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Figure is left standing in wait by the Deputy PM

By MICHAEL SHMITH,
arts editor

At yesterday's unveiling of the National Gallery of Victoria's latest and largest work, Willem de Kooning's 3.9-metre high bronze sculpture, 'Standing Figure', two important people were absent. One was Willem de Kooning; the other was Robert J. Hawke.

The artist could not attend the unveiling because he was at home in America awaiting the birth of his first grandchild. The Prime Minister, who was supposed to do the honours, was in Canberra with a heavy cold, Recumbent Figure, perhaps?

Enter the Deputy PM, Lionel Bowen, who, after missing one plane and arriving 29 minutes late, informed the capacity audience seated around the shrouded sculpture (two stage staff from the Arts Centre holding the parachute silk to avoid premature unveiling) that he

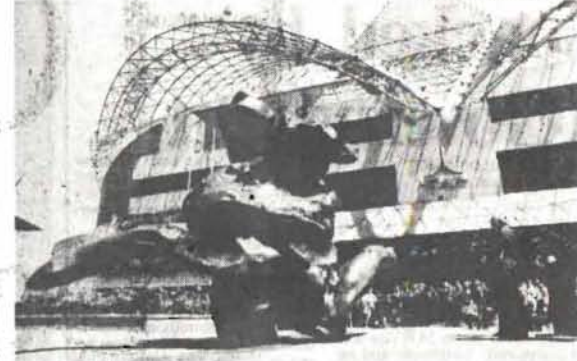
would not be able to stay long: "I have to be back for question time."

Still, Mr Bowen performed well as prime ministerial understudy. "It is called 'Standing Figure'," he said, with only the briefest look behind him at the billowing bundle, adding: "Which I am sure it is."

After a small joke ("Its size guarantees it won't be found in Spencer Street Station"), Mr Bowen pushed a red button. Off flew the shroud, to reveal the bronze in all its majesty.

'Standing Figure' is a bicentenary gift to the nation from the National Australia Bank, which bought it in 1986 for \$US375,000. It arrived in pieces in Australia in July, and was stored in a warehouse in South Melbourne. Last Sunday, in the wee small hours, the pieces were taken to the forecourt and assembled.

Picture: JOHN WOODSTRA



The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Bowen, unveils 'Standing Figure' at the National Gallery yesterday.

Illegal tapes could halt Edelsten case

The Federal Government's legislation against the use of illegally intercepted telephone conversations as court evidence is likely to result in the dropping of criminal charges against the medical entrepreneur, Dr Geoffrey Edelsten.

Dr Edelsten is charged in the Sydney Central Local Court with conspiring to assault a former patient and conspiring to pervert the course of jus-

tice. The matter had been set down for hearing on 23 November.

The court was told yesterday that the bulk of the case against Dr Edelsten was based on tapes of illegal telephone taps which, under the Federal Telecommunications (Interception) Amendment Act, passed in June and expected to take effect before the end of the year, would not be admissible evidence.



Dr Edelsten

Mr James Sheblin, for the director of public prosecutions, said that without the use of two illegally taped conversations, the prosecution would have insufficient evidence to mount a case.

Mr Sheblin told the magistrate, Mr David Hyde, that there was no section within the act providing for cases already before the court.

Mr Hyde vacated the committal hearing dates and stood the matter over until 15 December for mention.

Official says Nauru had cash for rehabilitation

By LUKE SLATTERY

The Australian high commissioner to the Pacific island of Nauru said yesterday that the islanders were "nationally wealthy" and had not used their resources since independence in the most beneficial way.

Mr John Powys said his comments would be contested by the Nauruans, who are inquiring into the rehabilitation of the island from the effects of phosphate mining before independence in 1970. Nauru's three former colonial administrators — Australia, Britain and New Zealand — do not recognise the inquiry.

Mr Powys said the Nauruan Government had reaped \$100 million a year in phosphate revenue since 1970. "By any reasonable view there should be enough money around to do what they want with the country." He estimated the cost of rehabilitation at \$1 billion.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs said Mr Powys's comments should not be taken as a criticism of the Nauruans. Similar views had been expressed in the Nauruan Parliament.

Mr Powys was quoted as saying the Nauruans "did not deserve compensation". He has refused to comment on the remark until he has seen a video tape of the program.

The Nauruan Government has also asked for a tape and a spokesman for the Government said yesterday a formal response to the Australian High Commissioner was being considered.

The counsel assisting the Nauru inquiry, Professor Barry Connell, said last night that the Nauru Government had continued to invest its money for the island's future.

"If they had spent all their money on rehabilitation they would have nothing left to invest," he said.



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In notices which appeared in this newspaper on 29 July 1987 and 29 August 1987, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal announced that it had received applications from Bond Media Ltd seeking Tribunal approval for its recent acquisition of the television and radio interests previously