

EMM B A R G O : 8.30 PM. THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 1970

S E N A T E C A M P A I G N 1 9 7 0

TV AND RADIO TALK NO. 2 BY THE PRIME MINISTER

MR. JOHN GORTON

(To be broadcast by ABC and commercial TV channels at 8.30 p. m. local time on Thursday 12 November and by the ABC Radio Network at 7.15 p. m. E. S. T. Friday 13 November.)

When I became Prime Minister a little less than three years ago, I spoke of my wish to help the old and the ill and the handicapped. Now it is undoubtedly true that a great deal remains to be done in this field, a very great deal. But it is also true much has been done.

We have done a number of things, and if you will bear with me for a moment, I will outline some of them.

We have removed the fear of the cost of long illness in hospitals. Our Health Scheme has removed the fear of the cost of expensive operations, or expensive specialist attention.

It is a scheme, moreover, which provides that the community will pay insurance for low-income families, and it is a scheme under which the contributor pays, in general, less, and receives, in general, more, than was offered under Labor's scheme.

We have brought in the Tapered Means Test, under which pensioners who can earn, or who have saved, can receive some of the benefit of their self-help without losing their pension entirely.

We have brought in a Home Care Programme for the care of aged persons, or others with special needs, in their own homes.

We are providing \$5 million a year to the States to build low rental housing for pensioners.

We are providing capital for buildings and equipment for homes for handicapped children.

We have raised pensions for TPI repatriation pensioners by \$8 a week, or more than 25 per cent.

And we have increased the base rate of pensions by \$2.50 a week for a single pensioner and \$4 a week for married pensioners, during a period when the Cost of Living Index shows a rise of \$1 a week.

In fact we have raised benefits, or taken entirely new initiatives in more than 30 different areas of social welfare.

As a result, social welfare now makes up the second greatest item in our Budget, and will cost this year \$1,800 million, which is a 25 per cent increase on the Budget of two years ago.

But we still must overcome the problem of long-term illness in nursing homes as distinct from hospitals. We still must redeem our promise to help low-income earners with young families. We need to initiate a scheme for pre-school care for the children of working mothers. And we must continue to improve the lot of the base rate pensioner, but without losing sight of the needs of other areas of social welfare.

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We will do these things as soon as they can be done with financial responsibility.

I have not changed the aim I had when I became Prime Minister, and I believe that what we have done in a short time is evidence that we shall continue with the task.

Australia must and will win the war on poverty. We shall not win it in one battle or in one year. It must be fought on many fronts. It will take time and it will take effort from all Australians, for after all, it is only from the production of Australians that Governments can divert resources to these ends. But my Government is determined we shall win it, and I believe I can claim that the record shows we have advanced.

Indeed, in this as in other fields, I think that I can truly say to you - what we promise we perform.

Goodnight.
