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COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA



Edward Dutton

Clerk of the Senate

27-3-17.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

SECOND GENERAL REPORT.

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 Edward Needham.*
 Senator Patrick Joseph Lynch, Vice-Chairman.†
 Senator William Harrison Story.

House of Representatives.

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

* Appointed 14th December, 1916.

† Ceded to be a member of the Committee 14th November, 1916.

(c) Katherine River to Bitter (Mataranka) Springs Railway.

This was a proposal that the railway line under construction between Pine Creek and Katherine River should be continued for a further distance of 63 miles 65 chains in a south-easterly direction, which would carry it to Mataranka Springs.

In the course of the Committee's inquiries two other routes were suggested as offering possible advantages over that to Mataranka Springs. It was, therefore, decided to constitute a Sectional Committee consisting of three members of the Committee to visit the Northern Territory.

A journey was undertaken by the Sectional Committee over the whole of the railway open to traffic and continued to the head of the line under construction, and an inspection was then made of the country through which would pass each of the suggested routes for the railway from the Katherine River southwards.

After a careful study of the question in all its aspects, the Committee recommended that, as a section of the main line, any extension of the Pine Creek-Katherine River railway southwards should proceed *via* Mataranka Springs.

(d) City Railway—Canberra.

This was a proposal to construct on a ruling grade of 1 in 200 a depressed line of railway to traverse the city in the position indicated on the schematic plan. The southern end of this railway to be linked up with the existing Queanbeyan to Canberra line and the northern end to be eventually extended to meet the New South Wales system at the boundary of the Federal Territory.

After extensive inquiry and careful consideration, the Committee decided that no reason exists for the construction of anything but temporary surface lines until the development of the city warrants the construction of the permanent line. It was resolved that the route of the permanent railway should be definitely settled in order to permit of the location of those elements of the life of the city which depend upon or are closely related to the railways, and thus allow such works as may be considered necessary to be proceeded with. For this reason, an indication was given of the route which, in the opinion of the Committee, the permanent line should follow. This route, while following generally the direction of the line indicated on the schematic plan, is deviated to eliminate an expensive tunnel and to approach somewhat nearer the proposed lake system.

(e) Dams for Ornamental Waters at Canberra.

The Committee made careful inquiries into the proposal to construct two dams on the Molonglo River and by certain earthworks form a chain of five ornamental lakes through the city area, but arrived at the decision that the work is not in any way an urgent matter, and recommended that the work be delayed for a period of years. Some attention was, however, given to the details involved in the provision of the lakes in order that the general principle of the ultimate course to be followed might be definitely laid down as early as possible, so that other works to be carried out might be proceeded with.

As a result of its deliberations the Committee recommended :—

- (a) That the suggested Eastern Lake be indefinitely postponed.
- (b) That the provision of the other ornamental waters be delayed for a period of years.
- (c) That the construction of the boulevards be delayed in consequence.
- (d) That prior to the formation of the lakes the Commonwealth be satisfied that the sanitation of the town of Queanbeyan is properly controlled.
- (e) That full advantage be taken of sand, soil, and gravel deposits, on the area proposed to be submerged, before the lakes are filled.
- (f) That 1,825 feet be adopted as the surface level of the lakes recommended.
- (g) That a strip of land at least 100 feet wide around the ornamental water system be reserved from lease or occupation when the lakes are provided.
- (h) That pending the formation of the lakes the area to be submerged as well as the 100 feet reservation around them be utilized for agricultural or other purposes on permissive occupancy.
- (i) That the straight line forming the base of the segmental basin be restricted to a length of about 1,600 feet on each side of the Ainslie axis.
- (j) That the lakes should be formed following generally the natural contours.
- (k) That a definite programme be drawn up outlining the successive stages in which various necessary works should be carried out.

(f) *Site for Arsenal within the Federal Territory.*

On 9th February, 1916, a communication was received from the Minister of State for Home Affairs intimating that Cabinet was desirous that the Committee, following upon its investigations of the proposal to erect a Small Arms Factory at Canberra, should advise in regard to a suitable site for a Commonwealth Arsenal within the Federal Territory.

Evidence in regard to the proposal was taken in private, and a Confidential Report forwarded to the Prime Minister recommending a site in the vicinity of Tuggeranong, on the bank of the Murrumbidgee River.

Grading and Survey of Streets—Canberra.

