

NEW PREMIER TAKES

14 FEB 1932

OFFICE

14 FEB

Mr. Richards' Seven Portfolios

CHANGE OF CABINET MADE IN AN HOUR

Interesting Constitutional Position

In less than an hour yesterday the Hill Government resigned, members of the Richards Ministry were sworn in, and the new Cabinet had begun its first meeting.

This quick reshuffle followed the recent appointment of the ex-Premier (Mr. Hill) as Agent-General and his resignation.

An interesting constitutional position has arisen from the fact that the new Government comprises only five Ministers. The resignation of the Minister of Local Government (Mr. Jelley), as the result of a Cabinet disagreement, left a vacant portfolio in the Legislative Council, where no other member of the Parliamentary Labor Party was available for appointment. The only other representative of that party in the Upper House is the Chief Secretary (Mr. Whitford). Consequently Mr. Richards, who, on the advice of Mr. Hill, was sent for yesterday by the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir George Murray) to form a Ministry, decided not to fill the Cabinet vacancy. He and the new Minister (Mr. Staniford) have shared Mr. Jelley's portfolios.

The position thus created is unprecedented in South Australia, and is possibly unique in Australian Parliamentary history.



MR. RICHARDS

The Premier (Mr. Richards), in the circumstances, could have appointed an Attorney-General from outside Parliament. Such a Minister could have occupied the office for three months without having to seek the endorsement of the electors. Many years ago the late, Mr. J. R. Anderson, who had not been returned to Parliament, was so chosen as Attorney-General, but he never became a legislator. The constitutional aspect of a Government's appointment with only five Ministers, was raised in the Parliamentary lobbies yesterday, purely, however, as an academic issue. The question discussed was whether, if a Cabinet of five could be chosen, the number might not be further reduced on a future occasion as an expedient.

Premier's Advice

The new Premier had foreseen possible constitutional difficulties, and had obtained legal advice, upon which he acted. "The Constitution," said the Premier last night, "provided that there cannot be more than six Ministers, but a smaller number may be appointed. It is laid down that there shall not be more than four in the Assembly, and not more than two in the Legislative Council, but it is permissible to have fewer in either House. "I was also advised," proceeded Mr. Richards, "that the five Ministers could share proportionately the whole of the money allotted by the Act for the full number. I decided that the sum which, in ordinary circumstances, would have been paid to the sixth Minister, should go into the Treasury. The members of my Government, therefore, will get no financial advantage from the smaller number of Ministers, though necessarily there will be extra work."

New Ministry

Formalities were over quickly yesterday. Mr. Hill, after luncheon with the Lieutenant-Governor, tendered his resignation, with that of his colleagues, and advised that the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Richards) should be

at for. This was done shortly before 3.30 p.m., and Mr. Richards accepted the invitation to form a Government. He immediately submitted the names of his Ministers, with the list of portfolios, and by 3 p.m. they had been sworn in by Sir George Murray in the Executive Council chamber. Mr. Richards, in addition to the office of Premier, has six departments to administer.

The new Ministry is as follows:—
Premier, Treasurer, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Minister of Mines, Minister of Marine, Minister of Irrigation, and Minister of Repatriation—Mr. Richards, M.P.

Chief Secretary, Minister of Agriculture, and Commissioner of Forest Lands—Mr. Whitford, M.L.C.

Attorney-General and Minister of Railways—Mr. Denny, M.P.

Commissioner of Public Works and Minister of Industry—Mr. McInnes, M.P.

Minister of Education, Minister of Local Government, Minister of Immigration, and Minister of Labor and Employment—Mr. Staniford, M.P.

The new Premier is leader of a Parliamentary party of 19 in a House of 46 members. The Opposition, comprising the Liberal and Country Party, however, comprises only 14.

Mr. Richards' Career

"When he starts a job he sees it through," it is said of Mr. Richards. He is a man of decisive methods, and has shown that in administration, as well as in debate. Now in his 48th year, the Premier has always been steadily ambitious, and the position he occupies today is the result of dogged effort from his early teens. A native of Moonta Mines—he was born on May 31, 1885—Mr. Richards was educated at the local school and the Moonta School of Mines, and started work at the age of 13. He engaged in various occupations at the mines—"picky" boy, newspaper seller, and carpenter, among others—and entered Parliament in 1918 as a member for Wallaroo, which he has represented continuously.

Minister Of The Crown

Subsequently appointed Chairman of Committees, Mr. Richards showed a good grasp of Parliamentary procedure, and in 1930 became Commissioner of Crown Lands and Minister of Mines in the Hill Ministry. Later the portfolios of Minister of Marine and Minister of Labor and Employment were added; and, in the discharge of all these duties the new Premier has shown diligence and capacity.

Mr. Richards has been in the Labor movement practically since boyhood, and has been prominent, both as an official in numerous offices and as organizer of various campaigns. He has been identified with the Rechabite order for many years, and is a Past Grand Ruler. During his long association with the Wallaroo and Moonta districts he was a keen supporter of educational activities and sports, particularly cricket and football.

