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RADIO TALK NO. 2

1969 FEDERAL ELECTION

TALK GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. JOHN GORTON,  
OVER ABC NETWORK ON WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER

In my last talk to you, I spoke of the disastrous effects which Labor's approaches would have on our own defence and on our overseas alliances and on Australia's future security generally.

Tonight I will talk of domestic approaches.

The essence of our own approach is that we regard it as our first task to maintain full employment, to maintain the inflow of overseas capital for development, to continue immigration at least at its present level, to continue growth, to protect Australians against inflation and, gradually, to lighten the burden of income taxation.

In short, our first task is to protect and promote our present prosperity and, at the same time, to seek to lighten income tax burdens.

In the field of social services, we have done much - indeed, I think, more than any comparable Government has done in any comparable period of time. And we will obviously do more as it becomes economically responsible to do so.

But we will not put our present prosperity at risk. We will not put greater income tax burdens on the wage and salary-earning family man. We will not risk that inflation which hits the pensioner and the wage and salary-earner hardest, but which hits all Australians and which will inhibit that immigration, that growth, that capital inflow which job opportunity demands should continue.

The Opposition, on the other hand, is prepared to put all this in danger. They have made promises which will require hundreds of millions of dollars a year to keep, hundreds of millions of dollars a year without any provision for increased defence, without any provision for national development, without any provision for the growing needs of the States. And those hundreds of millions will come from you the present income tax payers.

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They will come either by way of increased taxation or by way of a lack of reduction in taxation or by way of inflation hitting your pocket. But one way or another you will pay for there is no way of getting something for nothing.

Apart from this general difference of approach between the Opposition and ourselves, there is a particular matter on which we and the Opposition differ.

As you know, we have already introduced the tapered means test and age taxation concessions which are real incentives to thrift and which give real rewards to the thrifty. And now we believe that the first call for the future on resources for social welfare should be the alleviation of the lot of those who are still poor.

The Opposition, on the other hand, will provide \$370 million a year, not one cent of which will help the needy but all of which will go to pay pensions to the well-off, for \$370 million a year is what their plan will cost if it is put into operation.

We believe that this is essentially wrong and we reject it because we believe, as I have said, that the lot of the needy should have first call on our resources.

Our efforts in the next Parliament will be devoted to helping the children of needy families, to rehabilitation of the handicapped and the invalid so that they can return to normal life, to giving capital assistance to institutes helping handicapped children, to ensuring that the buying power of the pensions we have recently raised does not, over the period, fall, and to increasing social welfare generally as economic conditions permit.

This to us is a worthier aim than that of the Opposition and we hope that you on October 25 will agree with us and agree that it is better for Australians and for Australia.

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Note: This talk will be broadcast by the ABC National Network at 7.15 p. m. (EST).