9. On 20th November, 1915, the then Minister for Home Affairs invited the Committee to investigate and report in regard to the grading and survey of the streets and avenues at Canberra as projected by the schematic plan. After preliminary inquiries had been made, the question was raised as to whether it was competent for the Committee to undertake an investigation at the request of any particular Minister, and the Minister for Home Affairs was invited to have the question formally referred as provided in the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*. The formal reference on this subject has not, however, yet reached the Committee.

INQUIRIES INCOMPLETE.

10. The inquiries respecting the undermentioned public works are incomplete :—

- (a) Extension of Postal Stores' Building, Harbour-street, Sydney.
- (b) Erection of Power House and Workshops, Officers' Quarters, &c., Flinders Naval Base.

11. 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, 1916.

EDWARD RILEY,
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
120 King-street,
Melbourne, 16th February, 1917.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

SECOND GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable SIR RONALD CRAUFORD 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 during the year ended 31st December, 1916.

CHANGES ON THE COMMITTEE.

1. On the 14th November, 1916, Senator Patrick Joseph Lynch, having been appointed Minister of State for Works and Railways, and Mr. William Henry Laird Smith, having been appointed Assistant Minister, ceased to be members of the Committee.

2. On the 14th December, 1916, Senator Edward Needham was appointed by the Senate in place of Senator P. J. Lynch, and such appointment was notified in *Commonwealth Gazette*, No. 4, of 15th January, 1917.

3. The position rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr. W. H. Laird Smith has not yet been filled.

4. Before entering on the duties of his office Senator Needham made and subscribed the declaration required by Section 4 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*.

5. During the year the Committee and Sectional Committees held 186 meetings and examined 74 witnesses in connexion with the proposed works submitted. In making their inquiries the Committee and Sectional Committees travelled 5,070 miles by water, 5,252 miles by rail, and 404 miles by road—a total of 10,726 miles.

QUESTIONS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

6. When the Committee presented its last General Report the following questions were under consideration, namely :—

Flinders Naval Base—Water Supply.

Canberra City Railway.

Dams for Ornamental Waters at Canberra.

Extension of the Pine Creek-Katherine River railway southwards so far as Bitter Springs.

Grading and survey of streets, Canberra.

7. Since that date the following additional questions have been remitted to the Committee for inquiry and report, namely :—

Site for an Arsenal within the Federal Territory.

Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney (further Report).

Extension of the Postal Stores Building, Harbour-street, Sydney.

Erection of Power House and Workshops, Officers' Quarters, &c., Flinders Naval Base.

COMPLETED INQUIRIES.

8. The Committee has dealt with several of these questions, and has presented six reports in connexion therewith, namely:—

	Estimated Cost.
(a) Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney. (Further Report)	51,481
(b) Flinders Naval Base—Water supply (plus 9d. per 1,000 gallons)	61,000
(c) Katherine River to Bitter (Mataranka) Springs railway	320,000
(d) City railway, Canberra	378,972
(e) Dams for ornamental waters at Canberra	912,421
(f) Site for arsenal within Federal Territory	
	<u>£1,423,874</u>

(a) Alterations and Additions to the Customs House, Sydney. (Further Report.)

On a reference to the Committee in September, 1915, of a proposal to carry out certain alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney, at an estimated cost of £37,500, the Committee, after investigation, had reported in November, 1915, that from statements made in evidence it appeared that if the building were vacated while the alterations were being effected it would be possible to complete the work at an estimated cost of £29,500, and it was recommended that this be done.

Some delay occurred in commencing the work, and on the 22nd May, 1916, the then Minister for Home Affairs having obtained a further estimate which placed the cost of carrying out the work, which had been varied in some minor particulars, at £51,481, it was resolved by Parliament to remit the matter to the Committee for further consideration.

Evidence obtained by the Committee went to show that subsequent to the original estimate being prepared considerable increases had taken place in the price of many important building materials. By omitting, however, certain items and substituting other materials in cases where the rise in prices for those originally specified was considerable, the Committee was assured that the work could be carried out for £41,000, and at that price it was recommended that the work be proceeded with.

(b) Flinders Naval Base—Water Supply.

In inquiring into this proposal, several schemes were suggested whereby an adequate supply of water could be obtained for the Flinders Naval Base, that recommended by the Department being a proposition that the Commonwealth construct a pipe line to convey water from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works reservoir at Notting Hill, at an estimated capital cost of £61,000, and thereafter pay for the water used at the rate of 9d. per 1,000 gallons.

