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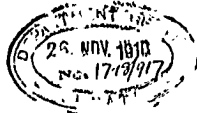
In return to Order

W. J. M. D. H.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Clerk of the Senate

19-11-18.



R E P O R T

from the

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

upon the

" Expenditure on Premises in the Capital Cities, owned
and rented by the Commonwealth for office accommodation";

F. 13203

MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE OF
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.
(Second Committee).

JOHN THOMSON, Esquire, M.P., Chairman.
MATTHEW CHARLTON, Esquire, M.P., Vice-Chairman.

<u>Senate</u>	<u>House of Representatives</u>
Senator Thomas William Crawford.	Llewelyn Atkinson, Esquire, M.P.
Senator the Honorable John Earle.	James Howard Gatts, Esquire, M.P.
Senator Allan McDougall.	James Edward Fenton, Esquire, M.P.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

The taking of evidence in the enquiry into "Expenditure on Premises in the Capital Cities, owned and rented by the Commonwealth for office accommodation", was commenced on 12th August 1918, and terminated on 26th October 1918.

The Committee inspected premises owned and rented by the Commonwealth and used for office accommodation, both in Melbourne and Sydney, N.S.W.

Meetings of the Committee were held in Melbourne and Sydney, during the course of which, various witnesses were examined.

R E P O R T
of the
JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Under the "Committee of Public Accounts
Act 1913" upon the

"Expenditure on Premises in the Capital Cities, owned and rented
by the Commonwealth for office accommodation."

I n t r o d u c t o r y.

At the inception of Federation, the Departments of Trade and Customs, Post-Master-General and Defence were transferred from the States to the Commonwealth together with all State owned properties used in connection therewith.

As a result of legislation passed from time to time other Departments and Sub-Departments necessary for the due performance of the Commonwealth functions have been transferred from the States; or have been brought into existence.

Coupled with the growth of the Commonwealth Government's activities, the problem of the economical and efficient housing of the various staffs has now become acute.

The Public Accounts Committee in pursuance of an investigation undertaken at the request of the then Treasurer (the late Lord Forrest) into the "Increased expenditure of Public Departments" have therefore decided to present a Sectional report dealing with that phase of the question.

BUILDINGS: in Melbourne.

Some of the buildings in which the Commonwealth Staffs are housed in Melbourne are ~~partly~~ owned by the Government, but by far the greater number are rented premises.

Dealing first with the buildings owned by the Commonwealth being transferred property - they include :

Value £ p + roof

297

Property	Cost		
	Structure	Site	Total
<i>302</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>
G.P.O. (Elizabeth St.) including furniture and fittings	240,000	290,000	530,000
Money Order Office	18,791	17,000	35,791
Dead Letter Office	3,585	included with G.P.O.	3,585
Customs House, including furniture, fittings, boundary walls, Quarters	80,000	60,000	140,000

The premises erected by the Commonwealth since Federation are :-

Property	Cost		
	Structure	Site	Total
<i>304</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
Commonwealth Offices	68,371	7,242	75,613
G.P.O. Spencer St.	216,150	53,402 including bldgs valued £6350.	269,552

The staffs (approximately) occupying these buildings are -

Property	Staff No.	Office accommodation in sq. feet
G.P.O. (Elizabeth Street) and Dead Letter Office	715	53,700
Money Order Office	76	7,500
Customs House	200	7,000
Commonwealth Office	438	40,674
G.P.O. (Spencer Street)	1,406	104,216

These figures show that staffs numbering 2,835 persons occupy 213,090 square feet of space or an average of (about) 75 sq. feet each person.

The buildings in occupation by the Departments of Defence and Repatriation are not taken into account in the preceding table, they include :

Victoria Barracks

(St.Kilda Road)	
Structure cost	97,000
Site "	<u>25,000</u>

T o t a l: £122,000

This was a transferred property to which a new wing costing £42,517 was lately added, on portion of the original land acquired.

