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Title:

Typed manuscript which begins 'The fight to establish the principle that each person in the community, by virtue of citizenship...'

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The fight to establish the principle that each person in the community, by virtue of citizenship, should have an equal and effective say in the choice of a government (and thereby in the laws that govern him and their administration) with every other citizen began at the earliest period of representative government in South Australia.

The first Legislature to have elected members, had sixteen members elected on a substantial property franchise. Each voter was required to own freehold or leasehold property and to have paid all rates and taxes on it. Only males were enfranchised, and only 37% of the male population registered to vote. In addition to the sixteen elected members the Governor nominated another eight.

It was, of course, considered inappropriate to nominate persons who might be considered to represent the disfranchised majority.

This was the Legislature which eventually decided on the constitution. Its first attempt at a constitution brought forth a storm of protest, including a petition, transmitted to London, in favour of equal electorates and signed by two and a half thousand residents. The first attempt was not assented to by the Queen, and they were told to try again. A resolution, by G.S. Kingston, partly carried the day -

Mr. Kingston's notice was to this effect - "That this Council is of opinion that in order to meet the wishes of the colonists as expressed at the recent general election, the Bills granting an amended constitution to South Australia should contain enactments carrying out in detail the following principles: - 1. Responsible Government. 2. The extension of the election franchise to every male twenty-one years of age, untainted by crime, who has been resident in and registered six months in the district. 3. The Parliament to consist of two Chambers, both elective, the Upper House to consist of twelve and the Lower House of thirty-six members. 4. The election to the Upper House to be by all the electors of the colony voting in one district. 5. The election to the Lower House to be by districts, for which purpose the colony shall be divided into electoral districts, comprising as nearly as practicable equal numbers with power of revision from time to time. 6. The qualification of voters to both Houses to be the same. 7. No property qualification for members of either House. 8. The Lower House to be elected for a period not exceeding five years. 9. In the Upper House one half of the members to retire, and a fresh election to take place in their stead at every dissolution of the Lower House. 10. All elections to be by ballot." A long debate ensued on November 20th, when the Colonial Secretary, who had charge of the Constitution Bill, moved the second reading, in which he kept within the course which had been agreed on by the Government.

He lost on some points: the Legislative Council had eighteen members and a property suffrage, and instead of the mere delaying powers on important measures proposed for a nominated upper house in the first proposal, complete powers of veto over measures originating in the lower house. It was to be a statewide vote, however, for the Legislative Council. The Assembly was to have three and not five-year-terms. There was a deadlock provision - to be all-important to us in obtaining reform, and the lack of which in the Western Australian constitution has prevented effective electoral reform in that State.

The early distribution of electorates did not provide equality of districts in numbers of voters, despite Kingston's proposals. This may, however, have been more through apathy about enrolment, (which was voluntary) than by deliberate intention. It does not appear to have been the intention to discriminate against urban voters. Large population concentrations were coped with in some instances by increasing the number of members elected for a district - a small country district had one member and central Adelaide six, for example.

Advantaging some country areas against towns became obvious in the 1861 redistribution, which had 18 seats with 2 members each. West Adelaide had 2000 electors and Flinders 595, Victoria 931. The number of districts in Adelaide and suburbs was reduced.

The 1872 redistribution, while it restored some three-member and one one-member seats, (North Adelaide, surprisingly,) also continued the trend. With a mean enrolment per member of 762 voters, West Adelaide had 1689 voters for two members, the mining area of Wallaroo 4151 voters for 3 members, and Flinders 1479 for 3 members.

The 1882 redistribution really set the pattern of unfair weighting of country areas. There were seven metropolitan districts, electing fourteen members and with 20446 voters. For the rest of the State there were 38 members, with 37,194 voters.

Subsequent redistributions followed this pattern though, with the emergence of party interests in the 1890s, the provision of multiple-member seats ranging from 2 to 5 members per seat to some extent disguised the unfairness of the distribution. In any seat of three or more members at least one member representing the minority viewpoint was frequently elected.

