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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS.

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TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL  
REPORT.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.  
(FIFTEENTH COMMITTEE.)

(Senators appointed 10th August, 1954, Members of the House of Representatives appointed 11th August, 1954.)

JOHN OSCAR CRAMER, ESQUIRE, M.P. (Chairman).  
Senator JUSTIN HILARY O'BYRNE (Vice-Chairman).

Senate.

Senator NORMAN HENRY DENHAM HENTY.  
Senator EDMUND BEDE MAHER.

House of Representatives.

ALLAN CHARLES BIRD, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
GEORGE JAMES BOWDEN, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
WILLIAM ROBERT LAWRENCE, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
WILLIAM PAUL O'CONNOR, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
DAVID OLIVER WATKINS, ESQUIRE, M.P.

(Cesed to exist on dissolution of House of Representatives on 4th November, 1955.)

(SIXTEENTH COMMITTEE.)

(Senators appointed 16th February, 1956; Members of the House of Representatives appointed 22nd February, 1956.)

Senator NORMAN HENRY DENHAM HENTY (Chairman).  
DAVID OLIVER WATKINS, ESQUIRE, M.P. (Vice-Chairman).

Senate.

Senator EDMUND BEDE MAHER.  
Senator JUSTIN HILARY O'BYRNE.

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ALLAN CHARLES BIRD, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
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ROGER LEVINGO DEAN, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
WILLIAM ROBERT LAWRENCE, ESQUIRE, M.P.  
WILLIAM PAUL O'CONNOR, ESQUIRE, M.P.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC WORKS.

TWENTY-FOURTH GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency Field Marshal Sir William Slim, the Governor-General in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

In pursuance of the requirements of section 11 of the *Public Works Committee Act* 1913-1953, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings—

FIFTEENTH COMMITTEE.

1. The members of the Fifteenth Committee were appointed in the Senate on 10th August, 1954, and in the House of Representatives on 11th August, 1954. The following were the members appointed to the Committee:—Senators N. H. D. Henty, E. B. Maher and J. H. O'Byrne, and Messrs. A. C. Bird, G. J. Bowden, J. O. Cramer, W. R. Lawrence, W. P. O'Connor and D. O. Watkins. At its first meeting the Committee elected Mr. J. O. Cramer as Chairman, and Senator J. H. O'Byrne was elected as Vice-Chairman. During its life of a little over twelve months the Fifteenth Committee dealt with a very heavy programme. In spite of this, and the considerable amount of travelling involved, the records show exceptionally good attendances by members, while letters were received from the Minister for Works, expressing his appreciation of the assistance which the Committee's work had afforded him. The Committee ceased to exist on dissolution of the House of Representatives on 4th November, 1955. There were no changes in the personnel of the Committee.

REFERENCES DEALT WITH.

2. This General Report, the twenty-fourth in the history of the Public Works Committee, is made at the commencement of the present session of Parliament, to cover the activities of the Committee during the previous session.

INQUIRIES INCOMPLETE.

3. When the Twenty-third report was presented all inquiries had been completed. At this date, of the works referred to the Committee during its term of office, there are two inquiries incomplete, as follows—

Canberra Community Hospital, Australian Capital Territory .. .. .	2,500,000
Plant and Soils Laboratory, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, St. Lucia, Queensland .. .. .	133,000

COMPLETED INVESTIGATIONS.

4. The works referred to the Committee by the House of Representatives, under the terms of the *Public Works Committee Act* 1913-1953, and upon which investigations were completed, comprise—

(1) Water Supply Storage System, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory .. .. .	1,800,000
(2) Commonwealth-avenue Bridge, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory .. .. .	821,000
(3) Automatic Telephone Exchange Building, Redfern, New South Wales .. .. .	442,000
(4) Studios for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, Forbes-street, Sydney, New South Wales .. .. .	170,000
(5) Commonwealth Offices, Yurong-street (Palladium), Sydney, New South Wales .. .. .	1,300,000
(6) Commonwealth Offices, Phillip-street, Sydney, New South Wales .. .. .	2,345,000
(7) Removal of Dual Purpose Jetty, Townsville, Queensland .. .. .	25,000
(8) Accommodation for Local Administrative Staff, Darwin, Northern Territory .. .. .	620,000
(9) Court House, Darwin, Northern Territory .. .. .	300,000
(10) Wharf Facilities, Darwin, Northern Territory .. .. .	390,000

5. While the Committee was in Townsville, investigating the proposal to remove the Dual Purpose Jetty there, the opportunity was taken by the members to secure information, requested by the Minister in connexion with the use of Ready-mixed Concrete for construction of hard-standing areas at the Royal Australian Air Force Station at Townsville. There was no official inquiry in this matter, and the members submitted advice to the Minister for his guidance in future work in that area.

#### SUMMARY OF INQUIRIES.

6. The following is a summary of the reports presented to Parliament in connexion with the completed inquiries—

#### WATER SUPPLY STORAGE SYSTEM, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY.

##### *The Proposal.*

7. In the earliest planning of Canberra the Cotter was decided on as the main source of supply of domestic water for the city. Owing to the high cost of an aqueduct it was decided in the early days to build a storage-dam (the existing dam on the lower Cotter) and to pump the water from it for about 4 miles to Mount Stromlo service reservoir, thence gravitating it to the Red Hill Reservoir for reticulation to the city.

