In the past Portland has had a notable history and even now I believe the growing town is proud of its early associations with Victoria's first pioneers. For some years it looked as though Portland might remain relatively undeveloped but in the early years after the war and in the beginning of this decade especially men of vision began to shape Portland's destiny. This vision was a deep-sea harbour, safe from any storm, capable of berthing the largest ships and only one hour sailing from the main shipping route. This harbour was to have the most up-to-date facilities for exporting the primary produce from the hinterland and it was hoped that significant development would also take place in the growth of secondary industries.

This vision, that for many years was little more than a dream about which man would talk, has now very nearly come to full reality. It is true that industries have not yet established themselves in Portland but the harbour is to all intents and purposes an accomplished fact. Nothing can now stop its completion. The main breakwater has reached its full length and contractors are building the wharves. New railways, bridges and canals have been built in the programme to connect the Port to the State railway system.

In the last few years Australia has gone through an unequalled period of growth and expansion, greater even than that of the U.S.A. in her most rapid period of development. In certain areas the face of Australia has been changed, great new factories have been constructed, electric power and irrigation water supplies have been vastly increased, the Snowy Mountains scheme is already returning benefits to Australia in the output of hydro-electricity and water for irrigation. In the north new mining enterprises have brought new towns into being and added greatly to the wealth and population of Australia. Oil refineries and steel works have been built or expanded.

The key words in Australia today are expansion and development and the Australian people have caught the spirit of this great adventure, upon the success of which our future survival as an independent nation depends.

The people of western Victoria have not been apart from this
great movement forward. We have been a part of it and have made our contribution to it. The output from farms and properties has been greatly increased and more people have been settled on the land through soldier and closer settlement. Nevertheless in terms of the future, if there were one thing to which people could point and say "What is the most significant development being undertaken in Victoria", they would say without hesitation, the development of Portland Harbor. Portland is something that might not have happened had it not been for the energy and initiative of certain people in Portland, that it has happened is to their credit and to the everlasting benefit of Western Victoria and South Eastern South Australia.

In view of the great development taking place, I am more than pleased that Portland is to be visited by our Prime Minister on July 18th accompanied by Dame Pattie. It is the first time a Prime Minister has visited the Port and the national publicity that should follow the visit should do much to make all Australia realise the significance of Portland Harbor.

The Prime Minister and Dame Pattie will fly to Warrnambool Airport where they will be met by Warrnambool City and Shire authorities. They will then drive to Portland. The Prime Minister will visit Borthwicks before lunch while Dame Pattie will attend a women's function. The Mayor, Cr. Mabel Hedditch, will be hostess to the Prime Minister and Dame Pattie over lunch and in the afternoon the inspection of the Harbor will take place.

In the last two months the Prime Minister has been visiting all those areas of Australia that have been experiencing the greatest development such as the mining areas of Queensland or that have the greatest potential for future development such as the Kimberleys. I am particularly pleased that Portland ranks in his mind of real significance and that it is included in the kind of tour of Australia that he has undertaken.

No-one tries to pretend that Governments are responsible for all the development and expansion that takes place but quite clearly they can create conditions that will be favourable to development, that will encourage people to use their initiative. It is to our Prime Minister's very real credit that despite wide fluctuation in our overseas earnings he has been able to maintain vigour and active development throughout Australia.
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