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Senator F. D. Miller

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1921.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Geo. Monahan

of the Senate.
28-6-21



PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

SIXTH GENERAL REPORT.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

SIXTH GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY WILLIAM BARON FORSTER OF LEPE,
a Member of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross
of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor-
General and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

In accordance with the requirements of Section 11 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works has the honour to submit the following Report of its proceedings for the year ended 31st December, 1920:—

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE.

1. On the 23rd April, 1920, the following Members of the House of Representatives were appointed members of the Committee, viz:—

Messrs. Atkinson, Bansford, Gregory, Mackay, Mathews, and Parker Moloney.

2. On the 29th April, 1920, the following Members of the Senate were appointed members of the Committee, viz:—

Senators Henderson, Needham, and Newland.

3. Prior to entering upon their duties each member made and subscribed the declaration required by Section 4 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*.

4. The first meeting of the Third Committee was held on the 30th April, 1920. At that meeting the Honorable Henry Gregory, M.P., was elected Chairman, and Senator John Newland, Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

CHANGES ON THE COMMITTEE.

5. On the 30th June, 1920, Senator Edward Needham, who failed to secure his return as a member of the Senate for Western Australia, ceased to be a member of the Committee.

6. On the 22nd July, 1920, Senators George Henderson and John Newland resigned their positions as members of the Committee.

7. On the 28th July, 1920, Senators Hattil Spencer Foll and William Plain were appointed and Senator John Neyland was re-appointed to the Committee.

8. Before entering on the duties of their office Senators Foll and Plain made and subscribed the declaration required by Section 4 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1914*.

9. During the year the Committee held 95 meetings and examined 82 witnesses in connexion with the proposed works submitted. In making its inquiries, the Committee travelled a distance of 10,161 miles by rail.

QUESTIONS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

10. Since the Committee presented its last General Report the following questions were submitted to it for inquiry and report, namely:—

- (i) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Seymour, Victoria.
- (ii) Alterations and Additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide.
- (iii) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Midland Junction, Western Australia.
- (iv) Kidman and Mayhew's Wooden Shipbuilding Contract.
- (v) Establishment of Automatic Telephone Exchange at Ascot Vale, Victoria.
- (vi) Erection of Ordnance and other Defence Buildings at Kelvin Grove, Brisbane, Queensland.
- (vii) Erection of Additional Telephone Trunk Line between Sydney and Melbourne.

MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

Third Committee:

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

Senate.

Senator Hattil Spencer Foll.*
Senator George Henderson.†
Senator John Newland, Vice-Chairman.‡
Senator Edward Needham.§
Senator William Plain.*

House of Representatives.

Llewelyn Atkinson, Esquire, M.P.
The Honorable Frederick William Bansford, M.P.
George Hugh Mackay, Esquire, M.P.
James Mathews, Esquire, M.P.
Parker John Moloney, Esquire, M.P.

* Appointed 29th July, 1920. † Resigned 2nd July, 1920. ‡ Re-appointed 29th July, 1920.

§ Ceased to be a Member of the Senate, 30th June, 1920.

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- (viii) Erection of Telephone Trunk Line between Brisbane and Sydney.
- (ix) Extension of the Port Augusta-Oodnadatta Railway from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs.
- (x) Northern Territory Railway Extension from Mataranka to Daly Waters.
- (xi) Re-modelling and Additions, General Post Office, Sydney.
- (xii) Establishment of Automatic Telephone Exchanges at Albion and Newmarket, Queensland.
- (xiii) Erection of Offices for Taxation and other Commonwealth Departments, Sydney.
- (xiv) Proposed Establishment of an Anzac Memorial Square, Brisbane.
- (xv) Erection of an Additional Telegraph Line from Perth to Eucla via Transcontinental Railway route.
- (xvi) Extension by two floors of the building under construction for General Post Office, Perth, W.A.
- (xvii) Erection of Automatic Telephone Exchange, North Melbourne.
- (xviii) Erection of Automatic Telephone Exchange, Newmarket, Victoria.
- (xix) Extension of Woollen Mills, Geelong, Victoria.

COMPLETED INQUIRIES.

11. The Committee has dealt with several of these questions and has presented reports in connexion therewith, namely :-

	Estimated Cost.
(i) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Seymour, Victoria	£78,672
(ii) Alterations and Additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide	76,014
(iii) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Midland Junction, Western Australia	36,570
	<hr/> £191,256

In addition the Committee by special consent of the House of Representatives presented to His Excellency the Governor-General an Interim Report on the subject of Kidman and Mayoh's Wooden Shipbuilding Contract.

(i) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Seymour, Victoria.

Under the scheme of the military defence of the Commonwealth, it is intended that certain specific quantities of equipment should be held in each State as a reserve stock in the case of war. To this end a proposal was submitted for the erection on a site in the vicinity of the Seymour Railway Station of Stores to house such of the material as has been allocated to the State of Victoria.

The estimated cost of the proposal, including levelling of site, provision of railway siding, roads, paths, fencing, water supply, &c., amounted to £78,672.

