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THE OPPOSITION-SIX MONTHS LATER

A revealing series of articles on how the Government's opponents stand now

STARTS TOMORROW IN THE AUSTRALIAN

Whitlam silent on A.L.P. defeat in Victorian poll

Middle-class appeal helps Hamer's vote

By ALAN RAMSEY

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mr Whitlam, retreated into embarrassed silence yesterday in the face of the Labor Party's defeat in the Victorian State elections.

The out-going Liberal Government under Mr Hamer, 56, has been returned with a surprisingly increased majority. With four of the 73 seats still doubtful the Liberals have won 42 — a gain of two. They could add another two. Labor increased its vote by about 1 per cent but still lost at least three seats.

HAMER'S VICTORY — PAGE 2;
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It was Labor's seventh straight defeat in Victoria in 18 years, and calls into question the political future of its leader, Mr Clyde Holding.

Mr Whitlam publicly ignored the result, even though he strongly intervened in the last week of the campaign. A member of his staff acting as a spokesman yesterday said Mr Whitlam had no comment to make.

Both the Federal Liberal leader, Mr Snedden, and the Country Party leader, Mr Anthony, were elated. They said the result was a clear rebuff to Mr Whitlam and his Government.

Mr Snedden was prompted to say in a TV interview last night that he now expected to be "Prime Minister soon."

But his interpretation of the result as being directly influenced by Federal issues was not shared by one of his Federal colleagues, Mr Andrew Peacock, the former Minister for External Territories.

Mr Peacock said on TV in Melbourne yesterday: "This is Mr Hamer's victory. It must be seen as that.

"It is a fillip to those of us who believe the Liberal Party should adopt moderate and progressive policies as Mr Hamer has successfully done.

"This is the course of the Liberal Party in the Federal sphere. We can't go back to the hard issues of the past."

CONFLICT

Mr Peacock is one of the small "l" Liberals of the Federal Liberal Party and a close friend of Mr Hamer.

His remarks reflect the conflict within the Federal Liberal Party between the conservative right and its more moderate, liberal minority.

The small "l" Liberal element is certain to use Saturday's result as a lever to influence Mr Snedden to pursue less conservative policies, even at the risk of offending the party's right-wing members.

The clear reasons behind Mr Hamer's sweeping win were the middle-class appeal of his policies and image and the electoral gerrymander that operates in Victoria.

Even though defeated, Labor increased its vote but lost seats.

It gained more votes — about 43 per cent of the total — than the Liberal Party (42 per cent) but so far has won only 17 seats to the Liberals' 42.

It out-polled the Liberal Party, but gained only two-fifths the number of seats won by Mr Hamer and his party followers.

Mr Hamer's complete rout of the Labor Party in the contest for the young, middle-class vote, particularly in the Melbourne metropolitan area, was the other dominating factor.

Mr Hamer won handsomely in the new, expanding suburbs. He captured the vote of the young married commuter.

It was a personal triumph for the Premier, who took over from Sir Henry Bolte less than a year ago and geared his policies to social and quality-of-life issues.

In this regard, the Victorian election has no bearing on Federal politics.

Mr Whitlam's embarrassment at Saturday's result is of his own making.

By directly appealing to Victorians to use the election as a vote of no confidence in the Liberals in Canberra — particularly the Senate — he left himself open to public ridicule.

I'll be PM soon, says Snedden

THE FEDERAL Opposition Leader, Mr Snedden, said yesterday he could see himself as Prime Minister soon.

"Whether it will be next year depends on Mr Whitlam," he said when commenting on the Victorian election result.

Both Mr Snedden and the leader of the Country Party, Mr Anthony, claimed Labor's defeat was in part due to public dissatisfaction with the Federal Government and the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam.

"The biggest influence on the Victorian State election was the Labor Government's performance in Canberra," Mr Snedden said.

"The Liberal Party is resurgent. This is a result which extends far beyond Victoria.

"The judgment of Victoria is no different from that of any other State."

Later on television Mr Snedden said Mr Whitlam would be a lot more hesitant about a double dissolution.

"I don't think there will be too much fed out to the Press about double dissolution now," he said.

DISSATISFACTION

The Country Party leader, Mr Anthony, said the strong swing to the Liberal Party had to be seen, as least in part, as an "expression of disenchantment with Mr Whitlam and his Government."

"The people of Victoria have passed their own judgment on that situation — as Mr Whitlam invited them to do," Mr Anthony said.

Last week, Mr Whitlam said he would regard the vote in the Victorian election as a judgment on whether the Senate Opposition's action had the backing of the electorate.

Yesterday he had no comment to make on the election.

The only Federal Minister to comment was the Treasurer, Mr Crean.

"It's a judgment of the opinions of Victoria and the only consolation I take out of it is that the Labor Party got more votes in aggregate than the Liberal Party," Mr Crean said.