8. The dam is 86 feet high, and provides storage for 950,000,000 gallons of water, and, after careful examination, it is considered unsafe to raise the wall any higher. The present daily demand is approaching 14,000,000 gallons, and this is likely to prejudice the safe draw from the storage. All alternative sources of supply were therefore carefully studied with a view to providing for the future needs of the city. It was found that there were two main alternatives—the Queanbeyan River offered the cheapest solution, while the Cotter River provided the purest water, and it was decided to place the matter before the Public Works Committee for decision.

9. *The Cotter Alternative.*—This proposal would provide a concrete gravity dam 122 feet above the river bed level to impound 2,470,000,000 gallons of water. The dam would be situated near Bushranger's Creek, in a narrow gorge where rock foundation could be obtained close to the surface. Under this proposal the water would still be pumped in the initial stages, but when the demand for water has increased with the population to the appropriate stage, an aqueduct or pipe line will be constructed, and the water gravitated to Canberra.

10. *The Queanbeyan River Alternative.*—The dam would be situated near Googong Station, about 6 miles from Queanbeyan, where it would be constructed to impound 2,300,000,000 gallons to be conveyed by gravity through a pipeline to Queanbeyan and Canberra. This alternative would also be of use in providing additional water for maintaining the level of the Lakes scheme when constructed in Canberra.

11. *The Estimated Cost.*—The proposal selected by the Department of Works as preferable for recommendation to the Committee was the Queanbeyan River dam, the preference resting mainly upon the economic aspect. Very careful calculations were made by the Engineers in connexion with the cost of constructing and of maintaining the various components of these two schemes, with suitable graphs and diagrams to assist the Committee in studying the factors involved.

12. The *résumé* of capitalized costs showed that the total for the Cotter River scheme was £3,100,000 against £2,100,000 for the Queanbeyan River scheme. On the basis of those figures it was therefore shown that the Cotter scheme was £1,000,000 more expensive than the Queanbeyan alternative.

13. *The Principal Decision.*—The Committee finally arrived at its decision in favour of the Cotter scheme, after discussing all the factors and arguments brought forward in the evidence.

##### *Recommendations.*

14. (1) Additional storage is required, and should be provided as soon as possible.
- (2) The Canberra Lakes scheme and flood control do not provide sufficient justification for including special storage at Googong at the present time.
- (3) It is very doubtful that effective control of the Googong catchment area would be exercised in practice through the State Governmental authorities.
- (4) Resumption of the whole Queanbeyan River catchment area for control purposes would be so costly that the economic advantage of this scheme would disappear.
- (5) The Seat of Government Acceptance Act provides sufficient safeguards in case of the Googong area being required in the future.
- (6) Suitable action should be taken to ensure that the landholders in the Queanbeyan and Molonglo catchment areas are acquainted with the effects of the Agreement concerning control of their lands.

- (7) The Health Department over-emphasized the dangers of the Googong area, from the health point of view, but other medical tests leave no doubt as to the superiority of the Cotter water.
- (8) As the Cotter area contains ample possibilities on Commonwealth-owned land for future requirements, the necessity for an alternative watershed is minimized.
- (9) The Upper Cotter scheme should be adopted for providing additional storage for Canberra's water supply.
- (10) The dam on the Upper Cotter River should be constructed at an initial cost of £1,390,000, and be followed by construction of pipelines for gravitation system some years hence, when the demand justifies it.
- (11) Immediate use should be made of Molonglo water for adjacent parks and gardens.

#### COMMONWEALTH AVENUE BRIDGE, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY.

##### *The Proposal.*

15. Prior to 1922 Canberra was served by one low-level bridge only, at Commonwealth-avenue, and by fords at Acton, Scott's Crossing and elsewhere. Consequent upon floods and damage in 1922, and the increasing needs of the city, the provision of a high-level bridge at Commonwealth-avenue was commenced, and the work was undertaken in three stages. The present bridge is 20 feet wide and 416 feet in length. Provision is also made for pedestrians on a footway 3 ft. 4 ins. wide on the outside of the bridge trusses.

16. The proposal referred by the House of Representatives was for a bridge to replace the existing Commonwealth-avenue Bridge, and it was to consist of seven 100-ft. spans and two 50-ft. end spans in steel and concrete, giving a waterway of 700 feet. In submitting the reference to Parliament the Minister particularly desired the Committee to ensure that the bridge to be constructed would provide for adequate traffic for many years to come, and to express some views on other aspects of the Griffin Plan, both in regard to the capacity of the bridge, the general question of bridges over the Molonglo River, and broad leads which future planning should follow.

##### *Alternative Plans.*

17. In view of the fact that the Committee's inquiry was to include the broad aspects of future planning, the Department of Works made a special analysis of bridge requirements and traffic trends, in view of the heavy traffic peaks in the morning and afternoon, particularly in the direction of Scott's Crossing. As a result a suggestion was placed before the Committee that an additional river crossing should be provided on the line of Anzac Park, and that this should take priority over the replacement of the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.

##### *Estimate of Cost.*

18. For a four-lane bridge, similar to the one originally proposed for the Commonwealth-avenue Bridge, the cost was estimated at £821,000 if constructed at the Commonwealth-avenue site, £696,000 at the Anzac Park site or £646,000 if constructed at King's-avenue. A comprehensive set of diagrams setting out a number of schemes to include the development of the necessary bridges for Canberra for many years to come, and providing the required preparatory work and completion of the Lakes scheme, were submitted to the Committee for decision as to the most appropriate for the purpose.

