

NOTES ONLY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY ( NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH )  
STATE CONFERENCE

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
MR E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C. M.P. 14 JUNE 1975 SYDNEY N.S.W.

THE HISTORY OF THIS PARTY IS THE RECORD OF THE EFFORTS OF OUR OPPONENTS TO DIVIDE US. OUR SUCCESSES ARE MEASURED BY OUR SUCCESS IN RESISTING THOSE EFFORTS. OUR FAILURES AND DISASTERS ARE THE STORY OF HOW WE HAVE SUCCUMBED TO THOSE ATTEMPTS. THOSE EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THIS PARTY HAVE ONLY SUCCEEDED WHEN THE PARTY ITSELF CHOSE TO DIVIDE - WHEN ONE GROUP OR SECTION OR FACTION WITHIN THE PARTY BELIEVED THAT IT COULD PROMOTE ITS IMMEDIATE, ITS SHORT TERM INTEREST, THROUGH A DIVIDED, A WEAKENED PARTY.

SINCE WE WERE ELECTED TO OFFICE TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO, SINCE WE WERE RE-ELECTED TO OFFICE JUST OVER ONE YEAR AGO, THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS HELD STEADFASTLY TO ONE OBJECTIVE.

WHAT IS THAT OBJECTIVE? THE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO FULFIL THE POLICY OF THIS PARTY, THE POLICY GIVEN TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AND ACCEPTED BY THEM IN 1972, THE POLICY GIVEN TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AND REAFFIRMED BY THEM IN 1974.

WHEN THE PEOPLE ELECTED US IN 1972, WHEN THE PEOPLE REAFFIRMED US IN OFFICE IN 1974, THEY VOTED FOR OUR PROGRAM, THE PROGRAM AS THEY KNEW IT TO BE, AS IT WAS PRESENTED IN 1972 AND AGAIN IN 1974.

THERE ARE MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM, MOUNTED AGAINST THIS PROGRAM IS A CAMPAIGN OF HOSTILITY UNPARALLELED IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. THE HOSTILITY IS UNPARALLELED BECAUSE NEVER BEFORE IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY HAVE SO MANY VESTED INTERESTS BEEN TAKEN ON AT ONE TIME. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE ENTRENCHED, THE POWERFUL, THE HIGHLY PRIVILEGED HAVE FOUND THAT THEIR DEMANDS ARE NOT ACCORDED THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY WHICH THEY BELIEVE IS THEIR INHERENT RIGHT.

I CAN ACCEPT ALL THE GROUCHES AND THE GRIPES AND THE COMPLAINTS OF ALL THOSE OLD ESTABLISHED INTERESTS WHO BELIEVE THEY ARE NOT DOING PARTICULARLY WELL OUT OF A LABOR GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA.

IT'S A DIFFERENT MATTER WHEN IT COMES TO RESISTANCE TO THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THIS IS A TIME WHEN THE LABOR MOVEMENT HAS TO THINK VERY CLEARLY ABOUT THE DIRECTION IT IS GOING TO TAKE.

IT IS A MISTAKE FOR ANY UNION TO BELIEVE THAT ITS OWN MUSCLE POWER IS AN EFFECTIVE SUBSTITUTE FOR CONCERTED GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROMOTE REAL EQUALITY AND RAISE REAL STANDARDS.

IT IS A MISTAKE FOR ANY STATE MEMBER TO BELIEVE THAT THE WAY TO POPULARITY OR POWER IS TO JOIN IN THE CHORUS AGAINST THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA.

IT IS OUR BOAST THAT WE ARE THE ONLY TRUE NATIONAL PARTY IN AUSTRALIA. WE CANNOT BLAME THE PEOPLE IF THEY TAKE US AT OUR WORD AND AT OUR OWN VALUATION.

THE STRENGTH OF THE NATIONAL PARTY IS THE STRENGTH OF EACH SECTION OF THE ENTIRE PARTY.

THERE IS A MYTH THAT STATE PARTIES COULD PROSPER IF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WERE DEFEATED.

