



1959.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY.

REPORT ON PROPOSED CANBERRA-TUMUT ROAD.

1.

THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

The Committee was appointed for the life of the 23rd Parliament by Resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate on 26th February, 1959 and 12th March, 1959 respectively.

The duties of the Committee are -

- (a) examine and report on all proposals for modifications or variations of the plan of lay-out of the City of Canberra and its environs published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette on the nineteenth day of November, 1925, as previously modified or varied, which are referred to the Committee by the Minister for the Interior; and
- (b) examine and report on such other matters relating to the Australian Capital Territory as may be referred to the Committee by the Minister for the Interior.

PERSONNEL OF COMMITTEE

(November, 1959).

Chairman

Senator J.A. McCallum.

Members

Senator the Hon. J.I. Armstrong
Senator D.M. Tangney
Senator V.S. Vincent
Senator I.A.C. Wood

Mr. C.G.W. Anderson, V.C., M.C., M.P.
Mr. K.E. Beazley, M.P.
Mr. J.R. Fraser, M.P.
Mr. J.B. Howse, M.P.

C O N T E N T S. ---

	Paragraphs
I. The Inquiry	1
II. Introductory	2
Historical	3 - 9
III. The Minister's First Reference - Benefits to be derived by Canberra residents in terms of primary produce and other commodities.	10 - 38
IV. The Minister's Second Reference - Relative merits of possible alternative routes between Canberra and Tumut -	
(i) The Brindabella route	39 - 70
(ii) The Wee Jasper route	71 - 77
V. Tourism	78 - 82
VI. Summary of Recommendations	
VII. Acknowledgments	

THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

REPORT ON PROVISION OF SAFE, ALL-WEATHER ROAD ACCESS BETWEEN
CANBERRA AND TUMUT.

I. THE INQUIRY

1. On the 14th May, 1959, the Minister for the Interior, the Hon. Gordon Freeth, M.P., requested the Committee to investigate and report on the following aspects of the suggestion that the Commonwealth participate in the provision of safe, all-weather road access between Canberra and Tumut, viz.:-

- (i) The benefits which may be expected to be derived by Canberra residents in terms of yields, quality and prices of milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, and other commodities.
- (ii) The relative merits in ease and speed of travel, all-weather availability, and estimated cost of establishment and annual maintenance of possible alternative routes between Canberra and Tumut.

II. INTRODUCTORY

2. Your Committee took evidence from a wide range of interested parties in Canberra, Tumut, Yass, Queanbeyan and Sydney, and, in all, 25 witnesses were called and examined.⁽¹⁾

Historical.

3. The question of the construction of a direct Canberra-Tumut road has been considered by the Commonwealth Government, in collaboration and conjunction with State authorities, at various times over the past 32 years.

4. In 1927, Mr. S.H. Jansen, Main Roads Board Surveyor, carried out a survey of the proposed route from the A.C.T. boundary at Brindabella Mountain to the Tumut side of the Bondo Gap. Jansen's surveyed route was 78 miles in length between Canberra and Tumut, 22 miles being in the A.C.T., and the survey revealed that there were no great engineering difficulties to be overcome. The length of new construction was 48 miles.

(1) See Appendix for list of witnesses.

5. The Main Roads Board estimate of the new construction was £324,000, and provided for a first class road with 30 feet pavement and 20 feet of gravelling and metalling. The Board was of the opinion that the high cost involved did not warrant the construction of the road.

6. Later, the Commonwealth Government offered to provide £200,000 provided the State Government found the balance, viz.: £124,000. The Main Roads Board agreed, but as $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the proposed road was in Yarrawlumla Shire, it was necessary for that Shire to lodge a request for the road with the Minister, before he could instruct his departmental officers to act. It would also be necessary for the Shire Council to enter into an agreement with the Board for the repayment in 20 years, with interest, the Shire portion of the cost advanced and that the road be properly maintained by the Shire Council. The Yarrawlumla Shire Council did not feel justified in incurring the liability (approximately £800 annually), and the proposal lapsed.

7. In 1943, the road was again considered by the Commonwealth and State authorities but no action was taken, on the grounds of costs.

