

Canberra
February 24, 1978

Remarks by

His Excellency J. Alan Beesley, Q.C.
Canadian High Commissioner

at the Official Opening of the Canadian Exhibit
in the National Capital Agricultural Show

"It is an honour for Canada to have been asked to be the first Guest Nation at the National Capital Agricultural Show. We are honoured to be the first nation so selected and delighted to be able to participate in the Show in this substantial fashion. Our participation gives us a chance to offer visitors to the Show some glimpses of a few of the many facets of Canadian life. (May I take this opportunity also of expressing my personal pleasure at being here with you. I have just returned from negotiations as Head of Canada's delegation at the United Nations in New York on fisheries and deep sea bed mining and other Law of the Sea questions of great importance to our two countries, and I made a particular point of ensuring that I would be back in Canberra in time for this event.)

"I should explain that some items are on display here because they portray aspects of our culture and way of life that may be unfamiliar to many Australians — such as our ice-hockey equipment, snow-shoes and ski-wear. Other items, however, serve to demonstrate that in coping with our rigorous climate we have developed housing construction techniques and heating systems which could have broad application in Australia, even in its resort areas. It is well known, of course, that we have Fir timber which have been milled in Australia into the attractive furnishing components in our exhibit. I would venture to say that only your own Huon pine, which I was privileged to see in its native habitat in Tasmania, can compare as a basic building material.

"It is a fortunate fact of life for any Canadian High Commissioner to Australia that the relations between our two countries provide an outstanding example of close, friendly, and mutually rewarding ties. Nowhere is this more true than in our trading relationship. Our two-way trade grew to an unprecedented level last year and I am optimistic that it will strengthen still further in 1978. Canadian firms produce a broad range of manufactured goods and Australia is among the top few of Canada's customers for such products, particularly our high quality consumer goods. For instance, Australia is our best export market for carpets, samples of which you see on display here. The carpets we sell to you are of a type and quality not produced in Australia and therefore complement rather than compete with Australian products. I can give you an excellent example of an Australian export to Canada where this complementarity principle also applies. Canada produces wines but we are at the same time your best export market for wine.

"The attractive Laser sailboat exemplifies another important aspect of the Canadian-Australian commercial relationship. The Laser was designed and developed in Canada and has become one of the most popular sailboats in the world. However, the boat you see here, although of Canadian design, is built in Australia by Australian craftsmen under licence, to the benefit of both our economies.

"Indeed, our exhibit contains many products which illustrate the fact that Australia and Canada have become both competitors and allies in world markets. In both situations, but especially in areas in which we compete, there is an increasing need for consultation, cooperation and awareness of one another's interests. We each have a tremendous wealth of natural resources coupled with a good deal of modern technology and expertise, and we should be alert to ways in which we can reinforce our strengths.

"We would like this Canadian exhibit to do more, however, than assist in increasing awareness of the importance of trade between our two countries, and providing visitors to the Show with an appreciation of some of Canada's cultures and handicrafts. I would like to see more Australians visiting Canada. It is my hope that the recreation items and literature and posters on display here will entice fair-goers into travelling to Canada to discover for themselves what a varied and beautiful country it is. On the other side of the coin, I can testify that I lose no opportunity in telling Canadians what a fascinating country Australia is, particularly for Canadians, since we receive such a warm and friendly welcome here.

"Let me close by expressing my appreciation to the National Capital Agricultural Society for their kind invitation to the High Commission to present Canada as their first Guest Nation. What we have here is more than an exhibition of Canadian products — rather it is intended as a tribute to the great breadth and strength of our relationship. It is thus with considerable pleasure that I declare it officially open".