THERE IS A MYTH THAT IF YOU KNOCK THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA YOU WILL GET KUDOS FOR LABOR IN BRISBANE, OR SYDNEY OR MELBOURNE. YOU WILL NOT.

OUR OPPONENTS WILL ALWAYS DO THAT SORT OF THING SO MUCH BETTER. IT IS ONE OF THE GREAT MYTHS THAT A STATE LABOR POLITICIAN, WHOEVER HE BE, WILL GET GOOD MARKS BY KNOCKING A FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT.

IF LABOR IS NOT NATIONALLY CREDIBLE, IS IT TO BE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT THAT IT CAN BE CREDIBLE ON A STATE BASIS?

THERE IS NO POINT, NO DIVIDEND, IN PLAYING THE LIBERAL GAME - THE OLD GAME OF DIVIDE AND RULE.

LET ME SAY VERY CLEARLY WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT IS ABOUT. IT IS ABOUT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE POLICY OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY AS PROMISED TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA.

WE HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IN CANBERRA. THE REAL OBJECTION IS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS ALL TOO PREDICTABLE. EVERYTHING THAT WE HAVE TRIED TO DO, OR ARE DOING, WAS IN THOSE POLICY SPEECHES.

IT MAY BE TRUE THAT IN 1972 SOME SUPPORTED US ON THE GROUNDS THAT WE WERE NOT SERIOUS OR SINCERE OR INTENT UPON APPLYING OUR POLICIES. IT MAY BE THAT SOME MISTOOK THE PROGRAM FOR MERE WINDOW-DRESSING.

IT MAY BE THAT SOME THOUGHT THAT ONCE WE GOT INTO GOVERNMENT WE WOULD TAKE UP THE NORMAL POSITION OF PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT - OF CYNICISM, OF BETRAYAL.

WHAT HAS HORRIFIED SO MANY OF THE WELL-ESTABLISHED, SO MANY OF THE POWERFUL, SO MANY OF THE PRIVILEGED IN AUSTRALIA IS THAT WE HAVE ACTUALLY SET ABOUT DOING THOSE THINGS WHICH WE SAID WE WOULD DO AND WHICH WE PROMISED TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA THAT WE WOULD DO.

*Succeeded*

WE INHERITED A GOVERNMENT WHICH WAS A JOKE;  
THESE GREAT AND POWERFUL PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT ALL  
GOVERNMENT WAS A JOKE; SO THEY TOOK OUR POLICY  
FOR JUST ANOTHER SORT OF JOKE.

THEY FORGOT THAT THERE WERE MEN AND WOMEN IN  
AUSTRALIA, THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
LABOR PARTY, WHO MIGHT BE SERIOUS - SERIOUS  
IN THEIR TASK, SERIOUS IN THEIR PROMISES AND  
PLEDGES TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AT AN ELECTION.

SO WHAT WE HAVE DONE - FROM DECEMBER 1972  
UNTIL THIS DAY - IS TO TRY TO KEEP THOSE PROMISES,  
TO ADHERE TO THOSE PLEDGES. AGAIN I REPEAT -  
IT IS NOT THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT  
AND OF THIS PARTY TO WHICH OUR OPPONENTS OBJECT,  
BUT OUR PREDICTABILITY - THE FACT THAT WE HAVE TRIED  
TO ABIDE BY OUR UNDERTAKINGS. IT IS OUR  
SERIOUSNESS, OUR SINCERITY TO WHICH THEY OBJECT.

AND LET IT BE VERY CLEAR THAT THE PRINCIPLE  
OBJECTIVE REMAINS AS I STATED IT IN NOVEMBER 1972 -  
TO PROMOTE EQUALITY. IF YOU LOOK AT EVERYTHING  
THIS GOVERNMENT HAS DONE, YOU WILL SEE THAT THAT  
HAS BEEN ITS ABIDING AIM - TO PROMOTE EQUALITY.  
I EMPHASISE - "TO PROMOTE EQUALITY" - NOT TO  
IMPOSE EQUALITY. WE HAVE IN A QUITE UNIQUE WAY  
IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA AND PERHAPS IN THE  
DEMOCRATIC WORLD, SOUGHT TO PROMOTE EQUALITY.