##### *Recommendations.*

19. (1) There is an urgent necessity for a bridge now, with special planning for future needs, commencement to be at King's-avenue.
- (2) Provision of facilities up to the theoretical optimum is not justified, as it will be expensive and largely unnecessary.
- (3) Eleven-feet wide lanes should be adopted as proposed.
- (4) Ten lanes should be capable of meeting all reasonable traffic demands, at least to the end of this century.
- (5) Origin and destination surveys should be made as required.
- (6) Definite decisions concerning the lakes scheme can no longer be delayed.
- (7) The West Lake is desirable and practicable. It was eliminated from the Canberra Plan by the Department of the Interior without adequate investigation by the National Capital Planning and Development Committee, and replaced by the ribbon of water scheme involving a capitalized cost of nearly £3,000,000 more. The lake should be restored to the plan, and the necessary ministerial action is recommended as soon as possible.

- (8) Detailed planning of the lake edges should be crystallized immediately to facilitate consequential action.
- (9) When the golf links have to be moved, further consideration should be given to completing the Westbourne Woods location, where considerable expenditure has already been incurred.
- (10) The Googong Dam is not considered necessary for the lakes scheme, but should be reserved for use in the light of possible future needs.
- (11) Early action should be taken to encourage the State Government to limit soil erosion on the Googong area by afforestation and all other available methods.
- (12) The golf links and race-course should be moved out of the City area and given suitable sites with security of tenure.
- (13) The Lakeside Drive should be planned in connexion with development of the lakes scheme.
- (14) Further investigation of the possibilities of safeguarding the Canberra plan in the future is a matter which might appropriately be considered by the Select Committee of the Senate.
- (15) This Committee's inquiries concerning roads and development connected with traffic problems could be extended by the Select Committee of the Senate to include the remainder of the City.
- (16) Opportunities should be given for contractors tendering for the bridge to submit their own designs for the structure, to encourage pre-stressed concrete or other modern methods.
- (17) The design should be drawn in the Department, having in view the possibility of achieving lighter appearance commensurate with economy of construction, with re-submission if radical changes in design are involved.
- (18) An access road from King's-avenue to Constitution-avenue is essential, and should be constructed as soon as possible.
- (19) Scheme No. 12, showing comprehensive construction programme of bridges and lakes, required up to the year 1990, should be adopted. It is flexible enough to permit variation according to changes in basis of calculation through the period. The cost is not excessive and is spread over the years.
- (20) Support of the Government, by providing some extra funds to permit orderly planning of Canberra on a national scale, is urged at this vital stage.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, REDFERN, NEW SOUTH WALES.

*The Proposal.*

20. The existing Post Office and Telephone Exchange site is situated on the corner of Redfern and George streets, and the present exchange building was erected in 1909. It was extended in 1937 to serve local subscribers, but it has now reached the limits of its capacity. The present proposal is to erect a building comprising ground, mezzanine, and five upper floors, and it is to be connected by a covered way to the existing post office. The estimated cost is £442,000, and the time of construction was stated to be approximately 21 months from the date of signing of the contract.

*Need for the Building.*

21 Telephone subscribers' development in the Redfern area necessitates the provision of additional building space to house the required exchange equipment. In addition, the increased demand for service in the central area of the City of Sydney and the eastern suburbs, has led to extra demands for switching equipment space at Redfern. A further reason advanced in favour of the new building was the necessity to free space at City South, where cable tunnel congestion and the need to accommodate long-line terminal equipment, are creating particular difficulties which need immediate attention.

*Recommendations.*

22. (1) There is an urgent necessity for the building.
- (2) The building as planned, at an estimated cost of £442,000, is suitable and should be proceeded with as soon as possible.
- (3) Precast concrete panels should be used in this case as proposed.
- (4) The site is a good one and is appropriate for the purpose.
- (5) Maintenance work should be carried out on the existing post office without delay.

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION STUDIOS, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

*The Proposal.*

23. The proposal envisages the erection of a four-story building over the existing underground structure built during the war. This is planned to function as a complete and self-contained unit, while its erection on the site will conform to the planning in the ultimate scheme for the site. Special provision is to be made for floating construction of certain slabs and walls in the studio area, and for treatment of various parts of the building where acoustic demands of broadcasting are critical and exacting. On the four new floor levels and the roof structure there will be a total net floor area of 15,260 square feet. The estimated cost is £170,000.

*Need for the Building.*

24. At present the activities of the Australian Broadcasting Commission are scattered in various parts of the city in sixteen studios, housed in nine different buildings. This creates many difficulties in operation, administration, and standard of service. There have been no new buildings erected for this purpose during the 23 years of the Commission's existence, and all the studios have been adapted from other premises and have inherent weaknesses of shape and construction. It is uneconomical therefore to attempt to make first-class studios of them. It is essential to have an effective operational centre to ensure adequate preparation and actual broadcasting of the programmes, while the present lack of a satisfactory recording centre and library are having a restrictive effect on the development and standard of the programmes.

