



1962-63.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

REPORT

relating to the proposed construction of the

TOP SPRINGS TO WAVE HILL ROAD,

NORTHERN TERRITORY.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

TOP SPRINGS/WAVE HILL ROAD, NORTHERN TERRITORY

R E P O R T

By resolution on 15th November, 1962, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, the proposal to construct a road from Top Springs to Wave Hill in the Northern Territory. The Committee have the honour to report as follows :-

GENERAL

1. The construction of a road between Top Springs and Wave Hill forms part of a plan of development of a network of roads in the Northern Territory to what is described as "beef road standard" to provide outlets from the cattle production areas to possible killing, fattening, marketing or shipping points. The other road in this scheme which serves the Victoria River district is between the Stuart Highway at Dunmarra and the Western Australian border near Newry via Top Springs, Victoria River Downs and Timber Creek. Use of these roads in a trunk road system was also taken into consideration.

2. It was as a result of the Committee's representations that a decision to seek the approval of the House of Representatives to proceed with this work without reference to the Committee was modified. The result was the reference to us of the Top Springs - Wave Hill road. Work on the other road had commenced when the matter was brought to our attention and we were therefore able to do no more than express, in strong terms, the view that all the work should have been subject to the Committee's investigation.

3. Similar circumstances surrounded proposed road development between the Stuart Highway and Yuendumu (£300,000); between the Stuart Highway and Jervis Range (£250,000); and between Barkly Highway and Anthony's Lagoon (£700,000); - work had commenced on these roads.

4. The Top Springs - Wave Hill road was estimated to cost £800,000 and the one between the Stuart Highway and the Western Australian border, £2,500,000.

5. The Committee heard evidence from the following witnesses on the dates and at the places indicated :-

H.C. Barclay, Esq., Acting Assistant Administrator (Economic and Social Affairs), Northern Territory Administration, Darwin, Northern Territory	Darwin 26. 5.63 Darwin 31. 5.63
H. Brennan, Esq., Member for Elsey, Legislative Council for the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory	Darwin 26. 5.63 Darwin 31. 5.63
C.J. Hawks, Esq., Haulage Contractor, Darwin, Northern Territory	Darwin 31. 5.63
Mrs. T.C. Hawks, Storekeeper, Top Springs, Northern Territory	Darwin 29. 5.63
J.H. Kelly, Esq., Rural Industries Consultant, formerly officer of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 33 Froggatt Street, Turner, A.C.T.	Canberra 21. 5.63 Canberra 25. 6.63
G. Lewis, Esq., Manager, Victoria River Downs, Northern Territory	Victoria River Downs 27. 5.63
D. McInnes, Esq., Senior Pastoral Inspector, Lands and Survey Branch, Northern Territory Administration, Darwin, Northern Territory	Darwin 31. 5.63
P.J.S. Morris, Esq., Manager, Australian Investment Agency Pty. Ltd., 255 George Street, Sydney, New South Wales	Wave Hill 26. 5.63
P.C. Murray, Esq., Non-official member of the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory and representative of the Pastoral industry, Coolibah Station, Northern Territory	Darwin 28. 5.63
Dr. R.A. Patterson, Assistant Director, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra, A.C.T.	Canberra 21. 5.63 Canberra 25. 6.63 Canberra 19. 9.63
L.G. Redmond, Esq., Director of Works, Darwin, Northern Territory	Darwin 28. 5.63

A.S. Reiher, Esq., Chief Road and Aerodrome Engineer, Department of Works, Yarra Street, Hawthorn, Victoria	Darwin 25. 5.63 Darwin 28. 5.63 Canberra 25. 6.63
A.L. Rose, Esq., Livestock and Pastoral Consultant, Alice Springs	Darwin 31. 5.63
C.N. Schultz, Esq., Pastoralist, Humbert River and Bullita Stations, Northern Territory	Victoria River Downs 27. 5.63
F.H. Shaw, Esq., Assistant General Manager, Hooker Pastoral Company Pty. Ltd., 270 Queen Street, Brisbane, Queensland	Victoria River Downs 27. 5.63 Darwin 28. 5.63
C.W. Tapp, Esq., Killarney Station, Northern Territory	Darwin 29. 5.63
P. Vandeleur, Esq., Manager, Camfield Station, Northern Territory	Darwin 29. 5.63

The Committee also received written statements from Richard L. Condon, General Manager of Northern Meat Exporters Pty. Ltd., and W.H. Robinson, General Manager of the Wyndham Meatworks.

6. The Committee flew to Wave Hill Station and drove from there over the route of the more easterly of the alternative routes referred to later in this report. They then travelled westwards through Top Springs to Victoria River Downs via the Dunmarra - Western Australian border road. The return trip to Darwin was by air.

THE PROPOSED ROAD.

7. The beef road scheme in the Northern Territory was approved by Cabinet in July, 1962, the estimated total cost being £4,570,000. As approved by Cabinet the road between Top Springs and Wave Hill would follow the route of the existing road past Camfield Homestead. The distance is approximately 115 miles.