8. A further conference in 1948, between Commonwealth officers and the Commissioner for Main Roads reached the conclusion that the existing highway from Canberra to Albury and Melbourne via Yass would be superior to any practicable alternative passing through Tumut and that consideration of a road connection between Canberra and Tumut be confined to the needs and advantages of communication between the two districts. The estimated cost of the proposed road was then £700,000.

9. In 1958, a high level bridge over the Goodradigbee River at Brindabella was completed.

III. THE MINISTER'S FIRST REFERENCE - BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED BY CANBERRA RESIDENTS IN TERMS OF PRIMARY PRODUCE AND OTHER COMMODITIES.

Milk.

10. In 1956, Mr. Leicester Webb reported to the then Minister for the Interior (Hon. A. Fairhall) on A.C.T. milk supplies. In his report, Mr. Webb stated that, for the year ended 30th June, 1954, the consumption of milk in Canberra was 803,000 gallons which is

an average per capita daily consumption of 0.60 pints of fluid milk. He then estimated that, with a population of 47,000 in 1960, the annual consumption would be 1,334,689 gallons and by 1965, Canberra would be importing 1,236,768 gallons of its annual requirements. It was further stated in the report -

"There are, however, three dairy production areas which are closer to Canberra and are outside the milk zone - the Tumut district, the Bega district, and the coastal region south of Bateman's Bay.

The 1949-50 inter-departmental committee investigated these and other sources of supply and was 'strongly of the opinion that the Tumut district offers the greatest potential at the nearest distance, not only for the future milk supplies of the A.C.T. but for abundant.....fresh foodstuffs as well'. This conclusion can hardly be disputed. Tumut is 125 miles by road from Canberra by way of Gundagai, but a direct road link is practicable which would reduce this distance to about 70 miles. The completion of this direct link, which involves only some 20 miles of new road formation, is an urgent necessity."

11. Mr. B. Angus, representing the Australian Primary Producers' Union, gave evidence that the present price of milk imported to Canberra from areas other than Tumut is approximately 5/7d. per gallon. Tumut is at present supplying Canberra 1,000 gallons every second day at a landed price of 4/3¹/₂d. per gallon. The structure of this price is approximately 3/2d. for the grower, the balance of 1/1¹/₂d. providing for handling at Tumut factory and freight to Canberra by road transport via Yass. The freight charges would be substantially reduced by use of a direct road and implying that the dairy farmer in Tumut should benefit and receive a payment sufficient to attract the maximum number of dairies into production, a price of 3/3d. per gallon on farm could be offered and then landed in Canberra at 4/3d. per gallon. This is 1/4d. per gallon less than milk at present imported from other areas and if this saving was passed on to the people of Canberra, would mean a saving, based on imported requirements of 1,000,000 gallons, of approximately £67,000 per annum.

12. Mr. Angus stated that, within a few years, the Tumut area could supply all of Canberra's milk requirements. A safe figure for foreseeable production in the Tumut area is 10,000 gallons a day which is three times Canberra's estimated import requirements for 1965. The production figure of 10,000 gallons a day is much lower than the daily average of 1933-34, which was 12,274 gallons.

13. Mr. Angus added that the New South Wales Department of Agriculture has stated that the Tumut district is second to none in New South Wales as far as dairying country is concerned. The soil, climate and rainfall are ideal for pasture improvement and good feed is assured for twelve months of the year. These conditions make for top quality milk and cream. The present supplies of milk from Tumut to Canberra are recognized as the best received, maintaining a 4.3 per cent. butter-fat content compared with the stipulated percentage of 3.5.

14. Butter

Evidence was given by the Tumut Co-operative Dairy Co. Ltd. through its Manager (Mr. J.D. French), that the Tumut district was already sufficiently geared, in a modern and well equipped factory, to supply Canberra's maximum butter demand, giving to the consumer a sound product of the choicest quality. In the peak production year of 1941, there was a record production of 1,019 tons.