At the time of the election of the Hill Labor Government in 1930, West Torrens had 2 members for 33,170 voters, Wooroora 3 members for 10562, Newcastle 2 for 6,266. 16,000 to 3,000 is a remarkable degree of inequality.

The 1938 redistribution was stated by the then Premier, Sir Richard Butler, to be designed to keep Labor from office for twenty years. It kept them out for thirty-three.

It did so by a number of devices. First, it reduced the number of seats to 39. All of these became for single-member electorates. The minority voice would not be heard. The electorates were provided - one third, (thirteen seats) for metropolitan Adelaide, two-thirds (twenty-six seats) for the remainder of the State. By that time nearly 60% of the State's voters lived in metropolitan Adelaide. The imbalance was serious, and as we shall see, produced monstrous absurdities in unfair distribution.

When I was elected as member for Norwood, in 1953 there were just on 21000 voters enrolled. The argument most frequently used then to attempt to justify the imbalance of voters, was that country people lacked the amenities and services available to city dwellers, and that because they were isolated and required the service of their members as agents, they needed to have more members to population.

The nearest country district to mine was Gumeracha, the seat of the then Premier, Sir Thomas Playford. In the Adelaide Hills, it was so large and difficult to service you could drive across it from one side to the other - East-West or North-South in forty five minutes. It contained just over 7,000 voters.

Sir Thomas could see, by 1953, that the metropolitan area was encroaching on so-called "country" areas, and therefore numbers of his members would be affected.

So in 1954 a redistribution occurred which re-enacted the 1938 operation. The metropolitan area was redefined and enlarged. Thirteen seats were provided to the enlarged population, (by now well on the way to 70% of the State's people) and again twenty-six seats for the rest.

This was designed, successfully, to negate the effect of Labor's piling up substantial majorities of votes at subsequent elections.

At the 1963 election Sir Thomas found that he had left it too late to perpetuate the unfair distribution as he had succeeded in doing in 1954. At the election the Labor Party elected 19 members. The Liberals 18 and there were 2 independants, Mr. Quirke and Mr. Stott. Both of whom had said they would not take office under any Government. The results of the election quickly changed their minds and Mr. Quirk suddenly became Minister of Lands in the Playford Government and Mr. Stott, Speaker of the House, both voting with the LCL to maintain Sir Thomas in power.

Realising he was in grave danger of defeat, Playford moved to protect his gerrymander and introduced a measure to redistribute seats. This time the basis was not so much areas as 'interest'. The 'rural interest' was defined to include all the areas outside the city which voted Liberal. (It excluded, for instance, quarrying, mining and forestry, for although these could be considered primary industries, their workers mostly voted for the Labor party.) The area of

the 'rural interest' was then given a heavily weighted voting advantage, and the rest of the State progressively further disadvantaged. But he had problems about getting the measure passed. The constitution required that a measure to alter the constitution of the House should pass with the concurrence of the absolute majority of the Members of the House. An absolute majority was twenty. He had nineteen votes. By another section of the constitution the Speaker could vote only if the House was evenly divided on a question. Obviously, we could see that the House was not evenly divided by withdrawing one of our members from a division - if the vote was nineteen to eighteen the Speaker could not cast a vote and he wouldn't get his twenty.

But there was another danger: if Stott were to count the votes, say 'and I concur', and certify as Speaker that the Bill had passed, they would have no difficulty in having it passed by the Legislative Council. It could then be presented for assent by the Governor. There was precedent to say that the Courts would not interfere in what was an 'internal form and proceeding' of the Parliament, and might refuse to look behind the Speaker's certificate as to due form having been carried out. Moreover the High Court of Australia in recent cases had shown itself to be reluctant to grant injunctions to prevent a bill from being presented for assent, although the Privy Council in England had not been similarly reluctant.

