

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 15 MARCH 1949

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

fallow and the seeding of this area to grain sorghum which is all growing splendidly following recent rains. The Caterpillar tractors used by the ploughing contractor were not directly from dollar sources as they were already in Queensland.

“2. Nil.

“3. 25 disc ploughs.

“4. Nil.

“5. 29 combines.

“6. (a) Nil. (b) It is not possible, for business reasons, for the Corporation to disclose the details of its orders for additional plant. However, in view of Britain's continuing urgent need for meat and fats, the Corporation is endeavouring, with the full encouragement of this Government, to expand greatly its area under crop next season. The extent of this expansion will be limited only by the amount of farming plant which the Corporation is able to secure. Honourable members may be assured that each farm implement obtained will be used to the fullest of its capacity and the work will be performed with the same high efficiency as has already been achieved at Peak Downs.”

TUESDAY, 15 MARCH, 1949.

Mr. SPEAKER (Hon. S. J. Brassington, Fortitude Valley) took the chair at 11 a.m.

QUESTIONS.

MACHINERY, QUEENSLAND-BRITISH FOOD CORPORATION.

Mr. McINTYRE (Cunningham) asked the Premier—

“In reference to operations of the Queensland-British Food Corporation, what are the following particulars of machinery used or to be used for the purposes of the Corporation, viz.:—(1) Number, make, and horsepower of tractors from dollar sources, (2) same information regarding other tractors, (3) disc sundercuts, (4) scarifiers, (5) combines, and (6) headers (a) delivered, (b) on order?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

“1. 25 Massey Harris 32 horse-power tractors and 4 Massey Harris 24 horse-power tractors. As I indicated, in reply to a similar question asked of me by the hon. member for Mirani in this House on 19 August, 1948, these 29 tractors were additional and would never have come to Queensland had not the Corporation made urgent representations for additional machines early in 1948. None of these tractors was obtained from allotments to Queensland farmers; in fact, as a result of the Corporation's application, four extra tractors were obtained for Queensland farmers. These 29 tractors arrived too late to do the Corporation's main ploughing which was done by a contractor using three large Caterpillar tractors hauling big gangs of ploughs. The 29 Corporation tractors, however, were the only tractors used for the cultivation of 30,000 acres of

RAILWAY ROLLING STOCK AND CHARGES.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister for Transport—

“1. In view of the extensive programme of rolling stock construction and reconstruction of permanent way, especially on the North Coast line—(a) Is his department carrying into effect Sir Harold Clapp's recommendation that Cooper E60 standard should be adopted for main lines and Cooper E40 standard for other lines in Queensland. (b) Is it a fact that Garratt engines (type GL, with mechanical stokers) used in South Africa have a tractive power of about 78,000 lb., as compared with only about 17,000 lb. in the case of C19 engines used in this State. (c) Is all new rolling stock being designed so as to be easily converted to standard gauge, as is being done in Victoria and South Australia. (d) Is it a fact that the drawgear now employed on rolling stock limits loads to approximately the load of a C19 engine? If so, is stronger drawgear being fitted to new rolling stock and that of old rolling stock being strengthened?”

“2. In view of the much higher earnings per train mile by country passenger trains as compared with suburban, will he give consideration to a review of fares and ‘from port’ freights with a view to giving a fairer deal to people living in country areas?”

Hon. J. E. DUGGAN (Toowoomba) replied—

“1. (a) The new rail and road bridge under construction over the Burdekin River on the North Coast line, which is a major structure, is being built to Cooper's E60 standard. No agreement has yet been reached regarding the conversion of Queensland's lines to 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge

and pending such agreement it is not considered that the vastly increased expenditure which would be necessary to strengthen bridges to Cooper's E40 and E60 standards is justified. To build bridges on the North Coast line to Cooper's E60 standard and to clearances for standard gauge would necessitate the complete rebuilding of all bridges on this line and on other lines to convert to Cooper's E40 standard would necessitate the complete rebuilding of all timber bridges and most of the other bridges. This would require the services of technical staff which are not available, as well as of large supplies of steel and cement which also are in very short supply; (b) South Africa has a few Garratt type GL locomotives fitted with mechanical stokers and having a tractive effort of about 78,000 lb. at 75 per cent. of boiler pressure. It is understood these locomotives are used on the heavy Cato Ridge between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. The C19 locomotive used in Queensland has a tractive effort at 75 per cent. of boiler pressure of 20,748 lb. The Garratt locomotives on order for Queensland will have a tractive effort of 28,920 lb. at 75 per cent. of boiler pressure. (c) Locomotives of the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge cannot be converted to 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. Certain newly designed wagons—viz., the HJS and FJS types—will be suitable for conversion to 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge by the fitting of new bogies and will also permit of the fitting of centre buffer couplings. Where considered practicable to do so future designs will make provision for conversion to the wider gauge. (d) The drawgear now used does limit loads to approximately that of the C19 locomotive. Old rolling stock has not yet been fitted with strengthened drawgear, neither is strengthened drawgear being fitted to new rolling stock, but the new air-conditioned train being designed for the Sunshine route will be equipped with drawgear of the centre buffer coupling type of greater strength than the existing drawgear. Steel baggage cars being constructed and newly designed FJS and HJS wagons are being provided with under-frames which will permit of the later fitting of centre buffer types of couplings giving greater drawgear strength than that now used.

"2. It is regretted that increasing costs of railway operation do not permit of consideration being given to any reductions in fares and freights at the present time."

SALES OF STATE HOUSES.

Mr. H. B. TAYLOR (Hamilton) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. How many homes have been sold through the Queensland Housing Commission in the period 1 July, 1948, to the end of February last?

"2. How many of these homes were built by private contractors?

"3. Will he present a schedule showing (a) the address of each such house; (b) its cost as paid to the contractor; and (c) the sum at which it was sold?"

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona) replied—

"1. 145.

"2. 124.

"3. No. The Queensland Housing Commission has no intention of disclosing to others the private transactions between itself and its clients."

EUNGELLA LANDS FOR SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. In reference to representations by branches of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A., the Queensland Dairymen's Organisation, and by me regarding lands surveyed at Eungella, when are these areas likely to be opened for selection, and how many selections will be made available?

"2. Is it intended to reserve any of such selections for soldier settlement, and, if so, will he kindly indicate which areas will be so reserved?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1. and 2. Many difficulties have arisen regarding the question of making these portions available, including removal of marketable timber, the size and suitability for settlement of the surveyed blocks, and the manner in which they should be dealt with. These matters are receiving consideration and a decision will be made as early as practicable."

LOSSES OF STOCK BY CROCODILES.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"In view of complaints I have received from cattle-owners in the Rockhampton and other Northern districts of severe losses of stock taken by crocodiles, will he give favourable consideration to the question of payment of an effective bonus for destruction of these pests?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"There is no record in the Lands Department of any correspondence from stock owners or Government officials regarding losses of stock through crocodiles, nor has the matter of a bonus ever been considered."

SUGGESTED CYCLONE INSURANCE.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra), without notice, asked the Premier—

"1. Have the Government given consideration to the many public suggestions made to establish a Queensland cyclone insurance scheme along the lines of the Commonwealth War Damage Insurance Scheme?

"2. If so, what was the outcome of such consideration?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) replied—

"The matter was considered by the Government some years ago when a similar occurrence occurred. The State Insurance Commissioner put forward an insurance

scheme for cyclone and tempest damage. However, the premiums were regarded as rather excessive, as they were graded in proportion to the risks in the area concerned.

"The State Insurance Commissioner, however, gives very cheap storm and tempest insurance to insurers for fire risks with the State Insurance Office. They can extend their cover, in any part of Queensland, for storm and tempest damage for a very moderate charge indeed. Obviously, the State Insurance Commissioner is not extending cheap storm and tempest cover to the customers of competitive offices."

STATE'S COUNSEL IN BANKING CASE.

Mr. PIE (Windsor), without notice, asked the Premier—

"1. Is the D. N. Pritt, K.C., briefed by the Queensland Government on their behalf in the Bank Nationalisation Appeal now before the Privy Council, identical with the Denis Novell Pritt, M.P., who is a well known Communist sympathiser in England, who was partly educated in Germany and Spain, who was chairman of the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. and who is author of the books "Light on Moscow," "U.S.S.A. our Ally"——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order! When the hon. member asks a question, we do not want a speech.

Mr. PIE: I am asking a question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sufficient information has already been given to the Honourable the Premier.

Mr. PIE: I have not stated my case. I have only given part of the question.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member knows that in asking a question, as I have previously told him and hon. members, he need give only the relevant matters necessary to found his question. I think sufficient information has been given now to enable the Premier to answer.

Mr. PIE: I have not completed my question. It goes on—

"2. If this is the D. N. Pritt acting on the Queensland Government's behalf, will the Premier explain why such a person should have been selected to represent this State, particularly when the issue involves a Socialist programme that was rejected in a referendum by 70 per cent. of the Queensland people?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) replied—

"Neither I nor the members of my Government have any knowledge of the political beliefs of the professional men they brief."

Mr. Maher: You can find out.

Mr. HANLON: The president of the National Party, or the Liberal Party, as it calls itself, or the Queensland People's Party—I forget which now—was also briefed to represent the Government in cases which have come before the courts. We never bother

about the political beliefs of such a representative. If the hon. gentleman is suggesting that a Labour Government should employ only members of the Labour Party in a professional capacity, he may move a motion to that effect.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

DEVELOPMENT OF BLAIR ATHOL.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (11.15 a.m.), by leave: On Wednesday, 9 March, I indicated that it was my intention, at an early date, to make a statement to the House setting out the latest developments in regard to the Blair Athol project. This was in reply to a question by the hon. member for Logan in which he suggested that I table a White Paper reporting on these developments, and setting out the reasons for and the consideration in relation to the assignment of the franchise.

The Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited Agreement Act of 1947 makes no provision for the granting of a franchise. The Act embodies an agreement between the Government of Queensland and the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited, whereby the said company undertook certain obligations with respect to the development of the Blair Athol coalfield. As hon. members are aware, it is provided in the agreement that, in the event of the said company's committing any breach of or failing to observe any of the provisions of the agreement, the Minister may by notice in writing require the company to make good and rectify such default within a reasonable time. If the company fails to comply with the provisions of such notice within the specified time or within such extended time as may be granted, the Governor in Council may by notice in writing determine the agreement.

The Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited Agreement Act of 1947 was assented to on 9 December, 1947. Since that date the company has been continuously employed in connection with detailed investigations concerning the Blair Athol coalfield, the proposed railway and port, and the marketing of coal. Certain drilling investigations have been undertaken in various parts of Central Queensland on behalf of the company. Air-survey photographs have been obtained which have enabled contour maps covering an area of approximately 400 square miles to be completed for the purpose of determining the best and most practicable route for the proposed railway.

Following the action of the United Kingdom Government in nationalising British electricity undertakings, the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited found itself without the resources which it had expected would be available to begin the development of the Blair Athol project.

Representatives of the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited waited on me when I was in the United Kingdom recently, and, after full and careful consideration of the various factors involved, it was agreed that the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited would enter into an

agreement with the Power and Traction Finance Company Limited whereby the technical and financial resources of that company and of its associates would be applied to the next stage of the investigation.

The chairman of the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited submitted a proposal to me that, in order to separate the Blair Athol project from the other activities of the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited, and to facilitate the actual financing of the project, when it is necessary to raise the required capital for the development of the scheme, a company should be registered in Queensland to which the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited, with the approval of the Governor in Council, would assign its rights and obligations under the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Agreement Act of 1947. These proposals were concurred in by representatives of the Power and Traction Finance Co. Ltd.

For the information of hon. members, I might mention that the Power and Traction Finance Co. Ltd. was registered in the United Kingdom in 1922 under the auspices of the following companies:—

Sir William Arrol & Co. Ltd., of Glasgow, engineers, crane-manufacturers and bridge-builders, who built the Forth bridge.

John Brown & Co. Ltd., of Sheffield and Clydebank, marine engineers and ship-builders, and formerly colliery proprietors.

Cammell, Laird & Co. Ltd., of Birkenhead, shipbuilders and engineers.

The English Electric Co. Ltd., of Stafford, Rugby, &c., electrical, mechanical and hydraulic engineers and contractors.

The Prudential Assurance Co. Ltd., of London.

It was formed for the purpose of concentrating the experience and financial power of the above concerns on the development and execution of large enterprises. Major comprehensive schemes have been carried out by the organisation in Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Poland and the Sudan.

In this instance, as on several previous occasions, Lazard Brothers and Company Limited, bankers, of the City of London, are associated with the Power and Traction Finance Co. Ltd.

The Power and Traction Finance Co. Ltd. has made arrangements whereby the services of Powell Duffryn Technical Services Limited, Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, and other experts will be available.

After a meeting held between the Power and Traction Finance Co. Ltd., Powell Duffryn Technical Services Limited and Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners on 20 January last, the consultants were asked to furnish the Power and Traction Group as soon as possible with the following information:—

- (a) The capital cost of—
 - (1) coal getting, screening, &c.;
 - (2) transport, and
 - (3) port facilities;
- (b) the cost of operation at the coalfield per ton; and
- (c) the cost of transport per ton delivered at a suitable port in Queensland,

assuming an annual production of say (a) three to three and a half million tons, and alternatively (b) six and a half to seven million tons.

On 25 February last Mr. A. D. Marris, of Lazard Brothers and Company Ltd., who, as already stated, are associated with the Power and Traction Finance Company Limited, called on me and stated that, subject to the approval of the Government, it was proposed forthwith to register a private company in Queensland to be known as The Central Queensland Coal Development Co. Pty. Ltd., with an authorised capital of £250,000 and an issued capital of £50,000. With the agreement of the Queensland Government the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited would assign its rights and obligations under the Act to the new company in consideration of the allotment to it of £50,000 of issued share capital in the said company. It was proposed that the Power and Traction Finance Company Limited should have an option for a suitable period to acquire this issued capital, which option it would exercise should the investigations which its consultants are now conducting prove satisfactory.

The Government have approved of these proposals and the Central Queensland Coal Development Company Pty. Ltd. has now been registered.

A draft deed of assignment which has been submitted by the solicitors representing the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Limited is now being examined by the Solicitor-General.

