

want to do is to see that the Afro-West and Pancontinental people are not hugely disadvantaged by somebody in their organisation forgetting to renew a lease. That clause can be redrafted to provide X number of days for the companies and to provide that a warning will be issued to the company half-way through that period of grace. Does the Attorney General follow me?

Hon. J. M. Berinson: The reason I was having some difficulty is that I understood you to say earlier that you accepted national interest questions as being a legitimate exception to the general rule.

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: The national interest question is in the Mining Act all right.

Hon. J. M. Berinson: But it is imported into clause 7 as well, although here it is called "the public".

Hon. A. A. LEWIS: There is absolutely no need for that provision. National interest is provided for—I cannot remember exactly where but I will find the provision for the Attorney tomorrow morning if he wants it; but surely one of his aides can do it. The Minister can do almost anything "in the national interest" under the Mining Act. The Mining Act is one of the few areas in which the Minister should have no say at all. The warden should have the say. A period of 14 days' grace should be provided and if the lease has not been renewed in that time a person should receive a notice and then if he has not renewed the lease in 28 days he should be chopped off at the knees. He has no more excuses. I suggest we have a look at revamping this clause.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Hon. J. M. Brown.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m.

ADDRESS-IN REPLY: FOURTH DAY

Motion

Debate resumed from 12 June.

HON. S. J. HALDEN (North Metropolitan) [7.31 p.m.]: It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak in this debate for the first time. I take this opportunity to congratulate all new members and all those members who were re-elected.

The Legislative Council has long been regarded as a House of Review. It is considered more so by members opposite than by members on this side of the House. Since the mid-1950s this House has rejected 51 Labor Government Bills and only one Liberal-

Country Party Government Bill. Interestingly, Labor Governments have been in Government for 12 years of that period and non-Labor Governments for 21 years.

The reviewing function of this House has been described by my Labor colleagues as the Liberal-Country Party members, who have always been a majority, behaving in a political manner in order to frustrate, annoy and even to bring about the downfall of a democratically elected Labor Government. This undemocratically elected Council has rejected proposals for parliamentary and electoral reform on seven separate occasions during the life of the first Burke Labor Government. Hopefully, this House will take up as its paramount review function the reform of its own terms and parameters of existence.

It is not just my Labor colleagues who think the system is undemocratic and in need of reform. As long ago as 30 April 1981 an editorial in *The West Australian* stated that the then Liberal Government's proposal for electoral reform would do little to break down the gross imbalance in voting values. Non-metropolitan electors still wield almost twice the voting power of their metropolitan counterparts in the Assembly; and, worse, the average imbalance in the Council remains at nearly three to one. The editorial concluded—

The Court Government's plans smack of camouflage . . . It appears to be designed to preserve as far as possible the hefty weighting in favour of non-metropolitan voters and this is to protect the "Liberal" Government's electoral advantage.

Speaking of attempting to camouflage electoral reform, I would briefly like to discuss the proposals put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, not as an election platform because at the time of the election Mr Hassell stated that electoral reform was not an issue. On Friday, 6 June, four days prior to the opening of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition announced an electoral reform package that would see an average rural weighting of 1.8:1 in the Assembly and 2.8:1 in the Council. He conceded that the Government's proposal for proportional representation from six regions within the State was acceptable; but, of course, he was not about to allow any of the Conservative parties' massive electoral advantage to slip away. Under his proposal power in the Legislative Council would be vested in the hands of the Liberal-National Country Party forever.

Equality, the basic cornerstone of democracy has clearly still not been encapsulated into Liberal Party thinking. The conservatives' excuse for distorting electoral boundaries and claiming electoral weighting is that rural voters require special protection; that is to say, rural people have special problems that can be resolved by the weighting of votes. Ridiculous! The argument has gaping holes. The conservatives disregard that argument for the people living in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions.

If one looks at market gardeners living in and around Wanneroo in the North Metropolitan Province one has to accept that their rural livelihood is in some way different from the rural producers in Kalamunda and Darling Range. In the case of the Council, their vote is discounted by two-thirds. The system defies logical explanation except to say that it fits into the general conservative view of electoral democracy; that is, a small measure of the democratic process is allowed provided the people do not get carried away with it and elect a Labor Government too often or with too large a majority and provided that the conservatives always have the upper House—the Legislative Council—to block any Bills with which they do not agree.

