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**Title:**

ALP broadcast regarding 'LCL ... argument concerning democracy and decentralisation  
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Good Evening,

It would appear from the <sup>correspondence</sup> editorial columns of the Advertiser and ~~from a letter that appeared recently in its~~ <sup>through people writing under various names,</sup> correspondence columns that the L.C.L. is attempting to develop a most extraordinary argument concerning democracy and decentralisation in this State. Since this involves very strange cerebral process which could hardly be called reasoning, it would be instructive to examine it.

The argument runs this way - the Labor Party says it believes in decentralisation. But it also says it believes in one vote one value. To get one vote value, each electoral district would have to contain as nearly as possible the same number of voters as every other district. As 63% of S.A.'s population lives in the metropolitan area of Adelaide, this would mean 63% of members of Parliament would be elected by the people of Adelaide and only 37% by the rest of the people of the State. This would give control of parliament to Adelaide, and that is the antithesis - they say - of decentralisation.

Now the people who say this sort of thing are using words without knowing clearly what they mean by them. Let's have a look at the two words 'democracy' and 'decentralisation.'

Democracy, a word coming from a Greek root, means literally "people's rule". That means that the basis of election shall be that people, human beings, shall decide on the Government. The Labor Party is a Party which believes in democracy. We say, as does every democratic body, that it doesn't matter where people live or what they own, or what they work at which gives them the right to vote, it is merely that they are people. Every sensible citizen would be in accord with that view. The Labor Party's electoral policy then is that there should be a House of Assembly of 56 members representing single electorates. The electoral boundaries should be drawn by an independent electoral commission, with electoral districts made as nearly equal in number of voters

as possible. These seats should be realigned periodically to allow for shifts of population.

Now that is a policy which is in accordance with democracy.

What of the other word "decentralisation". Well, we might ask - decentralisation of what? Labor is quite clear on that point - decentralisation of population, industry and facilities. That is Labor Policy. If there is a decentralisation of these things, in due course there will be more members representing country districts in the House of Assembly under the principle of one vote one value than would be representing the metropolitan area.

But if we don't have Labor's democratic electoral policy we won't get decentralisation of people industry and facilities. Since one vote one value was cut out of the South Australian constitution, the weighted rural vote has produced centralisation of people, industry and facilities not decentralisation. Before one vote one value was abolished, the country areas contained just on 60% of South Australia's population - now they contain only 37%. The point is that our L.C.L. governments dare not decentralise people, industry and facilities - that policy would increase the number of industrial workers, traditionally Labor voters in the under populated country areas. That would even up the voting strengths of the country areas to something like those of metropolitan districts and the L.C.L. would lose a number of country seats upon which it relies for its present majority. For what is the present position? The Labor Party has for years polled a majority of overall votes in the State at State as well as Federal elections. But under our present rigged system the A.L.P. did not gain a majority of seats. The metropolitan area, with 63% of the population elects on 13 of the 39 members and some metropolitan seats contain 29,000 voters electing one member as compared with some country districts with only 6,000 voters electing one member. That is why the L.C.L. Members in Parliament for years have voted against Labor decentralisation motions.

But what does the extraordinary L.C.L. argument which I mentioned amount to. It means by decentralisation not decentralisation of control, regardless of whether there are people there to exercise it. According to the L.C.L. argument if you get a large sparsely populated country area, you should give it a member of Parliament, even with only a handful of people to exercise the vote. This of course is a complete denial of democracy - it means not people's rule, but area rule - you give the vote not to people but acreage - to miles of empty spaces peopled by little other than saltbush. And then the L.C.L. and its morning daily paper have the face to call this decentralisation. What sort of decentralisation is it which keeps the country areas underpopulated and underdeveloped for the sole purpose of keeping the present dictatorship in power? None at all, of course, but then logic and reason principle and justice have never been well looked on in the Leave the Country League.

Goodnight.