Meat

15. Pigs. Mr. Angus said that Tumut is recognized as a strong pig raising district and the Canberra demand could be adequately met at a price to suit consumers. A proportion of the pig's diet is skim milk, which becomes available after the cream content has been extracted from the whole milk, for the manufacture of butter. In the above report on the supply of whole milk to Canberra, allowance was made for the dairy farmer who would prefer to run his business for the production of butter and pigs. Mr. Angus stated that the road freight on pigs would be reduced by half, over the proposed new road.

16. Fat Lambs and Fat Cattle.- Mr. W.P. Nicholas, representing the Tumut Branch of the Graziers' Association, gave evidence that Canberra butchers have evinced a keen desire to operate in the Tumut district. Sales are held every second Wednesday with the rail trucks leaving on Thursday and, as a result, killing cannot take

place in Canberra until the following Monday. This involves considerable wastage and a lot of time. Mr. Nicholas stated that if stock were taken over the proposed new road, there would be a considerable saving in freight rates. The cost of a double truck to Canberra via Yass is about £51 plus road tax of £4.10.0 if applicable. Assuming that the charge per mile would be the same, the cost over the proposed new road would be £30.12.0. The cost for a single truck would be reduced from £36 plus road tax to £21.12.0. Quality fat stock are available all the year round and, in the district, there are 70,000 head of cattle (80% beef cattle) and 725,000 sheep. In 1958, about 19,000 cattle and 20,000 sheep passed through the sale-yards.

17. Fruit. Evidence was given by Mr. C. Blessing, General Manager of the Batlow Packing House Co-operative Ltd., that the apple and pear orchards of Batlow cover an area of 2,000 acres and have an annual production varying between 200,000 and 500,000 bushel cases, according to seasonal and weather conditions, particularly hail. The industry is equipped with long established fruit cool stores, having 200,000 bushel-case space capacity, and a fruit packing shed with a through-put of up to 1,200 cases per day. The district has also a small production of choice Elberta peaches. Landed costs in Canberra would be reduced 3 to 5 per cent., by the proposed direct route.

18. Vegetables. Mr. Blessing said that vegetables produced for the fresh market include peas, beans, carrots, tomatoes, brussels sprouts, cabbages and cauliflowers. Quantity production of these items is now limited, due to distances from populous areas. In the Tumut district, cabbages and turnips have been grown to more than 30 lbs. in weight each. Given the adequate facilities of transport, the district could meet Canberra's vegetable requirements. Availability of potatoes extends over 8 months of the year, from April to December, and sufficient quantities are available to meet Canberra's requirements.

19. Canned Vegetables and Fruits. Mr. Blessing stated that the following are some of the products which are available from Batlow's food processing plant already in a large range of can sizes:-

Asparagus, green peas, green beans, beetroot, carrots, cauliflower, corn, soups, beef stews, sugoro, baked beans, spaghetti, apple juice, cider, cider vinegar, gherkins, sauerkraut, fruits in syrup - apricots, peaches, pears, apples and boysenberries.

20. Millet. Mr. D.S. McDonald, of the Australian Primary Producers' Union, said that the Tumut District is the main broom millet growing area of the Commonwealth, the output occasionally reaching 80 per cent. of the total.

21. Bricks and Tiles. Mr. J.V. Elder, representing the Tumut Brickworks, gave evidence that Canberra imports approximately half of its requirements of bricks and that about 2,000,000 come from Tumut each year. The costs of Tumut bricks in Canberra are £29. per thousand for commons, £31. for face and £38. for cream bricks, which prices are about £4. a thousand below the Sydney landed cost in Canberra. Cartage rates from Tumut to Canberra at present are £14. a thousand. Evidence was given that common bricks could be landed in Canberra at £23.10.0 a thousand over the proposed new road, a reduction of £5.10.0, and that production could be increased to 5,000,000 a year. This would mean a potential saving to the Canberra building industry of £20,000 per annum.

22. Canberra brickworks are at present producing 300,000 bricks a week. In addition, Monocrete are now providing concrete bricks and the Besser Vibrapac factory has just started production of concrete bricks. The Acting Director of Works (Mr. A.T. Ferrari) gave evidence that the Tumut market could soon disappear as Canberra's requirements of bricks may be fully met locally. The price of Canberra common bricks is £17. a thousand, and the concrete bricks are a similar price. These prices are substantially less than for imported bricks.

