

1937-38-39.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC WORKS.

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SEVENTEENTH GENERAL REPORT.

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

(*Eighth Committee.*)

THE HONORABLE JOSIAH FRANCIS, M.P., Chairman.

*Senate.*

Senator Charles Henry Brand.  
 Senator Gordon Brown.  
 Senator Walter Jackson Cooper.

*House of Representatives.*

Thomas Joseph Collins, Esq., M.P.  
 Charles William Frost, Esq., M.P.  
 The Hon. Eric John Harrison, M.P.  
 The Hon. Edward James Holloway, M.P.  
 Walter Maxwell Nairn, Esq., M.P.

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(*Ninth Committee.*)

THE HONORABLE JOSIAH FRANCIS, M.P., Chairman.

*Senate.*

Senator Charles Henry Brand.  
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*House of Representatives.*

Thomas Joseph Collins, Esq., M.P.  
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 Walter Maxwell Nairn, Esq., M.P.  
 John Lloyd Price, Esq., M.P.

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# THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

## SEVENTEENTH GENERAL REPORT.

To His Excellency Brigadier-General the Right Honorable Alexander Gore Arkwright Baron Gowrie, V.C., P.C., G.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O., Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency :

In accordance with the requirements of Section 11 of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1936*, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works has the honour to submit the following report of its proceedings for the year ended 31st December, 1938 :—

### INTRODUCTORY.

1. The Act constituting the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was assented to on the 19th December, 1913. Subsequently the appointment of the Members of the Committee was made and the first meeting of the Committee was held on 3rd December, 1914.

When the financial stringency precluded the carrying out of any large public works, the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1932* was passed suspending the operations of the Committee.

By the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act of 1936*, assented to on 7th December, 1936, the Act of 1932 was repealed and the Committee was reconstituted, the first meeting of the Eighth Committee being held on 24th June, 1937.

2. On the 25th August, 1937, Parliament referred to the Committee the question of the erection of a Terminal Building at Kingsford Smith Aerodrome, Mascot, New South Wales, but before the Committee had time to complete its inquiries the House of Representatives was dissolved on the 21st September, 1937, and the Committee ceased to have legal existence.

3. With the assembly of the new Parliament the Members of the Ninth Committee were appointed and the names published in the *Commonwealth Gazette*, number 73 of 9th December, 1937.

Prior to entering upon their duties each Member made and subscribed the declaration required by the Act. The first meeting of the Committee was held on 7th December, 1937.

### QUESTIONS BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

4. Subsequent to the reconstitution of the Committee the following matters were submitted to the Committee for inquiry and report, namely :—

- (a) Erection of a Terminal Building at the Kingsford Smith Aerodrome, Mascot, New South Wales.
- (b) Erection of a Community Hospital at Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.
- (c) Erection of a Hospital at Darwin, Northern Territory.
- (d) Erection of a Gaol at Darwin, Northern Territory.
- (e) Erection of a New Repatriation General Hospital at Randwick, New South Wales.

### COMPLETED INQUIRIES.

5. The Committee has dealt with most of these questions, and has presented reports in connexion therewith, namely :—

	Estimated Cost. £
(a) Erection of a Terminal Building, Kingsford Smith Aerodrome, Mascot, New South Wales . . . . .	51,026
(b) Erection of Community Hospital, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory . . . . .	210,000
(c) Erection of Hospital, Darwin, Northern Territory . . . . .	101,760
(d) Erection of Gaol, Darwin, Northern Territory . . . . .	42,000
	<hr/> 404,786



## SUMMARY OF COMPLETED INQUIRIES.

(a) ERECTION OF A TERMINAL BUILDING AT THE KINGSFORD SMITH AERODROME,  
MASCOT, NEW SOUTH WALES.

6. This was a proposal to erect a building to provide accommodation for officials of the Civil Aviation Branch and of other Commonwealth departments, and for air-line companies operating at Mascot. It was to be a terminal station which would function as a central point for the control of visitors and passengers, and for the regulation of the movements of aircraft; and was designed as part of a general scheme to provide for the development of the area as an airport worthy of the importance of the city of Sydney.

It was represented that the air passenger services, operated by six companies in Sydney, were making considerable demands on the use of the Kingsford Smith aerodrome apart from those made by the Aero Club and other flying and training organizations. With the increasing number of aircraft arriving and departing, it was claimed to be necessary, in order to avoid accidents, to place all operations under strict discipline. To this end it was proposed to place the station in charge of an Aerodrome Control Officer who would regulate aircraft movements. The station would also provide for a radio control officer, who, in close touch with the meteorological officer, would control aircraft outside a six mile radius of the aerodrome.

The plan of the building showed provision for a central concourse 90 feet by 37 feet, with a waiting hall 60 feet by 25 feet, space for baggage and Customs facilities and office space for air-line companies operating through the airport.

Passenger comfort was considered in the provision of a coffee bar and cafe, with kitchen and services and blocks of lavatories for both sexes. There was also to be provision on the ground floor for a post office, a medical officer attending to quarantine services, and for mail and freight handling. On the first floor were to be offices for Civil Aviation officials, a meteorological officer, the radio and control tower and a certain amount of storage space. The flat roof provided accommodation for sightseers.