I went to New South Wales to take advice from J.D. Holmes, QC (later Mr Justice Holmes), and he agreed that the dangers were real - while to do as it was suggested they might was obviously a breach of the constitution, we yet might be without an effective remedy to prevent it. We had to have a plan to cover the contingencies.

I prepared all the documents necessary for an immediate application for an injunction in the event of Stott's certifying the bill as having been passed, and drafts of the documents to take the case to the Privy Council if need be. But we also laid plans and drafted pamphlets ready to arrange rolling strikes, marches on Parliament House, civil disobedience campaigns. The Labor movement was determined that if Playford tried to pull a move such as this the time had come to man the barricades.

Playford, of course, was aware that this was happening. Did his courage fail him or was it just a try-on? In the event, the bill, at the second reading, had nineteen votes to eighteen, and Stott announced that that not being an absolute majority in favour of the measure, the motion was negated. We breathed a sigh of relief, and returned to preparing a leap over the existing hurdles at the 1965 election.

Redis Bill.

To do this, and to obtain electoral reform which would be entrenched against this sort of behaviour, the Labor Party developed a strategy which was partly of my devising;

1. We would concentrate on winning seats in two areas: marginals in the city to the point of taking nearly all the metropolitan representation; and enough seats in the country to take us to majority, by dint of selecting local candidates with strong personal local support, and intensive campaigning then novel to the State.
2. Once in office we would tackle the Legislative Council. It had been changed from state-wide voting first to four seats, two of them with weighted rural representation, and then five seats, also with three in the country and two in the city. Its representation was as unequally provided as was the Assembly's, and that could be judged from the fact that while Labor was clearly getting well in excess of 50% of the popular vote for the Assembly, it had 4 of the 20 Legislative Councillors.

The franchise for the council had been altered and was now still property based, but any householder renting a dwelling was qualified. Very few of the latter were enrolled, however, as we shall see.

At the 1965 elections the Labor Party was successful in the Lower House.

We introduced a measure, forecast at the elections, to obtain one-vote-one-value for the lower house. This provided fifty-six seats in the House, in such a way as to preserve most of the existing country seats, except those closer in to the city, which would take in part of the metropolitan area. This was projected as an answer to the Liberals' argument that one-vote-one-value would concentrate all service to voters into the metropolitan area, and deprive country people of the standard of agency service provided by existing members. It was passed in the Assembly, but inevitably, rejected in the Legislative Council.

I believed that if we were ever to succeed in democratic reform, we must tackle the Legislative Council. Our members there were quite disproportionate - four out of twenty - and moreover, were disproportionate to the number of qualified voters who would normally vote for us. Under the law, there was a separate roll for the Legislative Council and to be on it one had to make a separate application from that to go on the joint House of Assembly and Federal Parliamentary Roll. The qualifications were: the ownership of freehold property, or registered leasehold (there were few of the latter), be the inhabitant occupier of a dwelling house, or a returned ex-serviceman or ex-service woman, or the spouse of a qualified voter. The form of enrolment was complex - indeed filling it out correctly was often likened to doing the Times cross word puzzle. If one filled out a form incorrectly and sent it in, it was rejected without notice to the applicant.

In consequence, then, few voters enrolled except those with the first qualification. They were not only overwhelmingly Liberal voters, but were the only ones who had, at Government expense and invitations, been put on the roll. For as soon as anyone registered a freehold title at the Lands Titles Office the information was, by administrative arrangement set up by the Liberal Government, provided to the Electoral office, which then filled out the forms of enrolment for any newly qualified voter who owned property and sent it out to him to sign and return.