23. Mr. Elder said that the manufacture of terracotta tiles in Tumut is being investigated. Cartage of tiles from Sydney to Canberra costs about £7. per square. Estimated cost of cartage from Tumut over the proposed new road is £3.10.0 per square, resulting in a saving of £42. on a twelve square house. The landed cost is about £18 per square.

24. Mr. Ferrari gave evidence that the manufacture of cement tiles in Canberra is at a capacity equal to full requirements and the price is £6. per square delivered and stacked, compared with £18. for terracotta tiles. The terracotta tile has to compete with the concrete tile.

Timber.

Softwood. -

25. The Manager of the National Sawmill Company (Mr. J. Grimes) gave evidence that his company is at present supplying to Canberra 1,500,000 super feet of Monterey pine each year. Reduced cartage rates over the proposed new road, at current level of deliveries, would result in an overall saving of approximately £3,000 per annum in landed cost at Canberra.

Mr. Grimes estimated that the existing mills could produce 30,000,000 super feet per annum. On an approximate freight saving of 4/- per 100 super feet, overall saving to Canberra purchasers would, at this level of output, be in the vicinity of £60,000 per annum.

26. The Associate Commissioner of the National Capital Development Commission (Mr. G. Rudduck) stated that it will be important to establish another accessible source of softwood building timber. Although local production is high, better quality softwood timber from surrounding areas, including Tumut, is finding a local market.

27. Mr. Porter, of the New South Wales Forestry Commission, stated that the current yield of thinning from 2,718 acres of plantation, now of exploitable age, is 8.3 million super feet per annum. As additional areas of plantation come into production, yields will increase to 17.6 million super feet in 1966/67, 30.5 million super feet in 1976/77, and the ultimate total area of 65,000 acres, in full production, 200 million super feet per annum.

Hardwood.

28. The Proprietor of the Monaro Sawmilling Company (Mr. W. H.L. White) gave evidence that in the Tumut district there are eleven hardwood sawmills which can supply the Canberra market with 8,000,000 super feet of good quality sawn hardwood per year. Further quantities are available in the Tumberumba area. On account of long haulage and road taxes, these mills are now supplying only 1,029,000 super feet yearly. A saving of 13/6d. per 100 super feet on cartage is envisaged if the timber was transported over the proposed new road. On present sales of 1,029,000 super feet, there would be a saving on home construction of about £7,000 per year. On the timber that could be supplied there would be a saving of £54,000 per year. It is estimated that there is over 50 years supply of hardwood timber available before existing stands are cut out.

29. Mr. Ferrari gave evidence that there was a surplus of hardwood timber at the Government mill selling at 110/- per hundred super feet compared with 135/- for imported timber. The Government mill obtains its supplies from the Brindabella area.

30. Mr. Rudduck said that the Forestry and Timber Bureau has stated that, within five or six years, economical hardwood log supplies in the A.C.T. and in nearby areas of New South Wales will be exhausted, which highlights the necessity of developing a reasonably close source of good quality hardwood.

31. Mr. Porter stated that the current hardwood yield from Crown areas east of Tumut approximates 4 million super feet per annum.

Marble and Polished Granite.

32. Mr. J. Henrick gave evidence that marble and black granite of the highest grade was available in vast quantities in the Tumut district. Imported Italian marble contains about 62% of calcium compared with 95-97% calcium content in Tumut marble. In terms of lime, he estimated that costs in Australia could be reduced by 50% by exploitation of the Tumut marble deposits.

General.

33. Mr. Rudduck estimated a financial advantage to Canberra of £100,000 per annum, within five years, based on building materials,

milk, farm produce and tourism, the prime factor being the reduction in freight. Additional supplies of building materials would ensure the continuance of an uninterrupted housing programme and reduce expenditure on that programme.

34. Mr. Porter stated that the proposed road would have great value for fire suppression activities both in the State Forests and the Cotter catchment area.

Potential of Tumut District.

35. The altitude of good agricultural pastoral land ranges from slightly under 800 feet above sea level to well over 3,000 feet with annual rainfall averaging from 28 inches to over 50 inches. Despite droughts in most other areas of the State, a reasonable season is always assured in the Tumut district.