The decision as to whether or not the Power and Traction Group will proceed with the Blair Athol scheme depends entirely upon the result of the investigations now being undertaken by its consultants. If the report is favourable, the Power and Traction Group will acquire the whole of the shares in the Central Queensland Coal Development Pty. Ltd. and will themselves undertake the financing of the Blair Athol project. If they are not satisfied that the scheme is an economic proposition, the shares held by the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Ltd. in the Central Queensland Coal Development Pty. Ltd. will be valueless and they will lose whatever they might have already spent on the project.

The alternative to the present arrangement would have been to serve a notice in writing on the Electric Supply Corporation (Overseas) Ltd. in accordance with the provisions of the Act because of its apparent inability to discharge its obligations in full under the agreement. This aspect was mentioned to the representative of the Power and Traction Group (Mr. Marris) when he interviewed me recently. The Power and Traction Group, however, did not favour action along these lines, but have expressed entire satisfaction with the procedure which has been adopted.

I am confident that, with the ever-shrinking world supply of fuels, the Blair Athol coalfield, with its tremendous resources, will be sufficiently attractive to encourage its immediate development.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACTS
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. V. C. GAIR (South Brisbane—Secretary for Labour and Industry) (11.22 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Premier, in introducing this Bill, satisfied, I believe, all members of this Assembly of the need for the increase in the number of Ministers of the Cabinet of this State. He made out an excellent case which showed very conclusively that 10 Ministers today are an inadequate number to cope with the ever-increasing administrative and legislative work of government.

No-one can reasonably argue that, since it was decided to have 10 Cabinet Ministers in this State, Queensland has not grown enormously in every respect. Our population has increased considerably; and it is to be hoped that in the years that lie ahead a further appreciable increase in population will take place. Our legislative statutes have increased in number and this in turn means additional work for every Minister of the Government.

I was rather struck with the figures supplied to me in respect of governmental receipts and expenditure at present, compared with those for 1925-26. This is further evidence of the increase in the work of the Government in that period. These figures are—

		1925-26.	1947-48.
		£	£
Receipts—			
Consolidated Revenue	15,599,718	26,810,848
Fund	6,758,937	15,304,311
Trust Fund		
		22,358,655	42,124,159
Expenditure—			
Consolidated Revenue	16,154,404	26,914,480
Trust Fund	7,290,656	16,447,239
Loan Fund	4,950,848	5,822,313
		28,395,908	49,184,032

These figures are very definite and indisputable argument in support of the case submitted by the Premier when he introduced the Bill.

It was very pleasant to me to hear some members of the Opposition say that some members of the present Cabinet are inclined to devote too much time to detail. Whilst it was very refreshing, it was also very gratifying because it is at least a compliment to and commendation of the present Cabinet Ministers. It was much more pleasing to me to have the Opposition making the statement along those lines than for them to say that members of the Cabinet were not devoting sufficient time to their departments and were mere rubber stamps. If we are devoting too much time to detail, I can assure hon. members that the people they represent benefit as a result of the industry and assiduity demonstrated by members of the Cabinet.

It is true that a Minister in the administration of a department should primarily devote his time to the implementation of Government policy but it is impossible for a Minister to escape the details of his department and, indeed, hon. members would expect me and other Ministers to devote a good deal of our time to detailed matters concerning our departments and if we were unaware of some of the things taking place we should be charged with neglect or inattention in the administration of our departments.

Speaking for myself—and this applies to my colleagues in the present Cabinet—I would say that every Minister has more than a full-time job. It is utterly impossible for Ministers, with the pressure they have upon them today, to devote the time they should to a consideration of the many problems confronting the Government from a national point of view. It is true that if our time is to be taken up with the details of administration we have not enough time to devote to the big issues. On the other hand, if we disregard details entirely it will not be long before hon. members of this Chamber will be complaining that we are indifferent to the requirements of the individual or the smaller sections of our community.

Hon. members opposite who level the commendable charge that we devote too much time to detail never hesitate, when they receive a letter from an elector seeking an additional 100 feet to his house or something else, to submit it to the Minister for a review or examination of the case, and invariably end their requests by thanking him for an early reply, or saying something to that effect. If hon. members desire Ministers not to devote so much time to the details of administration, they can help Ministers by referring many of their inquiries and correspondence to departmental heads rather than to Ministers.

Personally, I am not complaining. I have a good deal of work and I like it.

Mr. Luckins: You look well on it.

Mr. GAIR: I do, because I have never been unaccustomed to work. I have been trained all my life to like work and to be industrious. That being so, I devote all my time to the job that has been assigned to me and for which I am paid by the people of this State. I give of my best in the hope that my humble efforts may prove of advantage to Queensland and her people. And what applies to me applies equally to every other member of the present Cabinet. Not one of them spares himself in the discharge of his duties, and I believe all their efforts are accompanied by a great measure of success, as is evidenced by the progress that has been made under Labour administration over the years that we have been in office in this State.

There is not much need for me to say a great deal on the second reading of this Bill. The appointment of an additional Minister is long overdue and I believe that the separation of the Department of Public Lands from the Department of Mines is not only desirable but necessary. I am sure

no-one will argue that any one person, no matter how qualified he may be, can successfully administer two such important departments. The Department of Public Lands, with the two growing Sub-Departments of Irrigation and Forestry, makes more than a full-time job for any person. With the revival that is taking place in metalliferous mining the man who is appointed Secretary for Mines will be fully occupied in encouraging and assisting that work in addition to controlling that very important, indispensable basic industry, coal-mining.

As the Premier stated in his outline of the duties of Ministers, there is not one of us who has not more than enough to do. Speaking for myself, I work more than the ordinary working hours a day; I seldom leave my office before 15 or 20 minutes past 6 in the evening.

I work in my office on an average two nights a week and I am invariably there on Saturday mornings. What is more, I take home a bag full of work to attend to on the nights I am not required to go out and when I am not in my office.

Mr. H. B. Taylor: You don't concern yourself with the details of your sub-departments.

Mr. GAIR: I am required to apply myself to all matters of importance concerning every sub-department under my jurisdiction. Everybody in the community, members of this Assembly particularly, appreciate that. If an hon. member is, say, interested in the migration of a family from England to this country he does not go along to see Mr. Longland but invariably comes to me, saying, "This is the case presented to me by Mrs. Brown of Oriel Road. She saw me about this and said that she wanted to get her relatives out here." By so doing the hon. member is throwing on me the whole responsibility of having inquiries made and supplying him with a suitable reply for despatch to Mrs. Brown. If I were to refer the hon. member to Mr. Longland, he would feel that I had rebuked him. I have no personal objection to the personal approach of hon. members to me; I am not complaining, but I am saying definitely that there is full justification for an increase in the number of Cabinet Ministers in this State.

Mark you, Mr. Speaker, every member of the present Cabinet devotes his full time to the job. He has no other business interests. This would not be so if the Government were composed of hon. members opposite. With few exceptions, all have business interests and they would be required to devote some of their time to their own businesses and would not be able to give the same amount of time to the job as Labour Ministers do. The exigency and importance of matters before the Government require this attention at the present time.

I say that the time is overdue for the introduction of this measure and I really believe that it will ease the high pressure of work upon members of the present Cabinet and will tend towards a greater measure of

efficiency and expedition in the administration of the various departments. I accordingly move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 a.m.): After giving consideration to the reasons advanced by the Premier the other day for increasing the number of Ministers from 10 to 11 and after listening to the Deputy Premier this morning and his reasons I am still not convinced that there is any need to increase the number of Ministers as proposed by this legislation. I still hold the opinion that a reallocation of the duties of the present Ministers will more than cope with the emergency the Premier and his deputy state exists at present. The Deputy Premier this morning said that the measure was long overdue but I maintain that after its passage we shall still have members of the Cabinet being overworked and other members not working to capacity. Let us tackle the problem in the way in which it should be tackled by making an examination of the possibilities of a reallocation of duties to give a better spread of work among existing members of the Cabinet. I maintain that if this was done no Minister would be working harder than he should be working; the reallocation would relieve the situation that the Deputy Premier pointed out.

Last session this House agreed to give Ministers an increase in salaries as a recognition of the heavy duties they are undertaking. They agreed to give also an increase to hon. members in this House, in view of their added responsibilities. However, I venture to say that if at the time of the introduction of that measure it had been suggested that we were going to increase the number of Ministers and the number of members in this House, possibly there might have been different action to that which we took then. In fact, at present many people outside are taking a very dim view of what is happening at the moment—increasing the number of Ministers and the number of members. After all, one can hardly blame them. We have heard the question asked, "What about Mr. Chifley's advice to save for security? Why don't you fellows set a better example?" Mr. Speaker, they have a lot of justification for saying those things to us. Therefore, I say we should examine this measure very closely before we agree to it.

I entirely disagree with the contention of the Acting Premier this morning that the Hon. the Premier had satisfied the House as to the need for this legislation. I say he has far from satisfied us. He has not satisfied hon. members on this side of the House. We are still of the opinion that there is no need for an additional Minister. The problems facing Cabinet and facing Ministers could have been overcome in other ways, such as I suggested on the introductory stage of this measure.

The Acting Premier quoted figures to show the State revenue in 1925-26 and the revenue in 1947-48 today, but figures do not mean a thing today. In 1925 the £ was worth £1, but in 1949 a £ represents approximately 10s. Therefore, the argument of the Acting Premier

this morning is completely blown out. I was very surprised at his using figures in his argument, when he knows how unreliable they are.

Mr. Aikens: It does not take any more effort on the part of a Minister to sign a cheque for £1,000 than to sign a cheque for £100.

Mr. NICKLIN: It all depends on whose cheque it is.

Let us look at the all-important question of the duties of Ministers, because we have to examine the problem from that angle. We have to see whether the duties of Ministers today are greater and more onerous than they were a few years ago, and then we can weigh up the case on that basis and decide whether this legislation is justified. We must not allow ourselves to be over-impressed by the imposing list of duties the Premier quoted to us the other day. Listening to him, one would have thought that the Minister had to do everything in the department, right down to polishing the door-knobs. In effect, that is what the Premier told us the other day, whereas we know—and the Acting Premier this morning emphasised this fact—a Minister's main responsibility is to implement the Government's policy and to see that the department is running smoothly and efficiently. If he allows his work to be cluttered up with minor details, certainly he has more than a full-time job.

Mr. Gair: You are giving me a lead for the future.

Mr. NICKLIN: Unfortunately, there has been a trend on the part of some Ministers to allow their work to be cluttered up by minor details. Let us look at this question of ministerial duties and let us go back to about the 1920's.

Queensland was then going through an era of development. Much financial work was done by the Government of the day in obtaining loans and in spending that money. In those days the then Premiers, Mr. Theodore, and the late Mr. McCormack, in addition to occupying the important portfolio of Premier, administered the portfolio of Treasurer also. In those days the Treasurer had an arduous job, without other duties. He had the responsibility of shaping the State's financial policy and seeing that the money raised on our own initiative was well and wisely spent. What is the position today? There has been removed from him all the responsibility of the taxation policy, which is now assumed by the Commonwealth Government. All the Treasurer does in order to get money is to go to Canberra once or twice a year and say to the Commonwealth Government, "I want so much money." Mr. Chifley then says, "All you can have is so much; do your best with it." There is no responsibility on the Treasurer whatsoever in working out the State's taxation policy.

After all, that was an important part of Governmental affairs. The people judged Governments by their financial policy and they also judged the Treasurer on the taxation imposed on or lifted from them. Yet the

Treasurer in those days, in addition to the portfolio of Treasurer, assumed other portfolios. Today we have a separate portfolio of Premier and a separate portfolio of Treasurer. I am not suggesting that the gentlemen occupying those portfolios do not work hard on their jobs. We all know that the Premier and Treasurer are tigers for work and are on the job all the time. I just quote those two portfolios as an example.

Let us come to the Deputy Premier's Department, the Department of Labour and Industry. He is one of the hardest-worked Ministers in the Cabinet at the present time, but he may take comfort in the fact that he did not administer his portfolio in the depression period, for the Minister in that day had a particularly worrying and difficult job. He must admit that that responsibility no longer exists. Consequently, that he is considerably relieved and is able to pay more attention to the constructive and developmental sections of Government policy.

Mr. Gair: The Minister in that day had only the Department of Labour and Industry to administer, not a lot of other sub-departments that I am called upon to administer.

Mr. NICKLIN: Admittedly. Many of those sub-departments have grown up because it has been Labour's policy to build them up with the idea of emphasising the importance of the job they are engaged in.

Mr. Power: Are you objecting to the State Electricity Commission?

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not objecting to that commission; I am objecting to the increase in the number of Ministers. We have too many Ministers now and are asked to make provision to appoint another one. No doubt the Secretary for Labour and Industry has in mind that he administers secondary industries and the State Electricity Commission but he must admit that the first matter is controlled by a board, and that the State Electricity Commission is controlled by a commission. He will also contend that he administers the control of prices.

Let us examine those functions. We have a board to deal with secondary industries. I take it that the board's object is to relieve the Minister of the detailed administration naturally associated with secondary industries. All the Minister has to do is to direct or give to the board the policy that the Government wish to be carried out. It is not the Minister's job to go into all the details in regard to secondary industries coming to this State. Admittedly he has a very important job in interviewing big industrialists who may come here. He is the medium through which those big industrialists get in contact with the Secondary Industries Board and get a line-up on Government policy in regard to the activities of secondary industries in this State. So the governmental set-up with a Secondary Industries Board greatly relieves the Minister of much responsibility in regard to that important section of his department.

The same applies to the State Electricity Commission, which, the Minister will be the first to agree with me, is a very important

organisation directed by a very efficient man. It involves many technical aspects that the Minister will admit he knows nothing about. It is not the Minister's job to know anything about them because that knowledge is obtained only after years of study and experience. His job is to tell the State Electricity Commission what Government policy is and to see that that policy is carried out.

In price-control, I admit, the Minister has had a big job handed to him, but I believe that if he and his Government wished they could relieve him of a great deal of the responsibility that he has to carry in regard to it. Many of the war-time price-control activities he is administering could be wiped out tomorrow and nobody would be one penny the worse off; in fact, much money would be saved and many of the black-markets now existing would vanish overnight. The Minister has still to maintain control of prices over farm lands and things of that kind. But he knows that land control could be wiped out tomorrow and nobody would suffer; in fact, the whole community would benefit.

