

PLEASE FILE
FOR REFERENCE:

1/1956
JANUARY, 1956

STATEMENTS, SPEECHES, BROADCASTS BY THE
PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. R. G. MENZIES, C.H., Q.C., M.P.

FEDERAL CABINET RE-CONSTRUCTION

On January 10, the Prime Minister announced the names of the Ministers in the new Government, together with their departments, as follows :-

Prime Minister	..	Rt. Hon. Robert Gordon MENZIES, C.H., Q.C., M.P.
Treasurer	..	Rt. Hon. Sir Arthur William FADDEN K.C.M.G., M.P.
Vice-President of the Executive Council; Minister for Defence. Production		Rt. Hon. Sir Eric John HARRISON, K.C.V.O., M.P.
Minister for Labour and National Service; and Minister. for Immigration		Rt. Hon. Harold Edward HOLT, M.P.
Minister for Trade	..	Rt. Hon. John McEWEN, M.P.
Minister for External Affairs (and in charge of C.S.I.R.O.)	..	Rt. Hon. Richard Gardiner CASEY, C.H., D.S.O., M.C., M.P.
Minister for Defence	..	Hon. Sir Philip Albert Martin McBRIDE, K.C.M.G., M.P.
Leader of the Government in the Senate; and Minister for the Navy	..	Senator the Hon. Neil O'SULLIVAN
Attorney-General; and Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate	..	Senator the Hon. John Armstrong SPICER, Q.C.
Minister for National Development	..	Senator the Hon. William Henry SPOONER, M.M.
Minister for Air; and Minister for Civil Aviation	..	The Hon. Athol Gordon TOWNLEY, M.P.
Minister for Territories	..	Hon. Paul Meernaa Caedwalla HASLUCK, M.P.

The above will constitute THE CABINET

Minister for Repatriation	..	Senator the Hon. Walter Jackson COOPER, M.B.E.
Minister for Supply	..	Hon. Howard BEALE, Q.C., M.P.
Minister for Primary Industry	..	Hon. William McMAHON, M.P.
Minister for Shipping and Transport	..	Senator the Hon. Shane Dunne PALTRIDGE
Minister for Health	..	Dr. Donald Alastair CAMERON, O.B.E., M.P.
Minister for the Army	..	Mr. John Oscar CRAMER, M.P.
Postmaster-General	..	Mr. Charles William D.VIDSON, O.B.E., M.P.
Minister for Customs and Excise.		Mr. Frederick Meares OSBORNE, D.S.C., M.P.
Minister for the Interior and Minister for Works	..	Mr. Allen FAIRHALL, M.P.
Minister for Social Services	..	Mr. Hugh Stevenson ROBERTON, M.P.

It will be seen that certain very important changes have been made.

In order to secure more concentration of discussion and expedition of decision on policy matters, the size of the Cabinet is being reduced to 12. I have decided to adopt something like the United Kingdom system of having a Cabinet which includes certain Ministers and of having other Ministers, not in Cabinet, who will be responsible for the administration of their own departments. Ministers not in Cabinet will be invited to attend and to participate whenever matters affecting their own department are under Cabinet consideration. I will also have the right to invite to a Cabinet discussion any non-Cabinet Minister who has special knowledge or experience on the particular matter under consideration.

In order to render this new system fully effective, I will invite Parliament to alter the Ministers of State Act to provide for two additional ministers. Mr. Cramer and Mr. Robertson will, therefore, not be sworn as Ministers until the statutory amendment has been made.

The practice of having a Defence Preparations Committee will be continued. On this Committee there will continue to be present (inter alia) the three Service Ministers and the three Chiefs of Staff.

The principal departmental re-organisation is to be found in the creation, for urgent and obvious purposes, of a new Department of Trade which will not only embrace the trade aspects of the present Department of Commerce and Agriculture, including the work of the statutory marketing boards for certain primary industries, but will also be equipped to ensure that both inward and outward trade are dealt with comprehensively. The new department will take over from Trade and Customs the administration of the Tariff Board and the Central Import Licensing Committee. The normal administration of import licensing, subject to the rules laid down in the new department will remain with Customs.

The Department of Trade and Customs will become the Department of Customs and Excise, a title which will more accurately describe its functions under the new organisation.

In order that the Department of Trade may not, under these circumstances, be overloaded and so that it may direct its major attention to the stimulation of trade, a new Department of Primary Industry is being created. It will, subject to the activities of the Department of Trade in respect of marketing boards, deal with the Commonwealth's activities in relation to primary industries, including sugar, cotton and wine, which have hitherto been in the Department of Trade and Customs. It will also embrace such matters as the tractor bounty and the sulphur bounty, fisheries and whaling. It will have transferred to it from the Department of the Interior, war service land settlement. There will be some other re-allocations of function as between departments, details of which will be announced shortly.

These changes necessarily involve an additional Minister. I have also thought it undesirable that any one minister should administer two Service departments, since the interests of these departments are not always identical. To do this, requires another additional minister. These considerations have led to the conclusion that, while it would be completely unworkable to have a single Cabinet of 22 Ministers, there is no reason why there should not be two additional ministers outside of the Cabinet, particularly as the Cabinet proper is being reduced to 12, and should certainly be no larger if the greatest possible efficiency is to be achieved.

I sincerely regret the loss of good colleagues who have fine records of public service, but I have felt that the circumstances of today require very wide reconstruction, the introduction of relatively new Members of Parliament who can contribute fresh experience and