

Policy Launch Speech: Gough Whitlam, Opposition Leader (ALP)

Sydney Town Hall, 1 October, 1969

“On 25 October Australians will elect a national government to take Australia into the 1970s. The campaign of the Australian Labor Party will have one dominant theme — the theme of opportunities, the taking of opportunities, the making of opportunities for Australia and for all Australians. We wish to renovate, rejuvenate, reinvigorate and liberate. It is not only time, more than time, for a change; it is time to refresh, remould and renew the whole framework of finances and functions and to end the 20 year story of opportunities needlessly deferred, delayed and denied by the Liberals.

We of the Labor Party have an enduring commitment to a view about society. It is this: in modern countries, opportunities for all citizens — the opportunity for a complete education, opportunity for dignity in retirement, opportunity for proper medical treatment, opportunity to share in the nation's wealth and resources, opportunity for decent housing, the opportunity for civilised conditions in our cities and our towns, opportunity to preserve and promote the natural beauty of the land can be provided only if governments — the community itself acting through its elected representatives — will provide them. Private wealth is insufficient now to provide such opportunities even for the wealthy few. The inequalities in our community now reflect not so much gross disparities in income, but the failure of successive Liberal governments to create opportunities for the overwhelming majority of our people — the lower, modest and middle income families — opportunities which only governments can make. And increasingly in Australia the national government must initiate those opportunities.

We make these assertions: Firstly, that Australians should not be deprived of opportunities, which citizens of every comparable country enjoy.

Secondly, there is every reason why Australia, wealthy and well endowed, in many respects incomparably so, should be giving a lead to other nations in the equality of opportunities and the quality of the opportunities we make for our own citizens and in the help we can give to others. Twenty years ago, Australia was indeed a pioneer and a leader; now we lag behind. It is not for lack of resources; it has been for lack of resourcefulness on the part of a national leadership, bogged down in its own past, shackled by the dogmas of an outdated, doctrinaire philosophy.

We make a third assertion — central to our cause. When government makes opportunities for any of the citizens, it makes them for all the citizens. We are all diminished as citizens when any of us are poor. Poverty is a national waste as well as an individual waste. We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer — a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.

In a very profound sense, the cause of Labor is the cause of national unity. Equality and quality of opportunity, equality of life and more quality in life, go together. Our opponents, by contrast, seek to divide, and thereby to rule. All too often, all too tragically, they have succeeded. They have deliberately used our relations with other nations abroad to divide the nation at home; they raise an army by dividing our youth;

they block off demands for a new deal in welfare for the aged and the ill by dividing the organisations who speak for those groups; they seek to divide the unions and employee organisations from the general public by misrepresentation about the penal clauses; they resist reform of a ramshackle health scheme by dividing those wealthy enough to be content with it from the great majority for whom it is a burden or a despair; they have used the same technique to resist reform of the tax system for 15 years. In this very year, they have thrown away an incomparable opportunity for a united, concerted drive to raise school standards for all our children; they have wilfully chosen to divide the school systems, to divide the parents and to divide the teachers.

They have lived by division; they are now falling apart through their own division, The Liberals have always been divisive; now they are just divided, They have always lacked a coherent and cohesive policy; now they lack coherent or cohesive leadership. They have a Treasurer who will not accept responsibility for his own Budget; a Defence Minister who has withdrawn from public life in sullen humiliation; a Minister for External Affairs who does not consult his own Cabinet on his own diplomatically naive initiatives; a Deputy Prime Minister who seeks re election for the sole purpose of resigning as soon as he can settle the problem of his own succession; and a Prime Minister who represents nothing except himself, speaks for nobody in his party except himself, and as far as one can gather, speaks to nobody except himself.

The policies I outline tonight are not my policies alone; they are the policies of a united and determined Labor Party. Yet this I will say on my own behalf: since I was elected Leader nearly 3 years ago, I have had one over-riding aim: to devise and promote practical policies to implement Labor's platform within a financially feasible framework.

The consequence is that I am able to present the most comprehensive, consistent program our party has ever presented, or any party has ever presented. I have nothing to pull out of the hat. The program I present has been subject to unrelenting scrutiny, by ourselves as well as by our opponents. Our proposals have stood the test of analysis by the best economists, by the editorialists, by public servants instructed to find the flaws, by the test of overseas example and experience, by groups with a vested interest in roasting or resisting them. Our proposals have withstood all these tests triumphantly. Now they must undergo the final, supreme test — the test of approval by the people of Australia. I am just as confident of the result.

So I ask you to judge our policies as a whole. I ask you to see them as part of a plan, to be implemented deliberately over the next 3 years. In the course of this speech, I shall show how these policies are part of a whole, are part of a deliberate plan to deal with the backlog of 20 years of Liberal rule and to begin the remoulding of Australia in the years ahead.

When I pledge the Labor Party, as I now do, to an Australian assistance plan designed to help Australia's one million poor permanently out of poverty, to abolition of the means test over 6 years, to a national superannuation scheme, embracing the retired, the widowed and the invalid, to automatic annual pension increases, to an immediate increase of all pensions this year by one dollar — these proposals will be seen, by all those who study them, as parts of a total plan to remove the injustices, get rid of the deadwood of the past, and to build a social welfare system in tune with the needs and aspirations and rights of a wealthy, modern nation in the third third of the 20th century.

When I pledge our party to a plan for reducing the cost of land and housing by: directly participating in purchasing, developing, sub dividing and selling land; helping to reduce the interest burden on home owners, particularly young couples; introducing a uniform building code; ending the rationing of War Service Homes; making a fresh housing agreement with the States to make special provision for urban renewal and housing for the aged — I want it understood that these are essential elements of our overall approach for building more pleasant, more civilised, better planned communities — true communities, in our cities and centres. We are the only party which accepts a national commitment to the problems of cities and towns.

Equally, we are the only party which accepts a national commitment for schools — for the 2 ½ million children in schools, as well as the 150,000 in universities and colleges of advanced education. And it will be in that context that I shall later present Labor's proposal for an Australian Schools Commission, and an Australian Pre-Schools Commission, to meet the needs of ALL Australian school children, irrespective of their parents' means, locality or religion. Nor shall talented young Australians any longer be deprived of opportunities for university education because of their parents' lack of means. University fees will be abolished.

We propose a universal health scheme, based on the needs and means of families. This proposal — the most rigorously investigated proposal ever put by any party on any subject at any election — has to be seen against the contrast of the existing scheme, unwieldy, unjust, enormously costly, inherently costly.

Similarly, the proposals I shall outline for our basic primary industries, particularly wheat and wool, should be judged against the chaos that Country Party incompetence and Liberal indifference have created in these industries.

I shall propose a national water conservation authority — and it may come as a shock to our younger people to realise that a Labor Government will thereby be undertaking the first national development project since the Snowy Mountains Authority, which was established by the last Labor Government, and which the Liberals are now so intent on undermining.