36. There are 20,000 acres of rich alluvial river and creek flats and, on the higher land, there are many thousands of acres, yet untapped, of deep rich red volcanic soil, ideal for fruit and vegetable growing.

37. The Department of Agriculture has stated that the Tumut district is second to none in New South Wales as far as dairying country is concerned.

38. Mr. McDonald of the Australian Primary Producers' Union said that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the A.C.T. and the Tumut district are not only adjacent but also complementary to each other. The rapidly expanding City of Canberra has needs which the agricultural district of Tumut can pre-eminently fill. He is of the opinion that the Tumut district has a greater potentiality than either the North Coast or the South Coast.

IV. THE MINISTER'S SECOND REFERENCE - RELATIVE
MERITS OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES
BETWEEN CANBERRA AND TUMUT.

BRINDABELLA ROUTE

Mr. A.W. Simmonds, Tumut Shire Engineer.

39. Using the route surveyed by Jansen, a length of 47 miles would have to be reconstructed, the preliminary estimate of cost being £490,000. Apart from cost, the Jansen route has two

serious disadvantages, viz.:-

- (1) The steep nature of the Lacmalac Hill;
- (2) Larger drainage structures required between Lacmalac Hill and Bondo Gap.

40. In view of the road construction being carried out by the Forestry Commission to serve the Billapaloola State Forest, a more economical route was sought and it was found that a length of 14 miles could be used, together with a further 10 miles which will be commenced immediately, giving access to the Wee Jasper State Forest. From that point (24 miles from Tumut) to the Brindabella Valley, a distance of 19 miles, a new road will have to be constructed. The further 6 miles of road to the A.C.T. Boundary will have to be re-located and constructed. The 15 miles from the A.C.T. Boundary to the Cotter River is in reasonable condition and the remaining 12 miles to Canberra is a first class sealed road. Therefore, the position is as follows:-

Satisfactory standard	41½ miles
Section about to be constructed by Forestry Commission	9½ miles
Section requiring complete reconstruction	<u>25 miles</u>
	76 miles
	<u> </u>

41. Based on recent construction costs in comparable country in the area, it is estimated that the 25 miles requiring complete reconstruction would cost £212,000 without bituminous sealing. The cost of bitumen surfacing of the 49 miles from Tumut to the A.C.T. Border would be dependent largely on the cost and location of suitable gravel, and would be approximately £145,000.

42. Including bitumen sealing, the road to the A.C.T. border could be completed in 18 months.

Mr. C.A.M. Hawkins, Chief Engineer, N.S.W.
Main Roads Department.

43. Mr. Hawkins gave evidence that the route surveyed by Jansen would not be suitable for through traffic, due, mainly, to steep grades and very winding alignment at Lacmala Hill.

44. He gave the following figures in respect of the mileage of the proposed route:-

- | | | |
|--|------|------------------------------|
| (a) Total length, Canberra to Tumut | 83M. | (29M. A.C.T.
54M. N.S.W.) |
| (b) Length of usable existing construction | 27M. | (12M. A.C.T.
15M. N.S.W.) |
| (c) Remaining length requiring new construction or re-construction | 56M. | |

45. Construction and reconstruction costs for the 56 miles referred to in (c) may be of the order of £1,000,000, but this does not take into account the amount already spent on the road.

46. The cost of establishing initial access by the construction of a low standard two-way gravel road from the immediately proposed Wee Jasper State Forest Road to Brindabella (21 miles) is tentatively estimated at £200,000.

47. The Department of Main Roads would not consider building an inter-district connecting road between Canberra and Tumut as part of its normal works programme.

48. The time taken to travel from Canberra to Tumut would be approximately the same over both the Brindabella and Uriarra routes.

49. If the Commonwealth Government makes money available for the construction of a road, the Department of Main Roads would have no preference as to the route other than that the most economical and suitable one was chosen.

Mr. A.T. Ferrari, Acting Director of Works, Department of Works, Canberra.

