

DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE
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J.R. Odgers
Clerk of the Senate

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH REPORT

EXPENDITURE FROM ADVANCE
TO THE TREASURER
(APPROPRIATION ACTS 1968-69)

JOINT COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

EIGHTH COMMITTEE

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C.J. Hurford, Esquire, M.P.(Vice-Chairman)

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B.W.Graham, Esquire, M.P.

A.W.Jarman, Esquire, M.P.

ILL. Robinson, Esquire, M.P.

The Senate and the House of Representatives appointed their

Members on 25 November, 1969.

DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Section 6 of the Public Accounts Committee Act 1951-1966 reads as follows :-

6. The duties of the Committee are -
- (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Commonwealth and each statement and report transmitted to the Houses of Parliament by the Auditor-General in pursuance of sub-section (1.) of section fifty-three of the Audit Act 1901-1950;
 - (b) to report to both Houses of the Parliament, with such comment as it thinks fit; any items or matters in those accounts, statements and reports, or any circumstances connected with them, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of the Parliament should be directed;
 - (c) to report to both Houses of the Parliament any alteration which the Committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them, or in the mode of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys; and
 - (d) to inquire into any question in connexion with the public accounts which is referred to it by either House of the Parliament, and to report to that House upon that question,

and include such other duties as are assigned to the Committee by Joint Standing Orders approved by both Houses of the Parliament.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, a series of inquiries relating to expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer has been conducted concurrently with a comprehensive inquiry into expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. The procedure to be adopted in regard to these inquiries was examined in the Sixtieth and Seventy-fifth Reports. Since 1964-65 Your Committee has taken the view that as some departments would be involved in both inquiries, considerable economy of time would be achieved if a single inquiry were to be held but, as the subject matter relating to the expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer is clearly distinguishable from that relating to other expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, two separate reports should be submitted to the Parliament.

P.P. No. 152
of 1962 and
P.P. No. 249
of 1964-65.

2. This One Hundred and Fifteenth Report is based on the evidence received in respect of expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer in 1968-69.

3. During July, 1969, Your Seventh Committee obtained departmental explanations relating to expenditure during 1968-69 from the Advance to the Treasurer. These explanations were examined and from them, ten Items from the Department of the Interior were selected for further examination.

4. The Items selected were made the subject of a Public Inquiry held at Parliament House, Canberra on:-

Thursday	14 August, 1969.
Monday	18 August, 1969.
Tuesday	19 August, 1969.

5. The following witnesses representing the Department of the Interior were sworn and examined by Your Committee-

Mr.G.A.Bennett	- Executive Officer,A.C.T.Police.
Mr.R.A.Bradford	- Registrar, Co-operative Societies and Agents.
Mr.J.R.Clark	- Executive Officer, Office Construction Secretariat.
Mr.L.L.Gillespie	- Assistant Secretary,Finance and Supply
Mr.T.F.Hopkinson	- Director,Programming and Projects.
Mr.E.S.Keehn	- First Assistant Secretary,Management Services and Property.
Mr.D.M.Lalor	- Director,Expenditure and Costing.
Mr.E.P.O'Brien	- Executive Officer,Administration,Housing Branch.
Mr.J.J.Ravenscroft	- Director,Finance Branch,Northern Territory Administration.

6. During our Inquiry we were assisted by the following Observers -

Mr.A.K.Ragless	- Auditor-General's Office
Mr.G.N.Vanthoff	- Public Service Board
Mr.J.Hunter	} - Department of the Treasury.
Mr.J.I.Maunder	

7. In examining expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer, Your Committee has sought to ascertain whether or not the principle that expenditure from the Advance should be confined to urgent and unforeseeable requirements for which provision could not be made in the Appropriation legislation has been maintained.

Chapter 2
The Department of the Interior

- (1) Division 350/2/06: Administrative - Administrative Expenses - War Graves - construction, care and maintenance.

Available Funds	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1967/68</u>	<u>1968/69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No.1	703,600	701,300	780,400
Appropriation Act No.3	900	-	-
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	4,359
Total Funds Available	704,500	701,300	784,759
Total Expenditure	<u>704,454</u>	<u>677,161</u>	<u>784,682</u>
Unexpended available funds	<u>46</u>	<u>24,139</u>	<u>77</u>

8. This item provides for the Commonwealth's contribution towards the cost of construction of War Cemeteries and erection of Headstones over graves of the 1939-45 war, maintenance of existing cemeteries and war graves of both wars and salaries, office expenses and rent overseas and for the Commission's office in Melbourne. Exhibit 115/1
9. The Department informed us that, included in the Original Appropriation of \$780,400 was an amount of \$349,853 required for payment to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in London, in four quarterly instalments of \$87,463. Exhibit 115/1
10. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's financial year commences on 1 April and the Department informed us that the Commission's estimate for 1969-70 was \$367,287 or \$91,822 per quarter. Funds available to the Department for the final quarter of 1968-69 i.e. for the first quarter of the Commission's new financial year, amounted to \$87,463, leaving a deficiency of \$4,359. It was necessary for this amount to be obtained from the Advance to the Treasurer. Exhibit 115/1
11. In evidence, the witness admitted that on 7 March, 1969 the Department had received advice from the Commission regarding its estimate for 1969-70. However, the matter did not come to notice Cs. 47 and 48

until after the Additional Estimates had been settled.

Conclusions

12. Your Committee believes that insufficient care was exercised by the Department in connection with the War Graves Commission's estimate for 1969-70. Had proper attention been paid to this matter, the amount of \$4,359 would have been sought in the Additional Estimates for 1968-69. Although the amount involved in this case is small, Your Committee is disturbed by the fact that it was overlooked when the Additional Estimates were formulated.

13. Your Committee is also disturbed by the fact that the Department's written submission did not disclose that the advice of the War Graves Commission's estimate for 1969-70 came into the Department's possession in time for an appropriate adjustment to be made in the Additional Estimates. Had Your Committee decided not to proceed to a public examination of this item, this situation would not have been disclosed.

(ii) Division 352/2/03: Real Estate Management-Administrative Expenses - Postage, telegrams and telephone services.

