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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC WORKS.

REPORT

TOGETHER WITH

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

RELATING TO THE PROPOSED

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE
GENERAL POST OFFICE, ADELAIDE.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

(Third Committee.)

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

Senate.

Senator George Henderson.

Senator Edward Needham.

Senator John Newland, Vice-Chairman.

House of Representatives.

Llewelyn Atkinson, Esquire, M.P.

The Honorable Frederick William Bamford, M.P.

George Hugh Mackay, Esquire, M.P.

James Mathews, Esquire, M.P.

Parker John Moloney, Esquire, M.P.

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ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE GENERAL POST OFFICE, ADELAIDE.

REPORT.

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS, to which the House of Representatives referred for investigation and report the proposal to effect certain Alterations and Additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide, has the honour to report as follows:—

INTRODUCTORY.

The existing General Post Office at Adelaide is a building of two storeys and a basement, occupying a site on the corner of King William and Franklin streets, having a frontage of about 211 feet to the former street by a depth of about 212 feet along the latter. It consists of two blocks—the main or southern block, the erection of which was commenced in 1868 and completed about 1872, and the northern wing, or additions block, which was commenced in 1891 and completed in 1893.

2. When, under Federation, the postal activities of the States were taken over by the Commonwealth the Adelaide General Post Office was included in the Schedule of Transferred Properties at a valuation of: building, £62,000; site, £56,700—total, £118,700.

3. In 1911 the expansion of business necessitated the erection of a separate building for a Telephone Exchange on the Franklin-street frontage. By 1911 also it had been found necessary to request two State Departments that were occupying rooms in the building, to find accommodation elsewhere, and in 1915, owing to the growth of postal business, the following Commonwealth Departments were required to vacate the space occupied by them in the building, namely:—Audit Office, Public Service Inspector, Maternity and Old-age Pensions, and the Excise Branch of the Customs Department; and in 1919 the General Branch of the Customs also moved out.

4. In 1913 the necessity for making alterations to the Post Office building was discussed, and in the following year a Departmental Committee submitted a report on the building.

5. In 1916 sketch plans were prepared by Mr. Murdoch, Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways, assisted by Mr. Simpson, of the Department of Works and Buildings, Adelaide, and submitted to the Postmaster-General, and in essence they are the plans which are now under consideration, the only variation being the elimination of one story.

PRESENT PROPOSAL.

6. The proposal as submitted to [the Committee is intended to provide for the expansion of post and telegraph operations, to give accommodation suitable for the needs of every branch of the Department and of the public in transacting business with every branch. The nature of the proposal is such that the outward appearance of the premises will be but little interfered with. The alterations and additions suggested will consist in a large degree of providing extensive new areas of floor space behind the main street frontages, constructed in a modern manner, fireproof, well lighted and ventilated, and with a minimum of structural interruption to the operations to be carried on within the General Post Office building.

A certain portion of the old structure will be demolished, and in its place will be erected a reinforced concrete building in the form of a compact rectangular block of six storeys—basement, ground, first, second, and third floors, and a roof floor.

7. *Basement.*—In the basement of the new structure will be located the Parcels Post Office, with ample public space for persons doing business with that branch. In the existing structure part of the old basement floor will be lowered 12 inches to provide accommodation for portion of the Registration Branch and the Telegraph Despatch Room; the remainder will be given over to a bicycle room, strong rooms, the storage of records, &c.

8. *Ground Floor.*—On the ground floor the existing Main Public Hall will not be structurally altered; around the hall will be located the Registered Letter section, the section devoted to the delivery of letters addressed to the Post Office, posting slips, the Bulk Postage section, &c., and it is suggested that a kiosk for the sale of stamps should be placed in the centre of the Hall. The private letter boxes are proposed to be taken from their present position and placed in a corridor adjoining the Main Public Hall with an imposing entrance which is to be created on the site of the present vehicle entrance from King William-street.

On the right of the proposed new entrance from King William-street it is suggested to give up the whole area at present occupied by the Money Order branch and the Telegraph Receiving branch to one large chamber, and to devote it entirely to the Money Order branch. On the left-hand side of the new entrance it is proposed to place the Telegraph Receiving Office in a large room giving ample space to both the public and the officials. Continuing from the main entrance there is to be a vestibule, at the far end of which is to be placed the messengers and an inquiry counter. To the left will be a staircase giving access from the basement to the top of the proposed new building, and opposite the staircase it is proposed to put in two lifts. Adjacent to the lifts will be a door giving access to the Superintendent of Mails branch. He will be separated by a glass partition from the Mail room, which will occupy practically all the room on the ground floor. The western end of the Mail room will open on to platforms 7 feet wide, which will abut on to the proposed roadway and be utilized for the receipt and despatch of mail matter.

9. *Roadway.*—It is proposed to close the driving way from King William-street and to divert all vehicular traffic to the driving way which has its present approach from Franklin-street; at the same time to open up a new outlet for vehicles to the north through the existing buildings which are erected against the northern boundary of the Post Office land. By this means a straight-through roadway will be obtained, allowing vehicles to enter from Franklin-street, proceed along the back of the Post Office building proper, serve the mail platforms, which are situated immediately to the rear of the Mail rooms, and finally debouch on the right-of-way which runs along the northern boundary of the Post Office land.

10. *First Floor.*—On the south side of the first floor there will be minor alterations only to the existing structure. On the east side it is proposed to remove three walls and the staircase and to make a large room 81 feet x 27 feet for the Records and Correspondence branch. The Telegraph Operating room it is proposed to leave as it is, excepting for an improvement in the lighting. The front part of the 1891 extension facing King William-street will be left untouched, excepting that it is proposed to take down partitions and turn the existing four rooms into two large working rooms for the Inspectors. The first floor of the new fireproof building to be erected is proposed to be given up to the Accountant's branch. It will have a floor space 98 feet by 63 feet. The annex on the first floor—the north-western corner—occupied at present by mechanics, will remain unaltered.

11. *Second Floor.*—This will be one large open room, 98 feet by 63 feet, with a height of 14 feet, and is proposed to be devoted to the use of the engineers.

12. *Third Floor.*—This will have the same area as the second floor, and is proposed to be devoted to the use of the Postal Institute.

13. *Fourth Floor.*—This will be a flat roof, part of which will be formed into a roof garden, and surrounding it it is proposed to place the women's retiring room, women's sick room, women's dining room, kitchen, sculleries and stores, and the men's dining room and library and reading room.

14. *Lifts.*—Provision is included for two electrically-driven fast-travelling passenger lifts in the front of the building of a size 6 feet by 5 feet; one lift at the back—size, 6 feet by 5 feet, for the use of the staff; and a goods lift, 9 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft. 6 in. This goods lift will be used to carry mails, and will run only from the basement to the ground floor. It is proposed to have a load capacity of 2 tons, and be driven by the hydraulic-electrical system.

15. *Stairways.*—There is to be a main staircase in the front of the building, and a second stairway is proposed on the western side of the Mail branch. Off these stairs, all the way up from the basement to the top floor, will be a series of lavatories, thoroughly well lighted and ventilated.

16. *Ventilation.*—The system of ventilation for the basement and ground floor is the introduction of fresh air from outside by means of an electrically-driven fan. The air is to be forced through ducts and delivered at outlets on the various columns, and similarly the foul air is to be drawn out through other ducts. This proposal will provide for a change of the air in the rooms once every ten minutes.

17. *Heating.*—The proposition for heating is a hot-water circulation through wall radiators with a forced circulation by means of an electrically-driven pump.

ESTIMATED COST.

18. The estimated cost of the proposal is set down at £76,014, and the time necessary to complete the work about four years. To this amount should be added the cost of providing temporary accommodation for the staff during alterations, the expense of removing furniture, &c., which would bring the total estimated cost of the proposal to approximately £80,000.

COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS.

19. The Committee visited Adelaide and thoroughly inspected the General Post Office buildings and the adjacent Telephone Exchange, as well as the Postal stores and the Linesmen's storeyard at West Terrace. Inspections were also made of the accommodation provided at the General Post Office, and the Elizabeth-street Post Office, Melbourne. The plans showing the accommodation proposed to be given at Adelaide were carefully studied and explained in detail by the Commonwealth Architect and the Acting Superintendent of Public Buildings, Adelaide.

20. Evidence was obtained from postal officials as to requirements in the matter of working accommodation and public space, and how these requirements were being met in the design under consideration, while opinions were sought from outside architects as to how the problem of remodelling and modernizing the buildings to provide the accommodation necessary had been grappled with.

21. It was ascertained that close collaboration and frequent consultations had taken place between Postal officials and the officers of the Department of Works and Railways with the object of studying postal and public requirements, and how these were to be met, and the postal officials expressed the view that the design as submitted meets their wishes and will give sufficient accommodation for the next 20 years.

22. From an architectural point of view the President of the Federal Council of the Australian Institutes of Architects informed the Committee, in evidence, that the design under consideration was "extraordinarily good," and congratulated Mr. Murdoch, the Commonwealth Architect, on the manner in which he had solved a difficult problem.

23. *Existing Premises.*—In the course of its inspection of the Adelaide General Post Office, the Committee was very unfavorably impressed with the accommodation provided for the Parcels Post branch. The principal portion of the work of this section is conducted in a basement with a low ceiling. The lighting and ventilation are bad, the position inconvenient for the public, and the conditions cheerless and altogether unsuitable for the permanent housing of the staff. As a whole, the original building was evidently not designed to meet present-day requirements, and in the main consists of a series of comparatively small rooms which in most cases will not house the whole of the officers of one section or branch. This feature tends to create difficulties in supervision, prevents economical working, and causes public inconvenience. Poor lighting and defective ventilation are common, and in some instances the working conditions are insanitary. The comfort and convenience of the staff cannot be catered for, and efficiency is reduced, with the result that both the Department and the public suffer.

With properly arranged offices and modern equipment the staff could be suitably housed and could deal with the work more expeditiously, give better service to the public, and have its efficiency increased by, it is said, 25 per cent. The Committee is therefore unanimously of opinion that steps should be taken to provide the further accommodation required as early as possible.

24. *Workshops.*—It was noticed by the Committee that the telephone mechanics' workshops are cramped and unsuitable, that the carpenters' workshop is located in portion of the basement, and that timber is also stored there. In the opinion of the Committee these items constitute a very grave fire risk, and an endeavour should be made to alter this state of affairs as early as possible.

Careful consideration was given to the matter, and it was unanimously resolved to recommend that provision for workshop accommodation be made with as little delay as possible on the postal property at West Terrace, not in, but adjacent to, the present Stores building, and that all workshops be removed from the General Post Office building to that location as early as practicable.

SITE.

25. The Commonwealth property at the corner of King William and Franklin streets, Adelaide, consists, as already indicated, of a block of "Transferred Property" of about 211 feet by 212 feet, on which the General Post Office and the Telephone Exchange are erected. In addition, the Commonwealth purchased in 1915, for the sum of £24,485, adjoining areas aggregating 1 rood 28·1 perches, and having a frontage of 90 ft. 5 in. to Franklin-street by a depth of about 211 feet. Representations were made by the City Council of Adelaide that in lieu of

carrying out the present proposition the needs of the Postal Department should be met by erecting a further building in harmony with the present structure, to cover the whole of the Commonwealth land. Careful consideration was given to this question, but, although the Committee duly appreciates the desire of the City Council to add to the beauty of Adelaide by the provision of a building of this description, it considers that the value of the land in this position makes it imperative that the Commonwealth should use it to the best advantage. The Committee is of opinion that a two-storied stone building over the whole area, besides being more costly, would not give the same facilities for administrative purposes, nor the same convenience to the public, and, therefore, cannot agree to the suggestion. It is noted, however, that in the reference under consideration care is being taken to retain the architectural features of the existing building on its King William-street and Franklin-street frontages, and the Committee is satisfied that the higher building at the rear, coming as it does about 42 feet back from the street alignment, will not in any way detract from the beauty of the existing structure.

PROPOSED NEW BUILDING.

26. Careful scrutiny was made of the plans of the proposed new structure, and detailed information was obtained as to the facilities and accommodation to be provided therein for the staff and the public.

27. *Basement.*—The question was raised as to the advisability of still accommodating some of the staff in the basement, but, after inquiry, the Committee is satisfied that most of the objectionable features usually associated with a basement will be removed by a proper system of lighting, heating, and ventilation as proposed.

28. *Main Hall.*—The Committee was favorably impressed with the facilities that will be provided in the main hall, and considers that the removal of the existing Weather Notice Board, and the provision of writing slopes will add to the convenience of the public and improve the appearance of the hall. It is considered, however, that the proposed stamp-selling kiosk and telephone boxes, in the centre, may block the free public use of the hall, and the Committee recommends that provision for the sale of stamps be made elsewhere.

29. *Telegraph Operating Room.*—The Committee noticed that it is the intention to allow the telegraph operators to remain in the room they occupy at present on the first floor of the old building. This room is not of fireproof construction, and, in view of the expensive plant used therein, and the dislocation of public business which would result from a fire in that branch, consideration was given to a suggestion that the Telegraph Operating Room should be located in the new fireproof structure. It is admitted that the risk of fire is somewhat discounted by the fact that some members of the staff are constantly in attendance, but the Committee considers that if the Department can conveniently arrange for the alteration, the telegraph operators should be located in the new structure, and their present quarters utilized for other purposes.

30. *Postal Institute.*—Consideration was given to the proposal to devote the whole of the third floor of the new structure—an area of over 6,000 square feet—to the use of the Postal Institute. From an inspection of the Postal Institute, Melbourne, and evidence obtained in the matter, it was ascertained that this Institute is intended to provide for the education of the officers of the Department in such subjects as mathematics, English, geography, history, telegraphy, telephony, motor-driving, shorthand, typewriting, &c., and for their social enjoyment, for which purpose space is set apart for a billiard-room, gymnasium, concert-room, library, &c.

Although the Committee thinks that a Postal Institute run on proper lines is advantageous from the point of view of the officers themselves and of the Service generally, it is of opinion that there may be a tendency for it to extend too far in certain directions, and considers that the scope of the Institute should be definitely laid down by the Government, and not by a single Minister, in order that the best value may be got from the money spent by the Commonwealth on the Institute, and that care is taken to see that too much valuable space in postal buildings is not devoted to purposes which could be quite as easily and much more cheaply catered for elsewhere.

In the case of the Adelaide General Post Office, as the whole of the fourth floor is to be devoted to men's dining-room, library and reading-room, women's dining-room, women's retiring-room, &c., the Committee is of opinion that, should the whole of the 6,000 square feet of space on the third floor be not required for the Postal Institute, it may be possible to utilize some of this space for official Postal purposes.

31. *Lifts.*—The Committee agrees with the proposals submitted for the passenger and goods lifts, but considers that one passenger lift in the front of the building would be sufficient for present requirements, and that, while making necessary provision for the second lift, it should not be actually installed until it has been shown that the traffic requirements warrant it.

32. *Additional Story.*—It was stated in evidence that the Commonwealth is paying about £3,250 per annum for office accommodation for various Commonwealth activities in Adelaide, and careful consideration was given by the Committee to the question of whether action should be taken to add a further one or two stories to the proposed new structure to provide for such activities in this building. It was shown, however, that even two additional floors would not be sufficient for the requirements of all the Departments, and that there was a certain amount of feeling in Adelaide that any additional height might spoil the architectural effect of the existing structure. Under the circumstances, the Committee decided not to recommend a variation of the designs submitted.

The decision arrived at by the Committee in connexion with this matter is shown in the following extract from its Minutes of Proceedings :—

Senator Newland moved—That the proposal to provide further accommodation at the General Post Office, Adelaide, as submitted to the Committee, be approved. Seconded by Mr. Mathews.

Mr. Gregory moved as an amendment—That an additional story be added to the proposed building, to provide accommodation for other Commonwealth activities in Adelaide until such space is required for postal purposes. Seconded by Senator Henderson.

The Committee divided on the amendment—

Ayes (3).
Mr. Gregory
Senator Henderson
Mr. Mackay.

Noes (4).
Mr. Bamford
Mr. Mathews
Mr. Moloney
Senator Newland.

And so it passed in the negative.

The original motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

33. The Committee is of opinion, however, that the question of the concentration of the various Commonwealth Departments in Adelaide in one building is a matter deserving of attention, and, in view of the fact that sufficient Commonwealth land is available adjoining the General Post Office, the Committee considers that when sufficient funds are available an effort should be made to house all the Commonwealth activities in a suitable building on this valuable site, and save the annual outlay for rental.

34. *Temporary Accommodation during Alterations.*—It is obvious that it would be impracticable to carry on the business of the Post Office in all branches while the alterations are in progress, and two suggestions were put forward to cope with this matter—firstly, the hiring of outside accommodation to house portion of the staff, and change the sections over as various rooms in the building became available; or, secondly, the provision of a temporary frame building or buildings of the drill-hall type to meet the same purpose. It was ascertained that approximately 10,000 square feet of space will be required, and the cost of renting same would approximate £1,000 per annum at a low estimate. The provision of space by the erection of drill-sheds would cost about £4,000, and of that amount approximately 60 per cent., or, say, £2,500 would be recoverable when the buildings were utilized in another place for other purposes. As it is considered that the temporary accommodation will be required for at least four years, and it is very unlikely that suitable accommodation of the nature indicated could be obtained convenient to the General Post Office, the Committee has no hesitation in recommending that the necessary accommodation in the form of the drill-hall type of building be constructed on the vacant Commonwealth land adjoining the Post Office.

35. *Roadways.*—There is a 15-ft. roadway along portion of the northern boundary of the Commonwealth property, which opens into a 20-ft. roadway connecting with Waymouth-street on the north, and with Franklin-street on the south. Over these three roadways the Commonwealth has right of carriage way. The roadways will be of great advantage to the Post Office for the receipt and despatch of mail matter, and it is recommended that the necessary representations be made to the City Council to declare them “one-way” traffic routes, to prevent congestion and delay.

CONCLUSION.

36. In conclusion, the Committee desires to congratulate the Commonwealth Architect on his very capable handling of a very difficult problem. The Committee feels that the alterations and additions to be made to the building, while providing much-needed space and facilities for Postal administration on modern lines, will also give the public greater facilities for transacting its business, and at the same time preserve to the people of Adelaide the distinctive architectural features of the Post Office building, of which they are justly proud. The sum to be expended on the work is large, but evidence shows that administrative costs will be reduced by approximately £1,200 in the first year after the alterations, and between £1,500 and £1,600 during subsequent years.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

37. Briefly summarized, the Committee's recommendations are :—

- (i) That steps be taken to provide further accommodation as early as possible :
- (ii) That the workshops be removed as early as practicable from the General Post Office building, and that provision be made for their accommodation on the Postal property at West Terrace, not in, but adjacent to, the present Stores building :
- (iii) That the stamp kiosk be not erected in the centre of the main public hall :
- (iv) That, if it can be conveniently arranged, the Telegraph Operating-room be located in the fireproof structure :
- (v) That the Government should frame regulations for the management of the Postal Institute :
- (vi) That for the present one passenger lift only be installed in the front of the building :
- (vii) That temporary accommodation in buildings of the drill-hall type be provided during construction :
- (viii) That representations be made that the roadways to be used for mail traffic be declared " one-way " traffic routes.

H. GREGORY,
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
31 Queen-street,
Melbourne, 19th July, 1920.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

(Taken at Adelaide.)

FRIDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1920.

Present :

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman ;

Senator Henderson,
Senator Needham,
Senator Newland,
Mr. Atkinson,

Mr. Bamford,
Mr. Mathews,
Mr. Parker Moloney.

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

1. *To the Chairman.*—I am aware of the reference submitted to the Committee in connexion with the alterations projected for the Adelaide General Post Office. I have been devoting attention to that matter since the inception of the project. Alterations have been considered for about six years. A concrete scheme was arranged in 1916. For a long while it has been considered essential that more ample provision should be provided for staff and public, and plans have been prepared with a view to making necessary enlargements, &c. There has been complete co-ordination in this matter between the Postmaster-General's Department and our own. The former department has approved of the scheme, which has now been put before this Committee. First in submitting this work to Parliament, the Postmaster-General, acting for the then Minister for Works and Railways, who was laid up at the time, submitted a memorandum, together with the plans. He pointed out that beyond some minor internal alterations, which necessarily had to be made from time to time, there had been no real steps taken to meet the great extension of postal work in Adelaide since Federation. He pointed out that the time had arrived when extensive provision was bound to be made in the form of remodelling the premises to meet the extended post and telegraph operations. He explained, further, that the scheme now proposed is intended to provide accommodation suitable for the needs of every branch, and of the public in transacting business with every branch. The proposals are on a scale expected to meet the expansion of the various activities of the General Post Office, Adelaide, for a considerable period of years. By that term, I should explain that it depends on what the expansion may be, but it is pretty clear that from fifteen to twenty years' requirements will be met if the work projected is carried out. The Minister said that the nature of the proposals are such that the outward appearance of the premises will be but slightly interfered with. They will consist in a large degree of providing extensive new areas of floor space behind the main street frontages, of a considerable height, constructed in modern manner, fireproof, perfectly lighted and ventilated, and with a minimum of structural obstruction to the operations intended to be carried on within the General Post Office buildings. That is to say, there will be no internal walls and obstructions of that character to take up necessary available working space. Inasmuch as it is not intended to interfere with the official use of the premises during structural alterations, the work must be carried on in sections, and in the aggregate, therefore, it will occupy several years. In that way expenditure upon the work will be spread over a number of years, covering several parliamentary financial periods. I think, personally, that

about four financial years will be encroached upon for the finding of the necessary money. It was intended to proceed with the work in 1917. Since then the necessary drawings and estimates have been in existence. Owing, however, to the financial situation progress had to be suspended until the present time, when the position is that the inconvenience experienced in these premises has become so considerable that the task of expansion must be put in hand. The estimated cost of the work in 1917 was about £66,866. Since that date building values have increased considerably owing to war conditions—rise in price of material, and in cost of labour. The Minister next explained to Parliament that between the date of his submitting his plans, and of this Committee meeting here, he would cause the original estimate to be thoroughly revised, with a view to submitting to this Committee a reliable estimate of the cost of the work at present date. Since the date of that submission by the Minister, we have had the original estimate of cost closely examined. The estimate of cost and all the plans were prepared by the South Australian Public Works Department. I might say that, since Federation, the State Government here has carried out all the Federal work—or practically the whole of it—undertaken in South Australia, under instructions by the Commonwealth Works Department. Speaking for myself, I have only good to say of the local work so carried out. The State Department has worked harmoniously with us. I have been a great deal in touch with the State officials concerned, and now that the Superintendent of Public Buildings (Mr. Owen Smyth) has retired, the Commonwealth authorities considered that the opportunity was favorable for the establishment of their own Works branch under a Commonwealth officer of the Works Department. A new branch has been recently instituted in Adelaide, and Mr. Todd, who was Works Director in Queensland, has been appointed to take up duties here. In this particular work which we are considering to-day we have the benefit of the whole of the preliminary operations having been undertaken by the South Australian Works Department, in addition, of course, to the assistance which we were able to render from Melbourne; and the whole is now embodied in the present plans, so that in that respect the proposition before the Committee is unusually complete. My own personal views are that it is a very good scheme. Mr. Todd was instructed, when he came to Adelaide a week or two ago, to go into present costs of this work, and he again was assisted by a Clerk of Works, attached to the Commonwealth Works Department, who has been here for some six months doing special work directly under the Commonwealth Department. The result of Mr. Todd's investigation into the estimate of cost I will now submit. The history of the estimate is that it was made in July, 1917, by the South Australian Works Department, and that estimate amounted to £79,171. This total, when it was placed before us in Melbourne, we considered higher than might have been expected. I personally thought it would have been a good deal less. I had a consultation with the Postmaster-General's departmental officials, and with the officers of the Works department here, and I proposed reductions in the scale of work to be done which would have meant a reduction amounting to £9,695. I also got Mr. Pritchard, one of our Clerks of Works, who was at that time working in South Australia, and thus had some first-hand knowledge of values of Adelaide building costs,

to go further into the estimate, and to give his views about the rates. He thought the rates were rather full, and he made out that a probable reduction in rates might be possible to the extent of £2,608. That brought the estimate finally down to £66,866. That was submitted in November, 1917, to the Postmaster-General's Department as the estimate of the Public Works Department for the work at that date. The reductions of estimate referred to included certain items which ordinarily ought to have come out of the Postmaster-General's vote, and not from the Works Department vote at all; so, obviously, those should come out of the estimate. The first item was that the estimate contained a provisional sum for diverting and maintaining telephone cables, £1,200. We took that out of the estimate. There was another small item of £377 connected with the operators' work and branches, and pits for telephone cables, which was also regarded as an item having to do with the Postmaster-General's Department. Then there was provision for altering electrical and pneumatic tube services in connexion with telegraph operator's room, involving a sum of £1,500, which was also the Postmaster-General's responsibility. To come to the items purely affecting the building, I suggested that we might omit one passenger lift, involving £1,800. I considered that one such lift, instead of two, would probably meet requirements, because Mr. Webster reduced the scheme in its initial sketch stage by the omission of one floor. That made it possible to do with one lift instead of two, in the meantime, however, making provision for installing the second lift when necessary. Then there was a provisional sum for contingencies totalling £1,500. I considered that £500 could come off that; it appeared to be too liberal altogether. Then, omission of provision for fire insurance was another item involving £175. It was considered that we might take that risk. As to that, however, I have rather changed my mind, and in the estimate which I am now placing before the Committee, I have restored the item. Then there was the matter of reduced area of window space. Window materials were very dear, and, in the proposed additions, I reckoned we were probably overdoing the matter of lighting. It is a good thing to have plenty of light of course, but it was evident that we could reduce the areas of windows, so I suggested saving over £400 on that item. Then I suggested substituting wooden window fittings for steel-frame windows in the top floor, except in the annexes, and that made a reduction of £127. A reduction in price of wood block flooring—the rates being rather high—was made, hence I reckoned we could save £288 on that line. Also a reduction in price of reinforced concrete work amounting to 10 per cent. involved the sum of £1,518. That is how the total of £9,000 was made up. Thus the estimate submitted by the Works Department to the Postmaster-General's Department on 10th November, 1917, was reduced to £66,866, and it was recommended to the Minister that that figure be submitted as the departmental estimate. It stood until a few weeks ago, when the submission to Parliament was given, and it was explained that the estimate would be revised. Mr. Todd and Mr. Pritchard have now revised the estimate in the light of present-day prices. The estimate is based upon that submitted in November, 1917, plus the item of insurance, and also plus the 10 per cent. which I had taken off the concrete item. The present estimate is made up in this way—cost, as per original schedule prepared by State Public Works Department, but at present day prices, £84,016, less reductions referred to amounting to £8,002. That makes a total of £76,014 as the final estimate submitted to the Committee to-day. I now submit this estimate in full detail. In submitting the revised estimate, Mr. Todd wrote a letter on the 3rd June last, in which he detailed the methods by which he had revised it. He gives a full comparative statement of costs of materials in 1917 and to-day, and also a comparative statement of the costs of all classes of labour

at that time and at present. I submit a specification of the work prepared by the Public Works Department, South Australia, in 1917, and I also submit a description of the work prepared by the State Public Works Department for the Committee in 1917. The plans before the Committee illustrate what is proposed. The area of the Government property occupied by the Post Office as distinct from the Telephone Exchange and from the vacant land behind the Telephone Exchange, has a frontage to King William-street on the east of about 210 feet, and to Franklin-street on the south of about 174 feet. The western boundary is occupied by the Telephone Exchange, and the northern boundary by a right-of-way which is about 15 feet wide for part of the distance, diminishing to a narrow pathway about 3 feet wide leading from that right-of-way into King William-street. Up to the present, the Post Office has not derived much advantage from the existence of that northern right-of-way, either of light or of access, but under the new scheme proposed it is suggested that use shall be made of the right-of-way for either incoming or outgoing vehicular traffic in connexion with the work of the mails. The narrowest part of the right-of-way cannot be widened. We could derive good light and good access from the wide portion, however. The vacant piece of land on the west side of the Telephone Exchange was acquired by the Commonwealth Government some years ago, the idea being that it might become useful in connexion with extending the Post Office. Another intention was that it would eventually carry a building to house all the Commonwealth Departments in Adelaide and so relieve the Government of the rents which are now being paid and amount to a considerable sum. It is well known to the Committee that the same condition obtains in all the capital cities. At present in Perth the difficulty has been partly overcome by the erection of the new Post Office, but in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane the item of rent is a very heavy consideration, and, if suitable Commonwealth buildings were erected, a very large sum of money would be annually saved. Before going into the project in detail, I wish to submit a few salient figures in connexion with the scheme. The Committee in course of its inspection yesterday saw that a good deal of actual floor area of rather an indifferent shape is proposed to be taken away. That floor area in the aggregate proposed to be removed to make way for the additions will amount to about 13,260 superficial feet. Under the additions—that is, the floor area that will be added to the premises by the proposed alterations, exclusive of the flat roof, and the staircases, and passages—there will be 33,625 square feet. The Committee saw how inadequate for its work is the present parcels post accommodation. It is being carried on in two sections—the Customs parcels in one building, and the general parcels in another. The parcels post branch is now using 9,290 square feet in the disjointed form which the Committee saw, while under the new scheme the parcels post section will have 14,560 square feet. For the letter mails, as distinct from parcels, at present they have 8,520 square feet in the bad form which the Committee saw—that is, badly lighted and badly shaped—while under the new proposal the officials concerned will have 13,110 square feet. For the telegraph receiving office, where the telegrams are received and the messenger boys are housed, the branch which was worst of all provided for, there is at present 1,170 square feet, while under the new scheme there will be 1,716 square feet. The Money Order office at present has a space available of 1,536 square feet, and it is now proposed to give it 3,000 square feet. The set of plans consisting of six drawings to which I now call the attention of the Committee, has been prepared entirely for the Committee to indicate the extent of work which will be required to be removed in connexion with the scheme. They are plans of the buildings as they now stand. The removals are considerable in extent, but it will be seen that the buildings and portions which are to

come down are not suitable for the work of the General Post Office. They are no longer modern in form, and they have poor lighting. Though these buildings will have to come down, practically the whole of the material will be capable of absorption in the new work. The age of the original Post Office building is about 50 years, while the age of that portion northward beyond the entrance lane from King William-street is about 30 years. Structurally speaking, they are both very fine buildings. This original building in which the Committee is now sitting is 50 years old, and beyond the fact that its arrangements are rather obsolete for present-day service, the structure has not deteriorated. For example, the wooden windows of this room are obviously practically as good to-day as 50 years ago. We have therefore a good structure on which to work in making our proposed extensive alterations. There is no reason to doubt but that in another 50 years this present building will still be standing and doing good service.

