



Australian Government



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CURTIN and CHIFLEY Led the Way [Newspaper Cuttings]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Subject CURTIN AND CHIFLEY LED THE WAY

The Age - 2/8/1966

Michael. Bowen Correspondent

The Prime Minister of Australia in March, 1942, John Curtin, marked the beginning of a major change in Australia's foreign policy when he broadcast that Australia (while acutely conscious of her link with Britain through blood and the Crown) must look to America for counsel and advice — and military aid and co-operation. Mr. Curtin, a pronounced pacifist and anti-conscriptionist in World War I, had to face the brutal facts of geo-politics as Prime Minister in World War II — and for the first time in Australia's history.

Successive Australian Prime

Ministers, particularly Sir Robert Menzies and Mr. Holt, have merely had to carry on that understanding and encourage that trend. Surely this is not being pro-American; it is being pro-Australian.

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LABOR SPEAKS

• This weekly feature is written by a spokesman for the Australian Labor Party and is published as a matter of public interest. The Herald's views are expressed in its leading articles.

Curtin and Chifley led the way

This week's Budget session in Canberra showed almost as much variety and action as a three-ring circus.

Inside Parliament House, our smug, self-satisfied but peevish Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, answered Labor's criticism of his Government's newest Budget.

Outside the chamber there were rumblings among Liberal backbenchers about the Government's extravagant proposal to move Parliament House to the bank of one of those expensive new lakes.

And then, by way of light relief, one of Sir Robert's Ministers suggested that Australia's lack of development is all Labor's fault.

The Minister for Supply, Mr Fairhall, made this surprising statement that "Labor had discouraged Australians from putting their money into developing their own country" (The Sun, August 29).

Labor acted

Mr Fairhall may not have heard about — or he may have forgotten — the record of the Curtin and Chifley Labor Governments in Australia's development.

Older Australians will recall John Curtin as the Labor leader whose government steered Australia through the trials and tribulations of the Second World War.

They will recall, too, how the Australian people, sickened by the bungling, wrangling and mismanagement of the Menzies Government, welcomed the positive planning of the Curtin Labor Government that held office for only a few months when the first Japanese bombs fell on Australian soil.

Labor was able then to develop a defence program that was quite beyond the capacity of the first muddling Menzies Government.

And when the Chifley Government followed we saw the pattern of Australia's post-war development unfold.

Big things

The Labor Minister for Immigration, Mr Calwell, was the architect of the biggest migration program in Australia's history.

This was taken up, and continued, by later Liberal Ministers, who never tire of telling of its success, but seldom mention that it was launched by Labor.

At the same time the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction handled the smooth return of more than a million service people from wartime to peacetime pursuits — another enterprise without precedent in Australian history.

In the blaze of ballyhoo of recent years, you could have been pardoned for thinking that the Snowy Mountains scheme was the brain-child of none other than Sir Robert Menzies himself.

The truth is, of course, that this magnificent example of national development was also planned

and set on its way by the Chifley Labor Government.

There will be ample evidence of Labor's record of national development long after the name Fairhall has been forgotten.