

1950-51.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

---

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PUBLIC WORKS.

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REPORT

RELATING TO THE PROPOSED ERECTION OF A

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE

AT

LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA.

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*Presented pursuant to Statute ; ordered to be printed, 23rd October, 1951.*

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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

(FOURTEENTH COMMITTEE.)

(Senators appointed 21st June, 1951, Members of the House of Representatives appointed 28th June, 1951.)

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EXTRACT FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
No. 17, DATED 12TH JULY, 1951.

6. PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE—REFERENCE OF WORK—TELEPHONE EXCHANGE, LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA.—Mr. Kent Hughes (Minister for Works and Housing) moved, by leave, That, in accordance with the provisions of the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913-1947*, the following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, namely :—The erection of a building in St. John-street, Launceston, for telephone exchange and other purposes.  
Mr. Kent Hughes laid on the Table plans in connexion with the proposed work.  
Debate ensued.  
Question—put and passed.

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# THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS.

## AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGE AND POST OFFICE, LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA.

### REPORT.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, to which the House of Representatives referred for investigation and report the question of the erection of an Automatic Telephone Exchange building in Launceston, Tasmania, has the honour to report as follows:—

#### SECTION I.—INTRODUCTION.

1. Launceston is situated on the Tamar River, and is approximately 30 miles from the north coast of Tasmania. It is a centre which is developing rapidly, owing to its geographical position and the establishment of industries there. The city is the commercial and trade centre for a flourishing primary producing area in the northern portion of the State, and is well served by road, rail and airline communications which radiate to and from this important centre.

2. The present exchange is a manually operated one, of the common battery multiple type, and was cut into service as long ago as 1910. The number of switchboard positions has been increased from time to time in order to meet growth, but a considerable amount of the original equipment is still in use.

3. The exchange is situated in the Post Office building, at the corner of Cameron and St. John streets. The building is of local brick construction and carries a brick clock-tower which makes it a landmark in the city. The increasing demands for greater telephone facilities has been met to the present time by extending the apparatus, and by making a number of alterations to the interior of the building to provide a measure of temporary relief.

4. The Post Office section has expanded also, and every available space has been pressed into service, so that the whole building is now uncomfortably filled with the various branches of the Postmaster-General's Department, all striving to carry out their functions efficiently in very confined spaces, and under most difficult conditions.

5. It has therefore been considered essential to make provision for the telephone exchange, as well as portion of the postal activities, in a new building adjoining the present one, so that the over-crowded conditions may be relieved, and space provided for the equipment necessary to cope with increasing business for the next 20 years.

#### SECTION II.—THE PRESENT PROPOSAL.

##### THE BUILDING.

6. The proposal is to erect a telephone exchange building of six stories above ground level and two basement floors, with a total gross area of approximately 81,500 square feet. The height of the building will be approximately 95 feet, with the top story set back from the main façade, thus from the street level the building will appear to conform to the normal 80 feet height, and will not interfere with the angle of light to St. John-street.

7. The building is planned to be of steel framed, fireproof construction, with walls and roof of reinforced concrete. The façade to St. John-street is to be faced to the level of the ground floor ceiling with approved Tasmanian granite, while the remainder of this elevation is to be faced with Launceston bricks and terra cotta trim to windows.

8. The proposed structure is to be erected facing St. John-street, on a site at present occupied by a brick warehouse type of building which will have to be demolished. The total staff expected to use the building is 335, while a maximum shift of 280 persons will be on duty at one time.

##### ESTIMATED COST.

9. The estimated cost of the structure as at July, 1951, based on current prices and the use of local materials wherever possible was:—

	£
Building .. ..	574,750
Engineering services .. ..	135,400
Total .. ..	710,150

#### SECTION III.—THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATIONS.

##### GENERAL.

10. The Committee studied the plans and travelled to Melbourne to take evidence from officials of the Department of Works and Housing and the Postmaster-General's Department responsible for presenting the various sections of the proposal to the Committee. A journey was then made to Launceston, where the Committee visited the site of the new building and inspected the present exchange and post office. Evidence was taken in Launceston from officials concerned with the present establishment and having an interest in the new proposal. Evidence was also taken from other officials and from Launceston people in a position to supply information needed by the Committee in its inquiry.