IN A SOCIETY SUCH AS OURS, EQUALITY, BOTH EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND EQUALITY OF RESULTS IS NOT GOING TO BE DETERMINED SOLELY OR EVEN MAINLY BY EQUALITY OF INCOME. THE FIRST AIM MUST BE GREATER EQUALITY OF BASIC SERVICES, THE SERVICES WHICH THE COMMUNITY ALONE CAN PROVIDE IN A MODERN SOCIETY AND THROUGH GREATER EQUALITY BETWEEN REGIONS. THE GREAT INEQUALITIES IN AUSTRALIA ARE NOW NOT AS BETWEEN STATES, BUT AS BETWEEN REGIONS WITHIN STATES. INCREASINGLY, A FAMILY'S STANDARD OF LIVING, THEIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR DECENT HEALTH, DECENT SCHOOLS, DECENT TRANSPORT, DECENT ENVIRONMENT, ARE DETERMINED NOT SO MUCH BY THEIR INCOME, BUT BY WHERE THEY LIVE.

NEXT WEEK, AT THE PREMIERS' CONFERENCE, WE WILL HEAR A GREAT DEAL ABOUT A BETTER DEAL FOR THE STATES. WE ARE PERFECTLY PREPARED TO PROVIDE A FAIR DEAL - NOT ON THE BASIS OF DIVIDING AUSTRALIA INTO SIX COMPETING, CONFLICTING COMPARTMENTS OR SEVEN COMPETING CONFLICTING GOVERNMENTS, BUT ON THE BASIS THAT ALL THE GOVERNMENTS SHARE THE SAME PROBLEMS AND SHARE THE SAME RESPONSIBILITY.

THOSE PROBLEMS CANNOT BE SOLVED JUST BY HANDING OUT A FEW MORE MILLIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN TAXPAYERS' MONEY. WE HAVE TO FIND PERMANENT SOLUTIONS WHICH MAKE FOR BETTER SERVICES AND A MORE EFFICIENT ALLOCATION OF THE NATION'S RESOURCES. THE APPROACH WE HAVE ADOPTED EVER SINCE WE CAME INTO GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TO TRY TO RELIEVE THE STATES OF SOME OF THE CHRONIC BURDENS ON THEIR BUDGETS AND FREE THEM TO USE THEIR RESOURCES MORE CONSTRUCTIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY IN THOSE AREAS WHERE STATE GOVERNMENTS ARE PROPERLY PARAMOUNT.

THE LIBERAL APPROACH OFFERS NO LASTING SOLUTION. THAT APPROACH IS TO LEAVE THE BASIC STRUCTURES UNCHANGED, TO KEEP THE ARRANGEMENTS ABOUT FUNCTIONS AS THEY ARE AND TO HOPE THAT THE EXISTING SYSTEM CAN CONTINUE TO CREAK ALONG BY THE APPLICATION OF A BIT MORE OF THE TAXPAYERS' MONEY. IN EFFECT THE LIBERALS ASK THE TAXPAYERS TO SUBSIDISE THE INEFFICIENCIES AND INEQUALITIES OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS AND TO MAKE GOOD THE LOSSES WHICH THOSE ARRANGEMENTS MAKE INEVITABLE. THAT IS THE APPROACH OF THE LIBERAL PREMIERS. IT ISN'T OUR APPROACH AND IT SHOULD NOT BE THE APPROACH OF ANY SECTION OF THE PARTY.

THE TWO GREAT DRAINS ON THE STATE BUDGETS ARE RAILWAYS AND HOSPITALS.

IN NEW SOUTH WALES WE HAVE THE SITUATION IN BOTH THOSE AREAS OF MOUNTING LOSSES AND DECLINING SERVICES. YET OUR EFFORTS TO HELP THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, TO HELP THE AUSTRALIANS WHO LIVE IN NEW SOUTH WALES GET BETTER SERVICES, MORE FAIRLY FINANCED, HAVE BEEN REJECTED OR OBSTRUCTED.

