



## PRIME MINISTER

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### ADDRESS AT OPENING OF SEBEL PLANT, BANKSTOWN

It is a great pleasure for me to be invited officially to open the plastics moulding division factory of Sebel Limited. I understand that pre-tax profits of Sebel Limited rose by six percent last year, and that there is to be a bonus share issue, I congratulate you on that performance.

I should also say I am a bit envious - it would be a happy day for politicians if we got a bonus everytime we got satisfactory results. We did in fact receive a type of bonus yesterday when the latest C.P.I. figure was released - only 2.3 percent for the March quarter.

This figure was far below that which some learned commentators forecast. It shows that the annual inflation rate, after adjusting for Medibank is only 10.2 percent. Inflation is coming down, and that is most satisfying. But of course there is still much to be done. Inflation must be reduced further, and unemployment greatly reduced.

Our objectives are to reduce inflation and unemployment and have a full economic recovery. If this is to happen, we need increased capital investment. New investment, like this new plant, is vital to the future prosperity of this country, and there is an increasing amount of capital investment. To ensure that this occurred, one of our first actions as a government was to institute a 40 percent investment allowance.

This action triggered off Sebel's decision to go ahead with this plant. This new Sebel's factory is a good reminder that Australian industry can compete effectively on international markets. We can only compete when a number of factors are present: good industrial relations; effective management; sound product development; good design work; and sympathetic government policy.

First on my list is industrial relations, and I particularly noted your comment, Mr Sebel, that without employees' goodwill and cooperation you would not have been able to raise production as much as you have done.

Good communications between employers and employees benefits everyone. Management, unions and every employee have a responsibility in bringing it about. Good industrial relations depend on consultation on issues such as the working environment and industrial

safety. The Government believes employees and employers should establish consultative machinery of their own choosing, which will improve communication and an understanding of the common interests of employers and employees.

A company's actions are vitally important to its employees. I see no reason why employees should be the last to learn of decisions vitally affecting their future. And company management should give a great deal more attention to taking employees into their confidence on the company's performance, its investment opportunities, and the possibility of creating new jobs. Management should make every endeavour to encourage employees to look on the company they work for as their company, and be proud of that fact.

Sebel's policy of sharing the benefits of increased efficiency with employees and the special share issue to fifty nine Sebel employees are good examples of this philosophy in practice.

Another important factor in competing successfully in export markets is a commitment to product development and design. Sebels can be justly proud of their record in this respect. One of the company's designs recently received the Australian Design Award. It is largely due to product development and design that Sebels has competed successfully in the U.K., South Africa, New Zealand, Singapore and elsewhere.

The Government actively encourages such development by supporting the Design Council. And this year we are providing \$15 million for industrial research and development grants.

There are, as all television addicts know, Australian inventors of great talent and ingenuity. It is up to industry to harness their inventiveness and to develop new Australian products which are the equal, if not superior, to any similar products in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate you on this fine new factory and have pleasure in declaring it officially open.

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