##### NECESSITY FOR NEW BUILDING.

##### General.

11. Amongst the many reasons advanced to emphasize the pressing necessity which exists for the new building, the most urgent was probably the need for more space in which to satisfy the existing demand for the essential services of the post office and telephone exchange, while very strong reasons were advanced to demonstrate the need to provide for the expanding volume of business which is certain to develop in the very near future.

##### *The New Telephone Exchange.*

12. The present exchange, which is of the manually operated common battery multiple type, was cut into service in 1910. Much of the original equipment is still in use, and the age of the apparatus is such that the maintenance effort required to keep plant in service is heavy, making a new exchange necessary for that reason alone.

13. In addition, there are other factors which make the present position very unsatisfactory. The original equipment was designed for an ultimate capacity of 3,000 lines, and, although the capacity has been extended by the use of temporary expedients, carrying 3,214 at 30th June, 1951, it will shortly reach the practical limit and relief will be essential.

14. Another aspect which is relevant is that the size of the exchange and its surrounding network is such that the conversion to automatic working should be undertaken for economic and service reasons. Launceston is the largest manual telephone exchange in Australia for which arrangements have not yet been made for conversion to automatic working. The present building does not provide space for installation of the necessary automatic exchange equipment, and a new building will be required for this purpose.

15. The trunk-line services are also inadequately provided for at the present time; the number of switching positions must be increased, and no space is available for the accommodation of the extra positions.

16. *Subscribers' Lines.*—The position with regard to subscribers' lines is that the number of lines connected has nearly doubled in the past ten years, and great development is expected over the next twenty years. The Committee was informed that a great deal of study has been carried out in order to arrive at the estimated figure upon which to base the developments for the next twenty years. The telephone survey staff responsible for this work have had to give due weight to many factors which will affect the position, and the survey extends even to individual streets in order to assess cable requirements. In 1940, 2,450 subscribers' lines were connected, while 4,290 were connected in 1951, excluding 787 deferred applications. By 1975, the end of the twenty-year period following the anticipated date of establishment of the new exchange, the number is estimated at 12,200 lines.

17. When the estimated growth over twenty years exceeds 10,000 lines it is desirable to divide the area, having the main exchange and a number of satellite exchanges connected with it. A careful study of the area from a cable distribution point of view indicated that a total of seven exchanges will be needed to cater for the complete unit fee area. These exchanges comprise Launceston, Launceston East, Mowbray, Launceston South, Tenalga, Ravenswood, and St. Leonards. The first three of these are at present in operation, and Launceston South is to be established in the near future to give further relief to Launceston, pending completion of the new building now being considered.

18. *Trunk Lines.*—Launceston is, in effect, the centre of the main interstate and intra-state trunk-line network. In view of the amount of trunk-line traffic to be dealt with and the importance of the centre, it is proposed to provide automatic trunk switching equipment at the Launceston exchange, so that distant operators may dial into the Launceston network, and also dial into other country centres through Launceston trunk exchange as required, thus eliminating the work of additional operators, as well as saving a great deal of time and making maximum use of the lines and equipment available.

19. *Long-line Equipment.*—The longer trunk lines need the addition of carrier telephone and repeater equipment in order to provide audible speech at distant places, and extra channels for both telephone and telegraph use. The present space for this long-line equipment is very cramped and totally inadequate for future development. The existing trunk-line links with the mainland, both cable and radio, are routed via Launceston, and the projected new radio link via Wilson's Promontory will also be routed via Launceston. Sufficient space is planned to include equipment to cater for development for twenty years, and, in addition, space is being provided for a transmission laboratory and testing depot.