I will first deal with the ground floor—the main floor of the building. Upon entering the building from the King William-street frontage there is a big public hall. No structural alteration is proposed in this main hall, and very little minor alterations. On the left-hand side going in at present there is the stamp sales section. In order to make fuller use of the large space in the public hall, which is considered by some people to be too extravagant, it is proposed to erect what we term a kiosk for the sale of stamps. The telephone boxes at present in the public hall will be accommodated in the corners of the kiosk. The dimensions of this structure are 15 feet by 12 ft. 6 in. Somewhat similar arrangements exist in Perth at present. All these interior alterations can be made at once. The effect will be to free the present corner now occupied for stamp sales. The suggestion is to make use of this freed section for housing the dead letter department. I point out that it is one of the most valuable portions of the postal buildings, situated as it is in the south-eastern corner—that is to say on the corner of King William and Franklin streets. Proceeding along the left-hand side past the stamp sales section in the public hall, it is proposed to give up a space of 36 by 25 feet for registered letters. There the public will do all its registration business. This section is a function of the mail room. Behind the counter officials deal with all registered letters. There is a glass partition with a locked door cutting it off from the rest of the mail room altogether. At the same time there must be access of course. This does not quite afford the accommodation necessary for registration, and it is proposed to introduce a small lift and stair in the corner to get down to a space in the basement where portion of the work in connexion with the registration of letters will be carried on. The floor of that portion of the basement will be lowered 12 inches to provide better conditions for the employees. The very ugly invasion of the main hall by private-letter boxes was installed some years ago, owing to the absolute need for such accommodation. To improve the design of that portion, so that it shall conform architecturally with the rest of the hall, it is proposed to remove those private-letter boxes and to instal in their place the section devoted to the delivery of letters addressed to the Post Office. I am now referring to the western end of the main hall. The present demand for private boxes is now fully supplied. The private boxes are to be taken from their present site on the western end altogether. On the northern side of the main hall—that is to say, on the right-hand side entering by the main doors from King William-street—there is to be provision for posting slips and for bulk postage. The private letter-boxes are proposed to be removed to a corridor joining the main public hall with the new entrance which is to be created on the site where the present vehicular entrance from King William-street is. That is to say, the private letter-boxes will face into the new telegraph section. Thus, the new mail room proposed will directly become a base to all the positions at which the public will be served. I consider

that a great principle in the construction of a post office building. The public are served at one point, and behind that point the working base should be established. A leakage occurs if there is much distance between the point at which the public is served and where work is done connected with the Postal branch involved. On the ground floor, the important alterations proposed occur on the northern side, on the area now occupied by portion of the building erected in 1891. A large portion of it will have to be removed to make room for the extensions. At present, dividing the old building from the later structure, there is a vehicular lane from King William-street, where the mail traffic enters and passes out into Franklin-street on the south side of the Post Office site. It is considered no longer economical to utilize that space as a road-way, so the expedient suggested is that the road-way shall be closed altogether, and the land which it occupies covered with building. We suggest that a second main entrance into the main public hall shall be created at the spot where the vehicular entrance from King William-street now is. Coming to the proposed new entrance, on the right we suggest giving up the whole area at present occupied by the Money Order branch, and by the Telegraph Receiving branch, to one chamber, and devoting it entirely to the Money Order branch. It will provide magnificent accommodation to the public, and a splendid base for carrying on the money order business from behind the public counter. At present the money order business is conducted far away from the counter in small and very inconvenient rooms. Behind the new money order chamber there will be three strongrooms, and a store for forms, stationery, and the like. On the left-hand side of the new entrance, we propose to place the Telegraph Receiving office. It will have the usual counter, writing slopes, and telephone-boxes, and trunk-line telephone-boxes, and it will be open night and day all the year round. It was considered desirable to so arrange the new private boxes that they would be in full view of the officers in daily and nightly charge of the telegraph receivers. Thus there will be no such thing as forcing of boxes, stealing of letters, &c. For the private-boxes will be always under observation, and will create in Adelaide a privilege that all box-holders shall have access to them night and day. The Telegraph Office will become a very fine chamber, and will afford urgent relief. Continuing from the main entrance we enter a vestibule. At its far end the messengers and the inquiry counter will be placed. To the left will be a staircase giving access from the basement to the top of the new proposed building. Opposite the staircase, we propose putting in two lifts. Beyond the lifts, we come to a door giving access to the Superintendent of the Mails branch. He will be cut off from the mail room by a glass partition. From that glass partition he will have command of the whole area under his charge. The lighting will be fairly good. I will now deal with that part of the mail room abutting on the new roadway. Now we have closed the King William-street access for vehicles, so we must find another entrance. It is proposed to overcome that by opening out a gateway into the roadway on the north of the Post Office. That will enable vehicular traffic to come in either from the south or from the north. The width of the passageway from wall to wall is 24 feet, and from the edge of the platform to be placed along the building, to the opposite wall, will be 17 ft. 6 in. The width of the platform, which will be covered, will be 7 feet. On the western side of the Mail branch we propose to put a second stair, to be used particularly by the staff going from the basement right to the top, and off that stair, all the way up, will be a series of latrines thoroughly well lighted and ventilated. In regard to the main staircase in front, I should say that adjoining it there will also be a series of latrines running all the way up from bottom to top. The accommodation in this regard, on one floor, will be given up to women in each case. The proposed accommodation is very liberal provision. It will all be

quite private. Nothing in the nature of lavatory, cloak-rooms, or any other kind of accommodation will be seen upon opening outer doors. The south-eastern corner of the main floor, I might add, might be a splendid site for the housing of a Commonwealth Savings Bank branch. I refer to that portion at present occupied by the Dead Letter branch and the Stamp Sales section. It would be quite feasible to join those two portions if this corner of the General Post Office were to be given over to some other branch of Commonwealth activities. The Post Office tower, on the south-eastern corner, could be given access to from an upper floor of the building. Of course, there is this point to be considered, that post office officials do not favour the idea of other branches of the Commonwealth Service being housed within postal buildings, but from the point of view of public interest that view does not hold good. I will now proceed to describe the basement floor. All the workshops will have to go. When we come into the main entrance on the ground floor, people wishing to do business with the Parcels Office go through to the main staircase, and come down into a hall in which there are two counters, one for general parcels business, and one for Customs parcels, which latter branch is controlled by Customs officials. The whole of the area extending from the northern wall of the present building right over as far as the lane on the northern boundary is to be occupied by the Parcels Post. There will be wall lighting from the western and northern sides, and for the central area there will be lighting from the glass roof. In the basement, secretly placed from the staircase, is to be provided a detective's room, and off that room a secret staircase will go directly up through the floor until it joins a system of detective galleries provided on the main floor. That is, from the detective's room one can come up a winding stair and enter a detective gallery extending along the western wall across the mail room and along the northern wall of the present building, and at the same time joining up with the detective gallery in the present mail room which is now in existence. This will not be altered, but will be joined up to the new gallery. Regarding the Parcels department, the parcels themselves will be shot down an inclined chute from the platform outside, and will be elevated by means of one large goods lift having an area of 10 feet by 8 feet. At the north-west corner of the basement area, it is proposed to wire off a space as a boiler house for heating the building. It is proposed to introduce a low-pressure hot water system of heating, and if a vacuum cleaning apparatus is to be installed, it will also be placed within that area. To the basement under the original building it is proposed to provide a ramp access from the new road on the ground level. The idea of the ramp is to allow the telegraph boys to come down with their bicycles, and also, if necessary, the mail sorters with their bicycles. The first room will be a large bicycle room, and there will be a large room for telegraph boys, and further provision for bicycles also underneath the present building. I have already dealt with a portion of this basement, under the Registration branch, which portion will be given up entirely to that section. The whole of the other rooms, which now are badly lighted, it is proposed to give over to the storage of records, bags, and the accumulation of articles incidental to the General Post Office. For valuable parcels, a large strong-room has been provided. There is also a strong-room for registered parcels on the south wall. Dealing with the first floor, beyond making alterations where the women's lavatories are—we propose taking that away—and taking down a partition which temporarily makes a men's cloak room, we propose nothing new on the south side. On the east side we propose to remove three walls and the staircase, and to make a large room for records and correspondence. That will be in direct touch with the office of the Deputy Postmaster-General and the Senior Inspector, and thus all the records and correspondence will be in one huge room 81 feet by 27 feet. The telegraph operating room on the

first floor will remain as it is, although we propose to improve the lighting. The windows are rather small now, and even on a bright day on the south side of the room the officials have to use artificial lighting. It is 35 feet wide, and has small windows on the north side; so that from them the light does not carry across. We are taking out the north wall of the mail room on the ground floor, and we though it just as well to take it out on the first floor also and put up slender supports, and so get practically a glass side to the operators' room. The front part of the 1891 extension facing King William-street will be left untouched, except that instead of having four rooms, we propose to take down partitions and make two large working rooms for the inspectors. The first floor of the new fireproof building to be erected is proposed to be given up to the Accountant's branch. It will give a new floor 98 feet by 63 feet. In coming up the stairway, we come to this new level in two flights, and then we go up one other flight to reach the level of existing first floor. The old building level is 23 ft. 3 in., and the new level will be 16 feet in height. The annexe on the first floor—the north-western corner—is occupied at present by mechanics, and they will be left there. On the second floor we leave altogether the old building. All the accommodation on this floor is what we propose to create in the new fireproof addition. It consists of the two staircases, the lifts—one at the back and two at the front—the messengers' box, as on the floor below, and the front group of lavatories, and the back group of lavatories. The area will be the same as below, namely, 98 feet by 63 feet, and its height will be 14 feet; and it is intended to be devoted to the Electrical Engineer's staff, draughtsmen, and clerks, and others. The third floor is proposed to be devoted to the institute—a semi-educational and semi-social institution such as has been introduced in Melbourne. I understand that the institution is appreciated in Melbourne, and it is proposed to introduce it on a proportionate scale in Perth and in Adelaide, and in the scheme under consideration in Sydney it is also proposed. The Melbourne institution is about three times the size of the space to be devoted to the same purpose here. On the top floor is the flat roof—it is not proposed to occupy its whole area, but to create a roof garden, and, surrounding it, to have women's retiring room, women's sick room, dining room, kitchen, sculleries, and stores, and men's dining room and reading room, and lifts, stairs, and latrines.

2. *To Senator Needham.*—The question of policy in construction has not yet been considered, but for this particular work I have somewhat settled views. It should be primarily a day-labour job. The main work should be so carried out, and contracts let for much of the subsidiary work. Contracts could be let for the supply of all material, joinery, steel windows, all fittings, &c.; but seeing that the work is involved to this extent, namely, that we must keep the Post Office departments in occupation of the building during the alterations, and in view of the fact that the old material very largely enters into the matter of reconstruction, and that there is a lot of connecting up between the new and the old, requiring little jobs to be done here and there at odd times, I would therefore much prefer to see this primarily a day-labour job. Contracts could be let for such things as I have just mentioned, including plumbing and the heating installation. It would save money for the work to be done departmentally, and would be most convenient for the purpose of carrying on the activities of the sections of the General Post Office. The difficulty of carrying out these alterations and additions is rather aggravated by the fact that the postal activities must be carried on uninterruptedly throughout. In 1916 a letter from the Postmaster-General's Department inquired in what sequence our Department considered this work should be proceeded with, and the following reply was despatched:—

In reply to your memorandum of the 21st ultimo, relative to proceeding at an early date with the work of additions and alterations to the General Post Office building, Adelaide, I have to inform you

that the general working drawings and bills of quantities are far enough advanced to permit of the work being begun by day labour at any time. Before that can be done, however, there are several preliminary steps to be considered.

Parliament will doubtless refer the scheme for report by the Standing Committee on Public Works, whose investigations will incidentally extend to the means proposed for carrying on the work of the branches of the Postmaster-General's Department, which will be disturbed during progress of the work.

In order that the works may be carried on with a minimum of inconvenience to the Postal service, they will have to be undertaken in well-considered stages on a definite programme, probably on lines somewhat as follows:—

- (1) Prepare the new vehicular court yard from Franklin-street to the lane behind, together with loading platform and entrances to existing mail room (this will be necessary before any work is done which would interfere with the vehicular entrance from King William-street).
- (2) Demolition of the two existing brick wings to make way for the new main extension could then be begun, but temporary provision will be necessary to carry on the services which will be disturbed, chiefly Parcels Post and Money Order. It will probably be difficult to find conveniently-situated premises for this, and a possible way out of the trouble might be to erect a frame building on the adjoining allotment of standard drill-hall type, which could be specially constructed for easy removal to another site for Defence purposes. If this course is decided upon, the erection of the building should be begun simultaneously with the work under para. (1).
- (3) The main fireproof concrete extension could then be begun, together with the front and back staircase and latrine annexes, and carried on without interference with the Public Telegraph Office.
- (4) When the new main stair is available, the existing stair within the area of the new Public Telegraph Chamber could be taken away, and that chamber prepared for occupation by the Telegraph Receiving branch.
- (5) The new Money Order Public Chamber could then be prepared for the return of that branch to the main building.
- (6) Removal of the existing side wall of the mail rooms to admit of their extension into the new wing could then be undertaken, and the alterations within the present mail room effected.

The above programme is, of course, subject to fuller consideration than has so far been possible, but it will be realized that this is a work which will have to be carefully executed piece by piece in order to maintain reasonable convenience for the public and the staff in carrying on the service.

It is suggested that the views of your local officers, relative to procedure generally, and particularly to the temporary accommodation which may be necessary to provide, or may be conveniently available, might be obtained.

With respect to the proposed erection of the standard drill-hall type of building on the adjoining allotment, the Money Order and Parcels Post sections could be temporarily housed there, and the frame building could subsequently be removed for use as a typical drill hall in some place or other. Roughly, the cost for one building would be £2,000, and there would probably be 60 per cent. of that saved when the building came to be removed. A second building of smaller size might even be necessary. I do not think there would be any municipal objection to such an erection of a temporary character. As a matter of fact, the municipal authorities have no jurisdiction over either the State or the Commonwealth authority, but so far as we are concerned, we always observe the municipal by-laws. I point out that that letter was written in November of 1916, and I have no reason now to modify the views then expressed. One of the matters to be considered in connexion with the scheme of putting up a drill-hall type of building is how to temporarily accommodate those sections which must be disturbed. If the Money Order and Parcels Post sections and portion of the staff of electrical engineers were to be accommodated as I have suggested, the trouble would be got over. When this letter was written there was another rather important consideration incidental to the matter. At that time there was an idea to construct new workshops on West Terrace on the site containing the postal stores. At the time of writing this document it was supposed that these workshops would have been completed before the big job at the General Post Office had been begun. These West Terrace works have been affected, however, by the question of finance, and have not yet been proceeded with.

This year our Department has been asked to earmark the sum of £6,000 for the erection of these workshops. Originally they were supposed to cost about £5,000, but since I made the plans, four or five years ago, I understand that the Post Office officials desire more extensive premises. They have not disclosed their views, however, beyond asking us to put £6,000 on the Estimates either for the whole work or enough to begin it. In the event of this main work going on it is highly desirable that the West Terrace job should proceed. I do not think there would be any hope of getting temporary accommodation on lease anywhere in the vicinity of the Post Office, so I can see no way but to build a temporary structure of the drill hall type. We could absolutely promise that it would be of a temporary nature. I hope that the Government in the next few years will utilize this available land adjoining for the erection of a good class of economical office building to house all the Commonwealth offices in Adelaide. I made a rough scheme with that end in view some time ago, but nothing has come of it. I think that the Post Office officials have never replied to our Departmental letter of 23rd November, 1916.

3. *To the Chairman.*—We do not propose to make any provision for workshops within this building. They will be entirely removed to West Terrace. I do not approve of their being here at all. In deciding on the plans with respect to the top floor and, in fact, throughout the General Post Office, we have made no provision for caretaker's quarters. The same applies to General Post Office buildings throughout Australia. The top floor of the Adelaide buildings as at present planned would be quite suitable, however, for the accommodation of a caretaker if deemed necessary. With respect to the contract system of doing the work, I think a large proportion of it can be done under sub-contract. I think the economical procedure would be to do the work by day labour, with a series of sub-contracts. Work of this character has distinct characteristics which complicate matters. If a contract were let for the whole job difficulties might easily be created which would entail additional expense and probable delay. The expeditious way would be to carry it out as I have stated. I think the whole work will take, from its beginning to the completion, about four years, and it may be necessary for Parliament to find for this purpose a sum of about £20,000 per annum during that period. The foundations of the new six-storey building will be of concrete. The whole site covered by the alterations and additions will be thoroughly drained by means of open agricultural drains for both external and internal seepage water, all laid with proper falls to necessary sediment pits, and finally led into a brick steined soakage well taken right down through the blue lias clay to the gravel. The supporting stanchions of the new building will be spread out to provide about 72½ super. feet of resistance to the ground. That is calculated to carry a load, if it should be necessary, of two further stories; that is to say, if the additions should ever be required either for the Postmaster-General's Department, or for any other Commonwealth activity. I emphasize that we are making provision in our foundations—calculations of supports, &c.—to carry two further floors. The plan which I originally made and submitted to the Postmaster-General's Department provided for one other floor, and I thought that would be a complete scheme; but Mr. Webster looked over the building and took out one floor, so that the scheme is now one floor less than I had in my original sketch. In going on with these complete drawings, seeing that it costs so very little more to increase the area of the supports and the resisting area of the foundations, I thought it a very good thing to provide for two additional floors in case of such further accommodation being wanted. As to whether the original building—that is, the 50-year old portion in which we are now—would carry further stories if necessary, I should say that there would not be any danger. In fact, I went into a scheme of putting a storey on to this

present portion before taking up the present scheme. An eventual scheme may be decided upon to place on top of these new additions probably two more stories, and possibly another story over the whole of this old building. The architectural structure of the building could stand those additions. Respecting the point whether the new additions will affect the architectural lines of the present building, I point out that they will scarcely be seen from the street frontages; but if we were to go up another two floors the new structure within the old certainly would be very obvious. These, however, are defects which must be expected, and incidental to any city expansion. But the height to which we are proposing to go now will not render the work inharmonious with the present external features. I do not think that the average man, viewing the additions from the other side of the street, would connect them with the General Post Office at all, but would regard them as an independent building. I would not now suggest building two floors more, but I would like to see one floor more.

4. *To Mr. Bamford.*—I am of opinion that the alterations now proposed will be sufficient to carry the business of the General Post Office for about fifteen years. This has never been a suitable building. The additions and improvements will be much in advance of present possibilities. One could scarcely make a comparison of to-day's business with what may be carried on fifteen years hence.

5. *To the Chairman.*—If other branches of Commonwealth activities were carried on upon the suggested additional floors, quite ample facilities for the public coming into contact with those independent departments would be afforded by the lift and stairway accommodation at present planned. There could be no cheaper way of affording accommodation for various Commonwealth departments than by adding one further story now. I could give the Committee an estimate of cost for one extra floor and for two extra floors to be erected on the new proposed building, with its floor area of 98 feet by 63 feet. When the proposals were formulated by the Post Office Department estimates were roughly made showing the increased volume of work in Adelaide. The idea was that the additions would be sufficient for twenty years. I understand that in ten years past the staff of the General Post Office has increased 62 per cent. and revenue 76 per cent. Even in the light of those figures, and calculating that the volume of business will continue to increase proportionately throughout the next fifteen to twenty years, I still think that the proposed additions and alterations will be sufficient. The improved form of the building in which operations will be carried on will admit of a greater proportion of expansion than if the building were to remain of inconvenient form such as it now is. But even if the Post Office does so expand, and the ground floor will afford no longer sufficient room for the mail work, it can be taken up on to the first floor. Even in our newest Post Office building, namely that at Perth, the mail work will be done on the first floor. With modern elevators there is no reason why the mail work should not go upwards.

6. *To Senator Newland.*—In making our calculations regarding the capacity of the additions for future operations the Deputy Postmaster-General and the Postal Inspector, who was put on the work from Melbourne, namely, Mr. Woodrow, whom Mr. Webster sent over to Adelaide to go into the matter, were both in consultation with our Department. I feel pretty safe in saying that, from the figures supplied, we will be providing Adelaide with requisite accommodation for something like twenty years. I point out that the Postmaster-General's Department is still carrying on in these inadequate buildings, but at the same time there is possibly a good deal of economic leakage occurring. When the extensions to the present 50-year-old building were erected in 1891, nobody dreamed that there would have been such an expansion of postal business by this date. Since

Federation, postal activities have increased more than 100 per cent., and yet the Adelaide business is being carried on in the same old building, so I really think we can carry on to the extent of another 100 per cent. of business easily in accommodation as planned. In drawing our plans and making our calculations, we have not considered any further extension than the additional two floors to which I have referred, although I think that in the very distant future there may be still another floor, or even two floors, put around this present old building. That would not spoil the architectural effect, in my opinion. If necessary, the tower could be heightened or taken away altogether. Works of ornamental character such as that are not gone in for nowadays. The Federal Government have not built a tower to any public building. I have not considered the matter of extension behind the Telephone Exchange on the vacant land. I think the land on which the General Post Office buildings are at present situated is sufficient for all requirements of Adelaide for a very great period to come. I am not aware of the price paid for the vacant land. I do not see that any disadvantage can follow from the removal of the workshops from this building altogether. The site proposed for the workshops is alongside the postal stores. The workshops are closely related to the Stores branch. All items coming in for repairs, I understand, go first to the stores, then to the repair shops, and then back to the stores for distribution. Thus, the two branches should be together. There is plenty of room on the West-terrace site for the workshops as well as the stores, so that the buildings should be adjoining. The purpose of lowering the floor of the basement is to provide more head space, and thus insure greater comfort and consideration of health for the employees. Over the area to be utilized for parcel post work and for the sorting of the registered mail this alteration will apply. That will be two-thirds of the whole of the basement floor. The present height of the basement is 8 ft. 5 in. and the new height will be 11 ft. 6 in. Concerning the question of housing other Commonwealth activities upon the suggested additional two floors, I do not say that those additional floors would be adequate to house the whole of the Commonwealth Departments in Adelaide, but they would be sufficient for a fair portion, and would provide cheaper housing than in any other possible way. Seeing that we have the site, foundations and supports, we could introduce new accommodation under a scheme such as this more cheaply than in any other possible form. If such Departments as Old-age Pensions and Taxation were transferred to one of the new suggested stories above the accommodation shown on the plans, the present means of access would be quite sufficient for the public, and, moreover, would be quite independent of postal activities. The proposed staircases and lifts would be adequate for all Departments—that of the Postmaster-General included. I have said that I would favour the construction work being carried on by day labour, with sub-contracts which would cover possibly about two-thirds of the value of the whole job. The removal of walls and erection of other walls should be departmental work in order that we might meet the convenience of carrying on the various branches. If we were to let this work to contract it might lead to difficulties and delays and claims for extras, involving arbitration cases, &c.

7. *To Mr. Parker Moloney.*—With regard to the possible ultimate extension of the General Post Office, Adelaide, I am of opinion that the form of expansion which would follow after the alterations and additions as now planned would be by putting two stories on to the old original portion of the building. That is why I say that the area of land at present occupied by the General Post Office will probably be sufficient for anything we can contemplate. Mr. Todd's estimate of £76,014 was based on the principle of day labour. I agree with Mr. Todd that day labour would be the best means of carrying on the work.

8. *To Senator Needham.*—I was in indirect charge of remodelling the old Post Office in Melbourne. The main hall in Adelaide could be remodelled upon a similar pattern, but only at a very large cost. The hall in the Melbourne building has existed for the last 40 or 50 years. I am of opinion that the alterations as proposed will give as much accommodation to the public as if the main hall here were remodelled on the lines of the Melbourne building. If it were considered necessary to remodel this hall on the Melbourne scheme it would involve a considerable addition in cost. For example, we would have to pull down walls to make room for counters, and I do not think that would be justified. In the matter of the proposed lift accommodation for this building, the size of the electrically-driven, fast-travelling passenger lifts will be 6 feet by 5 feet. There will be two of these in the front. The back lift for the staff will be 6 feet by 6 feet, and the mail lift will be 10 feet by 8 feet. In the passenger lifts there will be accommodation for eight or nine people at a time, and that will be sufficient capacity. As to the mail lift, if it is designed to carry 15 cwt. to 1 ton, that should be quite sufficient.

9. *To Mr. Atkinson.*—I am asked whether the Telegraph office, even as proposed to be altered, will give sufficient room. The reason for almost doubling the Money Order floor space is that behind the counter of the present Money Order office there is a good deal of space which is not useful for working in at all. The actual working base is far removed from the employees who come into contact with the public. A proportion of those employees will have their work transferred to a base immediately behind the public counters. That area will be so large that a large staff of clerks can be working there, and the remainder of the staff will be in the Accounts branch, since the Money Order section is part of the Accounts branch. The Accounts branch proper will be on the first floor—that is, the floor immediately above the Money Order section. That is the reason for the big expansion in the floor area of the Money Order branch. At present all the telegraph messenger boys are concentrated, and their bicycles are placed right behind the counter. Now, those lads and their cycles will be removed to the basement. There will be tubular connexion between the two branches of the Telegraph Department. So I think the telegraph space as suggested will be really good. It is an ideal arrangement. I feel satisfied that our proposals are the most economical and efficient possible. I think the best lines have been adopted; it has been a subject of considerable thought. This is not the only scheme which has been studied.

10. *To Mr. Mathews.*—I have heard of no objection being taken in Adelaide on the ground that the alterations will harm the architectural effect of the building. As to the question of the health of the employees who will work in the basement, I have pointed out that the floor is to be lowered about 3 feet over the greater portion of the basement space. The basement will be mechanically ventilated, and there should be no harm or inconvenience in that regard. The portion of the basement which smelt so musty in the course of our examination of the building will not be regularly occupied by employees, but will be devoted solely to storage. Regarding the proposal to make arrangements for the installation of two lifts in the front of the building, but to install only one at present, I think the one will be sufficient for the proposed number of floors; but if the number of floors should be increased the two front lifts should be installed. As I say, the necessary provision to that end has been made. I do not think that when the stamps sales kiosk has been erected in the main hall it will cramp the hall for the conduct of public business generally. I think the whole proposal will prove just as convenient an arrangement as that in Melbourne, and vastly more convenient from the working stand-point. Here all the working staffs will be right behind the various counters. In Melbourne the working staffs are planted away down at the corner of Spencer-street.

11. *To Mr. Bamford.*—Before coming to the conclusion that the new work as proposed was the best possible solution of Adelaide's General Post Office problem, I exhausted every suggestion and opinion.

12. *To Senator Newland.*—In the matter of construction of supports for the main building and for the floors, concrete pillars are to be constructed on the beam principle. The floors will be of reinforced concrete, covered with jarrah blocks, just the same as the floors of the Spencer-street building, in Melbourne.

13. *To Senator Needham.*—Attention has been called to the dampness of the atmosphere in the testing room, and it has been suggested that it may interfere with the accuracy of the tests. The matter need not be further considered, for the reason that that work will be removed from its present site to the third floor.

(Taken at Adelaide.)

MONDAY, 14TH JUNE, 1920.

Present:

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman;

Senator Henderson,
Senator Needham,
Senator Newland,
Mr. Atkinson,

Mr. Bamford,
Mr. Mathews,
Mr. Parker Moloney.

Alfred Edward Simpson, Acting Superintendent of Public Buildings, South Australia, sworn and examined.

14. *To the Chairman.*—I was connected with the State Public Works Department when the plan for the proposed additions and alterations to the General Post Office, Adelaide, were prepared. I controlled the preparation of the drawings and worked on them myself, with assistance. That is, from the State side. The original estimates were prepared by my Department in July, 1917. The plans were prepared after due collaboration with officials of the Postal Department. There has been a considerable increase in cost both of labour and material since the preparation of the estimates. The increase has amounted, on the average, to 20 per cent., depending largely upon the amount of material being used. The costs of the principal materials, such as bricks and cement, still show a tendency to harden. There are two local cement producing companies. The price of cement to the Government is 17s. 6d. per cask, and to contractors 24s. 9d. per cask. The price of bricks delivered at the General Post Office would be—sandstocks, insides, 77s. 6d.; outsides, 82s. 6d.; best, 86s. There was another story in the original sketch, but it was cut out by Postmaster-General, Mr. Webster. We provided for an additional story to house the telegraph operators. In my opinion, the only thing about the plans which might be altered in any way is that I would like to see the telegraph operating room within the fireproof building. I would like to have seen Mr. Murdoch's original suggestion embodied in the scheme. When spending a lot of money in altering the building it would be wise to minimize the risk of fire in respect of the telegraph operators and their costly instruments. All that would be necessary would be to put another floor on the reinforced concrete building. I do not think there is any municipal limit to the height of building constructions in Adelaide. We are not governed by the Local Building Act, but we work in conformity with local regulations. I am asked whether in connexion with water supply, and for the purpose of fire protection the authorities fix any standard of height. For buildings of 100 feet and over we always supply tanks to meet the possibility of drought and low pressure. We could get water without any difficulty to the top of this building, as proposed,

together with its suggested additional story. There would be no objection, I feel sure, to the addition of one or two stories, from that aspect. In the future we will be even more safe in the matter of water supply and pressure for fire purposes, when the water from the new Millbrook reservoir is available. I tender the following description of the proposed additions and alterations to the General Post Office, which description was written by me in 1917, when the sketch, plans, &c., were forwarded to Melbourne:—

The lay-out of the Post Office Building proper, as will obtain after the proposed additions and alterations are completed, is shown on the set of Drawings marked "A" and numbered 1 to 14.

The set of Drawings marked "B" is included to show the plan of the existing buildings; those portions of same that require to be demolished or interfered with are clearly indicated by means of "red" colour; the Drawings comprising this second set marked "B" are numbered 1 to 6.

A *Tentative General Specification* of building operations forms the second portion of this description; in it the works are dealt with according to their location. This specification is liable to revision at a later date—when the final specification is written after the general scheme has been approved—both as regards the nature and dimensions of the proposed materials.

A *Scheduled Statement of Approximate Quantities and Costs* is also provided. It is pointed out for the information of the Standing Committee that, although every care has been exercised to arrive at a correct estimate, latitude must be allowed, owing to the great difficulty which is now being experienced of arriving at the values of materials and labour, because of war conditions.

These war conditions make the question of the actual supply and cost of labour and material, even at the present time, a matter of great uncertainty. This difficulty is most strongly applicable to such works as are now proposed, for the following reasons:—

There is no time at present fixed for the start of building operations, and the progress of the works must necessarily be retarded, due to the fact that great care will require to be exercised so that a minimum of interference with the efficient working of the Postal services will take place.

It is to be understood that the order in which building operations will be carried out is as determined at a Conference in Adelaide of Postal and Works Representatives during January of this year, and in accordance with the Home Affairs memorandum to the Secretary, Postmaster-General's Department, Melbourne, dated 23rd November, 1916.

The attached estimate is based on the present market prices of materials and labour—and even this basis is not stable—as the current values fluctuate from day to day.

The actual cost will, therefore, be determined by the conditions obtaining at the time the various sections of the work are executed.

The scheme as drawn and estimated for is essentially a constructional elaboration of the scheme arrived at in outline at a joint conference of officials of the Postmaster-General's and Federal Works Departments, which Conference was held in Adelaide during 1916, at the instigation of the Ministers concerned, and the resultant scheme was at the time approved of by the Postmaster-General.

In *General Terms*. The proposed scheme is a comprehensive one, and is designed to provide accommodation for many years to come for the expansion of the various Postal and Telegraph services located in the building, and is considered to be a satisfactory solution of an exceedingly difficult problem, viz., that of modernizing buildings, the erection of which started as far back as 1868, with additions at subsequent dates, all of which buildings were designed, at the time of erection, to meet the requirements of the Postal services as they then existed.

