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1916.



P. A. Murray
Clerk of the Senate.

22-5-16.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

FIRST GENERAL REPORT.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

First Committee :

EDWARD RILEY, Esquire, M.P., Chairman.

Senate.

Senator the Honorable John Henry Keating.
Senator Patrick Joseph Lynch, Vice-Chairman.
Senator William Harrison Story.

House of Representatives.

James Edward Fenton, Esquire, M.P.
William Eyle Finlayson, Esquire, M.P.
The Honorable Henry Gregory, M.P.
Sydney Sampson, Esquire, M.P.
William Henry Laird Smith, Esquire, M.P.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

FIRST GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable SIR RONALD CRAUFURD MUNRO FERGUSON, a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY :

In accordance with the requirements of Section 11 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works has the honour to submit the following Report of its proceedings from the date of its appointment to 31st December, 1915 :—

1. The Act providing for the establishment of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and for other purposes was assented to on the 19th December, 1913. Subsequently the appointment of members of the Committee was made and the names published in the *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 97, of 5th December, 1914.
2. Prior to entering upon their duties each member made and subscribed the declaration required by the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*.
3. The first meeting of the Committee was held on 3rd December, 1914.
4. Since its appointment the Committee has held 144 meetings and examined 126 witnesses in connexion with the proposed works submitted. In making its inquiries the Committee has travelled 10,025 miles by rail, and 1,196 miles by road, a total of 11,221 miles.

MATTERS REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE.

5. During the period from date of appointment of the Committee to 31st December, 1915, the following matters were referred to the Committee for inquiry and report :—

	Estimated Cost.
Flinders Naval Base—	
Water supply	£52,000
Erection of buildings	111,032
Sewerage scheme	9,500
Storage and regulating reservoir, Upper Queanbeyan River	100,000
Construction of a main sewer for the City of Canberra*	75,000
Small Arms Factory, Lithgow—	
Extension of buildings	66,600
Machinery, &c... .. .	38,727
Canberra City railway	378,972
Dams for ornamental waters, Canberra	769,800
Selection of a site for Small Arms Factory at Canberra†	
Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney	93,008
Automatic Telephone Exchange, Malvern, Victoria	46,933
Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood, Victoria	49,752
Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney..	37,500
Additional office accommodation at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne	35,000
Barracks, quarters, gun park, &c., for the Royal Australian Field Artillery, Enoggera, Queensland	26,000
Cement works for Federal Capital and other Commonwealth purposes	100,000
Extension of Pine Creek to Katherine River railway southwards so far as Bitter Springs	320,000
Grading and survey of streets, Canberra‡	120,000
Total	£2,429,824

* Inquiry in accordance with promises made by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives—no formal motion submitted.
† Reported upon at the request of the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Defence.
‡ Report requested by the Minister for Home Affairs.

COMPLETED INQUIRIES.

6. Of the works included in the foregoing list, inquiries respecting the following have been completed and the Reports presented to Parliament :—

	Estimated Cost.
(a) Construction of a main sewer for the City of Canberra ..	£75,000
(b) Storage and regulating reservoir, Upper Queanbeyan River ..	100,000
(c) Erection of buildings at Flinders Naval Base ..	111,032
(d) Sewerage scheme for Flinders Naval Base ..	9,500
(e) Increase of output, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow ..	38,727
(f) Increase of plant, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow ..	66,600
(g) Extension of buildings, plant, &c., Small Arms Factory, Lithgow ..	26,000
(h) Site for proposed Small Arms Factory at Canberra ..	93,003
(i) Barracks, quarters, gun park, &c., for the Royal Australian Field Artillery, Enoggera ..	46,933
(j) Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney ..	49,752
(k) Automatic Telephone Exchange, Malvern ..	37,500
(l) Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood ..	35,000
(m) Alterations and additions, Customs House, Sydney ..	
(n) Additional office accommodation, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne ..	
	£689,052

(a) Construction of a main sewer for the City of Canberra.

