

hand, of having university education, and I hope that the Government will look favourably on this proposal. I urge, as a matter of extreme importance, that, as a first step, a committee be appointed under the Minister of Education to look into this matter and to report as to the best and most practical means of providing this from of education.

The problem goes a lot wider than Victoria. It is part of the challenge to the whole of the Western world that we must use our brains and abilities to the best effect. In fact, if I may go so far, I think that the motion we are now debating, which is a motion of loyalty to the Crown, illustrates what is now becoming obvious, that the British Commonwealth has a unique and important function, and this is high-lighted at the session of the United Nations in New York to-day. It is to raise the voice of common sense, reason and hope, and, if we are to provide the leaders for the purpose—if we are to take our rightful place in the Commonwealth of Nations—undoubtedly we must have university education facilities at the highest possible level.

I should like to refer to one other matter. His Excellency the Governor, in the course of his Speech, spoke of the general progress of Victoria. One of the things which His Excellency did not mention, and which I think might have been mentioned, was the development in Melbourne of a new Cultural Centre. I do not like the title, and I hope that something better can be thought of. At any rate, it is the building to be erected next year on the site of Wirth's Park. I think a number of Governments can take credit for this development, but I wonder how many of us realize that it is going to be one of the greatest of projects. It will be unique in the world. It will be the largest and most comprehensive group of buildings of its sort anywhere. When the architect returned from abroad recently and promised that it would be unique and something that Melbourne and the whole of Victoria would be proud of, I do not think he was exaggerating.

*The Hon. R. J. Hamer.*

I should like to see the project taken a little further. I think nobody could challenge the Government's insistence that education be given first priority. We have not overcome all the shortages by any means, but, as they are overcome, and as our resources permit, I trust that the Government will find its way clear to support some of the cultural activities in our midst of which this centre is to be the first fruit. Most countries abroad have found that it is not possible to provide good drama, opera, ballet and the like at prices that the public can afford unless there is a subsidy from the State representing the people as a whole. I should like to think the Cultural Centre might be the first step towards the recognition in Victoria that these are activities which require a State subsidy and could so become permanent. All such activities cost money, but they are also the marks of a truly developed and enlightened State. I hope that in the future, when we have overcome many of our practical difficulties, we shall find established in Melbourne a school of drama and schools of ballet and opera that will bring those arts to the high level which the Cultural Centre and National Gallery have already achieved.

I join with other speakers in supporting this motion and in congratulating those members who moved and seconded it, as well as the new member of this House who has also spoken.

**The Hon. D. G. ELLIOT** (Melbourne Province).—I think every member of this House will agree with me that freedom of speech and freedom of expression are among the foremost of human rights. I suppose we could say that they are an extension of freedom of thought and a fundamental element of any system of society. These freedoms have not been won without a stern fight on the part of the peoples of the world through the centuries. We can go back to the days of the old Anglo-Saxon kings, who were absolute rulers. Frequently the kings would call together their wise men when they needed help, advice and money—particularly money—from the people. It was the same in the days of the Norman rulers. It

was not until Magna Charta that the foundations of our liberties as free people were laid. Actually, however, most of the benefits of Magna Charta were devised for the barons alone.

From those earlier times we note how through the centuries the British House of Commons has furthered the ideals of Magna Charta in its magnificent fight for freedom of expression—and it has been a fight—and has set the pattern for the true democracy of to-day. In that famous House Parliaments fought for the right of free speech and paid dearly at times, both in courage and tenacity of purpose. It is indeed the corner stone of true democracy as we know it to-day.

I would refer now to a survey recently conducted by the United Nations, which discovered a rather astounding fact, that there is not a country on earth that has not stated in definite language that every citizen has complete freedom of speech and press. I could quote a number of countries in support of that. The United States of America in no uncertain manner decreed freedom of speech and press. In 1791 that country decreed that there should be no law passed abridging the freedom of speech and press. The same applies in respect of the French Constitution, in which there is reference to the unrestrained communication of thoughts or opinions being one of the most precious rights of man, whereby every citizen may speak or publish freely. There is such a principle set forth, even in the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, for article 125 of its Constitution states that all citizens are guaranteed freedom of speech and freedom of press.

