

constructed. Many other recent examples of similar large-scale works could be cited to demonstrate that the magnitude and cost of this project are not disproportionate in the case of metropolitan Auckland.

Secondly, what justification is there for the imposition of toll charges?

We have already stated the general principles, and we now point out that the prospective users of the bridge already pay tolls and ferry charges at rates considerably in excess of those we propose; and we have demonstrated that the rates recommended by us are sufficient to make the project financially self-supporting. We also draw attention to the fact that land and property values on the North Shore have been established under the handicap of limited and indirect access, and we regard the imposition of toll charges as the only practical means of ensuring that the enhancement of values which will accrue through improved and direct access shall not be provided entirely at the expense of the general taxpayers, and that the beneficiaries shall contribute by payment of tolls.

Thirdly, how does this project affect other works contemplated by road and railway authorities for the improvement of the transport facilities of metropolitan Auckland?

The announcement by the Government of the works referred to in clause (1) of our order of reference preceded our sittings and has formed a valuable and indeed indispensable background to our deliberations. It is not part of our function to suggest the order of priority in which we think the respective items comprising the Government's programme of works should be carried out, but we consider that it is incumbent on us to direct the attention of the Government to the need for reconsideration of its plans for the contemplated northern highway outlet via Whenuapai and Dairy Flat. If our recommendations concerning the bridge are adopted, the whole aspect of this proposed northern outlet becomes changed, and it will then be open to question whether—

(a) The proposed northern highway should extend beyond Whenuapai, at all events for many years; and

(b) The standard of construction should be lowered to that of a highway of only local importance. The money so saved would represent a substantial part of the cost of the bridge.

Fourthly, what scope will there be for the ferry services when the bridge is open for traffic?

The Devonport Steam Ferry Co., Ltd., informed us that its Devonport passenger service was more profitable than its services to Chelsea, Birkenhead, Northcote, and Bayswater. Indeed, it stated that the Devonport service "carried" the other services. We have recommended that the Devonport and Stanley Bay services should be continued after the bridge is completed, and we consider that there will be ample support forthcoming from the residents of Devonport, Stanley Bay, and part of Takapuna to enable adequate services to be provided at reasonable rates. The existence of the bridge will not, of course, affect the continued expansion of the company's services to Waiheke and other points outside the North Shore area.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

But for the post-war factors to which we have already referred, we should have had no hesitation in recommending commencement of the construction of the bridge at the earliest possible date, because we consider the provision of direct access to the North Shore area as overdue. We are compelled, however, to take cognizance of the fact that both the Government and the local bodies have six years arrears of public works to overtake, among them literally hundreds of smaller bridges in the Auckland Provincial District alone. All these can be classed as overdue, either in the interests of the safety of the travelling public or as essential aids to rural development and therefore