

1925.



THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

presented by Lynch

Presented to the Senate
By Command
In return to Order

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC WORKS.

H. Wren
acting Clerk of the Senate.
26th August, 25.

REPORT

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

RELATING TO THE PROPOSED

ERECTION OF A HOTEL (No. 4) AT CANBERRA.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

(Fourth Committee.)

The Honorable HENRY GARGOY, M.P., Chairman.

Senate.

- Senator John Barnes.†
- Senator Hattil Spencer Foll.‡
- Senator Patrick Joseph Lynch.†
- Senator John Newland.‡
- Senator William Plain.*
- Senator Matthew Reid.†

* Ceased to be a Member of the Senate, 30th June, 1925.

House of Representatives.

- Arthur Blakley, Esq., M.P.
- Robert Cook, Esq., M.P.
- David Sydney Jackson, Esq., M.P.
- George Hugh Mackay, Esq., M.P.
- James Mathews, Esq., M.P.

† Appointed 6th July, 1925.

‡ Resigned 22nd June, 1925.

INDEX.

	PAGE.
Report	iii
Minutes of Evidence	1

EXTRACT FROM MINUTE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL—No. 263 DATED 19TH MAY, 1925.

Departmental No. 253

Home and Territories Department,
19th May, 1925.

Executive Council No. 25.

MINUTE PAPER FOR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

Subject.—Reference to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

Approved in Council.
(Sgd.)
H. ATKINSON,
for Governor-General.
19th May, 1925.

Recommended for the approval of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, that in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1921, the following proposed works be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, viz. :—

- (b) The erection of a Hotel (No. 4) at Canberra.

(Sgd.) G. F. PEARCE,
Minister of State for Home and Territories.

Filed in the Records of the Council.
(Sgd.)

J. H. STABLING,
Secretary to the Executive Council.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

	PAGE.
Butters, John Henry, Chairman, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra	4
Daley, Charles Studdy, Acting Secretary, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra	1
Hill, Thomas, Chief Engineer, Department of Works and Railways	9
Murdoch, John Smith, Director-General of Works and Chief Commonwealth Architect, Department of Works and Railways	7
Owen, Percy Thomas, Chief Engineer, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra	1
Rolland, Henry Maitland, Architect, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra	2

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

ERECTION OF HOTEL (No. 4), CANBERRA.

REPORT

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, to which His Excellency the Governor-General in Council referred, for investigation and report to the House of Representatives, a proposal for the erection of a hotel (No. 4) at Canberra, has the honour to report as follows:—

INTRODUCTORY.

1. In pursuance of the plan adopted of providing for a large proportion of the residential accommodation required at Canberra in the early stages by means of hotels, the Hotel Canberra, capable of accommodating 180 guests, has been erected facing Parliament House, and the Hotel Ainslie, capable of accommodating 80, has been erected in the vicinity of Ainslie avenue, while a third hotel, the Hotel Brisbane, is in course of erection on a site between Federal avenue and Brisbane-avenue. Representations have now been made that to provide further necessary accommodation for members of Parliament, civil servants, and the general public, an additional hotel should be erected immediately.

PRESENT PROPOSAL.

2. The proposal now under consideration is to erect a hotel capable of providing accommodation for 120 guests. The design of the building is in conformity with the ideal of a garden city, and provides for the dining and other public rooms in a main central structure, with sleeping accommodation in separate pavilions grouped round the main building.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED BUILDING.

3. In the construction of the proposed building, it is intended that the foundations shall be of brick and the whole of the pavilions also of brick up to ceiling height, with the roofing of Canberra tiles. In the case of the main central building, the brick-work will be carried to the first floor only, and the upper story is to be of timber.

4. The design of the building shows a central block two stories high containing a dining-room, kitchen, &c., with accommodation for the domestic staff above, and flanked on the sides by lower two-storied pavilions containing the guests' bedrooms. In the middle of the central block it is proposed to have a dining-room 58 feet long by 44 feet wide, capable of seating 120 people, with kitchen and offices immediately off the dining-room to the rear. The front portion of the building is to consist of a common room 38 feet by 28 feet, a reading-room 21 feet 6 inches long by 15 feet wide, a smoking-room of the same size, and two vestibules containing a small cloak-room and a toilet—one for ladies and the other for gentlemen. The kitchen will be approximately 23 feet by 22 feet, and will contain a range, a grill, a carving table, three boiling pans, a steam cooker, a washing machine, and other small accessories. There will also be a scullery, a vegetable store, a pantry, two kitchen closets, a fuel store, and a servants' lavatory. It is further proposed to have three men's rooms and a boiler for heating and cooking purposes.

5. Over the main portion of the central block, it is proposed to provide ten bedrooms for domestics, a common-room, and two bath-rooms, two linen closets and a toilet, of the bedrooms, four are of a size 12 feet by 8 feet, four 12 feet by 10 feet, and two 13 feet by 8 feet.

6. The pavilions in which the bedrooms for the guests are located are removed from the walls of the main building a distance of 30 feet, and are connected by covered ways. The pavilions proposed to be erected are of two stories, and each story will contain accommodation for ten people. The single rooms are 13 feet by 10 feet, but on each floor of each wing are two bedrooms 16 feet by 13 feet. The bedrooms are planned with recessed cupboards and wash basins, and in the recesses for the wash basins will be a looking-glass, shelving for brushes, &c. On each floor of each pavilion will be four bath-rooms.

7. The height of the walls in the bedrooms will be 10 feet, and in the dining and public rooms, 13 feet.

8. On each floor at the end of each wing of the pavilions it is proposed to provide a sitting room 18 feet by 13 feet and two balconies. In each of the bedrooms there will be hot and cold water supplied to the lavatory basins.

ESTIMATED COST.

9. The estimated cost of the building as submitted to the Committee was set down at £55,000, and the time fixed for completion about twelve months from date of commencement.

It was stated that the furnishing will probably cost an additional sum of about £10,000.

COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS.

10. The Committee visited Canberra and took evidence from the Chairman and Acting Secretary of the Federal Capital Commission, as well as the Chief Engineer and Architect attached to the Commission, and the Chief Commonwealth Architect and Chief Engineer of the Department of Works and Railways.

It was explained in evidence that owing to the urgent necessity for providing accommodation at Canberra in anticipation of the early transfer of the Seat of Government, the Commission desires to construct a replica of the Hotel Brisbane now in course of erection, and in order to save time proposes to use the plans and specifications and bill of quantities that are being used for that building. These plans had already been carefully considered by the Committee in connexion with its investigation into the proposal to erect the Hotel Brisbane.

SITE.

11. Two sites were submitted for consideration; the first on the south-east of Waratah Parkway on the southern side of the Molonglo River, and the second in the vicinity of University-avenue on the north side of the river.

These two sites and others which were thought might be suitable were inspected by the Committee. Some objection was raised to the site on Waratah Parkway as being too close to the location of the Hotel Brisbane, the Chief Commonwealth Architect holding that it would be unsightly to have two buildings of similar design not entirely balanced in location and yet in proximity to each other. It was also thought that as an aid to the development of the northern portion of the city and to meet general convenience present and future, the site in the vicinity of the civic centre offered some advantages. Although agreeing that the site selected by the Commission fronting the University block is an excellent one, the Committee considers that it should be reserved as worthy of a more important building. The Committee was impressed with the beauty and general convenience of another site south of the University block, but being unwilling to hamper the action of the Federal Capital Commission agrees that the selection of the site for this hotel be left to that body.

BUILDING.

12. The building as designed commended itself to the Committee, realizing that this hotel is likely to become the permanent home of a number of people. Every bedroom is well lighted and has an outside view. The accommodation in the common, dining, reading, and smoking rooms is also very liberal and comfortable.

Electric lighting is to be installed throughout; the common rooms will be heated by hot water radiators; and a complete vacuum-cleaning plant is to be installed.

The Committee, however, is not in favour of the upper story of the central building being erected in weatherboard as proposed, and recommends that the timber framing be covered with roughcast on steel lathing in place of the weatherboarding.

SEWERAGE.

13. The sewage will be water-carried, and it was stated in evidence that the main sewer designed to serve this area would be available by the time this building is completed.

