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Title:
Speech opening Autumn Trade Fair, Adelaide

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN OPENING AUTUMN TRADE
FAIR, ADELAIDE.

4/5/73

MR. PATTERSON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ASKING ME HERE TODAY. THIS EXHIBITION HAS BEEN AN ANNUAL EVENT SINCE 1968 AND THERE'S NO DOUBT OF ITS VALUE OR POPULARITY.

THAT IT IS A PROVEN SUCCESS IS SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT THIS YEAR IT HAS ATTRACTED MORE THAN 100 EXHIBITORS.

AN EXHIBITION SUCH AS THIS, I THINK, HAS TWO VERY USEFUL FUNCTIONS. THE DISPLAY OF NEW PRODUCTS AND IDEAS FOR THE HOME IN A SHOWCASE SETTING GIVES CONSUMERS A CONVENIENT AND ENTERTAINING WAY OF SEEING THE LATEST TRENDS IN BUILDING AND HOME FURNISHINGS. AND, OF COURSE, IT PROVIDES THE EXHIBITORS WITH A MARKET PLACE TO ADVERTISE AND SELL THEIR GOODS.

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ITS OTHER GREAT BENEFIT IS AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING HIGHER STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND DESIGN. PUTTING PRODUCTS SIDE BY SIDE IN AN EXHIBITION FORMAT ALLOWS VISITORS TO COMPARE AND EVALUATE. AND THIS HAS OBVIOUS BENEFITS FOR BOTH MANUFACTURER AND BUYER. I DON'T THINK THERE CAN BE ANY DOUBT THAT HOME, AND PARTICULARLY FURNITURE, BUYERS ARE BECOMING MORE DISCRIMINATING.

AUSTRALIA USED TO BE THE HOME OF THE CHEAP AND NASTY IN FURNITURE AND INDOOR DECORATION. BUYERS WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT - OR MORE OFTEN WERE FORCED BY THEIR POCKETS TO ACCEPT - BADLY DESIGNED, SHODDILY MADE GOODS WHOSE ONLY MERIT WAS THAT INITIALLY THEY WERE CHEAP.

I SAY INITIALLY BECAUSE A PRODUCT THAT QUICKLY FALLS APART OR WEARS OUT IS NOT A CHEAP BUY.

GOOD QUALITY AND GOOD DESIGN, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF FURNISHINGS, ARE INSEPARABLE, THERE IS STILL A LARGE MARKET FOR THE CHEAPER PRODUCT WHERE THOSE FACTORS ARE SUBORDINATE TO COST BUT IT IS A SHRINKING ONE AND THE TREND IS APPARENT.

AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURERS MUST MEET THOSE CHANGING DEMANDS.

IN DOING SO THEY WILL BE DOING THEMSELVES A FAVOUR. AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS ASIDE, THERE ARE VERY SOUND ECONOMIC REASONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. ITALY AND THE SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES HAVE EARNED THEMSELVES A WORLDWIDE REPUTATION AND A VERY SUBSTANTIAL VOLUME OF EXPORTS BY DELIBERATELY FOSTERING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN COMBINED WITH EXACTING STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

WE CAN DO IT HERE. THERE IS NOTHING INHERENTLY DIFFERENT IN AN ITALIAN OR SWEDISH DESIGNER FROM AN AUSTRALIAN THAT MAKES THEM SUPERIOR. EDUCATION, ENCOURAGEMENT AND A DEMAND FOR THEIR WORK CAN EFFECT THE SAME THING HERE.

THERE ARE ALREADY SOME OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES OF FIRST CLASS WORK IN AUSTRALIA AND NUMBERS OF OUR YOUNG DESIGNERS WOULD BE REGARDED AS EXCELLENT ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. BUT THEY ARE STILL TOO FEW.

WE CAN DO A LOT MORE. WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO GO THINKING THAT THE HOME PRODUCT IS ALL RIGHT FOR WORKADAY PURPOSES BUT THAT, IF WE WANT EXCELLENCE, THEN WE SHOULD LOOK FOR A FOREIGN LABEL. AUSTRALIAN DESIGN CAN BE GOOD AND AT THE SAME TIME IT CAN BE DISTINCTIVELY AUSTRALIAN IN SUCH A WAY THAT A EUROPEAN PURCHASER IS AS INTERESTED IN GETTING AN AUSTRALIAN TABLE OR CHAIR AS WE ARE IN LOOKING AT A EUROPEAN PRODUCT.

IT WAS WITH THIS IN MIND, THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOOD AUSTRALIAN WORK, THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED ITS GRANTS FOR INDUSTRIAL DESIGN - NOT SO THAT WE CAN GET A PRETTY PIECE OF FABRIC OR OFFICE DESK BUT SO THAT WE CAN GET A GOOD ONE THAT WILL SELL AND SO THAT OUR MANUFACTURERS CAN SECURE A BROADER SPECTRUM OF THE MARKET.

WE ARE GETTING RESULTS BUT WE WILL GET STILL MORE AS PEOPLE BECOME MORE DESIGN CONSCIOUS.

THIS EXHIBITION IN PROMOTING SUCH CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE PUBLIC AND WITHIN THE INDUSTRY ITSELF AS WELL AS IN GIVING CUSTOMERS A CHANCE TO SEE SOMETHING OF THE VERY WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, HAS A MOST WORTHWHILE PURPOSE. I HAVE MUCH PLEASURE IN OFFICIALLY DECLARING IT OPEN.