

[Wednesday, 23 June 1993.]

HON J.A. SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [7.42 pm]: As with other inaugural speakers, I also offer my congratulations to all members who have gained election to this House. I particularly congratulate the women who have made it to this House as I see that this place has a gender imbalance. My inaugural speech is also the inaugural speech of my party; therefore, I will give the philosophical base from which Greens (WA) policy is derived.

I am greatly honoured that my community has chosen me to represent it in this House, and in accepting this honour I also accept the responsibility that goes with it. This responsibility is to a number of groups: The first is the community I represent; second, is my party, its platform and all the people who helped me during the election campaign; and third, and the one for which I feel the greatest responsibility, is to the future generations of this planet. It is in the last aspect that my party is clearly defined from other parties represented in this Parliament. Our policy is to look beyond the next election and into the next century. Our philosophy springs from an ecological rather than an economic source. We recognise that our greatest need on which indeed our survival as a species depends, is harmonious inter-reaction with our living environment.

We can live without many systems of trade and delivery of services, but we cannot live without clean air, water and food. We are biological creatures interdependent within the Earth's ecosystem. A feature of Greens policy is the recognition of the interrelatedness of all systems, whether they be economic, ecological or social. Greens philosophy is based on four main requirements: Participatory democracy; social justice and social equity; peace, nonviolence and nuclear disarmament; and a sustainable ecology. These are known as the four pillars and are a feature of green groups worldwide.

The first pillar, participatory democracy, is a good starting point to consider the necessary components to facilitate the other precepts. Participatory democracy seeks to involve all members of society in the decision making process. Governments have a duty to ensure that the powerful, the skilled and the financially well off sections of the community do not dominate the decision making process of the State at the expense of the powerless. Unfortunately, this is not usually the case as those who gain a Government stewardship are usually those who least need it.

The Greens (WA) would like to see an enhanced level of community consultation in all tiers of government. We will be asking the Government not to throw people out of work without first consulting those people and providing them with all the information at its disposal; also, alternatives should be discussed with them. We would like to see real community input in the planning decisions, once again providing the community with all available information. In seeking to uphold the traditions of participatory democracy, I will be working to ensure that the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters are not watered down in the interests of either Government or business.

Other areas of interest to me will be the right of participation in decision making for residents and community groups in matters which will impact on their lifestyles and physical environment. I will resist the use of the Police Force as a tool of social suppression - that is also unfair on our Police Force. All members of our community, now and in the future, have a right to clean air, water and land, and I will protect that right.

Although favouring a greater degree of decentralisation, I believe in the precept of one-vote-one-value. Our community has been treated with contempt by the major political parties at a State and Federal level, as many grandiose promises have been broken immediately following elections. This has undermined democracy, and I will be examining ways to make parties liable for their promises.

State facilities should not be closed down purely on political whims. If good reasons exist for destroying people's livelihoods without examining alternatives, those reasons should be openly debated with full disclosure of all information. Only poor managers keep their shareholders in the dark.

The next precept of social justice and social equity naturally follows from participatory democracy. Australia and other similar countries have entered a period of rapid decline in social equity; many democratic countries have seen a rapidly growing gap between the rich and the poor. Even in Australia, with a Federal socialist Government, corporate salaries and handouts have soared as workers' wages have dropped in real terms. It is most unfair that salary rises are so large despite plummeting company profits. Dr Deming, the founder of total

quality management, which many observers believe is behind the success of Japanese business, said the following, as reported in The Australian Financial Review, when last in Australia -

. . . Western-style management had failed to recognise its primary responsibility. The blame for poor quality or productivity was more often laid with the work force, with outside suppliers or equipment; with anyone but with management itself. He said most production problems had common causes which only management could reduce or remove.

"I don't say anything about the work force - they are the part we don't need to worry about," he said.

"All they ask is a chance to do their job. They are not the problem - the problem is management not doing their job."

He continues -

At the heart of any revitalisation of a manufacturing or service company must be cooperation between management and work force in achieving common goals.

Dr Deming sees the Japanese as 30 to 40 years ahead of the West in this, partly because they embraced the idea of cooperation early and partly because they are a cooperative race.

He cites the Japanese experience in developing high definition television, a product that US companies are only just beginning to tackle. The leading Japanese companies developed the technology jointly, but then entered into a period of intense competition as each attempted to bring the best product onto the market as quickly as possible.