Thus a major part of this policy speech will be devoted to developing our resources — our human resources, our national resources.

In the final analysis, however, our future will rest on our defence capacity, and the relations we have with our neighbours. Our policies for the defence of Australia will be contrasted with the dismal record of the Liberals.

They have tried to raise and run an army on the cheap by an unjust system of conscription. We will end that system, not only because of its manifest unfairness, but because it is a positive barrier against our true defence need — the raising of a highly professional and the equipping of a highly mobile army. This is crucial if we are to play a proper role in regional co-operation and regional defence.

And it is in the context of our true needs, our true role in our region, and our true relations with our great ally, the United States, that our proposals to disengage from Vietnam must be seen. For three years — 1965, 1966 and 1967 — the Liberals misled you, deceived you, about the purpose and prospects of the war. Then, for the past two years, they have remained silent and sullen as one by one the U.S. adopted the proposals the Labor Party had advocated, and had been denounced for advocating. Now they have no proposals, except in the words of the retiring Minister for Defence

"the war is inevitably moving towards an unpredictable end at an indefinite date". They have moved from resisting proposals to end the war; they just resent them. They sabotaged two moves for peace in 1967. They have now moved from sabotage to sulky silence. While they remain silent, the killing, the maiming, the blinding, the scorched earth and scorched bodies, still go on.

When judging the policies we put to you on defence and foreign policies you are therefore entitled to ask yourselves whether the party, the Labor Party, which has been consistently right on this great issue, is likely to be right on the general issues. Or, to put it another way, how could you trust the Liberals — the Liberals whose two major post-war defence decisions have been the commitment to Vietnam and the purchase of the F-111s. Why should you trust them on any defence matters in the future? Why should you any longer trust a party whose leader responds to the momentous events of our time in our region by telling you "We are not the sheriff but we are part of the posse"?

So it is against this background, the background of Liberal failures and Liberal follies, against the background of Labor's instinctive sense of the right and the just and the decent — that I ask you to judge the policies I present tonight on behalf of this great and enduring party — the Australian Labor Party.

The chief duty of modern governments is to create opportunities for all its citizens, in the availability, use and development of the nation's resources. The chief resource of the nation is its human resources, and the most important of those human resources is the nation's children.

Education in Australia is falling rapidly below standards of comparable countries: this is a national shame. In attempting to remove deficiencies in one of the systems, the Liberals have succeeded only in sowing seeds of dissension between the systems, between the teachers, between the parents this is a national tragedy. This year of 1969 could have been the year of a remarkable breakthrough on education for all our children, at all our schools. We could have united teachers and parents and administrators behind a drive for a new national approach to education. The Liberals muffed the chance.

The Labor Party's approach is this: there will be no significant advance in education at any level, in either system, unless there is a continuing and comprehensive Commonwealth commitment to all schools and both systems. The Liberals explicitly refuse that commitment. The Labor Party alone advocates such a commitment. A Labor Government alone will establish the machinery to implement that commitment.

Teachers and parents of pupils at State schools are increasingly and properly resentful that free education is no longer free and becoming less free. Parents of pupils at Catholic schools wish to look forward with confidence that the system they support at great expense will not be crushed by the rising costs of education. All teachers and all parents want education taken out of politics, and politics taken out of education.

The Liberals' proposals achieve exactly the opposite result. By ignoring the urgent needs of State schools, they have aroused new resentments. They would establish a system which would ignore the needs of government schools and tie the needs of the Catholic system to yearly Budgets and in practice to three yearly elections. It is a recipe for endless contention and dissension — the perfect Liberal recipe.

We therefore propose as the first act of the next Labor Government to establish an Australian Schools Commission. It will consist of representatives of the State departments, the Federal Catholic Schools Committee, the universities and the teaching profession as well as Commonwealth departments. The Schools Commission will do for all Australians.

It will regularly examine the needs of government and non-government schools, and recommend grants which the Commonwealth should make to meet the requirements of all school-age children. Nobody would now assert that university education is solely a matter for the States; the Commonwealth must now do as much for Australia's 2 ½ million school children as it does for Australia's 150,000 university and college students.

The Schools Commission will no more impede the freedom of schools or impose uniformity on them than the Universities Commission has impeded or imposed upon universities. It in no way involves Commonwealth control of education. The diversity of existing schools is the diversity of standards between rich schools and poorer schools; the uniformity of existing schools is the uniformity of poverty in whole areas and levels. Australia needs a uniformity of high standards and a diversity of approach and methods. Our proposals are designed to secure just that.

The Schools Commission will be expected to make its first report in time for its recommendations to be included in our 1970 Budget. Meantime, my Education Minister (Senator Cohen) will confer next month with the State ministers and a representative of the Federal Catholic Schools Committee on emergency pro rata Commonwealth grants which they can effectively put to use at the outset of 1970 courses in their schools and teachers' colleges, in addition to the grants made under existing acts. In most State and Catholic schools there is an immediate problem in providing accommodation in new suburbs and centres. There is an immediate problem in recruiting and retaining enough qualified staff. This year the N.S.W. government had to turn away 1,500 eligible applicants for teacher education despite N.S.W. allowances being the smallest in Australia and less than half those in Victoria. We will set out without delay to reduce the gross disparities between suburbs and districts in the availability of aids and equipment for which parents are obliged to find funds.

Legislation for the Schools Commission and the emergency grants will be passed in the new session of Parliament commencing on 25 November.

The nucleus and basis of any education system is its teachers. Teacher education must become a fully recognised branch of tertiary education. At present it is the only form of tertiary education to which the Commonwealth makes no permanent commitment. There are gross disparities between the States. Victoria spends almost three times as much per head as Queensland on teacher education. Under Labor, teacher trainees for both government and non-government schools will receive their training with allowances and without fees.

Commonwealth grants will not be made conditional on trainees agreeing to serve in any State or Territory or with any institution. Teachers will not reach their full professional status until they can acquire and exercise their qualifications and have them recognised anywhere around or beyond Australia. We propose in short to ensure that teaching is fully recognised for what it is a true profession. We shall ask the Universities Commission to prepare for new autonomous teachers' colleges and halls

of residence not only in the capitals but in appropriate regions. We shall give general support to the recommendations which the Martin Committee made to Sir Robert Menzies and Senator Gorton in August 1964 and which those gentlemen rejected a year later. Just as Mr Justice Eggleston was asked to report on university salaries and Mr Justice Sweeney to report on salaries in colleges of advanced education, so we shall periodically invite an industrial judge to report on increases in salaries required to recruit and retain qualified teachers in sufficient numbers in both government and non-government schools.

