

BROADCAST NO. 1

BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES  
ON NATIONAL STATIONS AT 7.15 P.M.  
THURSDAY, 16TH NOVEMBER, 1961

Another Federal Election campaign is on. During the next few weeks you will no doubt, so long as you can put up with it, be bombarded with arguments and appeals. Many issues will be raised and discussed. Many claims will be made and rejected, and a good deal of dust will blow about.

So perhaps I should get in early, before you are tired, with a few broad remarks.

This is an election for the Commonwealth Parliament. That means an election for every seat in the House of Representatives, and for the retiring half of the Senate. On Polling Day, therefore, we vote for individual men or women, but for the most part we vote for them as the supporters of a Party with a body of ideas; a Party which hopes to form a Government.

I am a Party man. After many years of experience I believe that there can be no coherence and stability in government, and no continuity of policy, unless Ministers have Party allegiance. Every now and then somebody will ask you to elect him as an "Independent". Why should you do so? A Government that was made up of "Independents" would not last for a month, for there would be no common policy and no mutual loyalty. And what becomes of the individual Independent? He votes as he pleases; nobody can depend upon him from one week to another; if his vote, because of a near equality in the Parties, is important, no government has any reasonable expectation of life, nor can it engage in that long term planning which a modern and growing country needs.

So, the true question in this election is whether you want to put my government out and put Labour in, or whether you don't. There is no middle course.

The business of government is the greatest business in the nation. Some people try to separate business from government; to set up hostility between them; to treat politicians as if they were innocent of those economic and financial matters which affect private citizens.

This is a complete fallacy. A government can, by its financial and economic measures, create a climate in which enterprise is encouraged, the resources of the nation developed, much capital and technical skill invested, and future employment expanded. A bad government can discourage enterprise, make the financing of development difficult, frighten off capital and technical growth, and, by opposing those elements which create employment opportunity, create the most acute social problems.

Government, in short, is in a basic sense, the greatest business of all.

What you have to decide at a General Election, therefore, is the broad business management of our country.

Having set up this test, I want now, quite briefly, to apply it.

The Commonwealth Government has been in office for twelve years. They have, broadly speaking, been twelve years of remarkable national and individual progress and prosperity. By reason of good conditions at home and a vigorous policy of migration from abroad, the population of Australia has grown by at least a quarter. Production, both primary and secondary, has grown notably. This is important because increased production is the essential condition of rising living standards. Savings and investment have increased. The average household has, from motor cars and refrigerators to radios and television sets, a degree of equipment for civilised living which few thought possible twelve years ago. Employment has been high, and the degree of industrial peace remarkable. Our international relations have added to our national security. We have means of transport which are the envy of most countries in the world. Our trade has grown so that we are one of the ten leading trading nations of the world. We have the most remarkable facilities for enjoying our earned leisure. We are a free country and a happy one.

If Australia, as a whole, was your business, would you change the management?

Perhaps you would if you felt reasonably certain that, under new management, Australia, and you, would do even better. Let us, therefore, have a look at the proposed new management, and the new managers.

The new management is that of the Socialist State. The new managers are the Australian Labour Party, acting under the binding instructions of the Federal Conference of the Australian Labour Party, a small body which you do not elect at all. Let me repeat the words of the operative rule; they deserve to be well known --

"The Federal Conference of the Party shall be the supreme governing authority and policy making body, and its decisions shall be binding upon all State Branches and affiliates thereto, and upon the Federal and State Parliamentary Labour Parties and upon the Federal Executive."

The effective new managers who are offering to take over the national business are, therefore, almost entirely unknown to you. Those who offer themselves as the ostensible managers, Mr. Calwell and his Parliamentary colleagues, are notoriously divided into warring groups, with personal feuds, with a left-wing so aggressive that the bird finds it difficult to fly straight!

My own government has enjoyed complete cohesion, internal loyalty and a concerted policy. Our opponents cannot even pretend to offer you these. They have never been able to clarify their relationships with the Australian Communist Party, the faithful local agents of the Communist powers which alone threaten the world with suicidal war. How can they be trusted to deal with your affairs?

