

that the commencement of actual construction work in five years or, at the most, ten years would be warranted by the volume of traffic that might reasonably be expected to make use of the bridge when it was completed. It is estimated that the construction of the bridge and its approaches will occupy five years, and we consider that if general economic conditions warrant the commencement of construction work in 1951, the bridge, when opened in 1956, will pay its way from the outset.

A Commission of inquiry appointed in 1929 reported on 22nd April, 1930, and made recommendations as to the site, alignment, type, and dimensions of a proposed bridge across the Waitemata Harbour from the Fanshawe Street (eastern) end of St. Mary's Bay to Stokes Point, Northcote. It expressed the opinion, however, that the time for the erection of a bridge would not arrive for twenty years. We desire to express our deep appreciation of the assistance afforded to us by the investigations of the former Commission, which dealt comprehensively and most capably with the issues placed before it for consideration. We have, however, had the advantage of information that was not, and could not have been, available to it, and in the light of this knowledge we have been compelled to depart in a number of respects from its recommendations.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We now report our specific findings and recommendations in respect of the several matters set out in the order of reference, as follows:—

(1) What trans-harbour facilities are necessary in the Auckland metropolitan area and the approaches thereto to provide adequately for future traffic requirements of all kinds, both from within and from outside the metropolitan area, including through traffic, having regard to improvements in the railway and roading systems in the area that are contemplated by the Railways Department and the roading authorities respectively?

A bridge is undoubtedly a desirable traffic facility, and there are sound economic reasons for its inclusion in its due place in the Government's programme of improvements and extensions planned for the metropolitan area of Auckland. Nevertheless, having regard to the greater urgency of other public works, in particular housing, hydro-electric extensions, rural development (including roads, highways, and bridges), and works necessary to relieve congestion of city traffic, we do not regard it as a "necessary" facility at present, though it will certainly become so at the expiration of the minimum period required for its completion, which we have fixed at ten years, which period, however, may for economical reasons require to be extended to a maximum of fifteen years. The construction of a bridge within the next few years would create a competitive demand for materials and labour which would, under present circumstances, seriously hamper the Government and local bodies in overtaking arrears in their respective programmes of urgently necessary works. In addition to the large capital sums involved in such works, there is to be considered the further outlay on the large fleet of passenger vehicles (buses and trolley-buses) which, when a bridge is built, will be required to cope with peak loads of passengers, now dealt with by ferries having capacities of upwards of 1,000 passengers. If, as we think, the majority of this traffic should be catered for by trolley-buses (consuming electrical energy instead of imported fuel), the provision of electrical equipment and wiring is also to be considered. These items are likely to be in short supply for some years to come. For these reasons we consider that it would be most inopportune at present to embark on construction work of such magnitude.

(2) Should the facilities include means of direct access between the city and the North Shore suburbs in addition to or instead of the existing ferry services?

The existing passenger and vehicular ferry services, augmented and improved in the manner referred to later in our report, will reasonably meet the needs of traffic for the next ten to fifteen years, at the expiration of which time direct access by means of a bridge will undoubtedly have become urgently necessary. When the bridge is in service, scope will still remain for passenger ferry services to a limited number of points, but the vehicular ferry services should then be discontinued.