In dealing with this question, which is so intimately associated with the health and general well-being of the future inhabitants of the capital city of a continent, the Committee carefully investigated the various systems usually adopted for the disposal of the sewage of a city, and took into earnest consideration the proposals laid before it by the departmental engineers and others. It was eventually decided to recommend the construction of a sewer pipe sufficiently large to serve the needs of a population of 150,000, which will carry the sewage to Western Creek, a distance of about 9 miles beyond the city boundary. Here the sewage will be treated by septic tank process and (if considered necessary) filter beds, and the resultant effluent run over an area of about 3,000 acres of land which can, if desired, be utilized for the growing of lucerne or other approved crop. By the adoption of this scheme it is considered that the treatment works will be in a position unlikely to cause offence to the future inhabitants, and any contamination of the Molonglo River will be avoided.

(b) Storage and regulating reservoir, Upper Queanbeyan River.

The provision of a dam on the Queanbeyan River was one of the works laid down in the progressive scheme of Federal Capital construction. The dam proposed would have a capacity of about 6,400,000,000 gallons, and it is claimed that by its construction it would be possible to maintain the flow of the Molonglo River through the City area throughout the year; provide water throughout the year to compensate for evaporation and absorption in the ornamental waters at the City site; provide a uniform flow so that circulating water would be assured for the condensers for the power station; and reduce the volume of flood waters at Canberra Plains during heavy rainfall on the Queanbeyan catchment area. As a result of its inquiry the Committee came to the conclusion that the construction of this dam will eventually be necessary if the scheme of providing ornamental lakes within the City area be adhered to, but that the work is not urgent or immediately necessary.

(c) Erection of buildings at Flinders Naval Base.

The proposal referred to the Committee was for the provision of officers' residences and buildings required for the accommodation and training of the first complement of chief petty officers, petty officers, and men who will form the personnel of the Naval Sub-base at Flinders. The Committee is satisfied that the buildings have been carefully designed, that the structures are economical, and the general style and manner of construction satisfactory for the purposes for which they are intended, and recommends the work be proceeded with.

(d) Sewerage scheme for Flinders Naval Base.

The Committee investigated the various schemes which had been proposed to deal with the sewage at the Flinders Naval Base, and after due consideration recommended that the sewage be collected in a treatment tank situated about 700 yards from the nearest building. This tank, which can be duplicated when necessity arises, is to be of a size sufficient to deal with the sewage of 1,000 persons, and after treatment the effluent will be pumped in a southerly direction to the top of a ridge about 60 feet high, from which it will run by gravitation to Western Port, distant about 2 miles from the treatment tank. The sewage of the offices and hospital to be erected on the northern side of the inlet is to be gravitated to an anaerobic tank, and the effluent discharged into Western Port near Stony Point.

(e) Increase of output of the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow.

The Committee carried out this inquiry in conjunction with its investigations into the question of the proposed increase of plant at the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow, and, as a result of the information obtained, was in a position to recommend the starting of a second shift at the factory and to point out how the difficulties and objections which had been raised against working a second shift might be overcome.

(f) Increase of plant, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow.

The Committee arrived at the conclusion that it is expedient that such additional machinery should be purchased for the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow as is necessary to duplicate the present producing capacity of the existing plant. It is considered that the existing machinery under favorable circumstances should be capable of turning out 20,000 rifles per annum when working eight hours per day. Evidence tendered, however, showed that even in normal times 18,000 rifles are required every year to arm new trainees and members of rifle clubs, so that with increasing population, and the possibility of greater activity amongst rifle clubs, the Committee is of opinion that an output of 20,000 rifles per annum would barely meet current needs. The Committee also considered that it would be advantageous from all points of view for the Commonwealth to have additional plant and be capable of not only supplying its own needs and laying in a reserve of rifles for future use, but also in time of stress by working the factory continuously, possibly supplying other parts of the Empire. It was therefore decided to recommend that the additional machinery necessary to duplicate the present producing capacity of the existing plant be purchased.