University education is the roof of the house of education. Because of the Liberals' failure to accept any continuing, comprehensive commitment for schools, we have built a house with a roof, but no walls or foundations. There is still one gap in that roof. Fees amount to a small percentage of incomes of universities but a great percentage of the incomes of students and their parents. It would now cost \$12 million to abolish fees altogether. We believe that university places should be provided wholly on the basis of merit. From the beginning of the 1971 academic year, fees will be abolished.

If the university is the roof, then pre schools are the foundation of education in a modern community. Here again there are gross disparities between the States. Almost as many children are enrolled in subsidised pre school centres in Western Australia as in New South Wales. In the A.C.T. every child before going to school has one year at a pre school centre built and staffed by the Commonwealth. We will therefore establish a Pre Schools Commission to ensure that with Commonwealth help every child in Australia has the opportunity of pre school education.

In sum, Labor's approach is based on the principle of a continuing, comprehensive Commonwealth commitment to all schools, at all levels — not Commonwealth control, but a Commonwealth commitment. Labor alone accepts that commitment; Labor alone will provide opportunities for all our children at all our schools at all levels, so that our schools can at least catch up with comparable countries, by our national government doing for schools at least as much as it does for universities, and at least as much for schools as the national governments do in comparable countries.

If it is important that Australia should be an educated, it is no less important that Australia should be a healthy nation. Labor's proposals on health are aimed at providing complete protection for families at a cost lower than that paid at present by four out of every five families.

Few families or patients could pay their doctors' and hospital accounts without Commonwealth assistance; few doctors and hospitals could have their accounts paid without Commonwealth assistance. Liberals insist that in order to obtain Commonwealth assistance families must pay periodic contributions to one or more of 114 private insurance funds which the Commonwealth Department of Health has registered. Let us therefore have no Liberal cant about their health scheme being voluntary.

None of my criticisms of the Liberal insurance scheme reflect on the employees of the private funds. Indeed, we undertake to give preference to officers of the funds in staffing our proposed single health fund. It is the system itself which is deficient, not those who work in it.

To secure his maximum benefits, a contributor must pay annually about \$84. If he pays taxes, he can deduct the amount of his contribution from his taxable income. The

after-tax cost of health insurance is therefore \$67.36 for a family earning \$2,000 a year but only \$40.57 for a family earning \$10,000 a year.

Moreover, the funds squander or retain 81 in every \$4 they receive in contributions. Contributors are paid an average of only 67 cents for every dollar they themselves pay to doctors. One out of every four contributors is insured for less than the cost of a public hospital bed and one out of every two for less than the cost of an intermediate bed. Liberal health insurance is inequitable in its contribution rates, extravagant in its operating costs, inadequate in its benefit cover.

A Labor Government will replace the Liberals' multiplicity of funds with a single Commonwealth Health Insurance Fund. Taxpayers will contribute 1 and $\frac{1}{4}$ % of their taxable income to the Fund, with a ceiling of \$100 for a family. All residents — tax payers, pensioners, migrants, children — will receive from the Fund complete payment for hospital care, including medical care, in whatever ward their doctors advise. They will receive back 85% of their doctors' fees from the Fund if they pay those fees themselves. Alternatively, they will not have to pay anything to their doctors if the doctors choose to send their accounts direct to the Fund.

Canadian doctors who operate under these arrangements send fewer than one account in every twenty to patients, thus avoiding paper work, delay and bad debts. Australian doctors already send accounts directly to the government in the case of repatriation and pensioner patients and to insurance companies in the case of workers' compensation and third party patients.

Under Labor's health scheme, doctors will be freed from worry over the source of their fees and able to treat patients according to their medical status rather than their financial status. They will continue to be paid on a fee for service basis and not as under the British national health scheme on a per capita list basis. The delicate personal relations they have with their patients will not be disturbed but rather enhanced, since it will be possible to prescribe additional necessary tests and consultations without worry about their cost to the patient.

Precisely because of the crucial and complex nature of the health question, I have regarded it as a particular duty to explain, discuss and argue our proposals for the past two years, especially with and through the medical profession. The fundamental soundness of our proposals has never been effectively challenged. In fact their soundness has been attested in sworn evidence from the Chief Research Officer of the Commonwealth Department of Health.

I am convinced that Australians now recognise that the Liberals have foisted on them one of the world's most wasteful and unjust health schemes. Public hospitals in five States are obliged to write off each year over \$6 million in bad debts incurred by uninsured and under insured patients. Labor's scheme will eliminate any delay in the payment of hospital fees. The Liberals have destroyed free hospitals in five States and penalised Queensland \$2 million every year for maintaining free hospitals. Under our proposals Queensland will receive an additional \$22 million every year for its free hospitals. I am convinced that the people of Australia will refuse to tax themselves and be taxed merely to prop up a discredited, decrepit system.

The report of the Nimmo Committee on Health was a searing indictment of the impositions, costs, injustices and inefficiencies of the existing scheme; it made 42 recommendations towards relieving them. But Nimmo was deliberately limited by the Liberals; the committee was forbidden to examine alternative schemes proposed in

Australia or operating overseas. Because the existing scheme is intrinsically inequitable and expensive, the cost of even minor repairs is out of proportion to the improvement effected. Let me give one example: the last Budget partially implemented only one of Nimmo's recommendations — to permit those on the poverty line to join the scheme without contribution.

The Liberals propose to give a very limited cover to 105,000 families at a cost of \$8.1 million. Labor will provide a full, free cover to 300,000 needy families at a cost of \$3.5 million. Let the warning be quite clear: if the Liberals propose next week to prop up, patch over, the existing scheme, it will mean more in contributions and more in taxation for everybody. Let's have a clean sweep.

To reduce the cost of drugs, we will encourage Australian drug companies to expand their activities. Although the drug industry derives 80% of its income from governments, wholly owned Australian companies supply only one in ten of doctors' prescriptions, representing only 7.35% of the value of prescriptions. The Liberals have restricted the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories to supplying no more than 2% of the market. Labor will make available facilities for the full and thorough testing of drugs, so that doctors who wish to do so may confidently prescribe drugs by their generic names and not their brand names.

Australian standards of dental health are among the worst in the world. Labor welcomes the initiative taken by the Australian Dental Association in drafting a national dental health policy, and looks forward to planning in conjunction with the Association steps by which such a policy may be put into effect. A Labor Government will take immediate action to expand the scope of school dental services and train additional school dental nurses. It will finance the extension of school dental care by an additional school year in each successive calendar year.

In education and health we are missing out on opportunities freely available to citizens in comparable countries. We needlessly reduce the quality of life available to us. Crucial in determining the quality of that life is the environment in which we live; the shape of our cities and our towns shapes all our lives, for all of our lives. In no country in the world is this more important than Australia, the most urbanised country on earth. Eighty percent of our people live in cities and large towns. Yet in no comparable country does the national government accept so little responsibility for the problems of our cities and centres. A Labor Government will place cities and centres in the forefront of its responsibilities. The Liberals refuse to accept any national responsibility. Although the States paid \$72 million back to the Commonwealth last year for its earlier housing advances, the Gorton Government refused their request for \$1 million for town planning.