The construction proposed for the building was of a semi-steel frame type with steel beams supported on steel stanchions or walls as necessary, reinforced concrete floors and roof slabs, concrete staircases with external brick walls, and light internal partition walls of brick or terra-cotta which could be readily altered to meet future requirements. The construction of the north and south wings was to be made sufficiently strong to carry a future floor.

The elevations were simply expressed in buff-coloured brickwork with a small amount of cement dressing and coloured decoration in the form of tiled piers, &c. The main concourse and corridors on each side were to be floored with terrazzo; in the other rooms on the ground and first floor the floors were to be wood-blocked, and the cafe was to have a concrete floor covered with a finished rubber.

The estimated cost of the proposal as submitted to the Committee was £51,026.

After due consideration of all aspects of the proposal the Committee recommended:—

- (1) That a Terminal Building at Mascot is essential to cater for the comfort and convenience of passengers, and for the control of aircraft using the airport.
- (2) That the design submitted for the proposed building, subject to certain minor modifications suggested by the Committee, is satisfactory.
- (3) That a basement proposed be not constructed.
- (4) That no necessity exists for the central heating of the concourse.
- (5) That the regulation of the temperature in the Control Tower be effected by a small air-conditioning unit.
- (6) That negotiations be entered into with the appropriate authorities in an endeavour to provide for better road access to the aerodrome.
- (7) That in the interests of the safety of trainees and of commercial aviation, training flying at the Kingsford Smith aerodrome be prohibited when air-liners are arriving at or departing from the aerodrome.
- (8) That a bronze tablet or plaque be placed in an appropriate position in the concourse to commemorate the exploits of Air-Commodore Sir Charles Edward Kingsford Smith, Kt., M.C., A.F.C.

By the adoption of the Committee's recommendations it was estimated that a saving would be effected on the proposal of approximately £3,000.



(b) ERECTION OF A COMMUNITY HOSPITAL AT CANBERRA, AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY.

7. This project submitted for the consideration of the Committee aimed at the erection on the hospital site determined by the Griffin plan of Canberra, of a four-storeyed structure of a semi-vertical type, with a fifth storey to carry the private section. It was proposed that the building should be of concrete frame construction with brick in-filling to walls, floors of concrete and external walls of brick.

The total floor area of the building was to be approximately 64,000 square feet exclusive of balconies and roof areas and the number of beds asked for was 147 allocated as under :—

Public medical	..	..	..	..	..	..	26
Public surgical	..	..	..	..	..	..	26
Intermediate medical	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Intermediate surgical	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Private	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Obstetrical intermediate	..	..	..	..	..	..	20
Private	..	..	..	..	..	..	5
Children	..	..	..	..	..	..	16
Sick babies	..	..	..	..	..	..	12
Nurses' sick bay	..	..	..	..	..	..	4
Refractory	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	147

The estimated cost of the proposal as submitted to the Committee, including structures, mechanical services, fixed equipment, boiler-house, blinds inside and out, furniture and fittings (including partial re-use of existing furniture), laundry, structure and machinery and architect's fees, was set down at £160,000, and the time fixed for completion approximately fifteen months from date of commencement. During the hearing of evidence, however, it was learned that it was intended to provide nurses' quarters and an isolation block also, which would bring the total expenditure contemplated to £210,000.

After careful consideration of all the evidence received and a study of accommodation provided in towns of a similar size elsewhere in Australia the Committee recommended :—

- (1) That provision be made for 100 beds exclusive of the number that would be available in the isolation block ;
- (2) That the building be of similar design to that proposed but restricted to three storeys if practicable. The foundations, however, to be of sufficient strength to carry a five storey building.
- (3) That separate nurses' quarters be erected conveniently situated to the main building.
- (4) That the existing isolation block be made to serve for the present.
- (5) That when the new hospital is completed portion of the existing building be utilized as a convalescent or eventide home.

By the adoption of the Committee's recommendations it was estimated that the savings effected on the proposal would be approximately £60,000.

(c) ERECTION OF A HOSPITAL AT DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

8. The original proposal in this instance was for a structure of a cruciform type comprising four single-storey pavilions, with administrative block, X-ray block, and operating theatre, medical officers', matron's, sisters' and nurses' quarters, kitchen block, ambulance station, laundry, garages and services.

The construction was to be of concrete and fibro-cement, with fibro-cement adjustable louvres on the outside walls, and with fibro-cement roofing.

In the first instance the accommodation suggested was for 100 beds and the estimated cost was set down at £85,000.

During the course of the Committee's investigation, however, the proposal was modified to the extent that the main block was to consist of two two-storeyed structures providing 132 beds and the cost of the whole proposal was set down at £120,000, including two isolation blocks in course of erection, the cost of which was approximately £8,000.

The Committee discussed at a conference with the Administrator and officials the whole question of hospital accommodation in all its aspects, and had a further conference with the Commanding Officers of the Naval and Military units to ascertain their present and prospective requirements. Subsequently the estimate of £120,000 was reduced to £101,760, excluding the isolation blocks.