He said the issues in State politics were different from those in Federal politics and the vote was not one against the Federal Government.

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LATE NEWS

A DEJECTED Mr Holding at his home yesterday with his "down-in-the-mouth" dog, Cascius.

Beer for the winner, Scotch for the loser

By MICHEL LAWRENCE

CLYDE Holding was down in the mouth, his eyes red and tired. He blew his nose, and his eyes looked redder. He was beaten.

Mr Holding was sipping a scotch and milk as he explained, at his home in Richmond, why he failed to pin the State Government back to a minority Government.

He tried to rationalise a defeat no one thought possible. His dog sat motionless, soaking up the heat from the log fire.

At the Premier's house in Canterbury, Mr Hamer was holding a beer in one hand while he was congratulated by the PMG man bearing congratulatory telegrams.

"Would you like a drink?" Mr Hamer said.

"No. I haven't eaten yet," said the PMG man.

One of Mr Hamer's neighbors, Mr Andrew Peacock, the former Minister for External Territories, popped in to congratulate the Premier.

Then came the Premier's brother David, the Federal Liberal member for Isaacs, who scraped home in December.

The Hamer household was happy. The results exceeded the Premier's greatest expectations.

"I'm still amazed," he said. "I though our task was to regain the losses at the Federal election. But to go further than that was beyond our greatest expectations."

Although surprised at the size of the win, Mr Hamer said he had inklings of it when he was campaigning.

'GERRYMANDER'

"Wherever I went, people said they were concerned about the Federal Government, and what it was doing in Canberra," he said.

Mr Hamer and Mr Peacock didn't think Mr Whitlam would be in a hurry to make new threats about calling a double dissolution.

Mr Holding, at the other end of town, agreed with those thoughts.

But he said it was the preference system and the gerrymander which was really at fault.

"Our percentage went up 1 per cent and we may lose four seats," he said.

"With 1 per cent more than the Liberals, we have fewer than half the members."

No, he wouldn't blame the Federal Government.

"I am not attempting to blame anybody else for the result," he said.

"Abortion may have had some affect in some seats, but the DLP vote was down — they got what they deserved."

Did he think he would be challenged for party leadership

"We don't work like the other parties," Mr Holding said. "It is traditional for the leader to get three goes. Calwell had three."

But standing around Mr Holding, his campaign workers were still shaking their heads in disbelief. "Where did we go wrong?" they said.

Envoy's launch stolen

POLICE are investigating the theft of a launch owned by the French Ambassador, Mr Gabriel van Laethem.

The launch was taken from its moorings at Batemans Bay on the NSW south coast.

It was found drifting 20 miles out to sea by a Canberra fisherman, Mr Dennis Moore, on Saturday. Its fuel tanks were empty and the gears were engaged.

Mr Moore towed the $3000 launch back to Batemans Bay.

The boat is up for sale and is under the care of Mr Pat Love, of Batemans Bay.

He telephoned Mr van Laethem to tell him of the theft and was told: "Well, these things happen. They bombed our place in Melbourne as well."

Mr Love said the theft could have been the work of Canberra radicals who knew Mr van Laethem kept the boat at Batemans Bay.

In Paris on Saturday a sign was displayed in one of the city post offices telling Frenchmen they could not send letters or parcels to Australia.

The hand-written sign, pasted by the letter boxes, said: "All mail for Australia is suspended until further notice." It gave no explanation for the suspension.

Postal workers in Australia are boycotting mail from France in protest at France's nuclear tests.

Cairns to visit North Korea

From GREGORY CLARK: PEKING, SUNDAY

AUSTRALIA'S Overseas Trade Minister, Dr Cairns, has accepted an invitation to visit North Korea.

He has told the North Koreans he supports their request to send a trade mission to Australia — a request recently rejected by the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam.

Dr Cairns told reporters today that he had met the heads of both the North Korean and the Viet Cong missions during his Peking stay.

He said the Chinese Trade Minister, Mr Pai, asked him to meet the North Koreans.

The meeting with the Viet Cong representatives was arranged at their suggestion.

Dr Cairns told the North Koreans he hoped they could gain diplomatic representation in Australia.

Their request to send a trade mission headed by a minister was made during diplomatic contacts in Jakarta and he found it "unacceptable" that the Foreign Affairs Department in Canberra rejected a mission at this level.

He planned to visit North Korea in about September when he is due in Japan for Gatt talks.

He also hopes to visit North Vietnam on his way to Japan.

CHINA CONTRACTS

Dr Cairns said he told the Viet Cong representatives in Peking he supported their overall position.

Dr Cairns said the Viet Cong should be allowed to open an information office in Australia.

In Canberra yesterday it was announced that the Chinese Government had asked representatives from both the Australian Wool Corporation and the Australian Wheat Board to visit China for negotiations on long-term trading contracts.

The announcement was made by the acting Minister for Overseas Trade, Dr Patterson.