The Repatriation Department have also had premises erected at Jolimont, costing £8,062 on land held on 7 years lease for which no rental is paid.

Branch Post Offices are excluded from the Committee's considerations.

The position is more complex in regard to the premises rented in Melbourne, of which there are 36 separate offices ~~scattered~~ in 14 streets to accommodate 41 Branches: the floor space thus provided is 206,871 square feet at an annual rental of £23,555: (plus £502 for cleaning). The rental paid is equivalent to 2/3.32d per square foot.

The staffs occupying these offices number 1,512 averaging 136 square feet for each person.

PREMISES RENTED.

The Committee found that offices have been rented in various parts of every Capital City of the Commonwealth to provide accommodation for the staffs.

Details of these are :-

	262	9.11	9.10	9.11	
Capital City	Square feet	Rental	Average Rate per Sq.foot		
Melbourne	206,871	£ 23,555	2/3		
Sydney	76,712	9,920	2/7		
Brisbane	18,824	2,130	2/3		
Adelaide	24,849	2,302	1/10		
Perth	23,213	2,571	2/2		
Hobart	7,073	917	2/7		
Total	357,542	41,395	2/4		

INSPECTION.

AS a result of the inspections in Melbourne, it was found that offices had been rented in numerous parts of the Metropolis. The Committee were unfavourably impressed with much of the accommodation provided.

The rented premises may be divided into two classes; those which were erected as private residences, and those erected for offices.

The defects apply more particularly to the buildings which were designed for private residences.

A large number of the rooms were too small to use for staff accommodation. Many were very badly lighted, recourse to artificial lighting being necessary throughout the day.

In many instances there were no lifts, necessitating the Public and Officers constantly using, one or more flights of stairs, in order to transact their business.

The inflammable nature of some buildings endangers the safety of public documents.

In the "private dwelling" offices the ventilation and conveniences were not such as would conduce to the health of a larger number of occupants than they were originally designed to accommodate.

Notwithstanding the fact that the space rented provides an average of 136 square feet for each person, or nearly double of that in Commonwealth buildings, the Committee noticed that Passages, alcoves, Linen Presses, Bath rooms, and in one case a Stable were being utilised for storage of Records and official documents.

In buildings of more modern construction, the same disadvantages do not apply in such a large degree. The fact must not be lost sight of, however, that the benefits arising out of such suitability have been partly obtained by Commonwealth Expenditure.

The amount expended for alterations, repairs and renovations of rented premises during the past 5½ years in Melbourne was £4,631: (this is included in a total of £10,903 covering the same period for all the Capital Cities.)

Defective accommodation naturally impairs the efficiency of employees, thus adversely affecting both the volume and quality of the work performed.

The splitting up of a staff into various small rooms makes supervision a matter of great difficulty, and in some cases practically impossible. All witnesses who gave an opinion on this matter were agreed that small rooms militate against general efficiency.

Incidental expenditure is increased through a greater number of messengers, telephones, cleaners etc. being required.

There is a loss of time in communications between offices, and the public are greatly inconvenienced, a large section of whom (particularly since the War began) have business with Branches situated apart from the central administration of the Department to which they belong.

A further disadvantage is the loss of opportunity for closer co-ordinations, and interchange of staff, ideas, and appliances.

While the total rental per square foot paid in Melbourne averages 2/3d. an analysis shows that the "private dwelling" class is 1/9d, and those erected for offices is 2/5d. per foot.

During the course of their inspections the Committee noticed the variety of furnishings in these widely scattered offices and although this matter was not one of special enquiry, the Committee are impressed by the desirability of standardization in this respect, as it was observed that while economy had been exercised in some instances, others bordered on extravagance.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS INVESTIGATED.

The Committee in seeking for some means to remedy the defects manifestly existing at present, had to take into consideration the eventual transfer of Governmental Administration to the Federal Capital at Canberra.