Available Funds	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1967/68</u>	<u>1968/69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No.1	1,047,700	1,222,400	1,286,000
Appropriation Act No.3	-	-	183,000
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	<u>76,000</u>
Total Funds Available	1,047,700	1,222,400	1,545,000
Total Expenditure	<u>979,607</u>	<u>1,152,277</u>	<u>1,540,366</u>
Unexpended available funds	<u>68,043</u>	<u>70,123</u>	<u>4,634</u>

14. This item provides primarily for the cost of telephone services in all jointly occupied Commonwealth offices in metropolitan and country areas throughout Australia where the Department of the Interior is the registered subscriber.

Exhibit
115/2

15. Regarding the formulation of the Original Estimate for 1968-69 we were informed that the Department of the Interior is responsible for payment for telephone services in a number of buildings over which it has no administrative control. Therefore that Department must obtain estimates from a number of departments mainly in respect of Commonwealth centres located in the State capital cities and the Administrative building in Canberra. In these circumstances the Department of the Interior's assessment of financial requirements is based in part on these estimates and in part on its own judgement as to accommodation changes that will occur in the buildings concerned.

Q.52

16. We were informed that when the estimate for this Item was re-assessed following the posting of February expenditure, it was evident that the initial appropriation of \$1,286,000 was inadequate to the extent of \$183,000, due to increased requirements of \$20,000 for New South Wales; \$24,000 for Victoria; \$19,500 for South Australia;

\$13,600 for Tasmania and \$119,900 for the Australian Capital Territory. On the other hand there was an estimated reduction of \$14,000 in requirements for Queensland. The increased rate of expenditure was said to have been due to a number of factors, the main reason being a general increase in the use of telephone facilities.

Exhibit
115/2

17. It was stated that, in the case of New South Wales increased expenditure was due to an increase in trunk line charges from an estimated \$100,000 to \$113,963 and a re-imbusement of \$6,000 to the Postmaster-General's Department for the cost of relief telephonists' salaries. It was explained that telephonists loaned to the Department of the Interior to operate on a permanent basis the Commonwealth Centre switchboard in Sydney had been paid by the Department on an "Officers on Loan from other departments" basis. This, however, proved inconvenient when applied to relief telephonists and, in 1968-69 it had been decided that these staff members should be paid by the Postmaster-General on a recoverable basis.

Exhibit
115/2 and
Q.66

18. The higher expenditure in Victoria was attributed mainly to increased costs for blocks 1 and 2 of the Commonwealth Centre in Melbourne. These proved to be ten per cent in excess of the estimate. Part of the increase was due to the Department of the Interior accepting responsibility for telephone services in the Commonwealth offices at Mildura.

Exhibit
115/2

19. In South Australia the main source of expenditure was the Da Costa Building in Adelaide. This building is occupied by the Department of the Interior, the Department of Works, the Department of Civil Aviation, the Department of Supply, the Department of Primary Industry, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of the Treasury, and the Bureau of Census and Statistics.

Exhibit
115/2

20. The increase of \$13,600 in Tasmania was attributed mainly to the lease of Kingsway House during 1968/69; an amount of \$12,000 being paid to the Postmaster-General by way of installation costs

Exhibit
115/2

and 6 months rental of a new P.A.B.X. in that building.

21. The largest increase, however, occurred in the Australian Capital Territory where expenditure reached \$421,542 compared with an estimate of \$308,200. We were informed that the estimate for the Australian Capital Territory had provided for an increase of approximately eight per cent in expenditure, but, due to the full impact of the 1967 increase in rent and other items together with a significant increase in the number of calls, the provision proved to be insufficient. Of the total expenditure of \$421,542, the Administrative Building which, at the time of our inquiry housed the Department of External Affairs, the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Trade and Industry and the News and Information Bureau of the Department of the Interior, accounted for \$407,805. The Civic Complex (North and South Buildings, Moresby House and Electricity House) accounted for \$13,243 and other buildings for \$494. In particular, the Department indicated that expenditure in respect of the Administrative Building had increased during four successive claim periods from \$100,400 in May, 1967 to \$143,638 in November, 1967, \$184,009 in May, 1968 and \$208,798 in November, 1968.

Exhibit
115/2
Qs. 69 to 76
and Committee
File 1969/4

22. It was stated that the Department of the Interior made written inquiries when it noticed a significant variation in the costs of calls as against the estimate. These inquiries revealed that metered unit calls, including S.T.D. calls, in the Administrative Building had increased from 6,162,072 in 1967-68 to 7,534,300 in 1968-69 an increase which represented additional expenditure on \$34,889. Moreover, rent of the switchboard increased by \$15,000. The witness stated that the Department of the Interior is unable to identify the calls made by each department occupying the building as all calls are made through a single switchboard. It was felt however, that the Department of Trade and Industry, with its substantial overseas and interstate interests would be a large user of the facility.

Exhibit
115/2
and Q.78

23. The witness agreed that the inability to identify the calls made by particular departments operating on the same switchboard denies to the Department of the Interior the normal management devices of control that would otherwise be available. The Treasury Observer, Mr. Maunder, informed us that the Postmaster-General was developing a special piece of equipment named PETRA which it was expected would become available in the near future. That equipment would provide a print-out type of report indicating the extension making a call, the time and date and the number called. However, because the equipment would be controlling one hundred extensions it would not be able to handle them all simultaneously.

Qs.79 and

24. The Department of the Interior informed us that in June 1969 it became evident that the total of \$1,469,000 available from the Original and Additional Appropriations would not be sufficient to cover expenditure for the full year. Having regard to the expenditure incurred and to claims on hand and expected, the Department estimated that additional funds to the extent of \$76,000 would be required in 1968-69 and provision of this amount was sought from the Advance to the Treasurer.

Exhibit
115/2

25. The Victorian Branch had advised of an additional requirement of \$54,000 to enable payment of the Post Office claim for the Commonwealth Centre for the period to May 1969. This claim was for \$170,000 compared with claims of \$101,000 in November, 1967, \$129,000 in May, 1968 and \$128,000 in November, 1968. The increase in May 1969 was attributed to two main factors, viz, an increase in the use of existing services and the connection of a building at 460 Bourke Street occupied by the Department of Housing and the Department of National Development through the Commonwealth Centre P.A.B.X.

