

Charles Joseph La Trobe Address to the Citizens of Melbourne

3 October 1839

Captain Lonsdale and Gentlemen,

I beg leave to return you my acknowledgements for the welcome you have given me and my family. I have great pleasure in persuading myself, gentlemen, that it is a general one.

You will, I trust, at this time pardon me, if my thanks for the flattering address which I have had the honor of receiving are hastily expressed, and you will not undervalue their sincerity, because they are couched in few and simple words.

God grant that your favourable anticipations of the general results of my appointment to the station I shall have the honor to occupy among you, may be fully verified. I should, however, fear that the wishes of the inhabitants of the district may have led them to over-rate both my official and my personal powers; I can assure you, that I am impressed with a sense of the responsibility which attaches itself in the discharge of the duties upon me by Her Majesty's Government, and by His Excellency the Governor of these territories; and I pray God, to whom I look for strength and power, that whether my stay among you as chief organ of the Government, be long or short, that I may be enabled through His grace, to know my duty, and to do my duty, diligently, temperately and fearlessly.

In common with every new comer who lands on these shores, I cannot but be struck with the beauty of the district, and by the signs of increasing prosperity of this Township.

Three short years have effected great changes in this portion of Australia, and Captain Lonsdale will allow me to congratulate him, that the past period has been so sunny and so unclouded.

The sky is still bright before us and if appearances may be trusted, we may reasonably hope that increasing prosperity may still continue to mark the career of both individuals, and of the community at large.

I am persuaded from the Address which I have just now received, that the gentlemen present will agree with me in considering, that the particular epoch which we now are, is an exceedingly important one, in its bearing on the future character of the country. It will not be by individual aggrandisement, by the possession of numerous flocks and herds, or of costly acres, that we shall secure for the country enduring prosperity and happiness, but by the acquisition and maintenance of sound religious and moral institutions, without which no country can become truly great. Let us remember that religion is the only great preventive of crime, and contributes more, in a far more endurable

manner, to the peace and good order of society than the Judge and the Sheriff – the gaol and the gibbet united.

Our harmony and energy, as a people, must make up for our want of means.

My individual position among you, gentlemen, must be, both of necessity and from personal habits, humble and unostentatious; but however recent, I am now one of you, and I hope to prove to you, that the public interests are mine; and that I can both feel with and for you.

I have the honor to be,
Captain Lonsdale and Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant
CHARLES JOSEPH LA TROBE

Source: *Port Phillip Patriot*, 7 October 1839, p.4.