Further inquiries by the Committee satisfied it that a new hospital was essential and that the site suggested was suitable, but a careful scrutiny of the figures showing the daily average of patients in recent years, and estimates furnished of the prospective increase in the population of Darwin, convinced the Committee that all legitimate needs would be met by providing ward accommodation for 60 beds in the main hospital.

While agreeing that provision should be made which would permit, if at any future time increased accommodation should be necessary, of the completed institution assuming a cruciform plan, as originally proposed, the Committee recommended that for the present the accommodation to be provided be contained in two one-storey pavilions in lieu of the four single-storey pavilions originally contemplated, or the two two-storey structures subsequently suggested. It also recommended that an eventide home be provided for convalescent or chronic cases not requiring hospital treatment.

By the adoption of the Committee's recommendations it was estimated that a saving would be effected of approximately £34,760.

(d) ERECTION OF A GAOL AT DARWIN, NORTHERN TERRITORY.

9. This was a proposal to substitute for the existing gaol at Darwin a structure designed on modern lines and in conformity with the principles of tropical architecture. It was to comprise an administrative block, remand and first offenders' block, white prisoners' block, aboriginal prisoners' block, hospital block, medical inspection block, kitchen and garages, worksheds and stores, boundary wall, covered ways, watchtower, patrol trackways, &c., and was intended to provide accommodation for seventeen white prisoners and 98 aboriginal prisoners.

The construction proposed was of reinforced concrete with steel doors and grilles, and the outer verandah walls of the prison block were to be composed of concrete posts, adjustable fibro-cement louvres and expanded metal screens.

The estimated cost of the proposal as submitted to Parliament was set down at £42,000.

After due consideration of all the evidence received the Committee recommended :—

- (1) That to provide prison accommodation suitable and adequate to meet present and prospective requirements a new building is essential.
- (2) That the site selected is suitable for the purpose intended.
- (3) That accommodation be provided for 62 aboriginal prisoners.
- (4) That from a practical as well as a humanitarian point of view steps should be taken to permit of the transfer of long-term white prisoners away from Darwin.
- (5) That if long-term white prisoners be sent south accommodation for seventeen whites in Darwin would meet all normal requirements for a number of years.
- (6) That one cell for female white prisoners should be provided in a position adjacent to the Chief Gaoler's quarters.
- (7) That the gaol building proper with modifications suggested by the Committee can be erected for approximately £37,000.
- (8) That quarters for gaol staff should be provided in or adjacent to the gaol.
- (9) That in lieu of an elaborate hospital block an infirmary with accommodation for two white patients and four aboriginals be provided.
- (10) That the surrounding wall be sixteen feet high with rounded inner corners.
- (11) That the provision of grilled covered ways, cat walks and an observation tower are unnecessary.
- (12) That special efforts be made to provide facilities to enable prisoners to engage in reproductive work of a regular and intelligent nature.

By the adoption of the Committee's recommendations it was estimated that a saving would be effected on the project submitted of approximately £5,000

INQUIRY INCOMPLETE.

10. Inquiry in respect of the undermentioned public work is incomplete :—

Repatriation General Hospital, Randwick, New South Wales—Erection of a new hospital.

RECORD OF INQUIRIES.

11. Appended hereto is a return containing a record of inquiries of the Committee from the date of its reconstitution in June, 1937, to 31st December, 1938.



## SAVINGS EFFECTED BY THE COMMITTEE.

12. From an examination of the "record of inquiries" it will be seen that the total value of the proposed works reported upon by the Committee during 1938 reached the figure £404,786, and that the savings recommended by the Committee amounted to £102,760.

It was formerly the practice of previous Committees to print as an appendix to the General Report a table showing the whole of the works reported upon by the Committee since its inception, but as a matter of economy this has been discontinued. That table, however, showed that up to the end of 1930 the value of the works reported upon by the Committee reached £26,766,812, and the savings effected amounted to £5,005,069. Adding those figures to the amounts given above it will be seen that the total value of the works reported upon by the Committee since its inception in 1914, to 31st December, 1938, amounted to £27,171,598, and the savings effected to date have been £5,107,829.

JOS. FRANCIS,  
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,  
Parliament House, Canberra,  
4th March, 1939.

## PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.—RECORD OF INQUIRIES, 1938.

Date of Inquiry.	Proposed Work.	Expenditure proposed by the Government.	Expenditure recommended by the Committee.	Amount in excess of that proposed.	Amount in reduction of that proposed.	Remarks.
26th August, 1937, to 22nd April, 1938	Erection of a Terminal Building at the Kingsford Smith Aerodrome, Mascot, New South Wales	£ 51,026	£ 48,026	..	£ 3,000	
30th April, 1938, to 6th June, 1938	Erection of a Community Hospital at Canberra, Australian Capital Territory	210,000	150,000	..	60,000	
6th August, 1938, to 9th September, 1938	Erection of a Hospital at Darwin, Northern Territory	101,760	67,000	..	34,760	
6th August, 1938, to 27th October, 1938	Erection of a Gaol at Darwin, Northern Territory	42,000	37,000	..	5,000	
		404,786	302,026	..	102,760	