50. Mr. Ferrari gave evidence that the Department of Works had looked mainly at the road via Brindabella, because of substantial sums already spent in putting it in order.

51. For purposes of the development of the Upper Cotter Dam, the road from Canberra has been recently strengthened, graded and widened to provide an all-weather road to the A.C.T. boundary. Over the past two or three years, about £96,500 has been spent on direct improvements. The road is at present unsealed but is designed to carry the heavy traffic feeding the Dam and would be quite capable of being joined to the adjacent section crossing the Goodradigbee River and proceeding to Tumut.

52. He stated that the length of the road in the A.C.T. is 29 miles.

53. The single lane high level bridge across the Murrumbidgee River would not be acceptable for a high class tourist highway and would need to be widened to provide two traffic lanes. The piers are wide enough to carry the extra lane and most of the work would have to be done at deck level.

54. The preliminary estimate of cost for reconstruction of the section within the A.C.T., including bituminous seal, is £220,000.

55. Mr. Ferrari stressed that approximately 9 miles of the Brindabella road would pass through the Upper Cotter Dam catchment area and that controls would have to be exercised.

56. Referring to maintenance, Mr. Ferrari said: "I have our present costs for the A.C.T. portion separated into two sections. The first is the section as far as the Cotter River reserve turn-off, on which we spend £2,160 per annum on routine maintenance, and £1,500 on specific maintenance and minor improvement items. On the mountain section, which is largely gravel, we spend £3,460 on routine maintenance, and on specific items, which include mainly gravel re-sheeting - making good the loss due to wear - we spend £5,500 a year. It is estimated that in the final stage maintenance costs for a through length of sealed pavement would be in the vicinity of £12,000 per annum. That figure allows for periodic re-seals - we have allowed about a 7-year period - as well as routine maintenance. It will be noted that this figure is

comparable with the amount we are spending at present. However, we envisage that the extra traffic resulting from the provision of a through road would bump up the maintenance costs to at least double the present figure. So there would be a saving of about £12,000 per annum in the A.C.T., over the cost of an unimproved road surface."

57. Only about one mile of the road is affected by snow falls and these falls are not sufficiently heavy to hold up traffic.

Mr. G. Rudduck, Associate Commissioner, National Capital Development Commission.

58. Mr. Rudduck stated that the proposed road would be of direct benefit to both Canberra and the Tumut district. Roads already constructed or under construction by the N.S.W. Forestry Commission will form a major part of the western section of the proposed Brindabella route. He felt that it is unlikely that sufficient finance will be forthcoming for the construction of the road in the foreseeable future unless the Commonwealth provides a substantial portion.

59. It seemed to the Commission that the road construction costs submitted by the Tumut Shire were a reasonable estimate, although they had not been checked by the Commission, and could be accepted as a basis for examination of the project.

Mr. H. Porter, N.S.W. Forestry Commission.

60. Mr. Porter gave evidence that the N.S.W. Forestry Commission has completed construction of a length of road to the Billapaloola State Forest, 14 miles from Tumut which, in standards of alignment and gradient, is generally in conformity with the Department of Main Roads 40 m.p.h. standard for two-lane rural highways. The cost was approximately £150,000 and forms part of the proposed new road.

61. A further nine miles running generally easterly and of the same specification should be completed during the present financial year at an estimated cost of £70,000.

62. Extensions to the road for a further 11 miles towards Brindabella will be undertaken over at least ten years and, whilst a location to a 40 m.p.h. specification will be adopted, the standards of construction in formation and pavement widths will be progressively reduced with the increased distance from Tumut.

63. The Commission has taken into account in its road location and standards of construction, the possibility of the future use of any such roads by general traffic between Tumut and Canberra, either via Wee Jasper or Brindabella.

64. The Commission favours the Brindabella route because it serves, more directly, its forest areas.

65. Provided some assurance was forthcoming that roads so far constructed by the Commission would be sealed within a reasonable time, and that their future maintenance would be adequately attended to, the Commission will raise no objection to revocation from its State Forests of any length of constructed road which might be notified as a Trunk Road or State Highway, and will seek no compensation for expenditure so far incurred.