Dr Deming said that cooperation does not mean the end of competition. He said -

On the other side of the coin, American-style management -

This would include Australia. It continues -

- was about supervision rather than leadership. It concentrated on short-term goals - the quarterly dividend - rather than on a continual improvement of process and product that would bring the customer back again. And it pitted people against one another in the race up the promotional ladder.

That's what North America was built on - rugged individualism," he said.

"And it served us well. You can't say it was the best system we could have had but it served its purpose. However, the system we used is now obsolete, it doesn't work. The present system has run out of steam."

Dr Deming has no time for the confrontationalist attitudes of the New Right. Confrontation brings a "lose-lose" result, with the company and the workforce both suffering. Common purpose brings the possibility of "win-win".

And he is impatient with the financial paper shuffling and emphasis on short-term goals which he sees as substituting for real business development in the West, including Australia.

The increasing gap between rich and poor is so advanced world wide that we have third and first world communities within each nation. Cities in North America, like Los Angeles, are experiencing the growth of great walled estates for the rich which resemble the fortified towns of the middle ages. These were designed to keep out the brigands, and now the poor. In the streets of Los Angeles visitors are urged to keep their car windows wound up and car doors locked in case of robberies at the traffic lights. Life is cheap in the streets. I do not want this in my country even though the signs are there of its beginning. More and more young kids are being forced onto the streets to live however they can. This is an indictment on our society and on those who govern the country. All of us must do more to tackle this problem and the first place we must look is at social inequity and unemployment.

Most people here will be aware that refugees and others are arriving by boat on our northern coast. Like the United States, where authorities have reported 40 vessels carrying thousands of aliens towards North America,

we have a problem. With the world population expected to exceed nine billion in the next 50 years, the trickle we now experience will become a flood. The cause of this flood, apart from population, is the lack of equity between nations. This second type of social inequity will put us under immense pressure for our resources. This is a dangerous situation from the point of view of both conflict and environmental degradation. An article entitled "Environmental Change and Violent Conflict" in the Scientific American of February 1993 states -

Within the next 50 years the human population is likely to exceed nine billion and global economic output may quintuple. Largely as a result of these two trends scarcities of renewable resources may increase sharply. The total area of highly agricultural land will drop, as will the extent of forests and the number of species they sustain. Future generations will also experience the ongoing depletion and degradation of aquifers, rivers and other bodies of water, the decline of fisheries, further stratospheric ozone loss and, perhaps, significant climate change.

As such environmental problems become more severe, they may precipitate civil or international strife. Some concerned scientists have warned of this prospect for several decades, but the debate has been constrained by lack of carefully compiled evidence. To address this shortfall of data, we assembled a team of 30 researchers to examine a set of specific cases. In studies commissioned by the University of Toronto and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, these experts reported their initial findings.

The evidence that they gathered points to a disturbing conclusion: Scarcities of renewable resources are already contributing to violent conflicts in many parts of the developing world. These conflicts may foreshadow a surge of similar violence in coming decades, particularly in poor countries where shortages of water, forests and, especially, fertile land, coupled with rapidly expanding populations, already cause great hardship.

Further on -

Human actions bring about scarcities of renewable resources in three principal ways. First, people can reduce the quantity or degrade the quality of these resources faster than they are renewed. This phenomenon is referred to as the consumption of the resource's "capital": the capital generates "income" that can be tapped for human consumption. A sustainable economy can therefore be defined as one that leaves the capital intact and undamaged so that future generations can enjoy undiminished income. Thus, if topsoil creation in a region of farm land is 0.25 millimetre per year, then average soil loss should not exceed that amount.

The second source of scarcity is population growth. Over time, for instance, a given flow of water might have to be divided among a greater number of people. The final cause is change in the distribution of a resource within a society. Such a shift can concentrate supply in the hands of a few, subjecting the rest to extreme scarcity.

These three origins of scarcity can operate singly or in combination. In some cases, population growth by itself will set in motion social stress. Bangladesh, for example, does not suffer from debilitating soil degradation or from the erosion of agricultural land: the annual flooding of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers deposits a layer of silt that helps to maintain the fertility of the country's vast flood plains.

But the United Nations predicts that Bangladesh's current population of 120 million people will reach 235 million by the year 2025. At about 0.08 hectare per capita, cropland is already desperately scarce. Population density is 785 people per square kilometer (in comparison, population density in the adjacent Indian state of Assam is 284 people per square kilometer). Because all the country's good agricultural land has been exploited, population growth will cut in half the amount of cropland available per capita by the year 2025.

As we know, Bangladesh is already struggling. To continue -

Over the past 40 years, millions of people have migrated from Bangladesh to neighbouring areas of India where the standard of living is often better. Detailed data on the movements are few: the Bangladeshi government is reluctant to admit there is significant migration because the issue has become a major source of friction with India.