In no case is Commonwealth responsibility clearer than in housing. The price of every house which is built in Australia is artificially and needlessly inflated by the extra costs which Liberal governments have imposed or failed to halt in land prices, interest rates and construction costs.

Land prices are artificially high in Australia because we are one of the few urban countries in which public participation in land development is almost unknown. A Labor Government will make grants to the States to acquire substantial areas of residential land on just terms and to sub divide, service and sell it at cost.

We will subsidise institutional lenders to reduce by 2% the interest paid by mortgagees in their first 10 years of marriage. On a savings bank loan of \$8,000 over

25 years a young couple will save over \$140 a year during those first 10 years, on a terminating building society loan of \$9,000 over 30 years they will save over \$160 a year during those 10 years, on a permanent building society loan of \$12,000 over 20 years they will save over \$200 a year.

Housing costs are artificially high in Australia because of the diversity and multiplicity of building regulations and codes. The Minister for Housing admits that this raises the cost of each house by at least \$600. We will end the 5 year dithering and delay by the Liberals in introducing a uniform building code for housing.

We will end the rationing schemes imposed by the Liberals on the War Service Homes Division in 1951 and 1962. We will extend the Division's functions to other groups for whom the Commonwealth has constitutional responsibility, such as migrants and serving members of the Forces.

When the Housing Agreement with the States comes up for renewal in 1971, we will provide for: interest at long term bond rate less 2% on houses occupied by couples in their first 10 years of marriage; the reclamation and rehabilitation of depressed areas; the provision of such community amenities in housing estates constructed with Commonwealth grants as the Commonwealth itself provides in housing estates in Canberra; subsidies for tenants or purchasers who through bereavement or injury cannot meet an economic rental or repayment.

Housing costs are not simply dependent on the cost of land and houses themselves. Nor do masses upon masses of houses constitute a true community.

Differences in living standards amongst Australians are increasingly those related to the provision of public services such as hospitals, schools, recreation facilities, public transport, roads and sewerage. Only governments can provide these services. Increasingly, lower standards are related not solely to family income but to the availability and quality of government services. In the provision of these there is, increasingly, a geographical discrimination against those living in new suburbs and regional centres.

The burden of new urban development and the provision of basic services in the suburbs fall more and more on those least able to pay. Local government gets its revenue from rates and charges. State governments get their revenue from indirect taxes and charges. All these indirect taxes are inherently unfair in their incidence. They fall most heavily on those with smaller incomes and larger families.

The starting point of Labor's approach to the problems of cities and country centres is that the national government of Australia must accept at least as much responsibility for cities and centres as the national governments of comparable countries already do. We cannot afford to do less than other advanced, predominantly urban nations. By neglect now, we are building massive problems for the future. In the Australian Capital Territory, the Commonwealth cannot avoid its responsibilities. Alone of our cities, Canberra's growth has been comprehensive and synchronised.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission was set up to advise the Commonwealth on the fairest way to help the smaller States to provide services equal to those of the larger States. A Federal Labor Government will now ask the Commission to recommend the amount of Commonwealth assistance required to remove the inequalities of servicing developing suburbs and regions which stand in the same relation to better established parts of our cities and centres now as the so called claimant States did in relation to the more populous States a generation ago.

We will establish a Department of Urban Affairs with responsibilities similar to those of the, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It will analyse, research and co-ordinate plans for each city and region and advise the national government on grants for urban purposes.

We will sponsor the growth of regional development authorities. Australia has 900 local government authorities, which seldom co-operate on a regional basis and too often have to compete for available resources within their own region.

Development authorities will provide a focal point for rational and regional co-operation, planning and development. Through them local government will become a partner in a new Financial Agreement and will gain adequate access to national funds.

Under Liberal policies, the burdens of some of the world's highest rates for some of the world's worst municipal services have fallen almost entirely on middle and modest income earners. These same people have borne the whole burden of the Liberals' refusal to renew the tax schedules for the past 15 years. They are among the highest taxed earning groups in the world.

Don't be fooled by the Liberal boast that tax rates have not been increased. This year's Budget increases personal tax by a record 20%. The taxes have been raised by the simple silent expedient of leaving the tax schedules unchanged and letting inflation and wage increases do the rest. It is the typical Liberal way.

A Labor Government will review the tax schedules to make the progressive system of tax apply in practice as well as principle. In our review we will have the benefit of the analyses which were made by the Treasury for the last two budgets, which were twice rejected by the Liberal Treasurer, and which now, from all accounts, are to be produced next week as the basis of some bright new Liberal plan.

We must begin now to prepare for the sort of country Australia is to be for the rest of this century and beyond. It's not good enough to think we can go on in the next 30 years with all the methods of the past 70. In no area of government activity is this more important than social welfare.

The existing set up in Australia has remained basically unchanged for 60 years. For the vast majority of those who receive benefits because of age, illness, incapacity, widowhood or unemployment, its fundamental features remain the same: means-tested cash payments. It is for this reason that retirement for most Australians fails to provide new opportunities for leisure, pleasure and creativity.

We must now begin to prepare for an entirely new concept of retirement and other pensions. The old concept, to which the Liberals still cling, is that pensions are a government provided subsistence payment between retirement and death. Today, for most Australians, the pension represents the sole or principal income after retirement. The percentage for whom this is true is rising rapidly. Wealthy, modern countries can no longer tolerate the idea that retirement should mean instantaneous reduction in standards of living by one half or one third for most people. Few such countries, other than Australia, now tolerate such a proposition. They accept the principle that there should be a relation between working earnings and retirement earnings. This is the basis of existing superannuation schemes. A national superannuation scheme is designed simply to extend the principle and the opportunity to the whole community.

Family income after retirement, or after loss of the breadwinner through death or incapacity, should not be related merely to subsistence levels but should be related to the general standard of the earning section of the community.

We will have a three-pronged approach to the question to relate the general pension rate to average earnings, establish national superannuation, and abolish the means test.

The means test has long been discarded in most countries which claim to be modern and prosperous, It is time to end the tinkering, the tapering, the patching, the papering with the means test. It is time to make a fixed and formal commitment for its complete abolition. A Labor Government will abolish the means test by 6 annual stages. Each stage will cost no more than the new means test has cost this year. The Liberals have themselves disproved their own claim that abolition would be ruinous. In the next Budget, the means test will be abolished for everybody 77 and over, in the 1971 Budget for everybody 73 and over and in the 1972 Budget for everybody 70 and over.

