

EMBARGO: NOT FOR RELEASE BEFORE 7.45 P.M. ON 19/12/67.

TRIBUTE TO MR. HOLT ON NATIONAL RADIO BY
THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. JOHN McEWEN, M.P.

Harold Holt and I have been Parliamentary colleagues and intimate friends for more than 30 years. As two men in Australian political life we enjoyed a long and understanding relationship. His presumed untimely death is a tragedy for us -- as a nation and for many thousands as individuals.

He had great personal charm. He was one of the warmest and most friendly persons one could know. He was a humble man. The great and important offices he held did not change this. He certainly was a man of honesty and of great courage. In some ways, I think he was at his best when the going was difficult, when he sensed a challenge.

As a Minister he was responsible for some notable measures -- for child endowment; for continuing the active immigration programme commenced by Mr. Arthur Calwell in the 1940's; for improved relations on the waterfront; for orientating our policies towards Asia; and for a firm commitment with our great Ally, the United States, in the cause of freedom in Viet Nam. All this he achieved without weakening our British ties.

He brought to his administration a breadth of humanity, a concern for the welfare of the individual. He had a strong belief in the rights of the citizens to be made aware of the Government's policies and its purposes. In this he had an influence on all his colleagues.

We will miss him as a friend and leader. We will miss the wisdom of his counsel.

Now we must face the future with the same resolution, the same energy and the same imagination which endeared him to all of us.

Canberra,
19th December, 1967.