66. The Commission would expect to be indemnified against any claims for fencing, etc., that may arise from the increased usage of such roads and would have to stipulate that no restrictions be placed on log etc. haulage in the event of the roads being taken over by any other authority.

Mr. P.J.E. Osborne, President of the Yarrawlumla Shire Council.

67. Mr. Osborne stated that he favoured the Brindabella route as there were very many difficulties in the way of making a first class or really good road via Wee Jasper. In addition, the Brindabella route would open up 30-40,000 acres of very good land in Yarrawlumla Shire capable of closer settlement.

68. The proposed road would tap the agricultural sources of Tumut and reduce the cost of living in Queanbeyan and district.

Mr. J.M. Firth, Yarrowlunla Shire Engineer.

69. Mr. Firth gave evidence that the Brindabella route would be an easier road to construct from an engineering point of view with generally easier grades.

70. The section from the A.C.T. boundary to the Goodradigbee River would be the most expensive part of the road. Some deviations from the existing road would be necessary to avoid some of the sharp grades.

WEE JASPER ROUTE.Mr. J.W. Simmonds, Tumut Shire Engineer.

71. This route would involve the reconstruction of 35 miles of road compared with 25 miles under the Brindabella proposal, and, in addition, a large high level bridge would be required. From the point of view of the Tumut district, the Brindabella route would be more advantageous, being 49 miles to the A.C.T. border, compared with 54 miles through Wee Jasper.

72. In addition, he considered that the Brindabella route is the more economical from a construction point of view due to present and future construction by the N.S.W. Forestry Commission.

Mr. C.A.M. Hawkins, Chief Engineer, N.S.W. Department of Main Roads.

73. Mr. Hawkins gave mileage figures on two alternative routes through Wee Jasper, one going to Canberra via Taemas and the Barton Highway and the other via Uriarra. The figures submitted are -

	<u>Taemas</u>		<u>Uriarra</u>	
(a) Total length, Canberra to Tumut	94M.	(12M. A.C.T. 82M. N.S.W.	89M.	(20½M. A.C.T. 68½M. N.S.W.
(b) Length of usable existing construction	23M.	(12M. A.C.T. 11M. N.S.W.	23M.	(12M. A.C.T. 11M. N.S.W.
(c) Remaining length requiring new construction or reconstruction	71M.		66M.	

74. The tentative estimate of the cost of necessary construction and reconstruction over the lengths referred to in (c) above, to provide a two-way inter-district gravel road to reasonable standards, would be in excess of £1,000,000 each.

75. The figure of £1,000,000 does not take into account the amount already spent on the roads.

Mr. J.L. Hodgkinson, President of the Goodradigbee Shire Council.

76. Mr. Hodgkinson said that if the proposed road could, in addition to tapping the rich Tumut valley, tap the Wee Jasper area, it would serve a further purpose.

Mr. E.C. Archer, Councillor of the Goodradigbee Shire Council.

77. Mr. Archer stated that there is good roadmaking material over the whole of the Wee Jasper road.

V. TOURISM.

78. Although the subject of tourism was not in the terms of reference for consideration by your Committee, evidence was received from a number of witnesses on this matter.

79. Mr. Rudduck said that the road would provide an important link with the proposed tourist development in the Cotter River area, as well as generally stimulating the tourist industry and providing an alternative route between Melbourne and Sydney.

80. Mr. Ferrari stated that if the Brindabella road was sealed to the A.C.T. border, improvement of the road to Mount Franklin would be subject to further consideration, adding to the development of winter sports.

81. Mr. W. Dunbar, Director of the Government Tourist Bureau, was of the opinion that the Tumut Road would have a significant bearing on the movement of traffic which will come to Canberra and through Canberra. It will also have significance for the rising population of Canberra which is constantly looking for more outlets for recreational activities. There is considerable interest in the snowfields in the A.C.T. Mr. Dunbar

considered that the more direct route through Brindabella to Tumut would be the one more likely to be chosen by tourists who had a choice of routes.

82. Mr. T.R. McCausland, of the Tumut Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Tumut area has the potential to rank as one of the greatest tourist attractions in the Commonwealth. The proposed road would enable tourists to make a number of round trips instead of the back-tracking necessary at the moment.