So I concerted several steps by which we would rectify the imbalance of enrolments. First, I agreed to the joint commonwealth and House of Assembly rolls being computerised. This was a first for Australia. I then directed the Chief Electoral Officer to take a computer run of the new Assembly roll and the Legislative Council roll, throwing out a list of apparently qualified voters for the Upper House who were not enrolled to vote for it. In the meantime I got through an amendment to the Juries Act which had made only those of the Legislative Council roll liable and qualified for jury service and made the House of Assembly roll the relevant one, and increased the pay for jurymen (Liberals had often persuaded our followers not to go on the Legislative Council roll because of jury service liability). Then by regulation we altered the enrolment form for the Legislative Council roll, making it simple, had the forms of apparently qualified voters filled out, and sent out tens of thousands of invitations to go on the roll. The Liberals were furious and denounced the operation as a 'dastardly socialist plot' but the roll became much more balanced and this was the first step in our succeeding to democratise the lair of the reactionaries.

At the 1968 elections we hammered away on the electoral reform theme, but at this stage it did not have much bite, after all Labor had got into power we had not succeeded in getting across the obstructionism of the Legislative Council. Our survey showed that only 6% of those interviewed knew what it was.

In the election, while we polled well in the city and the gulf towns, we lost 2 seats, Chaffey and Murray and that cost us the election. The result was 19 all for the Labor Party and LCL with Stott again holding the balance of power despite the fact that the Labor Party had a unanimous plurality of votes. He voted with the LCL to turn us out and allow Mr Hall the Leader of the Opposition to form a Government.

Des Corcoran had won the seat of Millicent for us by 1 vote. The Liberals took the matter to Court of Disputed Returns and the position was quite desperate for us. If the LCL succeeded in winning the seat they would have an absolute majority on the floor of the House and be able to enact another unfair distribution in accordance with Hall's proposals.

The Court ordered a new election.

In this by-election Hall was insistent that a win for them would be the clear go-ahead for his new gerrymander of the State - he campaigned in favour of giving extra weight to the rural vote. The Hall scheme, outlined at the general election, was for a house of forty-five seats, twenty-five in a newly defined metropolitan area, and twenty in the remainder of the State. It carefully included in the metropolitan area the whole of greater Adelaide as defined by the Metropolitan Development Plan, taking in all fringe suburbs and potential ones, and placing them at an electoral disadvantage as compared with the rest of the State. This was designed to prevent the loss to Labor of country seats into which suburban development had spread (as had happened with Barossa) and to contain at a voting disadvantage any urban sprawl.

It would have provided that non-metropolitan voters would each have twice the say in the future of the State than metropolitan voters had, and given the likely variation to give larger numbers of electors to each seat which contained a major country town, would have effectively retained the gerrymander and allowed the LCL to be elected with a little over forty per cent of the vote.

We produced a modified electoral plan which provided four State seats for every Federal seat, and since Federal districts can only be marginally weighted out of line with an equal quota, fairly substantial compliance with one-vote-one-value.

One of the things in our favour was that it appeared that some voters had had minor grievances about which they had cast a protest vote not dreaming that Des could be defeated, but were now determined to keep him. But it was a hard and bitter struggle, and for us a life or death one - if we lost Millicent all we had accomplished would be swept away. In the event, we won and Des was confirmed as Member for Millicent and Deputy Leader of the Party. With a clear fifty-two per cent of the vote the seat was safe.

Hall now faced a dilemma - he was sitting on a time bomb. He could not protect the LCL by a new gerrymander, and the existing one would fail him by the time of the next State elections. The spread of Adelaide suburbs into neighbouring country electorates was going on at such a pace that Alexandra (on the southern fringe of Adelaide) was a certain ALP gain at the next elections, giving us enough seats to form a government, and Hall's own seat of Gouger (on the northern border of the city) would be in danger. After the election electoral reform had become an issue which it had not been previously. The people had voted over-whelmingly for the continuance of the policies of the Labor Government and had now got what they voted for. With 53.9 per cent of the votes Labor had a bigger vote than that which elected any other Government in office in Australia at the time.