The radical alteration in Postal methods now in vogue from those which formerly obtained, called for an equally radical reconstruction and rearrangement of the premises to meet modern methods and equipment.

It is proposed to close the driving-way from King William-street, and to divert all vehicular traffic to the driving-way which has its present approach from Franklin-street; at the same time to open up a new outlet for vehicles to the north through the existing buildings which are erected against the northern boundary of the Post Office land.

By this means a straight-through roadway will be obtained, allowing vehicles to enter from Franklin-street, proceed along the back of the Post Office building proper, serve the mail platforms which are situated immediately to the rear of the Mail Rooms, and finally debouch on to the right-of-way which runs along the northern boundary of the Post Office land.

The present roadway is to be taken up, and a new one laid down to fresh grades. When breaking through for this new roadway care has been taken to get the maximum width of throatway obtainable at the northern end—at which point it is proposed to erect large collapsible gates.

The traffic is to be controlled—a definite direction of entrance and exit insisted upon—and all delivery or collection of mail matter in bulk will be done within the precincts of the Post Office land.

The land retrieved by the closing of the King William-street driving-way has been utilized as a site for the two service annexes

in connexion with the new reinforced cement concrete building, as a means to extend the Mail Room floors, on both ground and basement floor levels, right out to the northern boundary, and also to obtain a second public entrance from King William-street.

The Post Office buildings affected by the proposed scheme of alterations and additions may be roughly divided into two parts.

The first part, or main building (on the south side of the King William-street driving-way), was erected in 1868, and the second part, or additions block (situated on the north side of the said driving-way), was erected in 1891.

It is proposed to demolish the back portion of this 1891 additions block to the extent shown on plans (more particularly on Drawings set "B"), and in its place to erect a modern six-storey structure of reinforced concrete, together with necessary service annexes to contain electric lifts, staircases, lavatory, cleaners' room, &c.

It is further proposed to pull down the northern wall of the main building abutting on to the present driving-way from King William-street between the service annexes of the new concrete building (right up from foundations to roof), and in lieu thereof to erect concrete encased steel stanchion and beam framework, open as regards the basement and ground floor, and filled in on the first floor with steel-framed windows.

The whole of the dividing walls of basement rooms immediately under the northern portion of the present Mail Room to be pulled out.

The present staircase annexe—which now stands attached to the main building in the existing driving-way from King William-street, also the lavatory room on first floor, which has been formed between this staircase annexe and the 1891 additions, have been dismantled to make way for the front annexe of the concrete block. It is also proposed to take out the wooden staircase which is now placed near this location. By the removal of this last-mentioned feature more office floor space will be obtained.

The remainder of the present driving-way from King William-street (other than that to be occupied by the service annexes of new concrete building) is to be converted wholly into Mail Room floor space, on both the ground and basement floors, by being covered over by means of a steel framed glass roof, at approximately the ground floor ceiling level of the new concrete building.

By means of this opening out of the northern wall of the present main building and the covering over of the whole of this central light court with a glass roof, it is possible to obtain Mail room floor areas (on both the ground floor and basement levels) extending from the northern wall of the large Public Hall in main building right out to the extreme northern boundary of the Post Office land, and of the width east and west equal to the length of the present Mail room. These large floor areas will be free from obstruction, except the necessary steel or concrete constructional stanchions.

The removal of the northern wall of the present Mail room and Telegraph Operators' room to the extent indicated will give better light to the Telegraph Operators' room, which is at present, and will continue to be, located on the first floor of the main building immediately over the present Mail room, and do away with much heavy constructional work consequent upon attempting to carry the heavy bluestone walling of the Telegraph Operators' room on the first floor.

A large light well will be formed in the floor of the Mail room at ground-floor level, and being situated immediately under the glass roof will give a flood of light to the basement Mail room under.

New and remodelled entrances and exits for mail matter in bulk will be formed along the western (or back) walls on the ground-floor level, with new delivery platforms at the ground-floor level where required; these platforms to be protected from the weather by means of suspended roofs, with glass lights at intervals as shown.

Many changes to promote more efficient working of the Mail branch will then be capable of being effected. It is proposed to utilize the whole of the ground floor apportioned to the Mail branch for all mail work other than parcels post and Customs parcels post; these latter will be accommodated in the basement.

Roughly outlined, the Mail branch will be located as follows:—

On the ground floor. Posting slip openings and opening for the receipt of city bulk postage will be formed in the northern wall of the present large public hall. Bulk mail matter from all outside sources will be received through the remodelled entrance doors in the western wall of the present Mail room. Incoming mail matter can thus be at once delivered on to the sorting tables, thence into the primary sorting divisions, and working naturally to the north will pass to the floor areas reserved for ship and inland mail operation situated in the new concrete building, and when bagged and ready will be despatched through the exit doors on the west side of the new structure. Mail operations will thus be positioned to follow on each other in the natural sequence necessary for efficiency.

The Registered Letter branch now located in the eastern end of the present Mail room on the ground floor and also in a room in the basement directly under same is to be removed to the south-western corner of the present main building, in two rooms, one over the other, on ground floor and basement. By this means better accommodation will be provided, with equal facilities of approach by the public from the main hall, a direct private stairway from basement to ground floor will be erected, and a new Registered Letter branch strong-room provided in the basement immediately under the Franklin-street entrance.

The site vacated by the Registered Letter branch on the ground floor will be fitted up to accommodate the private boxes a maximum amount

of accommodation being obtained. The walls of the public corridor running along the east side of this location are to be opened out as indicated on plans and sections to give easy access by the public, and by means of the provision of Bostwick gates at each end of the before-mentioned corridor it will be possible for the telegraph officials in attendance to control the public access after general closing hours.

The Letter Carriers' branch, now situated in one of the rooms in basement immediately under the present Mail room, is to be housed in the western end of the present Mail room on ground floor, immediately behind the main public hall. This will bring the carriers closely in touch with the new Mail room proper, in close proximity to the primary sorting tables, and with direct and speedy entrance and exit to the Franklin-street driving-way; any communication required with the Private-box section to be done by means of a pneumatic carrier service.

It will be seen that the letter carriers are also in juxtaposition with the *poste restante* branch, which latter is to be housed in a new specially designed structure at the western end of the main public hall on the old location of the private-boxes.

For public convenience in the matter of purchase of stamps and telephoning, a new kiosk is to be erected in the centre of main hall.

The office of the Superintendent of Mails is placed in the new concrete building, with direct access for the public from the new entrance from King William-street, and directly in touch with the Mail branch operations on the ground floor.

NOTE.—In this connexion that a service stairway is shown, close to the Superintendent's office, giving ready access to the basement Mail branch floor.

In order to overlook the working operations of the Mail branch on both ground and basement floors, an extensive detective gallery has been designed, the extent and position of which is clearly shown on the drawings.

The present gallery is situated in the western portion of the present Mail room, this is to be extended as shown on drawings as regards both old and new buildings. By means of small staircases at either end of the back service annexe the detective officer will be able to overlook the operations of the Mail branch in the basement.

No access to the basement is intended by means of the southern stairway; this stair is for observation purposes only. But the northern stairs constitute the means of approach to the detective's office, which latter is placed in the basement, directly approachable from the staircase in the back service annexe.

The major portion of the floor area in the basement is to be devoted to parcels post work, including the Customs parcels. A huge floor space will be obtained without interruption, except the stanchions needed for constructional reasons, with light and air obtainable on the boundaries and by means of a large open light well at the ground floor level immediately under the glass roof. Public access is obtained to both the General parcels and Customs parcels post through the front service annexe stairway and lifts. These in their turn are approached directly from the new entrance vestibule from King William-street.

A chute for parcels from the Mail room ground floor will be provided in a position to be decided on, and all incoming and outgoing bulk parcels postal matter is to be dealt with at the western side of the building where shown. Ingress to be obtained by means of a chute direct from the loading platform, and egress by means of an electric lift to the same platform. All necessary strong rooms will be provided and ample counter accommodation for the public will be placed in the public approachways.

Lockers for postal employees are indicated in the south-western corner of the basement Mail room, screened off from the general space by means of wire partitions.

As already mentioned, additional office accommodation for the Registered Letter branch together with strong room accommodation for the same branch is provided at the south-western corner of the present Main building in rooms on ground and basement floors, abutting on to the Franklin-street frontage.

The basement also contains storage rooms for bicycles, situated in the western end of the present main building. The rooms are to be remodelled, provided with up-to-date racks, and to facilitate approach from the Franklin-street driving-way a new reinforced concrete ramp is intended.

The Telegraph branch has been provided for as follows:—At present the Telegraph Receiving room occupies a position in the front portion of the 1891 additions. This branch of telegraphic work is to be housed in a new spacious Telegraph Receiving room formed in the old main building along the King William-street facade, occupying the whole length available between the present and new public entrances from King William-street, approachable from either entrance vestibule by means of swing doors, and opened out for spaciousness and direct public accessibility to the building generally, by means of a new large opening between this room and the public passage immediately to the rear of same.

In this room ample counter accommodation, writing slopes, and public telephones, will be provided; new floors and ceiling and a modern treatment adopted throughout.

This conversion has been made possible by taking out the partition walls, forming those rooms on the ground floor old main building along the King William-street frontage, which now house portions of the Accountants and Cashiers branches. These latter will be accommodated in the new concrete building as will be detailed later.

The Telegraph Messengers' Despatch room is to be located in the south-western corner of the basement of the present main building, connected directly with the public Telegraph Receiving room by means of a pneumatic carrier service, with quick access to Franklin-street, and directly in touch with the Bicycle Storage room.

On the Ground Floor.—The front portion of the 1891 additions, which is not to be demolished, is to be so structurally altered that one large room will be obtained. In this will be housed the Money Order and Cashiers' branches. The counter accommodation, &c., will be re-arranged and enlarged, and necessary strong-rooms provided.

The present public entrance from King William-street is to be retained, but in order to facilitate public access to the premises generally from this Money Order room, new swing doors opening out into the new public entrance from King William-street are to be formed.

It will thus be possible for the public to transact business with all branches of the postal and telegraphic services without the necessity, as at present, of using the street as a passage-way.

Attention is here called to the wide disparity in the height of rooms of the old main building and the proposed new concrete additions block.

The excessive heights of the rooms on ground floor, 23 ft. 3 in. from ground-floor level to first floor level and 20 feet from floor to ceiling in rooms on the first floor, were obviously adopted at the time to range in height with the architectural treatment of the freestone facades. The heights proposed for the new concrete building are those usually adopted for office buildings, and as such are sufficient and economical.

A new public entrance vestibule is to be formed from King William-street (in the front portion of the present driving-way) with all necessary approach steps, glass screens between vestibule and staircase hall in front annexe, new fibrous plaster panelled ceiling, new floors of Angaston marble, and steps of Murray Bridge granite. The walls to have new plaster treatment, and the present wrought iron gates at the King William-street entrance archway remodelled—fixed in new position shown.

On the First Floor present Main Building.—The partition walls forming rooms along the King William-street facade are to be taken out to the extent shown in order to get one large office for the use of the Records and Correspondence branches. Two large openings filled in with glazed partitions to be formed in the dividing wall between these rooms and the public corridor immediately adjoining in order to obtain better light in the corridor itself.

On the First Floor 1891 Additions.—The front portion left standing (after making room for the new concrete building) will be remodelled as shown, walls and partitions pulled out, new openings formed in order to obtain offices with large floor areas.

Care has been taken to provide additional top light where required. These rooms will be devoted to the use of the Inspectors.

The Concrete Additions make a compact rectangular block of six stories—basement, ground, first, second, third floors, and a roof floor arranged as per plans.

Provision has been made with regard to the strength of the reinforced concrete stanchions of both the main concrete block and its annexes, so that in the future, two additional office stories can be added, without undue interference with the working efficiency at the time of extension. This added strength of stanchions makes the plan an elastic one.

As already described the basement and ground floors of this building form parts of the large Mail room floor spaces devoted to the Parcels Post and General Mail branches respectively.

The first floor will be devoted to the housing of the Accountants branches, which now occupy:—

- (a) Rooms altered on the ground floor, old main building, in the location of the new Public Telegraph Receiving room.
- (b) Rooms in the 1891 additions block now occupied by the Accounts branch, which rooms will be demolished to allow of the erection of the new concrete building.

The second floor will house the Engineering branch. This branch is now located in rooms forming portion of the 1891 additions block, about to be demolished.

The third floor will be allotted to institute work.

With regard to the first, second, and third stories, no subdivision into rooms has been attempted. These large open office areas without subdivision, conform to modern office practice.

The fourth floor, or roof floor, contains comfortable leisure time quarters for employees of both sexes. On it are to be found Women's Retiring room, Women's Sick room, Women's and Men's Dining room, with ample kitchen accommodation common to both men and women, store rooms, and sculleries. A large Library and Reading room is also provided.

The rooms on this floor are connected by means of verandahs, and the remainder of the floor area has been converted into a spacious roof garden.

The service annexes in connexion with this concrete building (of which annexes there are two, at front and back) contain the staircases, lifts, lavatory rooms, and cleaners' rooms.

The front service annexe contains fireproof staircase serving all floors from basement to lift room. This stair serves not only as a means of approach to the new concrete building, but also all floors of the old building. Two modern electric lifts are to be installed

here, top-driven for economical working, and stopping at all floors. Lavatory rooms on all floors but the basement.

It is to be noted that new and commodious lavatory accommodation for women has been provided in this front service annexe on the fourth floor. The present inadequate Women's accommodation will be dismantled.

The back service annexe contains fireproof stairs from basement to lift room, top-driven electric lift, lavatory rooms on all floors, including the basement and cleaners' rooms on all floors. Access to the Telegraph Operators' room, first floor, old main building, has been obtained by means of a short fireproof stairway, thus making the convenience of the back service annexe stairs, lifts, and lavatories, available to the telegraph operators.

Heating.—It is proposed to heat the whole of the main building as altered, together with the new concrete structure by means of a low-pressure hot-water installation.

Telephone Cable Conduits.—Provision has been made for permanent concrete conduits together with necessary inspection pits, in connexion with the cables for telephones. These cables at present are located in the basement of the 1891 additions, just inside the northern boundary. They will require to be diverted because of the erection of the concrete building, but as nearly as possible the old route will be adhered to.

Electric Light and Power.—The whole of the premises whether new or disturbed by the scheme of alterations, &c., are to be electrically lit as required, and all necessary power points for fans, &c., installed.

Sanitary Work.—All lavatory rooms to be connected with the State governmental sewers, and fittings to be in keeping with the work generally.

Seepage Water Drainage.—The whole of the site covered by alterations and additions to be thoroughly drained by means of open agricultural drains, for both external and internal seepage water, all laid with proper falls to necessary sediment pits, and finally led into a brick steined soakage well taken right down through the blue lias clay to the gravel.

Allowance for Old Materials.—When preparing the schedule of cost due allowance has been made for the value of old materials from demolished work.

Generally.—It is to be seen from the plans that the scheme of alterations and additions is essentially an utility one—no money to be spent on purely decorative features.

That was prepared in August of 1917, and covered the whole scheme. There were certain reductions subsequently made. Our estimate for that work, as described, was about £79,000. When some of the work was cut out a reduction in estimate was made so that this description is a little more full in its terms.

15. *To Mr. Bamford.*—In the proposed alterations and additions I feel confident that there need be no worry about the matter of municipal restrictions.

16. *To Mr. Parker Moloney.*—With respect to the utilization of the material in those portions of the building to be pulled down, we propose to make use of everything that can be possibly availed of, and everything in this respect has been allowed for. There will be no waste of old material that is of any value or service at all.

17. *To Senator Needham.*—With regard to the estimated cost of the material to be used again, it would probably be worth more to-day than was estimated on current rates in 1917. The whole of the estimate, of course, was current. With regard to my expression of opinion that the Telegraph Operators should be housed in the fire-proof portion the accommodation in which they are at present housed cannot be said to be fire resisting, and I feel strongly that they should be transferred. There is a valuable plant in that section.

18. *To Mr. Atkinson.*—The scheme of alteration and additions was drawn up by Mr. Murdoch and myself in closest collaboration. We took the utmost care, and I personally cannot suggest anything better. It offers an excellent solution of a pretty difficult problem. Beyond my suggestion regarding the transfer of the Telegraphic branch, that is the only improvement that I can suggest.

19. *To Mr. Mathews.*—So far as I know, there have been no complaints concerning the marring of the architectural effect by the proposed new construction and alterations. The only thing I have heard has been our own discussion upon that very point. We came to the conclusion that the new portion would be so far back from the main street facades that it would not be a consideration. With regard

to the basement, I do not think there should be any objection to employees working in that portion; it will not be in any sense unhealthy and, in fact, will be the coolest, and, therefore, probably the most desirable portion of the building in hot weather.

20. *To Senator Newland.*—On the point whether these plans suggest the limit of possible extension, another storey could be built over the old portion of the building; but it would be better to leave the facades alone. They would present a difficult problem if we are not to spoil the architectural effect. By making provision now in regard to the stanchion work on the additions, allowance would be made for extension in the future. The Postal authorities reckoned that the proposed additions will cover expanding activities for 25 years ahead. It would be a good financial proposition to provide accommodation which would not be actually required for a matter of ten or fifteen years, perhaps. On the full scheme, if it were to be carried out now, our £79,000 estimate—made in 1917 and based on the full plans as they are now before the Committee—would have to be increased by 20 per cent. Our estimate was prepared for all work to be carried out on a contract basis. Contracts could be let for various parts of the proposed work, but I do not think we could get anybody to contract for the scheme as a whole. I would not take a contract for a two or three years job, especially for matters involving alterations or additions. The nature of this work is such that it does not lend itself to contract for the full scheme. A contract could be let for the new reinforced concrete building. Ready responses would probably be received in the shape of tenders for this latter work, and I would certainly favour that procedure for the reinforced cement concrete work, but not do the alteration work by contract. Concerning the Telegraph Operators' room, my criticism is based on the fact that I would not like to be associated with a plan which shows the Telegraph Operators' room located in a non-fire resisting building without an explanation. The present location of the Telegraph Operators forms a bad fire risk. My proposed location is a good one. The original sketch plans prepared by Mr. Murdoch and myself in 1916 were shown to the Postmaster-General, and, in essence, they are the plans such as are now before this Committee. There is only this difference of the additional storey which was cut out by Mr. Webster. I have heard of no objection from the public in the matter of the proposed additions and alterations spoiling the architectural features of this building. If the tall new portion is noticeable at all I believe it will be regarded as being in no wise associated with the General Post Office, seeing that it will be so far back from the front facades.

21. *To the Chairman.*—We allowed in our estimates for sufficient strength in the stanchions so that another two stories could be put on to the proposed new structure. The four storey building, after its erection, could be altered later into a five or six floor building. We could almost carry out that addition without disturbing operations in the floors below. The original building could be increased by one storey only. It does not lend itself to more than a one floor addition, otherwise the beauty of the facade would be spoilt. Something was done some time ago in the matter of preparing plans for the addition of an extra storey on the original structure. The cost of the 1891 additions was £16,469. The approximate value of the work proposed to be demolished is £5,634. In connexion with the revised estimate, I have not been in consultation with the Commonwealth Department. Originally we provided two passenger lifts. If two extra stories were added to accommodate some others of the Commonwealth Departments in Adelaide, those two lifts would still be sufficient for public purposes. The proposed size, namely, 6 x 5 feet, would be ample to carry eight or nine passengers at a time. With regard to the estimate of the cost of the work proposed to be demolished, the bulk of the cost is in the front, because of the cut stone.

The proposed additions will begin at a distance of about 42 feet back from the front alignment of the building. It is proposed to build the additions in reinforced concrete. The standards will be in reinforced concrete, also the girders. Probably some of the steel work put into the drawings will not now be procurable, but at the time we ascertained that all the materials were available. I have not had any personal experience of the mushroom system of construction. I do not think there is anything of the kind in Adelaide. The building in reinforced concrete will undoubtedly be cheaper than brick work. There will be a minimum of interference in floor area; all the available space will be availed of. Thus, from the point of view of economy of floor space, it is the best proposition. With the deepening of the basement and the proposed adequate provision for lighting and ventilating, I think that floor will be quite suitable for the purposes suggested for its use. I do not know of any method by which the Parcels Post section can be placed on the ground floor. The fact of having the light well will naturally make both lighting and ventilating conditions considerably better than at present. I hand in plans showing the sketch with the fifth floor provided for which was cut out by the then Postmaster-General.

22. *To Senator Newland.*—In the matter of providing entrance to the General Post Office from King William-street, and of installing a ramp instead of steps, I do not think there would be room available for the construction of a ramp.

The witness withdrew.

Charles Herbert Uttley Todd, Works Director for South Australia, Department of Works and Railways, sworn and examined.

23. *To the Chairman.*—I have revised the estimates for this work and brought them up to date. I have compared prices of materials available in this State. I have been able to some extent to familiarize myself with the item of cost of labour. I am satisfied that the estimate is a fair one. I should be quite content to undertake the work as on the basis of to-day's prices. If present prices continue, we shall be able to carry it out on those figures. In many instances the original estimate has not been altered. I have formed the opinion that one or two trades were priced rather high when they were originally priced. Further, some trades in 1917 were costing a little more than to-day. I have no doubt that under the supervision of my Department the proposed work can be carried out on the estimated prices. In the matter of setting about the work and keeping in view not only the factor of demolition, but also that of provision for the staff and the public without undue inconvenience, our first requisite will be to get the electrical engineers and mechanics away from the Post Office. The workshop must be installed somewhere else. Then we must provide sufficient accommodation to house those staffs which will be required to work outside such portions of this building as are to be demolished. That has been suggested by Mr. Murdoch. The staffs which would have to be arranged for would be, first, the parcels post. The public must be able to get at that section conveniently, and its temporary quarters should come pretty well up to the street frontage on the vacant block of land. The drill hall type of building suitable for the proposed purpose would cost something like £2,000 to £2,200, and it would probably be worth £1,500 upon removal in three or four years' time. I think we should need a second building also on the vacant block. I am of opinion that a building about 80 feet x 40 feet would house the parcels post, and would give the public adequate access. Then a building of the drill hall type, 100 feet x 60 feet would be sufficient to house the remaining sections requiring to be removed—the Money Order Costing section, and part of the Accounts branch, and the balance of the Mechanical Engineer's staff which does not go with the mechanics

to the workshops. Then the first thing to do would be to make the road. Having got the road through and provided the mail handling platforms so as to use the existing mail room, we should have to clear the site to start on the new building. With regard to the width of the road, I think it will be wide enough for the manoeuvring of large motor mail lorries, so long as there is only the one-way traffic. We should have to get to work on the demolition and then proceed with the new building. Having built that—which is looking eighteen months ahead—we should arrange to bring such portions of the staffs back as we could, and then make the necessary breaks into the old building. We should build the four or five storied building before making any alterations to the old building. When the new building was erected we should be able to transfer the staffs temporarily on to the new floors so as to make the necessary alterations in the old building. With respect to the utilization of material from the demolition for concrete work, I point out that for reinforced concrete we must work with a clean aggregate. We should not be able to use broken bricks, but it could be used in the floors not reinforced. It makes excellent concrete work when put in on a ground floor. Practically all the broken old bricks will be utilized. What is not used as I have described will be availed of for making roadways, and for the floor of the basement, for example. I do not know of an estimate having been made of the cost of removing the various branches in and out from one building to another. That is a matter concerning the Postal Department. The two buildings to be temporarily erected would cost about £4,000, and I should say that to remove the staffs backward and forward would cost another £1,000. A sum of £5,000 could be set down for those purposes. Out of that £5,000 the sum of £1,000 will be lost. I should say that 60 per cent. of the amount for the buildings will be recoverable when we utilize the buildings in some other place. No provision is made for that, however, in the estimate. I am asked what would be the total cost of the project, adding the removal of staff out and back again, and the cost of the buildings. The cost total of the project now as put forward, would come a little under £80,000, when we have the credit for the two temporary buildings to be erected. With respect to the element of fire risk in the telegraph operators' section, I do not think the risk is any greater now than it has been for the past 50 years. There is valuable equipment in that section, but I do not personally attach great deal of fear to the risk of fire in the old part of the building. If there were fireproof space available, I would, of course, put valuable equipment into it, and would utilize the space for the telegraph operators in other directions.

24. *To Mr. Parker Moloney.*—In his evidence Mr. Simpson stated that he favored the work being done by contract, but he pointed out that it would be almost impossible to get a contract for work of this nature. In all day labour schemes we let certain portions by contract. We put out certain portions under the contract system wherever we consider that to do so will be of service to the Government. My estimate is based on departmental labour for all the structural alteration parts. I do not see how we can carry such a job out by any other method than by the control of our own labour. With respect to the alterations in the windows, as mentioned by Mr. Murdoch, I might say that he decided that a certain reduced size of window would provide adequate lighting. I also am satisfied that there will be ample light upon this basis.

25. *To Senator Needham.*—I am strongly of opinion that the workshops should be adjacent to the stores. The latter are already situated on the West-terrace site, and the workshops must be taken to them. The stores handle the raw material, and, after its return by the workshops, it distributes the manufactured article to various centres. It would be a saving of time, therefore, and thus economical to place the two branches side by side. I am of opinion that with one-way traffic the mail roadway will be sufficiently

wide for the largest vehicle of which I have had experience in the service of the Postmaster-General.

26. *To Mr. Atkinson.*—I think that the lowering of the basement floor will greatly improve working conditions there. Undoubtedly there will be quite ample head room, and the lighting is to be greatly improved. In the course of my investigations I have been told, indeed, that for about seven months in the year the basement of this building is the most comfortable place in which to work in Adelaide. In the matter of providing better continuity in the work of the General Post Office, and of insuring full and adequate supervision, I am of opinion that the proposed additions will be just about as good as can be supplied in any modern building. They cannot be improved even if we were to set to work upon a new structure. The alterations and improvements will provide an economical building. The whole project has been very carefully considered, and I have no criticism to make of it.

27. *To Senator Henderson.*—With regard to the lowering of the basement floor I have ascertained that for the depth which we propose to go down there will be very good footing. I think there need be no fear of coming into contact with a very damp stratum.

28. *To Mr. Mathews.*—In reference to the reduction in window size for the purpose of economy, I wish to point out that the windows as planned for the basement were not interfered with. The alteration refers only to those very large windows to be put in the new annexe. The basement will be amply lighted, and there will be a proper and adequate system of mechanical ventilation.

29. *To Senator Newland.*—I have not considered the question of housing the telegraph operators elsewhere. I have held the view that their quarters are very well placed where they are at present. If the suggested additional floor were to be erected and the telegraph operators were placed there, there would be no disadvantage due to the greater spreading out of the employees generally. I have not heard any remarks from the public as to the proposed extensions spoiling the architectural appearance of the General Post Office. I think that such complaints as there were arose from the proposal to erect an additional story on the original portion of the building. The complaints had nothing to do, I believe, with the extensions as proposed. The opinion has been, rather, that the scheme is a good one. With regard to the mail roadway I think it could be arranged with the Adelaide City Council to authorize only one-way traffic for all parties who may use it.

30. *To Mr. Bamford.*—In the proposed temporary buildings on the vacant space it is suggested to build the wood and iron structures right up to both frontages. At the conclusion of the alterations to the General Post Office those buildings would be removed and employed, probably, as an area drill hall for defence purposes in some other neighbourhood. The only suggestion I have heard respecting the vacant land is that a suite of Commonwealth offices might be erected there to house all the other Commonwealth activities in Adelaide. The operating room in the Adelaide General Post Office as it stands is certainly better than that either at Brisbane or Townsville.

31. *To Senator Needham.*—With respect to a comparison of the plans for the alterations and additions now suggested, and to those which proposed an additional story on the original building, I might say that there is no real comparison between the two schemes. The one provides a modern up-to-date proposition, while the other is really only a makeshift. I therefore prefer the present scheme.

(Taken at Adelaide.)

TUESDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1920.

Present :

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman ;

Senator Henderson,
Senator Needham,
Senator Newland,

Mr. Bamford,
Mr. Mathews.

Edward William Bramble, Deputy Postmaster-General for South Australia, sworn and examined.

32. *To the Chairman.*—I have given special attention to the matter of alterations to the General Post Office from time to time, and I have recently examined the plans and gone into the question of accommodation with the heads of the various branches. I have prepared a full statement upon the subject, as follows :—

GENERAL POST OFFICE, ADELAIDE.

REPORT ON ACCOMMODATION.

9th June, 1920.

The southern wing of the present building was completed about 1872, and the northern wing was completed in 1893.

In 1909 and 1911 respectively, owing to the growth of the Department's business, it was found necessary to request two State Departments that were occupying rooms in the building to find accommodation elsewhere.

In 1911 the expansion of business necessitated the erection of a separate building for the Telephone Exchange, which now stands on the Franklin-street frontage, and in consequence of the erection of this building and subsequent additions to it, it became necessary to find yard space for the linemen, who previously occupied the site of the Exchange building, and they were removed to West-terrace, the final removals being completed about eight years ago.

In 1915 the following Commonwealth Departments were required to vacate the space occupied by them in the General Post Office building, viz., Audit Office, Public Service Inspector, Maternity and Old-age Pensions, the Excise Branch of the Customs Department, and in 1919, the general branch of the Customs.

In 1915, the Departmental Stores—which up till then had occupied the whole of the southern basement—had to be removed to a separate building on West-terrace.

The original building was evidently not designed to meet present requirements of the Postal Department, as provision was made in it for a portion to be residential quarters. The whole building, consequently, is a series of comparatively small rooms, which in many cases will not house the whole of the officers of one section or branch, and this feature tends to create difficulties in supervision, economy in working, and to cause public inconvenience. Moreover, in many cases, the lighting and ventilation is bad, thereby preventing the efficient output of work which could reasonably be expected, and in a number of sections the comfort and convenience of the staff cannot be arranged, and in some instances the working conditions are insanitary.

Since 1893, the working space has not been materially increased, and the work of the Department has been steadily progressing, and is still on the upward grade. The rate of progress will be observed from the following figures showing a comparison between the present date and ten years previous, viz. :—

Revenue—

1909	£345,282
1918-19	£608,365
Total increase	£263,000
Percentage increase for ten years	76 per cent.
Percentage increase per annum	7·6 per cent.

Expenditure (including new works)—

1909	£325,734
1918-19	£503,678
Total increase	£178,000
Percentage increase for ten years	55 per cent.
Percentage increase per annum	5·5 per cent.

It will be observed that during the past ten years the revenue has increased 76 per cent., or at the rate of 7·6 per cent. per annum, and the expenditure 55 per cent., or at the rate of 5½ per cent. per annum. The staff force has increased 62 per cent. or at the rate of 6·2 per cent. per annum, and it may be reasonably assumed that the staff increase during the next ten years would be approximately at the same rate under similar accommodation conditions. Since the establishment of the profit and loss account balance sheet, 1912-13 (and probably earlier), the transactions of the Department in this State have shown a substantial profit each year, excepting the year 1914—a period of one of the most severe droughts known in this State. In 1918-19 the profit shown for the year was £132,000.

In a number of instances, the accommodation for the public is inadequate and inconveniently situated to provide for expeditious handling of business.

