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ELECTION RESULTS

Comment by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

My warmest congratulations go to Sir Henry Bolte on leading his Liberal Government back for its sixth term of office. Victoria can be sure of a continuation of stable, responsible and progressive Government with Sir Henry and his Liberal team returned to the Treasury Benches.

I am sorry that Mr. Steele Hall was unsuccessful in South Australia. He was a vigorous champion for his State, and had achieved much in his two years of office. There was little variation in voting trends compared with the last state election in South Australia, but electoral redistribution was a key factor in Labor's success.

The huge drop in ALP support was the feature of the by-election in the A. C. T. The Labor Party's first preference vote was down by a staggering 31 percent - from 67.72 percent in the General Election seven months ago to 36.06 percent on the votes counted so far. To some extent, this is a tribute to the personal popularity and standing of the previous Labor member, the late Mr. Jim Fraser. But such a massive defection must be cause for concern for the Labor Party.

Despite the field of seven candidates, the Liberal candidate, Mr. Hermes, has improved marginally the vote for his Party, compared with the General Election last year. However, it is disappointing that more of the former Labor vote did not come to us.

For the first time since Jim Fraser entered the Parliament in 1951, the election in the A. C. T. will be decided on preferences, and so it will be some days before the result is known.

CANBERRA
31 May 1970