

BITTER PRE-SELECTION BATTLES

The Voice from the Pavement - Peter Adamis 2010



The Senate reselection conducted by the Liberal Party last weekend brought back bitter memories of the past. The battle for first second and third spots on the senate ticket was not fought out in the main arena, but on the battle fields in Federal electorates. It was a great pity to find the three main contenders jostling for position at a time when Labor is set to lose the next Federal election.

Depending on which Senator one favoured, much was happening behind the scenes so to speak, during the lead up to the Senate pre-selection, innuendoes, past battles, character assassination and even downright falsehoods were being perpetuated and fought amongst the staffers, supporters and those that dragged the cat in.

Some even tried to resurrect the Kennet and Kroger faction battles of the past and intimated that the battle of the factions was alive and well. Nothing could be further from the truth, times have changed, new blood has come into the Liberal party buoyed by the success of the Liberals who could not believe that they had won the battle. There were delegates who admired all three Senators and over the years have supported each one of the m in kind.

This support however was called into question and allegiances were somewhat frayed at times when the senators realized that delegates could not be taken for granted. The people had grown and one could safely say that with the internet, people are better informed and no longer rely on being advised by others who are perceived to be close to the power brokers.

Senator Scott Ryan was crafty enough to have realized this early on in the piece when he was a volunteer at Liberal party Central and as such capitalized on keeping in touch with many of Liberal party members. On reflection it would appear that Senator Scott Ryan had waged a campaign by stealth and cunning to take the second spot.

Others who wanted to demonstrate their allegiance and loyalty went beyond what one would term the rules of war in a political sense and used tactics that were uncharacteristic of them and brought political campaigning to a new low. Senators distanced themselves from the rot and the snide remarks and ensured that they kept the campaign based on the facts and performance e.

Like all political campaigns, Senate pre-selections are no different as they have to woo the voters and in this case the Liberal delegates to cast their vote their way. Many seasoned veterans realized prior to the man event that it was a done deal. Tokenism was also at play during the round tables and the main event and no matter how they dressed up the candidates or how well they performed, the number 4 spot was never in doubt.

The pre-select ion process itself was well organized and official protocol was followed according to the constitution, this alone was a pat on the back for the Director and his staff. The over familiarity and the easy going attitude and style of the Director was not lost on the audience and his performance on the day was far cry from the officials and straight laced days of past directors who shall remain nameless.

As for the senators themselves, one had to feel sorry for them in having to be paraded in front of their peers. It takes guts to stand up in front of an audience whom you probably have only just met and even those it may have been as quick chat on the telephone. The questions were diverse and covered subjects ranging from "The koala population, Defence, new technologies, multiculturalism, personal issues and/or performance based questions.

Some questions were fielded well, others were deflected and worse of all some were not answered entirely. Selecting Senators on the day based on their performance at the round tables, main event, lobbying, documentation and personal allegiances may not be the best method of selection but it does provide all delegates the opportunity to have their say and observe each candidate in a neutral environment.

Just like any job interview, the best performer on the day has the edge over their competitors. The question on everyone's lips now is whether the new blood that has come into the Liberal party will follow party's factions, be free thinkers, make their own minds up based on who has-been the best performer, what is best for the Liberal Party or last what is best for Australia. Whatever they may think, the results speak for themselves.



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