... This enormous flux has produced pervasive social changes in the receiving Indian states. Conflict has been triggered by altered land distribution as well as by shifts in the balance of political and

economic power between religious and ethnic groups. For instance, members of the Lalung tribe in Assam have long resented Bengali Muslim migrants: they accuse them of stealing the area's richest farmland. In early 1983, during a bitterly contested election for Federal offices in the state -

People do get angry during elections -

- violence finally erupted. In the village of Nelli, Lalung tribespeople massacred nearly 1,700 Bengalis in one five-hour rampage.

We have two main paths to take to solve these problems. The first is to spend an increasing amount on military hardware and personnel to protect our resources. The second - and this is the part of the Green philosophy which rejects violence and conflicts - is that we should work cooperatively with our neighbours and spend that money on programs for birth control and education facilities, and provide assistance, training and facilities in sustainable agricultural techniques, health and medicine. We should also encourage social equity in those countries and practise it in our own. Only the latter path is sustainable. The first will end in conflict and famine. Although this may be seen as a Federal issue we must bear in mind that the ramifications of the world population increase will affect us at every level, including the risk of nuclear war. Those of us concerned about such a holocaust have observed the spread of nuclear weapons throughout countries such as India, Pakistan, South Africa, Iraq, Israel and North Korea, and Indonesia is now about to build a nuclear capacity. It is madness for Australia to supply uranium to these countries. We must work to rid the world of this menace.

Speaking of the predicted growth in world population brings me to another form of equity; that is, equity between generations. In his Address-in-Reply speech Hon Bruce Donaldson highlighted the major philosophical difference between his party and mine. As I remember, he said it was wrong to leave coal deposits under bushland which would be a benefit for future generations. I think he was referring to Mt Lesueur National Park. My party says that in a market economy if the national park is opened up for mining the mining company will dig up the coal. If we are only opening it up for exploration, why bother? Because past Governments, both Liberal and Labor, have tied the State into buying more fossil fuels than it can use, any further coal supplies will have to be sent overseas. This "use it up quickly" policy will rob our future generations of fossil fuels, cause a continuation of energy wasting policies, ruin a beautiful national park and add to the greenhouse problems. Use it up policies are a disaster for the future of not only this country but also the whole world. We reject this waste of resources.

A misnomer called resource development is used in this field. I call it asset stripping, for that is what it is. As economist Herman Daly so aptly puts it in an article in *The State of the World 1991*, a World Watch Institute report on progress towards a sustainable society: "There is something fundamentally wrong in treating the earth as if it were a business in liquidation." The article states -

To extend this analogy, it is though a vast industrial corporation quietly sold off a few of its factories each year, using an incomplete accounting system that did not reflect these sales. As a result, its cash flow would be strong and profits would rise. Stockholders would be pleased with the annual reports, not realising that the profits were coming at the expense of the corporation's assets. But once all the factories were sold off, corporate officers would have to inform stockholders that their shares were worthless.

In effect, this is what we are doing with the earth. Relying on similarly incomplete accounting systems, we are depleting our productive assets, satisfying our needs today at the expense of our children.

In simple accounting, if we sell an asset for its true value, we gain liquidity but do not increase our overall net worth. In the case of mining, it is sometimes worse because the profits go to overseas shareholders and sometimes the environmental, health and other costs far outweigh any advantage to the community. Perhaps we should look at the gains from places such as Wittenoom. A few people have gained mansions; the less fortunate have mesothelioma, and the taxpayers have a massive bill. No, digging it up is not always the best answer. We advocate that scarce resources, especially energy, should be used as slowly and efficiently as possible.

With only 30 years' supply of oil left in the world we must start thinking about targeting our various energy types for specific jobs. For instance, if we wish to continue world trade we should conserve oil for shipping, not use it in private cars carrying single passengers. Quickly using up our coal reserves will disinherit our heirs in another way; that is, if we do not begin to examine energy savings and alternative renewable energy technologies our future industry will be less efficient and we will be buying our renewable technology from elsewhere. My party

would rather our grandchildren be research scientists and energy auditors than hole diggers, otherwise we will have done them a grave disservice. Ian Lowe, from the science policy research centre at Griffith University, has stated that the potential for energy conservation in Australia is pretty bleak because the authorities are doing their damndest to sell as much fuel as possible. Does that sound familiar? He says that we have a real problem, and that not only are there no financial incentives, but also we have a string of organisational and structural barriers which tend to discourage conservation.