For various reasons this date at the present time is conjectural, and the recommendation of a scheme which would alleviate the present necessity would have to make provision for absorbing the accommodation which will become vacant upon the transfer of the Central Staffs to the future Capital: The date of transfer being remote allowance must also be made for natural growth consequent upon increased activities.

STAFF: At the present time there are in Melbourne (about) 4,347 officers, including Central and Victorian Staffs. This is not inclusive of Officers belonging to the Department of Repatriation (Victorian Staff) or to the Department of Defence.

The number of officers who would be removed to Federal Territory is approximately 1906, (excluding Military): this would leave a balance of 2,441 to be accommodated in Melbourne.

As already set out accommodation at present provides for 2,835 persons in Government owned buildings: or 394 in excess of the number at present employed on the Victorian staffs stationed in Melbourne.

The Committee in an endeavour to effect a solution of the question of housing those now occupying rented premises viz: 1,512 persons, investigated various proposals which will be set out later.

Throughout their enquiries the Committee had in mind that any comprehensive scheme for the erection of suitable accommodation might eventually become excessive of Government requirements, and therefore must necessarily be capable of being utilized for private offices, Banks, or similar concerns.

FINANCIAL ASPECT.

As an indication of the return being received from the present Commonwealth Offices, the following figures are quoted:-

The cost of the land was:	7,242
The cost of the building was:	<u>68,371</u>
Total	<u>275,613</u>

The total office Accommodation provided is:	40,674 sq. foot
Basement accommodation of:	3,925 " "
Corridors, lifts & Lavatories:	18,398 " "

Total in Building:	<u>62,997</u> " "
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Allowing for Interest @ 5% on land & building	=	3,781
Maintenance @ 1%	=	756
Rates (Water etc) @ $\frac{1}{2}$ %	=	378
Sinking Fund @ $\frac{1}{2}$ % invested 5% for 50 years	=	<u>378</u>
		<u>£5,293</u>

This works out at a cost of 1/8.16d. per square foot per annum for the whole building.

The cost of the Building as shown above includes a special charge not usually incidental to Offices, that is: Bullion Room and strengthening of floors and walls etc; in connection with same, making allowance (£5,749) for this, the rental required to produce a return of 7% would be £4,890: an equivalent of 1/6.62d. per square foot.

The average rental paid for the rented Premises at the present time in Melbourne is 2/3.32d per square foot, and the rents paid for 206,871 square feet total £23,555. The capitalization of this amount at the same rate as that used in connection with the Commonwealth Offices, viz. 7% would represent a sum of £336,500.

PROPOSALS: With a view to housing the staffs in as close proximity as possible to each other if not all in one building, the Committee investigated various schemes for the alleviation of the position as it exists at present.

Special consideration was given to the matter of development of sites already owned by the Commonwealth, these are:

- (a) G.P.O. Elizabeth Street.
- (b) G.P.O. Spencer Street.
- (c) Customs House, Flinders Street.
- (d) Victoria Barracks.
- And a site owned by the Victorian Government.
- (e) Evelyn and Albert Streets.

SCHEME "A"

G.P.O. Elizabeth Street.

There is a considerable area of land lying practically undeveloped on the site on the old General Post Office; fronting Elizabeth Street and Little Bourke Street.

Mr. W. B. Griffin (Architect) stated in evidence to the Committee "I find that 200,000 feet of useful office area, excluding corridors, lavatories and lighting space, can be obtained on the site by leaving the present building west of the lane almost intact, extending its front to Little Bourke Street with the same facade and the same elevation, and then running back to the lane, and by extending the height of the building at the rear to nine storeys and running at various distances from the rear of the properties on the easternmost line as far as the rear of the main entrance pavilion on to Elizabeth Street facade. This would give an impression on the Elizabeth Street frontage of the completed building as originally designed with a separate building at the rear running up to nine storeys high. The latter would not be closer than 30 feet to Elizabeth Street and would extend back to the easternmost boundary. North of the main building there is a structure already in existence which does not go up to the full height of the wall lying to the south of the entrance pavilion. I would continue it so as to match the whole of the walls to the south. The design would extend as far as Little Bourke Street and along the latter street for 30 feet. Then I would put up at the rear a lighter modern steel frame or reinforced concrete structure to a height of nine storeys. I roughly estimate that the additions I propose would not cost more than £200,000."