PROBABLE TARIFF.

14. Efforts were made by the Committee to ascertain what would be the probable tariff chargeable to occupants of this hotel. It was stated in evidence that the charges would probably be mid-way between those of the Hotel Canberra and the Hotel Ainslie, and might be expected to be in the neighbourhood of £3 per week. It is realized, however, that in the initial stages of Canberra it may not be possible to make such charges as would be necessary on a commercial basis to cover interest, sinking fund, &c., on the capital cost of the establishment, and that consequently some concessions may have to be made. The Chairman of the Federal Capital Commission expressed the opinion that, while endeavouring to make the hotel self supporting, the tariff during the secretariat stage of the city would have to be adjusted to meet the salary of the public servant who was compelled to obtain accommodation there through lack of facilities elsewhere.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION.

15. After carefully considering all the evidence placed before it, the Committee is unanimously of opinion that to meet the plans of the Government for the early transfer of the Seat of Government to Canberra, the construction of a building of the class under consideration should be put in hand as early as possible, and recommends accordingly.

H. Gregory
H. GREGORY,
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
Federal Parliament House, Melbourne,
17th August, 1925.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Taken at Canberra.)

WEDNESDAY, 3rd JUNE, 1925.

Present:

Mr. Gregory, Chairman;	
Senator Reid	Mr. Jackson
Mr. Blakeley	Mr. Mackay.
Mr. Cook	

Percy Thomas Owen, Chief Engineer, Federal Capital Commission, Canberra, sworn and examined.

1. *To the Chairman.*—During the last year whilst we were studying the number of officials who would come to Canberra for the secretariats, it became apparent to me and to others that we would require more hotel accommodation, as many of the officials would only need to be here when Parliament was in session. That would mean that they would not desire residences. On the other hand, it is more difficult to provide dwellings. I cannot see how public servants can make satisfactory arrangements concerning housing accommodation until they know something about the place. So long as it is going to be a secretariat administration here, I feel sure that accommodation for the bulk of the officers will be something between a boardinghouse and an hotel. With that in view, I got out plans for an hotel to accommodate about 50 persons. This was done under the aegis of the Advisory Committee. I submitted a proposed site between Brisbane-avenue and the Telopea Park school. That site was adopted, sketch plans prepared, and a design submitted which was thought would meet the requirements. More recently the commission received information from the Government from which it appeared that the number of officers to be employed in the secretariats would be increased, which would necessitate even more accommodation being required than was anticipated by the Advisory Committee. In view of this, not only hotel No. 4 will be required, but probably further hotel accommodation will be necessary, depending upon the final decision of Cabinet. Pressure will be necessary to enable these buildings to be completed within the necessary time. The commissioners, therefore, proposed that the plans, specifications, &c., which had been adopted for the No. 2 hotel be used for the No. 4 hotel. It was first thought that the plans for No. 2 might be used for the No. 4 site, but the Chief Architect held out the objection that it would be unsatisfactory to have two buildings of exactly the same design not entirely balanced in location, and yet in proximity. The commission then asked for another site to be selected. I was unable to make a selection, but the architect, Mr. Holland, took the matter up on my behalf, and indicated two possible sites, one to the south-east of Waratah Parkway, and the other in the vicinity of the civic centre. The matter rested there until the members of your committee made certain investigations this morning, when the locations proposed by the architect were visited by the members of the committee accompanied by him and myself. At your suggestion, Mr. Chairman, a further site was inspected, and the merits of this will receive careful consideration. The first site is on the south-east of Waratah Parkway, and on the southern side of Telopea Way. The second site indicated by the architect would be bounded on the

south by University-avenue and a transverse road, which is at present unnamed, leading towards the south-west towards the West Basin Boulevard. I should mention that neither of these sites has been submitted to the commission. The proposed structure will be of brick with a tile roof. Plans and specifications are in existence, and are being worked upon by the contractor for the No. 2 hotel. Some modification of the foundations, walls, &c., will be necessary, but this will not entail a large amount of work. I submit for the committee's consideration the plans of the No. 2 hotel, which I suggest should be adopted for the No. 4 hotel now under consideration. The No. 4 hotel will accommodate 120 persons, and the cost is estimated at £65,000, including interest on cost during construction and the overhead charges of the commission. The amount mentioned includes the cost of heating, lighting, sewerage, and water supply, but is exclusive of the cost of furnishing. Mr. Daley, the secretary of the Federal Capital Commission, mentioned that the cost of furnishing would be, approximately, £5,000. The time required to complete the structure would be about one year. The erection of this hotel is considered urgent in order to accommodate the officials of the secretariats before Parliament meets. The building is to be constructed with the idea of housing those guests who could afford to pay the ordinary country hotel tariff, and the rate to be charged will be somewhere between the tariff at the Hotel Canberra and the Hotel Ainslie. I have not estimated what the charge would be per day, but I would suggest that a representative of the commissariat branch of the commission would be in a better position to supply the desired information. I believe Mr. Goodwin could supply the figures desired. In the past buildings such as this when completed were handed over to the Lands Department, but what arrangements are now proposed by the commission I am unable to say. The commission itself now erects these buildings, and takes them over as distinct from buildings erected by one department and handed over to another.

2. *To Mr. Jackson.*—Members of Parliament and the higher-paid Government officials will be able to be accommodated at the Hotel Canberra, or at either of the other hotels, according to taste.

3. *To Mr. Blakeley.*—The plans prepared and adopted for the No. 2 hotel show that weatherboard is to be used for the walls of the first floor of the central block.

4. *To Senator Reid.*—I have not dealt with the cost of upkeep, apart from the initial cost, of any of these properties. When Government officials have purchased or leased homes, and will no longer require accommodation at the hotels, I have no doubt but that they will be used as ordinary hotels for the convenience of visitors.

The witness withdrew.

Charles Studley Daley, Acting Secretary to the Federal Capital Commission, Canberra, sworn and examined.

5. *To the Chairman.*—Owing to the urgent necessity of providing the requisite accommodation for public servants at Canberra, when the seat of Government is transferred, the commission desires to erect a replica of hotel No. 2 to be known for the present as hotel No. 4, and in order to save time to utilize the existing

plans and specifications and bills of quantities that are being used for hotel No. 2. If this is done it will save several months. The chairman of the commission has decided to dispense with the use of the word "hostel," and to call all such buildings "hotels." Up to the present two hotels have been erected, namely, the Hotel Canberra, which has been completed and in occupation for about six months, and the Hotel Ainslie, which has recently been completed. The hotel which was known as hotel No. 2 is now under construction, and will be completed about the end of the year. The Hotel Canberra can accommodate 130 persons. It is estimated that about 450 officials will be transferred to Canberra when Parliament meets, which number includes members of Parliament, staffs of the secretariats, and the Parliament House and printing office staffs. The Government has sent a schedule showing the desire of each of the officials who will be transferred in regard to accommodation. It is impossible for the commission to provide all this accommodation in the form required by the middle of next year, but it is proposed to proceed on the basis, which has been indicated to the Government, and to provide 156 dwellings, 25 flats, and accommodation for 300 persons in hostels. Of the 156 dwellings arranged for, contracts have been let for 56, and the commission proposes to erect another 100 within twelve months time. The 56 are being erected on the design submitted last year by Messrs. Oakley and Parkes, who won the prize in competition with other Australian architects. In the conditions governing the competition a maximum price was not stated, but the competitors were informed that economy was to be a vital factor. It was understood that those dwellings were to be of a better type than those already erected, because they were to accommodate some of the higher-paid public servants. The commission does not propose to adhere strictly to the design submitted, but to erect also a proportion of a somewhat cheaper type. I submit the plans of the proposed No. 4 hotel, which are, as I have stated, those used in connexion with the No. 2 hotel, and which it is proposed to utilize in order to save the time involved in preparing fresh plans. The construction of this building must be proceeded with at the earliest possible moment or we will be unable to accommodate the officials who are to reside here. The building will accommodate 120 persons.

(Taken at Canberra.)

THURSDAY, 4th JUNE, 1925.

Present:

Mr. GRANTON, Chairman;
Senator Reid
Mr. Blakely
Mr. Cook
Mr. Jackson
Mr. Mackay.