Exhibit
115/2

26. It was stated that expenditure in Queensland also contributed to the need to seek additional funds from the Advance to the Treasurer. The underestimate by the Queensland Branch, which in February 1969 had advised a possible shortfall in expenditure of \$14,000 was due largely to the progressive occupation of Australia House. There had been no previous experience of full occupation of that building for a whole year. The first claim received on that account was for \$29,994 and the second received in June, 1969 was for \$56,571

Exhibit
115/2

27. Of the amount of \$76,000 obtained from the Advance to the Treasurer, \$4,634 was not required. In this connection the witness claimed that it is extremely difficult, even at a late stage in the financial year, to estimate accurately the amount required.

Exhibit
115/ 2
and Q.86

Conclusions

28. Your Committee's examination of this Item emphasises the validity of the conclusions drawn in our One Hundred and Seventh Report which related to Subscriber Trunk Dialling Telephone Facilities(S.T.D.) In that Report we stated that the evidence taken in relation to telephone expenditure highlighted the cost control problems that arise in buildings where multi-occupancy occurs. Allied to that was the problem that arises for any Department which is the registered subscriber of a multi-occupancy building. In that regard it was noted that the problems of estimating and cost control confronting such departments had increased following the introduction of subscriber trunk dialling facilities. P.P. No.23 of 1969.

29. In the present case the Department of the Interior is the registered subscriber of several buildings involving multi-occupancy and the evidence shows clearly the problems that have arisen for that Department in the formulation of accurate expenditure estimates. Indeed having regard to these problems, Your Committee would pay a tribute to the Department of the Interior for the results it has achieved on this Item in recent years.

30. We believe that the evidence taken on this Item justifies further the action taken by the Department of the Treasury in October 1968 in requesting departments to analyse their telephone accounts with a view to isolating the factors that have contributed to increased allocations for telephone purposes.

- (iii) Item 352/2/07 - Real Estate Management-Administrative expenses.
- Office Services.

Available Funds	1966/67	1967-68	1968-69
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No. 1	1,481,800	1,466,000	1,819,200
Appropriation Act No. 3	-	80,000	128,000
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	<u>125,300</u>
Total Funds Available	1,481,800	1,546,000	2,073,300
Total Expenditure	<u>1,418,793</u>	<u>1,542,447</u>	<u>2,066,829</u>
Unexpended available funds	<u>63,007</u>	<u>3,553</u>	<u>6,471</u>

31. This item provides for the cost of fuel, light and power, water supply and sanitation, night patrol services, electrical maintenance and materials for cleaning of jointly occupied buildings in all States and Commonwealth Offices in the Australian Capital Territory except those of the Postmaster-General's Department and the Defence Departments in Canberra. Exhibit 115/3

32. With regard to the amount provided in Appropriation Act No. 3, the Department informed us that during the period 1 July 1968 to 13 March 1969 additional commitments totalling \$144,337 were approved. The additional financial requirements for 1968/69 were estimated at \$128,800 and provision was sought in Appropriation Act No. 3 accordingly. Exhibit 115/3

33. Of the provision obtained in Appropriation Act (No.3), \$39,800 related to office services at Avalon airfield which had been omitted from the Original Estimates. The witness explained that this omission was an oversight on the part of the Department's Victorian Regional Office. The oversight was not discovered until early in the financial year by which time it was too late to have it included in the Original Estimates. It was stated that the Department has developed a pro-forma for Exhibit 115/3 and Qs. 99 and 103

routine expenditure of this type and a specific instruction has been issued to each Chief Property Officer in an attempt to improve the degree of accuracy in estimating.

34. The other most significant under-provision in the Original Estimates was \$70,000 for office services in the Australian Capital Territory. Of this amount \$30,000 was for unpaid accounts for 1967-68 requiring payment in 1968-69. In addition, provision was made in the Original Estimates for buildings occupied in 1967-68 for only the period for which they were occupied. The same amount was again provided in 1968-69 instead of for a full year of operation.

Exhibit
115/3 and
Q.104

35. In regard to expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer the Department informed us that the installation of a computer by the Department of Social Services in the Commonwealth Centre, Melbourne and Stage 2 of the computer complex at the World Meteorological Centre by the Bureau of Meteorology, increased the power costs in these two buildings by \$52,500 during 1968/69.

Exhibit
115/3

36. The Department of Social Services' computer was installed on 8 July 1968. It operated on a single shift basis from 11 July to 31 July 1968; on a 2 shift basis during August and September 1968 and on 3 shifts from 1 October, 1968.

Qs.107
and 108 &
Committee
File 1969/A

37. On 28 October, 1968 a computer for use by the Repatriation Department was installed with the Social Services complex. It worked on a 1 shift per day basis until the end of December 1968 and on a 2 shift per day basis from January, 1969.

Qs.107 and
108 Comm-
ittee File
1969/4

38. The Bureau of Meteorology computer was installed in April 1968 and started working on a 1 shift per day basis. It worked on a 2 shift per day basis from September 1968 and 3 shifts from March, 1969. A second computer was installed in

Qs.107 and
108 and
Committee
File 1969/A

March, 1969.

39. The department of Social Services and the Bureau of Meteorology both indicated that the consumption of electricity had not been included in the relevant feasibility studies. Qs.107, 108 and Committee File 1969/4

40. A review of expenditure on electricity costs as at March, 1969 indicated that the estimated cost of \$282,000 for the two buildings concerned was likely to be exceeded by only about \$10,000 and the judgment at that time was that this did not sufficiently justify seeking additional funds. However, at the time of the estimates review, three accounts for substantial amounts were on hand which, due to inexperience of the officer concerned, were not taken into account. We were informed that the attention of the person concerned has been drawn to this omission and steps were being taken to strengthen this area of the accounting function. Qs.107 and 108 and Committee File 1969/4

41. Also, in Victoria, new accommodation was leased in 1968/69 and the Department of Interior accepted responsibility, for the first time, for office services for jointly occupied buildings in suburban areas. The cost of assuming this responsibility was \$19,500 in 1968/69 and the total additional requirement from the Advance to the Treasurer in Victoria for 1968/69 was \$72,000. Exhibit 115/3

42. Increased electricity costs in the Australian Capital Territory amounted to \$56,189. The Department attributed this increase to the use of electronic equipment, and areas in existing buildings which were vacant for part of 1967/68 but which were fully occupied in 1968/69. Other buildings became occupied during 1968/69 and it was difficult to estimate electricity usage according to the period of occupancy of a building. A case in point was the Forestry Research Unit at Yarralumla where a further \$5763 was paid in 1968/69 for electricity for these premises for the first time. Exhibit 115/3 and Qs.112 & 113.

