

26th January 1988

Whitlam minister backs Pilger claim

By DENNIS ATKINS
A FORMER Federal Minister yesterday claimed that alleged CIA involvement in the sacking of the Whitlam Government had been outlined at a Labor Caucus meeting in 1977.

Mr Clyde Cameron, Labor Minister from 1973 to 1975, said former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam had given a long address to Caucus in May of that year on CIA involvement in Australia.

He said Mr Whitlam alleged the British intelligence service was also involved in the lead-up to the November, 1975 sacking. "decoding Australian Foreign Affairs messages" for the CIA.

Mr Cameron's claim sup-



● Clyde Cameron ... claim supports Pilger

ports a television documentary by Australian-born journalist John Pilger that will be screened in Britain today.

Pilger, quoting a Washington CIA source, claims the US intelligence service and Britain's MI6 collaborated in a bid to discredit the Whitlam Government.

The program also alleges a senior Canberra

bureaucrat was a go-between for British intelligence and former Governor-General Sir John Kerr.

The Federal Government has dismissed the Pilger claims.

A spokesman for the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, said Pilger was "not renowned for getting things right".

"The Prime Minister places no reliance upon anything he (Pilger) says," the spokesman said.

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser said the Pilger claim was an absurdity.

Mr Fraser, who benefited from the 1975 sacking by winning a premature election, said allied countries did not use their intelligence services to meddle in the internal affairs of friends.

Mr Whitlam could not be contacted last night.

Mr Cameron is renowned for his detailed diaries and accurate notes of meetings of Labor forums such as Caucus.

Mr Cameron said Mr Whitlam made his Caucus address prior to a Parliamentary urgency motion on the CIA.

Mr Whitlam told Caucus the then acting head of ASIO had shown him in 1975 a service to service message from the CIA identifying a military attache at the US Embassy, Mr Richard Stallings, as a CIA operative, he said.

Mr Whitlam said Mr Stallings was responsible for Pine Gap which was "no more than a listening post for the CIA", he said.

Mr Cameron said Mr Whitlam told Caucus he had no doubt the CIA had triggered the events of November, 1975 and that the British had decoded Australia Foreign Affairs' cables for the Americans.

Foreign Affairs Department head in 1975, Mr Alan Renouf, said last night it was "entirely plausible" the British intelligence service had played a role in the events of 1975.

Mr Renouf said the CIA could have expressed its disquiet with the Whitlam Government to the British, who could have passed these views on to Sir John Kerr.

A US Embassy spokesman said allegations of CIA activity had not yet been responded to.

British High Commission officials were unavailable for comment.

But a spokesman for the British Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, was quoted as saying it all happened a long time ago.