I referred to the "new management" being that of the Socialist State. For the Labour Party still stands for nationalisation and for Constitutional changes to make it possible. Before you vote for such a reactionary policy, and abandon the existing management, ask yourselves a few questions.

Would the great basic industries of coal, and iron and steel, and copper, and lead and zinc, of engineering production, of all those things, the recent development of which is one of the great romances of Australian history, have grown so much or so fast under Socialist nationalisation? Who have provided the dynamic force in our development? Men and women who, under a system of free enterprise, have used their skill and capital and sense of adventure.

You are all shareholders in Australia Unlimited. Will you choose as directors people who believe in you, in what you can do, given a fair break, and in the free spirit which has wrought such wonders, or those who believe in the all-powerful State, in which enterprise is discouraged, in which powerful contributions of capital and skill from overseas are resented and repelled, and in which the priceless independence of the individual is to be replaced by a docile dependence upon Government?

These are great basic questions. I hope they will not be obscured.

For your answer to them will determine whether we are, as a nation, to go on in growth and progress, or fall back into confusion and stagnation.

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SUPPLEMENTARY

The following statements could not, for reasons of time, be included in a Broadcast Speech limited to one hour. But they are issued for publication conjointly with the main speech, which in some respects they amplify and explain.

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### COMMONWEALTH AID FOR ROADS

In 1949-50 the Commonwealth paid £8,852,000 to the States for roads. It is estimated that, in the present financial year, the Commonwealth will pay £50 millions!

The present Commonwealth Aid Roads Act was passed in 1959 to give effect to a scheme, proposed by the Commonwealth, under which the Commonwealth undertook to provide over a five year period a total sum of up to £250 million to the States for roads.

Under this arrangement, which forms part of its developmental policy, the Commonwealth is to pay to the States, during the five year period 1959 to 1964, "basic grants" of £220 million and an additional sum of up to £30 million which (subject to certain annual limits) is to be payable on the basis of £1 for each £1 allocated by the State Governments from their own resources for expenditure on roads over and above the amounts they allocated for this purpose in 1958-59. The distribution of the grants over the five years is as follows:-

	Basic Grant	Matching Assistance	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
1959-60	40,000	2,000	42,000
1960-61	42,000	4,000	46,000
1961-62	44,000	6,000	50,000
1962-63	46,000	8,000	54,000
1963-64	48,000	10,000	58,000
Total	220,000	30,000	250,000

The amounts being made available by the Commonwealth will be distributed among the States in each year in the proportions of 5 per cent of the total for Tasmania and the balance shared among the other five States on the basis of one-third according to population as at the last preceding Census, one-third according to area and one-third according to vehicles registered at 31st December preceding the year concerned.

The States are required to ensure that not less than 40 per cent of the funds made available by the Commonwealth in each year is spent during that year on roads in rural areas, other than highways, main roads or trunk roads. The States may among them spend up to £1,000,000 of the amount made available by the Commonwealth in each year on works connected with transport by road or water, other than the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of roads. As under the previous legislation, the States are free to allocate to municipal or local authorities for roads purposes any part of the moneys received by them from the Commonwealth.

### UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

In 1949, towards the end of the term of the Chifley Government, there was much temporary unemployment caused by the Communist-inspired Coal Strike.

In that year the basic wage was

£6. 9. - per week

For an unemployed man with a wife and child, the unemployment benefit (under the Labour Government's legislation of 1945) was

£2. 10. 0 per week

In 1961 the Basic Wage was

£14. 8. 0 per week

Under the current legislation of the present Government, the unemployment benefit for an unemployed man, wife and child, is

£7. 10. 0 per week

The improvement is clear!

#### HEALTH

In health and health services, the story of the last 12 years is fantastic. In December 1949 there was no Commonwealth scheme operating to provide medical benefits.

Today, no less than 7,000,000 people are covered by a great voluntary and co-operative scheme. The total benefits being paid out for no less than 35,000,000 services is over £22 million, of which the Commonwealth pays nearly £10 million.

Under a greatly improved Hospital Benefits arrangement, the Commonwealth and the registered organisations between them are now finding over £32 million a year.