Henry Maitland Rolland, Architect to the Federal Capital Commission, Canberra, sworn and examined.

6. To the Chairman.—The proposal to construct a No. 4 hotel has been brought under my notice. The necessity for such a building is due to the greater number of officers expected at Canberra next year than was anticipated, and in order to save time, and the work of the staff, it is desired to utilize the same plans, specifications, and bills of quantities as are being used in connexion with hotel No. 2. The class of construction will be similar to the No. 2 hotel now being erected, and known as the Hotel Brisbane. Most of the structure will be brick, the only wooden portion being on the first floor of the main building which accommodates the staff. The building as at present designed will accommodate 80 persons, but provision

has been made for the erection of two additional pavilions. These two pavilions are now being designed each with a probable capacity of twenty persons, thus making a total of 120 for the whole building. The foundations will be carried out in brickwork, and the whole of the pavilions will be carried up to the ceiling height in brickwork. The roofs of the buildings will be of Canberra tiles. The brickwork of the main building will be carried to the first floor, and continued in timber construction. The pavilions will be two-storied, and, owing to the contour of the country, in the lower portion of one of these a billiard room will be provided. The present contract for the erection of No. 2 hostel covers the erection of the main building, and four pavilions only, but a price will be obtained from the present contractor for the erection of two more pavilions, as the commission is anxious to provide additional accommodation. For the information of the committee I submit the following statement in relation to the estimated cost:—

Building—Existing contract	£	28,773	£
Materials to be supplied by Commission	6,200
		34,973	
Mechanical services	...	10,860	
Grounds	...	1,000	
		46,833	
Additional two pavilions	...	11,200	
Additional mechanical services	...	2,250	
		60,283	
Overhead and interest charges during construction	...	4,500	
		£64,783	
Say	...	£65,000	

The present contract for the Hotel Brisbane has a currency of twelve months, but when the next contract is let we shall endeavour to reduce the time. A bonus system has been introduced in connexion with certain work under which, if the contractor is able to carry out the work in less than the stipulated time he receives a bonus. If, on the other hand, the time is exceeded, he is liable to a penalty. For your information I have sketched out a building on the block inspected by the committee yesterday, but in this rough design provision has been made for only four pavilions. The centre of the building is shown on the highest portion of the block, and in that respect it would be ideal from a constructional point of view. It may be possible to bring the proposed building a little further forward, and thereby leave more room at the back for two additional pavilions, although the space now allowed in front is only 60 feet. There is room on the site of the Hotel Brisbane to lengthen these pavilions. The gardens on the suggested site for No. 4 hotel provide a fair area of space in the front owing to the fact that a portion of the road side is planted. The actual distance of the building from the road is not as great as it would appear, owing to a portion of the road being a plantation. We could bring the building almost up to the edge of the building block, and still have a plantation frontage. We could perhaps have room for six pavilions, but not on the same plan; we could provide additional accommodation by adding to the four pavilions. I think we could do so, as the pavilions larger than the present one are not being erected, as they are inspected by the committee yesterday is a very suitable one from an architectural point of view. Across the site there is a fall of, roughly, 10 feet, but that would not prevent the building showing up as a pleasing architectural feature. The block is already provided with a permanent roadway, and from that access to all the various activities is easily available. This site

is nearer to the governmental group than that on University-avenue. In the event of these buildings being leased from the Commission in the future, the site is one which would be convenient and acceptable to members of the public desiring to be accommodated. It is quite possible that the tariff to be charged may be considered by the Commission purely from the point of view of accommodation having to be provided for in an emergency, and then afterwards to lease the building as a business proposition. Possibly there may be some more or less junior officers who will have to be accommodated, and the Commission may be faced with the position of having to house other than the officers for whom the building was really intended. I could not say what a leasing would be prepared to pay for such a building. When tenders were called for leasing the Hotel Canberra the principal objection was the fact that the house could not be licensed. Whether an outsider would consider that he would get a reasonable return owing to the fact that accommodation here is limited I cannot say, but it is quite possible that offers would be submitted.

7. To Mr. Mackay.—Recently we have been obtaining the services of a more satisfactory type of skilled worker than was previously the case. Artisans throughout Australia now realize that the development of Canberra is likely to proceed without interruption, that the conditions are improving, and in consequence a better type of artisans and unskilled labourers are offering for employment. In accordance with the suggestions made by your committee we have also been increasing the accommodation for married workmen, and at present 51 cottages are in occupation. Another 80 are in course of erection, and it is proposed to erect a further number. The labour conditions generally are improving, not owing solely to the fact that improved facilities exist here, but also on account of a certain dearth in employment in the capital cities. We have not had any difficulty in obtaining bricklayers even in constructing Parliament House, which up to the present has been our biggest job. The brickwork has been carried out efficiently, and on the whole compares very favourably, both as regards the quality of the work and the cost with that done in the cities. The supply of skilled labour depends to some extent upon the state of the labour market in Sydney and Melbourne, and this will control our progress to some extent, but at present I do not see any difficulties in the way. The commission has taken full control of all works in the Federal Capital Territory, and the buildings now under consideration will be constructed under the direction of the commission's officers. As architect to the commission I shall be in control. I doubt if Mr. Murdoch would be able to give the committee any more information than is at my disposal, because, as you are aware, we are utilizing the plans, specifications, and bills of quantity of hotel No. 2 in order to save time.

I do not think exception can reasonably be taken to a limited use of weatherboard in the upper portion of hotel No. 4, as in the first place it is outside the governmental group, which will comprise monumental buildings. This structure was purposely kept out of that group because it will not be in keeping with the other buildings. It is based on a residential design, and apart from public buildings the introduction of timber into this work has a very pleasing effect. As to whether I would be in favour of private enterprise constructing buildings composed of brick and weatherboard, I can only say that a good deal would depend upon the proportion, which in this instance is very small. I would not agree to the erection of wooden buildings on a brick base in what was a brick area. In this building it is only one veneer of wood. I would be surprised to learn that some of the Canberra bricks used in the construction of pathways are showing signs of disintegration. We are making a 2-inch pavement brick, and for special work they can be carefully selected. I would have no objection to the brickwork being carried to the window-sill, but

such a proposal would give more brickwork than was previously planned in the other pavilions. We have weatherboard in the gables in the Hotel Canberra. If bricklayers report for work in the morning and are unable to commence owing to wet weather, they are paid for one half-day, but in the event of fairly continuous rain they are informed that work will not be available on the following day, and they are not paid. It is very unusual for bricklayers to be kept from their work owing to inclement weather. The conditions were such that the workmen termed the weather "Government weather," as it would frequently rain at night, Saturday afternoons, Sundays, or holidays. There have been very few instances in which the rain has extended over more than one day. Bricklayers can usually be employed under cover. The average weekly rate of wages for carpenters, bricklayers, and plumbers is about £6. We pay an ordinary plumber £5 19s. 8d. per week and a licensed plumber £6 7s. Carpenters are paid £5 19s. 8d. and bricklayers £6 7s. I shall submit a return showing the average earnings of bricklayers over a period of twelve months. Recently there has been an alteration in the wages paid. Plasterers are receiving a special rate of £5 5s. per week, which is above the Federal Territory award. They are receiving 8s. 9d. per hour, and are paid for actual working time. The capital cost of the cottages at the Gap, which consist of four rooms, is about £310. The weekly rental is 12s., with a flat rate of 2s. per week for electric light. These cottages are sowed, provided with a bath, and are on fenced blocks 120 feet by 50 feet. The rentals to be obtained from the other groups being erected at the Causeway is to be 13s. weekly; in this case electric light meters are being installed. They are a similar type of building to those at the Gap, but have double brick chimneys instead of iron ones. The capital cost completed will be about £410, including drainage, water, lighting, fencing, &c.