8. The evidence given to us revealed that the figure of £800,000 was a preliminary estimate and that this was increased to approximately £1,000,000 following a more detailed examination of the work involved.

9. An alternative alignment east of the existing road through better road making country was proposed to the Committee at an estimated cost of £600,000. The distance between the Camfield Homestead and this route is approximately 30 miles. The evidence presented to the Committee by representatives of the Departments of Works and Territories was based on this route. The distance from Wave Hill to Top Springs along this route to a point on the Dunmarra, Western Australian border road east of Top Springs is approximately 110 miles.

10. As our inquiries progressed, a further alternative route was proposed which would bring the road to within approximately 18 miles of the Camfield Homestead. The estimated cost was £600,000 also.

11. We felt that alignments, distances and estimates given were not as precise as they may have been and that, bearing in mind the costs which could be involved, there was an absence of firm decisions about attitudes to be adopted towards the people likely to be affected by a change in the route of the road.

THE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS

12. The Committee discussed the evidence at length over a considerable period. In the early stages of discussion, consideration was given to referring the proposal back to the appropriate authorities. The following extracts from the minutes of proceedings shows the result of the debate during this period :-

"It was moved by Senator Dittmer, seconded by Mr. McIvor that

- As regards the Wave Hill - Top Springs beef road, the matter be referred to the appropriate authorities for re-consideration, more particularly as to particular siting and alternative routes recognizing a responsibility to an overall efficiency of the pastoral industry and that as it is an integral part of the beef roads scheme for north Australia, and more especially in the case

for the Northern Territory, that the Committee should be advised of the money already expended on other beef roads in the Northern Territory and the economic and social or national justification or effects of them and that all submissions should be made to the Committee at the earliest opportunity. Also, the authorities investigate the circumstances possibly changed through establishment of killing works at Darwin and proposed to be established at Katherine.

After discussion it was moved by Mr. McIvor, seconded by Mr. Griffiths that the question be put. The Committee divided -

Ayes (5)	Noes (3)
Senator Dittmer	Senator Frowse
Mr. Brimblecombe	Mr. Buchanan
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Dean
Mr. McIvor	
Mr. O'Connor	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative.

The Committee divided on the motion of Senator Dittmer and Mr. McIvor -

Ayes (5)	Noes (3)
Senator Dittmer	Senator Frowse
Mr. Brimblecombe	Mr. Buchanan
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Dean
Mr. McIvor	
Mr. O'Connor	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative."

13. The following extract from the minutes of proceedings shows the results of debate at a later meeting :-

"It was moved by Senator Frowse and seconded by Mr. Buchanan that

- The resolution adopted on the motion of Senator Dittmer and Mr. McIvor on 26th June, 1963 to refer the Top Springs - Wave Hill road proposal back to the appropriate authorities be rescinded.

Debate took place, all members of the Committee taking part. The discussion was concluded by Senator Prowse and the Committee then divided

The result of division was as follows

Ayes (5)	Moes (4)
Senator Anderson	Senator Dittmer
Senator Prowse	Mr. Griffiths
Mr. Buchanan	Mr. McIvor
Mr. Brimblecombe	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Dean	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative."

14. After hearing further evidence, the Committee again deliberated. The following extract from the minutes of proceedings shows results of the debate.

"After discussion it was moved by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Senator Dittmer that

- The Committee agrees with the need for a beef road of recognized standard in the Top Springs - Wave Hill area. The evidence presented to the Committee does not support the siting of the road as contained in the reference. We are therefore of the opinion that it is not expedient to proceed with the proposal in its present form.

An amendment was moved by Senator Anderson seconded by Senator Prowse that all words after 'area' be deleted and the following be substituted :-
The evidence has revealed considerable uncertainty from the client department and the Department of

Works as to the precise route of the proposed beef road. Also there have been varying estimates as to cost.

Having regard to these factors, the Committee are not prepared to make a report to the Parliament at this stage but require the client department to submit fresh evidence showing a clearly defined recommended route with an up to the present estimate of cost, also a precise statement of intention relating to "Camfield" if it is intended to by-pass that property.

The Chairman then put the question that the words proposed be substituted and the amendment was negatived.

The Committee divided on the motion of Mr. O'Connor and Senator Dittmer -

Ayes (5)	Noes (4)
Senator Dittmer	Senator Anderson
Mr. Brimblecombe	Senator Frowse
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Buchanan
Mr. McIvor	Mr. Dean
Mr. O'Connor	

And so it was resolved in the affirmative."

RECOMMENDATION

15. In accordance with the resolution, therefore, the recommendation of the Committee is that it is not expedient to proceed with the proposed Top Springs - Wave Hill Road in its present form.

R. L. Dean

(R.L. Dean)
Chairman.

Office of the Parliamentary Standing
Committee on Public Works,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA...A.C.T.

18th October, 1963.