Mr. Griffin was further of the opinion that such a site and building in the event of the Commonwealth's discontinuance of occupancy would "undoubtedly command tenants at a remunerative rate."

Such a building would provide rooms of large dimensions; along Little Bourke Street a rectangular floor space clear from Elizabeth Street to the furthestmost lane above the ground floor would be 58 feet by 182 feet.

On the 3 lower floors the rooms at the corner of Elizabeth Street and Little Bourke Street could be 116 feet by 110 feet; and above this the dimensions would be 30 feet less along Little Bourke Street on account of being broken by the light well.

Mr. Murdoch, Architect, Works and Railways Department, in referring to this site said :- "There is an architectural incubus against building on the Elizabeth Street frontage. The people will reasonably expect that any building erected on that frontage will be of the same character as the present building, and if you look all around Australia you would not find a more expensive building than the Old General Post Office is. It is crammed full of stone detail, and as there is not very much back to it, and there are two fronts in an architectural ornate style to be considered, the proposition is rather at a discount when you are looking for a building which will provide office

accommodation at a cheap rate. What I hope may happen to that site is that some institution, such as the Commonwealth Bank, which needs a certain amount of advertising, and which can afford it, will come along and build upon it. If you want offices where you can bring down the rate lower than that for which you can buy - that is to say, rent them - it would be a very bad proposition indeed to build on the Elizabeth-street frontage, unless you propose to seriously disappoint the public. I rather sheered away from the consideration of that site as one which could be used for providing office accommodation. If the Post Office, in the development of its Elizabeth-street building, ever came to require more ground floor space for the purposes of accommodating the public, it might be a justifiable proposition to extend the existing building, but the rate per cubic foot would amount to a very high figure indeed. Until that site is required for some purpose that would justify the country in spending the capital on it that would be needed, I would rather continue to treat it just in a temporary way by erecting a temporary building, perhaps a better-looking one than the iron structure which is now there."

Colonel F. T. Owen, Director of Commonwealth works, endorsed Mr. Murdoch's views.

SCHEME "B" C.P.O. Spencer Street.

Mr. J. S. Murdoch in referring to this site said :-

"There is the site in Spencer-street, next to the new Post Office, which is not improved up to its value. The postal workshops are now on that site, and a scheme has been put forward by the Postal Department to add a new story to them, but I have given my advice against doing so. I have pointed out that a cheap building, which could grow as requirements demanded, should be built upon the site. That is to say, a building which could be used as postal workshops and offices, and for any other purpose to which the Commonwealth might wish to put it, and which could grow piece by piece and unit by unit as required. I estimated a year ago that eventually it would probably cost about £90,000. It would provide a floor space of about 100,000 square feet. On that site a style of building of modern architectural character would be sufficient, so that it would be an economical proposition. The idea in regard to the main postal building in Spencer-street is that, as years go by, it will be absorbed for mail work, so that the other functions now housed in it - the Deputy Postmaster-General and his administration, the Electrical Engineer, the Postal Storekeeper's office, and so on - will have to find accommodation contiguous to the main building. It was my idea that a new building in Spencer-street would gradually absorb those functions as they were pressed out of the main building.

My consideration to that particular site was pretty well confined to the requirements of the Postmaster-General, except that I thought it would be a cheap form of building, and that, for the time being, a considerable portion of it could be utilized for general purposes. It is reached by two tramways, one running along Bourke-street to Parliament House, and the other running along Spencer-street. It is also right at the

Spencer-street station, and there is now a big Commonwealth centre there, because the post office administration has been concentrated there."

SCHEME "C" CUSTOMS HOUSE.

At the request of the Committee proposals were also put forward by Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Griffin in reference to the vacant land at the rear of the Customs House in Flinders Street, where there is a strip of land running from Market Street to William Street. Its area is 243 feet by 54 feet.