8. To Senator Reid.—At present we have three hotels erected, and in course of erection, designs of which vary, but they are more or less based on the idea of separate pavilions so far as is possible in order to provide rooms with the maximum of light and air. This type of building is considered preferable to one big block, which may be cheaper to erect, but which would not provide such comfortable or convenient accommodation. There should be no necessity to erect cramped buildings in Canberra where the cost of the land does not enter into consideration as it does in the capital cities. I do not think that the present method of building—by avoiding unnecessary high structures—can be regarded as expensive and leading to difficulties in later years when the population is greater, because Canberra cannot be regarded in the same light as other cities. The cost of living at Canberra is higher than in the capital cities, but against that it will be admitted that the conditions for public servants will be better than those prevailing in congested city buildings. The tariff at the Hotel Ainslie will be lower than the others, and those who do not feel prepared to pay the rates charged at the Hotel Canberra and the Hotel Brisbane will probably elect to live at the Hotel Ainslie. The quantity of timber used in the various buildings, which at present vary, and against that it will be admitted, is not large, and, consequently, the upkeep will not be excessive. Several timber buildings have been painted only once in ten years, which indicates that the dry air in this locality has not a bad effect on the timber. The class of plaster work is so varied that it would be difficult to strike an average of the number of square yards covered by plasterers.

9. To Mr. Mackay.—Generally speaking, about one-half of the work is carried out by day labour, and the other half by contract. At present we are getting a satisfactory return from day labour. Attempts have been made to institute piece-work, but, as a rule, the unions object to it. The average hotel would be a more favorable proposition from a financial point of view than the

erection of cottages, as in an hotel the services are grouped, whereas in cottages the drainage, lighting, sewerage and other services have to be provided separately. The hotels we are erecting should, under normal conditions, be occupied throughout the year. The Hotel Brisbane, which may be regarded as the officers' hotel, should be a better paying proposition than the Hotel Canberra. The financial success or otherwise of the Hotel Canberra depends largely upon how it is patronized by the public. According to the building regulations, the commission has power to grant certain areas to be set aside for the erection of timber structures, but at present there are no such areas in Canberra.

10. *To Mr. Cook.*—We endeavour to encourage work to be done by contract, and advertise publicly in Sydney and Melbourne, and on the whole are receiving a larger number of tenders than previously. I have not made a comparison, but I think that under the bulk tendering system for cottages the price was higher than our estimate, which was based on a rate of about 2s per per foot. We have not compared the relative cost for the cottages being erected by contract with the prices previously paid. The number of bricks laid per day varies, of course, according to the class and quality of the work, but the figures for straight wall work would be about 450 per day, working 44 hours per week. The average wage of bricklayers is about 2s 7s.

11. *To the Chairman.*—From our experience and that of contractors working here, I should say that cottages similar to those being erected in Adelaide, particulars of which you have given me, could be built for £750. I believe bricklayers could be induced to work under the piece-work system if the unions would allow them, but at present they strongly object, and at several meetings of the Industrial Board which I have attended, the question has been raised. Bricklayers operating under the piece-work system would earn more than at present, but I could not say if their wages would be doubled. Work conducted on that basis requires closer supervision to prevent bad workmanship. I do not think the commission would object if the union was agreeable.

12. *To Senator Reid.*—I do not think the architectural effect of the buildings would be interfered with if its length were decreased. The whole structure could be re-designed, but that would mean additional time and expense. It is to avoid that that we are using the plans already in existence. The item "ground" in the statement submitted does not mean the cost of the land, but the preparation of the ground. I do not think it would mean a great reduction in cost if the hot water service were connected only with the bathrooms, because if we have to take it to one end of the pavilion it does not mean much more to provide a service in the bedrooms. The main cost is in installing a system and providing mains through the building. I shall supply the committee with information concerning the cost of continuing the brickwork to the window sills on the first floor of the main building. We have adopted that class of construction in certain portions of the Hotel Brisbane, which looks very well. It may be better to bring the brickwork of the Hotel Brisbane up to the same height as in the pavilion, as the additional cost should not be very much if it were carried out when the other work was being done, but I shall have to see what additional weight would be thrown on the lower walls. I shall also supply the committee with a statement showing the amount which should be received from the occupants of these buildings, and what proportion of the interest charges on capital expenditure it would pay. I shall also obtain information for you concerning what rental should be charged to the commissariat branch for this building, and what interest, depreciation, and territory charges would amount to until such times as it was considered that the place would be paying its way.

13. *To Mr. Cook.*—In the event of the foundation or lower walls not being sufficiently strong to carry the extra brickwork mentioned, there are other materials

such as fibrous cement, rough cast, or expanded metal on timber rough cast that could be used. I think, however, that the severe weather here would lead to disintegration, such as is noticeable in some of the cheap cottages. In these circumstances it would not be advisable to adopt such a method in this class of structure. Undersneath the covered ways the walls are 9 inches in thickness, but the pavilion walls where exposed to the weather are 11 inches thick. It is quite possible that the additional weight entailed in consequence of the use of the greater proportion of brickwork would not be great.

The witness withdrew.

John Henry Butters, Chairman of the Federal Capital Commission, Canberra, sworn and examined.

14. *To the Chairman.*—I am a civil engineer by profession. I understand the committee has under consideration proposals for the construction of Hotel No. 4, a national library, a dam on the Molonglo River, and a permanent administrative building. In my opinion, these works, if approved, should be undertaken in the order mentioned. Speaking generally on the question of urgency, the position is that the House of Representatives may be required to meet at Canberra. When the commission was appointed at the beginning of January of this year, we had to consider the situation as we found it, and in doing so came to the conclusion that, in order to provide the accommodation required for the people during the first stage, the quickest and most economical way of meeting the demand—realizing, of course, that it is only a fraction of what will ultimately have to be done—was by constructing an additional hotel. One of the great troubles at the present moment is that almost every member of our staff is very much overworked. The whole place has been understaffed, with the result that we have been unable to maintain the speed necessary, and we have only just now reached a point where satisfactory work can be done. When the commission came into existence, there was no room to accommodate another man in the office. There was only a little room available for me, but no accommodation for the other commissioners or for additional officers. We have had to provide that. I found that we were very short of draughtsmen, and we had the utmost difficulty in getting them. We are only just coming to the stage where we have a full complement of draughtsmen. It has, therefore, been a most nerve-racking experience to get the necessary drawings and specifications prepared. Everybody has been working at top pressure, and individual members of the staff could not possibly have done more. That is one of the reasons why the commission came to the conclusion that it would be desirable to build the No. 4 hotel on the plans and specifications and building quantities adopted in connexion with the Hotel Brisbane, as such a course would naturally save a good deal of time. Judging from past experience, and making allowance for additional staff necessary, it would probably take six weeks in which to prepare an additional set of plans and specifications, and to make that, we would probably lose another month in calling for tenders. The intention of the commission in this instance is, if the work is authorized, to construct the building under the day-labour system. The members of the committee may have noticed we are now advertising for a really first class builder of long experience, and have been informed that several men of the right type are submitting applications. With a properly organized construction department we should be able to increase our speed, and generally improve the situation from an economic stand-point. The Government has indicated its intention to follow the secretariat stage in twelve months by a second stage, at which the whole of the departments may, if necessary, be accommodated here. We have been directed to study that problem, and to submit a report as to our requirements in order to fill such a programme. In such circumstances a fair amount of accommodation will be

