

DECLARATION OF HIGGINS POLL

Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

5 NOVEMBER 1969

The first thing I would like to do is to express my gratitude to the electors of Higgins for the majority they gave me. I also want to express my gratitude to all those who worked so hard during the election campaign, manning booths, sending out literature and doing all the work required for a successful election. I thank you very much indeed for that and I pledge that I will try to be a representative in the new Parliament worthy of your work and support.

I am pleased to see that the Government has been returned with a majority which looks as if it will be a good working majority of seven or nine, because I feel it would have been, as I said in the campaign, dangerous indeed for Australia if the Government had not been returned. And that is the second point I want to make.

Having said that, I think that I should point out that there was undoubtedly a swing against the Government during the election campaign. It was a swing greater than would be expected. One had to expect a swing of some kind back from an all-time high but not one sufficient to lose 13 or 14 seats, and not one of the magnitude, particularly in States outside Victoria, which was shown.

I think this is an indication that while the Government has been returned, the electorate has not been completely satisfied. There is some dissatisfaction shown by the vote and it is necessary for that to be identified and rectified. This will be the task of my Government - assuming it is my Government after Friday, and I confidently believe it will be - to do this and to examine our policies searchingly so that in the next election we can win overall as convincingly as you have allowed me to win in this division. This we pledge ourselves to do; to examine all our policies searchingly for that purpose.

Thank you very much.

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