These unanimous statements of principle, however, prove nothing, for freedom of anything is confined, or otherwise, by the legal practices of the country concerned. For instance, the Commonwealth Industrial Court in this country can legally fine a union thousands of pounds when all that that union is fighting for is freedom of action, freedom of opportunity to better the living and working conditions of its

members. It is obvious that an extension of these restrictive practices is now in the offing, and that is a disturbing thought. We can safely say that freedom of thought, expression and action is a glorious truth or a miserable mockery. It depends upon the basic justice of the law of the land. It depends also upon whether the sources of communication are fairly open to all or whether those sources of communication are politically or monopoly controlled. I refer specifically to the press, the radio and, nowadays, television. It is essential that free communication of thought from one man to another shall be preserved. That is what the nations have been trying for through the centuries.

I listened with interest to the Leader of the Country party in this House when he referred to meetings of representatives of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and particularly the newer nations among them. Mr. Byrnes said that they wanted to be free and that they were basically anti-communistic. There is no doubt that in those ideals is to be found the basic strength of our British Commonwealth of Nations. The distribution of more than 1,000,000 papers daily in our community, plus at least another 1,000,000 impressions distributed through radio and television—and that would be somewhat conservative in view of the specific stations which I have in mind—with little or no opposition, is a tremendous power in the hands of so few. That it should be used wisely and well, with fairness to all, goes without saying. Such fairness would not include, with monotonous regularity, statements and accusations on pages 1, 2 or 3 of a newspaper and denials on page 15 or later, and usually in small print. Comment on key pages of a paper is preferred space and is invaluable indeed to the individual or organization to whom it is given.

What a wealth of goodness is added to freedom of speech and press if it is backed by reason and education. I listened with interest to Mr. Hamer as he spoke of our university needs and education in general. Education is in

itself one of the great challenges of to-day. What a great truth Thomas Jefferson gave us when he said—

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be.

In Victoria, in 1872, the school-leaving age was set at fifteen years. In 1899 it was reduced to thirteen; in 1910 it was extended to fourteen, and in 1943 the leaving age was ostensibly back to fifteen. And yet, after nearly 100 years, in a period that has been described by the present Government as the greatest in our history, children can leave school at the age of fourteen years.

Our schools are hopelessly overcrowded, and the consequent waste of potential talent through lack of opportunity is nothing short of appalling. In Tasmania the school leaving age is sixteen, and in New South Wales it is fifteen years. I am sure that those facts must exercise the mind of Mr. Hamer. Our children—the world of to-morrow—deserve equal opportunity of education. It is of no use “passing the buck” with the hypocritical cry of, “Where’s the money?” or with the smug retort—“Anyway, we built so many classrooms last year, and we have done a better job than the previous Government did.” Here we have a challenge upon which we will be judged by future generations. Our Parliament House, our Treasury, and hundreds of other buildings throughout Victoria speak volumes for the courage of our forefathers and reveal the thoughts they had of the future of this State. Surely they have set us such an example that we cannot ignore it in our own actions.

With education, with freedom of thought and action, we produce our own form of security. I do not think anyone will deny that one of the big problems of to-day, in the passage of our people through their lives from youth to age, is that of the elderly citizens. We are supposed to have reached a stage of prosperity second to none in our history which should guarantee the dignity and security of the old folk, the invalids and the needy in our community. In the course of my

*The Hon. D. G. Elliot.*

experience in life I have come into contact with both the very young and the very old. This has been a privilege indeed, and I think I have learned a lot from it. But I become rather impatient when I hear people say, “This matter of our elderly citizens is a Commonwealth affair. It has nothing to do with us.” That may be the case in regard to pension payments, but what about housing, what about reasonably priced meals, and what about clubs where elderly people can meet and stay young in heart by means of enjoyable and productive activities? Admittedly, there are many fine elderly citizens’ clubs throughout Victoria, but there are not enough of them, and they all should provide low-priced nourishing meals and services that will help pensioners to live reasonably well and get somewhere near to balancing their budget, which many thousands find impossible.