The Pensioner Medical Service, pharmaceutical benefits for pensioners, has proved a godsend to pensioners.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, as a whole, has risen from a few pounds to over £27 million!

Our great contributions to the treatment of T.B. and mental ill-health are no doubt well-known, as is what we have done in the manufacture and free provision of the Salk vaccine against poliomyelitis.

This is a short, but revolutionary, story. A growing nation must be a healthy one. Our policy of strength and growth is all pervasive, and expresses itself in many ways.

#### NEW GUINEA AND PAPUA

We continue to discharge our great responsibilities for the advancement and good government of these territories. The statement made a few weeks ago by my colleague, Mr. Hasluck, on targets for future social and economic progress, has attracted favourable interest both in Australia and abroad. We are spending more each year, and will continue to do so for a long time. But our record in helping primitive neighbours in this way will stand comparison anywhere in the world.

#### ABORIGINES

Despite some carping criticisms, our record in raising the standards of the aboriginal peoples is a good one. Not long ago we solved the problem of providing them with social services of the normal character. In our own special area of responsibility, the Northern Territory, great strides have been taken in the direction of catering for their human and social needs.

An all-party Parliamentary Select Committee, appointed on the motion of the Government, has recently brought down a report on the problem of voting by aborigines. We will give that report careful study and most sympathetic consideration in the new Parliament.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL

An all-party committee made a close investigation of the working of the Commonwealth Constitution, and recommended a large number of amendments. Time has not permitted us to reach conclusions on such complex matters. I therefore need say no more in a Policy Speech, than that should we decide to promote any amendment or amendments, the constitutional procedures for a referendum will give the people the right to decide the matter. We do not propose to have a general election confused by speculative constitutional arguments which may or may not arise, and which, if they do arise, will be decided by a quite independent popular vote.

#### HOUSING

The growing nation for which we are working, with increased population and rising standards of living, must be given a proper chance to be well-housed. Above all things, we want a home-owning democracy. Though the problem of housing, whether by governments or private citizens, is, under the constitutional distribution of powers, primarily one for the States (except in Commonwealth Territories), my own Government can present a remarkable record of voluntary performance, a record which we would wish to add to in the next Parliament, working, as always, in co-operation with State Governments, who are fully conscious of the needs.

Since 1950, 907,000 houses and flats have been constructed in Australia, most of them being for ownership. Towards this remarkable total, which will more than stand comparison with any other country, the Commonwealth Government has found no less than £780m! In War Service Homes alone, which are our special and honourable responsibility, we have found £350million, which you may care to compare with a total of £53 million over the previous thirty years of the Scheme, which began in 1919.

#### RESTRICTIVE PRACTICES

We desire, in co-operation with State Governments, to do something to protect and strengthen free productive and business enterprise against monopoly or restrictive practices. The Attorney-General has done a great deal of work both here and in overseas countries, such as Great Britain and the U.S.A., where special laws exist. The matter is very complex and is in Australia affected by the division of powers between Commonwealth and States. It would be most undesirable to have an elaborate system of government controls which restricted true development, efficiency, and enterprise. On the other hand, the public interest must be paramount; exploitation must not occur.

The Attorney-General's investigations and conferences have not yet reached a point at which Cabinet decisions can be taken. When such decisions are taken and legislation prepared, we will, having introduced the legislation, allow it to be open to public examination and criticism for six months so that no proper consideration will be overlooked.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

All the efforts we may make to secure a favourable economic climate for investment and development can be largely frustrated if a great deal of working and producing time is lost by industrial disputes. Our opponents have regularly asserted that only they, with their Union contacts, can secure industrial peace. The facts are that in no year since 1951 has the number of days lost from industrial disputes been as large as those lost in any year from 1945 to 1949. There are many thousands of young men and women who will vote on December 9th who were children in 1949, and who may be tempted to take for granted the state of affairs which they have known for twelve years. I want them to know that such things as industrial peace, continuity of work, do not happen by accident. Our industrial policies, fitting into our whole conception of national growth, have been directed to these ends. It is not out of place to point out that today many thousands of employees are also shareholders in the enterprises in which they work. This broadens the co-operative spirit which is essential to success and to continuity of work.

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