The luncheon rooms and lavatory accommodation of the staff is badly in need of improvement. In some instances they are congested, and in cheerless and badly lighted and ventilated positions.

Apart from the question of much-needed additional accommodation, a general re-arrangement of the working space is absolutely necessary for the purpose of securing proper supervision, more expeditious and efficient working, and for prospective staff economies, and also for far better public accommodation. These improvements will necessarily also afford better service to the public. The removal of the Telegraph and Telephone Workshops to West-terrace (which has been approved by the Minister) should be the first step taken to enable the alterations to be carried out, as they are in urgent need of improvement, and they also bar the way to the proposed exit for the traffic through the yard, as the present entrance in King William-street will be closed.

The following information shows in detail the present method of housing the staff in the various branches, and the amount of space necessary for future requirements:—

State Engineer's Branch (Schedule "A").

The staff of the State Engineer's Branch housed in the General Post Office buildings consists of 132 officers. Of these, 25 are housed in accommodation attached to the Telephone Exchange, which will not be interfered with and need not be considered, and 54 are housed in buildings which, under the plan of alterations, will have to be removed to the new workshops building at West-terrace. At present the 132 officers are housed in 27 small rooms—in most cases disconnected and scattered all over the building, as per Schedule "A" attached. The total space occupied by the officers at present (omitting those which need not be touched in the rooms adjoining the Telephone Exchange) is 9,677 square feet; that occupied by officers to be removed to West-terrace, 4,751 square feet; and the blacksmith's shop 347 square feet, leaving 4,579 square feet, which is at present occupied by 53 officers, accommodation for present and prospective requirements for whom will require to be provided in any alterations.

The proposed new space is 6,076 square feet, and this allows approximately 33 per cent. for expansion of the staff. This, it is estimated, will just about meet our requirements for a great many years ahead, as it will probably be found that the development of South Australia will enable a proportion of the work to be decentralized in suitable country centres, and thus relieve the necessity for adding staff to the Chief Office.

The space at present occupied barely meets requirements, even if it were conveniently joined and situated for the work, but it will be apparent that, through the disjointed way in which the offices are situated in the building, expedition in working and efficiency are considerably reduced. At least a 10 per cent. increase in work would be possible if the staff were housed in one convenient room. The present system involves delay and expense in carrying papers from one room to another, and considerably militates against proper supervision and efficiency, to say nothing of the want of co-ordination of the work. It is estimated that the rate of staffing could be reduced by about 1 per cent. by an improvement on existing conditions.

The necessity for increased accommodation will be understood from the following facts:—

The work of the Electrical Engineer's branch is increasing year by year, and the rate of increase will be maintained.

In the near future, more suburban exchanges and improvements to existing exchanges are necessary to meet public requirements, which will involve expenditure of about £80,000. The increase in subscribers' lines during the past five years has been at the rate of 33½ per cent.—and this during the war period—viz., from 9,608 in 1914-15 to 12,000 in 1918-19, and from the number of applications already in hand, and the development of the metropolitan area (the population of which has increased from 187,574 in 1910 to 256,660 in 1919), and the increased settlement in country areas, the rate of progress of subscribers' lines is expected to be more than maintained.

Undergrounding and conduit works are at present in sight costing £41,000.

The telephone trunk line system to the country is in need of urgent additions, which will cost about £50,000, and new telegraph lines £18,000. Both these facilities are required to give reasonably efficient service to the public, and are fully justified by the business transacted; indeed, the revenue from trunk lines alone increased from £5,894 in 1909 to £39,694 in 1918, and this rate of increase, it is estimated, will be well maintained, for the reason that two important factors now arise which will increase this class of business and create the necessity for additional lines and facilities—first, owing to the more liberal terms under which the Postmaster-General will now grant country telephone lines, and secondly, to an increase in telegraph and telephone traffic when the Government relinquishes control of the Wheat Pool, and the wheat agents, as in the past, will be traversing the country negotiating for wheat business. Further, the Murray River Valley irrigation proposals will create large additional settlements and necessarily increase the activity of the Department; in fact, 1,000 settlers are already in the district, the majority of whom will need to be provided for—and this is to say nothing of settlements which may take place elsewhere. All these requirements will consequently increase the work and staff of the Electrical Engineer's Department.

In addition to the construction work, the maintenance work of the State Engineer's Branch is, of course, increasing with every additional line we erect, and the amount of work in this connexion can best be gauged by the following statistics:—

Telephone and Telegraph Statistics—

	1909.	1919.	Increase per cent.
1. Number of exchanges..	26	203	680
2. Number of lines connected ..	4,195	12,619	200
3. Number of instruments	6,179	17,189	180
4. Telegraph aerial (including wire used for dual purposes) ..	15,221 miles	18,440 miles	21
5. Trunk lines—single-wire mileage ..	524 "	5,934 "	1,400
6. Cables — single - wire mileage ..	10,874 "	45,406 "	317
7. Conduit—duct mile ..	100 "	257 "	150

Maintenance—

	1914-15.	1918-19.	
Telephone line and equipment ..	£100,506	£125,399	25
Telegraph line and equipment ..	£100,381	£114,528	14

Mail Branch (Schedules "B" and "B (1)").

The Mail branch occupies nineteen rooms (irrespective of luncheon and two storage rooms), and these rooms are disconnected and inconveniently situated in most instances for the work of the officers and for the convenience of the public.

There have been very few, and only minor, alterations made to the main rooms of the Mail branch since the building was originally erected, and any additional space that has from time to time to be found could only be obtained by going to some of the smaller rooms that were scattered about the building.

The principal portion of the work in the Parcels Post section is conducted in a basement, with an exceedingly low ceiling, badly lighted and ventilated, and altogether unsuitable for the housing of staff permanently. Other portions of the Parcels Post work have to be conducted in a room on a different floor, and in the middle wing of the building, for the reason that the basement is inconvenient and difficult of approach for public requirements, and the necessities of the Department in regard to the room in the wing in which the Postal Customs Parcels are dealt with require that it should be as conveniently situated to the public as possible.

The fact of this arrangement makes supervision casual and difficult. For example, the officer in charge has to spend portion of his time in the Postal Customs branch and portion in the basement, where the main receiving and despatching is done.

In the basement room, the work is congested, owing to the difficulty in handling and loading incoming and outgoing mails, due to its very awkward entrance. Moreover, owing to the want of mechanical appliances, and the difficulty of arranging for them in a room of this character, it necessitates the hand-carriage of parcels to and from the Inland Mail room on a floor above, thus causing delay and expense. With properly arranged room and modern equipment, the staff would be enabled to deal with the work more expeditiously, give better service to the public, increase the efficiency of the working by about 25 per cent., and enable the staff to be properly housed.

During the last ten years, the number of parcels dealt with have increased from 185,000 in 1909 to 482,000 in 1919, the rate of increase being 159 per cent., or at the rate of 15 per cent. per annum. The staff has increased from seven in 1909 to fifteen in 1919, showing an increase of 100 per cent. in staff in ten years, or at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum, but with proper conveniences and properly arranged room, this rate of increase of staff could probably be reduced to about 5 per cent. per annum.

The main Mail room, which is known as the Ship and Inland Mail section, situated in an L-shaped room on the ground floor, where the heaviest mail work of the Department has to be conducted, is occupied by 100 officers on an average, and does not contain sufficient space to enable the work to be properly handled. The letter and newspaper racks are crowding each other to the extent of impeding the access to them, with the result that sorting is delayed, the handling of mail matter from point to point in the room made difficult, and in some instances almost impossible, and no space is available for the provision of mechanical appliances to facilitate the work of the Department. Frequently incoming mails—perhaps one or two arriving together—overcrowd the space and retard the sorting and despatching. These features considerably hamper the work of the Mail branch, allow for no expansion of work to give better facilities to the public, and provide for no expansion which will be necessary to meet the development of country districts. The work of this section has increased by 50 per cent. during the last ten years, and this rate of expansion will be maintained and should be met. Extra space is urgently required at once, and the space provided on the plan will be necessary to meet the anticipated progress of work.

The Registration Branch, the work of which has increased by 32 per cent., also requires additional space and re-arrangement.

The sorting arrangements conducted in the basement are unsatisfactory and inconveniently situated in relation to the work with the Inland Mail section in regard to the receipt and despatch of registered mails.

The Postmen's room, which is a badly lighted and badly ventilated space in the basement, is inconveniently situated for the reason that it is away from the work of the Mail room, with which it should be properly associated, viz., the sorting section and the private letter-boxes. The new space provided for this section is needed for prospective requirements.

The Private-box room, which shows an expansion of 50 per cent. of business in ten years, requires to be placed in a more convenient position for the public, where it can be accessible to the public at all hours, and at the same time in a position more under observation. The space provided for this section is required, and will meet prospective requirements for some time to come.

The total staff of the Mail branch has increased from 145 in 1910 to 207 in 1920—an increase of about 43 per cent.—and although the rate of increase of work will probably continue, it is expected that, with the improved arrangements and the addition of mechanical appliances, the rate of staff increase will be reduced by about 1 per cent.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the disabilities at present experienced in working the Mail branch arise principally from want of proper accommodation, preventing supervision, reducing efficiency and reducing the output of work, to remedy all of which ten improved accommodation is required, and which will result in considerably better public convenience, better working conditions—both as regards convenience for the staff and economy so far as the Department is concerned.

Telegraph Branch.

The staff and work of the Telegraph branch is housed in nine rooms, as per attached Schedule "C."

The main Operating room for the receipt and despatch of telegrams is on the first floor, and the room for the receipt and despatch of telegrams from and to the public on the ground floor, the other rooms being for luncheon rooms, examination room, and telegraph messengers instruction room.

The Operating room is occupied by 84 officers at one time, the total staff being 161, and the space provided 3,958 square feet. A small portion of this space is also occupied by the Meteorological Department and the mechanician to attend to Creed and other telegraph instruments. The space at present occupied will meet requirements for many years to come, with an alteration to the existing space available to provide for an extension of about 900 additional square feet by absorbing the present ladies' luncheon room, and when the necessary space occupied by the Meteorological office, and removing the telephonic work done in the Operating room to existing adjoining space. This will meet requirements for the next twenty years, and it is not proposed to make any structural alterations in connexion with this room. Provision is, of course, being made in another portion of the building for a main luncheon and recreation room for the general staff of the General Post Office. Any alterations in the disposition of the upstairs staff can be provided for by minor alterations of the existing space.

The number of messages handled in the Operating room has increased from a daily average of 10,620 in 1910 to 14,783 in 1920, an increase of 39 per cent., and the staff in the same time has increased by 26 per cent., or at the rate of 2.6 per cent. per annum. It is estimated that the present space re-arranged as hereinbefore mentioned will meet this rate of staff and work expansion for some twenty years ahead, if not longer.

The Receiving and Issuing section which carries out the duties of receiving telegrams from the public, houses the staff for dealing with these functions, including the telegraph messengers and their bicycles, and has to accommodate 52 officers, 29 of which are required to be present at one time. The present space is 1,170 square feet, and is greatly congested and inadequate for the work. In addition to this disability the space for public accommodation is absolutely inadequate. The 12½ feet x 6½ feet provided to accommodate a frequent attendance of 40 people is overcrowded to the detriment of public business and to the great inconvenience of the public who have to transact their business. The facilities for writing telegrams are reduced to whatever space can be found on the lodgment counter.

In addition to this, the public space is crowded by local and long-distance telephones and their users, and an immediate improvement for the convenience of the public and the proper expedition of the business is absolutely necessary. Pending the alterations proposed, a temporary arrangement is now being made to partially relieve this position.

The working space for the officers is unsuitable and there is no proper place for the supervision, or attention to, or care of the messengers' bicycles.

The main proposal is to separate the Despatch room from the Receiving branch and afford the public ample space to transact their business, and at the same time conveniently house the necessary public telephones and to place the messengers in a different portion of the building, which will enable their work to be more expeditiously and satisfactorily carried out, both from a departmental and public point of view, and also to provide for the convenient housing and attention to the bicycles.

The conditions under which the work at present is carried out do not make for efficiency or expeditious handling of the business, and

considerable and much needed improvement can be effected in the delivery of messages by the provision of the proposed improved space for the Messengers' work.

The number of telegrams lodged daily for transmission has increased from 881 in 1910 to 1,320 in 1920, or an increase of 38 per cent., and the number received for delivery from 1,237 in 1910 to 1,729 in 1920, daily, an increase of 40 per cent. The combined space proposed to be provided in the plan shows an increase of 200 per cent. It is estimated that considerable increased space is required at once, and with the increase of space provided, the requirements of the Department will be met for at least the next twenty years, as the rate of progress of this class of business will be even greater than during the last ten years (five years of which included the war period), keeping in view the increasing settlement in the country and the increase in population in the metropolitan district.

The dining-room accommodation for the ladies and the male Telegraphists will, of course, be provided in connexion with the general luncheon-room arrangements on the fourth floor.

The examination room, which is required for the examination of officers to prove their eligibility for promotion and appointment as Postal Assistants, Telegraphists, and Supervisors, is at present in a badly-lighted and badly-ventilated room, which is unsuitable for the purpose, and accommodation for this purpose is provided for in the Postal Institute.

The class room for the instruction of Telegraph Messengers in telegraphy, to enable them to qualify for promotion, is conducted in a badly-lighted and badly-ventilated basement room, totally unsuited for the purpose, unbearable in summer weather, and with inadequate accommodation. It is not a place to expect continuous studious effort on the part of the learners. Moreover, the general conditions are very discouraging to the instructor, who, in better quarters, could get far better results. The Postal Institute will provide much needed improvement in these conditions.

Accounts Branch.

The Accounts Branch staff and work is housed in fifteen rooms, including three strong rooms and two storage rooms (*vide* Schedule "B"), and accommodate 90 officers.

As in the other cases in the building, the work is disjointed by reason of the number of rooms in which it has to be performed, and in some instances it has not been possible to house the officers of one section together in the same room. This causes inconvenience and delay in carrying out the work, reduces the value of supervision and the output of work by at least 10 per cent., thus reducing the efficiency of the total staff force.

In addition to this, the available space is very much overcrowded, and renders working conditions difficult and inconvenient to the staff. Many of the rooms are on different floors, causing a large amount of waste time on the part of the officers, who have in the nature of their duties to interchange visits. The cashier's section, although provided with sufficient space, is not suitably situated in relation to the Money Order section, with which its work is greatly concerned, and in the proposal these two sections will be properly housed together. The disjointed working space at present available, even if joined up as one suitable room is hardly sufficient for present requirements. The rate of increase of this staff during the past ten years has been under abnormal conditions, due to a change of system in the method of keeping accounts to better enable the financial operations of the department to be kept under constant review. These conditions are not likely to be changed or repeated to anything like the same extent during the next twenty years, consequently the rate of increase of this staff can be reasonably assumed to be about 3 per cent. per annum. Additional space is immediately required, and that provided in the plan will probably last the Department for many years to come.

The provision of this better-arranged space will not only facilitate the work, but will reduce the percentage of increase of staff, which would be necessary if left under the present conditions.

There will be ample accommodation in the basement for the storage of telegrams, cables, money orders, and postal notes.

Administrative Branches.

The Administrative section is housed in seven rooms, two of which are occupied by the Deputy Postmaster-General and the Chief Clerk, and to which no material alteration is required, excepting a minor improvement to the Chief Clerk's room to render it more private. The other five rooms are occupied by the Correspondence, Records, and Staff Branch, and the work is considerably impeded and made difficult by the fact that sections of the work are separated from each other by three stout walls. To consolidate and facilitate the work, and at the same time to enable proper supervision to be exercised it is necessary that the three walls should be removed and one large room for the whole of the staff provided. This scheme is provided for in the plan.

The present space occupied is 1,942 square feet, and as the work is progressing at the rate of about 25 per cent. in ten years, and the staffing will require to be added to accordingly, a working space of 2,750 square feet will be required—which is about the amount provided for in the plan. The provision of this accommodation is merely an alteration of the existing structure.

Inspection Branch.

The Inspection Branch is housed in four rooms. It is not possible to state with any accuracy what the increase of work in this branch has been for the last ten years, for the reason that it is only during

recent years that the Inspection Branch has been established on a proper basis: but with the progress that the State is making, it is expected that the work will increase at the rate of about 5 per cent. per annum, but it is not anticipated that a very radical increase in staff will be required for the next five or six years. It may, however, be anticipated that about 50 per cent. more accommodation will be required in twenty years' time, but this estimate is based upon the probability—which is almost certain to occur—of the work of the Inspection Branch being decentralized in years to come by the placing of inspectors in country districts. The amount of space, therefore, provided on the plan is ample for our requirements for many years to come. In any case, the provision of this accommodation involves no further structural additions, and is merely an alteration of existing accommodation.

Luncheon Accommodation.

The luncheon accommodation for the staff is located in various parts of the building as follows (*vide* Schedule "G"):—

Branch.	Location.	No. of Rooms.	Area in Sq. Ft.	Number using.
Mail Branch ..	Basement	10	564	50
Telegraph Branch—				
Ladies* ..	First floor	50	575	40
Telegraphists ..	First floor	51	525	145
Messengers ..	Basement	19A	475	Not used— unsuitable
State Engineer's—				
Mechanics ..	Frame room of Tele- phone Exchange	82	1,900	30

* *Note*.—This room is used by the ladies, not only of the Telegraph Branch, but also of the clerical branches.

Provision is made in the plan for suitable accommodation for the various sections to obtain their meals in the dining-room space provided on the fourth floor.

The staff employed in the General Post Office numbers 939, of whom 746 are males, and 193 females. The officers who are estimated to make some use of the luncheon room, more particularly in the purchase of light lunches, and in the use of accommodation while consuming food brought by officers from home, and purchased from outside shops, number 655 males and 192 females, a total of 847 officers.

It is not probable that a great many of the officers would avail themselves of a set dinner of, say, three courses, at an approximate charge of 1s., and it would be rather difficult to estimate the number who would.

The Mechanics' Arbitration Court Award directs that the Department shall provide proper meal, lavatory, and sanitary accommodation, but the Arbitration Court Awards relating to other classes of officers are silent on this matter.

Although provision is not made in Arbitration Court Awards relating to officers other than mechanics, it is considered the Department should fall into line with outside practice in this respect, and provide the accommodation for the comfort of the staff and convenience of the Department, as a large number of the officers cannot, consistent with their duty and public requirements, leave the building for meals, and the alterations to the building will necessitate the removal of existing dining accommodation.

Lavatories.

The lavatory accommodation, as shown in Schedule "H," is situated awkwardly for the convenience of the staff, and is insufficient, and in some instances is highly inconvenient and too limited for the ladies employed in the Department. The lavatory accommodation provided on the different floors is, therefore, a necessary sanitary improvement, and will suffice for many years to come.

Heating, &c.

Another feature which the present building does not lend itself to is the necessary provision for heating and cooling the building during the big disparity of temperature in winter and summer in this State, the mean temperature in winter being about 44°—with a minimum of 32°—and the mean temperature in summer being 86°—with a maximum of 116°. The plan provides for relief in this respect, which will be much appreciated by the staff, especially those working in the larger rooms and who have felt the need for some such provision for some years past.

The work of the Department in the main branches has been carried on during the last five years under very unfavorable conditions for the staff, owing to the inability to provide comfortable and adequate space, and which would enable up-to-date equipment and appliances to be installed to aid them in their work; but, notwithstanding these features, they have worked loyally and well, and deserve to be properly housed as soon as possible.

State Engineer's Branch.

Schedule "A."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.
		Sq. ft.	
First floor—			
64 ..	State Engineer ..	268	1
65 ..	Typists ..	376	4
66 ..	General Clerical Office ..	553	11
67 ..	Country Engineer ..	290	3
71 ..	Costing Section ..	522	10
77 ..	Drawing Office ..	527	3
78 ..	Deputy State Engineer Clerks ..	411	7
79 ..	Deputy State Engineer ..	235	3
80 ..	Metropolitan Telephone Equipment Engineers ..	402	4
72 ..	Telephone Equipment Stores ..	461	Mechanics, maximum 20-4
73 ..	Telephone Fitting ..	446	2
74 ..	Telegraph Workshops ..	1,231	20
75 ..	Telephone Workshops ..	1,014	21
76 ..			
Basement—			
19 ..	Carpenters' Shop ..	806	6
20 ..	Carpenters' Storage Timber ..	305	..
24 ..	Test Room ..	526	1
25 ..			
26 ..	High-tension Room ..	181	..
38 ..	Line Inspectors ..	288	6
40 ..	Blacksmith ..	347	1
37 ..	Motor-car Shed ..	217	..
37A ..	Motor-cycle Shed ..	271	..

To go out 107
54

Total space occupied in present building (not including room in Telephone Exchange) ..	9,677
Less space now occupied by sections to go to West-terrace ' ..	4,751
Balance ..	4,926
Less Blacksmith's Shop ..	347
	4,579
	53

Space required for prospective requirements—6,076 square feet.
Five years' rate of expansion staff—25 per cent.
Space proposed, new plan—6,076 feet.
27 rooms now occupied—132 officers.

Mail Branch. Schedule "B."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.	Space required for Prospective Requirements.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Work.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Staff.	Space proposed in New Plans.
		Sq. ft.		Sq. ft.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Sq. ft.
35 ..	Parcels Post, Midwing	363	2	..	..	..	..
36 ..	" "	1,151	5	..	..	..	..
6 ..	" "	480	4	..	..	..	..
3 ..	" "	405	6	..	..	..	..
4 ..	" "	391	3	..	..	..	..
5 ..	" "	513	..	..	..	..	..
12 ..	" "	552	..	..	..	..	..
7 ..	" "	312	Storage	..	..	..	..
7A ..	" "	253	Bags	..	..	..	..
11 ..	" "	276	Baskets	..	..	..	..
P.P. Main ..	" "	3,238	..	..	..	..	..
		7,934	..	9,902	159	100	9,902

Parcels dealt with 1909 ..	185,590
" " 1919 ..	481,845
Rate of increase ..	159 per cent.
Staff in 1909 ..	7
" 1919 ..	15

Mail Branch.
Schedule "B (1)."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.	Space required for Prospective Requirements.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Work.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Staff.	Space proposed in New Plans.
		Sq. ft.		Sq. ft.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Sq. ft.
41	Ship and Inland Section ..	5,592	100	8,720	50	..	8,720
18A	Registration	688B	5	1,704	32	..	1,704
2	"	540	4	1,050	No record	..	1,050
18	Postmen	944	26				
43	Stamp Sales and Inquiry ..	103	5	85	50	..	85
Off Mail Room ..	Private Box Room ..	458	11	465	..	..	465
44	Dead Letter Office ..	497	3	497	..	..	497
Off Mail Room ..	Poste Restante ..	342	4	323	..	43	323
		9,164		12,844			12,844
Staff, 1910				145			
" 1920				207			
About				43 per cent.			

Telegraph Branch.
Schedule "C."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.	Space required for Prospective Requirements.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Work.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Staff.	Space proposed in New Plans.
		Sq. ft.		Sq. ft.	Per cent.	Per cent.	
First floor—							
48	Operating Room	3,958	84	4,900	..	..	..
49 }	Ladies' Luncheon and Cloak	575	40	See Luncheon Room	..	..	..
50 }	Room		20 max.				
51	Telegraph Luncheon and Cloak	525	145	See Luncheon Room	..	..	..
	Room		26 max.				
52	Messengers' Room	350	4	525	..	..	..
Ground floor—							
30	Receiving and Despatching Section	1,170	52	1,703 (Rec. Sec.)	39	26	
			29 max.				
				1,912			
				3,615			
Basement—							
1	Examination Room	360	7	360 (see Postal Institute)	..	..	..
16	Telegraph Class Room ..	575	50	See Postal Institute	..	..	..
19A	Messengers' Luncheon Room ..	475	20 max.				
			6	See new Luncheon Room	..	..	..
		7,988					

Accounts Branch.
Schedule "D."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.	Space required for Prospective Requirements.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Work.	Ten Years' Rate of Expansion of Staff.	Space proposed New Plan.	Annual Percentage Increase of Staff.
		Sq. ft.		Sq. ft.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Sq. ft.	Per cent.
31	Money Order Section ..	1,080	6	..	..	..	..	..
32	" " " ..	374	5	..	..	..	..	..
33	" " " ..	765	13					
34	" " " ..	373	4					
		2,592	28	..	79	80	..	8
45	Distributor—Stamps ..	397	3	..	76	Nil	..	..
46	Cashier	567	5					
47	"	413	3					
		980	8	..	76	60	..	6
68	Telegraph Accounts ..	646	12	..	41	30	..	3
68	Telephone Accounts ..	646	10	..	206	230	..	23
68	Expenditure	323	5					
70	"	1,200	23					
		1,523	28	..	66	100	9,395	10
69	Accountant	387	1	600	..	..	416	..
31A, 31B, 43A	Strong Rooms	7,171	..	..	..	Storage ..	9,811	..
		375	..	..	..	Strong Room	1,056	
23 and 28	Storage	1,375	..	..	..		128	
		8,921	90	10,000	..	..	10,995	

Administrative Branch.

Schedule "E."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.
		sq. ft.	
55	Deputy Postmaster-General	460	1
54	Chief Clerk	345	1
			(1 Messenger)
57	Correspondence Room ..	448	5
58	Records	378	3
59	"	405	4
60	Staff	395	8
		(Passage 172)	
56	Storage Tower Room ..	144	..
		1,942	

Space required for prospective requirements—2,750 square feet.

10 years' rate of expansion work—About 25 per cent.

10 years' rate of expansion Staff—About 25 per cent.

Inspection Branch.

Schedule "F."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Working Area.	Number of Officers in Room.	Space Required for Prospective Requirements.
		sq. ft.		sq. ft.
61A	Senior of Inspectors ..	122	1	1,200
61	Typists	227	3	
62	Clerks	204	2	
63	District Inspectors and their Clerks	425	6	
				These officers will be most likely located in country districts
		978	12	1,200

Space proposed new plan—3,115 square feet.

Luncheon Rooms.

Schedule "G."

Number of Room.	Name of Section.	Area in Square Feet.	No. Officers using Room.
		sq. ft.	
10	Mail Branch	564	50
50	Telegraph Branch (Women)	575	40 (including women from Clerical Branches)
51	(Telegraphists) ..	525	145
19A	(Messengers) ..	475	Not used—unsuitable
82	State Engineer's (Mechanics)	1,900	30 (probably officers will be located at West Terrace)

Space proposed on Plan—

Women's Dining Room	389 square feet.
Men's Dining Room	697 "
	1,186 "
Kitchen, Scullery, Store Room	543 "
Roof Garden	1,450 "
	3,179 "

Lavatories.

Schedule "H."