Mr. Gair: What happened in other States where controls have been lifted?

Mr. NICKLIN: Nothing worse than what is happening here today. The Minister knows as well as I do that land and property sale controls are one big farce, and all they are doing is to hold up legitimate sales and transfers of properties. What happens in regard to sale of properties at the present time, particularly farming properties? Very often there is considerable delay before the property has changed from one hand to the other; and during that intervening period you find the vendor does no work, the purchaser cannot get on to do any work, and as a result the property goes to the dogs. I have seen more properties ruined by the delays caused by price-control than by any drought ever experienced.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to open a discussion on price-control on this Bill.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not intend to; I have finished with the question. I used it as an illustration to show how the Minister could relieve himself of much of the responsibility he carries, if it were Government policy so to do.

The bugbear in connection with the present mal-distribution of work of Ministers seems to be the Department of Mines. Apparently the sole reason for the appointment of an extra Minister is to relieve the Secretary for Public Lands of the responsibility for the Department of Mines. I believe that is necessary. The Secretary for Public Lands has a full-time job in that department without having the Department of Mines on top of his head, as he has at the moment. I cannot understand how in the name of goodness that responsibility was given to him because there are other Ministers who could have accepted it without being compelled to overwork themselves as the Secretary for Public Lands has had to do in handling the two portfolios he

administers at the present time. As I pointed out on the initiation, the portfolios of Public Instruction, Justice and the Treasury do not entail the same arduous detailed work as have the Department of Lands and other departments, and one of those Ministers could have had the responsibility of handling the Department of Mines without in any way interfering with the work he is doing in his own department at the present time.

Mr. Power interjected.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government interjects; he is one of the hard-working members of the Cabinet but for many months he handled not only his own important department but that of the Department of Justice and during that time he had a big legislative programme to bring before this House. He did this with credit to himself and without in any way impairing his physical abilities.

Mr. Power: At that time I worked five nights a week, Saturdays and Sundays, and I do not propose to do that in future; and the Premier's job is much harder than mine.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am not saying for one moment that the Minister did not work; in fact, I prefaced my remarks by saying he is one of the hardest-worked Ministers of the Government.

Mr. Power: I want a bit of recreation.

Mr. NICKLIN: The hon. gentleman did the job, figuratively speaking, on his head. But I do not want him to do it again; his portfolio is a full-time one without having any other sub-department tagged on to him.

But for example let us look at the Department of Public Instruction. In his introductory remarks the Premier said that the Minister of that department was going to be overworked for the simple reason that Government policy envisaged the establishment of university colleges in Northern and Central Queensland. That was one of the arguments used by the Premier—that additional work will be given to the Secretary for Public Instruction by the establishment of university colleges in Central and Northern Queensland. But nobody can say that the Secretary for Public Instruction will lose one extra bead of sweat as the result of that. That is Government policy, and once the policy is decided it is handed over to his departmental heads. It is they who execute it. There is no need for the Minister to go there, except in the course of his duties, to see whether these colleges are working adequately. Anyhow, perhaps he would not have the technical knowledge to enable him to decide whether they were working properly. That is the responsibility of his departmental officers and those officers will be prepared to accept that responsibility.

The Treasurer is another Minister who has a number of sub-departments that more or less run themselves after the Treasurer has intimated Government policy to his departmental heads. The Premier mentioned the

big dredging programme ahead of the Department of Harbours and Marine, and he suggested that that could not go on unless the Treasurer sat 24 hours a day in his office seeing that it went on.

After all, knowing the Treasurer as I do, I feel sure that once he has decided what is going to be done by the department he will give instructions that it shall be done and all he will have to do will be to make a check on occasion to see that it is being done. It is not his job to go down to the Pile Light with his flattie and bucket and spade and dig out the channel there. He is there to see to it that his trained technical officers carry out the Government's policy of increasing the depth of ports so that ships may come and go without being delayed by tides or anything of the sort.

Justice is another department that carries on more or less automatically once Government policy is decided. That is exemplified by the fact that the numerical strength of the department is very small. The Minister could easily accept the responsibility of Mines without being overworked. We all know that in the past the present Attorney-General has very capably carried the portfolio of Mines while at the same time carrying that of Justice, and he did it well because he has such an intimate knowledge of the workings and needs of the Department of Mines.

Whichever way we look at the duties of Ministers, we can only come to the conclusion that with a reallocation of duties to relieve those who are at present overworked and with a spread of the responsibilities of those Ministers who are not now carrying such a heavy burden, we could easily allocate the Department of Mines to an existing Minister without in any way interfering with the efficiency of government or overworking Ministers.

A good deal has been said about the amount of legislation passed through this House and the job Ministers have in doing that. Undoubtedly one of the greatest responsibilities of Ministers is administering departmental legislation; but when we examine the Bills that have been passed through this Chamber over the last 10 or 15 years we find that 90 per cent. of them have been merely amending Bills, their effect being to lighten rather than increase the duties of Ministers. That being so, the additional legislation passed through this House from time to time has not added to the burden borne by the Ministers; and it should not do that, because one of the prime objects of legislation should be to simplify administration. If the legislation being introduced is not doing that then the Ministers must accept full responsibility because it is they who bring that legislation forward.

As I mentioned previously, this move to increase the number of portfolios and sub-departments of Government has grown up over the years, the years when Governments have been Labour in particular. The real trouble is the socialistic objective of the Labour Party. After all, the idea of

Socialism is to build up a superstructure of government of such importance that the rank and file of the people have no say and cannot run their own lives as they would like to. The Labour policy and the Socialist policy, which run side by side, are to order the lives of the common individual in the community and build up a community in which everybody does as he is told—and naturally Labour and socialistic Governments want to be the ones to do the telling. This is evidenced in all States where Labour is in power. This tendency to increase the number of portfolios has been evident in the Commonwealth sphere ever since Labour came into power. In 1940, when the Menzies Government were in power, there were 13 Ministers and three assistant Ministers, but under the present socialistic Government at Canberra there are 18 Ministers.

Mr. Luckins: Eighteen.

Mr. NICKLIN: Yes, 18. The Department of Defence was previously handled by one Minister under the Menzies Government, and one must not forget that the Minister of Defence at that time laid down the policy for the defence of Australia; he laid down the structure or the foundation, which was only continued by the Labour Government when they came into power. All the important decisions with regard to the defence of this country that were made prior to Labour's coming into office were made by one Minister. That portfolio has now been divided into four sections—the Minister for Defence, the Minister for the Army, the Minister for the Navy, and the Minister for Air. That is just an example of what has been done by a socialistic Government. It is the policy of Socialism—the building up of bureaucracies and institutions of Government that are intended to enslave the people rather than allow them to carry on their activities in the community in their own way by the use of their own initiative and labour.

To quote an example of what could happen under the Socialist trend, let me recall to hon. members, particularly those on this side, the famous pronouncement by Mr. Pollard, the Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture and Commerce, in July, 1947. He proudly announced that the Government had evolved a plan for the production of 2½ lb. of potatoes per person per week—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am afraid the hon. member is getting away from the subject before the House.

Mr. NICKLIN: With due deference to you, Mr. Speaker, I am using this as an illustration—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member will understand my position. I wish to keep the debate to the question before the Chair. I cannot allow it to drift. I ask the hon. member to co-operate with me.

Mr. NICKLIN: I am illustrating my point as to what could happen. My point is that the building-up of bureaucracies and institutions of government does not make for efficient government, but rather brings about

the need for additional Ministers, additional sub-departments and additional expense to the community, and, what is perhaps the most important thing of all, additional interference with the freedom and liberty of the subject.

That is something we have to fight for and endeavour to maintain—the freedom of the individual and his freedom to carry out his purpose in life without undue interference from the Government. Hon. members opposite stand for the direct opposite. They stand for the continuance of controls and for the growth of the policy aimed at the direction of the individual. That is exemplified by the fact that they are introducing a measure here to appoint an additional Minister—unnecessarily, I suggest—with that sole object in view. If an additional Minister is appointed, naturally he will want to build up the importance of his department and his sub-departments. Like a snowball, it will grow. We shall find that before very long we shall want another Minister to carry out the work Cabinet Ministers have to do. Over 100 years ago—and the hon. the Treasurer will appreciate this point, as I know he reads Lord Macaulay's essays—Lord Macaulay said—

“When a Government assumes control of a product, it becomes bad, it becomes dear, it becomes scarce.”

That is exactly what has happened here in Australia since we have had undue Government interference in the affairs of the community. I say that Australia as a whole, and Queensland in particular, is suffering from a disease that might appropriately be termed “regulitis.” When we have Cabinet Ministers we have regulations being issued. Now, if we appoint another Minister, we shall have more regulations and we shall suffer from a worse attack of “regulitis” than we are suffering from at present.

Let us compare the responsibilities of Ministers in Queensland with the responsibilities of similar Ministers in other States. Of course, when we advance this argument it will be said that Queensland is a big State and Queensland has a greater population compared with some of the other States that may be quoted. That is true and is recognised; but we must not forget, as I pointed out earlier, than in years gone by a lesser number of Ministers than at present carried on the duties of government effectively and efficiently, for the simple reason that they got on with the job of government, directed Government policy and did not go into the “science” of issuing regulations, which seems to be one of the principal jobs of the Government today.

Let us compare Queensland with South Australia and Western Australia, leaving out the larger States of New South Wales and Victoria—and I mean larger from the point of view of population. Queensland has an area of 670,000 sq. miles and a population of 1,106,000. At the present time the work of government is carried on efficiently by 10 Ministers. South Australia has an area of 380,000 sq. miles, a population of 646,000 and six Ministers.

Mr. Jesson: They have an Upper House.

Mr. NICKLIN: Notwithstanding the fact that they have an Upper House they carry on with six Ministers. Ministers are required to carry on the business of the Government in the Upper House and to represent Government policy there.

Western Australia has an area of 975,000 sq. miles, bigger than the State of Queensland, and a population of 503,000, less than half the population of Queensland. There they have eight Ministers and two assistant Ministers.

Mr. Gair: We have a better measure of distribution here.

Mr. NICKLIN: We had, thanks to the wise policy of the statesmen of the past (Government laughter) but because of the policy of the present Government we find that that condition, which Queensland enjoyed for so many years—the wise distribution of her population—is now being lost because there exists in this State, as we have pointed out from time to time, and it is becoming more and more evident from day to day, a maldistribution of population.

However, let us get back to the number of Ministers in Queensland and compare the number with that in South Australia. One must admit that South Australia's area is not as big as Queensland's but it has far-flung areas, much of which consists of a poor type of country, difficult to administer. No-one will gainsay the fact that South Australia has had a very remarkable development in recent years compared with any other State. Apparently her Ministers must have been doing their job. What do we find there? They have two Houses of Parliament and only six Ministers. They administer the following portfolios:—Premier, Treasurer and Immigration; Chief Secretary, Mines, Attorney-General, Education Industry and Employment, Lands, Repatriation and Irrigation; Public Works, Railways, Marine and Local Government. The Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government would not care to have the responsibilities of the railways and marine attached to him. The agricultural portfolio carries also the important portfolio of afforestation. Notwithstanding the fact that those Ministers carry these responsibilities no-one will say that South Australia is not efficiently administered or governed. It is very efficiently administered and very efficiently governed, as the people have from time to time by their votes shown. When you look at it from that angle the comparison does not favour Queensland.

Take Western Australia, which has an area larger than Queensland, and it must be admitted that its area is particularly difficult to govern because of the widespread nature of the population and the fact that communications are not as good as in Queensland. Yet that big State is handled by eight Ministers, with the assistance of two assistant Ministers.

Therefore one cannot see the slightest justification whatsoever for an addition to the Ministry of this State. This Bill will create

an additional Minister that can be done without. He will be a redundancy. The cost of an additional Minister would be £20,000 per annum and his appointment at that cost will create amazement among the people, especially as they are aware that both the Commonwealth and State Labour Governments are not practising what the Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley, has been preaching to us all along. He has told us, "Be a saver, not a spender, and secure Australia against the dangers of inflation." No wonder the people say, "Oh yeah, says you!" when they hear that injunction over the wireless!

We on this side of the House cannot for one moment see any justification whatsoever in the action of the Government in increasing the number of their Ministers at the present time. It would have been far wiser and it would have brought about greater efficiency if they had examined this question from the angle of reallocating the duties of many Ministers with the object of relieving those who at present are doing more than their share of work.

Mr. Power: Not being a Minister you would not know the duties of a Minister.

Mr. NICKLIN: That may be so, but I have some appreciation of what Ministers do and what they are expected to do. The tenor of my argument all through has been—and I think Ministers will agree—that far too much detailed work is placed on Ministers at the present time and they are not able to spend sufficient of their time on the more important and major part of their job, the directing of Government policy and seeing that the departments are efficiently administered. They look into all the details of the department and I can easily imagine something like this happening: The head of a department reports to his Minister and says, "By the way, last week I appointed a clerk," and the Minister replying, "How dare you do such a thing without consulting me and without my approval of the person appointed? Did you inquire as to whether this gentleman is a member of the Australian Labour Party? Did you inquire as to his political antecedents before you made this appointment? Dismiss him at once. I shall have to bring this matter before Caucus, otherwise I shall be hauled over the coals." That is an imaginary conversation that may take place when Ministers are cluttered up with these petty details.

Mr. Power: You should know the head of a department cannot appoint a clerk. It would be done by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. NICKLIN: The Minister knows appointments are made outside the Public Service. It is only Public Service appointments that have to be approved by the Public Service Commissioner and go before the Executive Council for approval.

I was wondering whether, when we have this new Minister appointed, in order to find work for him he may have added to his many duties another portfolio. It is a wonder the

Government have not thought of a portfolio of Information; because when we pick up the paper we read all sorts of announcements by Ministers in regard to new lands open for selection, new schools built and painted, and new hospital fittings, and boats going to leave Newcastle for Brisbane with more wire and wire-netting. (Unfortunately the boats never get here because the wharries at Newcastle refuse to load them, or something of that kind happens.) Those are typical things we read from day to day of government propaganda. The air is disturbed on Sunday nights by talks by some Minister about what the Government departments are doing, yet we have not any Ministry of Information. Possibly if we get an additional Minister we may have such a portfolio added to his duties; and then we shall get more of these informative paragraphs in the paper and over the air—in fact, we may get a paragraph containing a daily bulletin regarding the health of Ministers so that we may see how they are standing up to the arduous duties they have to perform.

