

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 9 MARCH 1949

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

QUESTIONS.

COMMONWEALTH BASIC WAGE CASE.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

“Referring to the published statement that the Commonwealth Government has decided to intervene in the basic wage claim before the Commonwealth Industrial Court, have the State Government received from the A.C.T.U. or any other body a request to take similar action? If so, what are the details of any such request and what decision, if any, has been reached?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—
“No.”

SHAFTESBURY HOMES.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

“With reference to the Government’s refusal to accept Shaftesbury Homes (Queensland Branch) as an approved organisation for child migration—in view of the fact that this society has homes ready and adequate funds for the maintenance of the children it desires to bring to Queensland, and that governmental encouragement of the scheme in 1945 led to the formation of the organisation for this very purpose—what is the reason for the necessary approval now being withheld?”

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"I refer the hon. member to the answer given to a similar question which he asked on October 20, 1948."

WEIR, LAKE LEARMONTH.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumbidgee—Leader of the Opposition) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has investigation been made into a proposal for a weir in the Lake Learmonth reach of the Fitzroy River with a view to irrigation of an area of approximately 25,000 acres in the Garnant, Ridgeland, and Morinish districts?"

"2. If so, what recommendations have been made and what action, if any, is being taken?"

"3. If no investigation has yet been made is it likely to take place at an early date?"

Hon. T. A. FOLEY (Normanby) replied—

"1 to 2. Apart from a preliminary inspection of the Fitzroy River in the vicinity of Ridgeland, no investigations have been made into irrigation proposals for this area."

"3. The hon. member for Rockhampton has already been advised that the investigations of this proposal will be included in the general investigation of the Lower Fitzroy River which will be begun in the near future. To expedite this investigation, the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission is establishing a District Office at Rockhampton with the necessary engineering and survey personnel."

DEVELOPMENT OF BLAIR ATHOL.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) asked the Premier—

"Will he table a White Paper reporting on development with the Blair Athol project and setting out the reasons for and the consideration in relation to the assignment of the franchise?"

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca) replied—

"It is my intention at an early date to make a statement to the House for the information of hon. members, setting out the latest developments in regard to the Blair Athol project."

EMERGENCY LIGHTING, ROCKHAMPTON HOSPITAL.

Mr. WANSTALL (Toowong), for **Mr. MORRIS** (Enoggera), asked the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs—

"1. Is he aware that during the recent cyclone at Rockhampton, an iron lung installed at the Rockhampton Hospital would have failed with probable fatal consequences to an occupant had it not been operated manually by volunteers, and that there is at the moment no provision for emergency electric light and power at that hospital?"

"2. Is he further aware that an auxiliary power generating plant, which would have supplied electric light and power to the hospital during those critical hours, had previously been installed but had been removed and installed at another institution outside Rockhampton?"

"3. Will he inform the House whether satisfactory auxiliary generating plants are available for purchase, and, if so, if he will ensure that units are purchased and installed urgently at the Rockhampton Hospital and at each Government hospital where such installation will safeguard human life?"

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers) replied—

"1, 2 and 3. The respirators provide for operation by electricity or by manual operation. It is not extraordinary for these machines to be operated by manual power. Consequently there was no possibility of a fatality occurring due to the precaution of the hospital in arranging for voluntary help. The Government is constantly engaged in a programme for the provision of electricity generating plants at hospitals and the replacement of existing plants to provide additional power and lighting facilities in hospitals located in areas where there is no public provision. Hospitals in general have facilities for emergency lighting in the event of operations in an emergency."

J's.P. ACTING AS CORONERS.

Mr. MACDONALD (Stanley) asked the Attorney-General—

"1. What allowance, if any, is made to justices of the peace for acting as Coroners?"

"2. If no allowance, will he give favourable consideration to the question of a reasonable remuneration for such services?"

Hon. D. A. GLEDSON (Ipswich) replied—

"1. When a Justice of the Peace accepts appointment as Coroner he knows it is an honorary office and that an allowance for his duties is not payable. Since January, 1947, Justices of the Peace holding office as Coroners have held nine (9) Coroner Inquiries as under:—

1947	..	..	..	..	5
1948	..	..	..	..	3
1949	..	..	..	..	1

"2. The gentlemen who act as honorary Coroners do so in a spirit of public service and do not seek remuneration. Out-of-pocket expenses occasioned, for instance, by travelling to view a body of a deceased person will always be paid on application to the Under Secretary, Department of Justice."

COST OF STATE'S PRICES CONTROL.

Mr. HEADING (Wide Bay) asked the Treasurer—

"1. For what period is it expected that the Commonwealth Government will defray the administration costs of the Profiteering Prevention and Landlord and Tenant legislation?

"2. What will be the approximate cost of each for 1948-49?"

Hon. J. LARCOMBE (Rockhampton) replied—

"No definite limit to the period has been fixed by the Commonwealth Government. The estimated costs in 1948-49 are:—Prices control, £108,000; rent control, £15,000."

INTERJECTIONS FROM TABLE.

MR. SPEAKER'S STATEMENT.

Mr. Aikens (Mundingburra) proceeding to give notice of a question—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the hon. member for Oxley that it is entirely out of order to interject from the table.

Mr. Pie: What about the Premier?

Mr. KERR (Oxley): Mr. Speaker, I desire to draw your attention to the fact that in the first instance I was addressed by the Premier and I was replying.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I desire to say to all hon. members in regard to that point that the Premier was interjecting from his proper place but the hon. member for Oxley was interjecting from the table. I drew his attention to that and I hope he will take notice of it for the future.

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table:—

Statutes under the University of Queensland Acts, 1909 to 1941 (23 December, 1948).

Regulations (4) under the Apprentices and Minors Acts, 1929 to 1948 (23 December, 1948, 6, 20 January).

DENTAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. A. JONES (Charters Towers—Secretary for Health and Home Affairs): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Dental Acts, 1902 to 1939, in a certain particular."

Motion agreed to.

CITY OF BRISBANE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. W. POWER (Baroona—Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the City of Brisbane Acts, 1924 to 1948, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier): I move—

"That the House will, at its present sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Officials in Parliament Acts, 1896 to 1948, in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (11.15 a.m.): I move—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Officials in Parliament Acts, 1896 to 1948, in certain particulars." I think that if hon. members, between this and the time when the Bill has advanced another stage, will obtain a copy of the Queensland Government Gazette of 21 October, 1947, when the last allocation of work was made to Ministers they will have some idea of the immense field of work that Ministers nowadays have to cover. It must not be forgotten that every year when Parliament meets Acts of Parliament are passed and notwithstanding that Parliament passes each session perhaps 25 or 30 or 40 Acts—I think last session the number was 43—members on both sides of the Chamber, not only on this side but members opposite, are always asking for further extensions of services by the Government. Everywhere I go in Queensland and everywhere other Ministers of the Crown go in Queensland people of all classes, from chambers of commerce, local authorities, public authorities of all kinds—school committees, hospital boards, harbour boards, unions and bodies of people organised in all kinds of ways—are continually asking the Government for more and more legislation.

Members of this Chamber must realise that every Act passed by this Parliament has to be administered, and every additional Act passed means additional work on a Minister. When hon. members look at that Gazette and

see the Acts Ministers were administering in 1947 and consider what has taken place since then, they will get an idea of the extent to which work has grown.