If any action by a Labor Government threatened the status quo or the balance of power in the community, the conservatives in this House have traditionally dropped all pretences to a commitment to parliamentary democracy. They took any action necessary to ensure the threat is overcome. Of course, not all Liberals and conservatives are as blatantly political as those in this State.

As far back as 1974 Senator Steele Hall said in the Senate—

... It is utter absurdity to say that any person geographically placed anywhere in Australia should speak with a louder voice than does another person ... It is divisive and fostering class warfare in the community to say that anyone is at a disability and should have a bigger electoral weighting than another person.

To further convince members opposite that conservatives elsewhere in Australia—except perhaps the Queensland National Party—have a conscience on this issue, I quote from a speech by Sir Billy Sneddon in August 1974 in the Federal Parliament when he said—

We the Liberals agree with the principle of one-vote-one-value. Under one-vote-one-value, no sectional or geographical

group should ever exert more influence than its numbers warrant.

Even the then leader of the National Party, Doug Anthony, said in 1974—

Equality of voting value, and equality of political representation, are fundamental principles which should be insisted upon and adhered to.

It would seem that the thinking of Liberal Party members in this State is at least 12 years behind that of their Federal counterparts.

There are those who would argue that this House stands for vested interest groups closely associated with conservatives in this State. I suggest to this House that Western Australians believe much more in an egalitarian ethos than the Liberal Party would care to concede. In our society there is distaste for class and privilege. There is a belief in genuine equality and a stance for a fair go for all. If there is a threat to the basic fabric of our egalitarian and liberal society, it would be to replace fraternity, equality and compassion, with greed, indifference and self-interest. These latter three philosophies, I am sorry to say, are becoming more and more attuned to the philosophies of the Liberal Party and particularly to the philosophies of the so-called new Right.

The last State election saw the Liberal Party appeal to narrow self-interest more clearly than ever before. The Liberal Party in its current confusion as to direction and policies, fashions and forces, is in imminent danger of being captured by the philosophies of the new Right. The current factionalism within the Liberal Party reflects a struggle between the new *laissez-faire* dogma and the party's traditional opportunism. Conservatism today embraces two inherently contradictory interest groups: The traditional social conservatives who believe in using the state to preserve a certain moral order, and the free marketeers who believe in a minimal role for Government. In contemplating these viewpoints, one could say that they are epitomised by Bob Santamaria and Hugh Morgan respectively. If one were to combine their philosophies it would probably go along these lines: The state most definitely has a role in the nation's bedrooms, but most definitely not in its boardrooms.

Returning to the issue of this House, I suggest that the electoral laws governing its existence currently reflect class bias designed to protect the privileged. Electorate population sizes suggest that equality is a term that has not yet reached the intellect of this House and, as

for a fair go, it will be given to anyone who is basically conservative, moneyed, or a non-metropolitan landowner. The challenge lies in whether this House will reform itself or be brought before the public in total odium.

Prior to entering Parliament, I spent 10 years as a State public servant working in the social welfare system. Both these sectors of the community in the past have been on the receiving end of brutal attacks by the Liberal Party. Today, the attacks by the new Right, the dries, or whatever they call themselves, are even more virulent.

The State Liberal Party has launched attacks on the modern social welfare system, which is the very mechanism developed in response to the inequalities and inequities of the marketplace. Unashamedly, some of their members have proclaimed that they are interested only in wealth creation, not at all in its fair distribution. Conveniently, many of these same spokespeople make no mention of corporate welfare mechanisms such as tariffs, import quotas, bounties, subsidies, research and export grants, tax concessions and incentives, and protective regulations, let alone the Government's commitment to protect infrastructure like roads, water, ports, an educated work force, corporate law, information, and communication.

It is without doubt that the Liberal Party would reduce welfare assistance to individuals and groups. They blame bigger Government and bigger Government taxes for growth in this area. They say that welfare spending has undermined personal initiatives and self-reliance. As Galbraith once observed—

The rich seem to need their taxes reduced and incomes increased in order to unleash their initiative, whereas the poor need their income cut in order to motivate them.