#### *Telegraph and Allied Activities.*

20. Because of its geographical location Launceston is of equal importance, telegraphically, as the Central Telegraph Office of the State at Hobart. In addition to repeating all the mainland to Hobart traffic, at present some twenty telegraph channels terminate in the operating room at Launceston, and it is expected that this number will be increased to 30 by 1958.

21. The installation of phonogram automatic switching equipment, and the provision of picturegram equipment, are also required immediately to enable this important city to become part of the Commonwealth-wide picturegram network. Rooms for these activities must therefore be provided in the new building as no further space is available for them in the present post office building.

#### *Mail Handling.*

22. One of the urgent reasons for the proposed new building is the need for additional space for the postal activities, and an imposing statement of the number of postal articles handled each year was submitted to the Committee. The accommodation in the existing post office is severely congested, both from the point of view of the counter and associated public space, and the other activities located in the building. When the new building is erected it will be possible to re-allocate the space to provide the additional areas required for these services.

23. A large area of the ground floor of the new building will be allocated to enable the installation of 1,200 private boxes, and considerable working space for the mail-handling section. This area will be linked with the existing ground floor level of the present post office, portion of which is to be retained for mail purposes. Until the new space is provided in the proposed building the bulk of the mail-handling activities are to be transferred to the recently purchased Baptist Tabernacle building in Cimitiere-street, where plans are already in hand for the necessary alterations.

#### *Office Accommodation.*

24. The District Postal Inspector and staff are at present located at the Customs House, Launceston, and, following re-allocation of space in the existing post office, this section will be accommodated on the first floor, thus releasing the area at the Customs House for other Government activities. Other office areas shown on the plans will be used to accommodate the Divisional Engineer's section and the District Buildings staff.

#### *Development.*

25. Important evidence was given, both by the Civic authorities and the Chamber of Commerce, emphasizing the need for the new exchange. Figures were produced which demonstrated that the population of Launceston had practically doubled in the last 30 years, while all estimates indicated that a much higher rate of increase would be maintained in the future. If the development plans for northern Tasmania proceed as intended, it is estimated that the population of Launceston could double in the next ten years, but in any case it is anticipated that an increase of 50 per cent. in the next ten years will be realized. The impact of the growth on the business community is reflected in the number of buildings in occupation, and in the statement of bank clearances shown for the last ten years.

26. It was pointed out that the present manual telephone was outmoded over twenty years ago and was incapable of properly handling the necessary business. Announcements were made as long ago as

1929 that steps would be taken to convert the system to automatic working. It was also stated that it is a common experience for subscribers to have to wait many minutes before being able to even raise the exchange, while extremely long delays in obtaining trunk-line calls make business dealings by telephone most difficult.

27. The isolation of Tasmania from the mainland, as well as its dependence upon mainland sources of supply for many requirements of manufactured goods, make it imperative that an adequate system of communication should be available at all times.

#### *Defence.*

28. The need for adequate communication for defence purposes is most urgent, but, in view of the insular position of Tasmania, and the tension existing in international affairs, a vital case exists for the erection of new buildings in which to instal an automatic telephone service as a high priority defence project.

29. The Committee made particular inquiries regarding the necessity for the new building at this time, when the demand for labour and materials is very great in all parts of the Commonwealth. In the evidence submitted the Committee was informed that this project had been carefully examined in all aspects by the officers of the department, and the proposal under review was stated to be the most satisfactory and effective way of providing accommodation to meet the development of the various postal and telecommunication activities at Launceston for the future. After having inspected the conditions under which work is being carried on at the present time, and having studied the evidence in regard to the anticipated future development of the northern part of Tasmania and its urgent defence requirements, the Committee is convinced that there is an urgent necessity for the new exchange building.

