

Victory Speech: Harold Holt, Prime Minister (LP)

NOVEMBER 26th, 1966

“The Labor party has lost the election because it is living in the past with policies unreal for today.

I was confident there had been an improving position for us, largely because we’d been attracting younger voters. We are more in tune with today.

I feel fine, I’d be very hard to please if I didn’t.

I am grateful to the Australian people for giving me the chance to put our policies into effect over the next three years.”

I have said we will review the position of troops from time to time, either up or down.

I think we (he and Mr. Calwell) agreed that conscription was the principal issue, but that doesn’t connote any change in policy as far as I’m concerned.

One demonstration group tends to produce another, counter-demonstration group, particularly today as young people are taking a much more active part in public affairs.

But demonstrations and counter-demonstrations defeat the democratic purpose of explanation and persuasion at public meetings.

The Labor party thought he (Mr. Calwell) was formidable enough, so why should I question their judgment.

I think the public is concerned with the policies of the parties generally, not personalities.

I have to be elected leader, if I am to be leader, the deputy leader has to be elected.

I reconstituted the Government when I took over less than a year ago, and there is a Senate election before mid-1968.”

Source: Compiled from The Age, November 28th 1966, page 1, The Sun Herald and The Canberra Times.

Victory Comments: Harold Holt, Prime Minister (LP)

Melbourne, November 27th 1966

“Unrealistic Labor Party policies were the main reason for the Liberals’ landslide win,.

They are living in the past. The Labor Party policies are unrealistic to the Australia of today.

The fact that several issues and pressure groups were lined up against us failed to shake the judgment of the electorate.

The electorate made up their minds on the important issues which were those of Australia’s national security and development.

I think our policies were regarded by them as the more realistic and achieving the better result.

This was largely because we have been attracting a bigger proportion of the younger vote.

The younger voter regards our policies as being more in tune with the needs of Australia today.

I took a look at the chances of going underwater this morning but there was a bit of a swell and the water was a bit murky.

I’ll have another go at it tomorrow morning before I go back to Melbourne.

I do not forsee any cabinet changes but I do admit I have not given it much thought as yet.

I have yet to be elected as leader of the party.

I do not know when the party election meeting will be held.

When it is held it is possible that the meeting will also choose the next Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The meeting will depend on how quickly we get all the results.

When I study my Cabinet, it will not be like looking at it after a three-year term in office.

You must remember that I reconstituted the Government only 12 months ago.

The trend of demonstrations and counter demonstrations is not one I welcome in election campaigns.

It defeats the democratic purpose of explanation and persuasion at public meetings.

One demonstrating group tends to produce a counter demonstrating group.

Demonstrations come about because younger people are taking a much more active part in elections, partly because they are getting into well-paid jobs at an earlier age and also because issues like Vietnam and National Service concern them directly.

I cannot say if I see a more formidable opponent stepping from the Labor ranks if Mr Calwell retires.

The Labor Party did not see a more formidable opponent and not only did they elect him but they reconfirmed their choice during the last Parliament.

I think the public are more concerned with parties and their policies generally rather than with personalities.

My Government will review the Vietnam position from time to time but I will not say if the election win will result in a larger contingent being sent there.

Such a decision is a Cabinet one and is taken on the advice of the chiefs-of-staff of the services.”

Source: Compiled from The Canberra Times, November 28th 1966, page 1, The Sun Herald and The Age.