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E.L.D.O. AND WOOMERA JOINT PROJECT DISCUSSIONS

Joint Statement by the Prime Minister, The Rt.Hon. R.G. Menzies
and The Rt.Hon. Mr. Peter Thorneycroft, British
Minister of Aviation.

The discussions between the Right Honourable Peter Thorneycroft, British Minister of Aviation, and the Australian Government, which began in Canberra on Wednesday, have been concluded satisfactorily.

The main purpose of the discussions was to review the working of the Anglo-Australian arrangements for the Woomera joint project, and to consider the use of the Woomera Range by the European Launcher Development Organisation (E.L.D.O.). Australia and Britain are partners in E.L.D.O. with five European countries - Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands - who are combining in a programme of work for the development of a space vehicle launcher.

The initial programme provides for the firing of a complete three stage E.L.D.O. launcher from Woomera. The first stage of the launcher will consist of the British Blue Streak rocket, the second stage of a French rocket and the third stage of a rocket to be developed under the leadership of the Federal German Republic. The first series of satellite test vehicles are to be developed under Italian leadership. Long range telemetric links are to be developed under the leadership of the Netherlands; and equipment for the down range guidance stations is to be developed under the leadership of Belgium.

Australian membership of E.L.D.O. requires no financial contribution at least for the programme now planned and E.L.D.O. will meet the cost of completing the facilities at Woomera required for the E.L.D.O. programme.

Australia's contribution to the Woomera joint project will be on the basis of an annual contribution of £8.7 million for five years. Australia will also set aside funds for the development of Australian projects, previously included in the joint amount.

A party of technical experts from member countries of E.L.D.O. will be visiting Australia next month.

CANBERRA.

6th July, 1962.