*Future Planning.*

25. The advantage of having all the activities of the Australian Broadcasting Commission located in one area was stressed, and many reasons were advanced in favour of early planning of the complete scheme, involving construction of buildings capable of housing all sections together, with resultant efficiency and economy. It was also pointed out that the rapid development of television would have to be provided for in a very short time.

*Recommendations.*

26. (1) The broadcasting service is a most important national undertaking which has been operating for too long under difficult conditions and in cramped accommodation. Every effort should be made to encourage the best possible service now, and to facilitate maximum development in the critical years which lie immediately ahead.
- (2) The accommodation proposed is needed now, and construction of the west wing on Forbes-street should be regarded as an urgent matter.
- (3) With the early advent of television further accommodation will be needed at short notice, and steps should be taken to plan details of all three stages of the complete scheme for the whole site without delay.
- (4) The second stage of the scheme should be placed on an early schedule for works construction and pushed forward with all speed, if the pressing demands of the next few years are to be met satisfactorily.
- (5) The third stage should be then constructed as soon as possible, so that all the functions of this vital service may be developed along the most effective modern lines.
- (6) The three stages envisaged are expected to accommodate all present sections of the broadcasting service, but it is desirable to provide for possible future expansion, and also to make effective use of this valuable city site. The cost of strengthening the proposed foundations to take a limit height building at a later date will involve expenditure of an additional £10,000 now, and it is recommended that this amount should be included in the present proposal.
- (7) The full space desired by the Postmaster-General's Department for switching and control rooms is necessary and should be included in the proposal.
- (8) The size and position of the site make it an excellent one for the purpose.
- (9) Mechanical ventilation should be included for the toilets on the fifth level, and the area subdivided to provide for female staff.
- (10) The Committee emphasizes the urgency of the project and recommends that the amount of £158,500 proposed, plus an additional £10,000 for strengthening the foundations, should be approved as soon as possible.

## COMMONWEALTH OFFICES, YURONG-STREET (PALLADIUM), SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

*The Proposal.*

27. In 1954, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was given a reference to report upon a proposal to erect Commonwealth Offices in Phillip-street, Sydney, and to have special regard to and report on the accommodation requirements of all Commonwealth Departments in Sydney. In the absence of detail studies of building designs, the investigation was principally concerned with the need for the proposed accommodation, and the suitability of the sites available.

28. Because of the difficulties associated with the re-alignment of Elizabeth-street extension, involving delays of uncertain duration, the suggestion was put forward that the urgent necessity for immediate provision of office space could be partly relieved by giving priority to the erection of a building on the Palladium site in Yurong-street. In its report on the Phillip-street proposal the Committee urged constant efforts to bring negotiations on that site to finality at the earliest moment, but also stressed that plans should be developed for the relief building on the Palladium site.

29. Two sets of plans were accordingly prepared—one for the Phillip-street site, and an independent set for the Palladium site dealt with in this reference.

30. The proposal provided for an "L" shaped building of reinforced concrete frame construction, comprising a basement, ground, and nine upper floors, with its major axis north and south to suit the shape of the site. The building was planned to accommodate 1,354 people in a usable office space of 106,280 square feet, and the estimated cost of the building was £1,300,000.

31. Upon investigation of the plans concurrently with those for the Phillip-street site, the problems bound up with both projects, and the schedules of planning and construction times, it appeared that the time to be gained by construction of the Palladium building was not as considerable as had been hoped when this alternative was at first conceived. The Committee therefore gave further consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of having the Commonwealth officials housed in different buildings, and finally concluded that it is preferable to use every effort to accelerate construction of a complete Commonwealth centre on the Phillip-street site, and to defer any further development of the Palladium site for the present.

*Recommendations.*

32. (1) The proposed Commonwealth Offices, Yurong-street (Palladium), be not proceeded with at present.  
(2) A great deal of valuable work has been put into the plans for this building, and they should be kept for future reference if necessary.

## COMMONWEALTH OFFICES, PHILLIP-STREET, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

*The Proposal.*

33. Several attempts have been made in past years to plan comprehensive schemes to accommodate officials of the Commonwealth departments in Sydney. In both 1921 and 1927 the Committee reported that there was an urgent need for such a building in Sydney, but circumstances arose to prevent completion of the scheme.

34. In 1954 an investigation was commenced in which the Committee was to have special regard to the accommodation needs of all Commonwealth office activities in Sydney. No detailed plans were submitted to the Committee, but a suggested method of developing the site by the erection of a multi-storied structure was prepared. The suitability of the site was the main consideration, and a report was subsequently submitted, recommending that the Phillip-street site should be developed as soon as possible, and plans of a suitable building submitted to the Committee as soon as they were ready. This reference is the result of that recommendation, and a first stage was initially planned and submitted to the Committee.

35. The first stage of the proposal was for a building using about half of the site, and comprising a main multi-story block with a limit height structure of basement, ground and eleven upper floors; a smaller block of the re-modelled Wembley Chambers building extended to five stories; and a comparatively narrow link on the eastern boundary joining those two blocks.

36. The second stage was not submitted in planned form, but perspex models were produced to demonstrate two alternatives for possible development of the site at a later date.

37. The proposal submitted presented a possibility of constructing a portion of stage 1, if considerable delays occurred in securing possession of the whole site for building purposes. The cost was £759,000 for part 1 of stage 1, and the total cost of the whole of stage 1 was reckoned to be £2,345,000.