### THE BUILDING.

#### *Architecture.*

30. The plans provide for a structure approximately 95 feet high, making it higher than any of the surrounding buildings and immediately noticeable in this area. The design appears worthy of such a building, and presents a pleasing façade with a well restrained modern trend. The vertical lines of the design are emphasized by the somewhat unusual fenestration, made possible by the southerly aspect of the building. Tasmanian granite will be used for facing, up to the level of the ceiling of the ground floor, and the remainder of the front elevation is to be faced with brick, embellished with terra cotta trim to the windows and cornice.

31. All witnesses regarded the design as striking and suitable for a major building in Launceston, and the Committee is satisfied that it will be a worthy addition to the city architecture.

#### *Floor Space.*

32. *The Basements.*—The sub-basement is designed as a protected area for civil defence purposes. It provides for sub-station, emergency generating plant, ventilation machinery, and a considerable amount of spare space which can be used for temporary storage purposes until required in emergencies. The basement provides for boiler room, power and battery rooms, workshops, stores, cleaning staff room, and drying room for postmen and messengers' cloaks.

33. *The Ground Floor.*—This floor is allocated to mail-handling and associated activities, including private letter boxes, public telephones, entrance foyer,

lifts, and stairs. A covered access bridge connects the mail-handling section of the exchange building with the existing post office.

34. *The First Floor.*—The working area on this floor is allocated to automatic exchange equipment, together with accommodation for postmen. The remainder of the floor will be used for test room, offices and stores.

35. *The Second Floor.*—This floor will be used mainly for long line equipment, transmission laboratory and programme room, and also for lunch and locker room, stores, instrument store, and offices.

36. *The Third Floor.*—The bulk of the floor space is required for automatic trunk equipment, and the remainder will be allocated to Engineering staff and general departmental office accommodation.

37. *The Fourth Floor.*—This floor will accommodate the manual trunk exchange, lunch and locker rooms for female personnel, observation and office accommodation, pay office, first aid room, class rooms, stores and offices.

38. *The Fifth Floor.*—The main technical requirement on this floor is space for telegraph operating, phonogram and picturegram rooms. A small amenities section will also be provided, as well as machine room and space for offices for the Engineering staff.

#### *Construction.*

39. The type of structural frame work is designed to be of steel-framed fireproof construction, but, if the supply of structural steel sections is not available, the design will be modified to a basically reinforced concrete construction, specially designed to comply with the recommendations of the Civil Defence Committee.

40. Internal walls will be of reinforced concrete where required to brace the framework, but other partitions will be of terra cotta lumber, rendered on both sides.

#### *Accommodation.*

41. The gross area of the building at ground floor level will be approximately 10,240 square feet, which is 73 per cent. of the site area. The total area of the building including all floors, is 81,500 square feet, while the total usable floor space in the building will be 57,250 square feet.

#### *Unpacking Bays.*

42. The plans, as presented to the Committee, made provision for unpacking bays at the rear of the building, in front of the goods lift, on the basement, first, second, third, and fourth floors. These bays are planned for use in unpacking the large packages of plant and equipment to be installed on the various floors, and are designed to allow the unpacking to be done immediately in front of the goods lift, before the equipment is moved into the appropriate rooms. Upon study of the plans it appeared that these spaces would be of considerable use during the original installation of the exchange, but would be largely waste space at most other times. It also appeared that, if large boxes were to be unpacked in front of the lift, and in a position to obstruct the use of the rear stairs, there would be considerable risk in times of emergency, particularly on the upper floors where many telephonists and other staff would be employed. It was therefore suggested that unpacking spaces could be more effectively provided, with direct access to the lift, along the side wall of the building, leaving the entrance to lift and stairs clear. Objections were raised to this suggestion, however, as it was explained that the boxes containing the automatic equipment were 12 feet long and would need the space provided. It was agreed, however, that the doors opening on to the unpacking bays, as planned, could be moved to allow

the long boxes to be unpacked in a position which would not seriously interfere with the approaches to the lift and stairs. It was also stated that on some floors much smaller packages are used, and installation would only be required at irregular intervals.