At the instance of the Committee, however, investigations were undertaken with the view to obtaining from the Bunyip River a supply which would be sufficient for the seaside towns on the Mornington Peninsula in addition to the Naval Base, and as a result the Victorian State Rivers and Water Supply Commission agreed to construct, at an estimated cost of £156,000, a pipe line with necessary reservoirs, &c., which in addition to supplying water to the seaside towns of Mornington, Frankston, Seaford, Ararat, Chelsea, and Aspendale, as well as Somerville, Hastings, Tyabb, Crib Point, Pakenham, Beaconsfield, Berwick, Cranbourne, Garfield, and Bunyip, would deliver water to the Naval Base at a cost of 1s. per 1,000 gallons, on condition that the minimum payment by the Commonwealth be £4,000 per annum for the first three years, £3,500 per annum for the second three years, and then £3,000 per annum, with a possible further reduction.

This proposal was approved by the Committee, which recommended that an agreement be entered into between the Commonwealth and the Victorian State Rivers and Water Supply Commission so that the work might be put in hand at the earliest possible moment, such agreement to provide that the Commonwealth have priority of claim on the supply for Naval purposes.

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.
		£	£	£	£	
1915.		75,000	75,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
23th Jan. to 24th Feb.	Construction of a main sewer for the City of Canberra	100,000	..	..	100,000	Committee decided that there is no present necessity or urgency for this work
28th Jan. to 25th Feb.	Storage and regulating reservoir, Upper Queenbeyn River	111,032	111,032	..	..	Recommended as proposed
11th Mar. to 14th May	Erection of buildings at Flinders Naval Base	9,500	7,500	..	2,000	
19th Mar. to 6th May	Sewerage scheme for Flinders Naval Base	66,600 (including power plant)	62,100	25,500	..	In lieu 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 thereto of the existing machinery at a convenient date.
6th May to 24th June	Lithgow Small Arms Factory Extension	..	..	..	..	Committee recommended establishment of a second shift
6th May to 27th May	Increase of output, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	..	..	..	..	Recommended as proposed
6th May to 17th June	Increase of plant, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	38,727	38,727	..	..	
27th July to 24th Aug.	Small Arms Factory—location at Canberra	..	..	..	..	Site recommended
18th Sept. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney	63,008	..	..	..	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. Enoggera, Queensland	26,000	28,225	2,225	..	Recommended subject to improved lighting, water, and fire services
23rd Sept. to 24th Nov.	Cement Works for Commonwealth purposes	100,000	100,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
28th Sept. to 6th Oct.	Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney	37,500	29,500	..	..	Recommended, but stipulation made that occupants be removed to temporary accommodation during alterations
12th Oct. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Malvern, Victoria	46,933	46,933	..	..	Recommended as proposed
12th Oct. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood, Victoria	49,752	49,752	..	..	Recommended as proposed
25th Oct. to 26th Oct.	Additional Office accommodation, Victoria Barracks, Melbourne	35,000	35,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
1916.		..	..	..	..	
14th Feb. to 1st Mar.	Selection of site for arsenal within the Federal Territory	..	..	..	..	Confidential report issued to Prime Minister
24th May to 21st May	Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney (further report)	51,481	41,000	..	10,481	
25th Feb. to 21st Aug. 1916	Water Supply scheme for Flinders Naval Base and 6d. per 1,000 gallons for water consumed	61,000	Capital cost nil, 1s. per 1,000 gallons, with minimum annual payment of £1,000 for first three years, £3,500 for second three years, £3,000 thereafter	..	61,000	The interest on the capital cost of £61,000 as originally proposed, plus the cost of water consumed at 6d. per 1,000 gallons more than counterbalances the annual payment under the scheme recommended

Record of Inquiries—List of proposed public works inquired into—*continued.*

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. 10th Nov., 1915, to 30th Aug., 1916	Extension of Pine Creek-Kathérino River Railway to Bitter (Mataranka) Springs	£ 320,000	£ 320,000	£ ..	£ ..	Recommended as proposed
1916. 13th July, 1915, to 24th Nov., 1916	City Railway, Canberra	378,072	280,000	..	98,072	The Committee recommended that requirements for some years be met by temporary surface lines at estimated cost of about £78,000
1916. 14th July, 1915, to 28th Nov., 1916	Dams for Ornamental Waters, Canberra	912,421	472,421	..	440,000	Most of the expenditure recommended, however, will be deferred for a period of years