All over Australia even the most conservative journals condemned the result, and reflected on the fact that electoral imbalance was so great that one Labor member, Jack Jennings, represented more electors than seven Liberal members combined. In March a crowd of 10,000 had marched in the streets protesting the injustice of an electoral result so unrepresentative of the people's will. During the period between election day and our defeat in the House, we had been able to focus attention on the injustice to the people of the election result that the Liberals (or at least some of them, including Hall), knew that the issue must be defused before the next election. They could not sit by with the certainty of our election next round by our being able to exploit the electoral reform issue. There was only one thing, as Hall saw it, to do. He must put up not the re-gerrymander he wanted and which we would block, but a measure which had a sufficient degree of improvement on the existing one that although it still favoured the LCL, we would support it. Having thus defused the issue, Hall hoped to find an issue which would swing votes to the LCL in the metropolitan area sufficiently for them to win under the new system. He was impressed by the big swing of votes away from the ALP over Vietnam in the 1966 Federal poll, and felt that the same could be achieved in the State. The issue he fastened on was the water supply, which had come out in surveys in 1967-8 so prominently as a matter of concern to Adelaide Residents.

It was, of course, some time before the nature of this strategy was exposed to us. But it was clear that there was some ferment in the LCL with Hall and his closest associate, Robin Millhouse, the Attorney-General, urging the LCL had to capture additional urban support. At the LCL conference in 1968 Hall was reported as having spoken in favour of adult suffrage for the Legislative Council, having previously defended its restricted franchise.

As a result I introduced a Private Members' Bill for adult suffrage in that year. Hall, in the course of the debate, made a serious mistake. He and Millhouse had made a habit of reading the rule book and platform of the ALP and trying to twit Labor members across the floor with quotations from it. An especial favourite of LCL members was how closely we were bound by our rules and membership pledges whereas they were free to vote according to the dictates of conscience. That was, of course, a nonsense. Millhouse had been sub-rosa a co-author of a pamphlet in the 1950s put out by a group of young Liberals roundly attacking the gerrymander and proclaiming the injustice of anything other than one-vote-one-value, and yet had voted for the Playford re-gerrymander proposals in the House. But they believed their own propaganda about our being closely bound and unable to move from strict adherence to the Party rule book without holding a special Party conference.

Our platform bound us to support abolition of the Upper House and, pending abolition, compulsory enrolment and voting for it. When Hall rose to reply in the debate he threw out a challenge to me which he believed would contain conditions impossible for me and the Labor Party to accept, thereby removing pressure from himself about his reported support within his Party for adult suffrage. He said he would support our Bill for adult suffrage if we would support measures entrenching voluntary enrolment and voting for the Council, and that it could not be abolished except by referendum of the people. I immediately said, "We'll accept

that", and he was caught. He had not realised that with adult suffrage there would be a common roll with that for the Assembly and Federal Parliament. As it was, enrolment for the Assembly was not compulsory, but as it took place on the same form as enrolment for Federal Parliament which was compulsory, that made no difference. And since electors of the House of Assembly once enrolled, were compelled to go to the poll to vote, voluntary voting for the Legislative Council was irrelevant - the voter would have to go to the poll and would be handed his Council ballot paper along with his Assembly one. It would only have been in Council by-elections that the voluntary provisions would have had an effect - and they were so rare it was of small moment as compared with getting adult suffrage. Moreover, the provision for a referendum did not breach our policy for ultimate abolition - it merely altered the way of doing it. The Labor members were not confronted with the difficulties he thought he had devised for us.

Pandemonium broke out on the Liberal benches and angry exchanges occurred. Hall realised his mistake, but was committed publicly. A storm broke round his ears in the LCL and he appealed to some senior journalists for help in their papers. Eventually, at the third reading Hall carried nine of his colleagues with him in the Assembly to support the measure. When it reached the Legislative Council however, DeGaris, the LCL leader in the chamber bitterly attacked the Bill and had all his party vote solidly to adjourn it on nine successive Private Members' days so that it could not be further dealt with and lapsed at the end of the session.

Rifts in the LCL Government became obvious from this time on, and Hall's strategy about electoral reform anything but widely popular in his own party.

