

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.  
R.G. MENZIES, AT THE OPENING OF WARNER-  
LAMBERT PTY. LIMITED, SYDNEY, ON THE 9TH  
SEPTEMBER, 1960

Sir and parliamentary colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

My friend may say that this is the most satisfying experience of 35 years. I want to tell him that having endeavoured to open quite a few enterprises in my time, I've absolutely run out of ideas for something fresh to say. And of course the difficulty is always added to in my case, because I look around and you would be surprised how many faces I see here today who were there last time (Laughter) somewhere else, and the time before that. I am satisfied that there must be quite a few people who ought to put down as their hobby: "Visiting the opening of new factories". (Laughter)

I am very indebted to the Mayor for his reception. He has already given me one, I don't mind telling you, down in the heart of what I insist on calling "the city", though he tells me it isn't one. And on that occasion he got a long speech out of me so he won't expect another. But I am certainly having a good look at Bankstown today. The only previous time that I can recall going into Bankstown - some of you know about this very well - was when the then member for this area in the Federal Parliament who lived in Bankstown was offered by me a lift from Canberra to Sydney. That was in those old, old, frugal days when we didn't travel by air. (Laughter) And I gave him a lift. He was a very great friend of mine. And we had a wonderful journey down together, talking about all sorts of things except politics. And as we got on to the fringes of Bankstown I said, "Now by the way, Joe, I think I had better give you a lift to your house. Where do we go?" "Oh! No", he said, "wait a moment, wait a moment: a little bit careful if you don't mind". "Oh!" I said, "nonsense! Come on". And as we turned along towards Bankstown he sank lower and lower in the seat. (Laughter) That was a novelty to me then. Of course I've been in politics long enough since to regard it as one of the normal things in life. (Laughter) But he sank lower and lower. And I said, "Come, come, what's wrong? Are you feeling ill?" And he said, "Look old man, I've enjoyed coming down with you, but for heaven's sake let me out at the next quiet corner, because if I'm seen travelling with you, it will cost me three thousand votes". (Laughter) It didn't seem to me to matter very much: he could have lost thirty thousand without being beaten by me. (Laughter)

But, Sir, these occasions are really very stimulating. I suppose that everybody of my vintage will remember his earliest impression of what a factory was like. They always seemed to be dark, dismal places, a lot of smoke around, very bad lighting, terrible old corrugated iron places, intolerably hot in the summer and intolerably cold in the winter. This was rather the stock pattern of the old factory: what Blake called in the well-known poem 'the dark satanic mills'. Very characteristic. In my lifetime - and I have no responsibility for it whatever, nor will anybody think I have - there has been a revolution in this field of human activity. The modern factory is, I think, one of the glories of contemporary civilization - because it is humane: it is not only a wonderful thing to work in, to move around in, but it is a humane idea. People live and work under the best possible circumstances. It is one of the very great revolutions in modern time. We talk about the modern industrial revolution: quite true, in the case of Australia, that in the course of my own lifetime Australia has moved from being a predominantly agricultural and pastoral country to being a very great industrial power. And that is, of course, a great revolution, a great and beneficial one, the benefit of which we have already had some reason to understand

and which we will understand more and more as the years go on. Because a country that stands precariously balanced on one leg of production is much easier to knock over, much easier to knock back, much easier to incommode, as we saw in the depression, than a country which stands robustly on both feet: has a great industrial development potential and a great primary production potential and achievement. Now that has been the great economic revolution in Australia in my political lifetime.

But side by side to that has been this revolution in technique, this understanding that you are going to produce successfully only if you can produce to the highest possible standards; that in a competitive world it isn't only price that will determine it, it is quality, consistency, reliability that will have much to do with whether the market is maintained. And if you are going to achieve those things, you want, not only more and more scientific skill in the laboratory, more and more scientific skill in management - because it rapidly becomes a science - but you must also have a sort of circumstance of work which enables everybody engaged in the enterprise to do his best, or her best, with good light, plenty of air - a happy surrounding. All these things mark the Australian industrial revolution.