43. It was stated that responsibility for the new Forestry Research Institute Building was assumed on behalf of the Forestry and Timber Bureau, Department of National Development on 11 July, 1967 and was immediately allocated to that Department. The Forestry Research Institute has been in continual occupancy since that date. The Electricity Accounts for 1967/68 were paid by the Department of National Development. On 20 May 1969 the Department of the Interior reimbursed the Department of National Development for the costs relating to the first 2 accounts for 1968/69. The third account was referred directly to the Department of the Interior and was paid on 29 January, 1969. The fourth account for the year was paid on 15 May, 1969. The financial responsibility for the electricity accounts was first accepted with the payment made on 29 January, 1969 and therefore it was thought that sufficient provision was available to meet the charges.

Q.119 and
Committee
File 1969/4

44. Taking into consideration savings which had been achieved by various State Branches the further additional cash requirement for 1968/69 was assessed at \$125,300 and funds to this extent were sought from the Advance to the Treasurer. The resultant total provision proved to be \$6,471 in excess of the actual cash requirement. In this regard we were informed that the Department is not specifically aware of the times when accounts for electricity charges will be received and in the present case, the rate of receipt of the accounts was less than expected when funds were sought from the advance to the Treasurer.

Exhibit
115/3
and Q.115

Conclusions.

45. Your Committee notes with concern that, in the formulation of the Original Estimates for this Item, an amount of \$39,800 had been omitted due to an oversight that occurred in the Department's Victorian Regional Office. We trust that the development of a proforma for use in connection with routine expenditure will obviate repetitions of this type of error.

46. It is also clear from the evidence that in formulating its Original Estimates for the Australian Capital Territory for 1968/69 the Department failed to provide for unpaid accounts relating to the previous financial year and failed to make a provision for expenditure for a full year in respect of buildings that had been occupied for the first time during the previous financial year. Your Committee regards these errors as symptomatic of a poor standard of estimating.

47. Regarding electricity costs at the Commonwealth Centre Melbourne and the World Meteorological Centre, the evidence shows that, when the Additional Estimates were formulated, three accounts for substantial amounts were on hand, but, due to inexperience of the officer concerned, were not taken into account. Your Committee notes with approval that steps have been taken to strengthen the Department's accounting function in this area.

48. A further matter to which we would invite attention concerns the overprovision of \$6,471 from the Advance to the Treasurer. In this regard we note the claim made in evidence that the Department is not specifically aware of the times when accounts for electricity charges will be received. Your Committee believes that the Department should ascertain from the electricity authorities concerned the cyclical arrangements that are applied in the issuing of electricity accounts to assist it with its reviews of expenditure and formulation of estimates.

49. Your Committee also notes with surprise that the consumption of electricity had evidently not been included in the relevant feasibility studies relating to the computer installations for the Department of Social Services and the Bureau of Meteorology.

(iv) Item 355.2.03: Surveys - Administrative Expenses - Postage,
telegrams and telephone services.

<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act. No.1	17,000	20,500	16,000
Appropriation Act. No. 3	-	-	-
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	<u>4,400</u>
Total Funds Available	17,000	20,500	20,400
Total Expenditure	<u>14,142</u>	<u>15,925</u>	<u>20,243</u>
Unexpended Available Funds	<u>2,858</u>	<u>4,575</u>	<u>157</u>

50. This item provides for postage, telegrams and tele-
phones for the Survey Branch of the Department.

Exhibit
115/4

51. The Department informed us that in April 1968 it
estimated that an amount of \$20,000 would be required in 1968-69
to meet expenditure on postage, telegrams and telephone charges
and provision was sought accordingly. However, in June 1968
following a review of expenditure to 31 May 1968, the require-
ment for 1968-69 was reduced in consultation with the Department
of the Treasury to \$16,000.

Exhibit
115/4 and
Q.121

52. In March 1969 expenditure under this item was reviewed
and it appeared that the existing provision of \$16,000 would be
sufficient. Accordingly no further provision was sought in the
Additional Estimates.

Exhibit
115/4

53. During May 1969, unforeseen claims amounting to \$3,146
for the Australian Capital Territory and \$1,229 for the Queensland
Branch of the Department were received. The witness indicated that
while the estimate had been constructed on the basis of past
experience, it is difficult for the Department to assess the
dates on which telephone accounts will be received.

Exhibit
115/4 Qs. 122
and 126.

Conclusions

54. Your Committee accepts the Department's explanation on the basis of the evidence tendered.

55. Your Committee is concerned, however, by the remark made in evidence that it is difficult for the Department to assess the dates on which telephone accounts will be received. In this regard Your Committee would invite attention to paragraph 113 of its Eighty-fourth Report. In that paragraph Your Committee stated that any department which charges other departments for services it renders has a clear responsibility to ensure that it submits accounts for payment to debtor departments as soon as possible after the provision of the service concerned. Where the service provided is of a continuous nature, the department rendering the service should arrange for the submission of accounts at such intervals as will ensure that debtor departments are given the opportunity to effect regular payments.

P.P.No.
30 of
1964-65-
66.

56. In the circumstances we believe that the Department of the Interior should discuss its problem with the Postmaster-General's Department with a view to obtaining accounts on a regular basis acceptable to both departments.

(v) Item 362.4.03:

Australian Capital Territory Services-
General Services-Flats Caretaking and
Maintenance.

<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>1966/67</u>	<u>1967/68</u>	<u>1968/69</u>
	"	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No.1	160,000	141,600	140,000
Appropriation Act No.3	-	-	7,000
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	12,300
Total Funds Available	160,000	141,600	159,300
Total Expenditure	<u>137,948</u>	<u>141,455</u>	<u>158,812</u>
Unexpended Available Funds	<u>22,052</u>	<u>145</u>	<u>488</u>

57. This Item provides for the operation and maintenance of boiler rooms, cleaning common areas, employment of caretakers and maintenance of electrical installations and public lighting of Commonwealth owned flats in Canberra.