TOMORROW I SHALL BE ADDRESSING THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CONVENTION OF THE PARTY.

I SHALL BE ABLE TO DRAW A GREAT CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO LABOR GOVERNMENTS - IN CANBERRA AND ADELAIDE - AS AGAINST THE OBSTRUCTIONISM OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT.

IN TERMS OF SHEER POLITICS, DON'T FORGET THAT THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT IS SHOWN BY THE POLLS TO BE THE MOST UNPOPULAR OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS, AND THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LABOR GOVERNMENT IS FAR AND AWAY THE MOST POPULAR.

KNOCKING CANBERRA HAS NOT PAID OFF FOR MR LEWIS. IF IT WON'T WORK FOR AN ANTI-LABOR GOVERNMENT, IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK FOR ANY SECTION OF OUR OWN PARTY.

THE OBSTRUCTION FROM NEW SOUTH WALES RANGES FROM PETTY CUSSEDNESS ON LITTLE MATTERS, TO GROSS IRRESPONSIBILITY ON GREAT MATTERS. THERE ARE THINGS LIKE THE REFUSAL TO LET A NEW SOUTH WALES OFFICIAL TRAVEL ON A CULTURAL MISSION TO CHINA, OR THE REFUSAL TO LET AN OFFICIAL ATTEND A MEETING OF A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION.

BUT THE TWO GREAT MATTERS, IN TERMS OF THEIR EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE AND THEIR POTENTIAL EFFECT ON THE STATE'S FINANCIAL POSITION ARE HOSPITALS AND RAILWAYS. THERE AGAIN, MARK THE CONTRAST WITH SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE OF THE STORY OF OUR PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE NEW SOUTH WALES RAILWAYS. IT WAS AN OFFER MADE IN THE POLICY SPEECH OF 1972. IN FEBRUARY 1973 I WROTE TO SIR ROBERT ASKIN CONFIRMING THAT PROMISE. IN MARCH HE AGREED TO OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS, WITHOUT PRIOR COMMITMENT, TO CLARIFY THE ISSUES INVOLVED IN SUCH A TRANSFER. WHEN MR LEWIS BECAME PREMIER, HE BROKE OFF THOSE DISCUSSIONS. THEY HAD BEEN FRUITFUL AND CONGENIAL - BUT HE BROKE THEM OFF.

IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WE REACHED AGREEMENT FOR THE TRANSFER LAST YEAR. THE CONTRASTING RESULT IS THAT SOUTH AUSTRALIA SAVES \$10 MILLION A YEAR AND NEW SOUTH WALES CONTINUES TO HAVE TO BEAR AN \$80 MILLION ANNUAL LOSS ON ITS RAILWAYS.

JUST BEAR THAT IN MIND NEXT WEEK WHEN MR LEWIS SQUAWKS ABOUT SO-CALLED CENTRALISM IN CANBERRA AND CANBERRA'S ALLEGED NEGLECT OF THE STATES. THERE'S NOTHING PARTICULARLY "CENTRALIST" ABOUT NATIONALLY-OPERATED RAILWAYS. IT'S HARDLY A MATTER OF PHILOSOPHY - ITS JUST COMMONSENSE. IN EVERY OTHER FEDERAL SYSTEM IN THE WORLD, RAILWAYS ARE RUN NATIONALLY.

OUR RATIONAL APPROACH IS SHARED BY OUR PARTNERS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. THE SAME OPPORTUNITY - FOR BETTER SERVICES, FOR FAIRER AND SOUNDER FINANCES, IS THERE FOR NEW SOUTH WALES. THE PARTY HERE SHOULD SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT OUR INITIATIVES. IT OFFERS A POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF FEDERAL-STATE FINANCIAL RELATIONS, A WAY THROUGH THE CARPING AND CONFRONTATION WHICH IS THE ESSENCE OF OUR OPPONENT'S APPROACH.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT'S RECORD ON HOSPITALS IS EQUALLY OBSTRUCTIVE. A LITTLE MORE THAN A MONTH BEFORE MEDIBANK WAS SCHEDULED TO COME INTO OPERATION ON THE 1ST JULY, AFTER MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS, MR LEWIS CAME UP WITH A NEW SET OF PROPOSALS THAT WOULD STRIKE AT THE FOUNDATION OF OUR HOSPITAL PROGRAM. IN PARTICULAR, THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE BASIC PRINCIPLE, THAT ANY PERSON IN NEED OF HOSPITAL TREATMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THE BEST AVAILABLE TREATMENT FREE OF COST AND FREE OF CONTRIBUTION TO A MEDICAL FUND. THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT HAS RESORTED TO A VERY EXTENSIVE PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO JUSTIFY THIS SABOTAGE.

THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY ASPECT OF THIS CAMPAIGN AND MOST OF THE CAMPAIGNS WAGED BY OPPONENTS OF OUR PROGRAM IS THAT THEY ALL RELY ON THE IDEA THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC KNOWS NOTHING AND REMEMBERS NOTHING. NEW TERRORS ARE DRUMMED UP TO CONDEMN PROPOSALS WHICH ARE IN FACT VERY FAMILIAR TO THE PEOPLE.

FOR INSTANCE, WHY SHOULD A PUBLIC LONG ACCUSTOMED TO STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICES BE TERRIFIED AT THE PROSPECT OF AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INSURANCE CORPORATION? FOR ALL THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS SPENT ON THAT CAMPAIGN, I DON'T BELIEVE THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE WERE A BIT IMPRESSED. THE CAMPAIGN DIDN'T GET OFF THE GROUND.

NOW THERE IS THIS LAST MINUTE ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE MEDIBANK. THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT AS FAR AS HOSPITAL BEDS ARE CONCERNED, OUR PROGRAM WILL SIMPLY RE-ESTABLISH WHAT EXISTED AND WORKED VERY SATISFACTORILY UNDER THE CHIFLEY GOVERNMENT - THE PROVISION OF FREE HOSPITAL TREATMENT IN PUBLIC WARDS, FUNDED ON A 50-50 BASIS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS.



I SAID BEFORE THAT THE GREAT THRUST OF OUR PROGRAM IS TO PROMOTE EQUALITY IN MATTERS LIKE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WE ARE STRIVING FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY.

EQUALLY FUNDAMENTAL IS THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL EQUALITY. IT IS EXTRAORDINARY HOW WE STILL ACCEPT THE DENIAL OF THIS BASIC RIGHT, A RIGHT WHICH HAS BEEN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC RHETORIC FOR A CENTURY OR MORE - YET NEVER TRANSLATED INTO REALITY IN AUSTRALIA. IT IS EXTRAORDINARY HOW EVEN PEOPLE IN OUR OWN PARTY FAIL TO BE INCENSED BY THIS DENIAL.

TWO WEEKS AGO THE SENATE AGAIN REJECTED THE NEW REDISTRIBUTION - A REDISTRIBUTION WHICH ON ANY GROUND IS THE FAIREST EVERY PRESENTED TO ANY AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT.

WE HAD TWO DEBATES ON THE REDISTRIBUTION, FIRST WE SUBMITTED THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS' PROPOSALS TO THE PARLIAMENT. WHEN THEY WERE REJECTED WE SUBMITTED THEM IN THE FORM OF BILLS. BOTH THE PROPOSALS AND THE BILLS ARE DESIGNED TO EFFECTUATE THE LAW OF THE LAND - A LAW ESTABLISHED AT THE JOINT SITTING OF BOTH HOUSES OF THE PARLIAMENT LAST AUGUST. THE LAW SAYS THE NUMBERS OF VOTERS IN EACH ELECTORATE WITHIN A STATE SHALL NOT VARY BY MORE THAN 10% ABOVE OR BELOW THE QUOTA IN THAT STATE.