Sir, you referred to the fact that you thought you had some competitors here. I am sure you have! I have walked around with you and two or three times I have, with the scepticism that Prime Ministers develop if they remain in office too long, said to you, "Oh, I see that's so-and-so. That is substantially the same as such-and-such, isn't it?" you know, naming one of the competing... (Laughter) I've been told every time, "No; it has a particular ingredient in it". And of course the moment, sir, you told me that, that the key to it was this particular ingredient, I realised why all your competitors were here. (Laughter) Have you made any provision for searching them before they leave? I think it might be a pretty good idea. (Laughter)

But I think all the same, that this Company has two claims to our regard - one of them perhaps is a little frivolous; but if you will permit me. My friend Mr. Wheeler over there, he's always a bit frivolous so I'll join in the frivolity on this occasion.

I understand, Sir, that the first Warner was the first man to put a sugar coating on the pill. I was surprised to read that. I thought that a man who had the genius to apply sugar coating to a pill, how is it that he never became the President of the United States? (Laughter) I assure you that the one genuine explanation of such political success as I've had, is that I'm the politician who discovered how to put the sugar on the pill. (Laughter) And the interesting thing is, that although the pill having been taken, and having done its deadly work - whatever it is - people tend to remember the deadly work - when it comes to the next pill, it is the sugar that attracts them. Now that is the law of continuity of life in politics. And therefore we are on common ground.

But the other thing, Sir, that I like about this is something that I've heard some people criticise. And that is that this represents an enterprise from another country established - long years ago now, but now further and brilliantly developed - in Australia. I like this kind of thing. I hope that we are not going to permit ourselves to become too narrow minded about investment in Australian enterprise by overseas operations. Because it is the law of life for Australia. Almost the same size as the United States, Sir, we are, and with one-eighteenth of the population of the United States. We have developed enormously since the war, both in terms of population

and actual industrial and productive achievement. This has been a marvellous period to live in. And there is no reason why it shouldn't go on.

But, Sir, it can't go on as fast as we would like, or as fully as we would like, unless we can - by obtaining the confidence of people in other countries - continue to draw into Australia resources of capital and skill and experience that can be used here for the benefit of Australians, for the benefit of Australians whether they are employees or employers, or simply the common-or-garden hum-drum consumer, as they say. We have ten million people: we are not a thriftless lot. There are those who when they read the sporting notes - some of which are sporting only in a technical sense - say, "Oh, Australians, oh, they're mad on sport in Australia. They're either mad on it, or sometimes mad about it. And they are a community of gamblers". People get frightfully troubled about it. You will be happy to know that Australia has no superior in the world for the saving and investment of capital. We save money, we invest money, out of our own resources - I'm not talking about imported capital for this purpose - a very high percentage indeed: just about as high as you can find anywhere in the world: we're not a thriftless community. Some of our saving is done voluntarily, which is very agreeable; and some of it is done involuntarily, which is very disagreeable. But between the two of them, if you were to cast up the capital investment tables in Australia, you would be proud of the extent to which this country does conserve and apply its own resources for its own development. But on top of that, of course, we've had, I'm happy to believe, large sums of money now ranging well over £100m. a year coming into Australia - not on Government account, but for private investment in capital enterprises, and capital enterprises which, in themselves are an enormous contribution to the further and further development of Australia and our employment, and the future of our children.

I know, Sir, that it is rather fashionable to talk about one or two spectacular successes and to say that they have succeeded all too well. Well I am a great believer in success. I would sooner that a business succeeded spectacularly, almost fantastically, and made a lot of money than that it should come here and fail.

And so when I am opening this factory, Sir, I hope that what I would imagine to be a reasonable profit level in the past, will go on. And I don't mind if it gets better and better and better. I'll take another 6d. in the £ out of it more. (Laughter) One way or another we will arrive at an accommodation with you, (Laughter) on that matter. More investment of this kind, more superb factories of this kind, more successful profitable enterprise in this country the happier we will be.

And so, Sir, I say to you that I wish you Good Luck. I am sorry that going around today I couldn't give vent to my usual instinct of wanting to souvenir something - you know: if it is edible, taste it. It is great fun opening a biscuit factory, or a food processing factory (Laughter). That is a wonderful idea, because, you know, you take a little nip here and you think it is very good. But I thought of that for a start and then I realised that it really wouldn't do, because I wouldn't be able to come up to the barrier. (Laughter) So, Sir, I conclude with great pleasure in saying that I have immense pleasure in declaring this factory open. (Applause)