Exhibit
115/5

58. We were informed that the original estimate for this Item was prepared on the basis of past experience and known changes in circumstances that were likely to occur.

Q.130

59. We were informed that between 1 July, 1968 and 13 March, 1969 addition commitments were approved totalling \$7,000 and comprising the following components:-

- (a) Increased cost of fuel oil at Northbourne Flats and Currong Flats - \$4,200
- (b) Increased wages payable to boiler attendants and caretakers. These consisted of a margin increase to boiler attendants of \$2.50 per week from 1 June, 1968 and a National Wage increase of \$1.35 per week from October, 1968 - \$400
- (c) Electrical maintenance of houses and flats increased as a result of margins and National Wage Case increases granted to electrical Trade employees - 2,000
- (d) Incidental expenditure to cover the purchase of items such as cleaning equipment and detergents for cleaning vacated flats.-\$400

Exhibit
115/5

60. It was stated that when the Additional Estimates review was conducted, it appeared that expenditure was only slightly above the pro-rata rate for 1967-68 and consequently an additional \$7,000 was sought in the Appropriation Act No.3.

Exhibit
115/5 and
Q.131

61. In regard to expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer the Department informed us that between March and June 1969 oil consumption at the Northbourne and Currong Flats increased by \$4,494 more than had been sought in Appropriation Act No.3. In this connection the witness stated that the Department of Works had been requested to investigate the possibility of mechanical faults in the oil feed system at Currong Flats and to undertake a chemical analysis of the oil supplied to them. Both examinations were carried out but failed to disclose faults.

Exhibit
115/5 and
Q.134.

62. Three possibilities were advanced to explain the increased oil consumption. One particular heating device had been cleaned out during the year. This had resulted in a more efficient operation of the device but had also given rise to an increased usage of oil. In addition the installation of a number of washing machines in flats necessitated larger supplies of hot water and therefore increased fuel usage. The witness further explained that unusual weather conditions during the summer months had necessitated the use of the heating system.

Q.134

63. A further amount of \$1,173 was required to cover increased expenditure for new cleaning contracts and variations to existing contracts. The increase was attributable to increased wages payable to cleaners and increased costs of cleaning materials. Contracts renewed during this period were made at rates significantly higher than had been anticipated.

Exhibit
115/5 and
Qs.143 and
144.

64. Expenditure for public lighting also showed a marked increase during the year. The increase amounted to \$3054 and an investigation was made to ascertain whether faulty equipment was installed in any of the flats. We were informed that the lighting system is governed by time switches which are checked and

Exhibit
115/5 and
Q.145 and
146.

re-set monthly on routine maintenance and no obvious factor could be advanced to account for the increased expenditure. It was felt however, that the promptness with which globes were replaced during the year in public areas could have affected power consumption and could thus explain the increased cost.

65. Increased wages for caretakers and a retrospective adjustment of penalty rates for broken shifts amounted to \$3,200. The Department explained that prior to 1967 the Watchmen, Caretakers, Cleaners and Lift Drivers' Awards prescribed a penalty payment of ten per cent for shifts commencing before 6.30 a.m. or finishing after 7.30 p.m., and the working of broken shifts. In a new Award issued with effect from 31 July 1967 separate penalties were provided, namely ten per cent to cover the former and ten cents per hour to cover the latter. The new provision in the Award was overlooked and the underpayment was brought to the notice of the Department by an employee through the Miscellaneous Workers Union in April 1969. Back payments totalling \$575.20 were made to the two caretakers involved for the period 31 July, 1967 to 6 April, 1969.

Exhibit
115/5, Qs. 142
148 to 152, 159
to 161 and
Committee File
1969/4

Conclusions

66. Your Committee accepts the explanations tendered by the Department except for that relating to the award operative from 31 July, 1967 for watchmen, caretakers, cleaners and lift drivers. It is clear that a new provision included in that award had been overlooked in the formulation of both the Original and Additional Estimates for 1968-69 and had not come to the notice of the Department until April, 1969 when attention was drawn to it by an employee acting through the Miscellaneous Workers Union. Your Committee regards this state of affairs as most unsatisfactory.

67. As in the case of Item 350/2/06 Your Committee is also disturbed by the fact that the Department's submission did not disclose that retrospective adjustments arising from the award made in July 1967 had arisen from an oversight in the Department. Had Your Committee decided not to proceed to a public examination of this item, this situation would not have been disclosed.

(vi) Item 363.2.02: Australian Capital Territory Police-
-Administrative Expenses-Office Requisites
and Equipment-Stationery and Printing.

<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No.1	16,100	20,300	20,200
Appropriation Act No.3	-	-	8,300
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	8,900
Total Funds Available	16,100	20,300	37,400
Total Expenditure	<u>14,542</u>	<u>20,288</u>	<u>37,182</u>
Unexpended Available Funds	<u>1,558</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>218</u>

68. This Item provides funds for the purchase of office equipment, printing, Xerox hire and general stationery. Exhibit 115/6

69. In connection with the Appropriation Act No. 3 we were informed that between 1 July 1968 and 13 March 1969 additional commitments valued at \$4,256 were approved for the purchase of 2 Ferrisway Model F856 card filing units for the criminal records of the Hodus Operandi Section. Approval for the purchase of this equipment by the Commonwealth Stores Supply and Tender Board was given on 2 August 1968. In addition, changed procedures in the reporting of accidents and criminal offences required increased usage of the Rank Xerox copier and forms. It was stated that copies of accident reports are now required by the National Capital Development Commission, Commonwealth Statistician and the Officer-in-Charge of the Department's Traffic Section. The increased cost arising from the changed procedures amounted to \$6,000.

Exhibit
115/6 and
qs. 166 &
167.

70. On the basis of these increases and experience of previous years the additional requirement for the remainder of 1968-69 was estimated at \$8,300 and provision was sought accordingly in the Additional Estimates.

