

INTERNATIONAL

Mexico's ruling party tightens political

Opposition party wins only 5 of 300 seats with 13 und

By Suzanne Bilello Mexico City Bureau of The News

MEXICO CITY — With only 13

seats left to be counted, the conservative opposition party in Mexico has won only five of 300 legislative seats in national elections, a total the party and others say reaffirms the ruling party's unwillingness to share power.

According to returns released late Monday by the National Electoral Commission, the conservative National Action Party (PAN) won two seats in Nuevo Leon state, which borders Texas, two in Chihuahua state and one in Durango state. The Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM), another conservative party, won one seat in the state of Tamaulipas.

The rest went to the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). PAN officials said the party won fewer seats than some previous elections, even though it considers itself stronger now than ever. PAN official Norberto Corella said the opposition party won the most legislative seats, 10, in 1976 under a different legislative structure. It won one seat in 1982.

In the northern border state of Sonora, a PAN stronghold, the state electoral commission declared sweeping PRI victories in all 69

towns and cities, all 18 state legislative positions, the governorship and seven federal deputy seats.

Results of state races are being tabulated by state commissions, and all results are not yet available. Also, 100 legislative seats proportioned to minority parties based on their vote have not been tabulated.

The sweeping PRI victories amid widespread accusations and evidence of fraud were interpreted Monday as a strong message to the opposition that the PRI will not tolerate political competition. "The message that we are receiving is that they are wiping out PAN," Corella said.

"I think the message is that the PRI is not prepared to entertain any fundamental opening of the political system," said Susan Kaufman Purcell, a Mexico specialist with the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York think tank.

Mrs. Kaufman Purcell and others said the PRI-controlled government does not want to risk giving a conservative opposition party any political gains in the midst of an economic crisis. "They are sending a strong message: In a time of crisis you don't let

POWER TO THE PRI

Results from national elections for 300 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house in the Mexican Congress, according to Mexico's National Electoral Commission.

Institutional Revolutionary Party . . .	281
National Action Party	5
Authentic Party	1
Still uncounted	13

an opposition party win, especially one that is critical of your practices," said Richard Sinkin, head of the Latin American Studies Program at the University of Texas in Austin.

The PAN has gained strength in recent years, mostly among middle-class Mexicans frustrated by a continuing economic crisis.

But PAN victories recognized by the PRI would represent an opening, albeit merely symbolic, of the Mexican political system that PRI has monopolized for 56 years, analysts said.

They said the PRI's unwillingness to share power and open the political system will not have immediate repercussions, but is an issue the party will have to deal with in the coming years.

"If they don't address the liberalization issue, they won't be able to address economic problems," said Mrs. Kaufman Purcell, explaining that the basis of Mexico's economic recovery requires a gradual opening of a closed economy that will imply risk for the private sector. The government, she said, also has to be prepared to take risks if it expects the private sector to do the same.

Sinkin says that by acknowledging PAN victories, the PRI could have risked opposition gains similar to the first elections a year after now President Miguel de la Madrid took office in 1982. Part of his election platform included the so-called moral renovation program, aimed at stopping official corruption. In what was considered one of the cleanest elections ever in Mexico, the PAN won several municipalities in conservative northern border states in 1983. A repeat of this, Sinkin and others said, could hurt the PRI and represented a risk the party could not take.

"They opened it (the system) in 1983 a crack and it nearly had a steamroll effect," Sinkin said. Lorenzo Meyer, a leading Mexi-

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