Australia is one of the freest and richest countries in the world. When we stop and think of the things we have done here in our one hundred and eighty years' possession, we may be quietly proud of our achievement. Almost the first country to win full political rights for every citizen, we now have a prosperous, energetic, society - just awakening to the unlimited possibilities of our Australia.

It is our job to see that these possibilities are grasped and exploited.

The very foundation of our political freedom lies in our ability to appoint and dismiss Governments. You will remember, when the Labour Party sought to nationalise the banks a few years ago, how the great mass of popular opinion rose against that Party in defence of traditional right: that is, the right to do what we like with our money. In a few weeks' time the people will have to give their verdict on the Liberal Government of the last three years. This Government has given us full employment: there are no men receiving benefits in the very large area covered by the Commonwealth Employment Service at Hamilton, and the position in Warrnambool is very much the same; it has given us lower taxes - reductions have been 50% on incomes of £600 a year for a man with two children, and 76% for a man earning £1,000 a year, with a wife and two children; and it has given us increased social services, which include record pension rises (27½ over four years), and for the first time in our history, a comprehensive health scheme.

If the people approve these things, then the Liberal Government must be returned, especially so since this achievement has been made in the face of extraordinary difficulties: Communists had to be ousted from the unions (and this was only made possible by secret ballot legislation), inflation had to be curbed, and the Korean War won. In all these things, the Government stood firm in its policies, thus making our present position of full employment and prosperity possible.

The right to express approval or disapproval of Governments carries with it an obligation. The obligation is to judge the issues calmly on the true merit of achievements. The issues are not always so clearly defined as they are for this coming election, and it is our job to see that our children can play their true part in the management
of Our Australia; when their time comes to vote.

Over these last ten years our schools have been overcrowded. The reason for this is that the birthrate fell in the unhappy depression of the thirties, and consequently school building stopped at that time. During the war nothing could be done, but from the greatly increased birthrate in the immediate post-war years it was seen that the schools then existing would soon become inadequate. Today, we have caught up with much of this need for more schools. In many areas new consolidated schools have been built. These serve larger districts, and they have taken the place of many "one man" schools.

The problem, however, was not only to get children to school, but the most important task was to teach them to become good citizens. For this purpose the old concept of the "three R's" is not enough. Today there is more emphasis on trying to show children how they can best take their place in society, and in helping them to choose their future jobs as careers. We must not forget that while the parents' influence and help is most important and essential in these things, the school is almost the first contact that children have with outside society. This makes the things they learn there of great individual and national importance.

Modern education is designed not only to make it easier for children to decide their own careers, but also to help them to take an active part in the future development of our nation. In the years to come their voice will be the voice of the nation.

These last few years have underlined the rights and the privileges that Australians find in their own country. It is our job to see that these rights and privileges are maintained and enhanced.

The decision of the nation at a general election is possibly the most solemn act that the people can make together. The importance lies not only in the immediate consequences but also in the fact that our decision can leave its mark for generations to come. It is a decision both for ourselves and for our children. Let us be sure that the progress of the last three years is continued so that the children we are educating for this nation will only know a free and energetic community that is determined to develop its own resources as a barrier against Communism and other unhappy political beliefs that lead only to bloodshed and hardship.