



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/1479
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:
Proclamation Day Address

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/1479

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

ADDRESS BY DON DUNSTAN, PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, ON
PROCLAMATION DAY.

28TH DECEMBER, 1970.

YOUR WORSHIP THE MAYOR,
YOUR EXCELLENCY,
MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES,
YOUR HONOURS,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

IT IS NOW ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR YEARS SINCE GOVERNOR JOHN HINDMARSH READ THE PROCLAMATION ANNOUNCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOVERNMENT IN WHAT WAS THEN 'THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'.

THAT PROVINCE IS NOW OUR STATE, WHICH IN TURN IS PART OF A FEDERATION THAT HAS PROSPERED AS GENERALLY AS WE HAVE PROSPERED SINGULARLY.

PAGE 2.

THE COLONISTS WHO HEARD GOVERNOR HINDMARSH READ HIS PROCLAMATION STOOD NEAR THIS PLACE, WHICH WAS THEN A WOODED AREA BOUNDED TO THE WEST BY UNSPOILT SWEEPING SAND DUNES AND TO THE EAST BY THE NATURAL SCRUBS AND SOAKS OF THE STURT RIVER. AS THEY STOOD THERE, IT IS POSSIBLE THERE WERE SOME SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES REMARKING WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR THEM A MOST CURIOUS SCENE.

WE CAN NOW SEE THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE HERE AND ELSEWHERE. THE SOME THREE HUNDRED COLONISTS WHO HAD SETTLED IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WHEN GOVERNOR HINDMARSH ARRIVED HAVE NOW SWELLED TO SOME 1.2 MILLIONS. WE HAVE CLEARED THE LAND, FARMED IT, BUILT CITIES, ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIES, SUPPORTED SCHOLARSHIP AND THE ARTS, AND CREATED A SOCIAL SYSTEM WHICH HAS AS ITS IDEAL THE EQUAL WELFARE OF ALL CITIZENS. AND WE HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT REVOLUTION OR SOCIAL CONFLICT. THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA - AS OF AUSTRALIA - CAN, BY AND LARGE, BE PROUD OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS, COMING AS THEY DO FROM A MIXTURE OF LUCK, FORESIGHT AND INDUSTRIOUSNESS.

IN OUR ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR YEARS, THEN, WE HAVE MANAGED TO BUILD A NEW SOCIETY. BUT ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR YEARS IS NOT REALLY A VERY LONG TIME WHEN COMPARED WITH THE HISTORIES OF OTHER LANDS, STATES OR NATIONS. IN FACT, IT IS POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT WHAT WE CALL CIVILIZATION HAS IN TERMS OF HISTORICAL TIME ONLY LIGHTLY BRUSHED THE SURFACE OF THE CONTINENT AND OF THE STATE. WE DO NOT HAVE MANY, IF ANY, OF WHAT THE POET YEATS CALLED "MONUMENTS OF UNAGING INTELLECT". WE ARE A YOUNG NATION, AND AT TIMES A CALLOW ONE. THE EARLY COLONISTS SETTLED IN WHAT WAS QUITE A WONDROUS ENVIRONMENT OF UNIQUE FLORA, FAUNA AND NATURAL DISPOSITIONS. IT WAS AN OLD LAND, AND HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS HAD GONE INTO THE MAKING OF ITS VERY CAREFULLY BALANCED ECOLOGY.

THE NEW SETTLERS CHANGED THAT IRREVERSIBLY BY BEGINNING THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THAT STILL CONTINUES, AND CONTINUES IN SOME AREAS TO OUR PERIL. IT IS ONLY IN THE LAST DECADE THAT PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER HAVE BEGUN TO REALIZE AT WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL COST THEIR SOCIAL, DEMOGRAPHIC AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IS ACHIEVED. ONE OF THE URGENT TASKS IN THE FUTURE IS TO ACHIEVE ORDERED DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DESTROYING IRREPLACEABLE NATURAL ASSETS.

