

WILSON'S WEEKEND

By David Wilson



Liberal storm over poll

WATCH for a nice old blue in the Liberal Party when leader Jeff Kennett returns from leave.

The base of the blue is in the long-running animosity between the Parliamentary party and the organisation.

A hint of what is to come was given during the run-up to the Nunawading Province by-election.

About three weeks out from the poll, at one of the Liberal MPs' weekly meetings, tempers ran high about the way the campaign was being conducted.

The administration, as run by state Director Mr John Ridley, was criticised for its handling of the campaign and it was agreed that something should be done after the poll was over.

Now even though the Liberals have well and truly won the poll the 'something' is said to be approaching.

It would be the wise boys at Spring Street who spoke to their friendly Liberal MP after the Parliamentary party meeting scheduled for Tuesday week.

'SOMETHING' is also set to be done about Mr George Crawford and some of his hard-line Socialist-Left colleagues within the ALP parliamentary socialist-left caucus.

There are strong moves by moderate Socialist-Left members to disassociate themselves from the hard Left and caucus by themselves.

There are about 25 members of the Socialist-Left in the parliamentary ALP with about five of them hardliners.

The hardliners earned the ire of their moderate colleagues after they had spoken against the anti-BLF legislation brought down by Premier John Cain.

They were censured at a full meeting of the parliamentary party shortly afterwards and last week they were given a blast in the parliamentary S-L caucus.

Tempers were said to have been well and truly lost by some of the hardliners, particularly when George's trip to China and North Korea was brought up.

It may be remembered that only hours before Premier John Cain was informed that a special conference of the party was to be held to implement parliamentary policy and the BLF legislation, George and his old mate Bill Hartley jumped on a plane and took off for parts east.

The S-L meeting is said to have got so hot that it almost came to an all out blue.

When George flies back next month he is very likely to be confronted, in his role as Convenor of the Socialist-Left faction, by the parliamentary S-L moderates telling him that both he and the hardliners should hold their own meetings and not attend the S-L caucus.

The move, if it occurs, would mean that Mr Crawford would not be attending factional caucus meetings with the six socialist-left ministers in the Government.

A somewhat strange position for one of the S-L elders.

THE roles and tumblings of the S-L in the parliamentary party are obviously a reflection of the massive brawl that is occurring throughout the faction.

That brawling could easily bring about a radical change to the factional base of the Victorian ALP.

Many S-L members see the Hartley-Crawford section of the faction breaking away from the moderates and forming their own faction.

They claim that this could come about later this year and envisage a 'broad-left' faction being set up, with ALP state president Gerry Hand as its unofficial leader.

The 'broad-left' faction would attract some leftish-leaning members of the pro-Bob Hawke Labor Unity faction and would have strong support from large unions like Mr John Halfpenny's powerful metal-workers union.

NO kidding! They want to win that Grand Final at Carlton — and word has it that the match committee chairman Wes Lofts has been offered a super-duper holiday if he comes home with the goods.



Jeff Kennett and Rosemary Varty after last week's election victory... he faces a party brawl when he returns.

Apparently the offer, which is said to have been made by Liberal Party President Mr John Elliot, is that if Wesley brings the Blues home he is off for a three-week, all expenses paid holiday to Europe. Capitals being mentioned include London and Paris.