*Need for Building.*

38. Previous investigations have stressed the necessity for office space for the Commonwealth Departments in Sydney, and the 1954 report established without doubt the growing urgency of the need, both in order to relieve the present congestion and use of unsuitable buildings, and also to relinquish accommodation leased from private owners, but urgently needed for commercial purposes. It was also shown that provision would have to be made for the future, and by 1967 there would be an overall requirement for accommodation to house 4,979 persons.

*Wembley Chambers.*

39. A factor which affected the trend of the investigation was the presence of Wembley Chambers building on the site. Because of its rather substantial construction, and relatively good state of repair, it had been looked upon as too valuable to discard, and it had proved a source of considerable difficulty in planning a new building to incorporate this old section. The result as submitted to the Committee was never a very happy one, and doubt grew in the minds of the Committee Members about the wisdom and advisability of accepting the plan, while the question of its real durability and economic life seemed open to question. The Committee therefore engaged the services of expert independent engineers to make a technical survey of the building, resulting in the decision that Wembley Chambers should be demolished, and fresh comprehensive plans drawn up before the Committee made its report to Parliament.

*The Re-planned Scheme.*

40. The new proposal envisaged a building comprising an east-west, slab-type unit, rising to approximately 230 feet, facing on to the proposed Place, supported by wings on the north and south sides, and planned to be constructed in three stages. The accommodation provided would house 4,600 persons, and would make economical use of the site, with the advantages of better light, ventilation and superior outlook, together with greatly increased isolation from adjoining buildings, with diminution of the fire risk. The estimated cost of the first stage only was £2,808,500, with second stage costing £637,400 and third stage £1,520,100. If the whole scheme were completed in one contract an amount of £62,700 could be saved on the first stage, and the total estimated cost would be £4,903,300.

*Recommendations.*

41. (1) The Commonwealth centre should be established on the proposed site, and the Palladium site not used at present.  
(2) Every effort should be made to sweep away the obstacles which have been in the way of development in this area for so many years.  
(3) If the conference with the Housing Commission fails to secure alternative accommodation, and the Council cannot gain possession of its property, it is suggested that early action might be taken to vary the Agreement to provide for the Commonwealth to acquire all the land concerned, and use its authority to gain vacant possession without the restrictions which operate against the City Council.  
(4) The whole of the proposed accommodation will be required by about 1966, and every delay in commencement of the building makes the matter more urgent.  
(5) Stage 1 of the proposal is required immediately.  
(6) Stages 2 and 3 will be required before they can be erected, and those stages should be planned and constructed to ensure the most economical and efficient building operations, and allow release of leased accommodation urgently required for commercial use.  
(7) Every consideration should be given to the provision of funds for the planning to proceed immediately, and successive amounts made available to allow the following stages to be constructed consecutively.  
(8) The project is an economical proposition, and the Commonwealth will acquire a valuable asset on favorable terms, while many advantages will accrue through added staff efficiency and convenience to the public.  
(9) Wembley Chambers building should be demolished at the appropriate stage to allow the overall plan to be adequately created.  
(10) As this design appears to provide the precautions generally deemed necessary in relation to the surrounding streets and properties, no objection should be raised to the height of the centre wing, which exceeds the maximum provided for in the city By-laws.  
(11) The car parking provisions are recommended, but special attention should be given to evolving a system of priority and control, to make the greatest use of the area, and facilitate traffic in peak periods.

- (12) The population of 4,630 planned for this building is not considered excessive with the modern method of planning adopted.
- (13) Only very light meals should be provided in the cafeteria, and the departmental committee for the purpose should be consulted without delay, with a view to reducing the space and some of the cooking equipment.
- (14) The question of giving better lift service to the basement should be given further consideration.
- (15) The zoning of the lifts as proposed should be reviewed in the light of the evidence, to ensure that an adequate service is installed.
- (16) The possibility of reducing the space between floors should be further investigated.
- (17) Consideration should be given to replacing the revolving doors with sets of double storm-proof doors at the entrance lobby.
- (18) Elaborate stairways should be avoided, and all should be fire-enclosed as a safety precaution.
- (19) The lecture hall is necessary and should be included as proposed.
- (20) The cost aspect should be given special study when the plans have reached the appropriate stage, and it is suggested that the Minister should call for detailed comparison with other building costs, in order to maintain adequate control over this unusually expensive proposal.
- (21) A project of this magnitude requires specially reliable and scrupulous supervision, and too much stress cannot be laid upon the necessity for all sections of the planning and construction to be strictly controlled.
- (22) Full air-conditioning is proved to be an economical proposition, and also desirable from many other points of view.
- (23) Appropriate shops should be included in the plans, early steps taken to decide the type desirable, and whatever priority is possible in those types should be extended to present businesses established on the site.
- (24) The architects are congratulated upon achieving a design of unusual distinction for a building which will be a magnificent addition to Sydney buildings.

#### DUAL PURPOSE JETTY, TOWNSVILLE, QUEENSLAND.

##### *The Proposal.*

42. The dual purpose jetty is one of the wharfs in Townsville Harbour, built during the war in 1943.44 by the Allied Works Council. It was to be used for the dual purposes of providing wharfage for naval vessels on one side and for cargo-carrying lighters on the other. The Townsville Harbour Board advised that no objection would be offered to the erection of the proposed dual purpose jetty as a temporary expedient for the duration of the war, and twelve months thereafter.