Present Accommodation—			
Men's, downstairs .. ..	..	..	368 square feet.
" upstairs .. ..	..	..	391 "
Supervisors', upstairs .. ..	..	..	64 "
Ladies', upstairs .. ..	..	..	49 "
			872 "
Proposed Accommodation—			
Basement .. ..	..	..	169 square feet.
Ground Floor .. ..	..	..	169 "
			272 "
1st Floor .. ..	..	..	169 "
			272 "
2nd Floor .. ..	..	..	169 "
			272 "
3rd Floor .. ..	..	..	169 "
			272 "
4th Floor .. ..	..	..	169 "
			272 "
			2,374 "

I have been Deputy Postmaster-General in South Australia for about seven years. The first wing of the old building was completed about 1872, and the northern wing was completed in 1893. The Post Office is a transferred property, both site and building. The transferred property value of the building was £62,000, and the site £56,700, making a total of £115,700. That does not include the Telephone Exchange, which is situated on the adjoining block. The cost of the building erected in Franklin-street for a Telephone Exchange was £13,953. The space occupied by the linemen on West Terrace is Commonwealth property. The valuation shown in the schedule of transferred properties was:—Building, £559; site, £500; total £1,059. The space occupied by the Postal stores on West Terrace is also Commonwealth property; its cost was, for the building, £3,956; and for the site, £3,663; making a total of £7,619. When I came to Adelaide I found accommodation both for the staff and for the public insufficient. Our staff was considerably crowded, while a fair number of the rooms was occupied by other Commonwealth Departments. The Audit Office, the Public Service Inspector—who also had a sub-branch of the Maternity and Old-age Pensions Department—the Excise branch of the Customs, and the General branch of the Customs, were all housed within the General Post Office. I had to take steps to request the removal of those Commonwealth Departments in order to provide accommodation for our own staffs. The removal of those offices merely provided extra accommodation for our staffs, but made no provision in the direction of improved accommodation for the public. That latter necessity still existed. I am pleased to say that the public have demonstrated their willingness to assist the Department and the Government in the face of considerable inconvenience throughout the period of the war, and due to the war. We had to make arrangements to handle an abnormally developed parcels post and letter business for the A.I.F. overseas. The only possible place in which we could carry on was in the basement, and that is the principal reason for the transfer of the parcels post from the middle wing on the ground floor to the basement. It was impossible to secure space outside even if it had been convenient for the Department to do so. In consequence of war conditions the public displayed great patience, although a great many people severely felt the nature of the unsatisfactory conditions. There was close collaboration between my Department and officials of the Works Department, but what appears to me to have been the trouble has been really the financial difficulty. The first steps taken to represent the necessity for the alteration of this building, after we had had a partial release of the congestion by the transfer of the various other Commonwealth activities from the General Post Office, occurred in 1915, the second year of the war. The

matter was considered both here and at the Central Administration. I assume that it was found that money could not be provided for the necessary work, and there the matter remained until about 1916, or the beginning of 1917, when the then Postmaster-General, Mr. Webster, personally took the problem in hand. Meanwhile, Mr. Simpson and Mr. Murdoch, as well as other officers, were conferring on a very friendly and assisting basis with the object of providing a solution, and a large amount of work of a preparatory character had been done up to the time when Mr. Webster took it up. He then sent an officer here in March, 1917. He took up the information as we had collected it, and, with advice from Mr. Simpson, Mr. Murdoch, and myself, the present plans were evolved. They were the production of Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Simpson, being actually prepared by Mr. Simpson and his officers in the State Department. Speaking from the point of view of Post Office accommodation, both for staff and public, it appears to me that the present plans provide the best arrangements possible within this building to give the space which we require at present, and for fifteen or twenty years to come. If there are not very vital changes in the working of the Post Office the accommodation proposed will provide for the period mentioned, based upon the present rate of progress. The business transacted during the period of the war was certainly abnormal for South Australia, but it has not shown any decline since; in fact, there has been a gradual increase. Although the war greatly enhanced the volume of our work we have found no great falling off since its end, and I do not anticipate a decline, but rather an increase. A very fair percentage of the men who left South Australia, and practically formed the elements of the increased work of our Department in regard to overseas business, were young men who had not homes and responsibilities of their own. Large numbers of them have now returned and have formed homes of their own, or intend to do so before long, and they will become separate individual users of the postal services. In addition, we are settling people in South Australia, especially on the irrigation areas. As the Committee will see from the statement which I have read, we have 1,000 returned soldiers on the Murray lands. All will require telegraphic, postal, money order, and the rest of the usual Post Office facilities; and this is only a part of the general settlement of South Australia. Looking forward, therefore, to increased settlement, and in view of the way in which our business has been legitimately expanding, I anticipate that our rate of progress will go on as before the war. In fact, it will increase a little more rapidly than during that period. The accommodation proposed to be provided could in no sense be regarded as excessive. I am wondering, indeed, if it is not over-conservative for twenty years' time. The matter of building now a little more extensively involves the question of cost and the power of expansion of the proposed accommodation. Looking at the plans, and regarding the possibility of expansion, the present expenditure is what I would favour rather than incur a heavier expenditure upon speculation. With regard to the project of building two additional stories upon the new fire-proof structure in order to house various other Commonwealth departmental activities, the departmental attitude would depend on whether those outside Departments required immediate contact with the public upon our ground floor spaces. If that were a requisite we could not afford to have them there. Even in respect to the rooms on the south-eastern corner of the ground floor now occupied by the Dead Letter Department, and suggested for use by the Commonwealth Savings Bank. I think we can very conveniently absorb that space during the next twenty years for expanding Post and Telegraphic facilities. For example, there is the stamp kiosk and inquiry office, in which are four public telephones. In Sydney, when we put in eighteen public telephones, it was our experience that before three or four years had passed the public were clamoring for still more. In South Australia, with the

ordinary rate of progress, those four telephones will not meet requirements, and we shall be compelled to find four to six more. Of course, in the new proposals there is provision in the telegraph room for ten other public and long distance telephones. Even so, we could utilize those dead letter office rooms for the extension of telephone requirements, and also for the expansion of public inquiry business and the sale of stamps. The kiosk for the sale of stamps does not afford us any additional accommodation over and above what we already possess for the sale of stamps. We could easily use one of those two rooms for the latter purpose now. We could find ready use for both rooms certainly within the next five or six years. In reply to the question whether there would be any objection from the Departmental point of view to the housing of other Commonwealth activities in the suggested additional stories, and, for the public in its dealing with those activities to use the lifts provided within the General Post Office, I should say that it depends upon the nature of the Departments to be housed here. I have some interesting particulars respecting the rentals being paid for the accommodation of Commonwealth offices in Adelaide. These particulars have been supplied by the Departments concerned, as follows:—

Office or Department.	Annual Rental.	Floor Space in Square Feet.
(a) Audit Office	£ 156 0 0	1,081
(b) Public Service Inspector	700 0 0	4,898
(c) Maternity and Old-age Pensions	225 0 0	854
(d) Excise Branch	200 0 0	3,430
(e) Customs Department	175 0 0	2,800
(f) Electoral Department	436 16 0	2,001
(g) Works and Railways	1,152 0 0	12,248
(h) Commonwealth Line of Steamers	145 0 0	700
(i) Taxation		
(j) Sub-Treasury		
Totals	3,240 16 0	28,012

These Commonwealth Departments are at present accommodated in various parts of the city. Upon the question whether economy could be effected by the housing of other Departments within the General Post Office, I would not like to hazard an opinion without full knowledge of costs, &c. I am asked my views, so long as lift facilities are available and the work of these outside Departments is confined to certain floors. Upon this matter, as to whether they would interfere or not with the administration of this Department, I am not prepared to say that they would not do so in respect of all the outside Departments. The Excise and General branches of the Customs Department, for example, would require public accommodation, which I consider would interfere with our business; and the provision of space for the business of the Commonwealth Line of Steamers would also be out of the question. I presume that space, to be of any service to these Departments, would have to be on the ground floor; and that space I could not possibly agree to part with. There is none available. The Sub-Treasury is a Department which I understand requires to be fairly closely related with the Commonwealth Bank. I should say that it would be better where it is now—that is, associated with the Commonwealth Bank—than if it were transferred here. But although I cannot commit this Department to a question of policy, so far as the Audit Office, the Public Service Inspector, and the Maternity and Old-age Pensions are concerned, I can see no objection; at the same time I would always prefer, if possible, to have General Post Office accommodation devoted as entirely to ourselves as possible. In further reply upon this subject, I would say that I see no objection to the housing of other Departments here which can carry on their activities upon the upper floors and do not require to be closely in touch with the general public. I do not think their activities would interfere with us, but those of the Customs or of the Commonwealth Line of Steamers would do so. I am asked whether, if the Committee

recommended that the space available on the ground floor at the south-eastern corner were recommended as a site for a branch of the Commonwealth Savings Bank, that could be done without impairing our own efficient operations during the next few years. I can only say that I would prefer to keep that space for our own expansion. My experience is that when another Department is allowed to enter the Post Office, it required an Archimedean lever to get it out again. I have not studied the matter of the utilization of that corner portion after the proposed alterations have been effected, further than to leave the Dead Letter Office where it is at present. In connexion with our arrangements, while the alterations and additions are in progress, the work of remodelling the building will have to be undertaken in a way which will not interfere materially with the activities of the Department. Two courses suggest themselves—first, the hiring of outside accommodation to house portion of the staff, and change the sections over as each piece of accommodation in the building becomes available; or, the provision of a temporary frame building of the drill-hall type to meet the same purpose. The first necessary step seems to be the erection of the workshops to clear the way for the new entrances to be prepared, and thus provide for the housing of about 54 officers at present located in the General Post Office workshops and basement. It will then be necessary to remove each section of the branches from time to time during the progress of the work, and to enable this to be carried out, a temporary space of about 10,000 square feet will be required. The cost of obtaining this space outside would be very high, approximately 2s. per square foot, or £1,000 per annum, at the very lowest estimate, but such space is practically unobtainable in Adelaide within a reasonable distance of the General Post Office. The provision of space by the erection of drill sheds would cost approximately £4,000, with a recoverable value of, say, 66 per cent., and the annual cost of providing this, plus interest, could be safely estimated at about £600 per annum, and would, of course, be the far cheaper proposition. With respect to the proposed temporary building, such an erection, of the drill-hall type, containing about 10,000 square feet, but a little more comfortable than an ordinary drill hall, will enable us to change the various branches about and house the first section of the staff that would have to be taken out to make way for the architects. The first business would be to clear the workshops out of this building and make way for the road. Then the basement work, the demolition of the two wings, and the closing of the King William-street entrance should follow. The 10,000 square feet to be provided in the temporary building would house all the staff now engaged in the wings. The erection of the workshops will house all those that are now employed in the workshops here. Our staff in the Telephone Exchange attached to the Engineers' branch will remain where they are, so that will merely leave us the necessity of removing the staff which from time to time occupies about 10,000 square feet or less of space. And, when that temporary space of 10,000 square feet is made available, it will be possible to remove section after section as the portion of the building in which those sections are now housed becomes disturbed. Probably two temporary buildings may be deemed necessary on the vacant ground. I have reckoned it up in the total of 10,000 square feet of space. It would not really matter to us whether one or two temporary buildings were reared, so long as either was big enough to house any one section as it became necessary to remove it from the present building. The first activity should be to remove the workshops. These should be contiguous to the stores. All ingoings and outgoings of material should pass through the stores, not direct through the workshops. It is a matter of accountancy of all ins and outs to go through the stores in order to keep the accounting side on a proper basis. With regard to the proposal to remove the Telegraph and Telephone Workshops to West-terrace, a site has been

purchased, namely, part of the site on which the Stores branch is erected at West-terrace. Suitable buildings are not yet erected. They must be built to provide accommodation for 47 officers who now occupy 3,152 square feet in the General Post Office in the following rooms:—Room No. 74, Telegraph Workshop; rooms 75 and 76, Telephone Workshop; room 72, Equipment, Maintenance, and Construction Stores; room 73, Telephone Fitting and Testing. This staff is now congested and the space provided per man does not comply with the Factory Regulations. Sufficient space to accommodate these employees could not be economically provided in the plan of proposed alterations. Furthermore, it would be more economical to have these men located in workshops in close proximity to the Stores—the source of supplies, and from whence all articles from the country come for repairs and are re-issued. With regard to the cost of the proposal, it is not possible to give a definite answer, as no plans have yet been approved, but an amount of £6,000 has been placed on the 1920–21 draft Estimates for this work. The cost of removing officers and material to the new quarters would be about £150. I am advised that there is ample land on the West-terrace site for the erection of our workshops. A proposal has been made, to which the Minister has agreed, for the erection of workshops; but the matter of method and position of placing them has not yet been decided. We have the papers in the Electrical Engineer's branch for report on proposals from the Chief Administration, but I understand, from the Works and Railways Department, that an amount of £6,000 has been placed on the Estimates in order to go on with the matter. I look upon the building of these workshops as a matter of urgency, not only as regards the necessities of the Telegraph and Telephone Engineering branch, but a matter of necessity so far as economy is concerned, and also as a matter of haste in regard to the starting of the new building. The element of safety from fire might also be added here. I impress on the Committee the urgency of proceeding with the construction of the workshops without delay.

33. *To Senator Needham.*—I have referred to the increase in the number of subscribers' telephone lines, and I am asked whether in view of that my Department has looked far enough ahead in regarding the additions and alterations as providing adequate accommodation for the next twenty years. What I have in mind is to show the reasons in support of additional accommodation for the officers of the Electrical Engineer's branch connected with this class of work, who will be in the building. The increase of this work does not necessarily need to be provided for, so far as accommodation is concerned, entirely in this building. We are making provision for a section of those who help to keep these increases going to be housed in the workshops on West-terrace. We are also providing for the remnant of that staff, particularly the clerical officers and engineers, who will be left in this building. My opinion is that we are safe in estimating for twenty years ahead, for the reason that as we progress and reach a point where it is economical to do so we distribute our staff of engineers and those attached to that Department over country districts. On the point whether the increase in the number of telephone subscribers does not also indicate a proportionate increase in the general volume of postal work, I would say that it indicates, of course, that as telephone subscribers' lines are increasing so also would postal work increase; but probably not in the same ratio. I am asked if the particulars which I have given do not indicate that there will be a greater increase during the next few years in regard to general postal work than is at present in the mind of the Department. In that portion of my statement I was dealing exclusively with accommodation for the Engineer's branch. The Committee will note that I have referred to the probabilities of increase in other postal activities, as I have proceeded in my statement to deal with different sections. But the indication that telephone subscribers lines may increase 33 per cent. in a given period is not a

safe indication that postal business generally may also expand to the extent of 33 per cent. over the same length of time, for the reason that a great proportion of this expansion is in the capital city; and advancement in the city is more rapid, so far as Australian history goes, than in the country districts. At this stage some figures concerning the development in the population of South Australia during the past ten years may be of interest. The population of the State in 1910 was 406,868, and of the metropolitan area, 187,574. The proportion of the city to the State was then 46·10. The population of the State in 1919 was 468,194, and of the metropolitan area, 256,660; the proportion to the State being 54·82. I am aware of the factors of a probably enhanced inflow of citizens as an outcome of Australia's immigration policy, and also as an indirect result of world-wide conditions settling down to normal again; but I hope that, however many new residents may come to South Australia, there will not be a greater proportion of city people to those in the country than at present. I trust that the great increase of population will be in country areas. I am of opinion that the population of Adelaide, as compared with the country to-day, is far too great. With regard to the project of placing an additional story on the proposed new fireproof building, if it is a question of expense to the Postal Department, I would need to see my way clear before committing myself in order to ascertain how to justify that expense; but in the matter of accommodating other Commonwealth Departments I prefer personally that the General Post Office should be devoted to post office purposes. If, however, economy suggests the wisdom of utilizing another floor, I see no objection to such of those outside Departments as I have already indicated being accommodated here. The scheme as at present outlined does not propose to remove the telegraph operators from their present locality. In the matter of fire risk the present telegraph operating room is not fireproof; but whether the suggestion to remove them elsewhere involves the protection of the instruments and staff I cannot say at this stage. Neither can I say just now whether the present project of additions and alterations involves any plans for enhancing the safety of the Telegraph Operators' branch. It is imperative, however, that fireproof provision should be given.

34. *To Senator Henderson.*—I am asked whether I am not of the opinion that we shall be compelled to decentralize more quickly than the other States, and whether, in the case of South Australian agricultural activity greatly increasing, that would not ease the volume of postal business transacted in the city. I am of opinion, rather, that it would tend to increase the business in the city. When I referred to decentralization my idea was that we could decentralize some of the work carried out in the General Post Office.

35. *To Mr. Mathews.*—Provided that the basement alterations are carried out so as to furnish the lowest floor along modern lines and methods employed in many basements in private commercial buildings now in Adelaide, I should say that there need be no fear in the matter of the health of employees there. I understand that the basement, as it is to be improved, will be quite satisfactory. The overhead space is to be increased so as to provide better and bigger working space than hitherto, and it will be better than numbers of other basements in different parts of Adelaide in which numerous employees are satisfactorily housed. Despite the fact that the windows and ventilation provision are to be placed higher than the floor of the basement, I do not anticipate any discomfort. There should not be much difficulty as to that matter at all. The basement is to be properly ventilated, and the surroundings made cheerful. The present basement is not a place in which one should expect fair work from one's employees; but the plans provide a very different proposition, and there will be quite satisfactory accommodation for the Parcels Post branch. Concerning the point that

the stamp sales kiosk may take away too much space from the main hall, I have never seen the hall congested, although it is always largely used by the public. I do not think that, as the years go on, we will have enough accommodation if we keep the telephones in the kiosk; but the main telephones are provided for in the telegraph receiving room. If the kiosk is to take up any more space, the business conducted there should be transferred to one of the side rooms off the main hall, rather than be in the main hall at all. I do not think we shall be cramping the hall at present, so long as we do not extend operations more fully than is now proposed in the matter of the kiosk and the *poste restante*. I would like to add some information regarding the number of officers employed in the General Post Office, Adelaide. The total of male employees is 746; the total of female employees is 193; making a grand total of 939. The permanent employees number 801, and temporary employees 138. In the matter of the question whether the better accommodation proposed will permit of any reduction of staff, I would like to say that that will be possible in respect of eight officers, whose salary would total £1,200 in the first year; and ten officers, whose salaries would total between £1,500 and £1,600 per annum in subsequent years. The size of the land owned by the Postal Department adjoining the Telephone Exchange is 1 rood 28·1 perches, and it cost £24,658.

(Taken at Adelaide.)

WEDNESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1920.

Present:

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman;	
Senator Henderson,	Mr. Bamford,
Senator Needham,	Mr. Mathews.
Senator Newland,	

Edward William Bramble, Deputy Postmaster-General for South Australia, recalled and further examined.

36. *To Senator Newland.*—I have not heard any objections or complaints regarding the proposed alterations so far as the architectural aspect is concerned. I heard at the outset that there would be objections to altering the general architectural effect of the front of the building. These objections were not addressed to me personally, but my impression is that such opinions were expressed before those who made them were aware of the nature of the alterations. In my opinion there will be no objectionable effect. I have considered the subject, but have not discussed the question of architectural effect with the architect. The matter of building has latterly been entirely out of my hands and in those of the Postmaster-General and the central staff; but, looking at the plans, I will say that the alterations will not destroy the architectural appearance of the building, nor should they be likely to offend one's æsthetic sense in any degree or direction. I am quite satisfied upon that point. I feel confident that the alterations proposed to the basement will meet requirements for a considerable period, both from the point of view of the employees and their work, and of the public. The work proposed to be carried out in the basement is work requiring space more for the larger articles handled, such as parcels, rather than for the increases of staff such as occur in other branches of the Department. The number of staff in proportion to the space allotted for the parcels post section is really smaller than in other branches. It is more a matter of room required for carrying on the activities of the parcels post. In addition, the approaches to that section of the service must be as near

to the public as possible. After providing for the other equally important, if not more important section, namely, the inland mail branch, we have no better means of giving the public approach to the parcels post than by taking them to the basement. In the preparation of the plans public convenience has been considered quite equally with the requirements of the employees and the work of the post-office. The alterations will make matters infinitely more convenient to the public than is possible at present. I am satisfied that the facilities, both in the Telegraph and Money Order branch on the first floor, will meet all requirements for fully fifteen to twenty years. In regard to the Telegraph branch, that is not only my own opinion, but the opinion of the telegraph manager, the engineers, and the telephone staff. The letter sorting room and the space for the mechanical appliances to aid sorting and speed distribution of mails will be ample; and, also, we shall have better ingress and egress in respect to loading and unloading of mails. It will permit of a very substantial increase in volume of work, and the conditions will make it easier and more cheerful for the men doing the work. We will be able to do more work with a less proportionate staff than under present conditions. I am asked whether the proposed alterations will provide more room for the Telegraph Operating Department than is available now. I would say, directly, no; but indirectly, yes. The telegraph operating room is ample for our requirements for many years. At the end of the operating room we have a proportion of space given over to the Meteorological Department, which can be retained by them at present without interfering with our work, but we can draw upon that space when we require it. It is not absolutely necessary for that branch to be housed there. In any case, the accommodation for the Meteorological officers is only for a very limited time during each day, when they are engaged in preparing their daily weather map, and it would be no great inconvenience for them to attend to that work elsewhere. Further, the luncheon room occupied by the officers in the operating room will provide additional means of expansion, at the south-western corner of the building. The wall between the operating room and the ladies' luncheon room could, I understand from the architect, be easily removed. In addition, as the telegraph business expands, the policy of the Department is to decentralize the work. For example, the whole of the Eyre's Peninsula telegraph work is coming on lines which pass through Port Augusta. With the aid of more complex instruments we can put the repeating instruments at Port Augusta, collect the business there, and reduce the number of Morse or other instruments in the operating room to the extent of about 50 per cent. That is only one instance of many in which we can decentralize the business of the operating room. We are now arranging for two places to take up that system. Taking all those features into consideration, the operating room is estimated, both from the engineers' and telegraph managers' and my own point of view, to last us conveniently for the next twenty years. I always attach importance to the risk of fire in the telegraph operating room, but in that regard I also take into account the experience in that branch of the postal service. We have had no fire of any size for 30 years, and then only one, when the means of heating the room were crude open stoves; the small outbreak was speedily subdued. In addition, I do not know that a fire has ever taken place in the Sydney operating room. I have never heard of a fire in the telegraph operating room there. The electrical connexions do not lend themselves to fire outbreak. It is impossible for a fire to take place from those connexions. When the stage is reached at which fire becomes possible, the fuses burst and the current

is shut off. The only risk from fire is in respect to one of those causes which cannot be provided against, and cannot be explained. The work of the mail room underneath is not likely to cause fire. The question arises concerning what would be the cost of providing for a contingency arising so rarely as compared with the cost involved should it occur. If it was going to cost a large amount disproportionate to the risk, to remove the operating room to the fire-proof building, I would be prepared to take the risk of fire. But if the economic cost of removal was small, I would consider it advisable to provide for that risk. The position of the operating room would also have to be considered in relation to this other work, and in regard to the arrangement of space already made. The operating room space would not be sufficient, even including the possibility of expansion, to achieve the object we are aiming at in regard to the other sections, by giving the other sections the space in the operating room that we might take for the operating room work. If no transposition were made, and an additional floor were erected for the operating room, the present space would be to spare. I could see no immediate use for it, and it would be an objectionable place in which to house other Departments outside the General Post Office. Regarding the removal of the mechanics to the stores site on West Terrace, before work were gone on with here, if funds were provided immediately there would be only the delay involved to the extent of the time occupied in erecting accommodation on West Terrace. There is no site to be acquired. There would be no great architectural problems to be considered. The work could be immediately proceeded with. With funds in hand, probably the building would not take more than three or four months to erect. The proposal is to put a few of the supervising staff immediately related to the workshops section at West Terrace with those who will be transferred. There will be room on West Terrace for many years to come. It would not be possible to accommodate the linemen on the stores block. There would not be sufficient space for them. I am satisfied that for the present, and for probably four or five years, the accommodation now available for the Telephone Department is sufficient. After that, it becomes a question of engineering and telephone development as to what we shall do. At present our telephone exchange is the C.B., or common battery working. Our extensions in the suburbs are semi-automatic, and the time must come when the Central Exchange will have to be transferred to the automatic system of working so as to dove-tail into the semi-automatic system in the suburbs, which will eventually develop into full automatic. In the event of such an alteration, I do not know whether the present telephone exchange accommodation available would be sufficient. What must be kept in mind is the fact that a transposition of exchange work from one system to another, or even the removal of an existing system to another building, means the provision of a separate building altogether at the time of transposition. If we have 8,000 or 10,000 subscribers—as we have in the Central Exchange—and we are going to remove those, we must be prepared, before we touch one line, to make provision in another building to continue the whole of the exchange business forthwith. The development phase would have to be closely considered, because a limit is reached in any exchange when it becomes necessary to provide an auxiliary exchange outside. The developmental centre for Adelaide City is where the exchange is at present. I do not know whether the development of the City of Adelaide would reach more than that building with its possibilities of extension could contain; so that if there were any expansion of metropolitan business—say, by the linking up of big interests outside of the Parklands belt—we would have

to provide another exchange to meet that business independently of the present exchange building. At present sanitary and fire escape conveniences for the staff are indifferent. They are congested and awkward, and although we have frequent fire drills and other provisions for means of escape, they are not what they should be for a staff of such dimensions. The plans, however, provide for all reasonable needs in this respect and against all reasonable risks from fire to a large staff. With respect to my views as to whether the installation of one lift only will be sufficient, or whether both the public passenger lifts should be installed, I would say that if space is left for extending the lift accommodation the proposed requirements will be sufficient for the next four or five years; that is, with the one lift only. The public in large numbers will not require to visit the first floor, as the main activities of the post office are on the ground floor. I have dealt with the luncheon accommodation fully in my statement, and I think I need say little further. I point out, however, that the luncheon hour will not necessarily strain the lift accommodation, for the reason that the staff will go to luncheon at different periods of the day. The mail branch staff would probably not take its lunch at the same time as the telegraph or engineers' staffs. First of all, there must be considered the necessities of the work of the departments. It would mean that the number travelling up by the lifts to go to lunch at any one time would not be a serious problem in that regard. I think the proposed provision will be sufficient for the time, in view of the provision made for expansion. We are already providing luncheon room accommodation which the alterations of the building will take away, and it is due to the Department to arrange for that space elsewhere—although it is not required to do so, that is, legally, except in the case of the mechanics, who are working under an award. It is the practice outside to do so, however, and we, as a Government institution, should not be behind. Moreover, there is quite a large number of our staff who, even if we did not provide the accommodation, could not get out from this building to have lunch. They must be immediately available when their luncheon hour is over. That is another obligation on the Department. The time for luncheon is provided for in the regulation hours, but we are allowed to make that period at any portion of the day that suits the work and provides reasonably for the comfort and convenience of the staff. There would be a difficulty in providing a set meal at a given hour. Many employees now bring their own luncheon. We furnish hot water and the simple means of cooking such food as eggs; but we have not reached the stage at which we can provide a regular three-course meal, prepared at the expense of the Department. It is a matter, however, on which I would not like to make a pronouncement, but it seems a matter for the co-operation of the staff. Where such a convenience is provided it is made use of, but I have no data as to the cost or revenue. I take it that the proposed arrangements provide for provision by us of meals, if deemed necessary. The only course I can see is to follow the example of exemplary employers, and make accommodation of that sort practicable by offering inducements to its being successfully carried on by means of co-operation.

37. *To Mr. Bamford.*—I cannot say whether the public have had access to the plans on which to express an opinion regarding æsthetic considerations. Such complaints as were made regarding the possible marring effect of rebuilding were uttered before the people concerned knew what they were complaining about. During the war there was great difficulty in dealing with parcels. Under the proposed alterations we will be

much better able to carry on, even though the strain of war-time should be repeated at any future period.

38. *To Senator Needham.*—With regard to the question of the employees forming a Mess Committee, and of the Government assisting by providing a cook, I would say as an individual that whatever we do should provide the greatest possible comfort for our officers. But the matter of the detailed costs to be borne by the Department is a matter of policy I cannot deal with.

39. *To Mr. Mathews.*—I am asked if I have any objection to the removal of the kiosk to a place where it would be equally convenient for the public to purchase stamps. I may say that it is not the only place where the sale of stamps could be conducted. We have those spare rooms in the south-eastern corner of the ground floor. If it should be found to be a public inconvenience to maintain the kiosk in the large hall, quite as convenient a position for public requirements could be found by utilizing those spare rooms. Upon the question whether there have been many accidents requiring medical attention for employees, I may say that there is not exactly a first-aid branch attached to the staff. There are standing instructions, however, in case of accident, whereby the sufferer is to be brought immediately to the Government medical officer. There are men on our staffs, I understand, who are quite competent to render first aid. I have no record of accidents or indisposition caused as the outcome of the work done within this building, which is not of a dangerous character. The principal accidents are in respect to our linemen when engaged working outside. We have among those parties a fairly effective system of first aid. During the past three or four years a complete set of instructions in regard to action to be taken in case of accidents has been issued, and such a set is in the hands of every officer working outside, with strict instructions to follow them. The rendering of fraudulent or excessive claims by persons injured by accident is reduced to a minimum provided the instructions issued by the Department to its officers are intelligently observed. All necessary inquiries have to be made forthwith, and it is a responsibility cast upon the officers to see that the sufferer is promptly attended to. There has been no need to provide first aid within this building.

The witness withdrew.

John Edward Dickie, Chief Officer, Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Adelaide, sworn and examined.

40. *To the Chairman.*—There is a Fire Brigades Board in Adelaide which has a certain degree of control in the matter of the erection of buildings throughout the State. My advice has been sought in matters tending towards fire protection in respect of the General Post Office building, and in 1917 I drafted a report on the matter. Only in exceptional cases have I been called on to furnish such a report in respect to the erection of any building in Adelaide. Only in the case of the construction of places of public entertainment has it been deemed essential, so far, for me to furnish an official report before authority is given to proceed with some new structure. I have made an inspection of the General Post Office for report upon the structure as it now stands. The latter was furnished to the Fire Brigades Board, and it is as follows:—

GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Main Building.—Constructed of stone, containing the following departments:—

Ground Floor.—Mail room, delivery and receiving offices.

First Floor.—Telegraph operating room and clerical offices.

Basement.—Parcel Post department.

Northern Annexe.—Adjoining main building, constructed of stone and brick.

Ground Floor.—Telegraph receiving office and money order office and offices.

Upper Floors.—Various offices.

Basement.—Carpenters' workshop.

POST OFFICE YARD.

Water Supply.—A 3-in. main connected to 6-in. main, Franklin-street, and 18-in. main, King William-street, 2 pillar hydrants connected to same, one west side of main building, in yard, Franklin-street entrance, one between main building and northern annexe in yard, King William-street entrance.

Outside Fire Escapes, to be used in case of fire or panic.—None.

Inside Fire Service.—None.

Chemical Fire Extinguishers.—For first-aid purposes, five electrene in telegraph operating room; none in any other part of the building.

Fire Alarm.—One in front of main building, King William-street, none inside building.

Lighting.—Electric light.

Exits from Upper Floors.—One inside unprotected staircase in each building.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE.

Building.—A fire-proof brick building containing the following:—

Ground Floor.—Test room, cables, and cable racks.

Upper Floor.—Electrical apparatus for the working of the exchange.

Basement.—Power Plant.

Exits.—From upper floors, two inside protected stairways, one each end of building, to allow of the staff using either in case of fire, or panic which might accrue from same.

Chemical Fire Extinguishers.—A number of electrene and dry powder extinguishers placed in suitable positions, also buckets kept full of sand ready for use.

Fire Drill of Staff.—The mechanics and operators are trained in fire drill, all the electrical circuits are protected by fuses, and every precaution seems to have been taken in case of fire.

DEPARTMENTAL STORES.

(Corner of West Terrace and Hindley-street.)

Buildings.—Main store, constructed of wood and iron. Three (3) stone cottages, used as offices and store-rooms; and a separate brick building, used for the storage of oils, paints, &c., clear of main store and cottages.

Water Supply.—A 3-in. main connected to 6-in. main, Hindley-street, is being installed in the yard, one pillar hydrant connected to same to be placed in position centre of site, within easy distance of all buildings, 150 feet of 2½-in. hose, fire brigade pattern couplings, branches attached to be placed in position near hydrant ready for use.

Chemical Fire Extinguishers.—For first aid purposes, four of an approved pattern in store on brackets, in suitable positions, and one near cottages.

Fire Alarm.—Front of main store, near Hindley-street entrance, connected to the head fire station. This should give reasonable protection to these stores and cottages, if brought into use immediately, should a fire occur.

GENERAL POST OFFICE, MAIN BUILDING AND NORTHERN ANNEXE.

After taking into consideration the large amount at risk, the number of persons employed in the various departments in the buildings, also the possible dislocation of the service should a fire occur in either of these buildings—

Exits.—The present means of exit from the upper floors of both buildings could not be considered satisfactory, owing to there being only one means of escape, and that by means of only one unprotected inside staircase, in each building, and in the event of a fire occurring in the basement, or ground floor, the inmates on the upper floors might be cut off owing to the smoke ascending to these floors.

Telegraph Operating Room.—Being immediately over the mail branch room, where sealing wax is extensively used, and heated, also large quantities of bags, letters, &c., about, also the fittings being of wood, a fire occurring in this department or basement, extending to the upper floor, might mean the dislocation of the whole of the telegraph service.

Basement, Northern Annexe, which is used as a carpenters' workshop, where large quantities of dry timber, paints, varnish, and oils are stored, also a large quantity of paper, this I consider a menace to this building, owing to the highly inflammable nature of the contents.

I would recommend the following, for the better protection of these buildings from fire, and panic that might accrue from same:—

Iron Stairway or Escapes.—One to each building, to be placed outside of building and constructed at opposite ends to the present inside staircase, so as to allow for a second exit from all floors above the ground floor, doors leading to same to open outwards, and should not be placed near windows unless unavoidable.

Exits.—From telegraph operating room another exit should be made available, at the opposite end of room, to the present one now in use, viz., door nearest to staircase.

Wooden Enclosure containing resistance lamps, in battery leads, to be made fire-proof.

Chemical Fire Extinguishers of an improved pattern, break-bottle type preferred, to be on brackets 4 ft. 6 in. from ground, placed in suitable positions, for first aid purposes—main hall (2), mailroom (4), balcony (2), basement (4).

Northern Annexe.—Two (2) on each floor, four in basement.

Hose.—Two 100-ft. lengths, with branch attached in box, to be placed as near as possible to pillar hydrants in yard, between main building and northern annexe.

Inside Fire Alarm System could be installed throughout these buildings, to denote the exact portion or floor in which a fire may have occurred, besides saving valuable time in turning in the call to the brigade, as it is absolutely necessary to ring up the brigade at once in the event of fire.

Care of Appliances.—It is very necessary that one of the staff be told off for this purpose, and held responsible that all the appliances are kept in good order and ready for use.

It could be arranged for the brigade drill instructor to attend to give the necessary instructions as to the working of the appliances.

If carried out, this should certainly minimize the risk from fire.

I have not seen the plans of the proposed additions and alterations. I do not think there is any regulation governing the limitation of height of buildings in Adelaide. The pressure of water in this neighbourhood is about 60 lbs. That would be sufficient for our needs, in the case of an outbreak of fire, with regard to a building of from 50 to 60 feet in height. For anything

above that the installation of a pressure plant would be necessary. I should think that rising mains throughout the building would serve the purpose, so far as inside needs were concerned, in respect of the proposed new portions. There is accommodation for a sufficient service up to 100 feet in height for inside purposes. If the supply to this building were to be taken directly from the 18-in. main running right along King William-street, that would be more than ample, and would be a very wise proceeding; but the 4-in. mains running past the building, which are tapped at the pillar hydrants, are badly corroded, and that point should be borne in mind. From a brief perusal of the plans it appears to me that every precaution has been taken for the safety of employees in the matter of exits, staircases, lift wells, &c. With regard to the matter of the lifts and staircases being in close proximity, I do not see any danger here, seeing that the lifts are to be encased in fire-proof form. I do not think any objection would lie if it were proposed to erect upon the fire-proof additions one or two more stories. I think the provisions made for safety are in every way adequate and suitable, and I do not see that any thing more should be expected.