The electoral distribution proposals were contained in a bill to instruct a commission to draw up new electoral boundaries - for a forty-seven seat House in place of the existing thirty-nine. There were to be twenty-eight seats in an enlarged metropolitan area, and nineteen in the rest of the State. There was still a heavy rural weighting - it would take three city voters to get the same say as two country ones, but it was a marked improvement on the existing 1955 gerrymander where the ratio was in most cases between four and six to one. We supported the measure while making clear that it fell a long way short of one-vote-one-value.

The Liberals in the Legislative Council tried to write in a provision for four more Legislative Councillors and a new gerrymander of Council seats, but Stott voted with the ALP to reject this, and the Council finally gave way. When the Constitution amendments to give effect to the Commissioner's report on the new boundaries reached the council, they wrote in the amendment about a referendum being required to abolish the Council or alter its powers, and enfranchising for the council the spouses of qualified electors. This was, of course, an attempt at a rearguard action against adult suffrage, but it was later to serve us well in our ultimate joust with Council on that score.

A careful examination of the new electoral boundaries showed that given a normal Labor vote, we should win. Hall was planning to see that there would not be a normal Labor vote.

Mr Hall went to election on the new electoral boundaries, however, his defeat in the Houses on the subject of water storages on the River Murray. Surveys had shown that concern for water supply was foremost in electors minds as an issue facing the State, and Mr Hall believed that on this single issue he could swing the State as it had swung against the Labor Party Federally over Vietnam. He was wrong, the Labor Party was elected with a comfortable majority on the new boundaries.

The three years 1970-73 saw the heaviest legislative program the Parliament had yet known. As usual, tackling the reform of the Constitution was in the forefront of the program. The immediate hurdle was to bring the Legislative Council to heel. They were still wildly unrepresentative, and unrepentantly obstructive, claiming to know better than the voters 'the permanent will of the people'. We passed a measure for adult suffrage through the Assembly. It was duly rejected by the Council, which again repeated the exercise later in the same Parliament. We also passed a measure to provide a single enrolment form for the two Houses - which drove the Liberals to furious opposition - the last thing they wanted was to have more enrolments for the council, except of property-owners in the old way. But the pattern of the legislation was designed to prepare the necessary blows at the one Achilles heel in the Council's otherwise impregnable armour - the deadlock provision.

In the 1973 election, although we lost Chaffey, Len King's work in enrolments for the Legislative Council paid off. We won the Midlands area for the first time, which brought our numbers in the Legislative Council to six out of twenty. In addition, we were within a few thousand votes of winning two other of the five regions, Northern and Central No. 2. This was going to give us a real muscle in the coming struggle for reform of the Upper House.

The win for the Labor Party in 1973 was an historic one. It was the first time in the history of the State a Labor Government had been returned to power for a successive term. We could at last, if need be, use the deadlock provisions. Immediately the election was over we set out to put ourselves in a position to do so. Because the electoral rolls were on computer, it was easy to program the computer to make lists of voters in street order - i.e. instead of alphabetically, each street in an area would be listed together with voters' names listed against each house in the street. We were also able to get the lists of apparently qualified voters for the Legislative Council who had not yet enrolled. By a scan of the occupations of these we could usually judge with some accuracy the potential Labor voters. Kits were prepared for Party workers in the industrial towns of Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, and in the metropolitan area of the Central No. 2 district. Well before Parliament had met we had enrolled thousands of new, committed Labor voters for the Legislative Council in each of the two districts. We were certain that in consequence, if the LCL majority in the Upper House was intransigent, refused adult suffrage, and we then had a double dissolution of the whole of both Houses (as provided by the deadlock provisions) on the issue of adult suffrage, we would win the Council sixteen to four, reverse the tables on the LCL and then could in due course pass a measure to abolish the Council. At the very least, we had that very real threat available to us against the LCL reactionaries.

