

REMARKS BY CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER

AT A TREE PLANTING CEREMONY
HONOURING SIR ROBERT MENZIES

June 29, 1979

Mrs. Henderson, other honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen:

Some 15 years ago Sir Robert Menzies planted a tree in the grounds of this High Commission to celebrate the opening of the new building to house the Canadian High Commission. It became evident not long ago that, in spite of the special care which had been given to the tree, it would have to be replaced. I wrote to Sir Robert Menzies asking if he would be able to plant a new tree. In his reply Sir Robert made known his express wish that this task be undertaken by his daughter, Heather Henderson, who is with us today to carry out Sir Robert's request.

The planting of this tree is intended to symbolize for all of us, Australians and Canadians alike, that the memory of Sir Robert Menzies lives on. He was a great Australian, loved and respected not only in his own country but throughout the world, particularly in the Commonwealth of nations to which he made so significant a contribution.

Although this is a solemn occasion, I think it important to remember the nature of the man we honour, for while he had a great gift for ceremonial and solemnity he also had a lighter side. When I had the pleasure of meeting Sir Robert not long after my arrival in Australia, when I called upon him in Melbourne, we had a fascinating discussion on a number of serious subjects. What I remember most of all, however, out of all the wise things he said to me, is that the world in which we live needs humour, and that

people must retain the ability to laugh, especially at themselves. He went on to say that politicians had a particular need for a sense of humour and he suggested that I pass this message on to Canada's politicians. I have not as yet decided whether or not to do so. Perhaps I'll do so eventually, after I retire.

All of us present here have good reason to know that Australia and Canada enjoy the best of relations and that Sir Robert Menzies had much to do with the forging of this strong and lasting friendship. It is particularly appropriate, therefore, that this tree be planted in his memory in the official home of Canada in Australia. I would like to thank you all for joining in this ceremony as part of our Canada Day celebrations in Australia.

I shall now call upon Heather Henderson to undertake the planting of the tree and to say a few words to you.

Your Excellency - Fellow Gardeners:

I am touched by the things you have said about Sir Robert Menzies. I can disagree with nothing. For me, he was a gorgeous Father.

He was a man of many talents, one of which was not gardening.

I am not a skilful gardener - I garden with intermittent bursts of enthusiasm. But I promise most solemnly (even as a good politician might - without humour) to come and have a chat with our tree from time to time.

I have not the temerity to compete with my Father or you in eloquence; I can simply endorse what you have said about contributing to the warm relations between our countries. I would not have spent the last 24 years of my life as I have if I didn't think our relations with the rest of the world are of the utmost importance.

I name this tree Eucalytus Nicolai Menzies Henderson.





PAUL J. HENNING
BORN: 1911
DIED: 1971
IN HIS 60th YEAR
FATHER OF MRS. J. HENNING
MOTHER OF MRS. J. HENNING
MOTHER OF MRS. J. HENNING
MOTHER OF MRS. J. HENNING