After a careful consideration of all the evidence placed before it, and giving due weight to the military reasons underlying the selection of mobilization store centres, the Committee signified its approval of the site at Seymour, and recommended the erection of the equipment and vehicle stores proposed, but stipulated that the equipment stores should be erected parallel to one another, one on each side of the proposed railway line, and that a system of fire sprinklers be installed therein.

A personal inspection of the vehicles stored in other Mobilization Stores and evidence obtained as to the heights of the highest vehicles to be stored, failed to convince the Committee of the necessity for having the walls of these buildings 11 feet high to the wall plate as proposed, and it was considered that they might with advantage and economy be reduced to a height of 9 ft. 6 in., and a recommendation was made to this effect.

Recommendations were also made that a luncheon and smoke room be provided for the comfort of temporary and other employees and that the possibility of further land being required should receive careful consideration, so that if an additional area were considered essential it should be acquired at once in order to anticipate any inflation of prices of adjoining land likely to result from the establishment of Commonwealth activities in the vicinity.

(ii) Alterations and Additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide, South Australia.

This was a proposal to provide increased and more convenient accommodation for the public and for the officials in the General Post Office, Adelaide. Briefly the idea is to demolish a certain portion of the old structure, and to erect behind the main street frontages a six-storied reinforced concrete building of modern fire resisting construction.

The estimated cost of the proposal was set down at £76,014, and the time necessary to complete the work about four years.

After a thorough inspection of the existing building, the Committee was unanimously of opinion that further accommodation should be provided, and recommended accordingly.

To avoid undue fire risk, it was also recommended 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.

The Committee agreed with the proposals submitted for the passenger and goods lifts, but considered that one passenger lift in the front of the building would be sufficient for present requirements, and that, while making necessary provision for a second lift, it should not be actually installed until it had been shown that traffic requirements warranted it.

To minimize as much as possible dislocation of business and inconvenience to the public during the progress of the alterations, the Committee recommended that temporary buildings of the drill hall type be constructed on the vacant Commonwealth land adjoining the Post Office to house portion of the staff while its particular part of the building was being altered, and that the sections of the office be changed over as various rooms in the new building become available.

(iii) Erection of Mobilization and Vehicle Stores at Midland Junction, Western Australia.

This was a proposal to erect, on a site acquired for the purpose at Midland Junction, Western Australia, storage accommodation for the usual military requirements of Western Australia, as well as accommodation to house certain materials being received from overseas.

The estimated cost, including provision of a railway siding, fire services, excavation and levelling of site, water supply, &c., was set down at £36,570.

Having carefully perused the whole of the evidence obtained in regard to this matter, the Committee was of opinion that the Ordnance and Mobilization Stores were required, and recommended accordingly. It, however, expressed its disapprobation of the fact that the site had been acquired prior to the reference of this work for investigation, action which may in many cases hamper the Committee in its decision.

Finally, it was recommended that, in the interests of efficiency and economy, the whole of the ordnance business, together with the staff clerical, armourers, artisans &c. should be concentrated at Midland Junction.

Kidman and Mayoh's Wooden Shipbuilding Contract.

This reference was made to the Committee on the 29th October, and, as it involved a considerable amount of research work, it was apparent that the Committee would not be able to complete its report in time for presentation before Parliament adjourned. The matter had been represented as urgent, and the House of Representatives, on the 26th November, 1920, resolved, on the motion of the Chairman, that the Committee have leave to continue during the recess, its investigations, and to present an Interim Report to His Excellency the Governor-General.

This Interim Report was forwarded to His Excellency on the 24th December, 1920.

It stated that the Committee, after careful consideration of the evidence, was satisfied that the ships had not been constructed in conformity with the approved plans and specifications and Lloyd's Rules as provided in the Agreement. Further, that there had been such serious departures from Lloyd's Rules and from the plans and specifications that the ships are not seaworthy.

As the Committee expressed itself as doubtful that even with the expenditure of an unwarrantable sum of money, the vessels could be made seaworthy, it recommended that under no circumstances should the ships be taken over by the Commonwealth, and that the request of the contractors to be relieved of their contract be not complied with.

RECORD OF INQUIRIES.

Appended hereto is a return containing a record of the inquiries of the Committee from the date of its appointment to the 31st December, 1920.

J. J. GREGORY,
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,
Dudley Buildings, 527 Collins-street, Melbourne.
26th April, 1921.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

RECORD OF INQUIRIES.

The following is a list of proposed public works inquired into by the Committee from the date of its appointment to 31st December, 1919, with the result of its inquiries:—