43. The Committee recommends that the position of the doors should be moved as suggested, and that some further thought should be given to the planning of the unpacking bays on any of the floors where very long packages are not used.

#### *Engineering Services.*

44. *Mechanical Services.*—Mechanical ventilation is to be supplied to areas where natural ventilation would interfere with the efficient operation of equipment or personnel. The main air treatment plant is to be located on the fifth floor, and will distribute air by means of masonry and metal ductwork terminating in ceiling outlets and registers. The sub-basement will be supplied from its own system, and adequate space is available to install special gas filters if the need should arise in the future.

45. In the basement the power room, battery room, and workshop are to be provided with individual propeller exhaust fans, and the air exhausted from the workshop will be discharged into the cable duct to give a slightly positive pressure in that duct. A mechanical exhaust system will be installed in the toilets, with the air being exhausted through a common vertical duct by a fan located on the roof.

46. Heating will be provided to the whole building, except portions of the basements and passages, by means of a hot water radiator system in connexion with an automatic, oil-fired boiler in the basement. Hot water will be supplied to all toilet fixtures throughout the building.

47. An emergency diesel electric generating plant will be provided in the sub-basement to serve the essential requirements of the building in case of breakdown of the electric supply. Drainage of various sumps located in the sub-basement area will be by means of submerged, vertical spindle type, automatic pumps.

48. *Electrical Equipment.*—Two passenger lifts are to be installed, with space for a third lift if the building is extended in the future. A goods lift for transport of goods and equipment frames is located at the rear of the building.

49. The electric installation allows for fluorescent type fittings to main working areas, with incandescent lighting to sub-basement and basement. Provision is also made for watchman's clock, fire alarm points, and electric clocks.

#### *Height of the Building.*

50. The Committee was informed that, when the plans were originally prepared, it was intended to carry the structure to a height of 120 feet, which would have allowed the inclusion of postal institute and other amenities, and space for the Federal Members' Rooms. In view of the existence of the local building regulation limiting the height in this locality of the city to 80 feet, the plans had to be revised, eliminating the top floor. Even this left the height at 95 feet, but, by setting the highest section back from the building line so that the angle of light to the street was equivalent to the 80 feet limit, the accommodation was designed to fit into the plans now before the Committee.

51. Evidence was sought by the Committee in order to be assured that no difficulties would arise in regard to the matter when the building is being erected, and it was stated that, when the plans were made, the civic authorities agreed to raise no objection on the score

of the few feet of extra height. Evidence given to the Committee by the civic authorities was that, although the building would actually exceed the prescribed height, no official action would be taken by the Council if the work is proceeded with. The view was expressed that government departments should conform to the local government regulations, but it was generally accepted that the necessity for the new building was of greater importance than the strict observance of the building height regulation.

52. In view of the proposal to set back that part of the building which will be higher than the height limit, and as no objection will be raised in this connexion, the Committee recommends that the height of the building shown on the plans shall be maintained.

#### *The Planning.*

53. General satisfaction was expressed with the planning of the proposed building. The Committee is pleased with the manner in which the architects have presented the plans and is satisfied that the requirements of the new exchange and postal services will be adequately provided for.

#### THE SITE.

54. The site is an irregular area, having a frontage to St. John-street of 88 ft. 2 in., with a depth of 141 ft. 11½ in. along the north-western side. It is at present occupied by a brick building, one-third of the floor area being used for postal activities, and the remainder occupied by various tenants. There is a fall of slightly more than 4 ft. in the footpath along the St. John-street frontage. Test holes have been sunk, and no difficulty is indicated regarding the excavations, but precautions will have to be taken to waterproof the sub-basement walls.

55. After making inquiries regarding the quality of the ground and the general suitability of the site for a building for telephone exchange purposes, the Committee agrees with the decision to use this site for the building.