IN BOTH THE DEBATES, NO SENIOR LIBERAL INTERVENED. THE LEADERS LEFT IT UP TO THE MEMBER FOR BENNELONG - <sup>scarcely</sup> NOT A HOUSEHOLD WORD - TO ARGUE THEIR CASE, SUCH AS IT WAS, AND NO WONDER. HOW COULD MR FRASER JUSTIFY TO HIS OWN SUPPORTERS THAT THEIR VOTE IN MITCHELL IS TO BE WORTH HALF THAT OF A PERSON VOTING IN DARLING? THAT ILLUSTRATES THE REAL POINT ABOUT ANY ELECTION HELD ON THE EXISTING BOUNDARIES. THERE IS NO PENALTY FOR LABOR VOTERS AS AGAINST LIBERAL VOTERS; THE PENALTY IS SPREAD INDISCRIMINATELY ON LABOR AND LIBERAL VOTERS ALIKE IF THEY HAVE THE MISFORTUNE TO LIVE IN THE PLACES WHERE MOST AUSTRALIANS, LIBERAL OR LABOR, LIVE.

THROUGHOUT THE DEBATES THERE WAS NEVER ANY SUGGESTION THAT THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS HAD NOT DONE A SCRUPULOUSLY FAIR JOB. IN EACH STATE THE COMMISSIONERS BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO BE FAIR. THE OBJECTION TO THEIR WORK WAS THAT THEY ADHERED TO THE LAW OF THE LAND, AS THEY WERE DUTY BOUND TO DO. THE OBJECTION TO THE REDISTRIBUTION WAS NOT ON ANY GROUNDS OF FAIRNESS; IT WAS AN OBJECTION TO ANY REDISTRIBUTION AT ALL.

THE FATE OF THE REDISTRIBUTION PROPOSALS IS THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF HOW A VERY SMALL BUT VERY VOCAL PRESSURE GROUP CAN SET ASIDE THE CLEAR WILL AND INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY, IN THIS CASE ALREADY EMBODIED IN THE LAW OF THE LAND. THE COUNTRY PARTY MADE ALL THE RUNNING AND WAS ABLE TO GET ITS WAY EVEN THOUGH THE LIBERAL PARTY IS EVERY BIT AS MUCH A VICTIM OF THE PRESENT MALAPPORTIONMENT AS THE LABOR PARTY.

WE HAVE TO REMEMBER HOWEVER THAT A GREAT DEAL OF OUR PROGRAM IS THREATENED IN THE SAME WAY - THE OPPONENTS ARE POWERFUL, WELL-ORGANISED, ENTRENCHED; THE BENEFICIARIES ARE IN GENERAL NOT SO WELL ORGANISED, SO ARTICULATE. THEREFORE WE HAVE TO BE THE SPOKESMEN, NOT JUST IN OUR OWN CAUSE, BUT IN THEIR CAUSE.

TAKE THE CASE OF THE HIGH COURT CHALLENGE SPONSORED BY THE NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIAN GOVERNMENTS AGAINST THE CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN AND THE REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME. SOME 60 SPECIFIC PROGRAMS ARE IMPERILLED BY THE CHALLENGE. WHAT EACH HAS IN COMMON IS THAT THEY ARE DESIGNED TO BENEFIT THE WEAK AND UNDERPRIVILEGED IN THE COMMUNITY - THE OLD, THE HANDICAPPED, ABORIGINES, MIGRANTS.

STATE PERMIERS HAVE A READY MADE FORUM IN THE CAPITAL CITY-BASED NEWSPAPERS. THE PEOPLE ON WHOSE BEHALF WE ACT, DO NOT HAVE ANY SUCH VOICE. IF WE DON'T SPEAK UP FOR THEM, NO ONE ELSE WILL. IF WE DON'T SUPPORT AND DEFEND OUR OWN PROGRAM, NO-ONE ELSE WILL.

THE INSURANCE OFFICES ARE WELL-ORGANISED. POLICY HOLDERS ARE NOT. THE A.M.A. IS ARTICULATE. THE MILLION AUSTRALIANS WHO CANNOT AFFORD HEALTH INSURANCE ARE NOT. WE HAVE IN OUR RANKS MANY OF THE MOST ARTICULATE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA, IT IS OUR DUTY TO MOBILISE OUR OWN RESOURCES AND TALENTS IN DEFENCE OF THE PROGRAM.

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