As I said at the outset, we are definitely opposed to this measure, because it is not justified or warranted. But we do not oppose anything unless we can offer constructive suggestions for an alternative and in this instance our constructive suggestion is the reallocation of duties amongst existing Ministers. If that was done I should say that no Minister would be overworked and the government of this State would be carried on just as effectively and efficiently as it is at present.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.25 p.m.): Mr. Speaker, I am very touched at the reaction that this Bill has had on members of the Opposition. We have seen them standing up one after the other opposing the Bill. We saw the Leader of the Opposition today stand up with his dewlap quivering with anguish because the Government had sold the Opposition a gold brick. We know, of course, that when the Government last year contemplated raising the salaries of members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown, they went into secret conference with the Opposition and at that secret conference the Opposition agreed to the staggering increase of £750 a year for Ministers of the Crown. Now, of course, they are bemoaning the fact that the Government did not tell them when they agreed in secret conference to bump up the salaries of Ministers by £750 a year that they also intended to bring down this Bill making provision for an additional Minister.

But I have not very much time to waste on the apparent anguish of the Opposition. I view this measure purely and simply with my usual level-headed clear-sighted outlook and I find I must join forces with the Opposition in opposing it. In order that I might base my arguments on some sound and reasonable foundation I went into the library and picked up at random a bound copy of "Hansard," a record of the Queensland Parliamentary debates for the year 1916-17. Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of young people interested in politics will not believe this,

but it is true: at one time we had on the Treasury benches of this Parliament a dinky-die Labour Government and representatives of the dinky-die Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will discuss the measure and not enter into a discussion on other political matters.

Mr. AIKENS: I know it is painful.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must keep within the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. AIKENS: Let me approach it from this angle: in the year 1916-17, the year covered by this official copy of the Parliamentary debates, we had on the Treasury Benches of this State Ministers of a Labour Government. That is my opinion, and, of course, that opinion is shared by many dinky-die Labour political thinkers. And we had controlling this State two Houses, the Legislative Assembly or Lower House, comprising 72 members of Parliament, and from what I can gather from the records of this book we had also an Upper House of roughly 40 members. In those days there was a war on. Australia was at war, consequently all our efforts were being thrown into the successful prosecution of that war.

In addition to that, Queensland was then a sovereign State. Queensland in those days set out its own financial policy; it assessed its own taxes and its Government went forth to the people at every election with the declared financial policy worked out and enunciated by the members of the party. Today Queensland financially is nothing more nor less than an agent of the Federal Government; it must take from that Government what that Government agree to dole out, therefore Queensland's status as a sovereign State has almost entirely disappeared.

Some mention has been made in the debate of the fact that the present Secretary for Labour and Industry controls the Prices Branch; in those days also we had a Queensland Prices Branch, or if we did not have, the legislation was being prepared to introduce it. We had too on the Treasury benches of this State a Government who were prepared actually to implement the policy of the Labour Party with regard to State enterprises, and we had actually State enterprises in operation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not bring irrelevant subjects into this discussion. The principles of the Bill are clear and I would ask him to keep within those principles. There are two principles. The first is the appointment of an extra Minister and the second is the question of the salary. I ask the hon. member to keep to those two questions.

Mr. AIKENS: I am drawing a comparison between the work of Ministers in the year 1916-1917 and the work of Ministers today.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There can be no objection to the hon. member's drawing a comparison, but I suggest that irrelevant matter might be left aside.

Mr. AIKENS: I am trying to point out that in those days the Government, through their elected representatives, the Ministers, were much busier than they are today because at that time either legislation was prepared for the setting up of those huge State enterprises, or the State enterprises were actually in operation.

In addition to that, tremendous development was taking place in Queensland in all aspects and in all areas of the State. A good deal of railway construction was going on. In 1917, as a young man in the railway service, I actually worked as a cleaner on a railway construction job. I believe we have not had any railway construction in this State since the Mt. Isa line was built in 1929.

Moreover, there was tremendous port development throughout the State, and in addition to that there was tremendous mining development throughout the State because in the years 1916 and 1917, as the hon. member for Carpentaria will know—we were both in the district at the same time—the Mt. Cuthbert smelters, the Kuridala and the Selwyn smelters were at the peak of their production. As a matter of fact, the Mt. Cuthbert smelters blew in for the first time in 1917.

In 1916-1917, I repeat, we were a sovereign State, controlling not only the finances but the destinies of the State. We had 72 members in the Lower House and 40 in the Upper House, and we managed to do all those things with the following Ministers:—

Vice-President of the Executive Council, Chief Secretary and Attorney-General—the Hon. Thomas Joseph Ryan.

Treasurer and Secretary for Public Works—the Hon. Edward Granville Theodore.

The Home Secretary—The Hon. David Bowman.

Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—The Hon. William Lennon.

Secretary for Public Lands—The Hon. John McEwan Hunter.

Secretary for Railways—The Hon. John Adamson.

Secretary for Public Instruction—The Hon. Herbert Freemont Hardacre.

Minister without Portfolio—The Hon. John Arthur Fihelly.

Secretary for Mines—Hon. William Hamilton.

So that we had nine Ministers in all representing the Government in two Houses of Parliament and controlling this State's destinies and finance in perhaps the greatest year of its activity and development since the formation of the State.

I repeat that World War I. was on at the time, and in addition we had all this tremendous development work going on in various parts of the State. At that time there was a fair amount of development work going on in the North. Railways were being constructed in North Queensland. The Dajarra line was under construction, as were various other lines, and other public works for the development and progress of North Queensland and elsewhere were in progress. Today,

of course, North Queensland is the Cinderella of the State. Over the last 20 years very little has been done in North Queensland so far as progress and development are concerned, and very little has happened.

Mr. Brand: Labour has ruined it.

Mr. AIKENS: The members of the Labour Party—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Mann): Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to depart from the principles contained in this measure.

Mr. AIKENS: Mr. Mann, you know I would not do that knowingly. You know that if I do drift away from the principles of a Bill during a debate, very often it is because I am innocent and am led astray by interjections from the Opposition.

Of course, in those days we had a dinky-die Labour Party in control of this State. In this House the Labour Party was honestly trying to implement the policy of the Labour Party, and in those days we had a strong virile Government.

The Government of that time were not afraid to do the things they had pledged themselves to do on the election hustings. We were on the threshold of perhaps the finest decade in Queensland's development. We were a State proud to be governed by that Labour Government because they were a Labour Government in deed as well as in name. Today we have a Labour Government in name only. In those times, which were pregnant with development and progress, we could get along with nine Ministers but today, when Queensland is nothing more nor less than a mendicant agent of the Federal Government, we have the position of hearing a long tale of woe from the Premier and the Deputy Premier about overworked Ministers. I assume those hon. gentlemen will be supported by tales of woe from other hon. members telling us that this State cannot progress unless we have 11 Ministers on the front bench. We have already got rid of that exorcism, the Legislative Council, with its 40 members; and yet we are told that this single Chamber of Parliament, controlling the affairs of this State—and, mind you, the development of this State is confined virtually to the south-eastern corner because that is the only area undergoing any development at the present time from the point of view of public works or industrial expansion—needs two more Ministers than were required by the glorious Labour Party in the heyday of its activities.

Because I have tried to bring a clear, clean and unbiased mind to the problem set us I have decided that I should be recreant to the trust reposed in me by my electors if I supported this measure, which is nothing more nor less than an imposition upon a long-suffering public; the financial provision to be made for the extra Minister is nothing more nor less than barefaced robbery of the public purse.

Mr. MULLER (Fassifern) (12.38 p.m.): The question before the House has been

approached with a broad outlook, and after listening to the debate last week and again this morning one finds it hard to see sufficient evidence in the arguments advanced by hon. members opposite to justify the appointment of an extra Minister. I am sure, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, that the solution to the problem would be found in an even distribution of the work between the Ministers of the present Cabinet.

It is true that some of our Ministers are working very hard, but if one examines this question one must realise they are doing quite a deal of unnecessary work. In the Public Service we have some wonderful men and I have made that discovery since I have been a member of this Assembly. Some of our under secretaries are very capable men and although a Minister goes out of his way to sign documents and investigate the whys and wherefors of many of the problems his department has to contend with he is guided very largely by what his under secretary tells him. A Minister cannot be expected to know everything about everything; he has his own electorate to attend to, besides business before the House. After all, matters of Government policy are perhaps the most important questions for a Minister.

The more closely I examine this question the more I am convinced that we are tending towards greater Government control. I do not know why this is so. When we go back to the war period we find that the Commonwealth Government seemed to take a special delight in interfering in every possible direction, demanding as it were that a person get a permit to get a drink of water.

We have seen Ministers, such as the Secretary for Labour and Industry, tell the House this morning how hard they are working. We appreciate all that. We know it, but when you examine the more recent activities of that Minister's department, seeing that controls have now been handed over by the Commonwealth, one cannot help feeling that he is working unnecessarily. The only effect that many of those controls can have is to cause delay, embarrassment and inconvenience to people who are making applications for building permits and other things.

A good deal of duplication exists. Hon. members will know that the illustration I am about to give is true. Frequently, we are informed by the Main Roads Commission that certain work will be carried out. Then we are told by the Treasurer that that work will be carried out. Then we are told by the Secretary of Public Works that the work will be carried out. All of that is unnecessary. It is not just a question of the Minister's signing the correspondence, but the Minister is concerning himself with detailed matters that I say should be left to his department.

Mr. Power: You know that you want to be told about those things.

Mr. MULLER: No member of Parliament could expect a Minister to be worried about all those minor details. We are told by the Department of Public Works and then

by the Department of Public Instruction that some trivial little repairs to a school fence will be carried out.

Mr. Power: When you make representations to the Minister or you get up in the House and criticise him, do you not expect to get a reply?

Mr. MULLER: I am trying to help the Minister.

Mr. Power: You will not get any more from me.

Mr. MULLER: I am endeavouring to show that much of the work a Minister has to do is unnecessary. It is quite unnecessary for the Department of Public Instruction to tell any hon. member that certain works are to be carried out and in a few days' time for the Secretary for Public Works to repeat the same dose and later again for the Treasurer to add a little more propaganda that the Government have decided to make so much money available for that work. Those things are all unnecessary.

However, the point I wish to emphasise is the embarrassment that is caused in a great many cases. I had an experience only yesterday in connection with a local authority that had made application to build a garage and workshop, and a building in which to house its road plant. This is what happened: the question was raised some six or eight months ago. We were directed that the job was to be done with loan money. The local authority approached an engineer and was advised that it was outside the scope of an engineer and that it would have to engage an architect. The job was to cost only £2,000. The architect was given an idea of what the council proposed to do. After it waited some time, it finally got a report and comments back from the Department of Public Works—the Secretary for Public Works will be interested in this matter. The report contained a long list of suggestions for improvements and alterations to the building. The point is that it is only a small matter, £2,000 being involved. No subsidy was attached to it. The local authority knew what it wanted and what its requirements were. It set out to obtain just what was necessary.

Mr. Power: What local authority was that?

Mr. MULLER: The Boonah local authority. Where else would the Minister take it to be?

Mr. Power: I do not know. It might be Rockhampton or some other place.

Mr. MULLER: I said it was in my own experience. The point I am making is that much of the work the Ministers are engaged upon is unnecessary. A great deal of the trouble would be avoided if the Ministers could be relieved in that direction. It is not just a question of the additional cost because the extra £750 spread over the whole of Queensland is not a big matter.

Queensland is big enough to realise that the services of the State must go on. If it is necessary to have additional supervision we must be prepared to stand the cost of it.

Nevertheless, the tendency is for the Government to take more and more control from individuals, industry, and local governing bodies.

To my mind, if an additional Minister is necessary, it is a Minister for Material Supplies. We had a Commonwealth appointment in that respect during the war period. This officer did investigate the supply position from time to time. Our method of dealing with this problem today is quite wrong. We are not going to bring about an improvement by controls and regimentation. We must get down to some form of production. If the Government are prepared to set up a department to investigate ways and means of bringing about greater production, then we shall get somewhere, but continual interference of the kind I mention will not enable us to overtake our lags. That is the root of our trouble today. If work necessitates the appointment of an additional Minister, then when we are aware that some of our Ministers are doing a great deal of unnecessary work the argument for the appointment does not hold water. I am not concerned about the monetary side of the appointment, although it is an important principle. We must tackle the problem from the other end, and cease regimenting, controlling, and harassing those people who desire and can help to produce materials and food and advance the interests of Queensland.

Hon. E. J. DUGGAN (Toowoomba—Minister for Transport) (12.47 p.m.): There are only one or two observations I want to make on this measure and I am impelled to do so by the contributions to the debate of hon. members opposite. I do not propose to traverse the reasons motivating the Government for introducing this measure as they have been adequately dealt with by both the Premier and Deputy Premier. I do think certain Opposition members are treading very dangerous ground indeed if in order to secure some cheap publicity they suggest that Ministers should divest themselves of a certain amount of detail work that they are now obliged to discharge, because if that is to be the gravamen of their charge Ministers will have to have a common policy as to how much time they are willing to set aside to consider tentative proposals and suggestions by Opposition members from time to time. The other day the Deputy Leader of the Opposition took up about an hour and a half of my time over a railway proposal.

Mr. Maher: That was not a detail. That was a matter of policy.

Mr. DUGGAN: If there is some suggestion about what an hon. member's qualification should be then there should also be an appreciation of his parliamentary responsibility. Today it is almost a physical impossibility to get steel and rails for major public works in any part of Australia. I had the Chief Civil Engineer of Railways in New South Wales to see me the other day. The steel requirements of the New South Wales railways for the next 10 years are approximately 322,000 tons and the availability from Australia is approximately 100,000 tons.

Maintenance requirements for the Queensland railways approximate 50 miles of rails a year, but we are getting only sufficient rails for 15 or 20 miles of maintenance work. Anyone who reads the newspapers and studies the articles available in the Parliamentary Library know that there is a world-wide shortage of steel. He knows that there is a great shortage of labour in Australia today. Then why waste the time of a responsible Minister in placing before him a proposal that cannot be implemented?

