



GRAND PAPUA HOTEL INAUGURATION
15 NOVEMBER 2011



STEAMSHIPS TRADING COMPANY LIMITED

SPEECH BY BILL ROTHERY,
CHAIRMAN OF STEAMSHIPS TRADING COMPANY LIMITED
OPENING OF GRAND PAPUA HOTEL, PORT MORESBY
TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2011

Rt Hon Prime Minister – Peter O’Neill
Honourable Ministers
Your Excellences
High Commissioners
Lords, Ladies and Distinguished Guests

A very warm welcome to the official opening of the Grand Papuan Hotel. Thank you for joining us on another historic evening in Steamships history and perhaps that of Port Moresby and even Papua New Guinea itself.

There are two family guests here tonight who deserve a special mention and recognition as really this is their party and their evening. The majority shareholder in Steamships is represented tonight by Sir Adrian Swire. Sir Adrian first visited PNG in 1957 in order to check up on his shipping agent, Steamships, who had been appointed five years earlier to represent the New Guinea Australia Line service operated by Swire. He toured the length and breadth of the country visiting customers and quite likely looking for unpaid demurrage. He has been checking up on us ever since. I know that Sir Adrian is particularly delighted to be here tonight and to have been able to see the enormous changes that have been happening in Port Moresby. Sadly, his wife, the Lady Judith Swire, was unable to join him. She has often told me of her fond memories of travelling in the Highlands with her two sons. Fortunately one of them is here tonight and many of you may remember Sam Swire from his last visit here when he represented the Swire family at Steamships’ 90th Anniversary celebrations.

The other special family is the other major shareholder of Steamships – Sir Michael Bromley arrived in PNG one year earlier than Sir Adrian in 1956 – a fact that he likes repeating to Sir Adrian whenever they meet. Sir Michael made his home and business in the Highlands with Bromley and Manton and then Collins and Leahy. I must digress for a second to recognise another guest here tonight – Lady Aileen Leahy whose husband, the late Sir Danny Leahy, was a good friend and PNG mentor to many of us. Sir Michael Bromley has a deep appreciation and understanding of this country and its people – he is disappointed that he was not allowed to make a speech to us in Pidgin but I am sure you will be able to persuade him



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to do so at the bar later on. Sir Michael is here with two of his daughters, Melissa and Louise, who are regular visitors and who have both worked in the country.

Both the Swires and Mike Bromley have shown great perseverance and faith in PNG over the past 60 years. They have seen all the ups and downs that all countries experience, especially those increasingly taking their place on the world's stage. No one would argue that the last two or three years have been significantly better from an economic standpoint and that the future looks bright.

The Grand Papuan Hotel is a reflection of these more prosperous times. It represents the faith that the shareholders have in the long term future of the country. It also represents the vision, creativity and quality of Steamships' management team in bringing a world class hotel into the heart of Port Moresby.

On behalf of the Steamships Board I would like to congratulate Darren Young, Andrew Potter, Glenn Murphy, Brent St Hill and David Martens who, along with so many other Steamships staff, have made tonight possible.

We are also very grateful for the enormous efforts made by our architects, designers and contractors, especially Cullen Feng, Space Interiors, and Fletcher Morobe Construction. However, there is one person above all others who most deserve our praise and thanks. He has worked tirelessly since day one, involved in many of the essential details and applying his myriad of hotel skills to ensure that PNG can boast that it has an international hotel the equal of those in many major cities of the world. Of course I am referring to our ex chef and now Managing Director, David Cox – thank you David.

Steamships has always been very proud of its contribution to PNG during its 92 year history. Tonight is just another chapter and I am sure that we and future generations can look forward to even greater contributions and exciting chapters in Steamships' future.

Please join me in a toast to the Grand Papuan Hotel and all who stay here. ■