43. While the jetty was being constructed the Townsville Harbour Board requested that the piles be protected with concrete sleeves, to ensure that they would have a longer life, and this was agreed to, provided that it did not delay the work, and that the cost of such protection would be borne by the Board.

44. After the end of the war the Harbour Board proceeded to implement a scheme of development which involved the demolition of the jetty, though the Commonwealth stressed the desirability of making use of the structure, which was in good condition. The Harbour Board insisted upon the removal of the jetty; the Department of Works commenced the work; and some of the superstructure was dismantled. Owing to the presence of the concrete sleeves on the piles considerable difficulty was experienced in withdrawing the piles, and the work was discontinued temporarily. The Harbour Board was advised that the Department would proceed with the work of demolition if the Harbour Board would remove the concrete sleeves, at its cost, but the Harbour Board refused to accept any responsibility for the removal of the sleeves.

45. Over a number of years there have been several attempts to arrive at a satisfactory basis for agreement on the matter, but without success, and the Harbour Board recently made renewed requests for the jetty to be removed by the Commonwealth, to enable the Board to continue with its developmental work. The Committee was required to investigate the matter and recommend appropriate steps to be taken by the Commonwealth.

##### *Recommendations.*

46. (1) The Committee is of opinion that the Commonwealth had a responsibility to remove the jetty prior to the addition of the concrete sleeves to the piles.

- (2) The Committee is of opinion that, when the jetty was first erected, all the implications suggested that the intention by the Harbour Board was to use the jetty in the future for a long period of years.
- (3) The evidence suggests that it was only when hostilities ended that the Harbour Board, finding itself in a buoyant financial position through war revenues, decided to implement its scheme for greater port development.
- (4) Whilst at no time did the Commonwealth accept responsibility for the cost of removing the concrete sheathing, the Department did not at first realize the full extent of the difficulty that the sheathing of the piles presented. This was only revealed when the work of demolition commenced.
- (5) The Committee is of opinion that the question can only be resolved if a new agreement is entered into by the Commonwealth and the Harbour Board in relation to the matter.
- (6) It is recommended that the new agreement be made, and should provide—
  - (a) That the Townsville Harbour Board remove the sheathing on the piles at its own cost, and that the Commonwealth should then proceed to the demolition of the jetty, or,
  - (b) That the Townsville Harbour Board pay an amount in cash or services equal to half the extra cost involved in the removal of the jetty caused by the presence of the concrete sheathing.

#### COMMONWEALTH ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

##### *The Proposal.*

47. A proposal to erect Administrative Offices in Darwin was recommended by the Public Works Committee in 1939, but the intervention of the war resulted in the project being abandoned, and following the war, under the altered conditions, the proposed land was used for other purposes. It is now proposed that an Administrative Office centre shall be established to house all Commonwealth Departments in the one area of the town in modern office buildings. It is proposed that the accommodation shall consist of a number of identical office units, each housing 160 officers, on land situated on each side of the present Legislative Council building. Four of the units are required at the present time, and, at £155,000 each, the total expenditure is estimated to be in the vicinity of £620,000.

##### *Need for the Buildings.*

48. After the war many ex-service hutments were pressed into service to alleviate the urgent need for office accommodation. Such buildings are still being used and, almost without exception, they are entirely unsuited to their present purposes under tropical conditions. It was stressed that the problem of recruiting staff is particularly difficult in Darwin where the turnover of staff is very high, and it is contended that greater attention to working conditions would improve efficiency, would ultimately reduce operating costs, and would encourage staff to remain in Darwin for longer periods.

49. Apart from the uncomfortable and unsuitable types of buildings being used, an important factor to be considered is the wide dispersal of the different activities in various parts of the town. It is considered that the four proposed units will provide satisfactory space for the present requirements.

##### *Future Requirements.*

50. It is considered that the present rapid development of the town and surrounding districts will result in further increases in staff as time goes by, but some little time will have to elapse before reliable and substantial results are obtained, to prove beyond doubt that the promise of mineral possibilities will be substantiated. When it is proved that additional space is required for office buildings, it is suggested that consideration should be given to using some of the extensive area on the opposite side of the street, now occupied by unsightly Navy hutments.

##### *Recommendations.*

51. (1) There is an urgent need for suitable office accommodation in Darwin.
- (2) Four unit buildings as proposed should be constructed as soon as possible.
- (3) Accommodation for the Customs Department should be included in the present scheme, with separate entrance suitably treated to emphasize Customs needs.
- (4) The open spaces at ground-floor level should be enclosed to provide additional space required, but basements are not recommended.
- (5) Land adjoining the Legislative Council building provides suitable sites for the establishment of an administrative centre.
- (6) The site proposed for the four units should be adopted.

- (7) The Master Plan of Darwin should be determined without delay, and land allocated for Navy purposes. Portion of present Navy land should be reserved for future extension of the administrative centre.
- (8) The design submitted is appropriate, and should be adopted for the standard units.
- (9) Air-conditioning should be included in the buildings as planned.
- (10) Amenities should be provided when the additional space is made available by enclosing the open ground-floor areas.
- (11) The estimated amount of £21,700 to close in the ground-floor space in the four units is recommended.

