

NO TIME BEING WASTED

Airlift speeds food to hungry

ASSAB, Ethiopia (AP) — The four-engined RAF Hercules lumbered to a stop, the back door already open like the jaws of a whale.

In seconds, a team of Ethiopian stevedores, most wearing only shorts and no shoes, sprinted through the swirling dust to the back of the plane. A truck loaded with Canadian wheat pulled up at the gaping mouth of the aircraft's cargo hold.

Five stevedores scrambled atop the truck and began piling the 50-kilogram sacks onto the backs of about 25 fellow workers who ran up a ramp into the belly of the plane.

It was 8:45 a.m., and RAF Her-

cules No. 186 was on its first run of the day. Its job was to bring food from this Red Sea port to the towns of Mekelle and Axum in Tigray province, where people are suffering from drought and famine.

By 9:05 a.m., the transport was roaring down Assab's dirt and gravel airstrip with 11 tonnes of wheat lashed to the floor of its hold. It headed northwest to Mekelle.

"From doors open to doors closed — 14 minutes," Warrant Officer Gerry Hynes, the loadmaster, shouted over the engines' noise. "We spent more time taxiing."

Britain, the United States and

the Soviet Union are among countries taking part in an international airlift to speed food to an estimated six million people on the brink of starvation in Ethiopia.

At Mekelle, the capital of Tigray Province 40 minutes flying time away, the drill was much the same.

Seconds after the plane's wheels were down, the plane's crew unlash the heavy nylon netting that secured the three piles of sacks and had the wheat ready for unloading when the plane rolled to a halt on the desolate airstrip.

While the plane's engines were kept running, to avoid any problem with a restart, Ethiopian teams clambered aboard and began transferring the sacks, in the screaming noise and heat of the engines' backwash, onto a truck

donated by West Germany.

Within 30 minutes, the empty Hercules, trailed by a plume of dust, lifted into the sky and headed back to Assab for another load.

This time the Hercules would ferry around 15 tonnes of grain to the town of Axum, an ancient capital where Menelik I, son of the Queen of Sheba, established the Ethiopian empire.

At Mekelle, a group of journalists who flew with the RAF Hercules rode to a collection of emergency feeding centres atop a truckload of Canadian powdered milk which had just arrived at the airstrip on a vintage Ethiopian DC-3.

Relief officials estimated that 36,000 people have gathered at Mekelle for food, driven from their small farms in the countryside by two years of crop failures.

Reagan got victory, but not power bloc

WASHINGTON (CP) — American voters showed in the national election that they think the world of their president, Ronald Reagan, but don't want him to get too carried away with radically conservative policies in the next four years.

The majority of the 90 million who cast their ballots handed Reagan a personal triumph — 59 per cent of the national popular vote and a clean victory in all but one of 50 states. Only Minnesotans were merciful to Democratic presidential rival Walter Mondale, granting him an edge of popularity in his native state.

The majority chose a leader who exudes optimism and makes them feel good about themselves, their country and the future. But they did not hand Reagan the conservative power bloc he needs in Congress to succeed in his election-night vow of prolonging "the Reagan revolution" into the next century. The voters clipped his wings.

They reduced his Republican party's 55-seat majority in the 100-member Senate by two and held the Republican gain in the 435-member House of Representatives to fewer than 15, leaving the Democrats firmly in charge. And the lion's share of state governorships remain in Democrat hands.

Some conservatives believe there is a long-term political realignment under way in the United States. They see giant swaths of the country and whole generations of the population, especially young people, turning to the right for a long time to come. They argue the days of Democratic political dominance are numbered.

They see kernels of this trend in Tuesday's election results, emphasizing that

while Republicans did not win the majority in the House they did make gains. And they believe the large numbers of young voters who flocked to Reagan are going to stay on the right of the political spectrum in future elections.

But the gains in the House are too slight to guarantee a forging of the coalition of Republicans and conservative-leaning Democrats that would not temper Reagan's policies. Compromises will be necessary.

Extreme conservative propositions — a Supreme Court stacked with ultra-right judges, a blank cheque on weapons development, a dismantled welfare system — are not what the voters asked for. They re-elected a popular, optimistic man and left a barrier in the way of his policies, just in case.

And there is an argument that young voters have short hindsight, choosing the optimistic and happy Reagan over the prospect that he raised of a return to less happy years when his predecessor Democrat Jimmy Carter was in the White House.

Many experienced their political awakening during what Reagan calls "the national malaise" of the late 1970s when the country had a hangover from Vietnam and Watergate, was weighed down by the Iranian hostage crisis and faced an economic recession.

Carter presided then and many people have apparently still not forgiven him or his party. Reagan capitalized on that, convincing many that he is the one who brought relief and comfort and will continue to do so.

A home movie of the president through the lens of his supporters shows a robust, ruddy-faced, smiling 73-year-old fellow with a flair

for spinning a yarn and making the best of bad situations. In the background is the crooning Frank Sinatra and the flicker of a cowboy movie starring John Wayne.

A snapshot of those who supported him shows a middle class that wants to hang on to economic recovery and not have to pay higher taxes. It's the majority of young voters. Most poor voters and blacks aren't in the picture — they're standing with Mondale.

And there were 84 million eligible to vote who didn't bother.

Economy counted in Reagan's win

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the Gallup poll says it was the robust state of the U.S. economy, not President Reagan's personal charm and popularity, that caused his landslide re-election Tuesday.

In fact, Andrew Kohut, president of the Gallup Organization, said at a news conference:

"There is just no polling data anywhere to support the view that Reagan is better liked than most presidents.

"Of course, he is well liked. . . . What Reagan has showed the public is not charm but success and a perception that someone has taken charge of the country."

Kohut said Reagan "has succeeded in fostering a positive attitude about America" and also convinced voters "to forgive and forget" for the 1981-82 recession.

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GENEVA (AP) — The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, citing a "disastrous drought" in Chad, has appealed for emergency food

Societies appeal for aid

and medical aid for some 140,000 of the worst affected victims. The league said it is seeking funds totalling about \$11.4 million U.S.

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