As time goes by more and more uses are found for the diverse flora of our country. For instance, a Kimberley seed company is planting acacias through North Africa, principally to hold back encroaching desert. Also, the seed of the acacia is becoming a major supplement for the diet of protein impoverished North Africans. This innovative company is now planning to plant large areas of the Sahara Desert with Australian trees. Its seed growing program is providing income for Western Australian farmers. To continue to destroy our biodiversity is more than a mistake. In my mind, it is more in the nature of a crime against future generations.

The next pillar of Green philosophy is a sustainable ecology. David Attenborough has stated that the main value of ecosystems is that we all live in them. He says that the jargon use of the word ecosystem tempts one to think that it is what goes on in a national park or somewhere around the corner, but actually we all live in ecosystems. We live in networks of relationships between animals and plants, big and small, of which we are a central part. However, he says that we cannot live without plants, because without plants we cannot feed. The whole system is so interlocked that if people start messing about with one part of it, they inevitably affect other parts of it, and in fact themselves and other human beings.

Many politicians of various political faiths believe that market forces if left untrammelled by regulation will deliver to us the best of all possible worlds. In a similar way to Voltaire we reject this notion as being simplistic, illogical and dangerous. This popular concept deals with just one small facet of the many complex human needs. While we recognise the obvious need and desirability to maintain a comfortable level of material wellbeing, we also recognise that humankind has a much wider and richer potential built into its psyche. There is more to our lives than the mindless pursuit of material goods and the accumulation of obscene levels of wealth, usually in order to gain power over our fellows. We are determined that the cultural, spiritual, creative and communal aspects of our human nature should not be ignored in the mindless pursuit of materials. Greed is antisocial and should be recognised as such.

In the 1980s corporate cowboys in the spirit of Ozymandias competed to build the highest concrete edifice in their own honour. Those phallic symbols of personal power were, as it turned out, paid for by the taxpayers and unpaid creditors. Unfortunately, the media, which now pillories these wrongdoers, at that time glorified their behaviour. They were treated as demigods with reverence and awe, with regular reports of their account balances, new houses, food and alcohol preferences - always Dom Perignon - and even their affairs were publicised. It is my contention that a society built on the values of greed, divisiveness, exploitation and competition is bound to fail in a very ugly way. Our chance of advancing our society lies with a different set of values. These include cooperation, caring, generosity, community and the love and awareness of ourselves and of others. Having grown up in the country I feel a deep attachment to the place where I live. This spiritual connection causes me a level of pain when I see mindless environmental destruction. For this reason I am obliged to say that I am ashamed that the Premier of this State has seen fit to take up the cudgels for some unnamed big foreign investors in order to suppress the spiritual aspirations of Aboriginal Australians. How can we seriously expect our children to respect the adage that there are some things that cannot be bought? How can this Government be so insensitive to an important section of this community? Why are big unnamed foreign investors supported and listened to by the Premier when the people he represents are unable to speak to him to express their views? Who does he represent?

Whenever I think of or speak about the great disasters facing our ecological world I am always puzzled why our leaders, especially those in this State, do not seem to be taking in the enormity of the problem. One hypothesis I have heard for this and which is promoted by Al Gore, the Vice President of the United States of America, is that because of the enormity and the resultant pain of the problems, people are refusing to face the truth. Like an alcoholic who claims he does not have a drink problem, we are refusing to acknowledge reality. Another view is put succinctly once again by The State of the World 1991 in an article headed "Two Views of the World". It reads -

Anyone who regularly reads the financial papers or business weeklies would conclude that the world is in reasonably good shape and that long-term economic trends are promising. Obviously there are still problems - the U.S. budget deficit, Third World debt, and the unsettling effect of rising oil prices - but

to an economist, things appear manageable. Even those predicting a severe global recession in 1991 are bullish about the longer term economic prospects for the nineties.

Yet on the environmental front, the situation could hardly be worse. Anyone who regularly reads scientific journals has to be concerned with the earth's changing physical condition. Every major indicator shows a deterioration in natural systems: forests are shrinking, deserts are expanding, croplands are losing topsoil, the stratospheric ozone layer continues to thin, greenhouse gases are accumulating, the number of plant and animal species is diminishing, air pollution has reached health-threatening levels in hundreds of cities, and damage from acid rain can be seen on every continent.