41. *To Mr. Mathews.*—I regard the staircase provision as ample to meet requirements in respect of the safety of employees working on the first and upper floors.

41A. *To Mr. Bamford.*—We have about thirty-six men concentrated at the head fire station. In the case of a fire alarm being given from this building, our brigade staff would be on the spot within about two minutes.

42. *To Senator Needham.*—I do not think a sprinkler installation should be necessary in a building of this character, where there will be employees always on the spot; but, of course, it would be an additional factor of protection. Personally, I would not recommend it. For purposes of fire fighting we can reach a building from outside up to a height of about 60 feet without being called upon to use the pumping plant. Of course, we could cope with a building higher than that with the assistance of a pumping plant. I would recommend the provision of outside fire escapes in the event of additional floors being decided upon. The staircases and lifts would not be adequate if the building were to go higher.

(Taken at Adelaide.)

THURSDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1920.

(Sectional Committee.)

Present:

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman;

Senator Henderson, | Senator Newland.
Senator Needham, |

Louis Laybourne Smith, B.E., F.S.A.I.A., President of the Federal Council of the Australian Institutes of Architects, and Vice-President of the South Australian Institute of Architects, sworn and examined.

43. *To the Chairman.*—I had an opportunity of looking at the plans showing the proposed alterations and additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide, for half-an-hour or so. The problem is an exceedingly difficult one, on account of the restricted site and the fact that the building is one of which the Adelaide people are proud, and jealous that it should not be marred architecturally. The first thing I should say is that you have reached the limit of height to which I could agree. I have been viewing the building to-day from different points to try and imagine what it would look like with the proposed additions. My opinion is that you are doing the very best under the circumstances, but that to carry the building any higher would mar the effect. If the Committee considers that, as far as possible, the Commonwealth activities of Adelaide should be housed in this building, I am afraid you are confronted with a difficult problem, for, excepting you erect a mansard story, I do not think it possible to add another story. The addition of a story would mar the effect of the tower, which could not be raised, but might possibly be rebuilt. Of course, the higher the front of the building is, the less objectionable the additions at the back would appear. If you make the front building a story higher, there would be nothing to do but to remove the tower. On present appearances I would protest against increasing the height of the old building. So far as the proposed design is concerned, and limiting it to the present scheme, I and a member of the institute viewed it yesterday, and consider it an extraordinarily good scheme, which has been wonderfully worked out, and we could only find very small points of criticism. The idea occurred to my colleague, however, that the north light was too great, and might be reduced. It would be quite impossible for a working staff to face that light, especially in the winter, because at that period of the year the angle of the sun's rays is such that they shine right through the window. My recommendation would be to reduce considerably the amount of window space in the north. The second point is that I think every effort should be made to keep the parapet wall as low as possible. I think it could be reduced several feet, or you might abandon the parapet and put in eaves, which could be made fire-proof. This would mean lowering the parapet wall perhaps 4 feet, and would effect a considerable saving. We have placed lift machinery in the basement in some buildings in Adelaide; but lift engineers generally advocate the top floor, as making one less bend in the rope. I think the life of the rope is less when the lift machinery is in the basement. I would not like the housing of the lift machinery to be visible on the top of the building. I would prefer a little more money spent and keep the power in the basement. I am not sufficiently conversant with the plan to know whether in the present design the parapet is masking the lift house. I should think that every effort should be made to reduce the parapet as much as possible; a break in the parapet wall always constitutes an ugly feature architecturally. With a very high building it might be possible to lower the parapet all around, and show the roof running into the gutters without the roof being visible from the ground. That was the suggestion I made, but these lifts are right at the side; that is the trouble. In going through the plans I certainly think the alterations suggested are very essential for the convenience of the public. In regard to the parcels post office in the basement, I consider the area provided excellent, and the lighting the best that can be done in the circumstances; and with mechanical ventilation I think the arrangements would be quite a success.

44. *To Senator Newland.*—My main objection to the proposed building is its height as seen from Victoria

Square. It is mainly an æsthetic objection, but I think you should exhaust every means of dealing with it. We sometimes imagine that utility is everything; but the public have regard also to the æsthetic. From the other side of King William-street, I do not think the appearance of the building will suffer by reason of the proposed additions, but from Victoria Square I think it must suffer. I hope you are taking proper steps to deal with the chimneys on the existing building. They are in front, and I hope it will not be necessary to carry them up to any height. If, as you tell me, the building is to be artificially heated, you could do away with them. There is another point I would like to mention, and that is, where your foundations and drainage are deep, nothing should be done in any way to endanger the foundations of the present structure. The building is at present on clay, and the stability of that clay depends on keeping it either moist or dry. If we interfere with its stability in any way, it must crack, and the building consequently will suffer. You say it is proposed that the foundations be put down on to the gravel. I do not think you will ever reach the gravel. You may go down 70 or 80 feet, and you will reach a stony crust, and below that the running water. That obtains right throughout the city. The building will stand on clay, I understand, but there will be a well which will drain the water away; but supposing the drainage system is 2 or 3 feet below the existing foundation, then there will be settlement of the older building, and it is only by trying to go no deeper than the existing buildings, and not undermine them, that the best work will be possible. If, as you say, you go but very little below the depth of the present building, I think there is no danger to be feared; but if you draw the drainage from the clay, the clay will almost certainly contract, and you will have trouble. Care should be taken that the drainage should not be lower than the existing foundations, so as not to endanger them. The proposal to erect a kiosk in the centre of the main hall, from an architectural point of view will look well; as to its efficiency, I cannot speak. But if room is available elsewhere on the ground floor, it would be a pity to obstruct the free use of the main hall.

45. *To Senator Needham.*—In the event of the parapet being lowered, you would save a certain amount of walling. There is no suggestion to reduce the efficiency merely to save a few inches, perhaps 2 feet, of wall. There will be an economy, but it is hard to say what that would actually be beyond the fact that you could effect a moderate saving.

46. *To the Chairman.*—Before concluding, I would like to say, as representing the architectural profession in Australia, that we think that all buildings of this nature should be erected in association with private practitioners. It is a world-wide practice. In other professions—medical, legal, and so on—when one requires good work one has to rely on the reputation of the practitioner; but in architecture, painting, or sculpture, it is possible to demonstrate beforehand what you are going to do; that is why competitions are in vogue in those three arts; and we think that architects throughout the world generally are in agreement that competitions should be much more common. The project you have before you appears to be an excellent scheme; but somebody else might produce something

totally different, which would be better. An architect cannot always do his best work, and the man who wins a competition is probably doing the best thing he ever did. We think that every national building should be erected from the best design possible, and the Government should find out from the architectural profession what is the best. In a scheme like this under consideration it might have been possible to ask for competitive suggestions, and you might have got something better even than the excellent scheme you now have. If the requirements of the Department were clearly set out, I think there would be no difficulty in getting architects individually to submit schemes. But in cases like that it is better not to ask for too much, and definite working plans should not be required. It would simply be necessary to lay down a ground work of requirements—what we call the programme—and the architects could prepare their preliminary schemes, generally only pencil drawings. Perhaps six of the best designs are then picked out; these designs are kept confidential, and the men who produced them are asked to elaborate their schemes in competition, and the best design is then selected. The designs might be judged by a Committee such as this, with professional assistance. Another thing I would like to mention is that personally I cannot see why the Commonwealth should avail itself of the services of a State Department in carrying out architectural works. In that case you have no choice in the man you are dealing with; you have to associate yourself with a Department—you do not know who is in the Department, and they either carry out the designs submitted well, or spoil the work. If you have to get assistance, it seems to me you would do better to get assistance from the private practitioner, and it would improve the architecture of your buildings considerably. Of course, I have great faith in Mr. Simpson, our present Superintendent of Public Buildings; but before his appointment we were for years without an architect at the head of the Department. On behalf of the institutes I would recommend that the Federal Government, when undertaking building works, should apply to the profession generally for the purpose of assistance in supervising, preparing plans, and getting help generally, instead of asking the State Departments or establishing a department of its own.

(The witness withdrew.)

Charles William Rogers, clerk to the Commonwealth Public Service Inspector, South Australia, sworn and examined.

47. *To the Chairman.*—In the absence of Mr. Gardiner, I have come before the Committee to give them any information I can. I am aware that a report has been submitted in connexion with the proposed alterations to the General Post Office, and I understand it has been suggested that in connexion with these alterations it might be possible to so arrange as to house other Commonwealth activities in this building. I have had an opportunity of consulting with the Public Service Inspector, and am prepared to give you particulars of the various Commonwealth Departments in Adelaide, the amount of rent they pay, and the

number of staff accommodated. These particulars, exclusive of the Postmaster-General's, Defence, Repatria-

tion, War Service Homes, and Meteorological Departments, are as follow:—

Department.	Location.	Rent per Annum.	Floor Space.	Permanent Staff.			Temporary Staff.			Total Permanent and Temporary Officers.
				Male.	Female.	Total.	Male.	Female.	Total.	
		£	Sq. ft.							
Customs, Adelaide ..	Pirie-street	225	854	5	..	5	..	..	..	5
Taxation	Hindmarsh Buildings, Grenfell-street	1,152	12,248	77	27	104	46	24	70	174
Electoral	Selborne Chambers, Pirie- street	260	3,430	7	1	8	..	..	..	8
Audit Office ..	Royal Exchange Buildings, King William-street	156	1,081	12	..	12	6	..	6	18
Works and Railways	Selborne Chambers, Pirie- street	175	2,800	5	1	6	..	..	..	6
Sub-Treasury ..	Royal Exchange Buildings, King William-street	200	854	8	1	9	..	..	..	9
Public Service In- spectors	} Brookman's Buildings, Grenfell-street	700	4,898	3	1	4	..	..	..	4
Pensions, Old-age, &c.				16	3	19	14	8	22	41
Excise				6	..	6	..	1	1	7
Total		2,868	26,165	139	34	173	66	33	99	272

The Taxation Department has authority to engage an additional 26 officers from 1st July, and will then need further accommodation. The War Pensions Office is to be transferred to the Repatriation Department, as from 1st July, 1920, which will relieve the Pensions Office of 20 officers.

The establishment of an Accounts Branch, Department of Works and Railways, in Adelaide, will mean an additional four officers.

The Public Service Inspector agrees that it would be an advantage to have all these offices together. He made a suggestion to that effect some years ago, but has not brought the matter up again lately. I think the location of the Commonwealth activities in a block of buildings on the Commonwealth property in Franklin-street would be an advantage. It would be close to the post office, it would be convenient for the public, and would save a certain amount of telephoning and the services of a few messengers. The figures I have given you in regard to the rentals have been examined by my office to see what office space is costing the Commonwealth per square foot. We work it out at about 2s. 4d. per square foot. I look upon that as a high rental. Of course, that is the average, as each Department does not pay the same. For instance, the Sub-Treasury pays £200 for 854 square feet, the Public Service Inspector, &c., £700 for 4,898 square feet, the Works and Railways £175 for 2,800 square feet, while the Taxation Department pays £1,152 for 12,248 square feet. They will require further accommodation shortly for an additional twenty-six men.

48. *To Senator Newland.*—The Taxation Department is employing temporary officers, and will replace them by twenty-six permanent officers as from 1st July. The appointments to the Clerical Staff are being made as the result of an examination held recently; it was a competitive examination limited to returned soldiers. The Works and Railways Department have not six officers here yet—those are prospective officers; there are only two officers of that Department in Adelaide at present. I have not included in this list the war service homes; that does not come under our office at all, it will be another department of considerable dimensions, for which accommodation will have to be found. If another story were erected on this proposed building, giving 6,000 feet of space, it would not help us a great deal. Allowing a minimum of 60 square feet to each officer, another story would provide for only 100 officers. The offices we occupy are on the top floor of Brookman's Buildings. The public do not complain about getting there, as there is a good lift service, with a man in charge. I have heard no complaints even from old persons, who have to come up there to the Pensions Office. We estimate that the Taxation Department may require accommodation for a further

twenty officers during the next ten years; and if the Commonwealth take over the State taxation, increased staff, and, consequently, increased accommodation, would be required. The Audit Office has increased from six in 1914 to eighteen in 1920; an increase in staff was necessary, because they have now to audit the Commonwealth Bank, the Repatriation and War Service Homes Departments' accounts. The Sub-Treasury is a new branch established here during the last twelve months; they have nine officers. The work was previously done by the State Treasury. We do not anticipate any large expansion in any of the other Departments. Even if the Commonwealth Electoral Office took over the State rolls, they could carry on with their present staff and accommodation.

The witness withdrew.

Joseph Richard Richardson, M.C.E., A.M.I.C.E., City Engineer of Adelaide, sworn and examined.

49. *To the Chairman.*—I have made a hurried examination of the plans of the proposed additions and alterations to the General Post Office, and Mr. Simpson has supplied me with a copy of a description of the works to be carried out. With those particulars, and with a knowledge of building such as I have, I was able to form a good idea of the proposition. The alterations and additions under consideration embrace principally the demolishing of structures on the north-west portion of the General Post Office building, and the erection of a reinforced concrete structure of five stories on the site thereof to provide necessary accommodation for desired improvements to the Post Office Department and for officers of the Federal Department. The present post office building, for some distance back from King William and Franklin streets frontages, will not be affected in any way by the proposed alterations. The frontage of the present building to King William-street is approximately 212 feet, and the frontage to Franklin-street, including the Telephone Exchange, is the same. West of the Telephone Exchange is vacant post-office land, with a frontage of 90 ft. 5 in. to Franklin-street, and of a depth of 211 feet to the lane at the rear, and abutting on Oddfellows-place, on the west. I am familiar with the plan

of the present structure, and recognise the disabilities of the present conditions. The officials of the Departments, as well as the public, deserve better conditions for the conduct of business at the General Post Office, Adelaide. It will suffice to instance the accommodation set apart for the telegraph office, where a large number of the public congregate for telephonic purposes, rendering the office unhealthy, particularly for the officials, as well as for the general public. The buildings as now existing for the conduct of the departmental business are antiquated, and there is lacking any harmonious connexion between the various offices as one would expect. Consequently the service must be very inefficient. I have not seen any comprehensive design for the General Post Office requirements of Adelaide to provide for the proper and efficient conduct of the business of the post office at present and for the future, with the city developing south and west. The citizens of Adelaide will not be satisfied with the proposed alterations and additions as set out and embodied in the plans which have been prepared. To attempt to modernize buildings started as far back as 1868 by alterations and additions at the rear thereof is, in my opinion, a mistake, and will be disappointing, notwithstanding the fact that the design may embody the most modern facilities for lighting and ventilation. The proposal is to concentrate the offices of the Post Office Department and other Federal offices in a structure where the hygienic conditions are unfavorable in comparison with that of the street frontages. Build up on the frontages, I say, rather than the rear; but if that is too expensive, build on the vacant land of Franklin-street, west of the telephone building. A comprehensive plan over the whole of the Post Office land available should be designed, including necessary alterations to the existing buildings, having a facade to Franklin-street in harmony with that of the existing building, and provision for necessary extension in stores and otherwise for the future. Build such portion of that comprehensive design as is required for the modernizing of the postal and telegraphic and other offices of the Postal Department, and also for the other offices of the Federal and Government Departments. The proposed scheme for the erection of a five or six story structure at the rear of the Post Office building, while it may effect many desired and necessary improvements, has, apart from the defects hereinbefore mentioned, the following objections:—

- (1) The destruction of much property now in use, and which otherwise could be partly re-used.
- (2) The construction of a building for the temporary accommodation of various Departments during the alterations, which must necessitate much expense as well as inconvenience to all concerned.

I hand in a plan herewith of the General Post Office, town area 237, city of Adelaide, and adjacent roads north and west, together with information thereon, which may be of interest to the Committee. I do not know how many stories the present structure would carry, but if it were deemed necessary I should think that at least two could be added; and I think that could be done, at any rate, in regard to one additional floor, without interfering with the architectural lines of the General Post Office. Probably the tower would require to be rebuilt or demolished. I note that in all the administrative rooms on the first floor the height is from 20 to 23 feet. That appears to be a considerable waste of cubic space. In adding another floor use could be well made of the unnecessary space. I consider it essential that many considerable alterations will have to be made in this building to insure efficient administration in future. Generally

it is well to insure concentration of activities of the General Post Office; but I should think that excellent use could be made of the vacant block on the western side. I would not, under present conditions, recommend that the brick building be retained. Part of the walls could be removed; but there is no reason why a very substantial portion of the building should not be utilized. I think that if various branches of the Post Office service were removed to the Franklin-street block the public would be satisfied. As a matter of fact, the city is growing southwards and westwards. Before many years the western portion will be almost as important as the eastern, and with the road facilities available, I think it would be better to divide the activities of the Department to some extent in order to avoid the evils of over-concentration. That latter factor creates congestion, against which the public cry out, and it is unsatisfactory, also, for the officials working in the building. I do not think there would be any dissatisfaction expressed by the public if the telegraph offices were placed on the block in Franklin-street, and the postal services concentrated here. It might be the most practical scheme to place the parcels post section on the Franklin-street block, but I am not prepared to say where various Departments should be placed, since I am not conversant with the subject. There is the factor of public convenience in respect to making all the allied branches of this service accessible to each other, and I agree that, in making the alterations, the design of the building should be comprehensive, and conform to modern requirements. My criticism of the demolition of the portion of the present building, to which I have referred, is based on the ground of economy to some extent. It is a matter of consideration also of postal requirements for a city of such growing importance. By building westerly there would be saved considerable disorganization during the period of building operations. I am aware that the parcels post branch is most inconveniently situated, and that urgent improvement is necessary. I have no objection, from the architectural stand-point, to the proposed alterations and additions, except that for hygienic purposes generally it is not wise to build back from open street frontages so long as there are such frontages available. There are not the same natural facilities afforded, and it is necessary to remember always that large numbers of officials will be virtually living their lives in these offices. As to the factor of the additions tending to destroy the architectural effect of this building, I understand that the new work will be scarcely seen from the street. I think the time has not arrived for extensive improvements being carried out within the present General Post Office building, but there is vacant land available on which provision could be made for the necessary additional accommodation, and it should be sufficient for years to come. No doubt various Federal Departments could be accommodated separately by the erection of a Commonwealth building on the vacant land if the additions and alterations are to be effected within this building as proposed; but, in my view, any structure erected on that vacant block should have first consideration as a post-office branch.

50. *To Senator Newland.*—I have not suggested that the scheme of alterations should include another story on the King William and Franklin streets frontages. My idea was that the vacant block should be developed first, and a comprehensive scheme drawn up to provide one or two additional floors upon this building, and further floors, if necessary, on the new portion of the present building, the whole of which, however, need not yet be erected. Upon the point whether it would be an inconvenience to the public to extend the postal facilities on to the vacant land in Franklin-street, I realize that it would involve considerable expenditure to alter the Telephone Exchange in order to secure communication

between the General Post Office buildings; but there is the site at the rear of the Exchange which could be made use of to effect communication between the two blocks. I think it would be wise, in view of the conditions placed before me, to utilize the Franklin-street block for the housing of various Commonwealth activities, and to fully make available this valuable post-office site so that it would be able to cope with the whole of the post-office business. I am not aware that there is any idea in the minds of the public that the architectural effect of this building is to be destroyed by the proposed additions. I have already stated that they would scarcely be discernible from the front of the Post Office. If further floors were to be erected on the original portion of the General Post Office, it might involve the demolition of the tower. I am acquainted to some extent with the accommodation at present provided in the telegraph and money-order offices. It is very inadequate, and the plans propose considerable improvements. Conditions at present are objectionable, both from the point of view of the public and of the officials.

51. *To Senator Needham.*—Upon the question of the use of the material from those portions of the building to be pulled down, I point out that by the time brickwork is pulled down and cleaned the bricks are not of much value compared with new material. I understand that a lot of the material can be used again, however. The demolition will run into a matter of many thousands, whereas the structure as it stands at present has its balancing factor of value. It will mean the destruction of a valuable building. The labour involved in demolition means that before one can use the old material the cost will have become so considerable that not much will have been gained. Indeed, it might be better to provide for using almost all new material.

52. *To the Chairman.*—The value of this land when it was transferred 20 years ago was assessed, I understand, at £56,700. This same area ought to be worth to-day probably £75,000 to £80,000. I am asked whether I do not think that, in handling a big proposition such as this, one's first duty should be to try and make the most economic and efficient use of the whole area. That is so, providing you do not sacrifice anything in the public interest while so doing. The Telephone Exchange also occupies a valuable site. I think it could have been placed further away. The public do not require to attend the Telephone Exchange. I am asked if I would consider it wise for the Government to erect a building on the valuable block on the west side, and, together with the Telephone Exchange building, provide for the housing of the various Commonwealth activities in Adelaide. I would say that those outside activities should be housed, if not here, then on some other convenient site. Naturally one would be justified in making the greatest possible use of a valuable area at one's disposal in the heart of this city, and accommodation could be found, I think, for the bulk of the Commonwealth Departments by the erection of a building on the vacant land.

The witness withdrew.

Lewis Cohen, Alderman, City of Adelaide, sworn and examined.

53. *To the Chairman.*—A special meeting of the City Council was called this afternoon, to consider the proposed alterations to the General Post Office, as they have been described in the press. There was general disappointment, both on the part of the Council and from a considerable section of citizens. That arose from the feeling that, instead of carrying out a project such as we had hoped for, the proposition, rather than proving an adornment to the city, will be just the opposite. I am aware that the present postal facilities are

obsolete, and are in no wise commensurate with the importance of the city; but we had hoped that the scheme of improvement would have been upon a more worthy and acceptable scale from the point of view of an addition to the city's architecture. The Council has not had an opportunity to consider the present proposals in comparison with earlier suggestions. We regard the General Post Office as being, next to the Town Hall, at any rate, the most important site in the city, and one of the most important edifices in Adelaide. Added to those considerations, the importance of the activities conducted here is such that we had been led to look for something more outstanding and generally suitable. What we had hoped for was an enhanced adornment to the city. When I am asked if I can suggest some method by which any proposal from the City Council could be entertained by this Committee, I answer by falling back upon the original proposal placed before the public regarding the building of a new, greatly improved, and entirely adequate General Post Office, intended to replace the present obsolete structure. By saying that, I do not desire to convey that the original proposal was to entirely pull down the present handsome old building. The scheme was to add to and modernize it both internally and externally.

54. *To Senator Newland.*—Although the citizens may be reasonably proud of the present structure, with its solidity and its generally acceptable architectural lines, the fact is that we were looking for something bigger and better. The general feeling is that we might have expected some marked alteration and improvement to the design of the front of the building, at the same time having regard to entirely adequate accommodation for the activities carried on within.

(Taken at Melbourne.)

WEDNESDAY, 23RD JUNE, 1920.

Present:

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman;	
Senator Henderson,	Mr. Bamford,
Senator Needham,	Mr. Mathews,
Senator Newland,	Mr. Parker Moloney.

Charles Edward Bright, Deputy Postmaster-General, Victoria, sworn and examined.

55. *To the Chairman.*—I am aware that the proposed additions and alterations to the Adelaide Post Office have been referred for report to your Committee. I have never been stationed in the Adelaide office, but I have visited it on two occasions. I have only a general knowledge of the building, and a more particular knowledge of the accommodation of the mail branch, as I was investigating the sorting arrangements there fifteen or sixteen years ago. Extensive alterations were recently made at the General Post Office, Melbourne. The main purposes to be served were the convenience of the public and the convenience of administration of the different sections of the work of the Department. The chief object sought to be obtained was that each section might be self-contained, and the space so laid out as to permit of the most complete supervision by the officers in charge of each section. In the old office in Elizabeth-street, the different sections were accommodated in different rooms all over the building, and it was very difficult, and in some cases almost impossible, to properly supervise the work. The result was that the work was not done so well as it can be done under the better conditions now existing. What is most necessary is to have

the space so laid out as to provide the greatest convenience for the carrying out of the work. For instance, the mail room should be so placed as to enable the mails to be landed easily, and to accommodate the branch on one floor, if possible, without too many pillars, so that the supervising officer may have a clear view of the whole of the operations. This should apply to the accommodation for all branches of the work of the Department. In laying out the provision for accommodation in Melbourne, I believe that expected development for twenty years ahead was provided for. We have been in the present office now for about four years this month, and I should say that provision has been made to meet requirements for the next fifteen years or a little more. The arrangements that have been made for the working of the different branches of the Department are such that we are able to carry out the work more expeditiously and give the public a better service than was previously possible. We are able to get better work out of the employees, because they are working under better conditions. That is an important consideration, and the present Melbourne office is very satisfactory in that respect. I have had an opportunity of looking at the plans of the proposed alterations at the Adelaide office, and approve of the arrangements made in connexion with the main hall. I see no reason why the proposed kiosk in the centre of the hall should not be retained. I notice that provision is made for four public telephones alongside the stamp kiosk in the main hall. I see no reason why the provision for public telephones in the main hall should not be retained, as they would lead to less delay to the public in waiting for calls. Under the old arrangements here, people were always asking for more telephones because of the delay to persons waiting to use those provided. I do not think that the establishment of these telephones in the main hall at Adelaide would create any obstruction that would be of inconvenience to the public. In the public hall at the Elizabeth-street building here we have no public telephones near the stamp-selling kiosk. They are right away by themselves in another part of the building, and on the opposite side to them there are the trunk-line telephones, where, of course, an attendant has to be in waiting to put people through. Considering the plans of the proposed alterations at Adelaide, I can think of no more suitable place for the public telephones than that proposed. In connexion with the Parcels Post Branch in Melbourne, we take parcels in over the counter, but bulk parcels sent by business firms in their own delivery carts are brought directly into the basement. It seems to me, from an examination of the plan, that the provision proposed to be made for this branch at Adelaide is very similar to that now provided at the Spencer-street Post Office in Melbourne. I agree that good light and good ventilation are most necessary. We have had no complaint in Melbourne on these points. In Melbourne, we have on the roof of the building resting rooms and rooms in which officers may have their lunch. We have also a dining room or restaurant run by a committee of officers of the Department, in which all employees who wish can get a quick-service meal of pies and a pot of tea for 6d., or a good sit-down meal for 1s. 5d. This is now paying its way, except that, of course, we are not paying rent for the accommodation. It has proved a great convenience, and since its establishment I have noticed that not so many of our female employees are on sick leave. This may be because they can now secure a hot meal in the middle of the day. We are able to arrange the meal hours of the employees in such a way that there is no overcrowding or unnecessary waiting in the dining room. Officers who make use of this accommodation get back to their work on the tick of time, whereas if they were to go up town for lunch five minutes here or ten minutes there may occasionally be lost. We have a large room on the roof, which is used in which

to eat their lunch by those who do not care to go into the dining room for their meals. The second floor of the building is devoted to the Postal Institute, and splendid accommodation for the officers is provided. There is a lady's lounge, a smoking room, a billiard room containing four tables, a reading room, a gymnasium, and a very good library. In addition, classes of instruction are established for every kind of employee who wishes to make himself fit for higher duties in the Department. The Institute is subsidized by the Department, but each employee pays so much a year on becoming a member of it. At present the Institute is not in the strict sense a paying concern, but it pays in the sense that it gives employees in every walk of life in the Post and Telegraph Department opportunities to make themselves fit to render the Department really good service. I have noticed that provision is proposed to be made on the top flat of the building in Adelaide for lavatories, library, reading room, dining room, kitchen, women's dining room, and retiring room and other conveniences, the same as we have in Melbourne. I think the establishment of the Postal Institute is a good thing for the service and also for the public, because officers instructed in the Institute will be able to render better service to the Department and to the public. I have in mind, of course, the instructional classes, which are really good. I think that the provision for recreation and instruction is good for the staff. Young fellows who now use the billiard tables in the Institute might, but for that provision, be tempted to pass their leisure time in public-houses. I have had to deal with very few men for drunkenness since the establishment of the Institute.

56. *To Mr. Bamford.*—The Institute is intended entirely for employees of the Post and Telegraph Department. I understand that it is the intention to establish similar Institutes in the other capital cities. Its establishment was talked of some years ago, but I think that Mr. Webster is principally responsible for it. The Railway Department of Victoria have a very fine Institute in Melbourne. I understand that it has done very good work, and that it led to the talk about the establishment of a Postal Institute. As to whether the establishment of such Institutes is a definite policy of the Department is a matter for the Central Administration. Mr. Dean looks after the Institute here; but I presume that in each State, if established, it will be as here, under the supervision of the Deputy Postmaster-General. I had an opportunity of looking over the plans of the proposed additions and alterations at Adelaide yesterday, and I can suggest no improvements for the convenience of the public on the ground floor.

57. *To Senator Newland.*—Really the whole of the work of the parcels post is done in the basement of the Melbourne office. Parcels are taken in at Elizabeth-street, and at the Exchange and the Rialto over the counter, and are then sent on to Spencer-street. Where business firms send a great many parcels, they are brought right down to the basement, and this saves a lot of delay and trouble. We collect parcels at various offices, and deal with them in the main building. We take only a certain number of parcels from people at the various places at which parcels are received over the counter. Under a regulation, outside offices are not supposed to take more than five parcels from any person. I should say that the height of the basement at Spencer-street, in which the work of the parcels post is carried out, must be about 12 feet. I see that by dropping the present floor by 3 feet it is proposed to make the height of the basement in Adelaide 11 feet. We have an open pathway into the basement here in Melbourne from Bourke-street out into Spencer-street. No artificial ventilation is found necessary here. I notice that provision is made at the end of the main hall in the Adelaide office for private boxes and letter deliveries. I do not

think that the erection of the kiosk in the hall will on that account lead to undue congestion. There are not now so many callers for letters as there used to be. The Department has discouraged the practice by allowing persons the privilege of a post-office address for not more than six months. There is nothing like the work now to be done at the general delivery windows that there used to be in former days. In the postal hall here in Melbourne in the Elizabeth-street office we have a stamp-selling kiosk in the centre, and a number of offices on each side of the hall. So far we have experienced no trouble through overcrowding, but it should be remembered that here people can enter the hall from Bourke-street and leave it by way of Elizabeth-street. We have a school in the Institute for the training of telegraph operators. At present we are training telephonists in the Telephone Exchange. We have experienced no inconvenience through the training of officials in the Institute. We have a class there for the training of mechanics. We take in only our own employees, but they may take up any course they please. That rests entirely with them, and they are not forced into the classes in any way. I attended a postal class the other night, at which certificates were given to various officers. If they pass an examination in the Institute, they are given certificates, which, of course, are valuable to them. We have not so far experienced any desire on the part of officers trained in the Institute to leave the Service and take outside employment. The tendency seems to be to secure employment in our own Department. I do not think that there is much fear that we shall be training officers at the public expense for work outside the public Departments. With the exception of that part which we use as a telegraph office, the old building in Elizabeth-street has been taken over by officers of the Income Tax Department. Accommodation has been provided at the General Post Office for officers of the Auditor-General's Department who are employed in connexion with Post and Telegraph Department work. There is no objection to these officials being accommodated in our building if there is room for them. They do not interfere with our work. We have two lifts in the old General Post Office in Elizabeth-street. The floor occupied by the Income Tax Department is reached by a short flight of steps, and so the officials of the Department and the public who have dealings with it do not need to make much use of the lift. The lift is principally used by our telegraph office staff. We have a great number of officers employed there. Telegrams are, of course, sent backwards and forwards by tube to the despatch room and to Spencer-street. We have a large number of returned soldiers on the staff. They can take up any class of training they prefer in the Institute, but we do not provide training for outside services.

