

Mr STOCKDALE (Brighton) - In the year 1840 there was in England a gentleman named Henry Dendy. He was a substantial landholder but in that year he sold all his interests in England, purchased 5120 acres in the Colony of Port Phillip and forthwith headed to what is now Australia. There he joined with a Mr J. B. Were. Together, those two gentlemen fashioned what today is Brighton. I have the honour to -represent the electorate of Brighton.

Brighton was founded on enterprise and on vision of private individuals. That spirit of enterprise and vision has characterized Brighton ever since and does today. Brighton has always been loyal to Her Majesty, the Queen. On behalf of the electors of Brighton I pledge loyalty to Her Majesty and to His Excellency, the Governor of Victoria.

I take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, of congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker of the House. Your reputation of upholding the finest traditions of that office is known even to those of us new to this place. I thank you for the kindness that you have shown to me and other honourable members, as they have said, in introducing yourself and this place to new members. That it was of tremendous benefit hardly needs to be said. I hope that you have no cause for complaint about my conduct in this place.

Brighton is a unique electorate and I am proud to represent it. It has a greatly diversified community from what it had in Henry Dendy's day and, as a result of the electoral redistribution, since it was represented in the last sitting of this House. It has diversified in socio-economic standing and the electorate now includes more of the poorer sections of the community than previously was the case. I emphasize that I represent all constituents. I regard it as fundamental to the office that I now assume that I represent and serve all constituents equally, irrespective of their backgrounds, their standing in the community, their socio-economic background and of how they voted in this or any other election.

I pay tribute to the former member for Brighton whose place I take in this House. Jeanette Patrick served this Parliament for nine years. She has served the electorate of Brighton in various ways for much longer. She has given sterling service to the electorate through local government, through involvement in the affairs of the State and in many aspects of community service. Mrs Patrick set a high example. At all times she behaved with the dignity befitting a member of Parliament. I take upon myself the obligation of continuing the provision of the high standards of conduct that she set.

As a member of the Liberal Party, my highest value is individual liberty. I believe individual liberty is under threat in our community. There is a tension necessarily between freedom and the drive for equality. Insufficient distinction is being drawn between equality of opportunity on the one hand and equality of outcomes on the other hand.

Every citizen, irrespective of sex, race, colour and creed should have equality of opportunity, but it is different altogether to claim a right to equality of outcomes. Citizens are different; their capacities are different; their experiences are different; the rich experience of life treats each differently; their resources are different; above all, their values are different. Liberals believe the whole society gains when individuals have freedom to express their individual capacities and values. Our political opponents traditionally have feared those differences and have sought to leaven individuals to a mould of perceived equality of outcomes.

The greatest threat to freedom is the crude view that democracy confers power to rule upon the majority without qualification by the interests of minority groups or individuals. It is an essential

element of democracy that minority rights equally are to be protected. One of the great authorities of recent centuries addressing the question of liberty is John Stuart Mill and I quote from his essay *On Liberty*, at page 68:

"the tyranny of the majority" is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard.

Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and, if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compels all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence: and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism.

However, freedom and the preservation of freedom is not simply a matter of individual liberty; it is also a matter of efficiency. Government can never have the resources each individual possesses to make the best decision for his own life and for the life of his family. When Government usurps the powers of individuals, it makes mistakes. Some celebrated examples include the destruction of the sparrows of China, which had an horrendous effect upon the lives of Chinese people.

It is clear that mistakes are being made in Australia at present. Fifteen years ago it was widely recognized that Australia had the best system of health insurance in the world. That system was abandoned, ostensibly on the basis that it was said that 2 million people did not have adequate cover for health insurance or for health services.

The direction of the policy initiatives of Governments in Australia was dictated by the need to provide health care for the poor, yet today we see the virtual breakdown of our health services arising mainly out of the operation of Medicare. In the electorate that I represent, at the Brighton Community Hospital, because of the operation of Medicare, it is the poor who are unable to obtain the free hospital care which they obtained in 1970.

In housing, at present there is the suggestion of a capital gains tax and it is my submission that the potential effects of the capital gains tax have been ignored. Notwithstanding the enormous expenditure of the Government of this State and other Governments upon public housing, and notwithstanding schemes designed to promote the construction of new houses. The reality is that there is a tapering off of the supply of investment funds for housing. I refer to the recent publication of the Real Estate Institute of Australia's publication, *Market Facts*, which recorded the institute's executive director, Mr Ged Lawrence, stating that the tightening of rental markets reported in that publication was caused by investors' fears of an impending capital gains tax.

Again, there is a Government initiative which strikes at the very objective of Government policy which is designed to promote private rental accommodation.

These are not new ideas that Government has no preserve on wisdom and that the decisions affecting individuals' lives are best made by themselves.

Adam Smith stated that:

"The statesman who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ

their capitals, would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted to no council and senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it."

A further quotation from a man who was to be the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Mr Justice Brandeis, provides that:

Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government's purposes are beneficent. Men born to freedom are naturally alert to repel invasion of their liberty by evil-minded rulers. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding.

It is axiomatic that where government usurps and overrides the power of individuals over their own lives, wrong decisions will be made. However, the lessons of history are being ignored. I shall examine two examples of that general view. The first is taxation, which in a society of our type, is unquestionably a necessity. However, taxation should be regarded as an evil. The Government should have to justify every impost. Erosion of an individual's power over his or her life results from the appropriation of his or her private resources. It is one of the ironies of life that those who most urgently lead the attack on conscription for military services are the first to advocate the appropriation of the income of individual citizens.

Taxation is a burden on business; it affects the employment market and attacks family security. Taxation most injures those with the least power. Today honourable members had the illustration of the organized workers in this country being able to maintain their standard of living by the maintenance of their real wages through indexation.

Honourable members interjecting.

The SPEAKER - I advise honourable members that it has been a long tradition, as well as a practice of the House and good manners, for honourable members to hear maiden speeches in silence.

Mr STOCKDALE - Who speaks for the unemployed, the poor and the disadvantaged so that they can maintain their standard of living as a result of the onslaught of high-taxing Governments? Who speaks for the superannuants? Who speaks for the people who have provided for themselves all their lives-many thousands of whom live in Brighton and other communities of like kind on fixed incomes, in homes of their own, struggling to make ends meet with the onslaught of high-taxing Governments-whose living standards are being eroded day by day?

Taxation should be justified and there is a need, as is acknowledged by both sides of the House, for restraint. What is required more than rhetoric is the application of actual restraint.

My second point concerns education and the operation of a "market" in education. It is apparent that the community is not receiving what it wants from the State education system. This is expressed no more clearly than in simple enrolment statistics and in the number of schools.

In the past ten years enrolments in Victorian Government schools have fallen by a little more than 57000 students. In the same period enrolments in non-Government schools have risen by more than 41000 students. That represents a net movement of 98000 students between the Government and non-Government sector. At the same time, the number of Government schools

has been reduced by 55 and the number of non-Government schools has been increased by 113.

Concern is being expressed about what is offered in the State education system and consumers are voting with their feet by moving as fast as they can to the private system. That is a problem with which this House and the Government will have to grapple. In my maiden speech I do not come so bold as to suggest a solution. I merely draw attention to the fact that Victorians are voting with their feet against what is being offered in Government schools.

I conclude by reiterating what I said about individual liberty. As a Liberal I seek no higher standard than to stand in this House for the preservation and advancement of individual liberty, and may I here take as my motto what is inscribed over the portals of the Library of the Congress of the United States of America:

The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.