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Senate Campaign 1967

NATIONAL BROADCAST BY THE PRIME
MINISTER (MR HAROLD HOLT)

Friday, 10th November, 1967

(Following is the text of the first of a series of National Broadcasts to be made by the Prime Minister, Mr Holt, during the Senate campaign. This talk will be relayed over the ABC's network at 7.15 this evening (EST))

This Senate election differs from a general election for the House of Representatives. The general election decides who is to govern Australia, and the next general election is not due, in the normal course, until 1969. But you will be hearing a lot about policy from our opponents.

Years ago, elections were regarded by many people as a policy auction. The theory was the bigger the promises you made, the bigger the vote you were likely to get. The Australian electorate of today is more mature and knowledgeable. But the Labor Party has not yet appreciated this fact. From time to time, since we came into office first in 1949, the Labor Party has presented you, the electors, with a fantastic set of promises. In 1966, Mr Calwell made the sky the limit. But you, the electors, were not duped by this.

You recognised that even a sensible and practical domestic programme, directed to national growth and social welfare, lacks reality unless it is set in the framework of a foreign policy cementing our security. We have yet to hear the Labor Party offer us the kind of domestic programme that could be carried out without the prospect of serious inflation, without oppressive taxation and without discouraging private enterprise - and private enterprise still provides three out of every four jobs in Australia.

And what about national security? Here the ALP is bogged down under prejudice and isolationism. It shows no reality about Australia's position in a dangerous world.

We of the Government have put first things first. We believe we have correctly analysed where the threats to our security lie. We have made friendships and treaties with countries and people who also recognise these threats.

But we have not neglected either national growth or social welfare. We have helped build this country to its present stability and strength. There are many outside Australia who envy us. The progress of our economy has been steady and sure. We enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, and there is virtually no limit to our potential if we go about this in the right way.

Since the elections of last year, we have been giving speedy effect to our policy undertakings. We have, in fact, been doing a great deal more than that in the area of national development. This makes impressive reading: Legislation to cover the discovery of off-shore oil and gas, the provision of an additional \$50 million for beef roads in Northern Australia, great water projects on the Ord River

in Western Australia and the Nogoia Dam in Queensland.

I mention these here to emphasise that we regard policy-making as a continuing process not limited to what is said at election times. In opening the present campaign, I illustrated our forward thinking on education and national health. We look to the future, we move steadily towards our social objectives but our planning is always based on what we, and you as taxpayers, can reasonably afford and what the national economy can accommodate.

We are following the course we charted a year ago. We do not believe you want us to deviate from it.

Candidates for the Senate who believe that the role of that chamber is to take the business of the country out of the hands of a government you have elected, carry vanity to the point of arrogance and absurdity. When the Senate has the numbers to defeat the government of the day on party lines; when it tries to usurp the role of the House of Representatives, the effectiveness of government must be hampered.

The issues confronting Australia today are large and critical. Too large and too critical to permit of confusions and uncertainties from a Senate where the government you have chosen could be compelled - by the vote in this Senate campaign - to remain indefinitely in a minority.
