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Good evening. For the last four or five weeks we've all been involved in the annual, national Christmas-New Year count-down. We've now only nine days to go - for most of us, nine days of celebrating, shopping, and preparing for blast-off on the 25th and orbit on the 31st. And since it's a time of the year when, for a few weeks at least, most people would like to hear a little less about the day-to-day political issues, I thought tonight I'd speak shortly and quickly not about the past or the present, or who's wrong or right, but about the future - 1970, the decade we're about to enter.

In just under sixteen days time we'll be talking of "The Sixties" in the way we now talk about the "Fifties", "Forties", "Thirties", and "Twenties". We'll be well into the third-third of this century, with a plate as full of national and international problems as I hope your Christmas dinner plate will be full of ham and turkey. The 'seventies will be years of decision for Australians - they may even be the years which decide whether we survive as a nation at all.

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The nineteen-seventies will see many changes in Australia that give cause for optimism. But for the moment there is Christmas, 1969. Most of us have already enjoyed its preliminaries. The exceptions, of course, are the poor and the dispossessed in this country - our pensioners, our under-privileged groups, our aborigines and low wage earners. Let us hope that their lot will be happier in 1970 and the years to follow. But for everyone now, on behalf of myself and my colleagues in Parliament House, Adelaide, and on behalf of the Australian Labor Party, may I take this opportunity of wishing you and your families a happy Christmas and a worthwhile New Year. May 1970 and the years to follow give us peace, prosperity, and universal charity. Good night.

Then again the 'seventies will see us all grappling with the problems of individual privacy, individual liberties, an outmoded federal constitution, wisely diversified industrial development, and the physical shape of our country and the health of our cities. We hear urgent voices raised every day warning us of the dangers of industrial waste and environmental pollutants. Conservationists are rallying to protect and save our unique flora, fauna and delicately balanced ecology. In the 'seventies, if we have imagination and intelligence, we may indeed begin to solve these crucial matters. But we can only do so if the community is adequately informed about them, and if the people as a whole, in exercising their democratic rights, create a situation in which their representatives in the parliaments are men of imagination, ^{MEN} whose lack of conservatism will give them the ability to put forward the right answers at the right times.

Australia's national problems have their counterpart in the smaller problems of the individual states. Only the scale is changed, the problems have a constant rate of urgency. They are problems which concern the actual direction we are prepared to have the nation go, and the role we see ourselves playing in our region and in the world. The questions we should now be asking ourselves have answers which define the kind of people we are. They concern our future international relationships, especially in South East Asia, and the need for Australia to take initiatives in the search for global peace. They ask whether our migration policy is to remain narrow and insular, and continue to offend citizens of neighbouring countries with whom we wish to be friends. They require us to decide just how much private money we should all have, and how much public money we are prepared to spend on the education of our children, the health of the community, and the security of our citizens.

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17/12/69

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