Abolition of the means test is only a partial answer to removing the injustices, inconsistencies and inadequacies of the present system. Among the worst victims of the means test are those already provided with superannuation. Too few Australians now have the opportunity to join superannuation schemes. It is time this opportunity was extended to all Australians. Only the national government can create this opportunity. The Liberals, after years of paying lip service to the concept of national insurance and superannuation, now formally and openly denounce it. Only last week every member of the Liberal and Country Party voted against the proposition. Mr Gorton himself slammed the door; we will open it.

I do not brush over the complexities of any such project. There are existing rights fully paid up rights, often by people who had no choice but to buy those rights if they were to follow the career of their choice. Such rights shall not be reduced, but indeed will be enhanced by the abolition of the means test and the introduction of our new health scheme. There is the difference in payments appropriate for those fully covered by superannuation, those who pay high insurance premiums, and those who are covered by neither. There are features of schemes in other countries which are not applicable or acceptable in the Australian context.

For these reasons, just as the Holt government commissioned an outside inquiry into superannuation for Commonwealth and university staffs, so will we institute an inquiry into superannuation for all, examining Australian proposals and overseas practices. Our objective is to give the three quarters of our people who are not able to enjoy the benefits of superannuation the opportunity to do so.

In the interval before these proposals begin to operate, there remains the pressing problem of the inadequacy of the general pension rate. Twenty years of Liberal Budgets and Liberal "compassion" have reduced the value of the single age pension in terms of average weekly earnings from 24% to 21%, of the married pension from 48% to 38% and of the general rate repatriation pension from 27% to 17%. Even after the second Gorton-Wentworth Budget, the only Class "A" widow pensioners who are not living below the poverty line are those with a child under six. Pensioners of all kinds have been the principal victims of inflation. The gap between their standard of living and the standard of the remainder of the community has seldom been greater.

I am convinced that employed Australians now freely and generously acknowledge that those who laid the foundations of our national prosperity or defended it have a right to share in that prosperity.

To ameliorate the gross injustice of the last Liberal Budget, we will introduce legislation in the November session of the Parliament for a further \$1 increase for all age, invalid, widow and repatriation pensioners.

Thereafter, we will provide an additional \$1 in each successive Budget until the general pension rate is at least restored to 25% of average weekly earnings, which is a figure representative of its value under the Chifley Government. We will protect the value of each successive increase by making annual adjustments in accord with rises in average weekly earnings.

Those dependent on pensions, particularly pensioners living alone and widows with children, comprise a large proportion of the one million Australians who live in real poverty or marginal poverty. We will not eliminate poverty in Australia unless we have an entirely new approach to social welfare. We will not have a new approach to welfare without a new government — a Labor Government.

The Liberals' approach to the whole question of social welfare is in terms of cash benefits only, with meagre increases provided in election eve Budgets. In every comparable country, it is recognised that cash benefits alone cannot provide an adequate response to welfare problems. If the one million poor, particularly the young, are to break out of the interminable poverty cycle, it will not be done by providing cash payments alone, but also by providing advice, counselling, training and retraining and services by social workers in the home, in the neighbourhood at the level of the home and the neighbourhood.

Labor proposes to establish an Australian Assistance Plan. We will make grants under Section 96 of the Constitution to enable State governments, local authorities and voluntary agencies to co operate in the establishment of regional departments of social welfare.

Although the Australian public showed by its over-whelming vote in the referendum of May 1967 that it wanted the Commonwealth to accept responsibility for bringing Aborigines to a position of equality with other Australians, the Government has declined to do so. A Labor Government will assume this responsibility. We will vest existing Aboriginal reserves in a trust or trusts, comprised of Aborigines. Title to Aboriginal land will include full rights to minerals. Labor will give special attention to Aboriginal education, housing, health and employment. It will establish a Parliamentary Committee to study all aspects of policy affecting Aborigines.

All these proposals are based on a view, the Labor view, of what is appropriate for a country which has any claim to be modern, advanced, prosperous. Their full achievement depends on our capacity to build up that prosperity, and that depends upon the proper use and development of our nation's resources.

As I have said, our most important resource is the quality of our population and that is why Labor places a prime emphasis on education. High productivity, however, will depend not only on the efficiency of our employees but on sensible industrial relations between employees and employers.

Australian employees can no longer tolerate a situation in which industrial action is made a criminal offence and where all employees from airline pilots to tram drivers,

bank officers and, building labourers, are liable to criminal proceedings and penalties if their association or their union even contemplates direct action. No other country in what the Liberals call the free world tolerates such a situation. We will repeal the provocative and pointless penal provisions contained in sections 109 and 111 of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act. We will put "conciliation" back into arbitration.

Significantly, most industrial unrest over the last two years has been among the higher skilled and government employees. The Liberals have proved themselves not only poor managers but bad employers.

Continuing provocation and consequent disruption has occurred in Australia's largest business undertaking, the Post Office. At the same time postal charges have risen steadily and postal services have as steadily declined. Under a Labor Government the Post Office will be established as a statutory corporation, as has been done with the British Post Office and the West German Post Office and is now proposed by President Nixon. The result has been a marked increase in efficiency of services and harmony in the service. Even while present arrangements exist, we will restore the second mail delivery.

At the time of Federation Commonwealth employees were given three weeks' annual leave with pay. This ceiling remains in the Act despite the fact that for nearly six years all public employees in N.S.W. have had four weeks' annual leave by statute and increasing numbers of private employees have gained it through arbitration. Harold Holt was considering it in 1966; he was forestalled by Senator Gorton. We will grant Commonwealth employees four weeks' annual leave.

Maintaining and increasing our standards will depend, not only on the quality of our work force, but on the proper use of our natural resources. Proper use depends on proper planning and continuous planning. Liberal delay has deferred indefinitely the 20-year-old agreement for the Queensland Burdekin Scheme and the 20-year old agreement for the Adelaide Port Pirie railway standardisation. The Commonwealth Railways Commissioner submitted last January his final reports and specifications for the railway from Whyalla to Port Augusta.

In his policy speech in 1963, Sir Robert Menzies described the Chowilla project as "a splendid example of the Liberal approach". He spoke more truly than any of us knew, particularly those of us who comprised the 500 members of 4 parliaments which unanimously endorsed the project. Yet, at the very time when these Parliaments have all been placed in the position of breaking their word to South Australia, at a time when the River Murray Commission has been discredited, when South Australia faces the real threat of strangulation of its industrial and population growth because of salination of the Murray, its sole source of water, and when Queensland is suffering the worst drought this century, the Liberals have decided to cripple and I believe ultimately destroy the Snowy Mountains Authority.

This greatest investigation, design and construction team ever assembled in the Southern Hemisphere is to be down graded to the level of a consultative body. All its work in progress on the Snowy and elsewhere in Australia will have come to an end in 4 years' time. If the Liberals are to be allowed to proceed with their plans to destroy an authority they have always resented since the Chifley Labor Government established it, it is inevitable that the experience and expertise of its teams will be disbanded and lost. Most of them will go abroad.

