

You've just seen the man who often represents me -  
I'm now speaking in my own right.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've all shown by our presence tonight that we want to make TV Australian - we've acknowledged in the flesh, directly, the men and women of talent who can make television Australian. On behalf of the Australian Government I support their efforts. But I must confess that it's become much more difficult to do so than I thought when I pledged this support on behalf of my Party three years ago. It's not that very much hasn't been attempted and quite an amount achieved - but I must mention two particular difficulties we have: first, of course, it's only in recent years that the Australian Government has tried to do anything about making TV Australian. Before John Gorton, who is with us tonight - and except for John Gorton, no other Australian Governments have ever tried to do anything about making television Australian. And one of the early pleasures I had as head of the present Government was to bring in to the House, and get through both Houses, the statute to establish the Television School. Then we established a Film, Radio and Television Board in the Australia Council; and we've established an Australian Film Commission.

But there is one very long-seated difficulty that we have in Australia - there are too many television commercial stations; and this stems from the fact that in the later 1950's and the early 1960's the Australian Government of the day had to make sure that every one of the newspaper families got its own two television stations. And it is very much cheaper to be one of the few hundred television outlets for television programs made in the United States or even the United Kingdom than it is to be one of the half dozen catering for Australian programs. With a great number of outlets it's cheaper and therefore Australian television programs are too expensive, so they say. And all the newspapers do their best to disparage the Australian program - and they do it under the guise of telling their viewers that they are entitled to a choice: they're entitled to the best, and the best - the inference is comes from overseas.

And then there is one other very great difficulty that we've found: the laws under which there is supervision of radio and television in Australia, the Broadcasting and Television Act, has not given sufficiently clear powers and jurisdiction to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. Where it has been possible by administrative action to improve the Australian Broadcasting Commission or the Australian Broadcasting Control Board the Government has done so. The people who work for the A.B.C. now for the first time have elected somebody themselves to represent them on the A.B.C. And the Australian Broadcasting Control Board for years said there were no more channels available and FM was not possible in Australia. We now know that these were false

statements. But still the Broadcasting Control Board can make suggestions and can issue orders and the television stations can disregard them with impunity. And twice the House of Representatives has passed amendments to give the Broadcasting Control Board teeth and twice the Senate has rejected those amendments. I will say no more about the Senate, of course. But we've done our best and until the laws are amended, radio and television in Australia will be handicapped by the lack of proper national power.

Ladies and gentlemen, we've all seen with our own eyes, and heard with our own ears tonight the extent, the range, the quality of talent, that there is in Australia to produce Australian TV programs. And I believe your voices, your response, to the artists, to the writers, to the producers, will yet be heard. Ladies and gentlemen, we all have to work harder, resolutely, patiently, to see that Australian talent is not only seen in Australia, but identified as Australian around the world. We have made increasing sums of money available - '73 Budget, '74 Budget, '75 Budget, when it gets through. But this is not enough - we must all see, as Australians, that all our resources are increasingly Australian - whether they are material or human. And we have a wealth of human material, human resources in this country, and not least in the performing arts and in the most modern and pervasive of them all, television itself. Let us make it Australian.

---