Last week the Parliament debated the Government's intention to hold a vote amongst 60,000 people to determine what should be Australia's new National Song. The songs involved are - 'Advance Australia Fair', 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'Song of Australia'.

The Opposition parties argued that Australia's present National Anthem, 'God Save the Queen', ought to be included in the poll. By refusing to allow people to vote on it the Government is virtually excluding 'God Save the Queen' from the possibility of choice. That is wrong.

While I can understand the arguments of those who say there ought to be a distinctive Australian National Song, there are certainly many people who would like to keep 'God Save the Queen'. I am one of them. There are many important links with the United Kingdom which ought to be maintained. The Government seems to be doing everything it can to weaken them and break them.

The other point which the Opposition disagrees with concerns the vote being held amongst 60,000 people. How are those 60,000 going to be selected? A matter as important as this ought to be decided by the vote of all the Australian people. The Government is not prepared to have that.

Over the last year the Australian defence forces have been cut about more than in any other time during Australia's peace time history. The Government has
allowed only 1½ hours debate over this most important matter. Jim Forbes and two other Opposition speakers were given 10 minutes each. Most of the rest of the time was taken by the Minister for Defence. The Government has consistently refused to allow a major defence debate on statements made by Mr. Barnard.

During this last week Members of the Labor Party showed that Mr. Hawke, Federal President of the Labor Party as well as President of the A.C.T.U., has brought considerable support for his attitude to the Arab/Israeli crisis. I have already made my own views known and they coincide very closely with Mr. Hawke's.

The Government's policy in this area is not even-handed. It is pro Arab and pro Russian, anti Jew and anti American. The Prime Minister only criticised the re-equipment after the Americans had begun an airlift of equipment to Israel. They had said nothing for the preceding 4 or 5 days when the Russians had airlifted in a mammoth quantity of equipment to Egypt and Syria.

The Prime Minister had also said that President Nixon had alerted American troops for domestic reasons despite the fact that two weeks earlier Dr. Kissinger had said that that alert had been recommended unanimously by the United States National Security Council. The hard information available to that Council concerning Russian activities was very serious indeed. The Russians were about to airlift substantial troops to the area. President Nixon was not even present when the National Security Council came to its recommendation.

Mr. Whitlam is all too ready to blame the United States. He is even now under implied criticism from China because recent reports have indicated that China has said it does not want American troops withdrawn and wants the 5-Power Arrangements in Singapore and Malaysia to remain.
Mr. Whitlam believes, of course, that American troops should withdraw and that the 5-Power Arrangements should also be abandoned. Mr. Whitlam is out on the end of a long limb. His new friends in Peking chopped it off.

Debate on the Health Insurance Bill was undertaken during the week. The Opposition parties have indicated that they are going to oppose this measure because it will destroy the existing health scheme which maintains a high standard of service and maintains freedom of choice for patients. We strongly believe that the Government's proposals will result in increased cost to the great proportion of the Australian population and in the lowering of health care standards for Australian families.

The Government's proposals are an alternative to the present scheme and they replace it. It cannot be regarded as a modification or an adaptation.

The Government plainly wants to establish a situation in which more doctors are paid on a salaried basis in community health centres and where there won't be the usual fee for service payment that applies now when you go to your local doctor. Under these circumstances there would be basically nationalised medicine.

In addition to this, the Government's proposals would result in the destruction of private hospitals and of independent country hospitals.