58. *To Senator Needham.*—No training in wireless telegraphy is so far provided for.

59. *To Mr. Moloney.*—I have not been in Adelaide for fifteen years, but I have had a look at the plans of the additions and alterations at the Adelaide Post Office. Judging by the plans, I should think that sufficient provision is made for light and ventilation. It seems to me that it is proposed to do very much what we have done at Spencer-street. I should say that at times it is necessary to have artificial light in the basement at Spencer-street. There are windows all round the basement, and light comes in through the entrances to which I have referred. Without actually seeing the place, I think that the provision proposed to be made for light and ventilation of the basement at Adelaide will be very similar to what we have at Spencer-street, but I do not know what provision is made there for light at the back. We have had no complaints of light or ventilation at Spencer-street, and if they were not satisfactory we certainly would have complaints.

60. *To Senator Needham.*—We give training at the Postal Institute in mechanical work necessary for the Department in the making of all kinds of telephones and telegraphic instruments. I understand that the training is confined to the requirements of the Department. We are working with a view to the training of our own men for our own work, instead of having, in a haphazard way, to instruct men entering the service with a smattering of mechanical knowledge which perhaps is not of much use for the work we require them to do. I think that, in making provision for postal requirements, it might be well for us to look 30 years ahead. I have no knowledge of the volume of business done by the Post Office in Adelaide for the past ten years. I think it would be well to make provision for 25 or 30 years ahead. In discussing the matter with the heads of branches, I have been informed that here we are only about fifteen years ahead now. The provision proposed to be made for Adelaide, I should say, would meet the requirements of the case for the next 20 years, if not more.

61. *To Mr. Bamford.*—At the Telephone Exchange there is a very fine retiring room and luncheon room provided for the officers, but no meals are provided there. If they want meals they must go to the dining room at the Post Office.

62. *To the Chairman.*—A large number of public servants other than postal employees are accommodated at the old General Post Office in Elizabeth-street, but there are none at Spencer-street except the Audit officials. The Telegraph Office is accommodated at the old General Post Office in Elizabeth-street; the Telephone Exchange is in Lonsdale-street, and, with the exception of some 30 officers employed in the postal hall at Elizabeth-street, the rest of the officers of the General Post Office are accommodated at Spencer-street. No provision is made for meals at the Elizabeth-street building; those who require meals must go to the Spencer-street office. In the Telegraph Office at Elizabeth-street there are 430 officials employed, and in the Postal Hall at the delivery windows and the office for the sale of stamps, money order, telegraph counter, mail work, &c., there are about 30 officials all told. The public utilize the Spencer-street building, but not to any extent, for money order business or for the purchase of stamps. All that work is practically done at the old General Post Office in Elizabeth-street, which is in a more central position. The bulk of the business with the public is done there, but our main work in the sorting of mails and so on is done at Spencer-street, where the principal staff is accommodated. All letters posted at Elizabeth-street are brought on to the Spencer-street office by motor car about every quarter of an hour. When I said that we had made provision for the requirements for fifteen years ahead, I was referring to the Spencer-street building, and not to the building in Elizabeth-street.

63. *To Senator Newland.*—I do not think it is possible to have too much light in a building, though I get rather too much of the sun in my own room. I notice, according to the plan of the Adelaide building, that practically the whole of the northern side of the hall will be of glass. If, as a consequence, the light should be found to be too strong, the glass might be frosted, or blinds might be used. We have very large suburban offices here, which do a very large business. They do practically all the business of the areas in which they are situated. In Melbourne we have what are called midnight clearances. We clear in every suburb, and the letters are brought into the General Post Office. In the day-time the district offices do most of the work of clearing the pillars in their vicinity. We have an arrangement with the other States to make up city and suburban and country letters

separately, so that on arrival here the latter can be sent direct to the district offices. We do not, in the Melbourne central office, handle a large proportion of the mails for the suburbs. In making alterations here, we moved the parcel post before we moved the mail branch. I think it should be possible in Adelaide to make some arrangements for carrying on the work while the alterations are being made. I notice that the alterations proposed are very considerable, and such extensive alterations could not be carried out while the staff continued working.

The witness withdrew.

Edward Woodrow, Chief Inspector, Postmaster-General's Department, Central Administration, sworn and examined.

64. *To the Chairman.*—The necessity for making alterations to the Adelaide Post Office was discussed in 1913, and in the following year a departmental Committee submitted a report on the building. In 1916, I was sent to Adelaide to furnish a report, the outcome being the plans which have been submitted to the Public Works Committee. The building at present is not suitable for the requirements of the public, or for properly carrying out the work of the Department, and I am quite satisfied that alterations are necessary in order to conduct the present-day business on anything like reasonably modern lines. The conditions under which the public are obliged to proceed along a right-of-way into a basement in order to send parcels by post, are quite unreasonable. From a departmental point of view, one of the greatest objections is the division of the present building into so many rooms scattered all over the place. It renders it impossible to group the staffs, let alone bring them into relative positions one to the other. Including the divisions of the basement, there are something like 80 rooms in the building. Present conditions are absolutely unsuitable, from a departmental point of view, and from the point of convenience to the public. Drastic alterations are essential. That was the opinion held in 1914 by the departmental Committee; but, if I remember correctly, their report was in favour of increasing the accommodation by adding to the existing building. Their proposals were not as drastic as those recommended in 1916, when I went to Adelaide, and sketch plans were drawn up from which the present working plans have been prepared. The sketch plans were drawn when I was in consultation with Mr. Murdoch and the State Works officer. I produce those sketch plans. They were actually prepared by Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Simpson. Speaking in the House, Mr. Webster, the then Postmaster-General, on the 17th May, 1916, as reported in *Hansard*, page 7968, said:—

According to the original plans, it was intended to create a further number of rabbit hutches on the top floor at heavy expense; and, as I am not able to go myself, I have sent a gentleman from the Department to Adelaide to get all the plans, and other data, and bring them to Melbourne. So far, we have so re-designed the building as to be able to insure that the cost of other alterations will not, I think, be more than that of the original plan, though I am not quite sure what the cost itself will be. The original plan provided for the requirements for five years necessitates further extension at the end of that period, whereas we have managed to provide for twenty-five years' growth at the same price. I desire to show that if I had taken the ordinary course of accepting the plans presented to me, and I had had no knowledge of the requirements of the Department, I should, as in the past, have proceeded in such a way as to bring trouble in the administration.

There was a prior plan, to which Mr. Webster referred, and it is among the sketches which I produce. There was also a plan prepared by the Works Department to add two new floors to the old building, but I do not think it was ever really submitted. The sketch plans were prepared by Mr. Murdoch and

Mr. Simpson. I was present at the time. I do not know who drew the prior plan to which I have just referred. I have had possession of these plans since they were prepared in Adelaide, in 1916, and given to me. Copies were retained over there. It was originally proposed to have an additional story in the new building, but when I returned to Melbourne and went through the proposals with Mr. Webster, he decided that that floor should be eliminated. What actuated me in recommending the additional floor was to give more security from fire to the telegraph installation, which is not now in a fireproof building. I thought it would be as well to house such an installation in a fireproof structure, as the new building will be. In eliminating that additional story, Mr. Webster was actuated by the question of cost. As the space to be occupied by the Accountant's Branch is very similar to that now occupied in the old building by the telegraph operators, it might be possible to house the latter in the new building, while transferring the Accounts branch to the operating-room in the old building. Of course, if we move the telegraph branch to the new building, it will cost £2,000 or £3,000 to do so. If anything should happen to the telegraph installation, it would cause a tremendous amount of inconvenience to the public. Of course, there is always a certain amount of danger from fire, but there is greater danger in a building which is not fireproof, such as the old building where the operators are now established. If we do not place the Accountant's Branch in the old building, we might place the Postal Institute there; in fact, it might be more advantageous to do so, because the object of the lay-out of the new building is to bring the sections of the Department together in open spaces. A fire would cause serious loss to the machinery in the operating-room, but the most serious loss would be the inconvenience which the public would suffer. Lines come to Adelaide from Western Australia, and the Northern Territory. It is a very important office, from a telegraphic point of view. I cannot say how long it would take to replace the machinery in the case of fire. We always strive to place telegraph operators in a building as fireproof as it is possible to make it; but I do not recognise that there is any special danger in regard to the room in which the Adelaide operators work. There is just the ordinary risk. The mail-room, which contains a fair amount of inflammable material, is underneath. There will be concrete flooring between the basement and the floors above it in the new building. The structure will be as fireproof as it is possible to make it. I have not heard any one connected with the Departments express the opinion that the erection of a high building, such as it would be with the additional story, would interfere with the architectural beauty of the old building. Architects declare that the result will be quite the contrary. We have tried to avoid any interference with the architectural beauty of the old building. In Sydney, there is a proposal to add to the General Post Office by building up from the centre of it, and the sketch shows that, instead of detracting from the architectural appearance, the additions will rather add to it. As far as I am aware, there has been no suggestion in the Department that outside architects should be invited to prepare plans for work in connexion with buildings which have a claim to architectural beauty. So far, the great trouble in the departments has been money. The architectural appearance of buildings has not been so much considered. We have been obliged to spend the money available on essentials. Mr. Griffin, who is an outside authority, prepared a plan for the alterations to the Sydney General Post Office. I am more concerned with the utility point of view. I think good, plain buildings can be erected which will not detract from the appearance of

a street. By that means, money can be saved and more usefully employed in the interiors. The St. Louis Post Office, which is supposed to be the latest in post-office designs, is a plain building, but is of a striking character. In the past, our Governments have gone too far in their endeavour to lead the way in the matter of providing buildings of architectural beauty, while at the same time affording facilities to the public. Take the Sydney and Melbourne Post Offices, for example. The interiors of these buildings have been sacrificed for ornamental exteriors. Doubt has been expressed in regard to the necessity for the new post office in Spencer-street, Melbourne, but only in regard to the site. Several times I have expressed the opinion that it should have been erected on the Elizabeth-street site, because, to have one's activities severed is fatal to the efficient handling of mail matter. The division of activities in Melbourne and Sydney is very costly. From a post-office point of view, there would be no objection to placing an additional story in the new Adelaide building for the purpose of housing other Federal Departments. Access and egress could be given to them without encroaching on the departmental space. In fact, I think it would be an advantage to do this, and it would have been better if we had put up two extra stories in the Perth Office and rented the space. If other Departments are prepared to occupy floor space in the Adelaide building, it would be economical to make the provision for them. The Government would save rentals, and the time may eventually come when it may be necessary to extend the building to meet postal requirements. When we were considering the proposed alterations, Mr. Murdoch said that it would be unsuitable to erect another story on the old building. He spoke from an architect's point of view. From a postal point of view, instead of improving matters, it would add to the present inconvenience. Furthermore, the proposal would not lend itself to the scheme of reconstruction. The present plans will not prevent another story being put on the main building later on if it is found necessary to do so. We are not interfering with the old building, except by taking down the annexe, which it was not possible to convert into utility space. As the land on which the Post Office is erected has been transferred to the Commonwealth, at a cost of £50,000, it is necessary to keep in view how it can be best utilized. My dealings with the Works Department, and theirs with me, have always been with the sole desire of doing the very best for the Government. The officers of the Works Department carry out our wishes, as far as possible, to enable our work to be conducted as efficiently as possible. The plans before the Committee were prepared from the instructions of the Postal Department. They will give all the facilities to the public that are possible, and provide for the means of administration we wish, without the demolition of the old building and the erection of a new structure. The whole matter was very carefully considered. Other ideas were advanced and put on one side; and, after great consideration, the plans now adopted were evolved. For the Postal Institute, accommodation to the extent of 6,000 square feet is to be provided on the top floor of the new building. The floor space devoted to the Postal Institute in the Spencer-street, Melbourne, building is very much larger. I understand that all Commonwealth public servants, and even State officers, are eligible for membership of the Postal Institute; but the classes are pretty well restricted to postal employees. I should say that more than one-third of the floor space is devoted to educational matters, and if other floor space is required for this purpose, it will have to be made available. In starting this institute, we commenced off scratch, as it were. It was difficult to get the officers

to understand its purpose, but results so far have been very successful, and the experience gained should enable the new institutes to start off more advantageously. The policy of the Department is to establish these institutes in the main city postal buildings. This system is not a new one. Most large institutions throughout the world make similar provision. Our main object is to train young officers in various sections of departmental activities. To do so we must make provision to draw them to the institute, where the training is given. I do not think that the Government would be favorable to making attendance compulsory. Therefore, it is necessary to make the institute attractive, and the classes popular. Mr. Dean is the educational officer in charge of the Melbourne Postal Institute. It is difficult to say how the idea originated here. The matter had been mooted for some years, but was not taken in hand in any definite way until Mr. Webster took action. Mr. Dean is a specialist in this class of work, and was brought into the Department for the purpose. The State Railways Departments subsidize such institutes very heavily. Provision is made in the Perth Post Office for a Postal Institute, and in the proposed alterations for Sydney similar provision is made. Our object is to extend the principle as far as possible. There are special correspondence sections for country officers, and there is a library from which these country officers can borrow technical books. There are special transit postal facilities for the library books. I am mostly concerned in the postal classes. Pupils sit for examination, and the Public Service Commissioner recognises the certificate of competency we issue.

65. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The cost of transferring telegraph operators to the new building might be about £2,000. I could not say exactly. The basement in the new building would offer fair working conditions. The floor is to be lowered, and there will be 11 feet 6 inches between the floor and the ceiling. It will be well ventilated and reasonably lighted; in fact, the conditions for the parcels post sections will be equal to those provided on the ground floor. It is a disadvantage to have steps leading up to the section where the old-age pensions will be paid, but it is not possible to avoid that. Speaking generally, a ramp would be preferable. One cannot be provided in connexion with this building.

66. *To Senator Newland.*—I have heard complaints from Adelaide citizens that the proposed extensions would spoil the architectural effect of the old building, and I fancy there was some reference in the newspapers, but I do not think it was generally known at that time what was to be recommended. I am quite satisfied that there will be no spoiling of the architectural effect. The building will not be unsightly. It will be so far back from the street alignment that I cannot see how it will interfere with the main building. It will be better to have the kiosk for selling stamps in the middle of the hall than to have the stamp-sales counter in a corner, which causes congestion. The kiosk will have two counters, and there will be a clear get-away from both of them. There will be 12 feet of space on each side, which ought to be ample to provide against any possible congestion. There ought not to be a block for more than a minute or two, and, if necessary, we could work six stamp-sellers in the kiosk. The plans show several rooms for which there will be no occupiers. It was at first intended to let the Customs Department have the use of those rooms, but they have since found new quarters, and I do not know whether they will require the space we have provided for them. We have no objection to other Departments occupying rooms in our building. In the Elizabeth-street office, the Taxation Department is housed, and in Little Bourke-street there are several Departments occupying a postal building. The postal-staff was moved to Spencer-street. I quite

agree that a building such as is now proposed to be erected ought to provide more space than the Postal Department actually requires, because it can be used by sister Departments if the capital cost of erection is less than the capital cost of the annual rents paid by those Departments. Eventually the space can be used by the Postal Department as its operations expand. It is a great advantage to the public to have all the Commonwealth Departments housed in the one building. It might not cost £2,000 to move the telegraph operators into the new building. At first we intended to do so, but after a consultation with the Postmaster-General the matter of expense was raised, and it was held that the risk of fire was only a reasonable one. If the risk from fire is now in evidence, we can move the operators into one of the new floors, and place the Postal Institute in the old operating room; but, as a matter of fact, the Institute ought to be near the luncheon room and retiring rooms on the top of the new building. However, I do not think there is any inordinate risk to the telegraph machinery in the old building. It has not come within my knowledge that members of our staff take advantage of the instructional classes, and after being trained leave the Department. I do not know that we are establishing a training college for men and women to get into private employment at the expense of the Department. That is done without the Institute. Boys, after being two or three years in the Department, brush up and leave us, because they get more pay outside. In my opinion, a good boy can get on as well in the Department as outside, because there are good opportunities for advancement. At Spencer-street the workshops are in a separate building, although it is on the block occupied by the Post Office. It is not at all suitable to have the workshops in the same building, as is the case in Adelaide, but the proposal there is to remove them to West Terrace. The original proposal was to have the new workshops erected simultaneously with the new additions to the Post Office. The idea now is to accommodate the workshops temporarily in the stores building in West Terrace. Plans of the new workshops provide for a fairly large building. Money has been placed on the draft Estimates for this work for many years past. The remodelling of the Post Office ought not to be delayed until the new workshops are completed. A temporary arrangement for the workshops should meet the case. Half the existing workshops will be cut down in the remodelling of the Post Office.

67. *To Senator Needham.*—As Chief Inspector, I have supervision of the postal side of the Department, covering the matter of erecting buildings, establishing systems, handling mails, and everything on the postal side of the work of the Department. In considering the plans drawn up in 1916, Mr. Webster was anxious that the expenditure should not be more than was absolutely necessary. I estimated that the activities of the Department for the next 25 years could be conducted in the space provided by eliminating the additional floor, and in order to reduce the capital cost of the remodelling, it was then decided to cut out that floor. The decision was arrived at as a result of the discussion with the Postmaster-General. I agreed that we would have sufficient accommodation without that floor. To-day I say that it is not necessary to have the additional floor which was to be provided for the telegraph operators. If the telegraph machinery is in any danger, it will be possible to transfer it to the new structure, and take one of the other sections into the old building. The additional floor is not required for postal purposes, but it may be wise to provide it for the accommodation of other branches of the Service. It would also be of advantage to the Postal Department, because when it required further space it could utilize it, and the cost would be reduced, because during the period of remodelling the extra floor could

be provided much more cheaply than at a later date. The risk of fire in the operating room is very small. The installation of sprinklers would not be an advantage, because the instruments would not be of very much use after being sprinkled. My desire was to put the instruments in a building which was as fireproof as possible, but if those who understand such matters say that they are just as safe where they are now, I could not say that they are wrong. The vacant block of land alongside the Post Office is not required for postal purposes. It is now available for other Departments. There was a suggestion that we should build our workshops there, but it is really essential that the workshops and the stores should be together. In making provision for buildings, we generally look ahead for 25 or 30 years. These alterations provide for 25 years ahead. In the Postal Institute we do not educate persons outside our own Department. Members of other branches of the Service may join the Institute for social purposes, but I am not too certain on that point. There are one or two ordinary classes which they may possibly attend. The alterations to the Adelaide building can be carried on without inconvenience to the public, but two or three of the sections will need to carry on their work under special conditions. I have no idea how long the alterations will take.

68. *To Mr. Bamford.*—I am not an architect. When we ask the Works Department for plans of a building, we may submit a rough plan of what we require. We need sufficient space for the work we are handling. We must have space for mail work, and my records, which show what business is transacted in each office, enable me to work out the probable requirements for 25 years. We may want the mails handled in a certain place, the posting facilities in another place, private letter boxes in another spot, and counter space elsewhere. We may also require provision for a telephone switch board. All these details we supply to the Works Department, and they provide the plans. First of all they give us a sketch plan, and it is amended or approved, and then they draw up the working plans, and furnish an estimate. It is our experience that the Postal Institutes have increased the efficiency of the Service. They enable men to meet one another. Sometimes men have worked in one building for fifteen or twenty years without knowing one another. The general idea of the alterations to the Elizabeth-street post office was that of Mr. Griffin. No one undertook the work prior to Mr. Griffin except that a Departmental Committee got out some sort of a plan, but it could not be called a plan for remodelling. I was not responsible for the architectural effect. I could not go into a building and say that this wall or that wall should come down, but in collaboration with Mr. Griffin and others, I showed what we wanted for postal purposes, and how we wanted it. These requests were submitted to the Works Department, and altered and modified, but the general idea was maintained throughout. I could not say exactly to whom the first appeal was made for a design—Mr. Griffin or the Works Department—but the question of remodelling the building had been under consideration for some time.

69. *To the Chairman.*—The Adelaide Telephone Exchange is erected on very valuable land. Our telephone exchange ought to be in the technical centre of a city, where all parts can be reached without doubling. This enables a saving to be made on cables and conduits. It is not necessary to build on valuable land on a street frontage. The erection of the Adelaide Exchange on the block adjoining the General Post Office was justified if the position was the technical centre, and I do not know of any better purpose to which the land could have been put. The exchange is a very important building. The postal workshops ought to be erected close to the stores. I would not have carpenters working in stores except as a temporary expedient. The

existing stores building in Adelaide is merely a galvanized iron structure. The workshops will be placed in the stores as a temporary expedient only. At present they are in the main post office, and this is always dangerous from a fire point of view. I would not recommend it. The steps going down to the basement are very light. Bulk parcels will most likely be taken into the basement by carts at the rear.

70. *To Mr. Mathews.*—There is no more risk of fire in the Adelaide operating room than there is in the Melbourne operating room.

71. *To Senator Needham.*—I think the lifts provided on the plan will be ample.

(Taken at Melbourne.)

THURSDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1920.

Present:

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman;

Senator Henderson,	Mr. Bamford,
Senator Needham,	Mr. Mathews,
Senator Newland,	Mr. Parker Moloney.

John Smith Murdoch, Chief Architect, Department of Works and Railways, re-called and further examined.

72. *To the Chairman.*—When in Adelaide, I was asked by the Committee to prepare an estimate of the cost of an additional floor to the new high building proposed to be erected at the south-west corner of the site, in accordance with the original plan. The scheme originally provided for one more floor than is contemplated in the scheme which is now under consideration. That additional floor was intended to be occupied by the telegraph operating branch, in order that the functions of that branch might be discharged in a fire-proof building. The new addition would be a fire-proof structure; the present building is not modern in that it is not fire-proof. Since my visit to Adelaide I have gone into the question of the extra cost of an additional floor, and I think that, in round figures, it would represent about £8,250. It would provide for 8,000 feet of floor space, inclusive of the annexes containing latrines, lifts, and stairs. The effective working floor space would be about 6,200 feet. The additional height of that portion of the building would be 14 ft. 6 in. Of course, it is unnecessary to remind the Committee that the architectural evidence taken in Adelaide was against the erection of an additional story. Personally, I have no feeling in the matter. I do not think that the appearance of the structure would be mutilated in any grave manner by an additional story. Seeing that one additional floor would not provide the requisite accommodation for all the Commonwealth activities which are at present located in rented premises in Adelaide, the necessary accommodation for those activities could be erected upon another site for something like a similar amount. Consequently, not a very great deal would be secured in an economic sense by the introduction of extra floors to the proposed building, except that the expansion of the post office itself would be more fully provided for than it is in the present plans. At the same time, that expansion is provided for in the scheme now before the Committee, at any rate, for the next twenty years. Another matter upon which I think I may assist the Committee has reference to the General Post Office in Elizabeth-street, Melbourne. When we visited that structure this morning, I was asked by several members questions as to the comparative sizes of the public halls provided at the General Post Offices in Melbourne and Adelaide. I am now able to say that the public hall in Melbourne is 102 feet long by 32 feet wide between the counters, and that between the walls—which are considerably behind the counters

—the dimensions are 102 feet by 35 feet. That is equivalent to a space of 3,264 feet. In Adelaide the public hall is 90 feet long by 38 feet wide, so that it is shorter than the Melbourne hall by 12 feet, whilst it is 6 feet wider between the counters. It provides a space of 3,420 feet. While at the post office buildings in Spencer-street this morning, I was asked by Mr. Bamford how the huge room there which is occupied by the electrical engineers, compares in size with the typical new room which it is proposed to add on each floor under the Adelaide scheme. I replied that, roughly speaking, they enclosed about the same space. Since then I have looked into the matter, and I find that the size of the new room upon each floor of the new high additions proposed to be made in Adelaide is 98 feet long by 63 feet wide. That is equivalent to an effective space of 6,174 feet. The room at Spencer-street is 113 feet long by 55 feet wide, and provides a space of 6,215 feet, so that the room at Adelaide will be 15 feet shorter than the room at Melbourne, but 7 feet wider. The Adelaide rooms, will, therefore, have almost the same superficial area. The lighting which will be secured under the Adelaide scheme will be quite as good as at Melbourne. Assuming that the life of the proposed building will be a very long one, and that the capital cost of it would be met by 6 per cent.—as I have no doubt it can—the Government would enjoy the occupation of a perfectly lighted, perfectly ventilated, and fire-proof structure, equipped with all sanitary conveniences, for about 1s. 7d. per superficial foot per annum. Taking the accommodation, which is more or less of an indifferent character, that is at present provided for Federal Departments in Adelaide, I find, in rental, the Government are now paying 2s. 4d. per superficial foot per annum for it. Of course, in that calculation, I have not allowed anything for the value of the land or for lift accommodation. We could only properly house the staff at 1s. 7d. per superficial foot, by reason of the fact that we already possess the land. Whilst in Adelaide I discussed with Mr. Laybourne Smith, the architectural expert who gave evidence before the Committee, the possibility of lowering the height of the building, even if we adopted the scheme which is now under consideration. I pointed out to him that I could see a way of reducing the height by about 2 feet without any detriment to the structure. When giving evidence previously I stated that I might be inclined to consider an improved method of concrete floors. In the scheme which is now before us, concrete floors have all been planned upon a beam principle construction. In connexion with other works which have been investigated by the Committee, a description of the mushroom system of construction has been given. The effect of that system is to eliminate all beams. It is also quite possible under certain conditions to entirely omit the conical mass of concrete at the top of the pillars. In other words, the supporting stanchions would go right up to the ceiling without any alteration of form at the top where they entered the floor plate. This system is being extensively employed in England and elsewhere where floors have to carry only light loads, such as 80 lbs. per super foot, added to the static load of the material itself. In Adelaide, I think it may probably be found advisable to adopt this system. If that course be followed, the beams will be eliminated, and it may be possible to reduce the height of the floors. The beams would be about 20 inches deep on each floor. If they were taken out so that the ceiling was perfectly flat, we could count on a saving of 9 inches in height on each floor without detriment to the appearance of the structure. That would mean a saving of 5 feet altogether. In other words, the erection of an additional story, instead of adding 14 ft. 6 in.

to the height of the building, might be made to add only 8 ft. 9 ins. The alterations to be made in the existing structure at Adelaide will be carried out in such a way as to preserve the character of that building, but the new high building proposed to be erected on the area that is occupied by the wings, which are to be demolished, will be of reinforced concrete. They will have reinforced concrete beams and floors. Between the floor levels we intend to utilize thin brickwork in the walls. I think it is advisable to have ample window area, but I am of opinion that the area at present contemplated can be reduced at a cost of about £475 without the scheme suffering in any way. The idea is that in the new fire-proof buildings steel windows, such as the Committee saw at Spencer-street this morning shall be provided. Glazing will be wired as an additional precaution against fire.

73. *To Senator Newland.*—The plans provide for windows 17 ft. 6 ins. long by 9 ft. 6 ins. high. If we took off 2 feet on each side that would mean 4 feet on the width of the pillar, which is 3 feet, making it 7 feet altogether. I do not think the effect of this reduction would be to throw dark shadows. In our estimate of the cost of the floors, we have provided for jarrah blocks 12 inches long, 3 inches wide, and 1 inch thick. There will be no difficulty in securing jarrah. The first thing we do is to purchase the timber and put it out to season. Every floor we have laid down since the buildings were erected in Spencer-street seven years ago has been an improvement upon floors previously laid down. Even if the projected work was started to-morrow, it would probably not be completed for three years, so that we should have all that time within which to purchase the requisite timber and to season it. At Spencer-street we experimented with timbers other than jarrah, but the results disclosed that, as compared with jarrah, those timbers were not good. I do not think we could secure redgum if we wanted it. I have used ironbark, stringybark, and jarrah. I know that in Queensland we could obtain grey ironbark, spotted gum, and Moreton Bay ash. In the cheaper buildings of Melbourne a lot of rimu is being used. But jarrah is unquestionably the best timber obtainable for our purpose, because it remains truer and shrinks less than do other timbers.

74. *To Mr. Bamford.*—In connexion with the proposed building at Adelaide it is intended to lay the jarrah directly on the concrete upon a thin film of bitumen. I know that there is a large quantity of timber lying at Canberra which is never likely to be used there, but it is timber more of the ornamental variety. If we adopt steel windows, with the exception of the doors and the fittings, there will be very little timber in the building. When the time comes for the erection of the structure we can arrange for those fittings to be carried out in the timber which can be procured at the cheapest rate in Adelaide, and I have no doubt that this would be found to be blackwood. Flooring such as we propose can be laid down on the concrete at a cost, roughly, of 5s. 3d. per superficial yard. This will provide for a sound and hygienic floor, which does not require either a carpet or a mat upon it. I am satisfied that the drainage that will be necessary will not affect the original foundations of the main building, and Mr. Laybourne Smith is of the same opinion, as is also Mr. Simpson, who has spent a lifetime in dealing with the lands around Adelaide. The foundations go down only as far as the clay, and steps have been taken to keep the clay at an even degree of saturation. The object of this is to prevent shrinkage, which might cause the foundations to move. I believe that the lifts could be operated from the basement of the building instead of from the roof. If that plan were adopted, it would make a difference of about 6

feet in the height of the parapet. I am of opinion that one lift will suffice for present requirements, unless an additional story be added to the structure.

75. *To the Chairman.*—In the General Post Office, Melbourne, there is a passage of 13 feet between the counters and the writing desks in middle of hall. I think it would be possible to cut out the kiosk altogether.

76. *To Senator Newland.*—I do not think that the facilities provided under the proposed scheme will be inferior to those already provided at the Melbourne General Post Office. Indeed, I think that the Adelaide building will be a superior one.

77. *To the Chairman.*—If the kiosk be eliminated there is no reason why a nice group of telephone boxes should not be installed in the centre of the main hall. Business people requiring to obtain delivery of large parcels could do so at the rear of the proposed structure. The scheme provides for 200 private letter-boxes in excess of existing requirements. The mushroom system of construction could not be employed in the proposed building because it is so unarchitectural. It may, however, be adopted with advantage in the case of a store or other type of building, in regard to which the matter of appearance is of no moment.

(Taken at Melbourne.)

FRIDAY, 25TH JUNE, 1920.

Present :

Mr. GREGORY, Chairman ;

Senator Henderson,
Senator Needham,
Senator Newland,

Mr. Bamford,
Mr. Mathews,
Mr. Parker Moloney.

Edwin Dean, Educational Officer, Postmaster-General's Department, sworn and examined.

