

AY OCTOBER 14 1967



Behind the news

with JAMES HALL

ONE FRIENDLY hour at the White House and the taciturn External Affairs Minister was sounding like a give-'em-hell Republican general, opposing any military "striptease act" in Vietnam as a means of charming Hanoi into talks: that way would only end up with us naked. At home, at a floorshow called Hullo America, Mr Holt cited LBJ while defining leadership as willingness to go ahead despite criticism which, of course, in war goes for the enemy too.

Anyway, the bombs went on falling and the Army Minister blasted those who created "moral doubt" about Australia's role. Not even he can win them all. Perhaps there was some consolation in knowing that 38 per cent of the first national servicemen opted to stay on. Furthermore, there was equivocal support from the Archbishop of Sydney who didn't want anyone to quit nor the war to widen.

PROTESTANT and Catholic theologians themselves came to the table—with not much hope, according to the archbishop — to attempt a settlement of their own long-running conflict. Elsewhere the Presbyterian moderator in Victoria promised that changing world attitudes would force the Church to change too. The Archbishop of York, for one, wanted urgent changes in Australia's white superiority ideas—and just when the Government announced a 100 per cent increase in Asian migration, up to 345.

ONE ASIAN who was "more welcome than rain" was the tough Japanese Prime Minister, here looking for trade and tax reductions and to flex a few untried political muscles. At the same time the London Economist warned us not to get hooked on Japan's tearaway economy; the Commonwealth Banking Corporation warned us against going soft under too much overseas investment and a team of consultants advised us to learn about planning from another country: would you believe Iran?

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THE SAKE was still going down as the Prime Minister seemed to signal the start of the Senate election campaign by agreeing to a Liberal leaders' summit 24 hours after the A.L.P. called one on the same problem — the Commonwealth-State financial stew. For the moment, the money on many minds was that going in increased pensions to former MPs. Victorian politicians also looked forward to a Christmas box. The unions, meanwhile, told the High Court they were losing money under the new basic wage system. With a smile on their faces, waterside workers finally signed a new deal which is supposed to bring peace and prosperity on the wharves.

IT BECAME clear during the week why the U.S. troops feel so at home here: a bomb was posted to a Brisbane man; a university newspaper published the formula for LSD (and the NSW Government almost flipped); most drug addicts over 25 were said to be "bored housewives"; kindergarten children were developing ulcers because parents were "pushing them to succeed"; everyone was risking heart attack through eating fatty foods — or poisoning through living in Sydney where smog was approaching Los Angeles' suicidal level. Mrs Holt, however, still thought Sydney the "Cleopatra of Australia." Such bizarre riches! — the customs seized heroin, opium and gold bullion worth \$70,000.

FOR THOSE who were living it up more and enjoying it less, a Sydney woman had the solution — 40 cups of tea a day. "It puts me right," she said. Or is she some kind of addict, too?