These contrasting views of the state of the world have their roots in economics and ecology - two disciplines with intellectual framework so different that their practitioners often have difficulty talking to each other. Economists interpret and analyze trends in terms of savings, investment, and growth. They are guided largely by economic theory and indicators, seeing the future more or less as an extrapolation of the recent past. From their vantage point, there is little reason to worry about natural constraints on human economic activity; rare is the economic text that mentions the carrying capacity principle that is so fundamental to ecology. Advancing technology, economists believe, can push back any limits. Their view prevails in the worlds of industry and finance, and in national governments and international development agencies.

In contrast, ecologists study the relationship of living things with each other and their environments. They see growth in terms of S-shaped curves, a concept commonly illustrated in high school biology classes by introducing a few algae into a petri dish. Carefully cultured at optimum temperature and with unlimited supplies of food, the algae multiply slowly at first, and then more rapidly, until growth eventually slows and then stops, usually because of waste accumulation.

The article goes on to say that we need a new measure of prosperity accounting instead of the gross national product or gross domestic product measures currently used. We need to have a system which accounts for the cost of ecological damage, the decline in health and the loss of resources. My party agrees with this idea and has included it in its policies.

At a local level my party is very concerned by the after election turnaround by the Government in a number of key environmental areas. Conservationists everywhere are bracing themselves for the next attack on environmental standards in this State. First, a word of praise: Unlike the Labor Party it seems the Government - most unusual for a Government - will take the advice of a Government committee. In this instance it will accept the advice of the Carnegie report with which my party and the Greens are in broad agreement. It is a shame that party political needs have taken priority over the needs of the State in this issue. I hope the Minister for Energy is able to cope with the political opportunism he will have to face. However, my party is disappointed that there is no meaningful plan to incorporate energy saving - demand side management as it is called - into our future energy system. Energy saving will not only bring cheaper production, but also will create four times as many jobs as energy production. I urge the Government to look at this more carefully.

Some of the other issues I will be pursuing on an ecological front will be the reverse of the Government's position on the Port Kennedy development which, before the election, was a shonkie WA Inc deal. Now it has become an important housing area for young home buyers - that is, if their Keystart home loans will pay the \$200 000 for a luxury marina golf course complex lot. Suddenly the fact that this is the last undamaged remnant of bushland between Yanchep and Mandurah has lost its importance to the Government. WA Inc is alive and well - only the parties have changed to protect the developers.

My party does not feel very safe about the Creery wetlands, the national parks or the logging targets in our State forests. With the environment, as with jobs, the Government has promised one thing and is delivering another. If the Government were a used car, people would send it back. If the Government really does have new plans for jobs I urge it to tell us where they are coming from. If the Government does care about the environment I ask it to share its good news with us. We certainly need it!

Finally, I will tell members some of my personal aims in this place. The young people of this State have been alienated. Our greatest resource is being poisoned. I noticed that the coalition's social initiatives were largely about the gaoling of children, putting up fares on public transport and scrubbing out graffiti. It is not what I would call a social program. What annoys me about the Government and the Sunday Times is that they are waging a campaign against kids who are hitting out at the system. No mention has been made of the majority of

young people, many of whom have worked hard for tertiary qualifications and have been discarded by the Government and ignored by the media. I have interviewed young Honours graduates who are seeking jobs and they have told that me their interview, despite many applications, has been the first in many years. This Government, like previous Governments, is dealing with effects, not causes. Nobody seriously believes that mining will employ these often highly trained young people. We cannot go on being diggers; we must start using our intellectual talent which has been locked away in these kids. I urge the Government to lift its game.

Another personal interest of mine is urban planning and regional development. Our city is becoming less communal. Because of poor planning people are becoming more isolated. The city is becoming polluted, and even though we know better, we continue to build highways and neglect public transport. Worst of all, we are not meeting with or listening to the needs of our citizens. At this time, we have many solutions and technologies to deal with the problems of our developing world. Only the political will to make necessary change holds us back. I urge members of this House to have the courage to listen with an open mind to ideas that are not their own, openly express their concerns, accept valid criticism, discard outmoded thinking, put aside prejudice and work together to improve our State.

I conclude by leaving with members the thoughts of Professor Ian Lowe, which address the responsibility which each individual member of this House and of the community has to this State. He states -

What the individual can do is think about how they contribute to the political process of changing the structures. We can only use public transport if there's economic, accessible, reliable, clean, safe public transport. We can only cycle to and from work if there are cycleways so we don't have to risk being mown down by a truck. Politicians respond to what they think people will let them get away with. I believe we all have a responsibility to play a part in that political process of maintaining the pressure for change, so that the structures are there to enable us all to live responsibly.

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

[Applause.]