Labor will establish a National Water Conservation Authority with the Snowy Mountains Authority as its nucleus. The Chowilla project is the law of the land. We will carry out the law. Chowilla will proceed as part of the co-ordinated development of soundly based water storage projects in the whole Murray Darling system. At the same time there will be development of storages in the Burdekin and Fitzroy basins and associated river systems.

To place financing of new development projects on a continuing basis and to take projects out of the realm of electioneering, we will establish a Development Revolving Fund. This fund will apply revenue from existing projects to new ones. Within 4 years the Snowy Mountains projects alone will be making \$42 million net each year from electricity users in Victoria and New South Wales. By then another \$10 million will be coming back to the Commonwealth each year from railway projects it has hitherto financed in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales and water projects in New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. The fund will allow the Commonwealth to assist in such rail, power and water projects as I have mentioned.

We will establish a Ministry for Northern Development. Mr Chifley regularly conferred with the Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia on northern development. Sir Robert Menzies, Mr Holt and Mr Gorton never did. I shall.

The new department will accept responsibility for the conservation of the unique national assets and tourist attractions of Central Australia and North Queensland. Bearing in mind the views of Sir Percy Spender and Sir Garfield Barwick that the Commonwealth has sole responsibility for the seas and seabed commencing at low water mark, we will suspend all mining and drilling on the Great Barrier Reef. It is a remarkable thing — Liberals always stress the rights of property — except when the property belongs to the whole people.

In September last year, after nearly 19 years in Parliament, Mr Gorton made his first visit to any place in Northern Australia outside Townsville and Darwin. He was appalled to find how little Australian ownership there was in the great new mining projects which are reshaping the face of our continent. He raised great hopes for a change. Soon after, the Australian share of the Gove project, in a Commonwealth territory under Commonwealth laws, fell from 50% to 30%.

After a year of false starts and false hopes, the so-called guidelines for foreign investment appeared. They may be of relevance to board-rooms in Collins Street or Wall Street or Threadneedle Street. They are irrelevant to the central objective of giving Australians opportunities to share in the development and processing of Australia's own resources.

Labor has three positive proposals. A Labor Government will invest directly on behalf of the Australian people in Australian development projects, in co-operation with local and foreign private companies. The Australian Government has invested in Bougainville. It refused to invest in Gove to maintain the Australian share of a project on our own territory.

Secondly, we will amend the taxation laws to enable and encourage Australian insurance companies, the largest reservoir of new private capital in Australia, to invest in approved basic industries and development projects, as hitherto they have been enabled and encouraged to invest in government securities alone. The Commonwealth already guarantees banks against loss for following approved credit

policies. We will give the insurance companies similar guarantees in development policies.

Thirdly, we will establish an Australian Industry Development Corporation on the lines of Italy's I.R.I. It will be similar in scope and purpose to the project which has been urged by Mr McEwen, which made some headway under Harold Holt and which Mr Gorton has prevented coming to Cabinet.

The men who framed Australia's Constitution foresaw the need for Commonwealth co-ordination of those State activities which are national in scope and national in importance. They foresaw in particular the need for Commonwealth co-ordination of the six State transport systems. The Constitution therefore makes provision for an Inter-State Commission with specific responsibilities for "navigation and shipping and railways the property of any State". A Labor Government will re-establish the Inter-State Commission. It will up grade and strengthen the Department of Transport and appoint a Minister whose main responsibility will be to conceive and concert with the States a national approach to transport development.

An effective Inter State Commission and a national approach to transport development would enable us to achieve great economy and great efficiency in all our transport undertakings. It would enable us to make a start on construction of the network of national highways which we so urgently require.

A Labor Government would introduce those forms of assistance to companies building and operating ships which already apply throughout North America and Western Europe. Australia is a natural source of supply for small ships throughout the archipelagos and islands which surround us.

Australia has the longest navigable coastline in the world. It is the twelfth largest trading nation. With a minimum of explanation, and a maximum of unexplained changes in previously announced plans, Mr Gorton and Mr McEwen have reversed in principle their long standing denunciation of Australian participation in Australian trade. They have done it with as little eye to economics as to consistency. By contrast, Labor will have proper regard to both, and follow by deliberate and deliberated steps our long-established policy of constructing, chartering and operating, under the Australian National Line, enough ships to carry a fair share of our trade. Our aim will be that half Australia's trade shall ultimately be carried in Australian built, Australian owned, Australian manned ships.

Crucial to all forms of transport is oil. Australians now face the intolerable paradox that the more oil we discover in Australia, the higher the price of petrol is likely to be.

The hurried and hushed agreement with Esso BHP, negotiated personally by Mr Gorton on the eve of what turned out to be a non-election last year, is directly responsible for this situation.

We will renegotiate the arrangements to ensure that Australian petrol users are not penalised by the use of Australian petrol. These negotiations will be in the hands of a Fuel and Energy Board, whose overall function will be to apply a national fuel and power policy to remedy the confusion and waste of unplanned use of our existing fuel resources and to plan properly for the development of nuclear power.

The Inter-State Commission, like the U.S. Interstate Commerce Commission, will regulate and co-ordinate the construction and operation of interstate pipelines.

There is confusion about the future of our new industries and resources; but there is a crisis of confidence in Australia's traditional primary industries. Both wool and wheat, which have underpinned the prosperity of Australia for so long, face an uncertain future. It's no wonder the Country Party gags or prevents debate on urgent rural matters.

Fundamental to Labor's policy for the urgent reconstruction of primary industries is the provision of long-term finance at moderate rates of interest. Labor, unlike the Liberal Country Party, is not bound to the policies of the private banking system. It can and will arrange for long term development finance for the primary producer.

With the wheat harvesting season upon farmers, it was not until two weeks ago that any proposals were put forward for the provision of additional off farm storage, The amount allocated was too little and it comes too late.

The Labor Party has put forward a practical and realistic plan to overcome the inflexibility of the present quota system. It will establish a No. 2 pool within the Wheat Stabilisation Act which will allow the sale of surplus wheat at competitive prices to the livestock industries and for industrial use.

The wool industry, like the wheat industry, has had to wait for election eve for the suggestion of any positive action to help it face the future. It is a half hearted half plan which will create more problems than it will solve. The Labor Party recognises the need for action to safeguard the economic position of wool-growers against deteriorating real incomes, particularly the small bona fide wool grower. After consultation with the industry, it would be prepared to implement an effective minimum plan to safeguard this group.

Labor will also assist in the introduction of wool testing into wool marketing. We will resist the abolition of small lots if the evidence can be sustained that this would be to the detriment of the small wool-grower.

