

THE AUSTRALIAN 8/7/1987

Cold Paddo times, and no Alan Jones

By BERWYN LEWIS

IT'S a chill wind that blows no...

True to the gothic note established at their launch at Sydney's State Theatre last month, the Liberals chose Paddington Town Hall for a meeting of John Hewson, Liberal candidate for Wentworth, and radio man Alan Jones.

(Only Alan didn't turn up.)

Everyone looks more or less cold, the ones in real furs less so than the ones in fakes, and there's a lot of coughing.

John takes the mike. Applause. "My medical advice was against my coming out tonight." (He's right! It is cold). His voice is gruff, if not breaking, but he didn't want to embark on his career (will he be the treasurer in a Howard government?) with a broken promise, and he'd promised he'd come out tonight. (Where's Alan?)

John plays for time with a joke:

Ronald Reagan, Margaret

Thatcher and Bob Hawke are at the Pearly Gates. God allows them each one question.

Ronald: I would have liked to have fixed the American economy. How much longer would it have taken to fix it? God: Two years. Ronald bursts into tears.

Margaret: I would have liked to have fixed the English economy, how much longer would it have taken to fix it? God: Eight and a half years. Margaret bursts into tears.

Tears

Bob: I would have liked to fix the Australian economy, how much longer would it have taken to fix it? God bursts into tears.

John knows. He's 40 years old and comes from a working-class background. He studied economics, he worked for the Reserve Bank, the International Monetary Fund and as a consultant to business and government.

He is professor of economics at the University of NSW. He has served as economic adviser/chief-of-staff to two federal treasurers, and is an executive director of the Macquarie Bank and owner of a Sydney restaurant.

He understands the needs of business, large and small. He understands the media. He is offering himself as your Member in the belief that he can contribute to a higher degree of professionalism in government policy-making. On July 11 he's looking forward to the great opportunity to serve the people of Wentworth and Australia.

Now for the real serve...

"How can you be complacent about inflation when it's standing at 6½ per cent?"

"How can you be complacent about unemployment when it's standing at 8 per cent?"

"Why do we spend money on social security? Because we believe there are people who

should be treated better. (Uh, huh.)

"How many more are there? There are now about one and three quarter million people who are poor. It's costing you about \$15,000 per needy person. (That's really staggering.)

"It's staggering think of all the taxes you've seen lately." (It's fantastic.)

"It's fantastic the only way to reduce taxes is to cut Government expenditure. Tax burdens sap incentive. No wonder there's a tax-avoidance industry." (Where is Alan?)

You have to hand it to John. His lips are growing tired or cold, but he keeps it up.

"Compare Hawke's fiscal policy... unless we start to immediately address these problems we're going to have another crisis with the dollar. Stand back. Take a long realistic look at where we'll all be in the next 10 to 15 years."