At this very early stage of my parliamentary career, I state clearly my belief that Government has an essential role in compensating for market failure and inadequacies. Government has a primary responsibility to ensure social equity. First, Government provides a form of social insurance against the risks of illness, injury, widowhood, desertion, unemployment, and old age. Secondly, Government ensures the provision of merit goods, such as housing, health, legal aid, and education which, if left to the marketplace to supply, would be beyond the reach of many people. Thirdly, Government should also supply such public goods as

law and order, and an economic and social infrastructure, which, because of their collective nature cannot be marketed individually. Finally, through a positive transfer of income and the supply of certain goods and services, Government provides a fairer distribution of the community's resources.

Besides these attacks on the welfare system, the conservatives, of late, have launched their inevitable attacks on the public servants and the public sector. These attacks culminated in the Liberal Party's privatisation policy prior to the last election. The Liberal Party continues to be obsessed with the size of the public sector rather than with its performance. It has no interest in the quality of the public sector. Consequently, it will always pursue either the Holy Grail or cheap panaceas such as that of privatisation.

To highlight this, I point out that John Howard was Treasurer for five years and did nothing to improve the efficiency of the Federal public sector. Frequently I have heard Opposition members refer to the public sector as the non-productive sector. One would have hoped that this furphy would have been buried forever, but the Right still persists with it. To paraphrase Galbraith, the Right continues to push arguments along the lines that a teacher at a school is non-productive, while a contract plumber changing the toilet seat at a school is productive. That is obviously absurd. Both sectors can be equally productive or non-productive. I suggest that the public sector in this country, by international comparisons, should not be embarrassed.

The Liberal Party has called for small Government for at least the last two decades. Why is it then that we do not have small Government? After all, the conservatives have been around for a long time. In this State they have been in Government for 20 of the last 26 years. The proponents of small Government—Court, O'Connor and now Hassell—have all had opportunities but have never delivered. The conservatives do not want small Government, nor are they interested in efficient Government.

I suggest that there is a new right-wing language in the Liberal Party: Small Government means good health care, sound education, decent housing, and access to legal counsel only for those who can afford it. Above all else, the Liberal Party has taken the view that the rich have no obligation to assist the less well off. The Liberals have allowed their cohorts to avoid taxation. Not that long ago, the only

growth industry in this country under a Liberal Party Government was tax avoidance.

Nowhere in recent days can the attitude of supporting their peers, the rich, be more clearly seen than in the stance of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hassell, who says he will lead the tax revolt in this State. The Liberal Party's policy of privatisation was based on the notion that profitable public enterprises would be sold not because they had failed, but because they had succeeded. The public sector would be left with uneconomic enterprises which would be cited as further evidence of public sector inefficiency. I quote a statement by the late Victorian Liberal senator, Alan Missen, which reads as follows—

Anyone who has experienced the chaos of USA telephones or slowness of its mail, will realise that, particularly in this country, the outback dweller and private citizen have a lot to lose from applying mechanistic supply and demand rules to people's fundamental needs.

Even the selling off of profitable parts of these enterprises will leave the ordinary citizen with a vast burden to pay for uneconomic but necessary services.

Privatisation asserts the primacy of bookkeeping over social justice. True Australian virtues of compassion and concern have no place in the conservative schema. The conservatives of our society and their political wing, the Liberal Party, have an avid desire to entrench two nations in Australia, one of the rich and the other of the poor.

In the past three years this State has been governed in a spirit of cooperation and compassion rather than confrontation and the use of power to suppress. In place of despair and division, characterised by the bleak years of the Court Government, we have seen this State come together with optimism and confidence. There is more goodwill between labour and capital today than at any other time in the past.

It could be said that this House typifies the Liberal Party's desires to entrench the two nations of the rich and the poor. Since its inception, this House has been controlled by the conservatives with vested interests and close associations with the rich, the powerful and the moneyed. The political party most closely associated with the working class has been deprived of democratic control.

But the day is approaching. The very existence of this House with its current electoral laws is an insult to the average, honest, hardworking person in our society.

The last election saw the Hassell-led Liberal Party attack the working class further by proposals to cut youth wages, introduce voluntary work contracts, and ultimately destroy the arbitration system. For the Liberal Party to consider that young people straight from school could negotiate their own wages and conditions with a worldly-wise employer is ludicrous.

Further, to place jobs in the sphere of going to the lowest bidder is to threaten the job security of older people, because unemployed Western Australians, desperate for a job, are prepared to work for lower wages.

Of course, there are winners. Under a Liberal Government, as has always been the case, they would be the powerful, the moneyed and the propertied.

