

reform

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New Federal Law Commissioners

The A.L.R.C. is beginning to take shape. Established by the Law Reform Commission Act 1973 (Cwth) the first Members were not appointed until 1975. Until now, the only full-time Member has been the Chairman, Mr. Justice Kirby. There are at the moment four part-time Members : Mr. F.G. Brennan, Q.C., Mr. J. Cain, Professor A.C. Castles and Associate Professor G.J. Hawkins. On 11 May 1976 the "Financial Review" referred to the delay in appointing full-time Members, having regard to the extensive programme being given to the A.L.R.C. by the Federal Government. The article referred to "an incredible output of work by the Commission even in its present truncated form".

The Attorney-General, Mr. Ellicott, Q.C., has now announced further appointments to the Commission. In a thought-provoking address to the Women Lawyers' Association of N.S.W., reviewed below, he stated his criteria : "It is most important that those who serve ... should be able to bring to the area of the law under scrutiny, the most advanced thinking on the subject and the practical difficulties that might be posed by possible solutions. My view is that there should be an interchange between the profession and the Commission on a regular basis. For this reason I think there should be full-time representatives from the Bar, from the solicitors and from academic lawyers on the Commission". The Commonwealth Attorney-General favoured short-term appointments of full-time Members "on the basis of skills in particular areas of the law". During the same speech, he announced that Emeritus Professor Sir Zelman Cowen, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland, had been appointed as a part-time Member for three years. On 13 June 1976 he announced the appointment of the first full-time Members, other than the Chairman. They are Mr. M.R. Wilcox of the Sydney Bar, Mr. Russell Scott, a member of a leading firm of Sydney solicitors and Mr. D. St.L. Kelly, who is Reader in Law at the University of Adelaide. The current term of Mr. F.G. Brennan, Q.C., of Brisbane, a part-time Member, has been extended for three years. The new Secretary, Mr. G.F.P. Brouwer, has also taken up duty, fresh from the Federal Cabinet Office in Canberra. Details of the careers of the new Members and the Secretary are contained in *Personalia*.

Three things are sure. First, no major programme of law reform can be attacked without full-time Members. The latest Annual Report of the South African Law Commission urges that the additional cost of full-time Members "should be weighed up against the importance of law reform for the community". The 1973 Annual Report of the Law Revision Commission of New Zealand said the same thing. Secondly, the A.L.R.C. is rapidly acquiring a major programme that will extend even these appointments. The A.L.R.C. Chairman has been heard to say that Cecil B. de Mille would have used a "cast of thousands" on the Privacy reference. Thirdly, the totally inadequate salaries offered to the Federal Commissioners remains as it was when criticised in the Annual Report of the A.L.R.C. 1975. The salaries are about \$10,000 behind those offered by the N.S.W. Commission. National service is what the Federal Commission offers. Those with hopes of financial gain, need not apply.