A few minutes ago, before coming into the Chamber, I was trying to arrange with Ministers for a conference on something and as there were so many urgent things coming up I facetiously remarked, "Would to God there were 48 hours in a day!"

Mr. Sparkes: A 40-hour week.

Mr. HANLON: The Leader of the Opposition must not allow one of his colleagues to interrupt when I am speaking on this important matter.

There is really a continual burden on Ministers in trying to keep the work in their departments up to date. At present we have one Minister handling two departments. This practice was initiated by the Moore Government when they came into office. They attached two departments to one Minister because of the expansion of the duties of other Ministers. They associated two departments—departments they of course considered of minimum value at the time—the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction. Actually, under the Moore regime not a tremendous amount of public works was being done, and the activities of the Department of Public Instruction were not expanding, and it was possible at the time for the one Minister to cover both departments.

During the war years we attached the Department of Mines to another department because work of that department was strictly limited. As hon. members know, the Commonwealth Government imposed an embargo on gold mining for instance and restricted the number of people who could engage in the industry. People engaged in prospecting and scratching on the various mineral fields of Queensland were all called in for essential war services and consequently there was then no room for expansion or development in the industry.

The State Government also decided to defer the subdivision of Crown lands while the bulk of the young men of this country were in the fighting services. They believed that in the absence of these young men it would not be fair to permit balloting for land only by those who were not in the services and would thus have had an unfair advantage over the fighting men in establishing themselves in prosperous primary industries. I think the action of the Government in deferring such balloting until the post-war period met with the approval of every hon. member. Since that time the activities of the department have increased tremendously and today it is impossible for the Minister in charge of that department to control another Department also.

I have carefully examined every portfolio and all the responsibilities attaching to it and I cannot see how any Minister can adequately administer his own department and attend to another department as well. It therefore becomes necessary now to relieve

the Minister in charge of the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Mines of one of those departments. It is impossible for him to carry on both today and give proper attention to the land development policy. We have appointed a Commissioner of Irrigation. We have gone in for extensive soldier settlement. We have greatly extended forestry work. The work has been expanded to such an extent that it is impossible for the Minister in charge adequately to supervise the work and give detailed attention to it unless he devotes the whole of the time to the one department.

Similarly, the Department of Mines and mining are extending and expanding. Recently we established the Coal Board and through it we propose greatly to increase coal production in the State. We have a splendid opportunity of developing these activities and exploiting the coal resources of Queensland. Hon. members must not get the impression that the Secretary for Mines is concerned only with the sinking of a shaft or with matters related strictly to mining. If hon. members will refer to the Gazette mentioned by me earlier, giving an allocation of the duties of the various Ministers, they will find that the Secretary for Mines has quite a number of Acts to administer. His duties will be increased because of the establishment of the Coal Board. There will be considerable expansion in mineral production. At the present time companies in the north-west of the State are operating under prospecting license with a view to developing the huge low-grade ore deposits in that part of the country.

The Secretary for Mines has to attend to quite a number of matters of domestic concern also, such as those relating to the inspection of machinery and the inspection of scaffolding. His ministerial duties extend into the home of every housewife in the country in connection with the Weights and Measures Acts. He has to control the Government garages to see that Government cars are kept in proper order. The supervision of Government cars is no small job in itself and he has to accept that responsibility. He must exercise control over the great number of cars that are necessarily required by public servants in carrying out their duties throughout the State, embracing an area of 630,000 square miles. That work alone is no easy job. Abuses will creep in if a careful watch is not kept over these matters and sometimes no matter how careful the watch may be abuses will occur. All these things are the responsibilities of the Minister.

I come now to the Department of Labour and Industry. The Minister in charge of that department at one time administered the Department of Mines. The Department of Labour and Industry is expanding. The Minister in charge has to exercise control over prices, land sales and buildings. Then there is the new division dealing with secondary industries and I am sure the hon. member for Windsor will admit that that is a very important section of the department. The State Electricity Commission comes under his control and through it the

department deals with the electrification of the State. These are very important activities indeed and today the Secretary for Labour and Industry has to exercise ministerial control and direction over a great many new matters that did not exist a few years ago.

Mr. Wanstall: He is groaning under his burdens.

Mr. HANLON: I know he is. If the hon. member were in charge of that department and gave his proper attention to it he would never see a court.

Mr. Wanstall: I realise that.

Mr. HANLON: Not only that, but he would be carrying home at night just as heavy a bag of work files as Mr. Gair does now. It would surprise hon. members sometimes to pick up a bag that a Minister takes home at night in order to get a little work done in his home where he will not be interrupted by the public, newspapers and members of Parliament getting into contact with him, as they do in his office each day.

Mr. Wanstall: I am not belittling him at all.

Mr. Pie: If he does his job it is a big job.

Mr. HANLON: That is so.

Someone suggested that the Secretary for Public Instruction should undertake more work. Believe me, that Minister has a job to do that will take the full time of any man. A commencement has been made with the decentralisation of administration of the Department of Public Instruction. That is a complete reorganisation of one of the most expensive departments of the State. Do not forget that this department costs the State a tremendous amount of money. The object of the reorganisation is to enable better service to be rendered to the people. The decentralisation is of tremendous importance to the people, and will be of very great importance to the Treasurer if it is not supervised and kept within reasonable bounds. It is quite easy to set up all kinds of administration if you are not worried about the cost. It is the duty of a Minister to see in setting up new administration that the service rendered to the community is in keeping with the cost to the community. Furthermore, we are engaged in the extension of university studies. We want to give the young people of Central and Northern Queensland an opportunity to reach our University. At the present time this is somewhat restricted by the distance they have to come from their homes. They have to find board and lodging in Brisbane. The department has a scheme whereby at least in the first couple of years study in quite a number of faculties can be done in the Central and Northern Divisions. This will decrease the time students will be away from their homes and be at the University here. It will also prevent the overcrowding of the University that exists today.

No-one would suggest that the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs can undertake any more work than he is doing. It is increasing every day.

The Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government, in addition to controlling public works, administers and controls housing and local-government affairs, sub-departments that were not attached to the Secretary for Public Works in the old days. Every time we introduce some new legislation it increases the work of Ministers.

One of the most important factors in keeping the public happy in its relationship with government—I do not mean with a particular Government, but the whole system of government—is the prompt attention given to any matter submitted to the departments. Delays lower the opinion of people of the system of government we have.

Mr. Pie: There is no question of that.

Mr. HANLON: It is not a question whether it is a Labour Government or a Country Party Government or a Liberal Government, it is the system of government. Unless we can give prompt attention to all correspondence and all questions submitted to us and have prompt investigation made by all responsible bodies throughout the State, the prestige of the Government falls. You get a tremendous amount of correspondence from all kinds of cranks that does not call for much attention, but it all has to be read and the departmental officers, if they think there is any business in it, submit it to the Minister.

All representations by any responsible body or any representative body have to get the personal attention of the Minister. If there is not prompt attention to these things, it is not so much a matter of weaning the allegiance of the people from the particular Government in office, but of creating a feeling in the public mind that democratic government as we know it is inefficient. If we want to give the service to the people to which I think they are entitled we have to spread the burden a little more than we do at present.