Date of Inquiry.	Proposed Work.	Expenditure proposed by the Government.	Expenditure recommended by the Committee.	Amount in favour of that proposed.	Amount in favour of that proposed.	Remarks.
1915.						
25th Jan. to 24th Feb.	Construction of a main reservoir for the city of Canberra	75,000	75,000	£ ..	£ ..	Recommended as proposed
28th Jan. to 25th Feb.	Storage and regulating reservoir, Queanbeyan River	100,000	..	..	100,000	Committee decided that there is no present necessity or urgency for this work
11th Mar. to 4th May	Extension of buildings at Flinders Naval Base	111,032	111,032	..	..	Recommended as proposed
10th Mar. to 5th May	Sewerage scheme for Flinders Naval Base	9,000	7,500	..	2,000	
6th May to 24th June	Lithgow Small Arms Factory Extension	66,500 (including power plant)	92,100	23,500	..	In lieu of making additions to the existing factory at Lithgow, the Committee recommended the erection of a new factory at Canberra twice the size of the existing factory, the installation of new machinery therein, and the removal thereto of the existing machinery at a convenient date
6th May to 27th May	Increase of output, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	..	..	..	..	Committee recommended establishment of a second shift
6th May to 17th June	Increase of plant, Small Arms Factory, Lithgow	38,727	38,727	..	..	Recommended as proposed
27th July to 29th Aug.	Small Arms Factory—location at Canberra	..	..	..	..	Site recommended
18th Sept. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Sydney	93,008	..	..	..	Committee favorable to proposal subject to provision of additional means of ingress and egress
21st Sept. to 22nd Sept.	Barracks, quarters, gun park, &c. for H.A.A. Engineers, Queensland	26,000	28,225	2,225	..	Recommended subject to improved lighting, water, and fire services
23rd Sept. to 24th Nov.	Cement Works for Commonwealth purposes	100,000	100,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
28th Sept. to 6th Oct.	Albermarle and additions to the Customs House, Sydney	37,600	29,500	..	..	Recommended, but stipulation made that occupants be removed to temporary accommodation during alterations
12th Oct. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Malvern, Victoria	46,933	46,933	..	..	Recommended as proposed
12th Oct. to 15th Oct.	Automatic Telephone Exchange, Collingwood, Victoria	49,752	49,752	..	..	Recommended as proposed
22th Oct. to 20th Oct.	Additional Office accommodation, Victoria, Barracks, Melbourne	35,000	35,000	..	..	Recommended as proposed
1916.						
14th Feb. to 1st Mar.	Selection of site for arsenal within the Melbourne Town Hall	..	..	..	..	Confidential report issued to Prime Minister
24th May to 31st May	Alterations and additions to the Customs House, Sydney (further report)	51,481	41,000	..	10,481	
25th Feb. 1915, to 21st Aug. 1916	Water Supply scheme Flinders Naval Base	91,000 per 1,000 gallons for water consumed	Capital cost nil; £ per 1,000 gallons with minimum annual payment of £4,000 for first three years, £3,500 for second three years, £3,000 thereafter	..	61,000	The interest on the capital cost of £91,000 originally proposed, plus the cost of £1,000 per 1,000 gallons, more than counterbalances the annual payment under the scheme recommended

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

Date of Inquiry.	Proposed Work.	Expenditure proposed by the Government.	Expenditure recommended by the Committee.	Amount in favour of that proposed.	Amount in favour of that proposed.	Remarks.
1916.						
10th Nov. to 20th Aug.	Extension of Pine Creek—Katherine River Railway to Bittern (Matankra) Springs	320,000	320,000	£ ..	£ ..	Recommended as proposed
1916.	City Railway, Canberra	378,972	280,000	..	98,972	The Committee recommended that requirements for some years be met by temporary surface lines at an estimated cost of about £75,000
1916.	Dams for Ornamental Waters, Canberra	912,421	472,421	..	440,000	Most of the expenditure recommended, however, will be deferred for a period of years
1917.						
16th Jan. to 20th Feb.	Extension of Postal Stores, Harbour-street, Sydney	68,632	68,632	..	..	Recommended as proposed
21st Jan. to 16th Mar.	Power House, Flinders Naval Base—construction of powerhouse, hospital, detection barracks, quarters for married officers and warrant officers; water, sewage, and storm-water drainage; electric distribution system; and accessory works for that establishment	15,000	9,500	..	5,500	
27th Sept. to 1st May, 1918	Flinders Naval Base—two breakwaters, excavations, reclamations, basins or quaywalls, floating docks, administrative buildings, and permanent railways	168,845	142,641	..	20,204	
1918.						
18th June to 1st Aug.	Housing of Commonwealth workers at Lithgow, New South Wales	4,620,100	2,908,850	..	10,250	The Committee recommended that the cost of £1,001,000 be made the subject of further inquiry at a later date. A saving of £10,250 was effected in connexion with the transport of material from Wongong
20th Sept. to 29th Oct.	Arsenal Railway	..	..	..	..
23rd Dec. to 20th June, 1919	Ordnance Store, Leichhardt, N.S.W.	62,614	62,614	..	..
1919.						
19th June to 7th Oct.	Commonwealth Note Printing Offices	47,800	46,800	..	1,000	The Committee recommended a variation in the floor finish proposed which would result in a saving of £1,000
1920.						
4th May to 9th June	Erection of mobilization and vehicle stores, Seymour, Victoria	78,672	80,472	1,800	..	Increase resulted from the recommendation of the Committee that five workshops be installed in the Equipment Building
11th June to 19th July	Alterations and Additions to the General Post Office, Adelaide, S.A.	76,014	76,014	..	..	Recommended as proposed.
13th July to 24th Aug.	Mobilization and vehicle stores, Midland Junction, Western Australia	30,570	..	..	..
1921.						