#### ESTIMATED COST.

56. The cost of the building has been calculated on the basis of prices current at July, 1951, and the use of local materials wherever possible. It is also reckoned on the understanding that the building will be erected under one contract. Details of the estimated cost are as follows:—

Building—		£
Including demolitions, excavations, retaining walls and other site works .. ..		574,750
Engineering services—	£	
Service and stormwater drainage .. ..	2,400	
Mechanical—		
Mechanical ventilation ..	} 39,000	
Heating .. ..		
Hot water supply .. ..		
Emergency generating ..		
Plant and sump pumps ..		
Electrical—		
Electrical installation ..	} 94,000	135,400
Elevators (three) ..		
Inclusive of all contingencies ..		710,150

57. In addition to the cost of the building, the cost of establishing the exchange is very considerable in regard to provision of equipment and other expenditure.



The total value of the establishment, estimating that the date of cut-over will be 1955, is as follows:—

	£
Building, complete with sub-basement, basement, ground and five upper floors .. .. .	710,000
Automatic exchange equipment for 3,900 lines, to be installed on the first floor .. .. .	195,000
Long line equipment to be installed on the second floor, and ultra high frequency on fifth floor .. .. .	45,000
Automatic trunk exchange and associated equipment to be installed on the third and fourth floors .. .. .	250,000
Telegraph equipment to be installed on the fifth floor .. .. .	25,000
Subscribers' equipment, cost of conversion to automatic existing common battery instruments .. .. .	10,000
Line construction, cost of diverting cable .. .. .	6,000
	1,241,000

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

58. The financial statement as at date of cut-over in 1955 is:—

	£
Capital cost new .. .. .	1,241,000
Capital cost new and in situ (including subscribers' instruments and line plant) .. .. .	1,603,350
Annual working expenses .. .. .	127,100
Total annual charges, including working expenses, interest and depreciation .. .. .	221,700
Recoverable value of assets to be demolished—	
Exchange equipment .. .. .	10,000
Long line equipment .. .. .	8,000
Telegraph equipment .. .. .	2,000
	20,000

59. The annual revenue from telephone rentals, local and trunk line calls from subscribers' lines, and public telephones in the Launceston unit fee area is—

	£
30th June, 1951 .. .. .	132,300
1955 (based on the same rate for charges) .. .. .	276,000
1975 .. .. .	524,000

60. It was pointed out that revenue derived as a result of the proposed new exchange would also include considerable amounts for through calls, the revenue from which would be credited elsewhere.

#### LABOUR AND MATERIALS.

61. Inquiries were made into the position regarding availability of materials and labour for the proposed building. The Committee was informed that since the Committee's last investigation there has been little change, and it is still difficult to obtain many of the essentials of materials and labour for any kind of building. However, in Tasmania certain materials are more plentiful than on the mainland, such items as timber and cement being available in reasonable quantities. Some doubt was expressed in regard to structural steel, and it was pointed out that, if the necessary steel cannot be obtained when the time comes for it to be secured, the plans will have to be somewhat modified

to allow for construction in reinforced concrete. It is preferable to use steel in the exchange building, as it enables maximum use to be made of the space available. The Department of National Development furnished the Committee with evidence of comprehensive surveys of the position regarding the supply of bricks and cement in Australia, and in Tasmania in particular.

62. It was generally agreed that, although Tasmanian bricks were proposed for the facing of the St. John-street elevation, there would not be any considerable interference with home building in the locality, and care has been taken to ensure that materials to be used will, as far as possible, be those not in general use for house construction.

63. *Facing Bricks.*—It was stated in evidence that 72,000 face bricks would be required for the front of the building, and local bricks were proposed for this purpose. Some doubt was expressed regarding the quality of these bricks and their suitability for this purpose, on account of their mottled appearance and deficiency in strength. Difference of opinion was expressed in connexion with the appearance of the bricks, one witness suggesting that preference is sometimes shown for these bricks owing to the variety they offer. On the other hand dissatisfaction was expressed regarding the use of these bricks for facing purposes, and it was suggested that it might be possible to bring a better class of brick from Hobart or, alternatively to use a facing of architectural terra cotta.