BUT THAT IS ONE TASK. WE HAVE ANOTHER OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE, AND WHICH CARRIES WITH IT ALL THE WEIGHT OF A MORAL IMPERATIVE. WHEN GOVERNOR HINDMARSH SET OUT FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA FROM ENGLAND HE CARRIED WITH HIM THE LETTERS PATENT FROM KING WILLIAM IV ESTABLISHING SOUTH AUSTRALIA. THEY WERE PASSED UNDER THE GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND SET OUT THE PRECISE LONGITUDES AND LATITUDES OF THE NEW PROVINCE.

THEY ALSO SAID: (AND I QUOTE):

"PROVIDED ALWAYS THAT NOTHING IN OUR LETTERS PATENT CONTAINED SHALL AFFECT OR BE CONSTRUED TO AFFECT THE RIGHTS OF ANY ABORIGINAL NATIVES.....TO THE ACTUAL OCCUPATION OR ENJOYMENT IN THEIR OWN PERSONS OR IN THE PERSONS OF THEIR DESCENDANTS OF ANY LANDS THEREIN NOW ACTUALLY OCCUPIED OR ENJOYED BY SUCH NATIVES."

GOVERNOR HINDMARSH IN HIS PROCLAMATION ECHOED THIS. HE SPOKE OF HIS INTENTION "TO TAKE EVERY LAWFUL MEANS FOR EXTENDING THE SAME PROTECTION TO THE NATIVE POPULATION AS TO THE REST OF HIS MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS". HE SAID HE WAS DETERMINED TO PUNISH WITH "EXEMPLARY SEVERITY ALL ACTS OF VIOLENCE OR INJUSTICE" WHICH MAY BE PRACTISED AGAINST THE NATIVES.

HE SAID THEY WERE TO BE CONSIDERED AS MUCH UNDER THE SAFEGUARD OF THE LAW AS THE COLONISTS THEMSELVES AND "EQUALLY ENTITLED TO THE PRIVILEGES OF BRITISH SUBJECTS".

I THINK THEREFORE IT BEHOVES US ON PROCLAMATION DAY TO REMEMBER THOSE WORDS AND THE FACT THAT THEY WERE NOT AND CANNOT BE SEEN TO HAVE BEEN OBEYED UNTIL IN SOME CASES QUITE RECENTLY. THAT THEY SHOULD BE IS A TASK TO WHICH BOTH GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENS SHOULD APPLY THEMSELVES.

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT WHEN THE FIRST SETTLERS ARRIVED IN SYDNEY COVE THERE WERE IN EXCESS OF 250,000 ABORIGINES IN AUSTRALIA, AND SOME 50,000 IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGION. AT THE 1966 CENSUS THERE WERE ONLY SOME 5,505 PEOPLE IN THIS STATE WITH MORE THAN 50 PER CENT ABORIGINAL BLOOD. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER 45,000? WELL, NOT TO PUT IT TOO BLUNTLY, UNTIL 40 YEARS AGO THEY FADED AWAY AT AN AVERAGE RATE OF ABOUT 400 EACH YEAR.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THEN THAT PROCLAMATION DAY SHOULD BE ENTIRELY A DAY OF REJOICING AND SELF-CONGRATULATIONS ON OUR PARTS. THOSE TRADITIONS SHOULD PERHAPS BE TEMPERED BY AN ACTUAL RECOGNITION THAT THE BEST WE HAVE DONE IN MANY AREAS IS NOT REALLY GOOD ENOUGH IN SOME. THE OLD PATERNALISM THAT COULD NOT RECOGNISE IN THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE ANYTHING BUT A PRIMITIVISM WHICH NEEDED NOTHING MORE THAN PROTECTION AND CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY IS THANKFULLY NOW BEING REPLACED BY A CANDID EQUAL ACCEPTANCE OF A PEOPLE WITH A UNIQUE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF WHICH THEY CAN BE PROUD AND WITH WHICH WE OTHER AUSTRALIANS SHOULD BE HONOURED TO BE ASSOCIATED. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT PROCLAMATION DAY 1970 SHOULD BE ONE ON WHICH EQUALITY AND BROTHERHOOD IS CELEBRATED AND ON WHICH BLIND PREJUDICE IS DESPISED.

THANK YOU.