

# Centralia must get numbers

**C**ENTRALIAN members of the Country Liberal Party are fighting back at what they see as undue dominance of party affairs from Darwin.

The proposal to split the inordinately large Alice Springs branch into several branches should give them not only a far more flexible structure but, at least as important, a bigger say in the all-powerful annual conference and central council of the CLP.

Whether anyone likes it or not politics dominates just about every economic and financial factor in Territory and Australian life.

The ripple effects of decisions taken by governments are felt across a vast spectrum that includes almost all facets of activity.

In the Northern Territory this is even more so because the public sector here is disproportionately large and influential.

It is by far the Territory's biggest business.

This is why Alice Springs, the heart of CLP country, is wise to put in place a structure that will ensure its voice is heard.

This is quite clearly not the case now.

Both federal representatives will be based in Darwin.

Only one, Mr Ray Hanrahan, of Mr Hatton's eight-man Cabinet is from Alice Springs.

Six are Darwin politicians while another, Victoria Rivers MLA, Mr Terry McCarthy, is also a Top Ender.

This means that the Berrimah line is alive and well in Territory politics.

One of the ways to fight it is through the central council of the CLP.

The council was not particularly important during Mr Everingham's period as Chief Minister, but it acquired an enormous clout during Mr Tuxworth reign eventually forcing his resignation on May 10.

It has retained this clout and that is why it is vital for Centralians to have a far bigger say in its deliberations.

The only way to do that is through numbers.

They speak loud and clear in language that even the most obtuse Top Ender can understand.

It does not make any sense for a large branch like Alice Springs, with more than 200 members, to send the same number of representatives to the council as a branch one-quarter its size.

## Gerrymander

The central council and the annual conference are heavily gerrymandered in Darwin's favor.

Nor does it make any sense to take the CLP vote in Alice Springs for granted in political decisions designed almost exclusively for the benefit of Darwin's admittedly electorally vital northern suburbs.

The present Centralian moves are designed to change the existing situation so that there is much more balance between north and south.

And not before time.

One final point should be made.

It is that Alice Springs CLP attempts to redress the political inequality with Darwin would not be necessary with a strong Labor opposition active in Centralia.

Unfortunately the ALP in Alice Springs can hardly be called a party, much less a Labor party.

It is just a ragtag collection of trendy lefties committed to doctrines which, if implemented, would destroy this Territory faster than you can say Hawke.

Which is all the more reason for the right-of-centre forces to fight for the good of the town and its environs.