I notice that some wiseacre suggested that I should take over the Treasury Department. I was in the Treasury Department and I held the Treasury Department while I was Acting Premier. It was said that the previous Premier, Mr. Forgan Smith, held the position of Treasurer. The Secretary for Public Instruction of the day acted as Assistant Treasurer. It was the Assistant Treasurer who dealt with the administration work and Mr. Forgan Smith dealt with the questions of the allocation of money and all final decisions and all expenditure and representation at the Loan Council. The Treasurer today has further duties to attend to. We are very confident that the trade and industry of this State will expand—and so are the great majority of the industrialists who come here from overseas—and confident that Queensland is going to be an expanding State. The Government have asked the Treasurer to make a survey of the ports on the coast so that fully-laden ships can enter and leave them. We visualise sooner

or later having our old Torres Strait service restored, as a link with Britain, and the growth of our trade with the East.

Mr. Wanstall: What about the Dutch East Indies?

Mr. HANLON: We have a wealthy country that produces things and it has prospective trade with any neighbouring country where there is a big population.

Mr. Wanstall: Why is there not trade there now?

Mr. HANLON: Probably for the same reason that we are not trading with Germany at the present time. There are restrictions on trade all over the world. The hon. member should realise that neither he nor anybody else can trade where he likes today. You cannot buy a thing from England without a licence from the Government. No Englishman can buy from Australia without a licence. There are certain things that are declared by the Government and a licence has to be obtained in order to buy them. The Government lay down that you can take this, that and the other, but to get outside what the Government allow you have to get a special permit.

Mr. Pie: Only in dollar areas.

Mr. HANLON: Not at all. You have limitations on imports from Britain. In leaving this country you are searched to see you are not taking money out of the country. It has got to the stage in England that in every note of the Bank of England there is a little thread of metal running through it so that if it is put into parcels and letters it can be X-rayed to see that the money is not leaving the country. The greatest restrictions exist there today.

But sooner or later there will be a settling down of the political unrest and disturbance in the world, and there are great possibilities for expansion for all industries of this State. We are going to meet the situation. We first want ports into which ships can come and go without having to leave part of their loading and having to go somewhere else to complete it. We must have ports where the big ships can come and get their loading and take full loads from here and where fully-loaded ships can come and unload part of their cargo. We already have two additional heavy dredges under construction.

Mr. Hiley: Ocean-going types?

Mr. HANLON: Big types. One is coming from Sydney, so it has to go on the ocean to come here.

The dredge being built in Queensland is not of the same type. We shall have to have more and we shall have to have whatever plant is necessary to bring our harbours up to the state required. We shall have to expand over a period of years.

In every department one touches one finds growth and development taking place in Queensland today and with the growth and development that we envisage in the next decade every Minister will be fully occupied, so I am asking Parliament to agree

to an increase in the number of Ministers to 11 in order that I can make a proper distribution of the work and responsibilities of Ministers among my colleagues.

Mr. NICKLIN (Murrumba—Leader of the Opposition) (11.36 a.m.): The proposal the Premier has put before the Committee this morning is one that must receive a considerable amount of consideration. From his angle the Premier made out a particularly good case for the increase of the Ministerial strength in this State but that case must be examined to see whether a similar result, that is, a better spread of work among the Ministers might not be achieved by some other method than increasing the number of Ministers.

We must look at this proposal from the angle whether the Ministers in Queensland have to carry greater burdens than those in the other States. We find that some of the other States get along with fewer Ministers than Queensland, and nobody would suggest that a State such as South Australia, for example, is not governed as well by the lesser number of Ministers there as the State of Queensland with the number of Ministers here.

Mr. Theodore: It is much smaller in area and more compact.

Mr. NICKLIN: There is a difference in regard to size and population but the responsibilities of Ministers are exactly the same, and the Ministers there are prepared to accept greater responsibilities than are our Ministers and they do a very good job in the administration of those responsibilities.

The Premier, in justification for the motion he has moved this morning, said that Ministers now have to administer a largely increased number of Acts in their respective departments. Let us examine that statement. Admittedly, each time Parliament meets Parliament passes a lot of new legislation but analysing that legislation it is found that a very large proportion is not of the kind that could be termed new legislation; rather it is amending legislation, legislation that instead of increasing the responsibilities and duties of Ministers reduces those responsibilities by the simplification and consolidation of legislation. From that angle, that excuse or reason will not stand examination.

After all, a great deal of the legislation we pass does not add to the responsibilities and duties of a Minister. And in any case it is not the job of a Minister to cross every "T" in legislation. Rather is the departmental office responsible for administration. All the Minister is there to do is to direct the policy of his department and to see that the administrative work is carried out properly. I feel that at the present time Ministers are undertaking a great deal of work that they should not be called upon to do, work that should be delegated to officers of their department. Ministers should be more concerned with matters of high policy in their departments instead of dealing, as they do at the present time, with so many of the minor details.

which could be well left to officers who are trained to the job and who are receiving in many instances good salaries for doing it.

Mr. Power: Many hon. members of the Opposition write direct to Ministers instead of to departmental heads.

Mr. NICKLIN: That is a practice that has grown up, but I think Ministers encourage it. Occasionally I have found that when I have communicated with a departmental head, with a view to relieving the Minister of some responsibility, the reply has come back signed by the Minister, so that apparently Ministers have decided of their own volition that that should be so. Where it is purely a departmental matter, I believe it is far better to address the matter to the officer of the department concerned with the idea of reducing the work of Ministers who have a big enough job to do without having to attend to small administrative matters.

Mr. Power: The Minister has to accept responsibility for any decisions made by a departmental head.

Mr. NICKLIN: That is admitted, but after all, does not the Minister think that each departmental officer regards himself as responsible to his Minister? Of course he does. He is not likely to do anything that he knows is contrary to ministerial or Government policy. That is his guiding force in any decision he may make or any action he may take.

Let us look at the question of the extension of services that Governments are giving at present. It is admitted that over the years there has been an increase in the services given by the Government but I remind hon. members opposite that very many responsibilities of State Ministers are being taken from them now by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government have taken over the question of labour and employment, but we still have our own department in this State. Is not that duplication?

Mr. Power: No.

Mr. NICKLIN: Is that not adding additional duties to those of our own Ministers, duties of which they could be relieved?

Mr. Power: Our officers must police our own State awards.

Mr. NICKLIN: But that is just one activity of the Department of Labour and Employment. Is it necessary for the State to maintain employment officers in opposition to those of the Commonwealth? After all, the taxpayer is paying for this duplicated service.

We have duplication in many of our social service activities. From time to time the Commonwealth Government intrudes further and further into the realm of the State Government in this respect, taking responsibilities that were carried previously by State Ministers and to which State Ministers are clinging, with the result that we have duplication of services and so more expensive government services.

Another activity that State Ministers necessarily have had to accept relates to many of the war-time controls that have been ditched by the Commonwealth Government and that have had to be picked up by State Ministers. This entails a great deal of work on the State Ministers. Are these war-time controls that are such a bugbear in our community now to go on forever? I can only hope that they are not. The sooner we get rid of many of them the better it will be for all concerned, the better it will be for the Ministers who now spend so much time administering them. Take land sales as an example. Land sales control could be abolished tomorrow without in any way detrimentally affecting the economic structure of the community and so Ministers could be relieved of a great deal of responsibility.

It will be found possible to relax some of these war-time controls, eventually throwing them overboard altogether and this will relieve Ministers of a good deal of the responsibility they are carrying now. I hope that in the matter of the appointment of another Minister the Government do not consider that these war-time controls will be a responsibility on Ministers for all time.