By June we were in a position to move against them. DeGaris, as the leader of the campaign in defence of the non-representative Upper House, decided upon a rearguard action. He announced, to the surprise of those aware of his previously expressed view, that the Council was concerned to achieve the objective of having everyone vote for it on the true principle of one vote one value! But he had a cunningly devised scheme to retain the conservative veto over the Lower House. He said the only true system of one vote one value was proportional representation on the Hare-Clark system. Under such a system, given voting patterns in the State, almost certainly each election for the half of the Legislative Council would result in five ALP and five LCL members being elected. Although the ALP would have a substantial plurality of votes, a proportional representation system of this kind tends to minimise differences between majorities and minorities. With the resultant House in due course split ten ALP and ten LCL, and the requirement that the ALP in Government find a President from its own ranks with only a casting vote when the House was evenly divided, the LCL would have a majority on the floor to exercise a power of veto for all time. This was a careful plan to maintain conservative minority control presented under the disarming guise of a conversion to democracy as dramatic as if it had been on the road to Damascus.

I, personally, had been in favour of proportional representation in a statewide vote for the Upper House, but Hugh Hudson and Geoff Virgo, who had worked together in preparing our detailed analysis for electoral purpose had insisted that it would be sure to produce deadlocked or conservative dominated Upper House, or so great a danger of them that we must have a system giving sufficient seats to the Party with a majority of votes that it could get its legislation through. However, then Hugh came up with a scheme which would work and hoist DeGaris with his own petard.

Since in Europe most countries having introduced P.R. systems had had to modify them because of their tendencies to minimise majorities and put a premium on splinter groups, often producing (as in Italy today) a series of electoral impasses, we too should modify the P.R. system to eliminate those not making half a quota (four point two per cent of the vote - in Germany it is five per cent). Voting would be on an optional preference basis (i.e. a voter could indicate preferences to other groups if he wished, but need not do more than vote for one) the voting would be on a party-list system so that the between five per cent and ten per cent of Labor voters who in the Senate voted informally when they had to number a ballot-paper from one to fifty odd consecutively, could now be sure of a formal vote by simply putting a 1 beside the group they wanted. In addition we would add two members to the Upper House so that each election there would be eleven members elected and not ten, and we would alter the constitution to give the President a deliberate instead of just a casting vote.

So two bills were introduced - one for adult suffrage, in the same form as that rejected in the previous Parliament and so able to be the basis of a double dissolution if refused again, and one for proportional representation on the party-list system, with a statewide electorate, an increase in Members to twenty-two, and the deliberate vote for the President. The measures passed the House of Assembly, but DeGaris fought a desperate rearguard action in the Upper House, trying seriously to amend the P.R. bill and refusing to pass adult suffrage until the other measure had been dealt with. I decided it was time to pressure the dodderers in the Legislative Council. DeGaris, I knew, was not negotiating from strength. There was not only the threat of our beating them hollow at an election over adult suffrage, but some LCL members of the Upper House needed a little further time to qualify for Parliamentary superannuation, and were horrified at the thought of suddenly being back on the hustings with every prospect of imminent political doom. I put on a grand turn to the media to start getting the fight onto the front pages. I was afterwards criticised by some people in the ALP for having been over-dramatic. I replied that if anything I had been moderate - but what I did was necessary to win the war. We went into conference of managers of the two Houses since the Legislative Council had made amendments to the P.R. bill which were designed to wreck the measure.

I had documents prepared recommending a double dissolution to the Governor, and let these be seen in my bag during the conference. Eventually we emerged with victory. Adult suffrage passed, and the party-list optional preference P.R. state-wide. The only amendments we conceded to the LCL were that while enrolment was compulsory voting was not (but as it would be on the same roll and at the same time as a compulsory House of Assembly vote, that really meant nothing and the votes below half a quota would have a single preference counted.

In the Legislative Council seat of Northern the Labor vote of 38361 and the Liberal vote 41705 and the Central No. 2 seat Labors vote was 20568 and the Liberals 22765.