Exhibit
115/6

71. In March 1968 the Government Printer was requested to provide an estimate of cost for printing a Law Manual and Police General Orders. On 19 March 1968 an interim order for \$500 was

placed to enable printing to proceed pending receipt of a firm estimate. However, a firm estimate was not received from the Government Printer and no further order for printing was issued. The total expenditure against this order exceeded the authorization by \$6,243 and, in the absence of a firm order, the full commitment of \$6,743 was overlooked and was not recorded. The matter was not pursued with the Government Printer and it was not until the Department received the final cost late in June that it realized there would be a considerable over expenditure. In addition the production of the manual was said to be of a higher standard than anticipated.

Exhibit
115/6 and
Cs.168 to
172

72. We were also informed that a reduction that occurred in delivery delays by the Government Printer over the last months of the financial year increased the cash requirement for 1968/69 by \$2,650 against commitments which were not expected to be met until 1969-70.

Exhibit
115/6

Conclusions.

73. It appears to Your Committee that the principle cause of expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer on this Item arose from an interim order placed on the Government Printer in March 1968 for the printing of a law manual and Police General Orders. In connection with this matter Your Committee believes that, as requested by the Department, the Government Printer should have provided an estimate of the cost of this work and that the Department should have ensured that it obtained such an estimate. Your Committee is also concerned that, based on an interim order of \$500, the final cost for this work should have reached a figure of no less than \$6,743 without a final order having been placed. We can only express the view that the circumstances surrounding this matter are unsatisfactory in respect to both of the parties concerned.

(vii) Item 368.4.11 - Northern Territory Services - General Services -
Forestry Branch - Operational expenses.

<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No.1	525,000	326,500	450,000
Appropriation act No.3	-	-	-
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	30,000
Total Funds Available	525,000	326,500	480,000
Total Expenditure	516,412	326,480	479,899
Unexpended Available Funds	8,588	0	101

74. This Item provides for the establishment and progressive development of a forestry organisation in the Administration to perform the functions normally carried out by a State Department of Forests. Exhibit 115/7

75. We were informed that after the estimates for 1968-69 had been finalised unexpected expenditure occurred on transport, repairs to heavy equipment, air charter and vehicle hire. It was thought that this expenditure could be met from savings by reduced expenditure on wages for industrial staff and that there would be no need to supplement the appropriation in the Additional Estimates. However, it became necessary to maintain employment of industrial staff at a constant level due to various operational needs. These included urgent saw milling construction work at Maningrida to provide employment for Aborigines and to increase the output of timber required for housing projects. There was also a need for the recultivation of forest areas that had been damaged seriously by cyclone "Audrey" in March 1969. In addition, increased fire protection work was required at Maningrida following a serious fire at the plantation late in 1968. This work increased in late March or early April 1969. Also the need arose to employ industrial labour required to undertake nursery work at Pickertaramoor and Darwin which could not be arranged by contract. Exhibit 115/7 and Qs.235 to 240.

76. We were informed that unexpected expenditure also occurred in relation to the repair and maintenance of plant and equipment; vehicle hire, and air charters. Exhibit 115/7

77. In regard to the repair and maintenance of equipment it was stated that the Original Estimate of \$32,000 proved inadequate to the extent of \$12,000. It was claimed that repairs to heavy plant are difficult to predict and are expensive when they occur. In this area all of the major mechanical failures occurred in April, May and June 1969 and arose from the additional work load that followed the fire at Maningrida and cyclone "Audrey". Exhibit 115/7, Qs. 232, 242 and 243.

78. It was stated that vehicle hire cost nearly \$11,500 more than was originally estimated. The underestimation was claimed to have been due mainly to the hire of two new timber jinkers at a cost of \$121 per week each which were required to increase the output of logs at Maningrida and Snake Bay sawmills. The witness agreed, however, that the upward trend in these costs should have been foreseen when the Additional Estimates review was undertaken. Vehicle costs associated with the wood chip industry surveys undertaken in areas not served by roads were also said to have contributed to the underestimation of funds. Exhibit 115/7, Qs. 245 and 246

79. Expenditure on air charters proved to be \$5,000 more than was originally estimated. We were informed that this increase resulted mainly from a departmental feasibility study conducted in conjunction with the C.S.I.R.O. and the Department of National Development into whether certain areas in the Territory would be suitable for the establishment of a wood chip industry. The Northern Territory Administration was mainly involved in this project to the extent of the hire of helicopters and equipment to obtain data. Exhibit 115/7 and Qs. 233 & 234.

Conclusions.

80. Your Committee accepts that most of the expenditure charged to the Advance to the Treasurer in 1968-69 arose from circumstances that occurred in March and April 1969 following a fire that occurred at Maningrida late in 1968 and cyclone "Audrey"

that occurred in March 1969.

81. In connection with \$11,500 of the amount charged to the Advance to the Treasurer, Your Committee believes, on evidence tendered by the witness, that the upward trend that occurred in costs connected with the output of logs at Maningrida should have been foreseen when the Additional Estimates were prepared.

(viii) Item 855.1.14 - Capital Works and Services - Acquisition of Sites and Buildings - Department of the Interior.

<u>Available Funds.</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No. 2	541,000	93,800	9,200
Appropriation Act No. 4	-	87,400	5,397,300
Advance to the Treasurer	-	<u>79,921</u>	<u>29,568</u>
Total Funds Available	<u>541,000</u>	<u>261,121</u>	<u>5,436,068</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>521,464</u>	<u>261,019</u>	<u>5,436,067</u>
Unexpended Funds Available	<u>19,536</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>1</u>

82. This Item provides for the acquisition of sites and buildings for the Department of the Interior.

83. The Department stated that the additional provision in Appropriation Act No. 4 had arisen from three supplementary items which were approved by the Department of the Treasury for inclusion in the 1968-69 Acquisitions Programme. Exhibit
115/8

84. The first of these items related to the acquisition of a site in Hobart for Commonwealth offices. We were informed that a proposal to acquire such a site at a cost of approximately \$500,000 was raised with the Department of the Treasury at the initial stage of discussions on the acquisition proposals for the Department of the Interior. It was not possible, however, to settle a project of this magnitude prior to the framing of the programme. Following further investigations the Treasurer agreed on 8 August 1968 to the inclusion of the item in the Programme at an estimated cost of \$560,000 and to the provision of the necessary cash as required during the financial year. The site was acquired on 16 January 1969 and claims totalling \$491,147 were settled. Exhibit
115/8

85. The second item related to the acquisition of Crowwell Building in Melbourne. It was stated that in view of the steeply increasing cost of leasing accommodation needed for

Government departments, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne, the Government established an interdepartmental committee in May 1968. That committee, which comprised representatives of the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Works was directed to give attention to various aspects of the problem, one of which was the practicability and economic desirability of purchasing outright certain modern buildings. The Committee is also required to examine the practicability of reducing the time required in the construction of Commonwealth buildings and of means to reduce the cost of office accommodation.