COURT HOUSE, DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

*The Proposal.*

52. In 1884, provision was made for the appointment of a permanent Judge to reside in the Northern Territory, and, until the Commonwealth Government took over the Territory, the Judge functioned also as Government Resident. Before the turn of the century a Supreme Court building was erected on the Esplanade, but shortly before the first Japanese raid on Darwin the building was taken over by the Navy, who have occupied it ever since.

53. In about 1947 three naval huts on the Esplanade were adapted to court purposes, as a temporary measure, but the improvised buildings are still being used. The present proposal envisages a pair of buildings, comprising ground and upper floors, separated by a covered way, one building to house the Supreme Court, and the other the Magistrate's Courts, Crown Law Offices, and Registrar-General's Department. The Estimate given to the Committee places the cost in the vicinity of £300,000.

*Need for the Building.*

54. Two main reasons were advanced to justify the early erection of the new Supreme Court building. The first is that the existing temporary building will shortly be demolished to make way for a further block of the Peel-street Hostel; and the second is that the present buildings are not consistent with the importance which the administration of justice should command in the community. The condition under which the courts have to work are shocking, while the rooms in which the Judge and the rest of the staff have to work are inadequate, uncomfortable, and completely intolerable in Darwin climate.

*Future Requirements.*

55. It was pointed out that the amount of judicial work done in the Territory, even at the present time, greatly exceeds the work done in the southern States, and figures submitted indicate that, as the population increases the total number of crimes and amount of civil litigation will increase. It was therefore considered essential to include in the plans space which will be suitable for extension of the present activities of the courts.

*Recommendations.*

56. (1) There is an urgent need for new Court House buildings in Darwin.
- (2) The new buildings should provide for expansion of the town in the near future.
- (3) Planning should proceed on the basis of the accommodation suggested, and the complete proposal re-submitted to the Committee at a later date.
- (4) The final plans should indicate a somewhat more imposing aesthetic appearance in contemporary style, suited to the important judicial activities to be conducted in the buildings.
- (5) Air-conditioning should be included in the plans for the new building.
- (6) In order to stimulate and maintain confident development, an official Master Plan of Darwin should be drawn up without delay, giving adequate rights and titles to the land to be used for departmental or commercial activities.
- (7) The site proposed is the most suitable for the purpose.
- (8) The end of Bennett-street should be closed, provided suitable action is taken to widen Herbert-street and facilitate through traffic from Bennett-street, Herbert-street and the Esplanade.

WHARF FACILITIES, DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

*The Proposal.*

57. The original jetty constructed by the South Australian Government in Darwin in 1887 was of timber, and, after a few years it became badly eaten by teredo and had to be demolished. In 1894, a proposal was made that a stone wall should be built along the line of the edge of the mud bank

between Fort Hill and Stokes Hill, but as it involved a wall some 60 feet high, it was not approved. In 1904, a new jetty was constructed of cast-iron piers filled with concrete, steel bracings, and timber deck, and some of these piers are still in good order to-day. The jetty was partly destroyed in 1942 by Japanese bombing, and was subsequently repaired by the erection of steel spans across the damaged portion.

58. During the war a timber jetty, situated on the opposite side of the bay to the town jetty, was built as an emergency wharf to handle large ships. The timber piles were not treated, and became damaged by teredo in course of time, but this jetty was repaired after the war with the hope of prolonging its life until a new wharf could be completed.

59. Wharfage facilities have been the subject of several investigations by the Public Works Committee over the years, and a great deal of information is available regarding the requirements and conditions at the port. After a very full inquiry in 1949 the Committee recommended the erection of the first two stages of a three-stage proposal for a wharf 650 ft. long, and this structure is nearing completion. Owing to the rapid development of the Northern Territory following the discovery of uranium, as well as important progress in agricultural expansion undertaken in recent years, the question of the adequacy of the wharfage facilities in Darwin caused some considerable concern, and the matter was referred to the Committee again for inquiry. The proposal now is to extend the wharf under construction to a length of 800 feet, and to erect upon it a second transit shed to facilitate handling of the growing volume of cargoes. The estimated cost of the extension of the wharf of a total length of 800 feet and 140 feet wide, was stated to be £350,000, while the cost of the additional cargo shed would be £40,000, a total of £390,000.

*Need for Additions.*

62. The present situation is that, during construction of the new wharf now being erected, practically all the cargoes coming into the port must be handled over the old Fort Hill wharf, and very considerable delays are being experienced in securing delivery of goods coming to Darwin by boat. On completion of the new wharf these difficulties will be considerably relieved, but the Committee made extensive inquiries regarding development of the port, and the possibility of additional needs for the future. As a result, it was shown that, theoretically, there would be adequate provision for the present and immediate future requirements when the new wharf is completed, as a total berthage will then be available for two west coast ships, and one overseas ship or oil tanker. Close investigation showed, however, that the port could only work satisfactorily with these facilities if several sets of conditions operated at the same time. It is not possible to arrange the business of the port under such conditions, and it was demonstrated that considerable delays would still occur, and overseas ships would still be discouraged from making Darwin a port of call.

63. There seems little doubt also, that the tonnages coming into Darwin will continue to increase, and there will be a permanent need for additional facilities, though ultimate development of the port, in the manner submitted in the proposal, would have to receive further study when the demands of the trade make this necessary.

