

Memorial Services for Late Prime Minister of Australia

A MEMORIAL service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne at noon on December 22, 1967, for the late Prime Minister of Australia, the Right Honourable Harold Holt. Mr. Holt disappeared while swimming with a companion near Portsea, a resort about 60 miles southeast of Melbourne, when the two were separated in strong currents. Although a full-scale search was launched, Mr. Holt's body was not found.

Canada was represented at the memorial service by the Honourable Arthur Laing, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. ⁽¹⁾ Among those also in attendance at the service were H. R. H. Prince Charles, representing Her Majesty the Queen; President Johnson of the United States; and prominent government leaders from neighbouring countries.

On his arrival in Sydney, Mr. Laing, on behalf of Canadians and their Government, made the following statement:

We have come to add our tribute to the memory of your late Prime Minister. Canadians are saddened by his tragic passing and deeply distressed over his loss to the Commonwealth. He and Mrs. Holt had visited us in our centennial year and had participated in Expo 67; they made an enormous number of friends. Mr. Holt impressed everyone with his wide knowledge and great energy. His vitality has accounted in large part for the unprecedented recognition of Australia and its resources that now characterises all news media not only in Canada but on the American continent. Your loss is tragic; our sorrow, universal.

A special memorial service for Mr. Holt was also held in Ottawa at Christ Church Cathedral on Friday, December 22. In the congregation were the Governor General and the Prime Minister. Mr. Pearson delivered a eulogy.

(1) Statements by Prime Minister Pearson, Mr. R. L. Stanfield, leader of the Opposition, and representatives of all other parties in the House of Commons appear on Page 5517, House of Commons Debates, December 18, 1967.