As the member for North Metropolitan Province, I share with Hon. Graham Edwards an electorate of vastly different character and feature; an electorate whose population size has grown exponentially over the past three years. This growth, particularly in the northern sector of the electorate, has placed considerable strain on the resources of Government and on the people who reside there.

The demand for resources and facilities caused by population growth are enormous and often difficult to satisfy. However, I believe that people who live within the boundaries of the province have a degree of common purpose and direction. They demand for themselves and their children an education system geared to assist them cope with the demands of a modern society in a constant state of change. They want an education system designed to guarantee the relevance of schooling to the needs of individuals and the community in such rapidly changing social and economic times; equality of educational opportunities for all.

Literacy and numeracy skills of the highest possible level must be available to all, as must an environment in which children and adults can be helped to overcome social and other disadvantages so as to help to develop positive attitudes of self-worth and communal respect.

They also want the provision of an appropriate, efficient, and economical transport system which will guarantee to all an opportunity to get to their place of employment, or commute from one side of the city to the other with the minimum of delay and maximum standard of

safety. Whether they choose to use private or public transport, the demands on this State's finances will be stretched to the limit to provide a transport system which meets their needs.

Already there are demands for a further two lanes on the freeway and a rapid railway system. In the older and more established areas the demand on road systems to cope with traffic densities which were never envisaged has created stress, not only on the commuter, but also on residents who have to cope with increased pollution, road dangers, and the intrusion of traffic-related problems into their lifestyles.

Like so many other Australian cities, Perth's transport system poses a myriad problems for administrators, policy makers, researchers, and ultimately for the Government to remedy.

Like people all over this State, the constituents of North Metropolitan Province want a secure employment future for themselves and their children. This Government has taken initiatives in the areas of small business, tourism, and housing, and with the eventual creation of the Joondalup subregional centre we will see more jobs created *in situ*.

This contradicts previous Liberal Government policy, under which vast dormitory suburbs were created whose primary purpose was to export their work force daily so as to meet the needs of the commercial sector.

The concept of a living community which resides, works, and recreates within its own boundaries is essential in the northern corridor. With the election in the past four years of eight State and Federal Labor members in the area, it is obvious that the people of the northern corridor have entrusted their future to the Australian Labor Party and not to the conservatives who failed them after a decade.

The next six years will be a challenging time for all Labor members, but we have accepted the challenge to provide an egalitarian and free society for all rather than one based on vested interest and privilege.

I await with interest to see how this House responds to the challenges that face it. What this House chooses to do is in our hands, but members can be assured that I will not be deterred by disappointment, for there are many wrongs in our society to be overcome. The challenge for me is to remain committed to their resolution, no matter the time or the energy required.

I support the motion.

[Applause.]

HON. G. M. EVANS (Metropolitan) [7.57 p.m.]: It is an honour for me to be elected to this Chamber, and I offer my congratulations to you, Mr Deputy President (Hon. D. J. Wordsworth), on your return, and ask you to convey those congratulations to the President on his return.

I wish to thank the Clerk of the House for all the help he has given new members and for his introduction to this place. We found it a great help, and I appreciated it as a new member of the House.

I would like to make reference to Hon. Ian Medcalf, my predecessor, who helped me very much before coming to the House and has helped me in the House since. For many years we have been associated professionally and in business life. Since coming here I have recognised the great contribution he has made to this House. I owe a great debt to Hon. Ian Medcalf as my predecessor. He is also a great friend of mine. His predecessor, Sir Keith Watson, and I merged our accounting practices many years ago, and I have learnt much from him. It is a great honour to follow them into this House.

Today I wish to speak on various subjects which have been of interest to me in my professional life, and in my service as Chief Commissioner for Boy Scouts in Western Australia. Also I will refer to my personal interest in sport as a parent and competitor, my education at Scotch College and my time as a member of Scotch College Council.

Scotch College is apolitical. Mick Gayfer from the National Party, John Halden from the Labor Party, and myself from the Liberal Party are all from Scotch College; so it is truly apolitical.

In recent times I have taken an interest in State Government and local government authorities through my firm, which does many local government audits.

In the last two years I have taken considerable interest in the many new developments in accounting standards for the public sector, and some improved budgetary and financial management skills that have been developed for use by Governments. We must take note of these, and I will be making further comments on these matters in other debates.

My main interest of recent times, and the one thing that stimulated me to come into politics, was the fact that I believe something must be done for small business. Small business is