Mr. Nicklin: You think your time was wasted the other day?

Mr. DUGGAN: As far as I am concerned, it means that the matters to which I have to devote consideration must be postponed when I give time to hon. members for the unfolding of proposals to which we know effect cannot be given. When I make that time available, I have to return to my office at night, as I have been doing every night, and to take to Toowoomba at the week-end a whole bag full of memoranda that I have been unable to deal with during the day.

I have a table full of memoranda down there now which you cannot attend to during the day because of constant interruption.

Mr. Muller: Can you not do it?

Mr. DUGGAN: I have done it. We have been challenged that we are engaging in too much detail in these things. This morning the Leader of the Opposition asked me a very long question involving all sorts of considerations from the Railway Department. Why did he not go to Mr. Lingard or to the Commissioner and ask for that information privately? He asked me in this House so that I would accept responsibility for that reply. When that reply comes to me I have to make the answer. I ask the secretary to assemble what are considered to be the facts of the position, and I have to convince myself that the reply is suitable. I have to have some understanding of the background. Considerable time is spent analysing the data prepared before a reply is given. It is not true to say that the replies furnished by the Minister are in all instances the work of the officer. The reply to a controversial question is done entirely by me after studying facts assembled by departmental officers. In regard to the receiving of deputations I always endeavour to familiarise myself with the pros and cons of the position before a deputation is received; and that involves time, study and research of the particular proposal.

Mr. Brand: It has been done all down the ages.

Mr. DUGGAN: Nobody denies that; but we have been met with the challenge that it is the wrong policy; and that the Minister is wasting time dealing with these things, according to the hon. member for Fassifern. If hon. members say that let them go to the departmental officers and we will confine our activities to the work of the House. I do not think any hon. member can charge me with discourtesy in the reception of a deputation.

Mr. Nicklin: You are making it difficult for members to ask you.

Mr. DUGGAN: I am asking the hon. gentleman to stand up to his responsibility. For the purpose of cheap propaganda he opposed the Bill and tried to imply that the Ministers are a lot of nincompoops or that they immerse themselves in detail.

Mr. NICKLIN: Who said that? I rise to a point of order. It is objectionable to me to have a Minister endeavour to put words into my mouth. He said that I implied that Ministers were nincompoops. I did nothing of the sort. I gave Ministers credit for the work they do. I ask the Minister to withdraw that.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have always conceded to the Leader of the Opposition that he is generally most courteous and fair in his submissions. He said that I imputed improper motives to him. If I have been guilty of imputing motives to him that are objectionable I unreservedly withdraw; I regret it very much indeed. I felt that on this occasion the hon. member lapsed from the high standard he has consistently maintained over a number of years. I do not want to be personal, but, if Ministers are to be put on the spot, are we not entitled to ask how often do we have members of the Opposition ringing us up and saying, "Consider this as a personal interview." They cannot come up to the office but they expect to get a letter over the Minister's signature stating that representations have been submitted to the Minister so that they will be all right with the person or body for whom they made representations. I do not want to be personal, but the hon. member for Fassifern comes along about the project for the electrification of the railway to Southport, which may be desirable.

Mr. Hiley: That is not detail.

Mr. DUGGAN: The point I make is that if members of the Opposition have an appreciation of the physical impossibility of doing certain things in a certain time they should have enough courage not to waste the time of the Minister but to tell their people it is entirely impracticable but when the material position is improved to enable those projects to be considered they will be happy to place them before the Minister.

Mr. Morris: On your argument the investigation of the electrification of the railways was a waste of time.

Mr. DUGGAN: Not at all. It is a matter that can be proceeded with within a reasonable time. If the hon. member read the submissions of the committee he would see that the extension of the area the hon. member for Fassifern is interested in was such a development that could take place only some time after the Brisbane and suburban scheme had been brought into operation.

The important point is: why waste the time of the Minister in advocating a particular thing that would not be put into operation until the suburban lines had been dealt with?

Mr. Brand: You are there for that purpose.

Mr. DUGGAN: I have already indicated that Ministers are willing to do that; I am quite willing to do that and have done it over the past two years, but I am not going to do it and be the victim of continual attacks by members opposite who suggest that Ministers should immediately divest themselves of all these things. On every letter that goes out to a member of Parliament, when there is something that is more than purely formal routine procedure, I have always asked to have a look at the file. That all involves time, but I desire to give every member of this Parliament, because of his position, the fullest opportunity of having his case fairly and adequately considered. I, therefore, like to do all hon. members the courtesy of seeing that all the facts have been properly appreciated by the department.

There are many occasions when the departmental officer is concerned only with the point of view of his department; for instance take the haulage of timber at the present time. There is the railway point of view—if there is availability of wagons the work should be done by the Railway Department. Sometimes the sawmillers suggest, why should it not be hauled by road? The Commissioner of Transport might favour that policy. I have to consider the point not only from the Railway Commissioner's point of view but the point of view of the Commissioner of Transport and also the miller's point of view. In addition I have to consider the impact on Government policy. There are four or five considerations that the Minister has to take into account before he finally puts his signature to a decision one way or the other. It is certainly part and parcel of the Minister's responsibility to do that; but surely we are getting to a pretty all-time low in the standard of debate if, for some cheap publicity purposes, the Opposition seek in their statements to discredit this measure and suggest that Ministers of the Crown are unnecessarily occupying themselves with a good deal of trivial detail when much of it is the result of representations from the Opposition benches.

Mr. Nicklin: That is putting the Opposition in a difficult position in regard to deputations.

Mr. DUGGAN: I challenge the hon. gentleman as Leader of the Opposition to state any occasion, prior to my announcement here today, on which I have in any way retarded or prevented him from having the fullest and easiest access to me as ministerial head of the Railway Department.

Mr. Nicklin: You certainly have not.

Mr. DUGGAN: So long as the hon. gentleman is willing to acknowledge that that is so, I shall be very happy indeed to see those facilities are extended. The whole gravamen of the charges from the Opposition this morning has been to discredit the work of Ministers in a general way and to suggest that much of this work should be

done by officers in the departments. On all these occasions the Opposition hold not the departmental officers but the Minister of the department responsible. Every day there are questions from the Opposition asking a Minister to justify certain action.

Mr. Brand: A lot of your controls are unnecessary.

Mr. DUGGAN: That is beside the point.

I hope I have made the position on this matter clear. I am very disappointed indeed with the Leader of the Opposition because I have always found him to be quite fair and generous in his criticism, and I regret very much that he has lapsed on this occasion from his very high standard of the past.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (2.15 p.m.): The consideration of this matter is moving rather strangely. As I listened with sufficient care to the arguments of the Government, it seemed to me that a fair condensation of their case was that they were asking for this extra appointment on an ad-misericordiam basis. Here is a picture of a lot of over-weighted beasts of burden borne down with the weight of their office, and it is necessary to have some relief in order to shape up to the vast burdens that are theirs. That, I gather, after listening carefully to a series of Government speakers, appears to be the case for the extra assistance.

From this side of the House it has been contended that much of the burden is avoidable, that it is because of the predilection of Ministers for burdening themselves with detailed matters that should properly be left in the first instance to the Public Service that Ministers find themselves bowed down in the way they are.

It was the manner in which that particular argument was presented that brought the previous speaker, the Minister for Transport, to his feet with a contribution that impressed me as being more notable for the heat of its presentation than for its objective examination of the problem. I say that because, as the Minister for Transport well knows, I have the greatest possible regard for not only him but the many and repeated fine contributions he has made to the logical objective examinations of matters in this House, and if I say that his contribution before lunch this morning was well below the usual standard of his contributions in this Chamber, I do say it would take many such to destroy the very fine impression he has always created with me personally and with hon. members of this Assembly in general.

The Minister tells us in effect that much of the Ministerial burden is due to the fact that members of Parliament, Opposition members in particular, worry him and other Ministers with matters of detail. I propose to examine that complaint in some measure, but I am bound to observe that the two examples—and there are only two—that the Minister gave to this House utterly failed to illustrate his point. The first example was a request for a rail link from the Mary Valley line to Kileooy. The Minister after describing it went on to

say, "This is a major work and the hon. member should know that major works of that kind are not possible in these times of acute shortages." By what stretch of reasoning a matter that is a major work one moment becomes a matter of mere detail the next, I cannot see. I can think of no more important matter of policy coming within the responsibilities of the Minister for Transport than a rail link or a railway extension. That, to me, is railway policy par excellence. It is no trivial matter of detail.

Mr. Duggan: I was referring to the timing of the presentation, not the actual project.

Mr. HILEY: I shall have something to say on the timing. The second illustration the Minister gave was a request for the electrification of the South Coast railways. Here again I suggest that the Minister gave as an illustration of what he chose to portray as unnecessary and avoidable detail one of the most important matters of policy his department will consider now or in the future.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I observe that if there was any weight to the Minister's objections—and I concede that there was some—he gave the House very poor and unsuitable illustrations in support of the argument he was advancing.

If, Mr. Speaker, I felt that his examples were bad I think his comments worse. In effect, he told the House that it was the duty of private members, when constituents saw them on matters such as those he illustrated, to take the responsibility of deciding and saying to the deputation that the matter in question should not be presented. Who is the Minister for Transport? Who in this Parliament is entrusted with the decision of questions of railway policy in this State? Sixty-two individual members or the Minister for Transport? I go so far as to say that if 62 separate members of Parliament took upon themselves this responsibility of deciding issues such as those illustrated by the Minister it would be a grossly improper approach to the whole question.

I agree, and I think every hon. member of Parliament will agree, that hon. members commonly offer some advice concerning what they feel is the principle applying to a particular proposal. When matters are put to me I have frequently said, "You can advance that argument if you wish—it is your privilege—but all I can say is I do not think you have much chance of success." I think every hon. member will admit that at some stage or other he has expressed himself in such terms and that, I submit, is as far as he can be expected to go. It is not our duty severally to determine matters of railway policy. It is our duty to act as the vehicle for our constituents to state their case to the responsible Minister, and I suggest that the advice the Minister for Transport tendered to this House was not the true approach to matters of this kind.

One of the arguments the hon. gentleman advanced was the timing of these requests, and again I join issue on the question whether

we should determine the timing of what is generally desirable and whether we should take the responsibility of saying to a deputation, "Look, we think now is not the time to bring it forward; bring it up in two years' time when things are different from what they are now."

Mr. Duggan: What would be the normal reaction of an hon. member of Parliament when he was informed that it was only waste of time receiving a deputation? If I said such a thing I should be regarded as discourteous.

Mr. HILEY: I have not suggested that the hon. gentleman should do that. The Minister quarrelled with the timing of advancing some of these requests. I suggest that there is no greater duty upon any responsible Government than to be looking not only to the needs of today and the possible needs of today but to the needs of tomorrow and the possibilities of tomorrow. The correct approach to ministerial responsibility should be made with one eye to the present and at least another eye to the future. Matters that are presently impossible can be noted by the department and put on the list of desirable works for the future, to run the gauntlet of considerations of timing and all other factors in planning of great public enterprises. To suggest that we should say to the deputation that the immediate timing is bad and that we should refuse the request is not an adequate reason for declining to bring the matter before the notice of the responsible Minister. I am willing to agree with the Minister that hon. members at some time or other have been guilty of presenting some matters for ministerial consideration that come within the category of detail and in which an approach to ministers could have been avoided.

Let us accept that that is substantially true to a degree. What then? Is that fact to be justification for appointing an extra Minister? Should not the correction be to say to me and to every other member of Parliament, "You must not worry Ministers with avoidable matters of detail. Go to them by all means on matters that touch on the policy of the departments they administer, but when it comes to avoidable matters of detail don't worry the Ministers. Raise them with the departmental officials concerned and only go to see the Ministers as a court of appeal if you do not get satisfaction." That would be accepting the whole weight of the Minister's argument at its full value. I show there that there is an alternative approach to this question even if the Minister's argument was accepted as 100 per cent. correct.

Let us now deal with the issue, the appointment of an additional Minister. I am not blind to the advantages of having separate responsibilities for the Ministries of Mines and Lands. I agree, and I conceded at the first-reading stage, that both those departments can have an exceedingly heavy responsibility to discharge in the next decade in Queensland's history. I think there is

an advantage in separating them. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is time this House was concerned with the overall rise in the cost of government.

In the first half of this session we imposed a substantial increase in the total cost of government when we increased the salaries of the existing members and provided a superannuation scheme. Both of those added fairly substantially to the total cost, but on top of that comes a 20-per cent. increase in the total number of members and that 20 per cent. goes right through the whole field of expenditure on the cost of administration. Again, there comes the question of the appointment of an extra Minister. I say this to the Government: I believe the public have reached a stage when their toleration of the continued increased cost of government has been stretched to breaking point. I do not think it is a prudent thing for us today to further increase those costs on top of the increases incurred last year, which I supported in some degree so far as we have gone. I believe the time has now come when we should ask ourselves: are we justified in adding a further increase to the cost of government in this State? If I judge public temper aright, I do not think the public will welcome a further increase in the cost of government.

My belief is that the clear duty of this Parliament lies along the lines of the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition. If it is possible, by a reallocation of duties, to avoid an extra Ministerial appointment, then I think every member on the Government side will agree that such extra appointment is not justified. The House has not been shown that it is not possible to avoid that extra appointment. Therefore, in order to permit a very thorough examination of such a possibility and to insure that when the matter finally comes before us for consideration we shall be in a position to be shown that every possible examination has been given to the problem in order to avoid any extra payments and that we are asked to do it only when it is demonstrated that it is clearly unavoidable, I move the following amendment:—"Omit the word 'now,' and add to the question the words 'this day six months.'" The motion, as amended, would read—

"That the Bill be read a second time this day six months."

My purpose in moving clearly and purely a delaying measure is to provide this House with the opportunity of being shown clearly and conclusively that there is no alternative to the appointment of an extra Minister, and for the purpose of being supplied with some information that will enable us to say whether some reallocation of the duties would meet the position and whether that aspect has been fully explored and examined. If that was done, one would then take a different view of the measure.