The Premier asked us to study a Government Gazette in which is set out the duties and responsibilities of the individual Ministers and said that if we did that we should be impressed with the magnitude of a Minister's job; but when we go into detail and examine things we ask ourselves whether it is the responsibility of a Minister of the Crown to see that every shopkeeper in the community has a particular pound weight on his scales and to inspect every bit of scaffolding that goes up in the community. That work is the responsibility of the Minister's responsible officers; he administers the policy and sees that the work is carried out.

Mr. Hanlon: You attack the Minister when you are dissatisfied. He has to keep supervision in order to be able to meet your attacks.

Mr. NICKLIN: Of course a Minister has to accept responsibility for things in his department that are not done properly, but it is not his job to look at every motor-car in the Government garage or to look at the weights used by the trading community. The Premier said that the Treasurer controlled the Department of Harbours and Rivers and that he had a big job in seeing that ships that came to a port did not go away partly loaded because there was not a sufficient depth of water in the harbour. It is not necessary for the Treasurer to go with his bucket and spade and dredge the harbour to see that ships can go away fully loaded. That is not his responsibility. His responsibility is to see that the department does its job in getting the necessary dredges and that the harbour engineers carry out the policy of the department efficiently.

Mr. Power: Do you not think he has to read the reports of his officers to see that they are doing their jobs?

Mr. NICKLIN: There is no necessity for him to visit every dredge every day, because he has his sectional officers who report to him periodically. From those reports the Minister can learn what is going on and if he finds there is anything wrong he can say, "I want so-and-so here to see what is wrong with this thing."

Mr. Hanlon: And so-and-so might be up around Burketown on departmental business.

Mr. NICKLIN: Is there any necessity for him to stay up there for ever? Why, he can get back from Burketown in an hour or two these days.

Mr. Hanlon: An officer can only travel by air on a special permit from his Minister.

Mr. NICKLIN: If there is anything requiring immediate contact with any officer of his department, surely to goodness he will issue that permit. There is no need for the Minister to delve into and do the work that should be done by the minor officers of his department.

I admit that there is no Minister in the Government who is not doing his job, and I admit also that there are some who are doing more than their fair share of the work. However, I think the solution of the problem is a reallocation of portfolios and a reallocation of Ministerial duties rather than the appointment of another Minister. Let us have a look at the duties of the different Ministers to see whether it is possible to give some relief in the way I have suggested.

At the present time the Secretary for Public Lands is responsible for the administration of the Department of Mines also, and apparently the Premier is gravely concerned about the administration of the Department of Mines. I certainly think that the Secretary for Public Lands has a big enough job in attending to that department without having the Department of Mines tacked on to him. But let us have a look at some of the other departments. Take for instance the department controlled by the Attorney-General. It is a department with wide activities, but it must be admitted that most of the activities of that department run along relatively smoothly without the need for a great deal of detailed attention from the Attorney-General himself. That is one department that could with advantage take the Department of Mines under its control. In fact, at one time the present Attorney-General handled both his own department and the Department of Mines with great credit to himself and great credit to the State, and I think it can be said that when he was handling both portfolios he was not being overworked.

I come now to the Department of Public Instruction, which at one time had other departments under its ministerial head. Once the policy of the Department of Public Instruction is laid down, the department very largely runs itself without a great deal of ministerial interference, and I think that the Secretary for Public Instruction could well accept the responsibility of the administration of another department as well as his own.

Mr. Aikens: And do it on his head.

Mr. NICKLIN: I do not know about doing it on his head, but I think that the Minister in charge of this department might well assume ministerial control of the Department of Mines as well.

I come now to the Department of the Treasurer. That is a department that has a great deal of administrative work in connection with main roads and local authorities; but many of the other sub-departments it controls, such as stamp duties and land tax and the Printing Office, more or less manage themselves. Once the Government lay down the policy in connection with the Department of Harbours and Marine, for instance, there is not a great deal of detailed work to be done by the Treasurer. Here is one Minister who could accept the Ministerial responsibility of another department, and knowing the administrative capacity of the present Treasurer I feel sure he could accept another portfolio. He could well administer the Department of Mines as well as his own.

Looking over the other departments I should say that the respective Ministers have full-time jobs on their hands, but with a reallocation of duties the Attorney-General, the Treasurer and the Secretary for Public Instruction could handle the portfolio of the Department of Mines in addition to their own without unduly taxing themselves.

I can come to only one conclusion in connection with the Bill and that is that it is entirely unnecessary.

Admittedly, the office of a Minister of the Crown carries with it a great deal of responsibility and hard work, but when a vacancy occurs in the Ministry there are no lack of applicants for the job. Apparently, there are a few who are prepared to accept the risk of hard work attached to a ministerial portfolio.

Mr. Gair: That is no reason why a Minister should be overworked.

Mr. NICKLIN: No.

Mr. Gair: I spend two nights a week and Saturday morning in my office.

Mr. NICKLIN: I have not said, nor do I intend to say, that the Secretary for Labour and Industry is not doing a great deal more work than we should ask of any man; but will the appointment of another Minister relieve him of any of his responsibility? Not at all; he will continue to do the same amount of work he is doing at the present time because he is a man who is not afraid to work. That argument can apparently be blown out. The reason for the appointment of this additional Minister is that he can administer the Department of Mines, but, as I have pointed out, that department has in the past been handled and can still be handled by proper allocation of portfolios and a reallocation of duties of Ministers. It can be easily administered if that is done.

Let us look at the position of other States. Take South Australia, for example. The Government of South Australia is composed

of six Ministers. What responsibilities do those Ministers undertake? The Premier, in addition to his arduous duties as Premier of the State—and his duties as Premier are equal to those of our own Premier; I am not implying anything derogatory to our own Premier—undertakes the additional portfolios of Treasurer and Immigration. Then we find that the Chief Secretary looks after the Departments of Mines and Health. The Attorney-General administers also the Departments of Education, Industry and Employment. The Minister for Lands undertakes in addition the offices of Repatriation and Irrigation. The Minister for Public Works undertakes also the portfolios of Railways, Marine and Local Government, and the Minister for Agriculture has the additional responsibility of Afforestation.

When we analyse the composition of that Ministry it would appear to bear out the argument I have made, namely, that the desire of the Government to increase the number of Ministers could be accomplished just as effectively, in so far as efficient administration is concerned, by the reallocation of portfolios and the reallocation of duties of Ministers. For that reason we on this side of the Chamber definitely oppose the proposal that the Premier has brought forward.

Mr. SPARKES (Aubigny) (11.57 a.m.): I am sure that this session will be regarded by the public of Queensland as the "grab-all" session. Firstly, the Government started by increasing the salaries of Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not related to the subject before the House.

Mr. SPARKES: It has a bearing on it. Ministers' salaries were increased by £750. The reason given at the time was the extra work performed by Ministers. Parliament agreed to the increase on that understanding. That increase comprised half of a Minister's then salary. The increase was from £1,500 to £2,250 a year. Then, following fast on the heels of the increase in ministerial salaries, a Bill was introduced to redistribute the electorate to provide for 13 additional members of Parliament. That was to make the Labour Government as safe as possible. Having done that, we are now asked to approve of the appointment of another Minister. Where are we going to stop? Where is this expenditure going to stop? I am sure that if these measures were referred to the people of Queensland they would have voted them out. There is not the slightest doubt about that.