required, and we are considering the best way in which to provide it. The original proposal in connexion with the national library was to utilize a certain portion of the main administrative building in conjunction with the establishment of the printing office, but I am very clear in my own mind, and my colleagues are equally so, that that would be the wrong place for a printing office. The proposal was one which was quite impossible to meet in the first stage, and the justification for such a huge expenditure on a semi-monumental building is gone, and we are therefore forced to the secretariat building. The Chief Engineer (Colonel Owen) will be able to supply the committee with full details concerning the engineering services in the proposed hotel No. 4. Our idea is to repeat the design of the Hotel Brisbane with some slight modifications recently made to enable the proposed hotel to be more economically conducted. Sketches of those modifications are available, and should be submitted for use in conjunction with those already in your possession. Several sites have been inspected, and the one recommended by the Chief Engineer was that originally determined upon for hotel No. 4, but I did not like the idea of erecting a building so near to that constructed on the same plan. I therefore directed the officers to inspect other sites, and also to ask the members of your committee to give them the benefit of their views. We cannot, of course, provide what is exactly required for every grade of public servant in the secretariat stage, and our idea is to erect buildings that can be economically and expeditiously constructed, and then adjust the living rate for a year or two until the required number of dwellings are built. Even allowing for the heavy cost incurred in laying out gardens and constructing the hotels, I believe that when it may be desired later to lessen them we shall be able to receive a rent which will be sufficient to return interest on the capital expenditure. The interest on a building costing £55,000 would be, roughly, £5,000 a year, or £100 a week from a place built to accommodate 120 persons. I favour the erection of hotels in preference to cottages for a number of reasons, one of which is the time in which they can be built. A second point, and one which is of vital importance, is the provision of the necessary engineering services. If 120 persons are to be accommodated in houses, the engineering services required for that number of dwellings would be costly, and their completion would entail the loss of considerable time. What appeals to me most in the early stages of occupation is the difficulty of obtaining domestic assistance and also the fact that a large number of public servants will not in the early stages be accompanied by their wives and families. It is already understood that quite a number of officials intend to board during the early stages, and, consequently, dwellings will be of no use to them. I endeavoured to obtain from the Prime Minister the other day a list of the requirements, and although I secured a good deal of information, it was of no value to me for the immediate problem. I am aware that a portion of the second floor in the central building of the Hotel Brisbane is specified to be of hardwood. Although we have to keep the cost down so far as is possible, while at the same time preserving the architectural beauty, I think such work could be done in brick at about the same price as in wood, and am of the opinion that it will result in a distinct improvement in its appearance. Every effort is being made to provide the best and most economical accommodation for the workmen, and I think it will be generally admitted that houses costing more than £750 are too expensive for the average artisan. As I am not an architect, I cannot perhaps expect to offer an opinion of any value concerning the design, but there is no doubt that the architectural work of the Hotel Canberra is very attractive in many ways. The cost may be regarded as somewhat high, but I take it that we have to do a little more than rigidly study economics in constructing a capital city. I am not in favour of too large a proportion of wood being

used in structures such as that now under consideration, and if we found that the cost of brick was prohibitive we could perhaps adopt fire sheeting and stucco in place of timber. If the proposed building is constructed it will be handed over to the commissariat branch, which will conduct it until we can see our way to lease it at a satisfactory figure. At present we are keeping account of interest depreciation and all other charges. The Hotel Australia has been in operation sufficiently long to indicate whether it is likely to meet these charges. The men up here have been doing their best, but there has not been an expert whose sole business it has been to control this branch of our activities. The Hotel Canberra, which has cost £140,000, has been handed on to us, and it can cost money. Another has cost £53,000, and another £40,000, and we must have an additional one, the estimated cost of which is £55,000. In these circumstances we must have the services of an expert in order to prevent money being burned. The duties of this expert will be to take over the complete control of the hotels and to purchase the food supplies in cooperation with our stores branch. He will look after the prices of partly hotel necessities. I hardly dare to think of the laundry bill of the Hotel Canberra. We were hoping that private enterprises would have stepped in and established a laundry, but up to the present there is no sign of that being done. All the laundry work from the Hotel Canberra is now done through the Duntroon Military College, where we provided a little extra accommodation, and the extra we incur in this connection are credited to that department.

15. *To Mr. Blakeley.*—As soon as the Commission was appointed negotiations were opened with the Commonwealth Bank in order to ascertain whether the bank would be prepared to loan money on the lines for building purposes. After a little while I received a reply intimating that the Commonwealth Bank Board was not prepared to do so. I therefore arranged a conference between the Commission and the board in Sydney, at which we explained the whole situation. I left that conference somewhat hopeful, and as a preliminary step communicated with the Minister, asking that the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) or the Treasurer (Dr. Earle Page) communicate with the bank, intimating that it was the wish of the Government that something in the direction desired should be done. Notwithstanding that, and after considerable delay necessitated by the Commonwealth Bank obtaining legal opinion, we finally received a definite refusal. I could see that it was useless to proceed on these lines, so I arranged for an ordinance to be framed, and regulations drafted, which I sent to the Minister, the effect of which would have been to give the commission power to establish a bank for receiving deposits and advancing money to persons desiring to build. Under that ordinance we would conduct ordinary banking business, and pay depositors, say, 4 per cent on the savings, and loan it at 6 per cent, or 6½ per cent, the difference being sufficient to pay expenses. I submitted that proposal with the two objects in view, one of which was to let the Commonwealth Bank clearly understand that if they would not do business on the lines we suggested we would be forced to cut into their business in the Federal Capital Territory, and secondly, that if the bank finally turned down our proposal we would have the necessary powers to at once proceed to advance money. When the Minister received the draft ordinance he suggested that we should again approach the Commonwealth Bank Board. The Prime Minister was in Sydney on Monday last, and I received a telegram from the Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce) proposing to proceed to Sydney to confer with the authorities. By a process of cross-examination and with the support of the Prime Minister and the Treasurer, I think the matter has now reached a stage where the bank will do just about what we require. Our idea is that we should lease cottages to start with, and as an alternative allow public servants to purchase them on

the Crédit Foncier system within 35 or 40 years. We are starting them on the renting system, and giving them the option of buying; but in order to induce them to buy at all we shall have to make the rent a shade less attractive than the contributions under the Crédit Foncier system. We do not want to go into the general business of renting more than is necessary, as every one knows how difficult it is for some public bodies to collect revenue in this way.

16. *To Senator Reid.*—Although it is anticipated that a good deal of the hotel accommodation being provided will be utilized by public servants we are allowing a considerable margin for people who will wish to do business with the Government, or who will desire to stay in Canberra for a while, but the first preference must be given to the public servant. As an indication of the manner in which the Hotel Canberra will be patronized by tourists and the travelling public when the work is more advanced, I may mention that the hotel was full during the Easter holidays, and some had to be turned away. With a better train service from both Melbourne and Sydney, I am convinced that the tourist traffic will be very heavy. When the Hotel Canberra is reasonably full the revenue should be sufficient to pay ordinary expenses. The tariff to be charged at the Hotel Ainslie has not been definitely fixed, but the accountant is just developing an analysis of all charges, including interest, depreciation, and maintenance, with the intention of arriving at a rate that will be sufficient to cover expenses. No. 4 Hotel when constructed should also be able to meet its liabilities, always bearing in mind that in the secretariat stage the tariff must be according to the salary received by the public servant. If an officer were forced to live at the Hotel Canberra he would be charged a rate in keeping with his salary. This is the only hotel available for heads of departments and senior officers, and we have laid down a scale under which an officer whose travelling allowance is 17s. 6d. per day is charged 15s. instead of 20s., which is the ordinary rate. I would not be in favour of building another hotel such as the Hotel Ainslie, as the type of construction appears somewhat inferior. In considering the accommodation that will be provided for members of both Houses during the sitting of Parliament, we have taken the number of members and allowed a percentage for their wives. There will probably be accommodation available at the Hotel Canberra, the Hotel Brisbane, and in the building now under consideration. We have assumed that sufficient allowance must be made for the general public, and we have provided a considerable margin so that in rush periods 70 or 80 people may be accommodated in the Hotel Canberra. If we have over-provided it is not serious, because in a few years we shall doubtless have a tremendous number of people visiting or temporarily living in the city. The tariff at the Hotel Ainslie has not yet been fixed, but typists are at present paying 7s. 6d. per week and attending to their own rooms. We have fixed a temporary rate of, I think, 35s. per week for single persons and £3 per week for married couples. Mr. Goodwin submitted a schedule of charges which, before approval, I sent to the accountant to analyze. I intend to get the commissariat officer to closely study it, as when a rate has once been fixed I do not wish it to be changed unless there is very good reason.