Mr. MAHER (West Moreton) (2.30 p.m.): This Bill to create an additional Ministerial office has been very badly timed. I greatly question the necessity for the Government's action. There is a lot in the point

that has been adduced to show that if the curtain of the future had been lifted at the time we were asked to make a decision with respect to an increase in Parliamentary salaries and an increase in Ministerial salaries and if it had been known then that the Government intended to heavily increase the cost of government by the creation of an additional Ministerial appointment many of us would have drawn the line then.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Is it the intention of the hon. member to second the amendment?

Mr. MAHER: I am prepared to second it.

In my observation a better coverage of Ministerial duties could be effected by a reshuffle of Ministerial offices by placing those offices more equitably on the respective Ministers. Some Ministers appear to be overburdened with responsibilities, and other Ministers not so heavily laden down. It is a matter of evening up the load. That is largely a matter for the initiative of the Premier. He should see that he has a good working team and so readjust the responsibilities that each Minister is pulling his weight. If that was done there would be no need to increase the number of Ministers. Another factor is that many a man who aspires to Ministerial rank, and many of the men who actually attain Ministerial office in Queensland have not, by virtue of their earlier environment, been used to exercising the powers of self-reliance. They very often have been employees of some kind and have had to carry out the bidding of others. They have not had the experience of dealing with the larger aspects and broader outlines of directive policies. Therefore they are more at home in matters of detail. Their special forte is getting down to detail work, which could be delegated to a junior clerk. They get befuddled and tangled up in the terrific quantum of files of correspondence in which decisions should be delegated to responsible officers of their department.

After all, a Minister is the political head and a link between a government department, its capable officers and the public. He should place himself in a position where he would consider only the wider problems affecting his department and the State generally, and be able to meet what arises in the House as well as receive deputations from the public on matters concerning his department. As I see it, Ministers are working day and night with files and great bundles of matters that are not a Minister's province at all. A Minister could kill himself by surrounding himself with bundles of matter like that. The Minister should be able to keep his table reasonably clear every day because he has only to concern himself with the difficult problems.

The Premier was a particular offender in this respect himself. During the period he was Secretary for Health and Home Affairs he was a man who worked hard—I grant that—but he delved into a whole wealth of details in the department over which he

presided which he could well have delegated to capable officers on whom he could place the onus and responsibility; and if they let him down and failed to carry out his policy he could have dealt with them.

What I have seen of the Socialist Ministers over the years causes me to think that whilst they are zealous enough and hard-working enough, they cannot get away from the tuppenny-ha'penny outlook, and they cannot take the broader vision and so help to devise big schemes that will be of some value to the country. Their time is spent in dealing with all the pettifogging details. You would never get a man like Napoleon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar or Cecil Rhodes to act like that. If they were going to sit down and sign all the correspondence and read every file and deal with jobs that ought to be delegated to their subordinate officers they would never have risen to the dizzy heights they reached; they would not have done so if they allowed their minds to be clouded and their energies frustrated by dealing with detail. If Ministers kept to their correct sphere, if they contented themselves with dealing with broad outlines of political policy in their relation to the department over which they presided they would have ample work to do; and the work of the department should be carried out by the officers Parliament appoints to do the job.

I heard the Minister for Transport say this morning that he has to bring back to the house at night a sheaf of memoranda dealing with all sorts of things. I hate to think that if I were the Minister for Transport I should have to sit back in my room every night and run through a whole heap of files dealing with railway administrative matters. That should be the duty of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner, the chief clerk, the chief accountant, or somebody else whose special responsibility it should be. Place the onus of responsibility on that man; put the harness of responsibility on the man who has to discharge that special duty. If extra responsibility is involved, raise the status of the officer concerned and make him take the strain; make him be responsible for the decisions he makes in carrying out the directions and policies of the Minister concerned. If it is done that way—and after all that is the only common-sense way—the Minister would have time to meet members of Parliament and their deputations on things that involve Government policy.

The Minister for Transport waxed eloquent and grew very indignant at the fact that a deputation introduced by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cooroora about a railway link near Brooloo affecting their constituencies occupied an hour and a half—an hour and a half on this ridiculous proposal! Was it ridiculous? I say no. The duty rests on the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Cooroora, if they are approached by their constituents, to seek an interview with the Minister of Transport on the question. That is where the real link comes in—between the political head of the Department of Railways, the members concerned, and the public who are at the back of those members, and who have the right to make that approach.

That is one of the things in our railway system where political policy is involved. It was the bona-fide and correct thing for the Minister to receive the deputation. If the Minister felt that because of the times in which we live, shortages of steel and other factors make the construction of such a railway link more or less remote, his duty was to convey courteously to the members concerned the fact that it might be seven, eight, or ten years before there would be a sufficiency of steel for this project and no matter how sympathetically he looked at it he thought it might be best if the deputation did not come. He could have put that up. Nevertheless, if these men felt that they should be heard, even though they realised the shortage of steel, and wanted to put their project before the Minister for consideration when the shortages would be overcome, it would still be his duty to receive them. That is one of his real jobs. But we hear of Ministers being burdened down with files, worrying themselves to death, and going grey-haired in the process, and we know they are frequently absent from their places in the House. This places Parliament, because of their absence, at a low ebb in the opinion of the public, and these are the things that cause their absence.

When I sat in my first Parliament it scintillated with able men, the debates in the House were brilliant; that was because members sat in this House in the afternoon and night sittings. Do not forget, either, Mr. Speaker, that we had at that time in power a Government comprised of Ministers who did not burden themselves down with details but who were able to come into this Chamber and deal with matters of policy here. We would find them on the front benches day and night, every day, every session. Therefore, when the Premier, who then sat on this side of the House in opposition, in the time of the Moore Government—he sat under the leadership of Mr. Forgan Smith—got up to speak from his place on these benches he found a full line of Ministers on the front bench to hear what he had to say. Today that courtesy is not accorded to the Opposition in this House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: I am leading up to the point—

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member should lead up to the point and connect his remarks with the question.

Mr. MAHER: If Ministers weigh themselves down with a whole heap of detail and feel they owe a greater obligation to their departmental files than to this Parliament they are doing something to break down this pillar of parliamentary democracy. Their duty is here in this House when the House is sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: It all comes round to the point: if the Ministers were to hang a question mark onto the way in which they actually trust their departmental men,

examine their relationship with the department, or as it were, have a sort of inquisitorial questionnaire—

Mr. Kerr: Self-analysis.

Mr. MAHER: Yes, have a self-analysis to ascertain whether it is not possible for them to get through a heap more work and perform a useful function in their relationship with the Parliament by using the capable departmental staffs they have and placing a greater measure of trust and responsibility in those men, we should perhaps get somewhere. After all, in life we have to trust somebody. I have always followed that policy in my own dealings. I have had to meet all kinds and manners of men, different types, men with different angles, different outlooks, and I find there is good in every man: if you put the responsibility on him, trust him, he will not let you down.

Thus treated, the men in the departments would discharge their jobs. Let such a man feel that the Minister trusts him. If the Minister has the ability to think up what his line is, let him tell him and ask him to follow it through. He will follow it through and so relieve the Minister of a great deal of work and responsibility and free him up sufficiently to enable him to come into this House, sit on the front Bench, hear what the Opposition have to say and help make this democratic Parliament do its job.

One of the things that saddens me when I get up from time to time is to see a more or less empty Chamber with only one or two Ministers on the front Bench.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MAHER: In deference to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, let me say that the Ministers could improve things a great deal. There would not be the necessity for a Bill of this kind seeking to create an additional Minister if the job was done right.

I suppose the arguments that are formulated here today for the creation of one additional Minister could quite easily be used in two or three years' time by these or similar types of men for the creation of still further Ministers. They could use precisely the same arguments to say that they should have two more Ministers. They could argue that the work has increased, that the system of government today is entirely different from what it was in the past, that the demands from hon. members are much heavier, that they have so many interviews, that they have so many signatures to make, so many decisions to arrive at, that it takes so much time that there is room for two more Ministers.

Since Ministerial salaries were increased I have detected a quivering tension prior to every Caucus meeting as this one and that one unsheathes his sword and goes in hot pursuit of the spoils. Before the Ministerial salary increase the atmosphere prior to a Caucus gathering was not so thick; more peace and harmony prevailed; there was a more brotherly feeling, but since the salary has been increased it has become a sort of lodestar, a magnet to a great number; and

there are frustrated hopes, baffled ambitions and pressure within Caucus at its meeting, and this Bill is the result.

An example of what can happen can be seen by looking over the Federal scene. During the war the Socialist Government at Canberra found reasons and excuses for the appointment of a great number of new Ministers and brought the total up to 19 Ministers of the Crown in a Parliament of 75 members. The war has ended but I do not notice any reduction in the number of Ministers appointed to meet the special strain and stress connected with the prosecution of a war. There are still 19 Ministers down there and there are some queer and strange birds amongst them. There is that very strange fellow, Mr. Scully, Vice-President of the Executive Council, whose special job seems to be to move the gag. If there is a case for a Vice-President of the Executive Council, there is a case for the restoration of the Usher of the Black Rod in this Parliament.

Then we have other men, busybodies who talk of this and who talk of that, people like Mr. Calwell and Mr. Ward, who make great trouble for Australia and for themselves. Having too many Ministers can be a very great embarrassment, and I hope the Premier will mark, note and inwardly digest the fact that he can create a whole heap of bother for himself, as the late Mr. Curtin and his successor, Mr. Chifley, did with this great team of 19 Ministers at Canberra. They all talk out of their turn and create great embarrassment for the Prime Minister.

If the Premier here perseveres with his plan to extend the number of Ministers in his Cabinet he will find himself with his Wards, Calwells and Scullys and the whole team of mischief-makers and fire-eaters poking their noses into this and into that, creating trouble for everybody and in particular for this decent country which does not deserve to have them.

However, I say that I cannot see that the need exists for the creation of an additional portfolio. If I thought in my heart reasonably and conscientiously that it was necessary to create an additional office, I should not hesitate to say so. We have lost one important function that was at one time exercised in this State—the right of collection of income tax. That has now gone to the Federal authorities, and if the Federal people can get their way they would shear off more instrumentalities and activities, but they have been thwarted by several referendums held on the subject. I hope that public feeling will continue to give to the State its right in the political sphere. If we are to justify our responsibility as a sovereign State and resist these inroads upon our sovereignty by Canberra authorities, then I say we must have a lively sense of our responsibilities, and not outrage those good people who believe in upholding the State's rights. Do not let us outrage public opinion by going too far and seeking too many concessions at the expense of the public purse.

In recent times this has been emphasised. First of all there was an increase in Parliamentary salaries, followed by a Parliamentary

pension scheme, and substantial increases in the payments to Ministers. The Opposition have, generally speaking, given support to the Government along these lines, but it is to be remembered, Mr. Speaker, that it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and if we are to go on taking more and more at the expense of the public, then I say there will be a day of retribution, and State rights might suffer in consequence. Let us stand up to our responsibilities; let there be a reshuffle of Ministerial duties in such a way as to equalise the burden amongst the 10 members of Cabinet. I have not the slightest doubt that if that was done in the true spirit of esprit de corps there would be no difficulty in Ministers meeting the many calls in so many directions upon their time.

I should like to emphasise, now that this measure will go through—we cannot defeat the Government's intention, not having the weight of numbers to do so—that I should like Ministers to consider the points of criticism submitted here today, and with an extra Minister to share their duties they might be good enough to give a little more attention and courtesy on the front benches when debates are in progress.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (2.54 p.m.): I can hardly believe that the hon. member who moved the amendment is really sincere, because if there is any justification for the appointment of an extra Minister there is as much today as there would be in six months' time. The postponing of the decision for six months does not face the question at all.

I have never heard a better case put up for the rule of bureaucracy than I heard in the cases stated by the hon. members for West Moreton and Logan. In effect, they said that Ministers know too much about their departments and that Ministers poke their noses into things in their departments. They say that Ministers make inquiries about the work of their officers, and check up on how the officers are performing their duties to the public. I say that it is a very desirable thing—very desirable indeed. The proposal to increase the number of Ministers is not made because of Ministers who are broken down and want relief. Each of those 11 Ministers will be working full time, just the same as they are now, but it is desired to give better, quicker and more efficient service to the public.

A tremendous amount of Government money is expended on giving service to the people. That is what we are here for. We are the servants of the people, entrusted for the time being with legislative and executive responsibility. Our oath of office sets out that we will serve the people. Each Minister takes an oath that he will faithfully serve the people without fear or favour. That is his job. Obviously, the larger the ramifications of government grow, and the more legislation you put upon your statute book, the wider the field of service to the public grows.

We have not got a public as we had back in the dark ages, when the hon. member for

West Moreton learnt his politics, who would accept without question not only decisions of members of Parliament but decisions of Ministers too; we have a public who are keenly interested in their own welfare and in the reactions of a Government working for their welfare. They are not a bit backward in submitting their criticisms, suggestions or requests. Hon. members on both sides of the House know the number of requests they have to pass on—and rightly so—to the Ministers from their electorates. I say that an elector who approaches his representative in this House asking for any reasonable case to be made out at all for him or any reasonable request to be made for him has the right to have that done and it is the duty of the member representing that constituent to see that the request or the complaint goes to the Minister concerned.

Mr. Macdonald: The Minister for Transport does not think that.

Mr. HANLON: No, that is not correct. He said that hon. members opposite should abstain from introducing deputations at a time when their objectives were not practicable. Very rarely does a day pass here when we do not see 12, 16, 18 or 20 questions asked by hon. members opposite. I am not objecting to that, but very few of those questions ask for any information that an hon. member could not get by a ring on the telephone to the officer or the department concerned. That is what I find from just glancing through those questions. Hon. members do not do that. They get up here in the House and give notice that they will ask the Minister about it.

Mr. Brand: That is the publicity value.

Mr. Sparkes: You were one of the worst offenders when you were not in office.

Mr. HANLON: I was not an offender. I exercised a privilege. I know that I could have saved quite a lot of the Minister's time, but at that time I wanted the public to know that I was making those inquiries. Take the hon. member for West Moreton and the question he asked me this morning. He gave notice of a question concerning some roof that had been loosened in a cyclone in Central Queensland, obviously for no other reason than that he proposes to be a Senate candidate at the next Federal election, otherwise his political attentions would be centred out here in West Moreton and not up round Port Curtis.