(g) Extension of buildings, plant, &c., Small Arms Factory, Lithgow.

In connexion with the proposal to double the output of the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow, a proposal was submitted to extend the factory to about twice its size and install further power plant and machinery therein. In the course of its investigations the Committee weighed the relative advantages and disadvantages of having the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow, and prosecuted inquiries as to the advantages which would accrue to the Commonwealth by having such factory in its own Territory. After full consideration, and bearing in mind the possibility of the Commonwealth in the future greatly extending its activities in the manufacture of small arms, field guns, and other warlike material, the Committee came to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of the Commonwealth to have the Small Arms Factory at Canberra. A recommendation was subsequently made that a building twice the capacity of the existing factory at Lithgow should be commenced as soon as practicable at Canberra, and that the new machinery on order should on arrival be installed therein; the machinery at Lithgow to be removed thereafter to Canberra as early as practicable and in such a way as to interfere as little as possible with the output.

(h) Site for proposed Small Arms Factory at Canberra.

Following upon its recommendation that the Small Arms Factory should be located at Canberra the Minister for Home Affairs asked the Committee to indicate a site which, in its opinion, would be most suitable for the proposed factory. After careful inquiry the Committee indicated an area situated about 3½ miles north of the site proposed for Parliament House, and about 2 miles north of the proposed civic centre, which it is considered will be suitable for the purpose required, while at the same time being in such a position that it will not interfere with the accepted design of the City.

(i) *Barracks, quarters, gun park, &c., for the Royal Australian Field Artillery, Enoggera, Queensland.*

The Committee arrived at the conclusion that it is expedient that the proposed work be carried out, but recommended an alteration of the system of lighting proposed, and an increase in the capacity of the water service. It was further recommended that adequate precautions should be taken to meet any possible danger of fire by the establishment of stand-pipes and hoses at convenient points outside the buildings.

(j) *Provision of Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney.*

In connexion with the proposed provision of an automatic telephone exchange at Sydney, having an initial capacity of 5,000 lines and capable of extension to 20,000 lines, the Committee's investigations convinced them of the advantage of such system over the ordinary common battery system. At the same time, inspection showed that the site proposed for the building is in such a position that in the event of an outbreak of fire there would be great difficulty in the way of employees effecting an escape from the building. The Committee therefore reported that, while favorable to the provision of an automatic telephone exchange in Sydney, it is unable to recommend the erection of the building on the site proposed until ample and secure additional means of ingress and egress between the site and an adjoining thoroughfare be provided.

(k) *Provision of Automatic Telephone Exchange, Malvern, Victoria.*

The Committee approved of the proposals laid before it for the erection of a telephone exchange on the site suggested and for the installation therein of automatic telephone switching equipment having an initial capacity of 3,600 lines and capable of extension to 7,500 lines.

(l) *Provision of Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood, Victoria.*

The Committee approved of the proposals laid before it for the erection of a telephone exchange on the site suggested and for the installation therein of automatic telephone switching equipment having an initial capacity of 3,400 lines and an ultimate capacity of 9,000 lines.

(m) *Alterations and Additions to the Customs House, Sydney.*

After careful inquiry into the proposals submitted, the Committee is satisfied that more accommodation is urgently needed for Customs purposes at Sydney, and that the alterations and additions projected are sufficient to cope with normal expansion of business during the next 25 years. The Committee, however, recommended that, instead of endeavouring to carry out the alterations and additions without disturbing the Customs staff, the course should be adopted of obtaining temporary accommodation elsewhere and vacating the Customs House while the work is being carried out. By the adoption of this suggestion it was pointed out that it will be possible to complete the work twelve months earlier and effect a saving of approximately £8,000, less cost of removal and rent of temporary premises.

(n) *Additional Office Accommodation at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne.*

The Committee arrived at the conclusion that it is expedient that the proposed work be carried out. The evidence tendered showed that the existing building is overcrowded, and that some of the staff cannot be accommodated there at all, and accommodation has had to be leased for them in different parts of the City. The Department of Defence is growing very rapidly and generally the work is carried out under inconvenient conditions. The new building will adjoin and harmonize with the existing structure, and in the opinion of the Committee is an urgent necessity.