The Country Party has taken refuge in silence on the merino export embargo. The merino export embargo ministerial statement has been listed on the House notice paper since 27 March this year. They have not allowed the resumption of debate despite the Senate vote against the lifting of the ban. We do not equivocate. A Labor Government will maintain the ban.

Because the economic position of the sugar industry is more dependent on effective overseas marketing of sugar, a Labor Government would, in consultation with the industry, make provision for an expanded producer dominant Australian Sugar Board with the objective of giving canefarmers a greater say in determining and implementing marketing policies for export sugar.

If requested by the industry, a Labor Government will implement a price stability scheme for sugar sold on the world free market in order to provide a higher degree of price stability and income security for canefarmers.

A Labor Government would consult with the industry with the objective of implementing a comprehensive stabilisation plan for the orderly marketing of apples and pears.

Labor will initiate a national fodder scheme based on the construction of drought storages for surplus fodder and grains strategically located in selected areas highly susceptible to recurring droughts.

A Labor Government will regard itself as having two overriding responsibilities — to develop our resources, our human resources, our natural resources, our financial resources, the resources of our environment, the environment that has been given to us and the environment that we make for ourselves; and secondly to defend those resources. We will put the defences of Australia and the burdens of those defences on a rational, efficient and just basis.

The Liberals can no longer be trusted on defence. They should no longer be entrusted with the defence of Australia. Look at their recent record. This is the party which has cut defence expenditure by 5% the first peacetime cut since the end of the war in Korea. This is the party which has allowed all our defence industries to run down and in the case of the aircraft industry to be in large part dismantled. This is the party of the F-111 — the most colossal, the most costly blunder in Australia's military history. This is the party whose leader has caused unprecedented tensions and recriminations between Australia and Malaysia and Singapore. This is the party which fails to see any need for naval or maritime facilities in the Indian Ocean. This is the party which refuses to take the people into its confidence on the nature and purpose of installations in Central Australia. This is the party which relies on defence on the cheap by a flagrantly unjust conscription. This is the party which is actively sabotaging the most important initiative the United States has ever taken to prevent nuclear war.

Above all, this is the party of Vietnam, the party which has lied and lied and lied, just in order to keep that war going while thousands have died and died and died with no other result than that the war has just been kept going. This is the record of a party which expects Australians to trust it to build up our defences and build up honest and friendly relations with our allies and our neighbours.

The sole purpose of Australia's participation in the civil war in Vietnam was to keep United States military forces involved on the mainland of Asia. The sole achievement of that war — the sole consequence of the devastation of an entire country, the destruction of a proud and civilised nation, the loss of over 300 Australian lives, the political destruction of one of the strongest Presidents in America's history, the near disruption of the American political system — has been to hasten, to make certain, that American withdrawal from our region which our participation was supposed to delay or prevent. Australian arms remain undimmed; but Australian policy has never suffered so total and unrelieved a defeat.

The Liberals sabotaged two attempts in 1967 to end the war. They denounced all attempts to end the war in 1968 and they have remained sullen, silent and resentful about all subsequent American initiatives to end the war. They know but they will not admit that the American Administration has now only one aim — to end this war as decently and quickly as may be. They know that President Nixon must have moved substantially to end the war by the Congressional elections of November next year or else face the decimation of his party in these elections. President Nixon has clearly expressed his determination that there will be no American combat troops in Vietnam by Christmas 1970. Under Labor, there will be no Australian troops in Vietnam after June 1970.

The greatest assistance, the only assistance Australia can now render the United States in its tragic dilemma in Vietnam is to stop impeding the liquidation of this war which the American people and the American nation so desperately seek. For years the Liberals have talked about our involvement in Vietnam as a means of earning the

gratitude of the American people. The only way that Australia can now earn or deserve the gratitude of the American people is to assist them in the liquidation of the war they have come to hate. I intend, therefore, to go to Washington as your Prime Minister at Christmas to make it clear beyond all doubt that Australia will give every assistance to the United States in her efforts to extricate herself honourably and quickly from a disastrous and deluded war.

Meanwhile my Deputy, as Minister for Defence, will go to Saigon to begin the arrangements for the take over of our area of responsibility in Phuoc Tuy Province by the Army of the Republic of Vietnam to ensure that arrangements are made for the maximum safeguards, not only for our own troops but for the people of that area whose only real security and hope lies in a quick political settlement of the war we have so misguidedly prolonged.

I will also tell the President that we will sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which President Kennedy and President Johnson worked so hard to create and which President Nixon sees as so crucial to his hopes for a detente with the Soviet Union. The Liberal delay in signing has hampered American efforts to get Japan, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to sign. It was signed in July 1968 by New Zealand, Malaysia, the Philippines and South Vietnam.

We will use our influence, an influence which must rest on example, with the remaining countries in our region to adhere to this, the most important and fundamental initiative for world peace the United States has ever taken and the most important request the United States has ever made to us as an ally.

This is the most constructive step Australia could take in bringing about the detente, not through the Liberals' diplomatically naive initiatives, hastily announced and as hastily disowned.

Beyond Vietnam, we find the various Liberal definitions of our role crude and unacceptable. We are not "the policeman on the beat", we are not "the sheriff", we are not "part of the posse". We see Australia as a good neighbour. Indonesia, our nearest and most populous neighbour, is especially important to us. We look forward to resumption of open, honest and constructive relations with Malaysia and Singapore after the avoidable misunderstandings of the past year. Our aim in relation to those three countries may be summed up in a single sentence: it is to assist them to build up their economies their societies and their defences so that they can stand on their own feet.

We will use the years ahead — ten years of peace, according to Mr Gorton — to create effective patterns of regional co-operation in defence and development. The garrisoning of token military forces so restricted physically and politically as to render their presence useless and meaningless is incompatible with this wider aim. We will best help Singapore and Malaysia to stand on their own feet by applying our strengths where they are deficient and helping them overcome that deficiency. Our defence strengths are our skills, our familiarity with expensive and sophisticated equipment, the quality of our air force, and the calibre of our training techniques.

In practical terms, we will enter into arrangements with New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia for the standardisation of defence equipment, for the shared production of such equipment as is within our collective technological capacity and for the purchase of those major items which we cannot ourselves produce by joint approach to supplier nations. We will concert our tactical planning with the planning

of our neighbours to create a capacity for rapid and flexible regional response in an emergency.

Developing and sustaining our own defence strengths depends on the professionalism and mobility of the army. Expanding that professionalism and testing that mobility require constant training with and within the countries of the region. And in such training exercises, conducted not only abroad by our Army but here in Australia in exercises with our neighbours, we would foster not only the strength of our own Army but the strength and ability of theirs. It would be the military part of true regional co-operation. It would be a basis for a build up of our own defence industries. We should have exercises in neighbouring countries and their forces should exercise in ours. We should pool our procurement arrangements, our defence production in the region and our joint procurement from overseas.