Exhibit
115/8 and
4.384

86. Because of the extreme shortage of accommodation for departments, Melbourne was given a high priority and an immediate investigation was made into the practicability of purchasing a suitable building. Initially no suitable building was available but subsequently Cromwell Building at 362-374 Bourke Street, Melbourne, was offered for sale to the Commonwealth. After negotiations, agreement was reached on a purchase price of \$4,700,000. It was claimed that investigations had shown that, at that figure, substantial annual cost advantages would accrue to the Commonwealth by owning the building rather than by leasing space in it and the Government approved the purchase. The item was included in the programme on 20 December 1968, additional funds being provided from the Advance to the Treasurer pending Additional Estimates.

Exhibit
115/8
and 4.385
to 394.

87. The third item concerned the acquisition of houses of officers transferred compulsorily to Canberra. It was explained that an amount of \$197,520 was required to purchase thirteen houses in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It was stated that the purchase of these houses, which is in accordance with decisions of the Government in 1958, 1961 and 1967 respectively, could not be anticipated in framing the original programme as it is necessary for certain conditions to be met before a transferred officer becomes eligible to have his home purchased by the Commonwealth. One of these conditions is

Exhibit
115/8 and
4.396 and
397.

that the house must have been on the open market for two months.

88. It was estimated that additional funds amounting to \$5,397,300 would be required to meet the cost of these three proposals in 1968-69 and provision was made accordingly in the Additional Estimates. Exhibit 115/8

89. The Department informed us that applications for the acquisition of three additional houses were made after the Additional Estimates were prepared and in order to complete those acquisitions Warrant Authority for \$29,568 was sought from the Advance to the Treasurer. Exhibit 115/8 and Q.398

Conclusions.

90. Your Committee accepts the Department's explanation.

91. In connection with the evidence tendered in relation to Cromwell Building in Melbourne, Your Committee would observe that the problem of office accommodation in Australia has been a matter for concern in recent years. For this reason we note with satisfaction that in May 1968 the Government appointed an interdepartmental committee comprising representatives of the Department of the Interior, the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Works with terms of reference that embrace the practicability of purchasing buildings and the practicability of reducing the time required in the construction of Commonwealth buildings and the means of reducing the cost of office accommodation. P.P.No.53 of 1968

(ix) Item 855.1.18: Capital Works and Services - Acquisition of Sites and Buildings - Department of National Development

<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	\$	\$	\$
Appropriation Act No. 2	-	-	-
Appropriation Act No. 4	-	-	-
Advance to the Treasurer	-	-	3,636
Total Funds Available	-	-	3,636
Total Expenditure	-	-	3,636
Unexpended Available Funds	-	-	-

92. This item provides for the acquisition of a site for the Department of National Development.

93. The Department informed us that Warrant Authority amounting to \$3,636 was sought from the Advance to the Treasurer for the acquisition of nine acres of land in Maunds Road, Atherton, North Queensland, for the establishment of a regional station of the Forest Research Institute. Treasury approval to the inclusion of the acquisition in the 1968-69 programme, at an estimated cost of \$3,700 was given on 31 October 1968. In March 1969 the Queensland Branch expected that settlement could be effected during the 1968-69 financial year, and consequently that Branch sought provision of additional funds - \$3,636 - to be obtained from Additional Estimates. We were informed however, that this action was not taken, and reasons for this could not be ascertained from an examination of departmental files. The officer concerned in Head Office had since retired.

Exhibit
115/9

94. It appeared to the Department that there may have been a misunderstanding between the Central Office of the Department and its Queensland Regional Office. When questioned on this item the witness was only able to confirm that there was a

misunderstanding of a telephone conversation between the Canberra and Brisbane offices of the Department. Nevertheless the owner pressed the Department for a settlement as a matter of urgency and it was necessary to obtain additional funds.

Exhibit
115/9
and
4.400

95. In connection with cases of this type the Treasury Observer, Mr. Hunter, informed us that acquisitions which come forward during the year are approved for inclusion in a programme on the basis that cash will be provided, if required, in the Additional Estimates. This leaves the initiative for setting cash requirements with the Department of the Interior which controls the funds. If the Department of the Treasury does not receive a request for additional funds in the Additional Estimates when they are prepared it regards it as normally safe to assume that the proposition has not reached the stage at which expenditure is likely to be incurred during the year. The Department of the Treasury would not normally question the department on it. 4.401

Conclusions

96. The evidence shows that the amount of \$3,636 charged to the Advance to the Treasurer should have been included in the Additional Estimates for 1968-69. The necessary action, however, was not taken due to a misunderstanding that evidently occurred between the Central Office of the Department and its Queensland Regional Office. Your Committee trusts that appropriate action will be taken by the Department to ensure that misunderstandings of this nature do not recur.

97. In connection with this matter Your Committee also notes the observations made by the Treasury Observer, Mr. Hunter, in relation to the responsibility of the Department of the Interior for seeking funds in the Additional Estimates following Treasury approval for the inclusion of projects in the acquisition programme. On the basis of the evidence tendered in this case Your Committee rejects the argument that if the Department of the Treasury does not receive a request for additional funds in the Additional Estimates it is normally safe to assume that the proposition has not reached the stage at which expenditure is likely to be incurred during the year.

Your Committee believes that in each case where the Department of the Treasury has approved the inclusion of a project in the acquisition programme pending Additional Estimates, it should obtain from the Department of the Interior a report on the status of the project for consideration when the Additional Estimates are being framed.