78. *To the Chairman.*—When applications were invited for the position I now occupy, I was Secretary of the Railway Institute of New South Wales. That was in 1916. In 1917 I received notice of my appointment, and in 1918 took up my new duties. Before being appointed, I was called upon to meet a Board here consisting of the Acting Chief Electrical Engineer, Mr. Fussell, Chief Inspector of State Schools in the State of Victoria, Mr. Donald Clarke, Superintendent of Technical Education in Victoria, and two or three others representing the different States, together with the Comptroller of Stores and representatives of other branches of the Postal service. This Board had been making inquiries throughout the Commonwealth as to what should be done in the direction of establishing classes, and a welfare organization, something on the lines adopted by the Railway Institute of New South Wales. On taking up my duties I outlined a scheme, together with an estimate of the cost, which was approved by the Department and I proceeded to put that scheme into operation. The result so far is the establishment of the Victorian Postal Institute. The accommodation provided for the Institute, as well as dining and retiring rooms for male and female postal employees, at the Postal Buildings in Spencer-street, is ample. I certainly think it wise to make such provision. I could, if necessary, give names of many firms which have established dining-rooms for their employees. Such rooms have been provided by the Australasian Tobacco Company, the Commonwealth Clothing Factory, David Jones and Co. of Sydney, as well as at the Newport and Ipswich Railway Workshops. I have data showing the extent of this class of welfare organization in America. It is a well-established principle, and is certainly a good one. No provision is made in the Elizabeth-street Post Office for the selling of meals to the employees, but a room where employees may

have their meals has been set apart. I have not had anything to do with that branch of the organization; I am concerned only with the educational phase of the work. The floor space provided at the Spencer-street office for our Institute, including class rooms and privilege rooms, would amount approximately to 18,000 square feet, inclusive of staircase and passages. We have eight class rooms, including one 21 feet by 52 feet, used by the telephone mechanics; another room 18 feet by 44 feet for the telegraph clerks; and others 21 feet x 17 feet, 21 feet x 16 feet, 21 feet x 17 feet, 18 feet x 26 feet, 29 feet x 17 feet. We have also a billiard room, library, a gymnasium, and concert room. About one half of the total space is devoted to class rooms. We teach arithmetic, algebra, geometry, English, history, and geography, typewriting, shorthand, telegraphy, postal work, postal sorting, and postal accountancy. We do not teach commercial accountancy. We have instructors, all of whom, with one exception, are departmental officers. They are paid by the Department. Most of them receive 7s. 6d. per hour—the usual rate for such work—but in respect of some of the minor subjects, only 5s. per hour is paid. I am not an instructor; I deal with the question of organization and its application. All the subjects I have named are essential from the point of view of the Department. Such subjects as English, geography, and mathematics are prescribed for the clerical examination. Classes in those subjects were established to enable the General Division officers in the Department to qualify if they so desired for the Clerical Branch of the Service. Typewriting and shorthand are also subjects prescribed for the Commonwealth clerical examination. The introduction of a new subject rests finally with the Minister, who has the power of veto. The Council of the Institute is elected from the members. If an individual member or one of the councillors proposes that a new subject should be taught, the secretary, who is a paid officer of the Department, ascertains from the Deputy Postmaster-General by letter whether it is considered desirable by the Department that the subject should be included in our curriculum. If it is approved, applications for the position of instructor are invited, and the selection made by the Council is submitted for the approval of the Postmaster-General. That procedure insures our getting the right type of man to instruct the employees. The instructor, having been appointed, is directed by the Council to prepare a syllabus, and that, too, is submitted finally to the Postmaster-General for his approval in order to make sure that the requirements of the Department are properly covered. The syllabus may be amended by the Postmaster-General, who would, of course, consult the head of the branch to which the subject related. At the end of each course the Institute asks the Department to appoint an examiner to conduct an examination, and those who pass may be regarded as having attained departmental efficiency. Members of the Institute are not compelled to attend any of these classes, but we encourage them to do so as far as possible. Any youth who is a member of the Institute may join a class. Those in receipt of more than £3 a week have to pay a membership fee of 10s. per annum and those in receipt of less than £3 per week pay a fee of 5s. The charges are really nominal, and are imposed only because many people think that anything for which they have not to pay is not worth having. These fees do not cover the cost of instruction. The Department itself defrays the cost of the instruction, but pays nothing towards the cost of the recreation, side of the Institute. It gave us a start by putting in two billiard tables, library, and erecting the gymnasium, but apart from that it pays only for instruction, and puts in any plant required in connexion with the classes. When a member joins a class his continued attendance is not compulsory. I should be glad if it were. My experience as Secretary of the Railway Institute of New South Wales was that it paid the Department to have its juniors attending classes, and that having provided the means of instruction it would be well if the Department could compel them to attend. It might be

possible to compel certain sections, such as those juniors in the mechanical branches, to join the classes. Where a boy is employed at a special wage for special work I believe it is intended that he shall be compelled to attend such classes as provide the necessary training. So far as the ordinary classes are concerned, if a boy's attendance becomes irregular we write to him; we even write to the parents asking them to see that he attends regularly. When I was Secretary of the Railway Institute of New South Wales I often found on writing to the parents of a boy whose attendance had fallen off that it was unknown to his people; that he left home regularly ostensibly to attend his class, but went to a picture theatre or somewhere else. The list of classes which I have handed in is complete, with the addition of the classes for mechanics which are engineering, drawing, electrical technology, motor driving, technical telegraphy, and telephony. We have not yet established a class for dressmaking. It has been suggested that such a class should be set up, but up to Tuesday last the proposal had not been approved. The object of such a class is to give female employees an opportunity to learn to make their own dresses as cheaply as possible. The girls being on shift work cannot get away like girls in outside businesses to attend ordinary classes. The suggestion is that we should teach them only the practical side of dressmaking and millinery. We have the requisite room, and the organization and machinery are available for the purpose. The bulk of the female employees of the Department are telephonists and telegraphists. A great many of them regularly attend the Institute. Two girls in the Telephone Exchange are members of the Council of the Institute. The girls at the Exchange, and those employed at the Elizabeth-street office, may obtain their meals at the Institute if they so desire. The bulk of the girls are members of the Institute. We supply magazines to their retiring rooms at the Exchange, and we have a branch library at the Elizabeth-street office. We try in every way to cater for the employees of the Department. Female employees would be able to attend a dressmaking class in the morning when off duty. I mentioned that at the outset the Department supplied us with two billiard tables; we now have four, two having been put in and paid for by the members. The receipts from the billiard room are about £40 per month. Members get their billiards at a cheaper rate than outside, namely, 8d. for 40 minutes' play. The revenue obtained in this way is used in developing the Institute, extending the library, and generally in catering for the requirements of members. We also derive revenue from entertainments. The library is under the control of the Council, which is divided into various sub-committees. Books are sent to country members. Members outside a radius of 15 miles of Melbourne are charged only 5s. per annum. In return for that fee a library book may be mailed to them every week, and they have the benefit of correspondence classes. We have a set of papers prepared, by direction of the Council, by the Correspondence Instructor, and we also intend to extend the mechanics' trade classes to country employees. That will be somewhat difficult since we shall be able to teach only the theory, but it must tend to improve the condition of employees in the country. I think the 6,000 square feet of floor space proposed to be provided for the purposes of the Postal Institute in the Adelaide Post Office is essential. My experience is that the usefulness of an Institute of this kind is greater where the employees may reach it with the least difficulty. It is far better to establish it where the employees work, rather than in an adjacent building, even if the necessary facilities could be provided at less cost there. In New South Wales the Railway Institute is in the railway yards, but some 400 yards away from the railway offices. It was found somewhat difficult to induce many of the members to attend the classes regularly. When I used to come over here I was always impressed by the advantages which the Victorian Railway Institute enjoyed over that of New South Wales by the fact that it was situated in the railway

offices immediately over the yard. In New South Wales we found that those working in the immediate vicinity of the Railway Institute were its strongest supports. Many boys, of course, attend the central classes because they were interested in specialized railway subjects. If the Postal Institute were away from the building in which the main body of employees were accommodated it would have a bad effect on the attendance at classes. Although the Spencer-street office is in an awkward part of the city members regularly attend there. We have a very strong choir meeting there at night time. Our classes are held at night-time. If any ten employees, who are members of the Institute, express a desire for the establishment of a day class because they are on night work, we would conduct such a class for them where the expenditure can be justified. I will supply the Committee with a statement as to the attendance at the several classes. The membership of the Institute is now practically stationary. We started with much enthusiasm. Many joined merely out of loyalty to the enterprise, and some from curiosity, and a number of these have dropped out. They are elderly men in the fifties and sixties who are satisfied with their present position, and, therefore, do not wish to take advantage of the instructional classes, and do not wish to avail themselves of the social side of the Institute, because to do so would be to clash with other outside interests. We have, therefore, dropped back to normal, and the members now consist of students and those who find the social side of the Institute of value to them.

79. *To Mr. Bamford.*—We started the educational side of the institution with an arithmetic class. Seventy-four students were enrolled, but after a time some of them who had also enrolled for other classes found it impossible to devote three or four nights a week to study, and the class dropped down to 36. All our classes, however, are very vigorous.

80. *To the Chairman.*—I do not think the objects of the Department in the matter of instruction would be secured by giving employees facilities to attend the various technical schools in the metropolis. The Department went to a great deal of trouble to induce employees to attend technical schools, and offered to refund the fees paid by those who joined a class at a technical school. Only seven out of some hundreds responded to the offer. In Sydney we also found that such a system did not work well. The students had to mix up with men who were engaged in different branches of industry, and whose interests were not identical. It was found better to have each subject taught by our own officers just as we are doing here. These various classes to my mind are essential. I think it quite reasonable that we should have a motor driving class. The Department has a fleet of cars, and it is laid down that no man shall attend this class who does not actually drive a service car during the day or whose avenue of promotion does not lay through motor driving. We want to teach our drivers to be efficient. We do not want to make mechanics of them, but if a postal employee's car breaks down, he should know enough about its mechanism to be able to get it back to the garage. There are 90 or 100 men in the Sturt-street garage, but they are not all motor drivers. Our motor mechanics attend this class.

81. *To Mr. Bamford.*—The motor-driving class is open to drivers or stand-by drivers from the Department's garage. We permit other postal employees to attend the class provided that they pay a fee of £3 3s. for the course, but we do not encourage those who are not driving Departmental motors, or whose way to promotion does not lay through motor driving to join the class. We found that some of our engineers wished to join it, and this led to our fixing a fee of £3 3s. for such students. We said quite plainly however that we did not want any but our own motor drivers and mechanics to join the class.

82. *To Senator Needham.*—We do not allow any one outside the Department to join the class. The membership

of the institute is confined to postal employees and others in the Commonwealth and State Service. The Railway Institute is open to Commonwealth employees and we reciprocate, but we do not encourage any persons outside our Department to come in. If a man wants to join the institute merely for the sake of playing billiards, we say to him "stop out"; but if he wants to come in for educational purposes, we allow him to do so subject to the approval of the Deputy Postmaster-General. Such outsiders must not comprise more than one-third of the students in a class. Each class must consist of not less than ten students. At the close of last year there were 1,684 members of the institute—1,530 were officers of the P.M.G.'s Department, and 154 officers of other Commonwealth Departments. The revenue for last month was £106 3s. 5d. It consisted of £42 19s. 9d. from the billiard room, £17 11s. 8d. (gross) from the sale of tobacco in the billiard rooms, £1 5s. 6d. library fines, £3 3s. sale of student's books, £2 4s. tournament fees, £3 7s. rent charged associations attached to us, £18 5s. 10d. new subscriptions, and £17 6s. 8d. for renewals. We sell tobacco in the dining and billiard rooms for the convenience of members. We want to keep our men off the streets as much as possible. There are many broken shifts. Postmen, for instance, have two broken shifts, and the less time they have to hang about the streets the better.

83. *To Mr. Bamford.*—Lectures are given at the institute from time to time. The Postal Electrical Society meets in the institute once a month, when lectures are delivered, and we also have lectures on telegraphy and other departmental subjects.

84. *To Mr. Mathews.*—We have supplied the teaching requirements in Melbourne for telegraph and telephone students. Some of our plant was loaned to the Working Men's College, but when we established our own classes, it was returned to us. Students can learn by means of our classes all that they require for the purposes of the Department. The tuition of employees of the Department is confined mostly to our classes, and not to outside colleges. Postal employees in the country do not avail themselves to any great extent of the facilities of the Institute. We have some 185 students in the correspondence section. We are going to establish a correspondence section in relation to the mechanics trades, and this, no doubt, will lead to a considerable increase. We have tried to arrive at some arrangement with existing organizations in the larger centres for the convenience of country members. We have, for instance, made arrangements with the Railway Institute at Ballarat, Geelong, and Bendigo to co-operate and to establish classes for postal employees there. I certainly think the social side of the Institute is of considerable help to the educational side. It leads to many members enrolling in one or other of our classes. The New South Wales Railway Institute had branches in every big country town, and took over schools of art at Nyngan, Junee, and elsewhere and reorganized them for the purpose of the institute. We find that the spirit of comradeship engendered by such an institute as ours is helpful. It leads also to a spirit of friendly rivalry. This is particularly noticeable in connexion with the gymnasium. The Institute brings employees into closer contact with each other. An officer in the Elizabeth-street Post Office told me recently that although he had been employed there for a number of years, he had never met a fellow-employee on the next floor until he joined the Institute. The Institute has a general levelling influence. Every member is on the same level. As long as a man conducts himself as a gentleman he is welcome; the moment he oversteps the mark, he goes out. We have three "don'ts." We "don't" have religion, politics, or gambling. The social side is certainly conducive to the growth of the instructional classes. The gymnasium also serves a very useful purpose. Postal employees are fit on joining the Service, and if by means of the gymnasium we can keep them fit, the better for the

Department. Practically every large firm in the United States of America annually spends thousands of pounds on welfare work, apart altogether from education. The Kodak Company, for instance, spends over £2,000 per annum on the recreation of its employees, and by so doing has reduced its "sick bill" by three days a year.

85. *To Senator Needham.*—If a student is enrolled and then neglects to attend his class, that fact does not affect his promotion. There is no immediate connexion between attendance at a class and promotion. The heads of branches, however, being members of the Council, have opportunities to see the boys in the various classes, and they soon get to know who are the "triers" and who are not. There is usually an examination for every grade in the Service. On joining the Clerical Division, a man is placed in the 5th Class, and before he can be promoted to a vacancy in the 4th Class, he must be qualified for the higher post. In the case of mechanics, a youth joins the Service as a junior; he then becomes a mechanic, a senior mechanic, and ultimately a foreman mechanic. We provide instruction in respect of each of these grades. We do not go beyond the position of foreman mechanic. An outside college might give a man more education than he required in that regard, whereas we provide for efficiency up to a certain standard. The Department is not influenced by the attendance or non-attendance of an employee at one of our classes. The suggestion has been made that in connexion with all examinations credit should be given for attendance of classes, but that proposal bristles with difficulties, more particularly in regard to country employees. I think it would be well to allow a certain number of marks for attendance where regular attendance was possible. If a man could not attend, under that system he would not be prejudiced.

86. *To Senator Newland.*—Telephone attendants employed on the switchboards of business houses are not trained in the Department. We have nothing to do with their training. They would not be eligible for membership, since they are neither Commonwealth nor State employees. Switchboard attendants in the big Government Departments, on the other hand, would be eligible. The estimated cost to the Postal Department of conducting these classes, including the salaries of the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and one or two members of the staff, for last year was £2,874. The whole of that amount, however, was not expended. The total amount expended by the Postmaster-General's Department to date is as follows:—1918: Installation, salaries, and instructors' fees, £3,107; 1919-20: Salaries and instructors' fees, £2,665. We provide drawing-boards for students, and supply them with technical books and equipment at wholesale rates. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary are permanent officers. The salaries of the Librarians are included in the amount I have just stated, but I think they are paid by the Department only for the time being. The salaries of the two billiard-room attendants are not paid by the Department. The intention of the Department was to aid the development of the Institute. With this object it supplied us with about 3,000 books for the library, and we have since been able to build up a library of about 6,000 books. The billiard-room receipts go into the Institute's funds. The money provided by the Department, however, is specifically allocated on the Estimates to certain purposes, and if not expended upon them, it is returned to the Consolidated Revenue. I have before me the last balance-sheet issued by the New South Wales Railway Institute. It shows: Salaries and wages, £7,353; Instructor's fees, £1,740; Budget, £1,500. The total expenditure amounts to £15,833, and its total receipts were that amount less £9,943, which the Railways Commissioners made up. Those figures, however, do not include expenditure on new buildings or the cost of extensive alterations. The Commissioners, according to the Annual Report, have approved of new Institute buildings at Orange, Dubbo, Mudgee, Cowra, Broken Hill, and have also approved of the taking over of the Blayney School of Arts

and other proposed expenditures, so that I believe the total expenditure on institutes last year must have been in the vicinity of £20,000 or £25,000. The Government subsidy granted to the Victorian Railway Institute last year was £3,500. In the matter of instructional classes, and the facilities offered to members, the Postal Institute compares very favorably with the Railway Institute of New South Wales. Country and Inter-State members visiting Melbourne are allowed the full use of the Institute for a month; if they remain here for more than a month they must pay the usual fee of a city member.

87. *To Mr. Parker Maloney.*—I cannot say what percentage of the 1,684 members of our Institute attend our classes. It would be difficult to arrive at the percentage, because some members attend three or four different classes, while others attend only one. I supply the Committee with the attendance at classes for last month:—

STATEMENT OF AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS
ATTENDING EACH CLASS-NIGHT, MAY, 1920.

Class.	Average Attendance.
Electrical Technology	19
Technical Telegraphy	19
Telephony I.	29
Telephony II.	18
Mathematics	13
Motor Driving	16
English I.	14
English II.	25
Postal Accountancy	9
Shorthand	11
Post Office Work	8
Typing	29
Arithmetic	22
Engineering Drawing	7
Telegraphy	18
Geography	12
History	12
Correspondence Class	185

The total number of officers in State is 4,986; the total number enrolled in Institute classes is 1,055; percentage, 21 per cent.; but some of these officers have enrolled in more than one class.

The bulk of our younger members are students. As a general rule the younger members join one or other of our classes in order to better fit themselves for their departmental duties. My experience is that the qualifications so gained are used by members to advance themselves in the Department. There is no subject in the curriculum which would lend itself to a desire on the part of a Postal employee to qualify for some outside business. For instance, we teach postal accountancy as distinguished from ordinary commercial accountancy, because our desire first of all is that a man shall be a trained postal accountant. The object of our syllabus is to secure for the Department the greatest efficiency. My experience of the New South Wales Railway Institute was that the instruction supplied by it was not availed of by railway employees to fit themselves for service outside the Department. We have to take care not to compete with outside colleges. A big outside technical college would have to break up its system, so to speak, in order to undertake instruction in specialized postal work. As to the dressmaking classes, the suggestion was that, since we provided a billiard-room and a gymnasium for the male members of the Institute, we might very well cater in some special way for the female employees of the Department. We have a ladies' physical culture class, and also conduct life-saving and swimming classes for female employees. It is proposed that we should have a dressmaking class, not to teach scientific dressmaking, but so that a girl might learn to make a blouse or a dress for herself. It is thought that the Institute might very well provide sewing machines, and appoint a sewing mistress to supervise afternoon and evening classes. If, for instance, a girl told the sewing mistress that she wished to learn to make a blouse, she would first of all be sent out to

purchase the material for herself. On returning with it she would be taught how to make it, and the ultimate result would be not only that she had profited by the instruction, but that she had learned how to make a garment for herself.

88. *To Senator Needham.*—I think there are about 4,000 postal employees in Victoria and about 2,000 in the metropolitan area. I shall be glad to supply a return showing the percentage of postal employees who are members of the Institute and are attending classes, and the extent to which the membership consists of General Commonwealth and State servants.

89. *To the Chairman.*—On the 31st December last the Railway Institute of New South Wales had a membership of 6,007. When I left it towards the end of 1918 it had a membership of 6,284.

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

90. *To the Chairman.*—Certain engineering matters, such as lifts, heating, ventilation, lighting, and power, have been submitted to me in connexion with the proposed additions and alterations to the Adelaide General Post Office. It is proposed to put in three passenger lifts and one goods lift. Two of the passenger lifts are for the general public and one for the staff. They are to travel from the basement to the top floor. The goods lift is to travel from the basement to the ground floor. Each of the passenger lifts is to have a capacity of twelve passengers. Their dimensions are 6 feet by 5 feet. I think we can get twelve people into that space. At any rate they are designed to take twelve passengers and will be of our standard type for twelve-passenger lift capacity. If the lift holds only ten, that will not affect the ropes or the gear much. The proposal is that they should be electrically driven by overhead drive. The estimated cost is about £5,400 for the three, or £1,800 each. The goods lift is to be 7 ft. 6 in. by 9 ft. 6 in., and the proposal is to drive it by the hydro-electric system. As it travels only one story, and forms the method of conveyance for the mails from the basement up to the platform outside, we have provided that the city water mains should be connected to it, so that if at any time the electric power is cut off from the electric motor-driven pump, we may have the alternative power, and so avoid a stoppage of the mail service. The pump is to be electrically driven, with a small ram on the outside of the building, running at a low pressure. In case of the failure of the electric current, the water power can be connected by the mere opening of a valve. The load capacity of the goods lift is 2 tons. I understand from Mr. Murdoch that the question has been raised whether what are known as under-driven lifts should not be substituted for the overhead-driven lifts for passengers, with a view to reducing the height of the proposed building. It is quite possible to put in under-driven lifts, but mechanically they are not liked. They require double the lengths of ropes and guiding sheaves and improved foundations, and, looking at the plan, there will be a difficulty in finding a suitable spot to drive them from. The two main public passenger lifts are surrounded either by landings or passages or public spaces, and the only place for a chamber to contain the mechanism to drive under-driven lifts would be under the basement floor. It would be necessary to excavate a chamber below that floor.

91. *To Senator Needham.*—It would be necessary to excavate to a depth of about 7 feet. The under-driven system is perfectly practicable, but it is expensive.

92. *To the Chairman.*—The extra initial cost on the three lifts, including the extra length of rope, the sheaves, and the provision of the necessary chamber, would represent over £300 per lift, or, say, £1,000 for the three. Then, as to running cost, we have a very fair idea now of the life of lift ropes. £25 per annum is a fair cost for the renewal of rope for an overhead-driven lift. It would be at least £50 for an under-driven lift, because there is

twice the length of rope, and there are a greater number of bends. Even £50 is an under-estimate, but you can take it that the increased cost would be at least £25 per annum per lift. In addition, the under-driven lift uses more current, as there is greater friction in driving. That would represent easily £10 per lift per annum, so that the total increased running cost for the three lifts would be £100 per annum. We also consider it a bad mechanical job as compared with the overhead drive, although it can be done. The speeds proposed are 300 feet per minute for the passenger lifts, and 150 feet per minute for the goods lift. In the Estimates prepared some three years ago there is an item for ventilation. When that was put in we were thinking more of the removal of the dust caused by the opening of the mail bags. A little while before that, we had successfully handled the problem in the Melbourne General Post Office. We put in there a ventilation system of extraction fans with the necessary ducts. It was assumed that the basement and ground floor in the Adelaide General Post Office would require mechanical ventilation, as the mail room and parcels post room are practically one space. The item that we included then was, therefore, for ordinary mechanical ventilation with electrically-driven exhaust fans and the necessary ducts. The proposal is to place the machinery for that purpose in the room shown on the plan of the basement as the boiler house. It could be placed at the top of the building, but it is preferable to put it in the basement. Mr. Murdoch told me that he was under the impression that, even if the machinery of the lifts were put in the basement, the same space would be required at the top of the building for the ventilating machinery. Of course, it is three years since we dealt with that plan, but the proposal now is to put the ventilating machinery in the basement. At any rate there is no difficulty in putting it there.

93. *To Senator Newland.*—It would not make any difference to the ventilation where the machinery was placed. You would run ducts from the fan to wherever you wanted to take your air from, and introduce it wherever you desired similarly.

94. *To the Chairman.*—If the ventilation had to be carried over the whole of the building, it would, perhaps, be very handy to have the machinery on the top floor, but we have changed our methods somewhat in the last few years. Our tendency has been more and more to put the ventilation plant, if possible, in the basement. We can deal there more readily with air treatment, which is a system that has been very much developed lately in connexion with the automatic telephone exchanges. It has become necessary to wash and cool the air, and reduce its humidity, and those processes are much better carried out in the basement than on the roof, for water supply and drainage purposes.

95. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The system of ventilation to be constructed for the basement and ground floor is the introduction of fresh air from outside by means of an electrically-driven fan. The air is forced through ducts and delivered at outlets on the various columns. Similarly, the foul air is drawn out through other ducts. The scheme will be somewhat similar to the forced-ventilation system at Federal Parliament House. That is a very fine system, and I wish we could have the handling of it. It is of no use to rely on natural conditions. You must have a motive power, either for extracting or introducing air, or both.

96. *To the Chairman.*—It is becoming imperative in the automatic telephone exchanges and other buildings in Sydney to install a system of treating the air. The temperature of the water in the mains in the summer in Sydney becomes so high that we cannot get any cooling effects from it. I think we shall have to introduce special cooling plants, because if the humidity gets beyond a certain point the automatic system is interfered with. I do not think the conditions will be so severe in Adelaide, because the heat there is dry. I believe the system of introducing fresh air by means of fans and cooling it with water from the mains will give good effects for the basement and ground

floor. This system of scientific ventilation will be just as good for the basement as it would be for the upper floors. It is only a question of changing the air a certain number of times. Our proposition is to give a volume of air which will change the air six times every hour, or once every ten minutes. It would be advisable in all Commonwealth public buildings, in order to secure efficient ventilation, to allow the Engineering Department of the Commonwealth to control the system continuously.

97. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The control would not necessarily consist of having our own staff there. What we should have is power to direct the operations and see that they are carried out properly.

98. *To the Chairman.*—The proposition for heating is for a hot-water system similar to that in the General Post Office, Melbourne, and in the Commonwealth offices. That is a hot-water circulation through wall radiators, with a forced circulation by means of an electrically-driven pump instead of relying on the difference of temperature between any two points. As fast as the water is warmed in the boiler, it is circulated through the building. The water goes from the boiler through the pipes back to the boiler again. We provide for a forced draught for the furnace. The system is simple and easily regulated. One great advantage is that it gets rid of the green-house smell by keeping the temperature in the radiators at about 170 degrees and no higher. The water is not allowed to reach steam heat. This makes a very fine system, which is certain, simple, and particularly economical. The installation is estimated to cost £4,000. The question of the necessity for a hot-water system was gone into at the time very closely by Mr. Owen Smyth, who submitted data as to temperatures which seemed to show that it was a very necessary thing to have. It would be used for three or four months in the year. Working expenses would not be so high as in a colder climate, but even in a cold climate the working expenses are not high, as the system needs very little attention outside the ordinary stoking. The question of the foundations of the building has not come specially under my notice. It would not do so unless some special conditions developed when construction began. Mr. Murdoch has explained to me what the architects proposed. I understand that a fear has been expressed, that, as the old building is on a clay foundation, containing always a certain amount of moisture, if any drainage was effected which would withdraw the moisture from the clay, it might cause the foundations to crack. I think that, with the system of drainage proposed, which will keep down excess moisture, we shall get practically uniform conditions, and it will be quite safe. I cannot see any danger to the original foundations after an examination of the plan.

99. *To Mr. Mathews.*—The ventilation system proposed will insure a hygienic supply of air to those working in the basement. Six renewals of the air per hour will make the basement quite healthy as regards atmosphere. I do not think the basement at present has any ventilation system. I am satisfied that the air conditions will be as good as on the ground level, but, of course, you can never get anything below the ground to equal the conditions in the sunlight.

100. *To Senator Needham.*—If it were determined to put in underdriven lifts, the size of the necessary chamber below the basement would be so small in comparison with the area of the whole building that it could not have any injurious effect on the clay foundation. The overdriven lifts will be more effective than the underdriven. They will cost less in maintenance and in power. They will be less liable to get out of order. The underdriven system is a perfectly practicable proposition, but it is not a good mechanical one. We always desire to reduce friction as much as possible and save the wearing parts. The overhead drive makes for simplicity. It is more reliable, and has fewer parts to get out of order. It does not require the ropes to be renewed so frequently, and it works with

less friction. Still, the underdriven lift is reliable. I prefer the overhead drive every time.

101. *To Mr. Bamford.*—I have seen the water-heating system governed by a hydrostat, which is in operation in some parts of Sydney, but we claim that we have a better knowledge of the hot-water system than any one else in Australia. We have the largest systems and more of them than any one else, and we installed them ourselves. We find that the American practice has followed exactly the same lines, of forced circulation through small pipes to wall radiators from the boiler at just the temperature which you require to warm the building without its being unduly hot. The system works without the slightest difficulty, and can be put into operation in from twenty minutes to half an hour.

102. *To Senator Newland.*—For fire protection it is proposed, in the case of this building, to rely on the fire brigade and the street mains. I do not know of any provision being made for hydrants inside the building. Where the fire brigade is handy, as in this case, and there are plenty of hydrants on the street mains, that is considered sufficient. I do not think there is considerable risk of fire from inflammable materials in the parcel post room and the mail room. There is constant attention, and such a number of men about that I could not imagine a fire starting there. In this case I think it is sufficient to rely on the fire brigade, which is very fine and efficient. The central fire station is handy, and there are plenty of fire plugs in the streets. I would have chemical extinguishers provided to deal with any small outbreak of fire, but by the time a man has one of those extinguishers pretty well emptied the fire brigade should be there. I do not think there is any need to install sprinklers in the mail room, the parcels room, or the telegraph operators' room.

103. *To Senator Needham.*—I am in favour of outside fire escapes only if they are well built and not too steep. If one is not provided for in this building, I would not favour putting it in, so long as there are enough stairways inside, properly enclosed in brickwork, and if the lift shafts, as will be done in this case, are also enclosed. I do not think there is any necessity in this building for an outside stairway, judging by the number of inside stairways provided. Unless outside fire escapes are very well constructed, I do not like them. They should be constructed almost as well as an inside stairway, and then they are better inside.

104. *To Senator Newland.*—We deal with the system of artificial ventilation from the point of view of what is necessary for proper ventilation, and not with any relation to the cost of the building. The automatic telephone exchanges are entailing very heavy expense in that regard, but we put in whatever is essential and are not limited by the cost of the building. We have to provide whatever is necessary to keep the instruments going and to cope with the humidity. We would adopt exactly the same basis for new works. We would deal with them solely from the point of view of what is necessary for proper ventilation. I undertake that that is the way in which this building will be dealt with. It will be designed to give good air conditions in the mail room and basement, independent of any figure contained in the estimate. If, in addition to the ventilating and heating systems, an air-washing or air-cooling plant is also thought necessary, it will be put in. I should consult the chief of the fire brigade on the question of whether the windows proposed to be put in on the northern side are sufficient for protection against fire in case a building of equal height is erected on the other side of the right-of-way. When we were building the General Post Office at the corner of Spencer and Bourke streets, Melbourne, we asked Mr. Lee, and he considered that windows of wired rolled plate-glass would give sufficient protection, with a four-story building on the other side of an eleven-foot passage.