



PRIME MINISTER

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LABOR'S HEALTH NATIONALISATION PLANS

Statement by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. William McMahon,
C.H., M.P.

The statement of Mr. W.G. Hayden, M.P., that Labor would not attempt to introduce a system of salaried medical services and that such an action would be constitutionally impossible requires the closest analysis.

It is in direct conflict with the Labor Party platform and the statements of his leader Mr. Whitlam and his colleagues.

The simple truth is that there is no constitutional disbarment at all. The Labor Party could and would nationalise the medical and hospital professions by the process of "squeeze". Its policies are aimed to do just that.

A penetrating insight into the Labor Party's mass Socialist intentions was given by Mr. Whitlam in his 1972 Fabian Lecture in Melbourne on 25 July.

The main theme of that address was his rejection of the argument that the constitution offers any obstacle to full socialisation.

He said: "It would be intolerable if a Labor Government were to use the alibi of the constitution to excuse failure to achieve its Socialist objectives - doubly intolerable because it is just not true that it need do so".

He added: "My basic proposition is this: If Section 92 is held up as the bulwark of private enterprise, then Section 96 is the charter of public enterprise - Section 51 the key to National responsibility and national regeneration".

Section 96 permits the Commonwealth to make grants to the States for special purposes. By this device - by the offering or withholding of funds - a Socialist central government could reduce the States to mere puppets.

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But Mr. Whitlam has been even more specific with regard to Labor's health policies. In the same lecture he said: "The major act of nationalisation in the traditional sense, to be undertaken by a Labor government in the next term, will be through the establishment of a single health fund, administered by a Health Insurance Commission with contributions made accorded to each tax payers means and treatment accorded to each patient's needs."

Those are plain enough words. Everyone should know what "nationalisation in the traditional sense" means. The warning is clear.

The A.C.T.U. President, Mr. Hawke, at the opening of the Federal campaign in the Shortland seat confirmed on 3 September that the A.L.P. was a Socialist party and that he had no respect for any person who denied this.

The Labor Party has made it clear that all medical specialists at public hospitals under its policy would be fully salaried and not on a fee-for-service or sessional payment.

This is the essential instrument of nationalisation of medical specialists - all of whom must have full access to hospitals in order to pursue their profession.

Two other squeezes will operate on the specialists. The Labor Party's single nationalised health insurance commission will provide benefits for public wards only, unlike the existing voluntary schemes which provide full cover for intermediate and private wards.

Labor's policy, which must reduce drastically the number of intermediate and private wards in public hospitals and force almost everyone into public wards, would seriously restrict the many specialists now in private practice who function today mainly in non-public wards, except in the discharge of their honorary duties.