 484 HAD CONNECTIONS IN NEW SOUTH WALES. MANY OF THOSE PEOPLE WOULD BE KNOWN TO THIS AUDIENCE.

AND WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OF THESE ELDERLY PEOPLE DRAWING THE AUSTRALIAN AGE PENSION AT HOME IN GREECE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TEMPTED TO REMAIN HERE HAD THEY BEEN ABLE TO LOOK FORWARD TO RETIREMENT IN A PLACE LIKE LOURANTOS VILLAGE.

I HAVE VERY MUCH PLEASE INDEED IN DECLARING OPEN THIS LATEST VENTURE OF ST BASIL'S HOMES - LOURANTOS VILLAGE. MAY ALL WHO COME HERE ENJOY A PEACEFUL AND HAPPY RETIREMENT.