Mr. Maher: I got the complaint.

Mr. HANLON: I am anticipating a question tomorrow concerning something at Burketown or something of that kind, because the hon. member is now turning his mind to becoming one of those useless Johnnies he was talking about down at Canberra. He was talking about the useless, queer and strange fellows down at Canberra.

He is seizing every opportunity to put more and more work on Ministers by asking public questions that might gain him a little publicity.

That is all by the way. I am not complaining about the asking of questions by hon. members. That is a privilege hon. members enjoy, and answering them is a courtesy that every Minister should extend to an hon. member, irrespective of which side of the House he sits on. There is nothing wrong and nothing to be ashamed of in the fact that hon. members want their constituents to know that they are taking an interest in the welfare of the district by asking these questions publicly. Hon. members must remember, though, that the answers to them take up a lot of work and time of Ministers. It takes at least half an hour to get the information, all of which has to be checked up. Sometimes hon. members do not agree with the presentation of the answers because they do not believe it properly expresses what they want. The public are not concerned with policy; they are more concerned with getting the job done. The Minister frequently perceives that no good purpose can be served by answering a question in the form of the answer presented to him because it does not give a true picture in reply to the questions asked and quite frequently sends the question back to the official concerned so that the information will be framed to convey to the public mind what is desired.

Mr. Brand: And so that you will get a bit of publicity from it.

Mr. HANLON: That may be so, but if the dry-as-dust language of the official of the department in giving an answer in strictly legal terms to a question asked here was accepted, it would probably be beyond the questioner to understand it. It is therefore put into proper language so that it can be generally understood and its meaning appreciated.

The hon. member for West Moreton said that when he first came into the House this was a real live Parliament. That was under the Moore Government's regime. The only real live party then was on the Opposition benches. The hon. member for West Moreton said that the Ministers then were always present in the House. They were not. The sittings of Parliament were then held at night so that the Ministers could attend to their private business in the morning. Those men had business and professional interests.

Mr. Maher: They attended to deputations in the morning.

Mr. HANLON: Most of their administrative work while in the House was done in the Minister's room. I was here and I know what happened in this House.

Mr. Maher: I was here, too. Very few of them had private interests.

Mr. HANLON: Nothing was more tragic than to see Ministers on the front bench, under the Moore Government regime, perfectly and utterly incapable of meeting criticism of their departments. In 1931 I made a speech here during which I used a phrase for which I was criticised by some of my own people. That phrase was that the real tragedy of the Government was not so much their

policy as their hopeless incapacity to govern. Some of my people suggested that might be favourable to the Moore Government. It was not. Ministers sat on the front bench day after day and were never able to meet the criticism of the Opposition because they took their instructions from public servants. I could show hon. members files now on which the Minister's initials were put by some person other than the Minister. That was done while the Moore Government were in power.

The whole question of ministerial responsibility is involved in this matter. Members of this Parliament hold Ministers responsible for the efficiency of their departments. No Minister can be efficient if he does not, as the hon. member for West Moreton said, "poke his nose into it." He must know what every sub-department under his control is doing. For example, the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs could hardly hold that portfolio if he did not make himself proficient in each of the sub-departments under his control. In other words, it is his duty to know what is going on in every aboriginal settlement, for example. Should I have been capable of formulating hospital policy if I had not been round the country and seen the hospitals we administered? Should I have been capable of dealing with proposals for advances for water supply, road construction and bridge construction if I had not been round the country and seen what the people needed? Do not hon. members themselves frequently ask Ministers to come out to their electorates and see for themselves? I am not criticising that; I am saying it is necessary.

Most hon. members opposite see that they get some personal response from the Minister for any request. We get a tremendous amount of correspondence. The general policy pursued by Ministers is to answer letters addressed personally to the Minister by name. They are opened by the Minister's private secretary and they are seen by the Minister. If such a letter is addressed just to the official position it is opened by the official of the department and dealt with accordingly. If it is addressed to the Premier of Queensland it is an official communication and not necessarily intended for my personal attention. It is a communication to the official position. If it is addressed to "E. M. Hanlon," there is some reason for me to give an answer. I have endeavoured always to give a personal answer to every request I have got as far as I can; and I think every Minister has done likewise—and we receive all kinds of requests from all kinds of bodies throughout the State.

I received a letter the other day that gave me much thought. Normally it would not have been brought to my notice but it was unusual. It was a communication from a well-meaning person pointing out that the British Food Mission crop in Central Queensland would be subject to attack by rats when ripe, and he offered to donate 12 black cats of mixed sexes to be released in the area so that they could breed up and kill off the rats. He did not explain what the rats would live on while they were breeding up to be food

for the cats. You get all sorts of letters and that was brought under my notice because it was a bit unusual. I have given the person who wrote that letter a personal reply.

An Opposition Member interjected.

Mr. HANLON: I passed the buck to the British Food Corporation. I said that I would communicate his offer to this body and tell him what they thought of it.

Ministers get a tremendous amount of correspondence. I get letters from all over Queensland, the other States and New Zealand. I think as far as possible the Minister should see that any reply sent out by his department to any letter addressed to the Minister in person is courteously worded and the information correct as far as possible. We are endeavouring to give more service.

It is not a matter of lightening the load. Nobody has criticised the innovation we put on last year when we established information offices—a bureau of information in each building where any member of the public can walk in and say, for instance, “I want to make inquiries about weed poisoning; where do I go?” He is then told where to go. If he wants to know about getting a permit to build a house he is told the office and the floor on which it is situated. If he wants to know about pests in the street he is told to go to the Brisbane City Council, to such-and-such a department. That is costing a good deal of money but I maintain that it is worth it to the public. We have in every way tried to increase service to the public. At the present time I am preparing a book to be circulated amongst members of Parliament, newspapers and public bodies that would give them in alphabetical order the officer to see on any subject. That is the same as we had in the Information Bureau. When I saw the amount of work done by the Public Relations Department in preparing that information I realised that it should be in every chamber of commerce, in every shire council and newspaper office, in every trade union, and in every branch of a political party, irrespective of its political colour.

This was done so that any person interested in any Government office at all would have no trouble in finding out with whom to communicate and from whom he could expect a reply. All we are aiming at is giving better service to the people of Queensland.

Mr. BRAND (Isis) (3.10 p.m.): The Premier has not answered the amendment moved by the hon. member for Logan, in which that hon. member asked that the Bill be delayed for six months so that the Government could go further into the question whether it is necessary to increase the number or re-allocate the portfolios and duties of Ministers. The Premier has said nothing about that, and I would ask: are we not part and parcel of these amenities that we are providing for members of Parliament? In the first instance it was only in this session last year that the Premier came to members of the Opposition on the question of increases

of salaries for Ministers and members, but in the provision of another Minister of the Crown members of the Opposition were not taken into consideration at all. If the Premier had told the Opposition earlier this session that he proposed to increase the number of members of Parliament and Ministers the Opposition might not have supported him in his request for increased salaries. On that occasion the hon. gentleman and the members of his Government complained that their duties were very heavy and they were entitled to an increase. All members of the Opposition agreed to this, but we now have, in the closing hours of this session, the claim that it is necessary to appoint an additional Minister of the Crown. Judged by the other sovereign States, is this justified? This morning the Leader of the Opposition submitted that it was not, contending that the other States were able to carry on with a lesser number of Ministers than there is in Queensland today. The Premier knows that only one State in Australia has a greater number of Ministers than has Queensland, and that is New South Wales, with a population of 3,000,000 people. With a population of approximately one-third of that number, Queensland has 10 Ministers. This is more than the number in Victoria with a population of 2,000,000 people, and is certainly many more than in South Australia, West Australia and Tasmania.

The Leader of the Liberal Party in this House has submitted that the Bill stand over for six months in case a reallocation of portfolios would indicate to the people that there was no need to increase the cost of government. The amendment is reasonable, and the Premier should give consideration to it. According to his reply, he has not given any consideration to it, but maintains that the increase in the number of Ministers is to provide a better service to the people of Queensland. If his argument in that respect is sound, why stop at one Minister? Is it the policy of Socialist Governments to appoint increasing numbers of Ministers and to continue to increase the cost of government as the years roll on? In this session of Parliament we have increased the cost of government considerably, and are we not now bound to call a halt to the ever-increasing costs that the public have to pay? The people in all walks of life have to pay the piper.

It is strange that Ministers should be complaining that they are not able to carry out their duties today. One Minister indicated quite clearly this morning that Ministers are prepared to “stand over” hon. members on this side who dare to advance reasonable arguments against their claims. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition and the mover of this amendment that some good can come from a reallocation of the portfolios and Ministerial duties. I agree also with those who have said that the Ministers do a good job. Not one hon. member on this side has complained that they do not, but at least we say that if the present ten Ministers are overworked today they have been overworked for a long time.

The amendment does give this Parliament an opportunity to see whether we can save the people the expense that will be incurred by the appointment of an additional Minister, his private secretary, and other necessary employees.

Two of the Ministers who spoke today complained bitterly that a Minister must give every attention to the details of his department. Let me say with all due respect that not one hon. member has had the necessary training for the administration of the various departments of State and it is only right that those officers who have had a lifetime of training in the work and who have risen to such positions as director-general, under-secretary, director, and so on should be permitted to make a decision.

Mr. Bruce: They are not elected by the people.

Mr. BRAND: That is true, but at least, with a lifetime of training behind them, they should be permitted to make a decision. We are fast building up a type of public servant who, although in charge of a department, will not make a decision because he will be hauled over the coals by his Minister.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that Ministers might give less time to detail and more time to matters of policy. Since I have been in this Parliament I have never heard a Minister complain because an hon. member has introduced a deputation to him on a matter of policy. This morning the Minister for Transport complained and endeavoured to "stand over" the Leader of the Opposition because he had dared introduce a deputation to him on a major railway matter.

Mr. Power: That is not true.

Mr. BRAND: I am not complaining about the Secretary for Public Works, because he would be the last Minister to complain if an hon. member introduced a deputation to him concerning a major matter administered by his department.

Why, the Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government is never happier than when attending to the needs of three or four departments of State or holding down three or four portfolios. He is as happy as a schoolboy doing that, and I think it wrong for the Minister for Transport to stand up in this House as he did and say that if the attitude of the Opposition was as it is he was going to attend to the wants of the Government and not the wants of the Opposition. Such a statement should not come from the front benches of this House. I submit that the arguments adduced by the Leader of the Opposition and by the leader of the Liberal Party in this House should be taken note of and the Premier himself should answer those arguments. They were arguments whereby he could reduce the cost of government. Surely if we have managed to carry on with ten Ministers of the Crown for so many years we can carry on with the present number for another six months to enable the amendment to take effect. I think the amendment should be accepted.

Mr. JESSON (Kennedy) (3.22 p.m.): I take part in this debate because I have never heard so much hoovey indulged in by hon. members opposite and never have I heard such animus shown by the Opposition as in their stand today against the creation of another portfolio. Let there be two or three additional appointments made if they will further the interests of the people of Queensland and enable the work of departments of State to be carried out more efficiently. If this is done the Government will rise higher in the estimation of the people of Queensland; the Opposition will be brushed aside into oblivion. A monument should be erected in the memory of the Leader of the Opposition for his reactionary speech in knocking back Queensland.

Since 1926 there has been no increase in the number of Cabinet Ministers in this State, and, as everyone knows, Queensland has progressed tremendously since that time. Only a fool, and a real fool at that, would say that Queensland has not progressed tremendously since that time. The hon. member for Windsor's business has increased over the last 20 years or so. How many times has he increased the number of administrative officers in his factory? Other men in business have done the same thing. You have to move with the times.

I wish to quote from the Liberal Party's bible, "Hard Comment," a publication sent free to members, and there is no excuse for hon. members opposite for not reading it. This is a real vicious Tory paper and most of the contributions to it come from presidents of the Constitutional Association of New South Wales. On page 7 of this paper there is an article that says that parliamentary democracy needs a firm party system. It is a very good article, although it criticises the Chifley Government. At the same time it deals with the increase in the number of members of Parliament and what is considered to be the ultimate increase in the Federal Cabinet. I propose to read only parts of this paper.

It says—

"Parliamentary democracy won't work except on the basis of a strong party system. That means a few powerful major parties which can at any time take over the government of the country without having to depend, like French Governments, on embarrassing and precarious temporary alliances with other groups."

Then he criticises the Federal Government for its groups. The same thing would apply to a Liberal or Country Party Government. They would have to have their party meetings to frame their policies. Then it goes on—

"Bureaucracy is as much the result of the insufficiency of politicians as of anything else."

He further goes on—

"The new Parliament will, of course, be a larger one and the increased size of party rooms is likely to make for better government."

This is an article by Mr. H. M. Storey, President of the Constitutional Association of New South Wales. We will now go over to page 16. He says there—

“For one thing, since the deliberative work of Parliament has to be done by the ministerial party, when done by a hundred or more it will be more representative than when done by 60 or 70.”

He goes on further—

“A large cabinet indeed is a very good safeguard against bureaucracy.”

I cannot understand the hon. members of the Opposition when they complain about a bureaucratic Government, run by public servants. They say it is run by bureaucrats. They have slated this Government and the Federal Government over a period of years. They have slated the Chifley-Curtin Governments ever since they have been in power. It is stated here that they are a safeguard against bureaucracy. That is what they are condemning today. I suggest that it is political propaganda. I will repeat that again, because it is a nice tasty morsel—

“A large cabinet indeed is a very good safeguard against bureaucracy.”

“In the past senior ministers have had so much on their hands that they have wanted to avoid sessions of Parliament as much as possible, have had to deal brusquely with the party room, have become impatient of criticism and over-dependent on their departmental advisers.”

Most of the trouble with the Curtin Government and the Chifley Government in their early stages was that they were in the hands of bureaucrats created by the Tories in their day. They were very loth to administer Labour's policy or the policy of the party that was in power. Consequently, many of those misdeeds of the Chifley Government could be placed at the door of the bureaucrats whom the Opposition have quibbled about today. The Chifley and Curtin Governments, in their early stages, got into a lot of trouble for the simple reason that they were in the hands of people who would not give the policy of the party a fair go. Take the huge department that the Leader of the Opposition slated this morning. He deplored the fact that now the war is over the Defence Department has been split into three different sections. We know very well that in time of war it would be absolutely impossible for that department to be dealt with by one Minister.