Mr. J. M. Tait (Assistant Architect) on behalf of Mr. Murdoch said "a six storied edifice could be erected on the vacant land and an additional two stories on top of the existing laboratory building and build 5 stories at the rear thereof."

This scheme would provide the following floor space: Customs House Additions 59,886 sup. feet; laboratory additions 13,150 sup feet; total 73,036 sup. feet. The dimensions of the rooms in the addition would be: on each of the six floors two rooms, 74 feet by 55 with an annexe to each of 30 x 30 feet. At the rear of the laboratory buildings there would be 5 rooms each 55 by 33 feet and two of the same size in the additional two stories.

Provision is made for the installation of two lifts, heating, electric lighting and lavatory accommodation.

The estimated cost is £51,340.

Mr. Griffin in referring to the proposal prepared by him said :-

"I first investigated the site with a view to the same class of development as I had calculated for the G.P.O. site, namely, one building to supply all Commonwealth requirements. You could get at the Customs House site 200,000 square feet, but it would not be advantageous to do so. The only practicable way to accomplish this would be to tear down the existing building and erect a new one. This would be sacrificing a building of considerable area that is of some use at present. In treating this building I have assumed that the requirements would be a smaller structure to accommodate only part of the staff.

It would be practicable to erect a building of about 93,500 square feet of additional rental area to good advantage, confining the additions to a new building along the north property line extending from Market Street to William Street. This would leave the old building intact except for the North facade, and leave it in its present setting of trees and lawns. I would not interfere with the front or the ends of the present building which would retain its present appearance, enhanced by the extensions in the background which would be carried to a maximum height of 132 feet. The construction would be in re-inforced concrete faced with rendering in the same method as the present building so that the whole structure would be homogeneous architecture,

The plan provides for a basement and nine stories. I estimate the total area at about 1,250,000 cubic feet at 1/4d per foot, or a total of £85,000. That would be a cheap building

It would be very simple in plan but it would have a good deal of external wall area in proportion to floor area. It would have a flat roof. My estimate provides provision for elevators.

The 93,000 square feet represents a net rental area exclusive of lavatories, corridors, stairways and lifts. They would account for an additional 15,600 square feet making a gross total floor space of 109,000 square feet.

Each room is 50 feet by 68 feet in a rectangle with an extension of 28 feet by 34 feet."

Mr. Griffin's plan does not include any additions to the existing laboratory building.

SCHEME "L" VICTORIA BARRACKS.

A new wing was lately completed at the northern end of the Victoria Barracks and is now occupied by the Administrative Staff of the Defence Department.

The cost of this building was stated as £42,517: and it has a floor area of 34,734 sup. feet.

Colonel Owen informed the Committee that the Department of Works and Railways had prepared plans for another wing at the southern end similar to the one lately erected, the cost of which owing to present day conditions would be increased by about 10%, making the cost £46,768. There is also a large area of land at present carrying only old iron buildings used as stables etc. situated at the corner of St.Kilda Road and Wadey Street, being the northern end of the Barracks block. It is occupied by the Victorian Police. The area is approximately 64,000 square feet, having frontages of 135 feet to St.Kilda Road, 458 feet to Wadey Street, and 198 feet to Wells Street.

Should a building be erected on this land it would not be architecturally necessary to conform to the style of the existing Barracks which are built of bluestone.

The Navy Office is at present situated in Lonsdale Street with various branches in other streets. Mr. Trumble (Secretary of Defence Department) was of the opinion that "It would facilitate the work of both Departments if the Navy and Military were closer."

He said that it was originally proposed that the Navy Department should occupy one of the new wings at the Barracks; but not having received any reply to enquiries in this matter, it was decided not to proceed with the erection of the south wing.

The Committee during their visit to the Barracks found that there were several substantial modern well-lighted wooden buildings of one story, which have been erected since the commencement of the War. The buildings provide some 11,000 sq. feet of floor area and were built to accommodate large staff.

