

GOVERNMENT HOLDS ANOTHER SEAT

To Hammersmith - the question mark London suburb - turn the eyes of the nation. For this forty-eighth by-election may measure the trend in Britain's political thought. A Battle of No Excuses, it's touch and go from the start. The Conservatives in candidate Anthony Fell (former engineer, here with his wife) are testing not only Labour's hold on a seat won from the Tories, but also their grip on the will of Britain's electorate. With the General Election only a year away (perhaps even nearer) the Socialists, with their candidate Tom Williams, are also fighting with an eye to 1950. Backing Williams, Welsh-miner's-son-became-University-tutor, come relays of M.Ps to help the Government uphold its unbroken by-election record in a campaign based on social reform and improved housing.

As both campaigns reach their climax, the Tories play a trump card: a street-by-street tour by Winston Churchill, with candidate Fell at his side. Going into battle with an all-out attack on Socialist inefficiency and overspending, the Tory line is again attacked as a poor substitute for a constructive policy of their own.

Inside the Town Hall, 40 tellers check the record poll - 70 per cent of the electorate. Tension mounts as the last few papers are counted. The returning officer runs over the figures and the candidates (one the vanquished - one the victor) confidently await the voters' choice, before joining the Mayor on the balcony for the official announcement.