*Recommendations.*

64. (1) The wharf under construction, when completed, will not provide adequately for all the requirements of Darwin.
- (2) With improved facilities, additional shipping and larger tonnages of cargo will be offering immediately.
- (3) Supervision on the wharfs at present is not sufficiently effective to ensure the best results.
- (4) Indications of expansion warrant the forecast that aggregate cargoes to pass over the wharfs will grow sufficiently to require an additional berth. The Navy is also in urgent need of further facilities.
- (5) Additions will be less costly if proceeded with before the present construction equipment is removed.
- (6) The wharf under construction should be increased to 800 feet in length, with a width of 140 feet, at an estimated cost of £350,000, as soon as possible.
- (7) A second cargo shed, at an estimated cost of £40,000, is imperative if full use is to be made of the extended wharf.
- (8) Adequate additional amenities for an enlarged port quota, in conformity with Australian Stevedoring Industry Board standards and Northern Territory health regulations, should be provided after consultation with representatives of the men involved.
- (9) The use of Fort Hill wharf should not be restricted to oil tankers at the present stage of port development.

- (10) The Departmental suggestions for full development are accepted as a basis for further study, but the ultimate development of the port should be deferred until progress of the Northern Territory demands major additions to the port facilities.
- (11) It is more desirable to extend the Stokes Hill wharf than to replace it with a concrete wall at this stage.
- (12) Financial provision should be made for construction of access roads by the time the wharf is extended.
- (13) An appropriate area of the bay should be reclaimed with material from Fort Hill at an approximate cost of £110,000, to provide space for the access roads, a bulk storage yard, and a cattle holding yard.
- (14) A landing stair should be provided at the appropriate position for the use of small craft.
- (15) Definite steps should be taken to obtain reliable information as to whether the presence of *Neptuna* wreck is causing silting; whether there is any dangerous cargo still in the wreck; and the cost of removing *Neptuna*.
- (16) Parking space should be provided at the approach to the wharf.
- (17) Consideration should be given to establishing an appropriate port authority.

#### PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT.

65. In the last Report the Committee noted that amendments to the Public Works Committee Act, sought by the Committee for many years, were to be introduced shortly. During the term of this Committee the Members were pleased to receive information from the Chairman, that the Committee's representations to the Prime Minister were being considered, and various points had been discussed with him, to ensure satisfactory results when the amendments were made. The Committee trusts that the desired amendments will now be incorporated in a Bill to be placed before Parliament without delay, and the Act made more effective for future activities.

#### MOVEMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE.

66. During the term of office the Committee travelled to Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Queanbeyan, Townsville and Darwin to take evidence in connexion with the various references. Numerous local inspections were also made in connexion with the investigations, involving a considerable amount of car travelling. The official distances travelled by the 15th Committee totalled 10,304 miles, not including the distances covered by the individual members while travelling to and from their homes to attend meetings of the Committee.

#### STAFF.

67. The secretarial work was continued throughout the period by the permanent Secretary of the Committee (Mr. W. R. Blackman). The Secretarial Assistant, Miss D. R. Cantwell, resigned to take up an appointment in Sydney, and her place was taken in October, 1954, by Mrs. N. G. H. Clarke, who has continued with the work since that date.

DENHAM HENTY

Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,  
Parliament House,

Canberra, A.C.T.

1st March, 1956.

#### PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS—RECORD OF INQUIRIES.

Date of Inquiry.	Proposed Work.	Expenditure	Expenditure	Amount in	Amount in	Remarks
		Proposed when Referred by the Government	Recommended by the Committee.	Excess of that Proposed.	Reduction of that Proposed.	
		£	£	£	£	
1954-55. (See 24th GENERAL REPORT.)						
26th August, 1954, to 26th January, 1955	Canberra Water Supply ..	1,800,000	1,300,000	..	410,000	Recommended subsequent expenditure when requirements demand it.
26th August, 1954, to 29th January, 1955	Commonwealth-avenue Bridge ..	821,000	480,000	..	341,000	Recommended also construction schedule for future years, including Commonwealth-avenue Bridge and Lakes Scheme.
10th November, 1954, to 2nd March, 1955	Redfern Telephone Exchange, New South Wales	442,000	442,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed. Also preparation future plans.
10th November, 1954, to 2nd March, 1955	Australian Broadcasting Commission Studios, Sydney	183,500	183,500	10,000	..	Extra £10,000 to provide foundations for the future.
8th December, 1954, to 20th October, 1955	Commonwealth Offices, Phillip-street, Sydney	2,315,000	4,003,300	2,688,300	..	Recommended complete building, saving £82,700 on first stage.
8th December, 1954, to 26th October, 1955	Commonwealth Offices (Felladium), Yurong-street, Sydney	1,300,000	..	..	1,300,000	Not recommended. Complete Phillip-street building recommended instead.
31st March, 1955, to 12th May, 1955	Removal Dual Purpose Jetty, Townsville	25,000	25,000	..	..	New agreement recommended.
18th December, 1954, to 24th September, 1955	Darwin Court House ..	300,000	300,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed.
16th December, 1954, to 14th September, 1955	Commonwealth Offices, Darwin ..	620,000	641,700	21,700	..	Recommended enclosing additional space.
15th December, 1954, to 21st September, 1955	Darwin Wharf Facilities ..	300,000	600,000	110,000	..	Recommended £110,000 to reclaim area of Bay for storage.