I will now show what Mr. Storey suggests should be done when the redistribution takes place and the Commonwealth Parliament is enlarged. He says—

“But if each has only one portfolio (and an assistant where it is a major one), he should have the time and freedom of mind to pay a great deal of attention to what members of the party room have to say.”

Then he says—

“An idea of the magnitude of the change now possible can be gained from the following scheme:—

Prime Minister;
Treasurer (and Assistant Treasurer);
Minister for External Affairs (and Assistant);
Vice-President of the Executive Council;
Minister for Defence:
(Assistant Minister for the Army),
(Assistant Minister for the Navy),
(Assistant Minister for Air);
Attorney-General;
Minister for the Interior:
(Assistant Minister for Works and Housing),
(Assistant Minister, Chairman of C.S.I.R.);
Postmaster General;
Minister for Trade and Customs;
Minister for Information and Immigration;
Minister for Post-War Reconstruction;
Minister for Labour;
Assistant Minister for Shipping and Civil Aviation;
Minister for Health and Social Services;
Minister for Commerce;
Minister for Agriculture;
Minister for Repatriation;
Minister for External Territories; and
Minister for Commonwealth Relations.

The article goes on to say—

“Nineteen Ministers and eight Assistant Ministers make a team that the enlarged Parliament can easily manage. There would still be about 80 rank and filers left in the party room.

“Ministers would have the chance to do their job in Parliament as well as out of it, and the party room could play its part as it should.

“The portfolio of Commonwealth Relations is a very good suggestion made recently by Mr. Howard Beale, M.P., on his return from a trip to Britain.”

I have referred to this matter because it is the opinion of a man who is president of one of the biggest of our political institutions, outside the Labour Party, and it controls and formulates the policy of the Liberal-Tory Party. Mr. Storey, president of the Constitutional Association of New South Wales, proves quite conclusively the case of the Chifley Government. I am prepared to give a sucking-pig to any charitable institution if my surmise that the Opposition will oppose the creation of more Ministers in the Federal Government is wrong. Should that party attain the Government benches it would probably do the same as the Moore Government did—deprive the people of Parliamentary representation.

The need today is great. A member and former Leader of the Queensland People's Party in this House begged and implored the

Government to create a Department of Trade and Commerce to encourage secondary industries. In fact, he said he would call him Minister for Secondary Industries. Only the other day he said, further, that there should be a permanent Minister both in North Queensland and in Central Queensland, but overnight he or his Leader has changed the policy then enunciated. In other words, that party does not meet and make decisions on party lines.

The same applies to the Leader of the Opposition. When he was in North Queensland not so very long ago the hon. member for Mirani—I can be corrected if I am wrong—advocated the appointment of a Minister for North Queensland, and the creation of a new Northern State, because, he said, North Queensland did not get proper administration from the South. This Minister for North Queensland was to be permanently stationed at Townsville or Cairns. A similar statement was made with regard to the Western district, centred in Longreach. The party such hon. members represent somersaults when it enters this House.

Can anyone argue that it is not desirable that there should be created a Minister for Tourists for the development of the Northern parts of this State? He should be answerable to the people, and his duty should be to organise that huge industry for the benefit of this State. Is that not wanted? Our greatest development can result from the encouragement of the tourist trade. Should we be handicapped in this respect by the fact that a Minister is compelled to handle a number of sub-departments and thus cannot give his whole time to the job?

Can anyone tell me that the Secretary for Mines should not bend his whole energies to the revival of the mining industry, particularly tin-mining, as Queensland produces one-third of the tin produced in Australia? Should not that Minister devote his whole attention too to the revival of the mining industry, particularly the reopening of many of our old gold mines, as well as the development of the Blair Athol coalfield? Those are big things and affect the whole of the well-being of this State. We must have a Minister who will give the whole of his time to those matters.

The hon. member for Windsor has suggested that the Minister for Secondary Industries should do nothing else but travel and bring trade and commerce to this country. As a result of the trip overseas by Mr. Cooper—and I am sure the Premier's trip will have the same result—many people have come to Australia and helped the economic development of this country. If the attention of one man was devoted to each of these avenues there would be ample justification for the Government's increasing the number much further. The Government are only increasing the number by one. They would receive the backing of the public if they refused to allow a few thousand pounds to stand in the way of the proper handling of these departments. I believe the people would endorse

the action of the Government and they would not be against the creation of two or three other departments if necessary.

I did not hear the speech of the hon. member for West Moreton, as I was away on a deputation, but I heard the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Isis; and I am quite sure they are out of touch with public opinion altogether. It is apparent that the Leader of the Queensland People's Party is in agreement with the creation of another Ministry but he said he would like to see it wait for six months. I do not see why we should be kept waiting; if we adopted that policy we should never get anywhere. The hon. member for Isis and the Leader of the Opposition are still in short pants; they have not grown up. We are still progressing and I hope that within 12 months we shall have progressed to such an extent that it will be necessary to create two or three more Ministries.

Mr. EVANS (Mirani) (3.38 p.m.): I support the amendment. My main reason is that we were misled in this House when the salaries and the pensions Bills came down. The sequence of the legislation was wrong. This Bill, which seeks to increase the number of Ministers to 11, should have been brought forward before the Bill dealing with the increase in salaries. I believe there is a purpose behind the method adopted. I know the Government made up their minds on that occasion that there would be a new Minister. If they were honest, if they were genuine, would they not have told us all the facts on that occasion? Would they not have said, "We are making provision for a new Minister. We want you to have the full facts. We want you to have everything before you prior to making your decision." They are not only increasing the salary of ten Ministers, but they are going to have 11. That was No. 1 misrepresentation. No. 2 misrepresentation was that they knew that they had decided to increase the number of members by 13 and they withheld that also and misled us. There is no doubt about it. (Government laughter.) This is no laughing matter. If members on the other side get any satisfaction out of doing these things, it is not the way Parliament should function. There should be honesty and openness, and all the facts appertaining to matters that come before this House should be available to every member of it.

I repeat that there was misrepresentation and we were misled. I know that members on this side, I in particular, did think that members were working fairly hard and that there was reason for the increase that was put forward. I agreed also that Ministers had a full-time job. It would not be such a full-time job if all Ministers were capable but there are some very good Ministers and there are some that are not quite so good.

The Premier dealt with questions today mentioning the number that were asked, but almost every question I have asked has followed on correspondence on which I could not get a decision. The reason why I could

not get the decision was, I take it, that in most instances the Minister concerned was not competent to make the decision.

Mr. Hanlon: Did you write to the officer concerned or the Minister?

Mr. EVANS: I have written to both. This morning I asked a question about the Eungella land. I wrote a letter when I first came to this Parliament and I have written repeatedly since. The land has been surveyed and returned soldiers want to get on it. The Queensland Dairymen's Organisation presumed they would have 50 more members—they were given a district council—but this matter is still held up because the people in control of the department will not make a decision.

The Premier mentioned incompetence in the Moore Government. I do not think any of the Ministers in the Moore Government were incompetent, but if they were and if they were misguided I would ask the Premier who was his adviser as regards Blair Athol.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to allow a discussion on Blair Athol at this stage.

Mr. EVANS: I bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, but you have allowed the latitude to the Premier and on other matters.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would inform the hon. member that I have allowed members on my left the opportunity of replying to many of the points raised here today, but there must come a time when this debate must get onto the right track, and I suggest to the hon. member that he should not broaden it. A fair thing is a fair thing.

Mr. EVANS: I was only replying to the Premier. I asked him who advised him in regard to Blair Athol. I happen to know who advised him and all I want to say is that if he was advised by himself he needs to get a new adviser.

Mr. Hanlon: I had very competent advisers. My advisers had no personal profit to make out of doing anything concerned.

Mr. EVANS: They made a very bad job of it. The hon. gentleman has been misled by a stripling. He has been sold a pup and knows he has been sold a pup.

Mr. Hanlon: Nobody is getting anything out of it. That is what I struck wherever I went; somebody wanted to make something. That has been my job—to keep the hungry ghouls from getting their fingers into it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. EVANS: I oppose the Bill and I support the amendment because I believe that whether it is Labour Party, Country Party or any other party that is in power, when legislation is brought down in this House the whole of the facts should be presented to members. Since I have been a member the reverse has been happening. We were misled. We were told the Ministers were

being overworked but not that there was to be an extra Minister. The Government are deliberately misleading members of this Assembly. They knew on that occasion there was to be another Minister. Many of the decent Labour members, when the rise was put to them and they supported it before it came to this House, if they had known there was to be another Minister, probably would have brought about a reduction in the Minister's salaries. Hon. members opposite took advantage of the position to increase the salary. They led us to believe that there were to be only 10 Ministers when all along they knew there would be 11.

Mr. LOW (Cooroora) (3.45 p.m.): I rise to support the amendment. It is an inopportune time for creating an extra portfolio. I feel that with the reallocation of work it would be possible to hold this matter in abeyance until the end of this Parliament when, with a possible influx of new members, it might receive further consideration.

I was sorry to hear the outburst by the Minister for Transport this morning. I feel that he was prompted by the recent deputation that met him in connection with the construction of the rail link from Brooloo on the Mary Valley Line, to Woodford on the Kilcoy Line. I was pleased to be associated with that deputation and with the Leader of the Opposition. That project is a worthy one. It has been recommended by a Public Works Commission in the past and it is now being supported by all public bodies in the area. It was suggested that the time for introducing the matter was inopportune; but I suggest that it has never been more opportune, for not only would the project open up more fertile territory but it would also mean a double rail link to Gympie. The line to Gympie is heavily overtaxed now and the project we suggested would avoid the long delays that have been occurring. The position is acute and something must be done to alleviate it. I admit that shortage of steel would prevent its early completion but by bringing the matter forward in this way we ensure that it is kept constantly before the Government's notice.

I was sorry that the Minister should attack the Leader of the Opposition over the matter, for there is no finer or greater gentleman than the Leader of the Opposition. A fairer man is not to be found in this Parliament and I feel that the Minister was wrong this morning. While I have been in this Parliament the Minister for Transport has also proved to be a man easy of approach and willing on all occasions to do whatever he possibly can to help and advise on any matter we bring forward and I am confident that that spirit will continue. No Minister is better fitted than he is to put forward a case for the Government, because we all know that he works long hours and puts his best into the job. I feel that perhaps overwork may have caused fatigue and I am confident that he will regret his outburst of to-day.

As proof that the project is of importance let me inform hon. members that when we were discussing the deputation the Acting

Premier communicated with me and was good enough to say that he would be pleased to be present when the deputation was being received if we desired it. That offer by the Acting Premier proved that it was no trivial matter, that it was one of great importance to the State.

So far as I am personally concerned, and whilst I am a member of this House, I intend to continue my efforts to get this link constructed. I am sorry that the Minister for Transport has gone out of the Chamber, as several members of the deputation remarked—

Mr. Hanlon: You embarrassed him with your compliments.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think that the hon. member for Cooroora might now discuss the question before the House. I have given him ample latitude to reply to the Minister.

Mr. LOW: It has been said in this Chamber that an hon. member of this Assembly should offer advice to a deputation as to whether a Minister should be asked to receive it. I do not intend to exercise that power, should I be asked to lead a deputation to a Minister of the Crown. It is the Minister's responsibility to decide whether the deputation is worthwhile or not, and he should be willing to take the consequences of any criticism if he cannot see his way clear to receive the deputation.

In conclusion, I say that the Premier should give further consideration to this matter, because I feel that with an adjustment of duties the present difficulty can be overcome. We all realise that the duties of a Minister are numerous, but at the same time the appointment of an additional Minister is inopportune.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted (Mr. Hiley's amendment) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

In Division—

Mr. SPARKES: Is it in order for the hon. member for Merthyr to be present?

Mr. SPEAKER: I refer the hon. member to a very clear ruling I gave on a similar question, I think the year before last. I think I stated the position adequately, and if the hon. member will refer to that ruling he will find a very wide interpretation.

AYES, 34.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Ingram
„ Bruce	„ Jesson
„ Burrows	„ Jones
„ Clark	„ Keyatta
„ Collins	„ Larcombe
„ Copley	„ Mann
„ Davis	„ Moore
„ Devries	„ O'Shea
„ Donald	„ Power
„ Duggan	„ Roberts
„ Dunstan	„ Smith
„ Farrell	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Foley	„ Theodore
„ Gair	„ Turner
„ Gledson	„ Tellers:
„ Gunn	
„ Hanlon	Mr. Crowley
„ Hilton	„ Graham

NOES, 19.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. McIntyre
„ Brand	„ Müller
„ Decker	„ Nicklin
„ Evans	„ Plunkett
„ Heading	„ Sparkes
„ Hiley	„ Taylor, H. B.
„ Kerr	
„ Luckins	„ Tellers:
„ Macdonald	Mr. Chalk
„ Madsen	„ Low
„ Maher	

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time (Mr. Gair's motion)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Hanlon
„ Bruce	„ Hilton
„ Burrows	„ Ingram
„ Clark	„ Jones
„ Collins	„ Keyatta
„ Copley	„ Larcombe
„ Crowley	„ Mann
„ Davis	„ Moore
„ Devries	„ O'Shea
„ Donald	„ Power
„ Duggan	„ Smith
„ Dunstan	„ Taylor, J. R.
„ Farrell	„ Theodore
„ Foley	„ Turner
„ Gair	
„ Gledson	„ Tellers:
„ Graham	Mr. Jesson
„ Gunn	„ Roberts

NOES, 19.

Mr. Bjelke-Petersen	Mr. McIntyre
„ Brand	„ Müller
„ Chalk	„ Nicklin
„ Decker	„ Plunkett
„ Heading	„ Sparkes
„ Hiley	„ Taylor, H. B.
„ Low	
„ Luckins	„ Tellers:
„ Macdonald	Mr. Jesson
„ Madsen	„ Evans
„ Maher	„ Kerr

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

(The Chairman of Committees, Mr. Mann, Brisbane, in the chair.)

Clauses 1 to 4, both inclusive, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

THIRD READING.

Bill, on motion of Mr. Hanlon, read a third time.

The House adjourned at 4.8 p.m.