64. The Committee was not well impressed with the appearance of the bricks, and evidence shows that the local brick is subject to discoloration over a period of years. As a result of some chemical action on the clay the brick acquires a greenish tinge, and is not very suitable for facing a building such as the one proposed. It is recommended, therefore, that special consideration be given to the possibility of improving the facing medium when the plans are being completed, so that the final structure will present a front elevation suitable in appearance to the standard of architecture designed.

65. *Blue Metal for Concrete.*—During the course of the inquiry the Committee was informed that blue metal for the concrete mixture was only being crushed by the City Council, who were using it all for their own works, and it was necessary to depend upon river gravel which was not so suitable, and had to be hauled a considerable distance to Launceston. The Committee sought information in this regard from the City Engineer who stated that blue metal was not available in sufficient quantities to allow sale to private builders. He expressed the opinion, however, that present production could possibly be stepped up a certain amount, and that, if the exchange building were not to be commenced until their big filtration plant was completed, a reserve could be built up from which to supply the required quantity for this building.

66. In view of the superiority of blue metal over gravel for concrete work, and the high cost of transporting gravel to the site, the Committee recommends that the City Council be approached at an early stage in the construction programme, with a view to making suitable arrangements for production of sufficient supplies of blue metal for the exchange building. This would effect a saving estimated at more than 10s. per yard.

#### AMENITIES.

67. As a result of its inquiries regarding amenities in the building the Committee received some very valuable evidence concerning the methods used by the Department in planning the amenities desirable for its buildings. The Committee was informed that a great deal of thought and investigation had been brought to bear upon this question, and a code had

been evolved setting out the details to be observed when new buildings were being planned. This code had been established by the Government on the recommendation of an inter-departmental committee in 1946, and had been followed in the case of the present building, the Welfare Inspector of the Postmaster-General's Department having been consulted in the early stages of the planning.

68. It was pointed out by the union representative, however, that although the general standard had been observed in this building, representatives of the unions concerned with the particular building in Launceston were not given any opportunity to discuss the amenities proposed to be provided for their use. It was stated that it is not customary for the Department to discuss such matters with them.

69. The Committee was informed that it had been hoped, originally, to be able to provide for the postal institute in the new building, but, as a floor had to be omitted from the first plans, height of the building being too much in excess of the building regulations, the postal institute and other proposed areas had to be omitted. Temporary provision of a partial nature has been made in some accommodation available at the Cimitiere-street building, and full provision for postal institute purposes will have to await future extensions to the old post office building. Interesting and useful evidence was given by a representative of the staffs concerned, and satisfaction was expressed, in general terms, with the standards to be adopted. However, the evidence showed that the staff had no knowledge of the actual provisions to be made, or the reasons for the omission of certain amenities they had been led to expect in the new building. The Committee therefore feels that while there is no conflict between unions and the Department, nevertheless, in the interests of harmony and efficient working of the Department, a great deal would be gained by seeking the co-operation of the unions concerned in the planning of all major buildings in the future.

#### SECTION IV.—SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

70. The following is a summary of the recommendations made by the Committee after investigation of the proposal and study of the evidence:—

1. The Committee is convinced that there is an urgent necessity for the new exchange building (paragraph 29).
2. The architecture will present a building of striking appearance and is eminently satisfactory for the purpose (paragraph 31).
3. The plans have been well carried out and should adequately provide for the requirements of the new exchange and postal services (paragraph 53).
4. The height of the building shown on the plans should be maintained (paragraph 52).
5. The site is suitable for the proposed building (paragraph 55).
6. When the plans are being completed special consideration should be given to the facing material, with a view to improving upon the local bricks proposed (paragraph 64).
7. The City Council should be approached at an early stage in order to arrange for a reserve of blue metal for use in the concrete (paragraph 66).
8. A great deal is to be gained by seeking the direct co-operation of the unions concerned, when plans are being formed for future major buildings (paragraph 69).

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