A great deal has been happening in this political year. I'd like to say something briefly about two particular matters, and then mention Anzac Day.

In this next week of the Parliamentary Sitting, a Bill is being brought forward by Government members concerning abortion on request or abortion on demand. Long before the last election, I made my own views plainly known. I'll be opposing this measure, I'd oppose any other measure like it. I believe that abortion on request or abortion on demand would strike at traditional family values which are important to maintain in Australia or in any society. I believe that this measure brought forward by Government members has offended a very large number of people in Australia and I hope that the measure will be defeated.

I plan to be in Western Victoria supporting State candidates during that particular week for the State elections. I still hope to do this, but if the measure comes up for debate and for voting, I will certainly be in Canberra to register my vote against it.

In this next Victorian election, 18 year olds will have the vote for the first time. I applaud this. I wish we had granted the 18 year olds the vote before the last Federal election. I believe 18 year olds have earned their right to vote at elections because of their general concern which they have amply demonstrated to the nature of the society in which they live. I believe they have shown a greater concern than men and women of my generation showed or of older generations. They are concerned at the disadvantages of the under privileged that they should be given greater opportunities, be given greater assistance. They are concerned for justice, for equality, for equality of opportunity. Their concern is not only of domestic matters, but stretches through international events. They have earned their right to vote and they have it.

Last week we celebrated Anzac Day, perhaps the proudest day in Australian history, when we remember with pride men who fought in Gallipoli, in the trenches of the Western front, in the sands of the desert in two World Wars, in New Guinea, the Peninsula, in South-East Asia, in Korea. Over all of these battle-fields and many others, the Australian flag was flown proudly and Australians have fought proudly.

In the old terminology, Australians fought for God, for Queen and for country, but I think if these words were analysed, it really means the people fought for the right to choose the kind of society in which they wanted to live. People fought for the right to determine their own government, for a right of choice. They fought for their families, for their wives, for their
children. They fought for a better society. I believe that those who did not fight can only repay the everlasting and enduring deaths to those who did, and especially who gave the supreme sacrifice, by doing what they can to achieve a world in which the necessity for that kind of sacrifice does not arise again. I believe that men who had endured the difficulties of battle would all at some time say to themselves, "I hope that we can establish a world in which my son does not have to endure what I have endured". I wish it were possible to say with honesty and without equivocation that that kind of world was in sight, capable of achievement. At the moment I do not believe that this is so.

Much of the free world as we know it is in retreat. The United States' President struggles to maintain a world role for a nation that wants to be concerned only with domestic problems, only with domestic difficulties. It doesn't much matter now what the causes are of this change of heart in the United States - it's a political reality, a political fact. The United States is moving quite rapidly towards isolationism.

The United Kingdom has entered the European Economic Community and will inevitably become more and more enmeshed with the affairs of that Community. Her world role will also diminish. Russia remains a great predatory power with the most powerful Navy in the world, with I believe the most powerful armaments in the world. Japan is trusting in economic terms and China remains the great imponderable. It ought to be noted that many years ago, China set herself many objectives. She has already achieved many of them, and she has not made one concession from her own point of view. She has shown patience, determination and strength.

So while the free world that we know - Europe, but in particular the United Kingdom and the United States - is in many ways in retreat in international diplomacy, there are other countries trusting us, seeking to exert a greater interest. I do not believe that this bodes well for Australia. I am certain that it will place upon us a requirement for a greater independence, for a greater independent strength. It is going to make it much harder to repay the debt we owe to those who did fight in the course of freedom.