At present they are occupied by Base Record Staff and Pay Offices, and will eventually be vacated upon the disbandment of these War Service branches.

The Committee is of opinion that these buildings are capable of further utilization. It is too valuable to dispose of the second-hand timber and iron. There are several branches closely associated with the Defence Department which at present occupy rented premises.

1/18/54

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SCHEME "E" (Evelyn & Albert Streets.)

In view of the fact that the seat of Government will move to Canberra sooner or later, consideration was given to the proposal submitted by Mr. Tait on behalf of Mr. Murdoch to erect a temporary structure on the triangular piece of land adjoining Parliament House fronting Evelyn and Albert Streets.

This is a convenient site with an area of about 55,000 square feet. This land is owned by the Victorian Government.

A project for a temporary building was submitted suggesting that it should be constructed almost entirely of timber, and be of two stories. On account of the risk of fire brick rooms for the storage of records, plans, etc. were provided, and also in the brick portion, an escape staircase.

The floor area would be about 49,000 feet and the estimated cost £24,500; including provision for lighting, heating, and lavatory accommodation.

The life of such a building would (with care) extend from 30 to 50 years.

POSITION IN SYDNEY.

In Sydney, New South Wales, the following property was transferred to the Commonwealth at the time of Federation:-

Property	28.2	29.7	
	Cost		
	9.11	9.10	9.11
	Structure	Site	Total
G.P.O.	£ 439,000	£ 298,000	£ 737,000
Customs House	91,317	30,000	121,317

~~The Commonwealth Bank in Sydney was erected within the past 3 or 4 years at a cost of £122,122, for the structure and £25,000 for the land, a total of £147,122.~~

STAFF:

Sydney The total number of Permanent and temporary officers in *ranked premises* at 30th June 1917 (excluding Post Master General's department, and Department of Trade & Customs, and officers on active service) was:-

Permanent	304
Temporary	375
Total	679

~~There were in the P.M.G.'s Dept.~~

Permanent	485
Temporary	401

~~Trade & Customs Dept.~~

Permanent	405
Temporary	86

The Committee enquired into the probable growth of the Staff in the future, with a view to ascertaining the accommodation which would be required in *the future* for these Departments.

Mr. R.C.Kraegen Commonwealth Public Service Inspector for N.S.W. was of the opinion that the growth of staff will not continue in the future at the rate of past years, and he thought that the staff in the Pensions and Taxation Branches of the Department of the Treasury would increase more rapidly than the staffs in any of the other Departments.

ACCOMMODATION.

There are 13 separate offices rented in Sydney in ten different

5th rec'd.
States to accommodate 15 branches (excluding stores and workshops,) the space provided is 76,712 square feet: at an annual rental of £9920: (plus £130 for cleaning), an equivalent of 2/7.03d. per square foot.

Generally speaking criticism regarding the premises rented in Melbourne applies equally to those of Sydney.

The sum expended during the past 5½ years for alterations etc: amounted to £1741.

FINANCIAL ASPECT.

The rental paid for office accommodation in Sydney is £9920 per annum and the floor space occupied is 76,712 square feet.

Based on the same percentage of "return" as that used in reference to buildings in Melbourne, viz., a total of 7% to cover interest, maintenance, rates and Sinking Fund, the Capital sum available for building purposes would, therefore, be £141,714.

SITES:

The Commonwealth is not so fortunately placed in Sydney in having various lands lying vacant or unimproved to their full value, as is the case in Melbourne, and although it was urged by several witnesses that a site in the neighbourhood of Wynard Square, Central Railway Station, or Liverpool Street would be convenient to all concerned, no definite site was recommended to the Committee.

As the whole of the Central Staffs are located in Melbourne, the position in Sydney will not be affected by the transfer to the Federal Capital at Canberra.