Similarly with the air force, Australia properly assumes a training role with the Malaysian air force. But in fact half our Mirage squadrons are marooned at Butterworth because there are no airfields in Australia suitable for them. This is making a virtue of necessity with a vengeance. We will provide operational, technical and domestic Mirage facilities at Darwin as at Williamtown.

If a system of regional defence training and co-operation is to work properly, it requires that Australia should have a highly professional army.

Unlike the Liberals, we will treat the armed forces as an essential occupation which a man pursues for relatively few years in his working life. We will not run the army on the cheap by continuing conscription. We will not base our ability for rapid expansion of the army in an emergency by compelling those who have already been conscripted on the basis of one in ten to have to serve again. This is the logic of Liberal defence policies — a double penalty for conscripts.

The Regular Army is the basis of strength in peace and rapid expansion in wartime. Yet the re-engagement rate of regulars has declined every year for the past 5 years. The defence forces must be shown to be as necessary, and their conditions as attractive, as any other pursuit in the community. The only way to attract and retain regular soldiers in peace-time is to guarantee that they and their dependants will be, and after discharge will remain, on a par with civilians of the same age. They should be given war service homes, repatriation health benefits, civilian rehabilitation training, scholarships for their children and generous retirement and resettlement allowances. These are the methods by which other countries have acquired adequate regular armed forces. They are methods which a Labor Government will employ wholeheartedly in improving and expanding still further Australia's professional army. They are methods which have never been given a trial by the Liberals.

Stronger defence forces mean better-balanced defence forces. The F 111 fiasco has not only unbalanced our defence budget, but the R.A.A.F. Even if this aircraft proves technically sound, it will remain a totally unsuitable aircraft for our requirements. These 24 planes will be orphans in the Pacific. Unless Liberal mismanagement has created a solution in which cancellation would be absolutely ruinous, we would negotiate for a substitute aircraft more suitable to our means and needs.

So unbalanced have the Liberals left the Navy that the Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet has said that we need twice as many patrol boats as we have to patrol our coastline. A Labor Government will place orders for those boats. Since 1961, the Labor Party has insisted on the need for naval and maritime facilities on the Indian

Ocean. We will co-operate with the Western Australian Government in providing general maritime facilities at Cockburn Sound.

The purpose of defence is to preserve the nation and its freedom. It is just as much a part of a government's duty to preserve and widen the freedom we defend. It is one of the sure signs of the Liberal decline that there has been an erosion of personal freedom, particularly in the last 2 years. In the Liberal decline into illiberalism, they have become not only a force for division but a force for repression. There has been invasion of privacy, suppression of freedom of speech in public streets, attempts to deprive citizens of the right of trial by jury, denial of freedom of conscience against military service.

We will introduce laws providing for protection of human rights and civil liberties especially to prevent discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, sex, religion or political opinion. We will press for world wide and regional implementation of International Labour Organisation and human rights conventions. The right to privacy will be protected by special laws and vigilant administration to prevent interference with postal, telephone and other communications.

The censorship laws will be altered to conform with the general principles that adults be entitled to read, hear and view what they wish in private or public and that persons and those in their care be protected from exposure to unsolicited material offensive to them. For the purposes of implementing these principles a judicial tribunal will be established to hold public hearings and give published reasons. The Commonwealth laws for censorship of imported books, records and films will be altered to conform with these principles.

Public servants, who are now one in four of the work force, will be given the maximum possible freedom to exercise the civil and political rights enjoyed by other citizens. Restrictions on the freedom of expression of public servants and former public servants will be reduced to the minimum necessary for the conduct of affairs of state.

Trial by jury will be preserved and extended as far as can be in all serious civil and criminal cases. We shall adopt from the United States a Federal system of legal aid to ensure equal access to the courts and benefit of the laws.

We will pass the bill which Senator Murphy persuaded the Senate to pass in June last year for the abolition of the death penalty.

We will pass the two bills I introduced last November. One provides Senate representation for the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The other will give the vote at 18.

In enhancing and expanding liberties in Australia, in giving youth a say in Australian national life, we wish also to enhance freedom for dissent, and to avoid the need or excuse for violence. In this campaign in particular there is no justification for violence. On the contrary, I believe it is about the one thing that can prevent a Labor victory. Whoever might be the ostensible object of violent demonstrations in this campaign, they would be in fact directed, and deliberately directed, against the Labor Party.

The people have the right to hear Mr Gorton's views and proposals. It's true — he has voluntarily limited himself by the brevity and privacy of his campaign; but the people are entitled to learn from him, in particular, why any of his new proposals were not in

the Budget, and why they cannot be extensively explained and examined, as our proposals have been. Indeed one of the extraordinary aspects of this election is that people know far more about the proposals of the party which seeks to become the government than those of the parties currently forming the government.

I have had the honour of presenting those proposals. In all these matters, the people of Australia are offered a very clear choice. It is a choice between making the next 3 years the most constructive and purposeful in our nation's history, or another 3 years of Liberal dither and delay. At this time in our history, we cannot afford the Liberals, with their backward-looking ideas and their backward, brawling partners in the Country Party, for another 3 years.

We cannot afford another 3 years of the embarrassments and eccentricities and crudities, this appalling blend of amateurishness and arrogance — the perfect recipe for disaster — of the past 2 years. The Liberals and their allies are in a state of nervous prostration and political exhaustion. Let them settle their squabbles, let them sort themselves out in opposition. Give them a chance to recover. Let's put the Liberals out to pasture.

The programme I have outlined is a beginning. I cannot promise to reconstruct in a year, or even a single Parliament, 20 years of Liberal failure. I do pledge our party to three of the most constructive and purposeful years in Australia's history years of innovation, renovation, reinvigoration.

Without bombast, without rhetoric, let me say this: we are opening tonight not only a campaign but a crusade — a crusade to give all our people the opportunities to which they are entitled in a rich and growing nation; a crusade to ensure equal educational opportunities for all our children, to take financial harassment and despair out of ill health, to allow our young people to plan ahead for their homes and their family without a life time of debt, to restore dignity and creativity to retirement, to prevent our cities and towns from becoming vast, unplanned slums, to conserve our national estate, to keep the beauty we have been given and keep out the ugliness we can only make for ourselves, to revitalise the democratic processes, to restore and widen freedoms and civil liberties, to liberate the creativity and ingenuity of our people, to give Australia her proper place of partnership in our region, to use our influence and take our own initiatives to end the bombing and burning and killing and maiming in Vietnam, to build a truly great and good civilisation here in these southern oceans.

The future is with Australia; the future is with Labor.”

Source: Compiled from original documents in the National Archives of Australia (Series M170 Item 69/186), The Canberra Times and The Age.