The appointment of an extra Minister will not ease the work of some of the Ministers. Take the arduous portfolio of Secretary for Health and Home Affairs. Will the appointment of an extra Minister make any difference to the work of the Minister controlling that department? The Secretary for Public Works, Housing and Local Government has admitted by his silence that it will make no difference. The people will look upon this session, I repeat, as the "grab-all" session.

Yesterday the Deputy Premier got up and asked for the withdrawal of remarks by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding cheating, but in "Hansard" you will find terms such as "bribery and corruption," commonly used by the Premier.

Mr. Moore interjected.

Mr. SPARKES: The hon. member should know a good deal about it; he got the position of Acting Minister and no doubt he knows all about it. Some of his colleagues could throw much more light on it than I could.

I cannot see any justification for the extra expenditure that will be imposed on the taxpayer. The increase will amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order!

Mr. SPARKES: Provision is to be made for 13 more members and another Minister. Who can say that next session we shall not be asked to vote for another one? I realise that Ministers have a job to do but they are well paid for it; and there is no shortage of applicants. You have that knowledge, too, Mr. Hilton. If the job is so arduous and exhausting, why is there such anxiety on behalf of members to take it on? The ink is hardly dry on the paper providing for the increase in Ministers' salaries—made on account of the extra work they do—when we are asked to agree to the appointment of another Minister.

I am surprised that the Government have the audacity to come forward with this proposal. In keeping with the Government's usual policy, it is brought on without a minute's notice and all the matters on the business sheet are left in abeyance. Why was not the matter of additional members and an additional Minister left to the decision of the people at the election? We hear much from the Government about abiding by the wishes of the people. Why not give the people the opportunity to say what they desire?

They do not do that, but they rush it through as quickly as possible in the hope that the people will have an opportunity to forget. I join with my leader in entering my protest against this appointment.

Mr. AIKENS (Mundingburra) (12.5 p.m.): **Mr. Hilton,** if we keep on going as we are going in this Parliament the Labour Party will be like a South American army, all colonels and generals and no privates. But that will not affect the Labour Party. The hon. member for Aubigny spoke of the audacity of the Labour Party. I suggest that he should know just as much about their audacity as anybody else, because it has no limits so far as the allocation of political plums is concerned.

The Acting Premier, in the absence of the Premier overseas, put forward exactly the same argument last year for that staggering increase in ministerial salaries as was put

forward today by the Premier for the reduction of ministerial duties by 10 per cent. That is what the appointment of one additional Minister means.

Mr. Sparkes: Their salaries have been increased by 50 per cent.

Mr. AIKENS: Their salaries were increased by 50 per cent. and now it is intended to reduce their duties by 10 per cent.

I have no personal knowledge of the duties of a Minister, consequently I can judge them only from what I see. I have been in this Parliament for five years, although I have been interested in politics all my life, but after hearing the Premier's speech this morning I am beginning to doubt whether I have the right idea as to how and why Ministers were appointed by the Labour Caucus. As you know, Mr. Hilton, all Ministers are appointed by vote of the Labour Caucus. I was always of the opinion that a Minister was appointed because he happened to belong to the dominant faction of the Caucus at the moment; in other words, to use the vernacular, a man was successful or unsuccessful according to whether or not he happened to be "in the strong."

Mr. Luckins: Are there two factions?

Mr. AIKENS: There are two factions. To use the vernacular, I was of the opinion that he had to belong to the "strong" or a member of the dominant faction, but after the Premier spoke this morning I am beginning to doubt whether that is so. The Premier painted a very heartrending picture of the tremendous and onerous physical duties that fall upon the shoulders of a Minister, and now I am beginning to think that the Ministers of the Labour Party are appointed on the basis of their physical ability, that only the strongest, the most robust and huskiest are appointed to ministerial positions, that only those at the very zenith of their physical powers can hope to get on the ministerial benches. That is why we see in the recent appointments only those who would grace the front page of a physical-culture magazine appointed to the ministerial bench of the Labour Party.

It just shows how one can be misled into making a superficial judgment of men.

I really thought that the huskiest or apparently husky and apparently robust physical specimens like yourself, Mr. Hilton, the Chairman of Committees, the hon. member for Gregory, and the hon. member for Maryborough, might have the physical and mental requisites to earn a place on the ministerial benches, but apparently the Labour Party puts all its ministerial applicants through a strict medical examination. Probably Dr. Dittmer does the physical examination of ministerial aspirants in the Labour Party, and although men such as those I have mentioned appear to be physically robust and husky it would appear they suffer from some unseen physical weakness.

For that reason I say that it is only the strongest and those in the full bloom of health and strength who can become members of a Labour Ministry. If they were not in the

full bloom of health and strength and at the very zenith of their physical powers they would collapse under the tremendous burdens that were so beautifully word-painted for us this morning by the Premier. He told us this morning that Ministers of the Crown of the Labour Party were in imminent danger of physical and mental collapse under the burdens of their departments, that one department was enough to send them tottering on the brink of physical and mental collapse. I marvelled at the physical resistance and the tremendous latent power of the Secretary for Public Works.

In the latter part of last year he was not only Secretary for Public Works, but I received letters from him as Acting Minister for six other departments as well. While doing all this, he put on 2 stone, which just shows that you cannot assess a man's physical capacity simply by looking at him; he probably has to go before some medical practitioner, such as Dr. Dittmer, who no doubt told the Labour Cabinet what a remarkable physical man the Secretary for Public Works was, because he has been able not only to carry the tremendously onerous burden outlined by the Premier as resting on his own department but also the burden of six other Ministers as well.

It is about time we faced up to the position honestly and frankly and debunked all these stories about Parliament. I was sorry that I was not here yesterday. As a matter of fact, I am led to believe—and I believe it to be true—that when the Premier found I was flood-bound in Townsville and could not get down yesterday he took advantage of my enforced absence and rushed through the first reading of a Bill for an increase in the number of members of Parliament. But I shall be here for the second round, and I shall have some very pertinent comments to make.

As we know, since the railway strike and since Blair Athol, the Premier has become the darling of the Tory Press. We know that he stands up now and again and asks us and the people to believe that the "Courier-Mail" is anathema to him, that anything that appears in the "Courier-Mail" is repellent and repugnant to him, yet just prior to the opening of this Parliament on Tuesday we saw in Monday's "Courier-Mail" evidence of the fact that by some remarkable coincidence the photographer of the "Courier-Mail" just happened to be in the Library when the Premier walked in—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr. Hilton): Order! I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the matter under discussion.

Mr. AIKENS: I am going to do that. The Premier painted a heart-rending picture of his own duties and said, "I cannot take on the Treasurership; I am overburdened with work; I am staggering along with my eyes downcast, my shoulders bowed and my feet shuffling on the pavement. I cannot take any more work." This picture shows the Premier as preparing for the Parliamentary session. It shows the Premier studying, standing up reading a book. I do not know what

the book was. One of the boys of the Opposition told me it might have been "Love Me Sailor." When he was standing there reading this book, lo and behold, by one of those remarkable coincidences, who should appear on the scene but the "Courier-Mail" photographer who snapped the Premier with his head and shoulders bowed down with the duties of office preparing for the Parliamentary session!