Mr. Wm. McPherson, Deputy Commissioner of Commonwealth Pensions, Sydney, in evidence said :-

"I am strongly of opinion that a saving of several thousands of pounds would be made in rents, salaries and contingencies, as well as tend to greater efficiency, if steps were taken to resume sufficient land for the purpose of accommodating the whole of the Commonwealth Departments in Sydney. Failing this, and if the Pensions Office has to be provided for separately, a site near the Central Railway Station would best suit the convenience of claimants and pensioners."

CONCLUSION.

From the evidence tendered by responsible officers of the several Departments, and from a personal inspection made of the many premises rented in Melbourne and Sydney the Committee have come to the conclusion that the present accommodation does not tend to either economy, efficiency or public convenience.

That the distribution of the many branches and offices over such a large area prevents that close co-ordination and ready communication between heads of Departments and other responsible officers and which is essential to effective and economical administration.

Taking into consideration that some of the leases have already expired and tenancy is only on a monthly basis and that the maximum unexpired term of the others does not exceed three years this Committee is of opinion that the time has arrived when the Government should consider the desirability of erecting premises of their own in Melbourne on the best and suitable lands already owned but not fully developed. ~~The Committee~~ ^{It is} of opinion that cheaper and better accommodation could thus be provided; and that, should a considerable reduction in the number of public offices be occasioned by transfer to the Federal Capital or other causes, such premises if not then required for Government purposes would not fail to secure suitable tenants.

As previously stated the rents paid by the Commonwealth for premises in Melbourne amount to £23,556 per annum. This amount capitalised at 7% represents £336,500.

The schemes considered in this report are shown in the following tabulated summary:-

S c h e m e	Estimated cost	Gross space square ft.	Mental Value per sq. ft. on 7% basis.	Accommodation per 100 sq. person.
A. G.P.O. Elizabeth St. Mr. Griffin	£2200,000	217,000	1/3 ^d .48	12,170
B. G.P.O. Spencer St. Mr. Murdoch	90,000	100,000	1/3 ^d .12	1,000
C. Customs House Mr. Murdoch	51,340	73,036	11 ^d .81	730
" " " Mr. Griffin	85,000	109,000	1/12 ^d .10	1,090
D. Victoria Barracks	22,527	21,704	2/12^d.55	217
<i>Proposed New Wing</i>	46,768	34,734	1/10 ^d .62	347
E. Evelyn & Albert Sts., Mr. Murdoch	24,500	49,000	8.4	490
	27	6	6	6

With the exception of "E" Evelyn and Albert Streets: the land in each of the above schemes is owned by the Commonwealth. It is transferred property paying interest at 3%, but this latter charge has not been taken into account in the above figures.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Committee from the evidence taken are convinced:-

- (1) That the schemes as presented for the housing of the staffs in Melbourne are financially sound.
- (2) That greater efficiency would be obtained by ~~the~~ closer co-ordination and better housing.
- (3) That considerable economy would be effected by co-operation of staffs.
- (4) That a more effective and efficient service would be secured.
- (5) That there would be a reduction in the number of messengers, and in the cost of heating, lighting, cleaning of offices, etc.
- (6) The advantages to the Public having business with the different offices would be very appreciable.

The Committee does not express preference for any one of the suggested schemes, but having special regard to the financial aspect, is of opinion that the present system of renting premises is both costly and unsatisfactory, and therefore recommends that rented accommodation should be superseded as early as possible by the erection of specially designed premises owned by the Commonwealth.

In regard to Sydney the Committee recommends that a suitable site, not necessarily in the ~~business~~ ^{centre} of the City, should be secured, and premises erected thereon which would secure efficiency and co-ordination among the staffs and would entail a less annual outlay than that now paid in rents.

The Committee further recommends that the Commonwealth supply & Tender Board be empowered to fix a standard for office Furniture and arrange for all furnishing supplies for Departments.

.....John...Thomson...

CHAIRMAN.

18th November 1918.

1917-18.

Prof. please.
R.A. Brown.
19-11-18.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Report
from the
Joint Committee of Public Accounts
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