

Victory Speech: Robert Menzies, Prime Minister (LP)

May 31st, 1954

“I am delighted that the Government’s faith in the sound judgment of the Australian people had been vindicated.

The Government’s majority in the new Parliament would be small.

However, I have had an experience of four years of generous support from the members of the Government parties which assure me that the Government would be able to continue stable and progressive administration.

The Government knew that the 1954 election would be difficult and its result would depend on the success or otherwise of its policies.

When the Opposition policy speech had been delivered, with its remarkable array of expensive but attractive promises, it became quite clear that the election would be a real test of the judgment and character of the Australian people.

The result of the test is to show that this is a community which prefers a steady progress on sound foundations to taking a chance on getting something for nothing.

This is a piece of good fortune for Australia, for there will be difficult problems to deal with, both externally and internally.

The team-work which has characterised these recent years will be more important than ever. From my own personal point of view the results in Victoria are particularly gratifying.

We are all sad to think that our colleague Sir Arthur Fadden has been temporarily laid low by his most dangerous accident, but we would like to convey to him our congratulations on the vindication of the actions that have been taken.

I deeply regret the loss of some loyal and courageous colleagues, whose absence from the new Parliament will, I hope, be merely temporary.

Finally, I do not lose sight of the fact that electoral battles against what seemed a year ago to be overwhelming odds are not won by one man but by combined effort on the part of candidates, successful and unsuccessful, and of many thousands of men and women who have made the contest their own.”

Source: Compiled from The Age, 1/6/1954, page 1, The Sydney Morning Herald and The Canberra Times.