It is about time we debunked all these stories that are told us about Parliament. I have no desire to overwork any Minister. I do not know from inside information just what work a Minister does. I judge the Ministers from what I see in the House and what I consider to be the fair and reasonable job that they should be asked to perform, and I am going to take my stand on this occasion with the Opposition and vote against this Bill.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (12.14 p.m.): There is not much that I have to say in reply to the statements that have been made. The hon. member for Mundingburra can be dismissed lightly. In his usual style, he made a very heavy attempt at putting on a facetious act. He criticised the Secretary for Public Works for having acted for the Attorney-General while the Attorney-General was sick. It is obvious that the hon. member would not understand the bond of friendship which exists between decent chaps and which makes them help one another when one has the misfortune to be sick or to be in any difficulty at all. That would be outside the ken of the hon. member.

In case hon. members opposite should think that the dual job was done in all its ramifications by Mr. Power, let me say that during that period Mr. Power had to depend almost entirely on what officers of the department did. He could not give personal supervision to two departments.

While I was away Mr. Gair could not possibly give personal supervision to two departments. That was why, it being essential that some supervision should be exercised in both these important departments, we had an Acting Minister to act during my absence overseas.

During the time one Minister might be acting for another he always refuses to do anything at all that infringes the policy or general routine laid down by the Minister who is absent. He signs formal papers and things like that, other contentious matters having to await the resumption of duty by the Minister concerned. He has to trust to the efficiency of the officers of the department and whilst this might be all right for a time it is a limited time; you cannot leave the administration of a Public Service department for an indefinite time.

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Attorney-General has not got much to do and that all his work, to a greater or less extent, is done by his legal advisers. I want to inform the hon. gentleman that the Attorney-General has to act as referee in cases where the Solicitor-General decides, say, to enter a no true bill in a

case. Such a question has to come to the Attorney-General for decision. In disputed divorce proceedings, where there is a suggestion of collusion, such a question must come to the Attorney-General, and—

Mr. Macdonald: How often does that happen?

Mr. HANLON: It happens quite often, and, believe me, it is a nasty and difficult job to decide. He has probably to get turned up for him decisions made back over the years, to see that he does not depart from the established practice. Furthermore, hon. members are always sending on requests from their constituents to the Attorney-General in matters such as, for instance, a revision of a penalty. If a constituent complains to me of the severity of a fine or sentence or requests that somebody be released by the Parole Board on a bond to be of good behaviour, it is my duty to send the matter on to the Attorney-General for decision. He administers the Prisons Department—an important department, not a mere department that punishes law-breakers, but a department with honour farms in the north and the south which are doing good work. One of the only complaints we have had concerning them was during the time the Attorney-General was not able to give his personal attention to them.

The Licensing Commission is a particular headache to administer, and the Liquor Act of Queensland is a perpetual worry to the Minister in charge. With that I think all hon. members will agree, and I say right here and now that since the present Attorney-General took over the administration of that Act the Government have been freer of complaints about licenses than ever before. He has done a remarkably fine job. He controls also the office of the Public Curator, and hon. members on both sides of the Chamber know very well how many times they are approached by people who want some representation made to the Minister about the Public Curator's Office. I have before me a list of the departments over which he has to exercise control, and it is not a mere matter of sitting in an office and being guided by a Solicitor-General at all. Do not forget that when hon. members opposite—and the hon. members on this side of the Chamber, too—are dissatisfied, they do not attack the Solicitor-General or the department but they attack the Minister held responsible by this Parliament for the administration of that office.

Mention has been made as to what happens in other States. It is true that there are six Ministers in the South Australian Parliament. You could very nearly ride a bicycle round the settled part of South Australia. The vast bulk of the population of that State is within a radius of 120 miles of Adelaide.

Mr. Nicklin: Those who are far out deserve as much attention as those in Adelaide.

Mr. HANLON: I said that the vast bulk of the population was within a radius of 120 miles of Adelaide. Only a small percentage of the people are outside that radius; which is the reason why their transport is the cheapest in Australia—they don't go outside that radius.

The point I make is that Parliament could if it wished reduce the number of Ministers in Queensland to five and that would not prevent the Government from carrying on but it would reduce the amount of service that a Minister could give to the people. If, for instance, Barry & Roberts cut the number of their shop assistants by 50 per cent. it would mean that they would cut their service to the people by 50 per cent. They do not keep their present staff for love and affection.

Mr. Hiley: That is hardly analogous.

Mr. HANLON: There is the analogy in the service that you can give to the people. I believe that no man can give more service to the people than he can give in the time that he is able to do his work. For instance, I had an important conference in my office this morning and then I had to rush down to Parliament, leaving on my office table a great deal of work that I have not been able to cope with for a month but which I hope to deal with when this Bill is passed.

Tasmania is a very small State but they have seven Ministers and two honorary Ministers. That is, they have two additional Ministers without pay.

Mr. Sparkes: That might be a good idea here.

Mr. HANLON: All through his life the policy of the hon. member has been to get employees without pay and if he could not get them without pay then he kept the pay as low as he could. We do not propose to judge the whole of the people of Queensland by the standards set by the hon. member for Aubigny.

Western Australia has eight full Ministers and two Assistant Ministers. The principle adopted there is for the full Ministers each to allocate a share of their salary to provide an allowance for the Assistant or Honorary Ministers. That was the practice in Queensland when we had two Assistant Ministers and before we had 10 full Ministers—each Minister contributed a part of his salary to provide an allowance for the Assistant Ministers. I do not believe that is a good system. If you have Assistant or Honorary Ministers the responsibility in respect of all matters that come before the Executive Council falls on the duly appointed Minister charged with the administration of the Act concerned and a Minister cannot be expected to accept the full responsibility of the administration of another. I do not believe that a Minister should have to accept the full responsibility of a decision made by someone else.

That is all I have to say. I do hope that hon. members will get the Government Gazette that I mentioned earlier in the debate and also go to the trouble of asking the Under-Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, for a copy of the additional duties that have been

allocated to Ministers since 1947. I am sure that after they have looked through the Gazette they will realise that if Ministers do their job successfully they will be very busy indeed.

Mr. HILEY (Logan) (12.23 p.m.): I am not particularly enamoured of this proposal, but I think we are losing our sense of proportion when we say that one additional appointment is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Compared with the total problem of administering the affairs of this State, it would, to my way of thinking, be utterly stupid to suggest that what was good some time before, when one extra ministerial appointment was made, is now a bad system merely because of the extra appointment.

I think there are some arguments for and against to which we should give some little consideration. We have heard the arguments advanced about ministerial responsibility, but it is a wrong conception of ministerial responsibility to suggest that a Minister should personally carry out a whole lot of detailed administrative work. As a matter of fact, if that were the proper concept and it was carried to extremes the Minister would do everything himself and employ no staff whatever. As a matter of fact, the bigger the State grows and the bigger the department grows the less opportunity would one man have of being able physically to discharge all the responsibilities of carrying out his work.

Mr. Macdonald: And a greater responsibility.

Mr. HILEY: And the greater responsibility, which he will discharge through the hands and through the brains of others—the public servants who serve him. He will accept the responsibility for their acts and decisions. As I see it, a Minister in the Cabinet should determine the policies which the Public Service shall administer.

I have been concerned for some time to observe the ever-increasing tendency, to which the Leader of the Opposition drew attention, that detailed matters that should be attended to by some clerk, even in a subordinate position, reach you over the personal hand of the Minister.

Mr. Hanlon: Unless you write to the Minister you do not get a reply from him. Naturally if you do write to him the Minister gives you the courtesy of a reply.