17. *To Mr. Cook.*—When the Seat of Government is transferred to Canberra, I believe that practically the whole of the accommodation provided in the Hotel Canberra will be availed of during the session. There will not be much room for the members of the general public for the first two years. Although the tariff at the Hotel Canberra may be considered by some to be somewhat high, it must be remembered that there are very few of the better class hotels in the Commonwealth at which accommodation can be obtained for 20s. a day. We have had great difficulty in obtaining the necessary staff, as at present it is not the most attractive place, particularly

for young people who desire to participate in the amusements available in the capital cities. We have also had difficulty in obtaining and retaining the services of a competent chef. The waitresses and housemaids have to be more or less trained, but I am hoping for improvements in this direction. All the stores required for the hotel are purchased in bulk. We are hopeful that if financial arrangements are made with the Commonwealth Bank the private enterprise will establish boarding establishments suitable for public servants, but at present that is in the lap of the gods. I consider it advisable to offer every inducement to private enterprise, but anything that may be done will not be in time to assist in meeting the situation in the early stages. I consider the design of the proposed hotel excellent, and favour the principle of pavilions, although doubtless small improvements can be made as a result of experience. If the buildings were to go up instead of spreading out, work could be done more economically. In connexion with the proposed hotel No. 4, we have in minor ways provided for more economical working without interfering with efficiency. We intend to build a laundry, and then call for tenders for leasing it. The exterior gardens are not a charge against the hotel.

18. *To the Chairman.*—We regard it as essential to the economical construction of Canberra that a considerable amount of accommodation for workmen should be provided if the right type of men is to be encouraged to settle here. We are not satisfied that the type of tradesmen we have had in the past is the best obtainable, and that is one of the principal reasons why consideration is being given to this matter. It is not possible to attract first-class tradesmen from Sydney and Melbourne if they have to be accommodated in tents, and we are therefore tackling this problem in connection with many other pressing questions to the best of our ability. We are erecting a tradesmen's mess, capable of accommodating 100 single men. We have also constructed 100 cottages at the causeway for married tradesmen, and have built additional hutments to accommodate 100 single men at Mologolo. We have just started building labourers' camps of a more or less permanent character, one towards the railway and another out towards Red Hill. These are made in sections and bolted together, so that a long mess-room, big enough to seat 150 men, can be taken down in four sections, put on skids, and carted away to another site. That is for the start, and the whole of that accommodation will be available in eight weeks. When we have done that we should expect to get good results. Following that we propose to build permanent houses for workmen on the existing plan. The lower-paid public servants is a separate problem. We anticipate being able to construct workmen's cottages at about £760 each, and my colleague, Sir John Harrison, is collecting all the information obtainable in connexion with the cottages built by the Public Service Homes Department and under other similar schemes. He is discussing the whole matter with builders, and endeavouring to interest contractors with a view to their undertaking some of the work on a contract basis. Unfortunately, none of the big builders and contractors in Sydney or Melbourne tender, and it is, therefore, difficult to see if they could compete with our day-labour work. We do not expect to develop what will in 50 years' time be regarded as a slum area, and will wholly distribute the cottages as much as possible, and provide means of recreation by providing tennis courts and play grounds. We wish to arrange for public servants, artisans, and workmen of the same standard to be living together. In regard to homes for public servants generally, we shall in the first stage have to build 60 or 70 above those already provided for. We shall have to concentrate on a somewhat cheaper type of home for the lower-paid public servants, which may not be sufficiently elaborate

for a large number of the officials, but which may serve the purpose for a time. If the desired accommodation is not available they may for a while have to be content with a home smaller than they require, and meet the situation by erecting a tent or screening in the back verandah. The commission is able to enter into large contracts for the supply of finished cement, &c. We are hoping to use for roofing tiles, slates, and galvanized iron with a tile-like effect which has recently come on the market. Ordinary galvanized iron is an anathema to me. The galvanized iron with the tile-like effect is made in Australia, and can be obtained in any width, coloured as desired, and obtained in what ever gauge required. Mr. Holland and Mr. Murdoch inspected this roofing material in Sydney, and spoke very highly of it. I cannot submit a definite quotation but it would be cheaper than tiles. In my opinion there is not one tile roof in a thousand that does not leak in heavy rain. The material available here for making tiles is not very satisfactory.

19. *To Mr. Blakeley.*—Tests are being made with coloured slates on three cottages at Blainfordia. We are testing green, blue, and purple, and roofing such as this should be supplied at the same price as tiles.

(Taken at Melbourne.)

THURSDAY, 2nd JULY, 1925.

Present:

Mr. GRIBSON, Chairman;

Senator Barnes	Mr. Cook
Senator Lynch	Mr. Jackson
Senator Reid	Mr. Mackay
Mr. Blakeley	Mr. Mathews.

John Smith Murdoch, Director General of Works, and Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways, sworn and examined.

20. *To the Chairman.*—The plans submitted to the Committee are of the No. 2 Hostel, which is now under construction. The proposal before the Committee is that another hostel, on similar lines to that being constructed, shall be undertaken, subject, of course, to certain amendments that may be necessary to conform to the levels and other physical features of the site. I do not know whether a site has been selected, but in conversation with the Chairman of the Commission at Canberra the idea was expressed that it should be contiguous to hostel No. 2, and between it and the school. I suggested to him that, seeing that the proposed building was to be on similar lines to that now being built, it would be a good idea not to have them too close together. I thought that the Committee when it next visited Canberra would perhaps be inclined to consult the Commission regarding the site. Whether it will be possible to construct the building economically on the lines shown on the plans will depend largely on the levels of the site. The ideal site would be level. It is apparent that with a building of this description, which sprawls over a large area, the more level the site the more economically can the foundations of the building be laid. The site on which we are building now is fairly level, except that it drops at one corner. Advantage has been taken of the drop to provide for a billiard room. Assuming that a fairly level site is selected, the plan can be carried out practically as they stand. I welcome the proposal to place the building on the civic centre side. I consider that the hotel would be better on the north than the south side of the river. In saying

that I am considering the question broadly, and am bearing in mind that we have two large hotels on the south side. The provision of a hotel there would give an impetus to development. Generally, the plans and features of the hotel being erected should be followed in this case. The lines adopted are, generally speaking, economical, and I am unable to point to any extravagance. I think there would be difficulty in securing a tenant who would pay £4,400 a year for it. Much of its success will depend upon what is regarded as a reasonable charge for board and residence. If the Government did not stipulate that the charges should be at a certain rate, a lessee might be able to make it pay. I do not think the Government could run it and pay expenses and interest, but if a lessee would take it at £4,000 a year, and was allowed to charge the guests 53 10s. a week, I believe it would pay. I believe that the Government will fix the rate that the lessee shall charge. The difference in the cost of using brick or timber for the second floor would be very little. Timber is introduced for aesthetic reasons, and in order to distribute the work over a variety of trades. I have no objection to the use of brick construction for the upper floor, but the timber will look well, and will distribute the work over more trades. Speaking from memory, I think it is intended to lay hot and cold water on to the bedrooms and to the bathrooms. No. 2 hotel was a contract, and specifications were prepared. I shall obtain a copy for the Committee.

21. *To Senator Reid.*—It would take an hour to calculate the extra cost of laying hot water on to every bedroom. Speaking offhand, and without pinning myself down to a figure, I should say from £100 to £500. The pavilions are all two story. I doubt whether any cheaper form of construction could be adopted satisfactorily. The pavilions have corridors running through the middle of them, with bedrooms opening off on each side. That system would have to be adopted in any case. A building cannot be made more than two rooms deep for light and air must be admitted to every room. It would be possible to adopt a style with an enclosed light area, but there would be very little saving of expense in doing so, while it would be a distinct disadvantage. Instead of having a good view from every room, with outside light, many of the rooms would look into the enclosed area. I cannot see that scattering the buildings to the extent proposed will greatly affect the cost of upkeep. A place like this is very likely to become the permanent home of many people. To ask a person to settle permanently in a room that faces an inside courtyard in a city like Canberra would be unpopular, and would reflect itself in the reduced charge obtainable. In the completed hotels every room has an outside view, and every bedroom is in that way homelike. Some of the views are very charming. The increased cost of upkeep of the grounds with scattered buildings would amount to very little, especially if they were laid out with shrubs and grass plots. If a large saving could be made by constructing the ordinary type of hotel building, with an enclosed court yard, I should approve of it, but as far as I can see the saving, if any, would be infinitesimal.

22. *To Mr. Jackson.*—I cannot see that the cost of construction can be cheapened. I doubt whether the cost of building at Canberra will ever be lower than it is now. The high cost of building at Canberra is not due entirely to labour. We have estimated that the additional cost of labour is about 5 per cent., which possibly will tend to go up rather than to come down; but materials cost about 25 per cent. more than they cost in Melbourne or Sydney. This 25 per cent. is made up of the railway commissioners' charges for transport and the cost of handling in Sydney and at Canberra. I cannot say what the proportion of rail freight is, but I understand that it is considerable. There is the cost also of transport from the station at Canberra to the

building site. The distance from the station is about two and a half miles.