Reverting to my comment on the United Nations, it is interesting to note that they have expressed concern over the problems of old age throughout the world. Life expectancy is increasing every year; it is far greater than 25 years ago and it is producing many more millions of people, thus creating a major problem. Let us nourish the productivity of the years. Let us realize the importance of the recognition by the United Nations of this human product, appreciating that it is one that deserves real support from the press, the radio and the television of the world. Let us hope that the free press everywhere will take hold of the biggest opportunity it has ever had, in the faithful and fair reporting of the happenings at the United Nations Assembly. It is only by such means that we can progress favourably towards peace in this world. It is quite unnecessary for me to say that peace must be preserved in any way by which it can be. The press, radio and television have the power, in my opinion, to make or mar the progress of the United Nations Organization. Therefore, I say to each integral part of the press, radio and television throughout the world that, when they do report or express any

opinion on the United Nations, it shall be the truth, not a half-truth, but the whole truth at all times.

On the motion of the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned until the next day of meeting.

#### ELECTORAL PROVINCES ACT 1960.

##### PROPOSED REDIVISION OF PROVINCES: COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

The motion submitted by Mr. Galbally earlier this day—

That the Legislative Council disapprove the redivision of the boundaries of electoral provinces for the Legislative Council in a part of Victoria as proposed by the Commissioners appointed under the Electoral Provinces Act 1960 in their report and maps laid before both Houses of Parliament on the 14th day of September, 1960—was taken into consideration.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY** (Melbourne North Province). — When the Electoral Provinces Bill first came before the House, the Government succeeded in masking its true intentions, but it would now appear that the Government has been caught in its own rusty trap. The purpose of the Bill, some cynics were unkind enough to say at the time of its introduction, was to give the Government a majority in this House it had lacked after the 1958 election. In other words, the Government was prepared to do by legislative action what the electors had denied it. However, there were some people in the Liberal party who felt that this was not so. They had listened to the Minister of Transport, Sir Arthur Warner, that master mariner, explaining that this was merely a journey into fair skies on a blue sea, and that nothing sinister was contemplated.

**The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.**—He did not speak on the measure.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—I appreciate that he did not speak in the debate, but he was the master mind behind the proposal. Are any Government supporters prepared to deny that?

**The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.**—Yes.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—The Minister of Transport explained to the able seamen who sailed with him what was contemplated.

**The Hon. W. O. FULTON.**—You are forgetting about the episode off Wonthaggi.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—Of course, how he was hardened by shipwreck and toil!

**The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.**—No, he was first ashore.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—I have been labouring under the delusion that he was the last man ashore. But there were members of his party, and indeed Liberal supporters throughout the State, who had some old-fashioned ideas about integrity in public life and about not seeking to do by Act of Parliament what the electorate had denied. So it was that these rumblings in the Liberal party never emerged to such an extent that they were heard by the Government.

**The Hon. G. W. THOM.**—What do you mean exactly?

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—I am glad that I have awakened the interest of Mr. Thom. I mean that at the time this Bill was explained to the party, the Minister and his colleagues were told that the metropolitan area had become enormously swollen and that the right and proper thing to do was to cut it up in such a way that two extra seats in the Legislative Council would be provided. Of course, it was stated that everything would be fair, and that there was no doubt that the Liberal party would gain one seat and the Australian Labour party the other. What could be fairer than that?

**The Hon. G. J. NICOL.** — That the Liberal party should gain the two seats; that would be much fairer.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—Mr. Nicol did not say that at the time the Bill was introduced, when I listened to him with great attention.

**The Hon. G. J. NICOL.**—I did not even speak on the Bill.