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ACQUISITION OF WILLIAM WESTALL DRAWINGS  
FOR NATIONAL LIBRARY

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Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

The Commonwealth Government has purchased from the Royal Commonwealth Society in London an important collection of 139 drawings and water colours by William Westall, the young landscape artist who accompanied Matthew Flinders on his circumnavigation of Australia in 1801-3. These pictures, depicting parts of the Australian coastline as it appeared before European settlement, will be housed in the National Library in Canberra.

The Westall drawings and water colours have long been well and favourably known to scholars. They became even more widely known as a result of their reproduction in a large volume published by the Society in 1962.

As well as being on view in the National Library, they may also be exhibited elsewhere in Australia during the Captain Cook Bi-centenary Celebrations next year.

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CANBERRA  
21 February 1969