

BROADCAST NO.6.

BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER (RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES)
OVER NATIONAL STATIONS AT 7.15pm
MONDAY, 4th DECEMBER, 1961.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my Policy Speech I made two statements which I will repeat. The first was:

"After 12 years, the A.L.P. can easily make a series of brand new offers without saying where the new hundreds of millions are to come from, though they will, of course, come from you."

This forecast was completely borne out on the following evening when Mr. Calwell produced a series of promises, the cost of which on authoritative calculations runs into hundreds of millions; anywhere between £240m and £390m on his specific offers and many, many more millions on those which were more vaguely stated. It has been very interesting for me, going around Australia, to discover how widespread is the realisation that the people themselves would have to pay, since governments have no money to spend except that which has been earned and paid over by tax or loan by the men and women of Australia.

I gathered the impression from the Labour Policy Speech that Mr. Calwell thought that it could all be done without increasing taxes. Mr. Calwell's predecessor, Mr. Chifley, so frequently quoted by Members of the Labour Party, said quite plainly in Parliament, with reference to a much smaller proposal:

"It is of no use attempting to fool the people with promises. These things can be done only by the imposition of additional taxes."

But today's Labour men don't quote that remark.

The second statement in the Policy Speech was;

"We offer you good government. The essential quality of good government is that it should have sound and intelligible principles, that it should pursue great national and social objectives with resoluteness, that it should be able to meet the storms that arise from time to time with a proper sense of navigation, that it should have cohesion in its own ranks and a strong sense of mutual loyalty."

I stand by that definition. Good government is what Australians are entitled to. When you vote on December 9 you will, I know, exercise your judgment as to which side can give you good government in the sense that I have described.

Do you really think that the present Labour Opposition is capable of giving it to you? What are its sound and intelligible principles? I had thought that the major plank in its platform involved the nationalisation of industries. The Member for Yarra, a member of Labour's front bench, an absolute certainty to be a Minister if Labour won this election, wrote in June this year, only 5 months ago, that economic power must be transferred "by controls, by public enterprise and by nationalisation". Mr. Calwell is a determined advocate of Constitutional amendments which would enable this objective to be achieved. Yet, for purposes of this election, he has declared a moratorium on the great socialist principle. He says to you, in effect: "Don't worry about our great socialist principle by which we live and move and have our being; just vote us into office and we will forget about that principle for the next three years".

Can the deeply divided Federal Labour Party profess to have cohesion in its own ranks, to say nothing of mutual loyalty? The very idea is ridiculous. For on the great matters which will determine whether government is good or bad, it is almost impossible to obtain a concerted view from our opponents.

They profess to be opposed to Communism. Yet they resisted our secret ballots law which restored proper democratic rights to trades unionists, and if they honour the latest instructions they have had from outside, they will repeal the legislation and leave the way clear for a great Communist revival. Where do they stand on the threats to world peace presented by the bullying and aggressive tactics of the Communist Powers? That many Labour members are profoundly opposed to the Communist strategy is, of course, quite clear. I do not question Mr. Calwell's personal attitude. But he has sitting close to him prospective ministers who are seldom heard to voice a criticism of the Communist Powers but take a good deal of time in attacks upon the United Kingdom and the United States of America, without whose staunch friendship completely re-established by us, Australia's security would be in danger.

Where does the Labour Party stand on such great associations as those in the ANZUS Pact with America and New Zealand and in SEATO which includes three Asian powers and is powerfully backed by the United States, United Kingdom and France?

I remind you that they have never once had a good word to say about either arrangement.

What are their principles on defence? Every time the defence estimates have been before Parliament for years they have criticised them. It is not long ago that they were proposing that we should heavily reduce our defence expenditure. All this is graciously concealed from you in the present election.

Where does the Labour Party stand on the vital principle of responsible government?

That is a system under which the people elect a Parliament and may dismiss it at the next election if they think fit, while the Parliament produces through the normal processes a Prime Minister and Ministers who must accept responsibilities for their policies in the course of Parliamentary debate. The Labour Party cannot possibly pretend to believe in this system for, as I have frequently pointed out, the Federal Labour Party is absolutely bound by the decisions on policy of the Federal Conference of the Australian Labour Party which is, of course, not elected by you and has no responsibility to you.

It is the simple fact that you could elect Labour on such policy as it now presents to you, only to find that in the course of the life of the Parliament this outside body could, as the "supreme governing authority and policy making body" give different orders and compel their performance.

I could go on like this for a long time if I had the time or you had the patience, but what I have said to you is designed to emphasise that, with the complete mutual loyalty which has existed among Ministers and Members on the Government side for the last 12 years, we can offer you a continuance of good government with no qualifications, with no reservations, and with a record of performance to back it. The short survey of the Labour Party's position which I have put to you will, I think, satisfy you that Labour cannot offer you good government in this sense. It is no doubt for this reason that in this election they have offered you a series of inducements in cash or credit hoping that if they cannot persuade your minds they may at any rate have a chance of appealing to your pockets.

Time after time you have rejected this offensive approach. You have with sound common sense refused to be bought with your own money. I am confident that the current attempt to get you to reverse this judgment and to forget the essential character of good government will once more fail.

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