INQUIRY COMPLETED, BUT REPORT NOT YET PRESENTED.

Cement Works for Federal Capital and other Commonwealth Purposes.

7. The Committee made careful inquiries into a proposal laid before it that the Commonwealth should undertake the establishment at Fairy Meadow, New South Wales, about 30 miles from the boundary of the Federal Territory, of cement works capable of producing 20,000 tons or 120,000 barrels of cement per annum. The Commonwealth is at the present time a large consumer of cement, and there is a possibility of still larger consumption in the future in connexion with Federal Capital engineering works and

building construction and other Commonwealth activities. Evidence placed before the Committee showed that, at the figure at which it is anticipated cement will be produced, the Commonwealth will save £10,000 per annum on departmental work alone.

INQUIRIES INCOMPLETE.

8. The inquiries respecting the undermentioned public works are incomplete—

- (a) *Flinders Naval Base—Water supply.*
- (b) *Canberra City railway.*
- (c) *Dams for ornamental waters, Canberra.*
- (d) *Extension of the Pine Creek-Katherine River railway southwards so far as Bitter Springs.*
- (e) *Grading and survey of streets, Canberra.*

9. Appended to this Report is a return containing a record of the inquiries of the Committee from the date of its appointment to 31st December, 1915.

EDWARD RILEY,
Chairman.

Office of the
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
120 King-street, Melbourne,
15th February, 1916.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

RECORD OF INQUIRIES.

The following is a list of proposed public works inquired into by the Committee from the date of its appointment to 31st December, 1916, with the result of its inquiries:—

Date of Inquiry.	Proposed Work.	Expenditure proposed by the Government.	Expenditure recommended by the Committee.	Amount in Excess of that proposed.	Amount in Reduction of that proposed.	Remarks.
1916.		£	£	£	£	
23th Jan. to 24th Feb.	Construction of a main sewer for the City of Canberra	75,000	75,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
28th Jan. to 25th Feb.	Storage and regulating reservoir, Upper Queanbeyan River	100,000	..	..	100,000	Committee decided that there is no present necessity or urgency for this work
11th Mar. to 4th May	Erection of buildings at Flinders Naval Base	111,032	111,032	..	..	Recommended as proposed
19th Mar. to 6th May	Sewerage scheme for Flinders Naval Base	9,500	7,500	..	2,000	
6th May to 24th June	Lithgow Small Arms Factory Extension (including power plant)	68,600	92,100	23,500	..	Intion of making additions to the existing factory at Lithgow, the Committee recommended the erection of a factory at Canberra twice the size of the existing factory, the installation of new machinery therein, and the removal thereof of the existing machinery at a convenient date
6th May to 27th May	Increase of output, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	..	..	..	..	Committee recommended establishment of a second shift
6th May to 17th June	Increase of plant, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	38,727	38,727	..	..	Recommended as proposed
27th July to 22nd Sept.	Small Arms Factory—Location at Canberra	..	..	..	..	Site recommended
18th Sept. to 16th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney	93,908	..	..	..	Committee favorable to proposal subject to provision of additional means of ingress and egress
21st Sept. to 22nd Sept.	Barracks, quarters, gun park, &c., for R.A.F.A. Enoggers, Queensland	26,000	28,225	2,225	..	Recommended subject to improved lighting, water, and fire services
28th Sept. to 6th Oct.	Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney	37,500	20,500	..	..	Recommended, but stipulation made that occupants be removed to temporary accommodation during alterations
12th Oct. to 18th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Maitern, Victoria	46,633	46,633	..	..	Recommended as proposed
12th Oct. to 18th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood, Victoria	49,762	49,762	..	..	Recommended as proposed
25th Oct. to 26th Oct.	Additional office accommodation, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne	35,000	35,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

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