

(5) If such direct access is not considered necessary at present, within what period of time will the probable growth of population, and the use of motor-vehicles together with other forms of transport, render it necessary ?

Having regard to the probable growth of population and the density of the traffic likely to benefit from and make use of a bridge, we consider that a bridge will become a necessary facility, economically justifiable, within a period of time estimated by us at ten to fifteen years, but to be determined more precisely by general economic conditions prevailing five years hence—*i.e.*, in 1951. Within that period of five years, as we have already recommended, the necessary surveys, borings, investigations, designs, economic studies, negotiations, and other steps necessary to establish a reliable estimate of the cost of construction of the bridge and its approaches should be undertaken by the Government. We discuss the probable growth of population and the resulting increase in traffic in a later part of this report.

(6) If you consider that the existing ferry services should remain in operation, either with or without other means of direct access, what improvements, if any, should be made in the services now provided ?

The ferry services have provided a cheap and flexible means of passenger transport which it would be advantageous to continue in modified form even after the bridge is in service. Those residents of Stanley Bay and Devonport who do not possess cars will be served more efficiently and economically by the retention of the passenger service by ferry to those points. In our opinion, the most desirable and necessary improvement is the provision of an all-night vehicular service, which the Devonport Steam Ferry Co., Ltd., informed us that it hoped to commence about the end of July, 1946. We record our view that, after due allowance is made for conditions arising out of the war, the company has met, as far as reasonably possible, all demands made upon it, and has given satisfactory evidence of its intention to improve its services. The two large vehicular vessels recently acquired by the company and the new passenger ferry vessels that it contemplates building will enable better services to be provided during the period that will elapse before the bridge is completed. In so far as the vehicular service is concerned, the use of the larger vessels and the provision of a more frequent time-table, especially during peak-loading periods, should cater with reasonable expedition for some years to come for all but Sunday and holiday peak-time traffic. It would obviously be uneconomic to provide a sufficient number of vessels and landing facilities to obviate occasional delays to traffic and the consequent formation of queues. The task of the company would be simplified if more use were made of the Birkenhead vehicular service thereby relieving the strain on the Devonport vehicular service, and we are of the opinion that immediate steps should be taken to attract traffic to the former service by improving the roads and streets leading to the Birkenhead terminal, as recommended by Sir Francis Frazer following his recent inquiry. Such improvements will remain as an amenity to the district after the bridge is in service, and accordingly we recommend Government aid on a generous scale to enable the local authorities to make early arrangements for carrying out the work to be performed within their respective areas, which it is estimated will cost about £20,000. We understand that the improvement of No. 5 State Highway between Wairau Road junction and Birkenhead is to be undertaken by the Main Highways Board and will be charged against its funds. In view of our recommendation that the bridge should be completed between ten and fifteen years hence, we do *not* recommend that the Auckland Harbour Board proceed with its plans for duplicating the vehicular ferry terminals at Mechanics Bay and Devonport or for providing a new combined passenger and vehicular ferry terminal at Little Shoal Bay. Such improvements as the Auckland Harbour Board deems necessary should be planned and executed on the clear understanding that direct access by means