The Premier and Mrs. Richards have two daughters—Joyce, aged 18 years, and Kathleen, who is in her 15th year. Mrs. Richards is a sister of Mrs. Whitford, wife of the Chief Secretary.

The New Minister
The new Minister, Mr. Staniford, is 40 years of age, and is an orchardist at Summertown, where he has lived all his life. He took an early interest in public affairs, and worked for the Institute movement and in literary, agricultural, and sporting matters, and also in the Rechabite order. Mr. Staniford entered Parliament first in 1924, but lost his seat in the next general election. He was returned again in 1930, when he was elected Chairman of Committees.

First Cabinet Meeting

The first Cabinet meeting of the new Government occupied less than an hour and began immediately after the swearing-in ceremony was over. The Minister of Education (Mr. Staniford) was cordially welcomed by his colleagues. He will occupy the room in Education Building formerly used by Mr. Jelley.

Only formal domestic business was transacted by Cabinet yesterday. The Premier will concentrate immediately upon the preparation of his policy speech, which will be delivered at Wallaroo probably within three weeks.

Farwell To Mr. Hill

Before Mr. Hill left for Government House to tender the resignation of his Cabinet, heads of departments under the control of the Treasurer gathered in the Premier's room to bid him goodbye and wish him success in his new sphere of activity on behalf of the State.

Tributes to Mr. Hill's work and regret at his departure were expressed by the Under-Treasurer (Mr. R. R. Stuckey), the Assistant Under-Treasurer (Mr. W. G. Tucker), the Registrar of Motor Vehicles (Mr. H. B. Walker), and the general manager of the State Bank (Mr. W. J. Warren).

Special reference was made by the speakers to the fact that Mr. Hill had never shirked the unpleasant responsibility of placing before Parliament, and the public, unpalatable truths, or recommendations made to him by his responsible officers. They were glad to know that, although he was vacating his office in Adelaide, he would not sever his connection with the Government of the State, and that he would be able to continue his valuable work in London at the point where he had left it off in Australia.

Tribute To Officers

Mr. Hill said one of the most pleasing recollections of his term of office during a most strenuous time would be that of the unswerving loyalty, courage, and tireless work of his officers. He felt that on the other side of the world he would be able to assist each of the departments which he had administered in this State. He would keep them steadily posted with latest developments in any matters in which he thought they might be interested. He was sorry to be going, but in public life one was not always the master of one's own destiny. No effort would be spared on his part in London to assist this State by every means available to him.

The toast, "Success to the new Agent-General," was enthusiastically honored.

Mail

FEBRUARY 25, 1933

TRAFFIC IN CONVICTS

Mr. Oldham's Thesis

UP TO £25 EACH

"Britain probably sent between 75,000 and 100,000 convicts to America before the American revolution, and they were sold at prices from £10 to £25 a head," said the lecturer in history at the Adelaide University (Mr. W. Oldham), who returned today by the Orontes after two years in London.

"This traffic in convicts could not be called slavery because technically only the service of the convicts for periods to seven to 14 years was sold. The convicts did not become the goods and chattels of the buyers, who were not allowed to sell them. This trafficking went on for nearly 150 years."

These facts were revealed by official documents which Mr. Oldham perused while preparing a thesis on convict transportation from 1763 to 1793. This won him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

THOUSANDS OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. Oldham spent two years under Prof. A. P. Newton Rhodes Professor of Imperial History, at the London University. He searched tens of thousands of official documents to obtain the data.

The thesis covers the latter years of the American transportation, the first of the Australian, and the period of experimentation between the two.

No record was kept of the actual number of convicts sold in America because it was done by private contract. The money received from the sale of the convicts represented the profit of the contractor, because he was not paid by the Government. This went on until a Government contractor was given charge of the transportation at £5 a head.

"More scientific methods in historical research have been adopted, and present-day historians are disproving much which was written by the old historians," said Mr. Oldham.

HISTORY BOOKS WRONG

"One of the principal errors I discovered concerned the first convicts transported to Australia. History books say that they were sent to Botany Bay, whereas official records show that they actually went to Sydney Cove.

"Historians now have to search original documents when preparing a thesis. In the past they were able to take data from other people's books.

"The latest research proves that the earlier methods were by no means accurate. Apparently the old historians took many of their facts from newspaper articles, whereas official records have disproved many of these.

"The records are kept at the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, where hundreds of strongrooms contain documents going back to the Norman period. I went through 200 huge volumes of letters to the Treasury to find out the number of convicts carried. Some of the documents were practically unreadable."

Mail 25-2-33

Why Not Mawsonia?

AUSTRALIA possesses a huge unnamed territory in the Antarctic, and it has been suggested that it should be called King George the Fifth land. This would follow the custom of polar explorers in giving majestic names to the icy wastes over which they have had far from a royal time.

But an original idea which has been suggested is that the new land be named Mawsonia after the eminent Adelaide professor, who is now in England, and who so scientifically explored it.