On the 29th of May, 1954, the electors of Australia will pass judgement not only on the Government and its Members, but also on the Opposition. The verdict given on election day will be based on three things: for the Government as a whole, we must ask ourselves whether they have lived up to their previous promises, and whether they have done a good job for every one of Australia's citizens. For the Opposition, we must ask ourselves whether their criticisms have been constructive or destructive; whether their opposition has added to or detracted from the general achievements of the Government. We must remember that criticisms should be brought forward only when due, and not merely because of partisan adherence to the party line.

Australia as a whole will judge.

I would ask every man and woman to think carefully of the position four years ago. There were shortages of many essential materials: petrol, coal, iron and steel. Farmers could get few of the things they needed to improve their properties, while factory production was everywhere held up because of lack of power or raw materials.

Today, all this is changed. It is no longer "news" when a collier enters Port Phillip Bay. Industry and agriculture are both prosperous. We are now seeking export markets for coal and iron where before we had to import some of both commodities. Peace in industry is the first requirement of a country that wishes to go ahead and develop its natural resources so that its citizens may all have peaceful and prosperous homes.

Many people have asked me how it is that the Liberal Government has succeeded in this when a Labour Government had failed so lamentably before 1949. The answer is twofold: first, the secret ballot made it possible for the first time for every decent unionist to have his say in his Union affairs. By this means, many of the extremist agitators have been expelled from Union office. Second, the Government has co-operated with the Unions. In all matters concerning them, their leaders' advice has been sought. These two things count greatly to the Government's credit, and we must remember that the Labour Party always opposed the secret ballot, and in so doing, they were silently accepting the intimidation and graft in the Unions.

The record of taxation is also sound. In the last Budget, reductions in the lowest income groups were nearly one third. During the term of office reductions in these lower groups have totalled 100%. The first child is endowed for the first time, while Dependents' and Medical Allowances have
been increased, and recently a comprehensive Health Plan was put into operation. Many of these things have been designed specifically for young people with growing families, but we must not forget the pension increases which total 27½ over four years, while in the last Budget of the Labour Party there were no increases despite the rising cost of living. The Menzies Government has everywhere increased social services while at the same time it has greatly reduced taxation, giving full evidence of the soundness of its policies. In Australia today there were jobs for everyone. Since last November there has not been one man receiving unemployment benefits from the Hamilton branch of the Commonwealth Employment Service. This is a notable example of the soundness of the Government’s policies, for the first duty of our people at Canberra is to keep our citizens fully employed so that every man and woman in every home need have no fear for their future prosperity and happiness.

During its term of office, the Government met some extraordinary difficulties. There was not only the legacy of industrial unrest, of strikes, of shortages, and of unemployment that had to be overcome, but also the effects of a third drop in our export revenue in 1952. In addition to this there was the stricter and more costly control of the exchange market that was imposed by our creditors in the hope of preventing us from going into reverse after the previous two reverses. This necessitated severe restrictions and substantially increased taxation. These Acts were unpopular, but by them the Government avoided the misfortune of a severe economic crisis, and maintained general prosperity for all — a thing we can all see for ourselves in looking about us today.

During these last four years Members of the Opposition have falsely predicted disasters ahead. In 1951 Mr. Calwell said “Buy all you can — don’t save your money — because the position is going to be desperate. There’ll be a lot of people who won’t have a Christmas dinner in 1951.” In spite of this, savings increased and Christmas was better than ever. We must also remember Labour policy concerning trading banks. In 1949 Dr. Evatt spent hundreds of hours before the High Court and Privy Council arguing that the private banks should be nationalised, and in 1950 his Deputy Mr. Calwell made the further point: “in the course of time the Commonwealth Bank will be the only bank in Australia. By competition it will force the private banks out of existence, and thus the private banking system will be nationalised without the necessity to pay compensation to the private banks.” Such an objective contradicts every Australian’s ideas of fairness and free enterprise. It
is hard to judge these statements as being sound criticism. To predict disaster, inflation and unemployment when there is no sign of these things is disservice to the country.

The banking industry is only one of the things mentioned. Only recently Senator Cameron spoke of the nationalisation of insurance, sugar, and "one or two other things". Remember that the "other things" could be anything: they could be road transport, iron and steel, or even our own farms. No thinking person can place confidence or trust in men who so blatantly deride our nation's future.

It is for this nation of free men and women to judge the Government's record and its plans for the future. Let full employment, prosperity, development both agriculturally and industrially, general peace and plans for the future, speak for the Government.

Apart from the general question as to which Party should be returned, each electorate has its particular job of choosing a man to represent it in Parliament. Each Candidate must have an unshakable belief in the importance of every man woman and child; for the individual happiness of every citizen must be the first thought of men seeking to serve the nation. Australia is great only while our men and women are free from fear and went and only while our children can play without the shadow of unhappiness passing across their faces. Our men have fought and died for these ideals; no man can undertake a finer cause. The maintenance of these ideals is the final justification for men in public service.