He was commenting on the Australian trade mission's communique on the visit to China.

The communique, released in Canberra, said Australia and China would sign a trade agreement granting each other most-favored-nation treatment.

The agreement would also specify the formation of a joint trade committee with representatives from both countries.

Nixon could help on Watergate — prosecutor

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY

MR ARCHIBALD Cox, the newly-appointed special prosecutor for the Watergate affair, said yesterday that an interview with President Nixon would be relevant and helpful in his investigations.

Mr Cox, who was nominated by the Attorney-General-designate, Mr Elliot Richardson, and accepted the post on Friday, said he had not decided whether he would seek an interview with the President.

President Nixon's married daughter, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, said on a television interview at the weekend her father would not resign because of the Watergate scandal.

Julie, who like other members of the family has not watched the Watergate hearings on television, said her father had "too many projects to accomplish" to resign.

WHITE HOUSE ORDERED TESTS — PAGE 6

Hit-run victim left 12 children

A MAN killed in a hit-and-run accident has left 12 children, the youngest of whom is aged four.

Mr Francis McCabe, 49, of the Sydney suburb of North Ryde, was struck by a car on Friday night in Victoria Road, Rozelle.

Witnesses said McCabe was carried on the bonnet for almost 80 yards as the car swerved into the middle of the road to avoid a parked vehicle.

McCabe's body fell in the gutter outside Balmain Leagues Club.

Police are searching for a red Datsun 1600 with a broken windscreen, a damaged offside tail light and a sliding sun roof.

Mrs McCabe said yesterday her husband had a part-time job in the area as a cleaner and probably went to collect his pay.

She said seven of the 12 children lived at home, but most of them were staying temporarily with other members of the family or with friends.

20 killed on roads

ELEVEN people have been killed on New South Wales roads this weekend and nine in Victoria.

The worst accident was near Tumbarumba, about 180 miles south-west of Sydney, where five people were killed and seven seriously injured in a head-on collision.

Kosygin No. 1

MOSCOW: President Podgorny left today by air for Afghanistan. The Premier, Mr Kosygin, is in charge of the country as Mr Brezhnev is in West Germany.

Dunstan splits with PM on sea law

THE LABOR Premier of South Australia, Mr Dunstan, yesterday disagreed with the Prime Minister Mr Whitlam, on the States' appeal to the Privy Council.

He rejected Mr Whitlam's accusation that the appeal over the Federal offshore legislation breached Labor policy.

Mr Dunstan said his action did not bring him into conflict with the Labor Party policy

Mr Whitlam at his Press conference last week accused the Labor premiers of South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania of breaching Labor policy in their approach with the non-Labor premiers to the Privy Council.

The Prime Minister said the premiers, who were at the party's 1971 Federal conference — which decided the Commonwealth should legislate for the regulation and exploitation of offshore resources — knew they were defying party policy.

Mr Dunstan said on the television programme Federal File, there was a disagreement between the Prime Minister and himself on the sensible way of proceeding, but there was no conflict with Labor Party policy.

ONLY COURT

Mr Dunstan said the Privy Council was the only court in the world which had the ability to give a ruling on the administration and control of off-shore areas.

"The High Court has many times ruled that it hasn't got the ability to give an advisory opinion of this kind," he said.

"In fact if the present proposals of the Federal Government were passed we would have a similar situation to that which has existed in the United States where there has been litigation and uncertainty about the position of off-shore areas for 23 years."

Mr Dunstan revealed that when the Federal Labor Government was elected last year he approached the ministers concerned to begin talks on settling the off-shore problem.

"We agree that the Commonwealth should have the overriding say offshore in matters of national importance such as conservation, the interests of foreign companies and shipping," Mr Dunstan said.

He said the aim of the proposed talks was to find administrative means of giving effect to this policy.

TV GUIDE — PAGE 12

IF IT COSTS MORE TO AIR FREIGHT EXPORTS HOW CAN IT WORK OUT CHEAPER?

Kilo for kilo, air freighting exports is more expensive than sea freight. End of argument? It's only the beginning. The expense of air freight is in the freight cost itself. With sea freight the majority of cost is in packing, insurance, capital investment, warehousing and obsolescence. Additional costs with air freight are low so exporting is often cheaper. Greater cost effectiveness is achieved when time factors are considered; air freight is generally ten times quicker.

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FORECAST

SYDNEY	MELBOURNE	CANBERRA	ADELAIDE	BRISBANE	HOBART	PERTH	DARWIN
Mostly dry	Fine	Morning fog, fine	Fine	Cloudy, mainly fine	Early drizzle, clearing	Showers	Fine
Max. 19 deg.	Max. 15 deg.	Max. 14 deg.	Max. 21 deg.	Max. 23 deg.	Max. 13 deg.	Max. 20 deg.	Max. 33 deg.