23. *To Mr. Mathews.*—It would be a pity to erect buildings at Canberra on the lines of city buildings. A man would not care to visit the country and have a bedroom that looked out upon a courtyard and the windows of other rooms. Whatever mode of construction is adopted, a room must have four walls, a floor, and a ceiling. A saving in cost could be effected by making the buildings three stories, but in a direction has been laid down, of which I thoroughly approve, that no building shall be more than two stories. I think this hotel would pay with a tariff of £3 a week. Casual visitors would be expected to pay more than permanent residents. The Government could get improved returns by granting a liquor licence to these places. All of them would then pay handsomely. If Queanbeyan did not exist where it is, I might be inclined to modify my views, but seeing that our workmen are spending much money in that town, they might as well be spending it in Canberra. The licensing of otherwise of the hotels will not stop the inclination of certain people to have what liquor they want. I have been informed of large sums spent on liquor at Queanbeyan.

24. *To Senator Lynch.*—There is need for this hotel. The existence of hotels will relieve the Government of the necessity of erecting a number of residences. It is easier to accommodate people in such buildings than to provide them with cottages. The proposed building is intended to meet the needs of any member of the public who cares to pay the tariff. It is not exclusively for Government servants. The Government is attempting to do what private enterprise has fought shy of. The banks do not care to advance money on leases, and that fact, for the present, is strangling private enterprise. Without financial assistance from the banks and other financial institutions private enterprise is helpless. The Government is doing what private enterprise has shown a disinclination to do. If this building is not erected a considerable number of visitors to Canberra will have to sleep at Queanbeyan. My personal view is that the Government should, if possible, avoid constructing this building. I should be very much better pleased to see private enterprise construct it, if private enterprise could be induced to do so. When the banks have become more accustomed to the leasehold system, present difficulties may disappear. A large amount of property in England is on the leasehold system, and the banks and financial institutions understand it. Very few people who own a building in the west of London own the land on which it stands. They pay rent for the land during the whole currency of the lease. From first hand knowledge I do not know whether the Commonwealth Bank takes the same attitude as the associated banks to the leasehold system, but I have been informed that it does. I do not think the hotel would be suitable for any other purpose than a residential hotel or an accommodation house. It could become a hotel as it stands, except in the event of it becoming licensed, when the building in which liquor would be dispensed could be separate. I have not given consideration to the erection of the building in a cheaper material. I should approve of building it in sections, so that it could be erected, if I imagined that there would cease to be a demand for the use of it. I think the demand will always be there, and I expect the building to be fully occupied. Provided a good site is selected on the civic centre, the building would be suitable for conversion into a residential hotel. It would be perhaps the best situation in Canberra. Concrete is proposed for the foundations, brick for the walls, and wood for the upper floor of the central building.

25. *To Mr. Mackay.*—Two hotels are in operation at Canberra, and one is in course of construction. The

one now proposed is a fourth. A fifth has been spoken of, but I think the idea has been superseded by the proposal now before the Committee. If it is approved there will, I think, be no prospects in the near future for another hotel. A man with a wife and two or three children would find such a place too expensive. It has been pointed out in evidence relating to all these hotels that they would be used principally by single people or young married people with not more than one baby. Such a couple, when the family commenced to grow up, would have to live elsewhere. Towns are also being built, but it must not be overlooked that the hotel is not a place intended entirely for officials. Many people in Australia think that Canberra will become a sort of Mecca. During the first six months that the Hotel Canberra was open it was on several occasions full, and, I believe, on the average was about one-third occupied. In calculating the prospects of such an undertaking paying, one should not count on it being more than one-half occupied on the average. That would not make it unprofitable. Sixty people all the year round, paying £3 a week, would provide a large sum of money. The pavilion system of building is almost as cheap as the ordinary concentrated construction. There is not much difference in the cost. A massed building would not be consistent with the idea of what Canberra is expected to become. I should not like to be responsible for putting a five or six story building there. Public opinion would be very strongly opposed to it. Many private individuals would build hotels on the pavilion systems elsewhere if land could be obtained upon the same conditions as at Canberra. If people could construct hotels like this in the centre of Sydney, they would do it. If the hotels are leased the Government will require a fair rent for the land, but it would be infinitesimal when compared with the cost of a similar area in Sydney.

26. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The "massed" form of construction would interfere very much with the revenue of the hotel.

27. *To the Chairman.*—The sizes of the rooms on the plans submitted are not shown in figures. It is only possible to ascertain the size by measuring them to scale. The single rooms are 10 feet by 13 feet, and the double rooms 10 feet by 12 feet. If the rooms were reduced in size, as recommended by the Committee for No. 2 hotel, a considerable saving would be effected. I do not know whether the Advisory Committee consulted the Public Works Committee regarding the size of rooms in hotel No. 2. No steps have been taken by private enterprise to lease land for hotels. As far as I know, all the land leased has been for business and residential purposes. I believe private enterprise would construct hotels if the Government would allow licences to be granted. In the building now recommended the female staff will be housed over the dining-room, but not the male staff. I do not think the Minister would be concerned in the question of carrying out the Public Works Committee's recommendations regarding hotel No. 2. If any blame attaches to anyone, it must be attached to the staff of the Department and the Advisory Committee. I do not think that the proposed building could be erected for £25,000. The Minister asked for Parliamentary approval for a building to cost £39,000. Personally, I undertake to adopt all the recommendations of the Committee. It may cost £10,000 to furnish the proposed building. If I am on lease I should endeavour to induce the tenant to furnish it. I remember now that the Minister asked for Parliamentary approval of the building as originally proposed, and announced that a cheaper hotel would also be erected as recommended by the Committee.

28. *To Senator Reid.*—It is not possible to erect a hotel of this size for £25,000. There are no serious extravagances in the plan.

(Taken at Melbourne.)

MONDAY, 6th JULY, 1925.

Present:

Mr. GREGG, Chairman,	Mr. JACKSON
Senator BARNES	Mr. MACKAY
Senator LYNCH	Mr. MATHWES
Senator REID	
Mr. COOK	

Thomas Hill, Chief Engineer, Department of Works and Railways, sworn and examined.

29. *To the Chairman.*—It was estimated that the mechanical services, including laundry equipment, for hotel No. 2 would cost £10,850, but as it has now been decided to establish a central laundry at Canberra, instead of having separate laundries at each hotel, the cost of these services has been reduced by £1,100. The equipment for hotel No. 4 will be similar to that in hotel No. 2. Two sites have been suggested, one in a civic centre, and the other near Brisbane-avenue on the south side of the river. If the site in the civic centre be chosen, the water and sewerage mains, being part of the general reticulation of the district, ought not to be included in the cost of the hotel's mechanical equipment, and consequently the cost of mechanical services for the hotel can be further reduced. The only charge for water supply and sewerage mains would then be for those in the block itself. With these deductions the cost of mechanical equipment for hotel No. 2 should not exceed £9,700, made up as follows:—Heating of main block, with extensions to billiard rooms and sitting rooms in a pavilion, £1,000; hot water supply to kitchen, bath, and wash basins, including wash basins in bedrooms, £1,500; and kitchen equipment, £1,200. The heating service will be the usual forced circulation hot water service with wall type radiators, and a low pressure hot water boiler. The hot water supply to the kitchen, bath, and wash basins will be supplied by a low pressure steam boiler separate from the ordinary heating system. The reticulation for the hot water service will be through copper piping. For ordinary heating wrought iron piping will be used. The kitchen equipment will consist of a range, a grill, a carrying table, three boiling pans, a steam cooker, a dish washing machine, and other small accessories. To supply hot water to the bedrooms does not add much to the cost of the service. A hot water supply will be needed for the cooking in the kitchen and for the bathrooms, and the extra fuel required to supply hot water to the bedrooms will not cost very much more. I suppose that at Canberra the annual cost of running the hot water service and heating will be about £600. That will be cheaper than firewood, taking into consideration the extra labour entailed in providing wood fires. In the Hotel Canberra the cold water pressure is quite sufficient. It is a high pressure to the building and all around it, but in the hotel itself it has been cut down, mainly because it is thought advisable to have a storage in the building itself in case of a main bursting. That means the erection of tanks in the building, and then, of course, you have to work to the pressure these tanks give. However, it is quite sufficient for ordinary domestic purposes. The fire service pressure is not affected. The same arrangement will apply at hotel No. 4. In the reticulation of the city we have followed the advice of Mr. Lee, our fire consultant, by having nothing less than 4-inch pipes, and fed mostly from 6-inch. The position of the hydrants in the streets will be suitable for all buildings. There is a water service to the civic centre now, and the sewerage service will be available by the time this hotel is completed. The siphon under the river will be dropped into position about March next. The kitchen