Mr. HILEY: Even were I to write to a Minister I should be very well contented to receive a reply saying that the Minister had referred the matter to the attention of such-and-such an officer. The general desire of the present Administration is to centralise administration in the Minister. I do not wish for one moment to minimise the proper conception of ministerial responsibility. After all, in a Parliamentary system, only by centring responsibility on a Minister can you hold responsibility at Parliamentary level because no public servant should be allowed to make a direct report on a matter that should be the responsibility of the Minister. It should always reach here through the medium of a Minister. The question is

whether every Minister should know everything that goes on in his department. I regret that seems to be the regrettable tendency of the present Administration and a factor that has greatly increased the burden which is imposed on Ministers.

Mr. Hanlon: He would have a whale of a good time if he did no more than you suggest.

Mr. HILEY: That is my own view. I do not expect that everyone will agree with it.

One of the arguments advanced was the wisdom of separating the responsibilities of the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Mines. I really confess that the separation of those two portfolios suggest to me many advantages. The requirements of those two Ministries are in themselves so large that there is a definite advantage in their separation. As this State has a tremendous future in mineral production I for one attach great weight to separating those two portfolios and making the administration of the Department of Mines a full ministerial responsibility.

There is another cogent argument. I do not care what you are administering, whether it is a sporting club, or the board of directors of a company, or a Cabinet, or any other public body, there is an infinite convenience in keeping the number as small as possible. The Premier could tell us, possibly with some feeling, that there are moments when he wished he was presiding over a Cabinet that was much smaller because as you increase the number so there is a tendency to delay your ministerial process and take extra time to discuss a matter which with a smaller number could be dealt with more expeditiously. The more you extend the width of discussion, the greater the indecision and compromise you get.

There therefore is need always to aim at keeping our government bodies—whether it is Parliament or the Cabinet—as small as is sufficient to do the job and not to make them as big as one can conceive them. In those places where the rise of the population has involved the spread of the Cabinet to a vast assemblage, sooner or later you reach the point where within the Cabinet you start to form a committee that becomes the real nerve-centre. That is operating in Britain, where you have a full Cabinet and an inner group which is the real governing body.

Mr. Hanlon: Obviously with a big population like that you would need a much larger Cabinet than in Queensland.

Mr. HILEY: Administrative necessity forces you sooner or later, if you seek to spread the Cabinet to a big number, to the inner-executive principle, which after all is merely a narrowing down of the Cabinet against this enlarging process.

Mr. Hanlon: It becomes a director of general policy, but it does not take actual administration over the departments.

Mr. HILEY: I appreciate that. What is the prime purpose of the Cabinet? The prime purpose is the laying down of a basic policy, and incidentally the supervising of administration the responsibility for which obviously must fall on the Public Service; subject to the supervision of the Minister and ministerial responsibility to Parliament, you have to rely on the Public Service to administer. There never would be enough Ministers to discharge fully the duties of administration.

Mr. Hanlon interjected.

Mr. HILEY: I am suggesting that if the Cabinet fully discharges its responsibility of settling the basic policies of administration and leaves it to the Public Service to administer them subject to ministerial direction, that seems a proper approach to our problem. In too many cases the policy of the Government is to clutter the Ministers up with detailed attention to matters of administration that you could leave to the Public Service, only coming into the picture later if mistakes are made.

I repeat my view that nobody can suggest that one extra Minister could possibly be regarded as the last straw, although it is a proposal that gives me no very strong feeling towards it or against it.

Mr. PIE (Windsor) (12.34 p.m.): I have always believed that the administration of the State was a very important function. I still believe it is wrong in principle to mix departments together under the one ministerial portfolio. At one time the portfolio of Secretary for Mines was regarded as a junior Minister's portfolio.

Mr. Hanlon: It was at one time a major department.

Mr. PIE: Of recent years it has been a testing-out ground for junior Ministers, although that may have altered recently. I believe it will expand because of the development of our mineral resources. I am of opinion it is wrong to mix up two departments and have one Minister responsible for both, such as Public Lands and Mines. The job of Minister is a full-time one if it is carried out properly and effectively. At the same time the whole basis of the Minister's job is the delegation of power or authority to responsible officers. The Secretary for Agriculture and Stock knows that, because round him he has a splendid organisation of officers to whom he can delegate powers. They carry out the job and advise the Minister and on the advice tendered him he makes his decision.

It has been said that Ministers have been worked into the ground; candidly, I have never seen the Ministers of this State looking so prosperous, fit or well. For instance the Secretary for Public Works and Housing has never looked better in his life than he does now, and as the hon. member for Mundingburra has said, with six portfolios he put on 2 stone in weight. The Secretary for Labour and Industry was Acting Premier during the Premier's absence overseas and I believe he worked night and day on his

job while the Premier was away trying to carry out all the work that came to him. He has never looked better in his life. He has thrived on the work. But the point I want to make is that the larger an organisation grows the easier it is to administer, provided the executive has the right men about him to give the necessary background. I know this in my own case.

Ministers, instead of cluttering themselves with a lot of detailed work, as many of them do, and running themselves into the ground, should build up round them officers who could give the necessary background, and on their examination they could make their decisions and guide the policy of the Department. That should be the duty of a Minister, not looking into this little thing and that little thing. He should be there to make the final decision on matters of policy of his department and then stand up to his decision.

A member of Parliament writes to a Minister and asks that a matter be referred to a responsible officer in his department for decision. The reply comes back over the signature of a Minister or an officer, but if it is over the signature of an officer the Minister must be there to make the final decision. How often do we get from departments decisions with which we do not agree and how many times have we had to go to the Minister, acting as the final court of appeal as it were, to get a final decision? That is where the Minister comes in. Let the administrative work be done by the departmental officers and not have the Ministers running themselves into the ground, as they are doing today, according to the Premier. That is not their job; their job is to administer and make decisions. To make their jobs easier they must see that they have round them officers equipped with the necessary background to enable them, the Ministers, to make their decisions.

The Premier gave the Committee no idea of the extra cost of this appointment. This will mean not only the cost of the salary of an extra Minister but a new department will be created.

Mr. Hanlon: The departments are there now.

Mr. PIE: Yes, but the hon. gentleman knows that there are some that are run together. The hon. gentleman told us that the only additional cost, so far as the new ministerial appointment is concerned, is the cost of the Minister.

Mr. Hanlon: The Minister, a private secretary, and probably a typist.

Mr. Aikens: And a motor-car and a chauffeur.

Mr. PIE: A motor-car, chauffeur, and so on—what will it cost roughly? The cost to the Government will be another £10,000 or £15,000. Will it cost that amount a year to run this extra Ministerial appointment? If there is to be a Minister, secretary, assistant secretary, and so on—

Mr. Hanlon: No, a private secretary and probably a typist.

Mr. PIE: A private secretary, a motor-car and chauffeur, his extra salary and expenses. He will have to have a special office created.

Mr. Hanlon: No, the offices are there already.

Mr. PIE: It will cost roughly £10,000 to £15,000 a year, and the cost of our administration is being increased continually.

Our income is not going up in proportion. We are living on a fixed income from the Commonwealth Government, an income to which we shall not be able to budget, and this must result in a deficit. The Premier knows that if we are going to develop this State we cannot live on the handout we are now receiving from the Commonwealth Government. He need not smile, because he knows that.

Mr. Hanlon: I am smiling at what you are walking into.

