

OPENING OF CHANNEL 10 TELEVISION STATION  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

5th APRIL, 1965

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies.

It gives me quite a lot of pleasure to be associated with the opening of your new Station. That is partly because your Chairman and some of your Directors are very old friends of mine, and their individuality guarantees that this will be a highly well-conducted Station.

There are other reasons, of course, for my pleasure. One is that I think it is a very good thing for the future of television that we should have as wide a choice as possible in the programmes that we want to look at. I do not mean by that that there ought to be so many that they cease to be effective, but I do mean that a choice, the possibility of turning that knob and getting on to another station is of tremendous importance.

I do not look at television as much as perhaps most people, but I always have a very attractive sense of power when a programme is on and I do not like it and I can just turn the knob and get rid of it. It makes me understand exactly how people feel during an election campaign when they can do the same kind service by me.

Choice is, I think, in the long run, the guarantee of quality because if people are exercising their judgment in that way, this will soon become known and standards I think will tend to be maintained and improved.

There is another thing about television which makes it fascinating and, I think, sometimes almost terrifying. It appeals to the eye as well as to the ear. People look at the performer, whether he is a speaker or an actor, or whatever he may be, and they listen to him. They have an opportunity of forming a judgment in two senses, which cannot be made merely by listening to a voice over the air. I think, indeed, that although your prime function will be to entertain your viewers, to instruct your viewers in a mild and insinuating way, you will occasionally have on your station political people, men of affairs, university professors, all sorts of people who have something to say which may be contentious, and I think it is tremendously valuable that people should be able to look as well as hear. It gives them an opportunity of forming a judgment, so to speak, in the round.

I think television is going to have a tremendous effect in the future. Indeed, I sometimes tremble to think of what will happen in due course when the premiums will be put on television personalities and nobody will be nominated for a seat in Parliament unless he is a clean winner on the screen. Well, sometimes that might be good and frequently it might not, but with experience people will cultivate an additional judgment through the medium of television.

Therefore, I think you are entering upon an adventure. It is a financial adventure, of course, though I have no doubt it will succeed, an adventure into a new world of entertainment and instruction, a new world which I believe is going to be more and more significant as the years go by.

I compliment this Company on the quality of those who direct it. I am perfectly certain that under their guidance this Station will have great success, and I certainly wish it all the luck in the world.

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