VI. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

QUESTION 1.

The benefits which may be expected to be derived by Canberra residents in terms of yields, quality and prices of milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, and other commodities -

Your Committee is of the opinion -

- (a) That the Tumut district could supply to the residents of Canberra milk, meat, pome fruits, vegetables and other primary produce, of the highest quality and at lower prices, in sufficient quantities to meet Canberra's present and future needs.
- (b) That, as a result, the provision of a direct route would have a profound effect on the cost of living of the residents of Canberra.
- (c) That the importation of both hardwood and softwood timbers from the vast sources in the Tumut district, and other building materials from that area, over a direct route, would ensure the continuance of an uninterrupted housing programme and a reduction in expenditure on that programme.
- (d) That, as a result, the extent of savings in building construction is another factor which would warrant the building of the road.

QUESTION 2.

The relative merits in ease and speed of travel, all-weather availability, and estimated cost of establishment and annual maintenance of possible alternative routes between Canberra and Tumut.

Your Committee is of the opinion -

- (a) That the construction of a road, by either route, presents no engineering difficulties.
- (b) That, owing to the appreciable lengths of high standard road already constructed by the N.S.W. Forestry Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Works at either end of the Brindabella route, the Brindabella route is the more economic proposition.
- (c) That, in the light of detailed evidence given by the Tumut Shire Engineer after a traverse of the route and based on current construction costs in the area, the Commonwealth Government would be justified in voting the amount necessary for the completion of the Brindabella route, to connect with the extension of the main Forestry Commission road. The estimated cost of a two-lane gravel road is \$212,000, exclusive of already planned development of the route within the Australian Capital Territory.

ADDENDUM.

Your Committee is of the opinion -

That, as an effect, but not as a basis on which the recommendation is made, the road would further the tourist trade and winter sports.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Your Committee expresses its thanks to all witnesses for their valuable evidence.

Your Committee also expresses its appreciation of the sterling work of Mr. A.R. Browning, Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerk of Committees of the House of Representatives, during the taking of evidence and in the compilation of this Report.

John A. McCallum
JOHN A. McCALLUM,

Chairman.

Canberra,

24th November, 1959.

A P P E N D I X.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

ANGUS, B.,	representing Australian Primary Producers' Union,
ARCHER, E.C.,	Councillor, Goodradigbee Shire Council.
BLESSING, C.,	General Manager, Batlow Packing House Co-operative Ltd.
BRENNAN, L.B.,	Deputy President, Tumut Shire Council.
DUNBAR, W.,	Director, Government Tourist Bureau, Canberra.
ELDER, J.V.,	representing Tumut Brickworks and Hume Brickworks.
FERRARI, A.T.,	Acting Director of Works, Department of Works, Canberra.
FIRTH, J.M.	Yarrowlumla Shire Engineer.
FRENCH, J.D.,	Manager, Tumut Co-operative Dairy Co. Ltd.
GRIMES, J.,	Manager, National Sawmill Company, Tumut.
HAWKINS, C.A.M.,	Chief Engineer, N.S.W. Department of Main Roads.
HENRICK, J.,	a citizen of Tumut.
HODGKINSON, J.L.,	President, Goodradigbee Shire Council.
LEWIS, C.J.,	President, Tumut Shire Council.
McCAUSLAND, T.R.,	member of the Tumut Chamber of Commerce.
McDONALD, D.S.,	representing Australian Primary Producers' Union.
MacKAY, J.H.,	Controller of Civil Defence, Tumut Shire.
MacLEAN, R.B.,	N.S.W. Forestry Commission.
NICHOLAS, W.P.,	representing Tumut Branch of the Graziers' Association.
OSBORNE, P.J.B.,	President, Yarrowlumla Shire Council.
PORTER, H.,	N.S.W. Forestry Commission.
RUDDUCK, G.,	Associate Commissioner, National Capital Development Commission.
SIMMONDS, E.W.,	Tumut Shire Engineer.
WATSON, D.,	member of Tumut Chamber of Commerce.
WHITE, W.H.L.,	Proprietor, Monaro Sawmilling Co., Tumut.