Mr. PIE: I know what I am walking into. I have always advocated two things in this Parliament. One is the development of North Queensland and the other the development of Central Queensland. I have always advocated the appointment of a Minister for the development of North Queensland with ministerial responsibility direct to Cabinet and a secretary established in Townsville to make decisions. Similarly, I have advocated the appointment of a Minister for Central Queensland, with a secretary there. Both these Ministers should be added to the Cabinet so that the problems of those areas, together with the plans the Ministers have for their development, may be brought direct to Cabinet on a ministerial level.

It is no good thinking the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs can handle the big problems of the North. He has a full-time job with his own Department of Health and Home Affairs, but if he was appointed Minister for the North and taken from his present department he would be able to bring direct to Cabinet the problems and plans to which I have referred. The same would apply to the Central District, and the scheme would be a prelude to the new States. Establish that set-up and you have the prelude to the new States, which would follow automatically.

I suggest in all sincerity that a Minister's job is not to be weighed down with minor administrative work, but to act in the capacity of managing director, to make decisions on policy and the general running of the department. If trivial matters come before his notice, let him refer them to the member concerned and tell that member that in future he would like such matters referred direct to the department.

I have a matter now in which I do not agree with the decision of one of the officers, but I know I have the right of appeal to

the Minister, and as long as we have that right of appeal to a Minister the departmental officer should give the first decision.

The bigger a department grows, the bigger a business grows, indeed the bigger anything grows, the easier it should be for the man at the top to give final decisions. I appeal to Ministers to build up their departments on that basis, not to weigh themselves down with detailed work but to leave their minds free for the development of the department, for the development of the State and for the making of decisions.

Hon. E. M. HANLON (Ithaca—Premier) (12.44 p.m.): I wish to call the attention of the hon. member for Windsor to the obvious inconsistency of his attack this morning. First of all he complains about the growing size of Cabinet and the growing amount of work. I do not want the hon. member to think I am being personal, but I attended the opening of that fine modern factory he has established in Brisbane. I wish him luck and hope it will expand. Already he has applied for permission to add to that factory. He wants another building permit. I am glad his business is a success, but that means extra land, extra building, extra staff and all those things he is talking about as being involved when the State expands its activities. If it is good enough for him to expand, why is it not good enough for the people to expand their activities?

If it is good business for a private company to go in for extra buildings, extra machinery and power costs and staff, why is it not good for the people to extend their business of management? He will have another branch manager. He said himself that it is not for the top man to concern himself with the details of industry.

Mr. Pie: I am not having more directors. The Minister is a director.

Mr. HANLON: The only difference is that Cabinet Ministers are board directors in the interests of the people. Other directors direct in the interests of somebody making money.

The hon. member went on to say that there should be a Minister for North Queensland, but surely he knows something about the set-up of government? What could a Minister for North Queensland do? What would he administer? How would he administer North Queensland? Should we have to cut off the North Queensland railways, the North Queensland police, the North Queensland courts, the North Queensland health services, the North Queensland Department of Public Lands, the North Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock, and give all those departments to a Minister in the North to administer?

Mr. Pie: He would bring the problems of the North to Cabinet on Cabinet level.

Mr. HANLON: The Minister brings them to Cabinet. Yesterday the same hon. member made a vitriolic attack on the proposal to give

three extra representatives to the northern part of the State so that those hon. members could make representations to the Ministers of the Government on behalf of that part of the State. His attack was vitriolic, and he has been completely inconsistent. He says that in the interests of the development of North Queensland he would appoint another Minister. Another Minister would be in the road of other Ministers. No hon. member wants anybody to interfere with the work of his electorate. He wants to make the representations himself; he does not want anybody bouncing around the electorate playing counter to what he is trying to do. The hon. member's proposal is an absurdity. When we make an intelligent proposal to give added representation he opposes it and says that a Minister should not be personally responsible for the administration of his department and should have nothing to do with the detailed administration of that department.

Mr. Pie: How can you be responsible for the detailed running of your department?

Mr. HANLON: I shall quote the hon. member's own actions in this Chamber. Some little time ago he made a complaint about a Minister; he made a very savage attack upon the then Secretary for Health and Home Affairs, Mr. Foley, concerning a woman who had been neglected in the Brisbane Hospital. In the first place, the Minister administers the Hospitals Act, which creates a hospitals board to conduct the administration of the Brisbane Hospital. The board's duties are laid down and do not include the treatment of sick people. For that purpose qualified medical men are appointed to administer to the sick and qualified nurses to nurse them. He never made an attack on the doctor—in this case there were two doctors, as it happened—and he never said that they killed the woman. He made no attack upon the doctors but took his attack around from the doctors and the medical superintendent and the board directing the business in relation to the hospital, to the Minister, and he personally attacked the Minister. He personally attacked the Minister because the Minister did not feel the pulse or heartbeats of the patient. I called attention to the fact that two medical specialists on Wickham Terrace had been in charge of the case and said that if he lodged a complaint against their conduct in neglecting the patient I would see that they were not only removed from the staff of the hospital but that they were reported to the Medical Board for their lack of care and attention to the patient.

That ended the matter. The hon. member launched an attack on the Minister because of what he called neglect. The charge of neglect was obviously wrong. The doctors had done their best for the patient and the patient had died, as patients will. Now he gets up and says that a Minister should not concern himself with the administration of his own department. Hon. members can see how inconsistent he is. A few years ago I had to intervene in these attacks on the Secretary for Health and Home Affairs because they had become so savage and now the hon. member

gets up today and says that the Minister should not concern himself with the actual administration of his department.

If a Minister is to be able to estimate the correctness of a public servant's recommendations he must have some knowledge of the work of his sub-departments and their activities. Let me mention one case that happened in England in connection with a board of directors that has been held up as one reason why private enterprise should be pushed out of the steel industry in England. A certain firm in England had always supplied steel to the Admiralty for the construction of war-ships and for other Admiralty work. Just before the outbreak of the last war its steel was rejected and it kicked up a devil of a row because it had always supplied the steel. It was told that its steel was not up to the specification that was demanded. Of course, the specification of steel had improved but their works had not improved. The board of directors had a meeting and decided upon an investigation to be carried out by their research department only to be told by their general manager that they had no research department. That was held up as an instance of the complete incompetence displayed by a board of directors in a big industry upon which the life and safety of Great Britain depended. The board of directors had not discharged their responsibilities to their shareholders. If they accept fees provided by their shareholders they should display some interest in the activities of their company. Had that interest been shown in a certain case now exciting attention here the events that have occurred might not have arisen. A board of directors have a responsibility to the shareholders.

Mr. Pie: In that case had not the man been given authority to sign for the Minister?

Mr. HANLON: I will bring the statement of the hon. member to the attention of the authorities and to the attention of the people engaged in the case and he can be subpoenaed to give any evidence he has of any authority given by the Minister. I shall certainly call attention to the statement and if the hon. member has any knowledge he will have an opportunity of clearing up that scandalous affair and I should say that he will be subpoenaed to attend the tribunal to give evidence. I will draw the attention of the Royal Commission to the statement he has made.

There is not a bit of use in his complaining that a Minister knows nothing at all about his department and at the same time saying that a Minister should not concern himself with the detailed administration of his department.

Motion (Mr. Hanlon) agreed to.

Resolution reported.

FIRST READING.

Bill presented and, on motion of Mr. Hanlon, read a first time.

The House adjourned at 12.57 p.m.