

PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS AT RANK-NEC FACTORY OPENING - PENRITH 11.9.74

"Mr. Russett, Consuls General for Britain and Japan, my colleagues the Mayor of Penrith, Mr. Luchetti M.P., Mr. Mulock M.L.A., Mr. Makino, Mr. Montgomery, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me very great pleasure indeed to be in this "studio", and I know that not only those on the platform but everybody in the audience will be on their very best behaviour because we are all in LIVING COLOUR, glorious technicolour, on the best and latest television sets available in the world.

It gives me very great pleasure indeed to be at this function with you. One of the first things I did after becoming Prime Minister was, early in the piece, when I was Prime Minister and minister for 12 other departments as well, was to ask the Tariff Board to put into force the conditions under which colour television sets should be made in Australia- it was an early and striking opportunity to demonstrate that my government wanted to open up the processes by which decisions of this character were made.

I'm delighted now to see the product, to see it being produced so well and so early. There is no doubt that but for that early, intensive, rapid enquiry by the Tariff Board (now the Industries Assistance Commission), we mightn't have had such good colour television sets in Australia as are now being made at Penrith, and it is certain that the public wouldn't have got such cheap ones.

The infusion of more colour in production and marketing has been a "god-send" for the Australian electronic industry. The industry was over-protected and arrangements were in hand to see that the existing companies would have the whole field for themselves. Here today, we can see that two of the greatest, most experienced enterprises in the world have combined to produce, in Australia, good sets. They will be available in good time for the introduction of colour television in Australia, and we can be

certainly assured that companies that have had some greater part to play in Britain, in Japan will produce good sets, and the heads of these enterprises assure me that the products of this factory will be as good as the products of any factory in which they participate anywhere in the world -- there couldn't be any greater assurance of quality than that.

I am very glad indeed that one of the first steps I took as Prime Minister was to see that we would get as good sets as we are now getting and as cheap sets as we will now be getting.

I also welcome the opportunity to say in the company of this great gathering of people who are involved in all aspects of the electronic industry: design, production, marketing, servicing and of course those who make the programmes too, that I welcome the opportunity to refute some of the alarmist talk that sometimes goes on, including in the electronics industry, because I regret to say that some hitherto over-protected industries sometimes monopolised by overseas companies, very often too in collusion with trade unions, have raised the alarm of unemployment in this industry. It is absolute nonsense. There will be no reduction of employment in the electronics industry in Australia. One very simple reason is that it takes two or three times as many men and women to produce colour television sets as it does to produce an equivalent number of black-and-white television sets.

So we're getting the good product here as we can see in Penrith today. So the industry in a more contemporary, competitive form is going to be prosperous. There will be a very great number of people employed in making and in designing and servicing these sets and producing these programmes who will benefit.

But above all, the public will benefit. And that's why all of us in each of our callings is able to provide because the public is satisfied with it.

There is one other matter which I should mention - a feature of government policy in this field, and that is that earlier this year we had to face the fact that the patent rightscontrolling the PAL -- these initials are always

very confusing -- if I talk about National, of course people in the National Alliance may think I'm raising some political issue; if I say PAL some people may think this is some mutation of ALP. I assure you if I use words like National or PAL I am doing so in a completely dispassionate bi-partisan, multi-partisan sense.

Well, earlier this year, we found that these patent rights were held by AEG Telefunken and under the arrangements then pertaining, imports from Japan of sets under 18" couldn't come to Australia before March, 1977 - another 3 years before we could get them - that is colour T.V. would be here for 2 years before 18" screens would be available from the best source. Now this would have unreasonably restricted the consumer's choice. As a result of negotiations with AEG Telefunken and with AWA my government has ensured that sufficient small sets will be available in Australia to meet the estimated demand from the outset of colour T.V.

I sometimes have misgivings about the small sets, I usually find that I require a broad screen and some people say that my wife and I both require a broad screen. It's a great medium for the family, television, but particularly for our family.

And I also of course, on this occasion in this week couldn't forbear to pay tribute to the insight or rather the farsightedness of the most progressive commercial station in N.S.W. for seeing that the whole team regularly appeared! The only difficulty in our family is that we have to see that the programmes in which we appear don't compete, so we have to appear at different times on Channel 2 and Channel 10. We have to keep our Channels right in T.V. And in our family we keep a good public balance in this respect. Just as I have to give equal time to Bill Snedden whenever I speak, my wife has to give equal time to me.

I always watch the polls. I never know whether they're referring to my government's stocks or my wife's ratings but I watch the polls in these respects.

But to come back to the subject here, we are determined, as a government to see that people in Australia will have the best T.V. possible. The programmes, the reception, the servicing, the consumer, the producer, the performer -- albeit rain or hail or "Frost", T.V. will be first-rate in Australia. Now, we will be seeing ourselves, I don't know what channels will be showing it later on, but in a few months, on the products of this factory, people in a very great area of Australia, will be able to see colour T.V. as most comparable countries have been able to see colour T.V. for some time past. And we can be sure, that the wait has been worthwhile, because we will now, in Australia, from a combination of Australia's greatest overseas customers, Japan and Britain, with the co-operation they've shown in this case, with the opportunities they've given to men and women in this country, we will now be able to see colour television in Australia on sets which will be as good as those to be found anywhere in the world. I have very great pleasure in declaring the Rank-NEC factory open.