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COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION INTO
TRANSPORTATION COSTS IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, today announced the appointment of a Committee to investigate transportation costs in northern Australia. In announcing the terms of reference and the composition of the Committee, the Prime Minister recalled that in his policy speech prior to the recent general elections for the House of Representatives, he had expressed the Government's intention to appoint such a Committee to carry out a thorough and authoritative examination of the facts behind the high cost of transportation in northern Australia.

The names of those appointed are as follows :-

Sir Louis Loder, CBE, (Chairman), former Director-General of Works

Mr. G.R. Fisher, C.M.G., Chairman, Mt. Isa Mines Ltd., Queensland

Mr. I.G. Blythe, Managing Director, Air Beef Pty. Ltd., Western Australia

Mr. P. Baillieu, Grazier, Vice President, N.T. Cattle Lessees' Association

Captain J.P. Williams, CMG, OBE, Chairman, Australian Coastal Shipping Commission

Mr. B.B. Callaghan, General Manager, Commonwealth Development Bank.

The Committee will function under the following terms of reference :-

"Having regard to the Government's economic policy objectives of -

- (1) assisting, in co-operation with the States of Queensland and Western Australia, the promotion of soundly-based development within the northern part of Australia; and as part of such development
- (2) of achieving significant and stable increases in the population of the area; and
- (3) of encouraging the growth and diversification of private enterprises;

and having regard to the special problems that may be posed for such development by the effects of the present levels of transportation costs, the Committee is invited -

- (a) to make a thorough and factual examination of, and to report on, the costs of transportation to, from and within northern Australia, with particular reference to the costs of transporting goods, and the effects of such costs on the development of northern Australia, and
- (b) to examine possible means whereby such costs might be reduced and to report on the practical and economic feasibility and the implications of each means so examined."

The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the establishment of a sound and workable Committee under a capable and experienced Chairman. He said that every assistance would be accorded the Committee in its studies of northern transportation costs. The Government would be looking to it to produce in due course essential information and analysis on a problem which is vital to our North.

CANBERRA,

17th April, 1964.