(x) Item 855.6.02: Capital Works and Services - Advances and Loans A.C.T. - Loans to Co-operative Building Societies.

Available Funds	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
	↓	↓	↓
Appropriation Act No. 1.	900,000	1,060,000	1,494,000
Appropriation Act No. 3.	60,000	240,000	-
advance to the Treasurer	<u>100,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>175,000</u>
Total Funds Available	1,060,000	1,300,000	1,669,000
Total Expenditure	<u>1,060,000</u>	<u>1,300,000</u>	<u>1,662,402</u>
Unexpended Available Funds	-	-	6,598

98. This item provides for loans to be made by Co-operative Building Societies in the A.C.T. from Commonwealth moneys advanced for this purpose. As a means of encouraging the use of such societies the Government has been prepared to provide whatever funds they are able to use for the purpose of constructing homes in the Territory.

-Exhibit
115 / 10
and Qs. 7, 11
and 26.

99. It was stated that the Original Appropriation of \$1,494,000 for this Item for 1968-69 was based on an estimate calculated from trends indicated over the years since 1959-60 when the scheme was first implemented. We were assured that in formulating this estimate the Department had consulted the six permanent Co-operative Building Societies in the A.C.T. as to their likely needs during the financial year. The Societies, however, usually find it difficult to predict the quantity of loan applications that might be submitted. We were also informed that in formulating the Original Estimate, allowance had been made for an expected increase in the maximum permissible loan that could be granted by the Societies. Such an increase from \$7,500 to \$8,500 per loan was made on 13 August 1968.

Exhibit
115 / 10
and Qs. 7, 11
and 26.

100. During the year the Department conducted monthly reviews of expenditure by comparing the actual expenditure with a pro-rata amount of the appropriation. Exhibit 115/10

101. The Department also explained that between July 1968 and January 1969 the monthly rate of expenditure did not correlate with the pro-rata amount and it was difficult to determine at that time whether or not the appropriation would be fully expended. It was not until January that a steep increase in expenditure brought the two figures into close proximity. Exhibit 115/10

102. We were informed that the Department maintained regular contact with the Building Societies as to new applications which might be expected but there was no indication that there would be any departure from the existing trend. Accordingly it was expected that expenditure would not exceed the appropriation for the year. Exhibit 115/10

103. It was stated, however, that a combination of factors brought a sudden and unexpected increase in claims from Building Societies during the first two weeks of May, 1969. It then became apparent that expenditure would exceed the appropriation for the year and further funds were therefore requested from the Advance to the Treasurer. Exhibit 115/10

Conclusions.

104. In considering the evidence submitted in relation to this Item Your Committee has noted that, as a matter of policy, the Government has been prepared to provide such funds as Co-operative Building Societies in the A.C.T. are able to use for the purpose of constructing homes in the Territory.

105. The evidence shows that the Department formulated its Original Estimate for 1968-69 and reviewed its financial position

on the Item in anticipation of the Additional Estimates in close consultation with the Building Societies concerned. The evidence also shows, however, that the Societies have experienced difficulty in predicting the quantity of loan applications that might be submitted each year.

106. In view of that uncertainty and the nature of the policy underlying the purpose of the Item, Your Committee believes that the Department had no alternative but to obtain additional funds from the Advance to the Treasurer in 1968-69 to meet an unexpected increase in claims from Building Societies during May 1969. Your Committee trusts that as greater experience of the needs of Building Societies in the A.C.T. is obtained, the Department will be able to formulate and review its estimates for this Item with greater certainty.

Chapter 3
Conclusions

107. In its One Hundredth Report, which relates to expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer for 1967-68, Your Committee stated that its preliminary examination of departmental submissions connected with that inquiry showed a marked improvement in the quality of the material furnished and in the use made by departments of the Advance. Your Seventh Committee's preliminary examination of departmental submissions connected with expenditure from the Advance to the Treasurer for 1968-69 showed that those improvements had been sustained and as a result Your Committee confined its inquiry to ten items of expenditure.

108. Notwithstanding the improvements to which we have referred some of the evidence taken during the present inquiry revealed instances of inadequate submissions having been tendered. Attention has been drawn to these inadequacies where they have arisen.

109. The evidence taken relating to telegram and telephone services, particularly in connection with multi-occupancy buildings, justifies further the action taken by the Department of the Treasury in 1968 in requesting departments to analyse their telephone accounts with a view to isolating the factors that have contributed to increased allocations for telephone purposes.

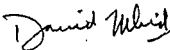
110. Your Committee is also concerned by evidence tendered to the effect that the Department of the Interior is unable to assess the dates on which telephone accounts will be received. In this regard we would invite attention to paragraph 114 of our Eighty-fourth Report. We believe that any department which is confronted with that difficulty should discuss its problems with the Postmaster-General's Department with a view to obtaining accounts on a regular basis acceptable to both departments.

111. The evidence also reflects a need for departments that are required to pay electricity accounts to ascertain from the electricity authorities concerned, the cyclical arrangements that are applied in the issuing of electricity accounts to assist them with their reviews of expenditure and the formulation of their estimates.

112. Arising from the evidence relating to the acquisition of a site in North Queensland for the Department of National Development, Your Committee has expressed the view that where the Department of the Treasury has approved the inclusion of a project in the acquisition programme pending Additional Estimates, it should obtain from the Department of the Interior a report on the status of the project for consideration when the Additional Estimates are being framed. We believe, however, that the principle involved in this case has a wider application. There are many circumstances that arise during a financial year in which the Department of the Treasury, will, at the request of a Department, accept liability for expenditure pending Additional Estimates but actual expenditure will not be required until the Additional Estimates have been settled. We believe that in such cases the Department of the Treasury should obtain from the Department concerned a report on the status of such matters when the Additional Estimates are being settled.

113. As in previous inquiries of this type the evidence has shown continued misunderstandings that arise in administrative operations. We believe that departments must at all time be vigilant to ensure that human errors of this type and the consequences that arise from them are kept to a minimum.

For and on behalf of the Committee,


DAVID N. REID,
Secretary,
Joint Committee of Public Accounts,
Parliament House,
Canberra. A.C.T.

9 April, 1970.



DON DOBIE
Chairman.