outfit for hotel No. 4 is the ordinary equipment as provided in hotel No. 2. The Department has recently prepared a layout for a laundry capable of meeting the requirements of 5,000 people and of future expansion. I think the mechanical equipment of that laundry will cost about £8,000. To this will have to be added the cost of the building. It will be used for all purposes, government and private, and should lead to considerable economy. Hotel No. 1 has some laundry equipment, but it is not sufficient. The proposed laundry will follow the line of modern establishments. The estimate of the cost of mechanical services for hotel No. 2 also included £2,250 for other equipment that at the time we had to take into account, but which, now that the plan has developed, has not to be taken into account and is not being provided. Therefore, instead of the mechanical services costing £10,850, with an additional £3,250, they are costing only £9,700, and the estimate for hotel No. 4 has thus to be reduced by the sum of £9,410.

30. *To Mr. Jackson.*—My estimate of £1,000 for a hot water service for hotel No. 4 is very moderate. The interest on that amount at 6 per cent. is only £60 a year. To heat the building in any other way would cost far more. It would add to the cleaning costs. It would be necessary to cart wood into the building. It would mean more labour in every respect. It would be necessary to have more chimneys. I am quite satisfied that the engineering services to be provided will be essential. If they are left out the cost of running the building will considerably increase. We have checked the price of running the engineering services at the Hotel Canberra. They are working out very economically. The cost of attendance is a little higher than we expected. Visitors arrive at 5 o'clock in the morning, and do not leave until 11 o'clock at night. That makes the time too long for one man, and consequently we had to employ a second attendant. However, he does other work. I can say that the economy achieved by having a hot water system is most marked. It would be very uneconomical not to have one.

31. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The hot water service is a continuous circuit. It is forced by a pump from the boiler right around the circuit and back to the boiler again. By turning on a tap you get hot water right away. In other systems you cannot get hot water until you first run off a certain amount of cold water. The hot water service to be provided in hotel No. 4 will not heat the rooms. The pipes are all insulated to prevent any loss of heat. I should say that it would cost £1,500 extra to install radiators all through the bedrooms, and about £150 a year extra for fuel. It would be very nice to have the bedrooms warm in the winter at Canberra. The site for the central laundry has not been fixed. It will probably be near East Lake.

32. *To Senator Lynch.*—It is not fair to compare a house costing £1,500 and accommodating seven people in Melbourne with the modern building proposed to be erected for hotel No. 4 at Canberra, where building costs are so high. For example, there will be big dining rooms in which 120 persons will have to be provided for within an hour. You do not need this in a small dwelling in Melbourne. I do not consider that the estimated cost of the hotel is on the extravagant side. It will be built in a very fine locality, either in the civic centre or on the alternate site on the south side of the river, and it is not likely to become an objectionable type of building in the event of its becoming licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors later on.

33. *To Mr. Mackay.*—No provision is being made in hotel No. 2 for a laundry, in view of the proposal to provide a central laundry. One man looks after the hot water service and the kitchen equipment. He also keeps the kitchen equipment clean, and generally attends to all odds and ends in the building. It is stipulated in the award that he must render services in other directions if necessary while he is on his watch.

33. *To Mr. Cook.*—Both sites are most excellent for the purpose of building an hotel. They can be well drained, and are both accessible. I have no preference for either. The supply of labour for building purposes is quite good. It is quite up to expectations. I do not know whether the Canberra Commission has given any consideration to the matter of providing a special heating service for each bedroom, but the Advisory Committee decided that it was not necessary to do so. There was no obstacle. It was really considered it was not necessary to provide a heating service in hotel No. 1. Some of the rooms in that building have open fireplaces, and anyone who is sick can be removed to one of those rooms. Furthermore, each room is fitted with a power plug, to which an electric radiator can be attached. The experience at the Mount Kosciuszko and Jenolan Caves hostels was that 2s. 6d. a day was a fair charge for the use of an electric radiator. It was decided to adopt the same system at Canberra and meet the convenience of those who required heat in their bedrooms. Materials cost about 25 per cent. higher at Canberra than they do in Sydney or Melbourne. No private individual has yet taken steps to provide accommodation at the city. I think you will have difficulty in getting private enterprise to do so unless they can couple the accommodation they provide with the sale of intoxicating liquor. The fact that a man cannot get a freehold may have some detrimental effect, but it is not comparable with the other prohibition. I am told that the banks will not advance money on Canberra leaseholds, but only time will show what effect the inability to secure freeholds will have on the settlement of Federal territory. It does not come within my province to study the plan provided by Mr. Murdoch, but I do not think that you can cut down the cost unless you cut down the accommodation. There is nothing ornate about the building. I do not think that the use of hardwood in an upper structure will effect much saving, but I do not know what Mr. Murdoch's ideas are in that respect. To cheapen the building you will have to cut down the accommodation or go in for quite a different class of building, which would be false economy. I do not think it would be nice to have the plain barrack type. I think it is worth a little extra to avoid that. No economy would be effected by having large stores at Canberra where we could keep large quantities of building material. We could not buy any cheaper than we do now, no matter how big the stocks were held. As a matter of fact, we are buying in a big way now. We have large quantities on hand, but not too large. Wages are reasonable. The men work very decently and well. We are studying costs all the time. Judging from the Hotel Canberra, there will be no difficulty in making the other hotels pay. They will be well patronized. In fact, I think the No. 2 and No.

4 hotels will be better patronized than No. 1. The Hotel Canberra may suffer because of the cheaper rates at the other hotels. The rates themselves will not be excessive in comparison with what has to be paid elsewhere in Australia.

34. *To Senator Reid.*—The Advisory Committee went into the question of heating the bedrooms very thoroughly. The power plugs were provided in the bedrooms in order to meet cases of sickness or the desire of people who were prepared to pay for using the electric current. When we were running the mains through the building it was not difficult to provide plugs at certain intervals for radiators. The radiators will be supplied by the management. The charge of 2s. 6d. a day is based on 1d. a unit an hour, which is quite fair, taking into consideration the fragile nature of the radiators. Considerable allowance has to be made for breakages. The Advisory Committee did not reject the proposal to install a heating service in each room on the ground of the extra rent that would have to be charged. They looked upon it from the stand-point of whether it was a reasonable addition to the cost of the building. There was an endeavour to cut down the cost as much as possible, and it was felt that there was no justification for the extra expenditure involved in installing a heating service for each bedroom. Until the central laundry is established, the hotels must make temporary arrangements. There are people at Canberra who take in washing, but the necessity for a central laundry is becoming critical. For that reason the Commission has asked for the data of the cost of a central plant. I think the extra cost entailed in supplying hot water to each bedroom is about £250 or £300 out of a total cost of £1,500. In the winter at Canberra a hot water service in the bedrooms is desirable.

35. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The proposal to provide at the Hotel Canberra a small laundry for the use of people living in the hotel was not carried out. The attendants do their own laundry work. The people living in the building are mostly there for a few days only.

36. *To Senator Lynch.*—The average cost of a brick room in a good class house in a Melbourne suburb is about £206, as against £270 which would be the cost at Canberra. Provision is made in hotel No. 4 for married couples' quarters, and for accommodation for male and female attendants. It is better to have at Canberra a building of the type proposed than one of the barrack type. It will be more cheerful to live in. You want light into every room. It will command a better price than would one of the barrack type; it will also be more likely to pay for its upkeep than would the other type.

The Committee adjourned.