

After Barnard...

DR CAIRNS, who was not due to return from his overseas trip until shortly before the Premiers' conference on June 19, has suddenly changed his mind and will be back tomorrow. No, this has nothing to do with the expected resignation of the Minister for Defence, Mr Barnard, and the likelihood of a Cabinet reshuffle. Of course not. How could people possibly imagine such a thing? It is just that he has finished talking to the OECD panjandrums and has decided that he had better get ahead with preparing the Budget, not to mention explaining a few points to the public and trade-unions, rather than have a series of cosy chats with Swiss bankers about funds for investment in Australia.

Mr Barnard's decision to call it a day on the local political scene and to accept a diplomatic appointment has been very much a matter between himself and Mr Whitlam. It has obviously come as a disagreeable surprise to the party machine, and that is hardly surprising, because Labor is by no means certain of holding the Tasmanian seat of Bass at a by-election. Mr Barnard's majority dropped sharply at last year's poll. There is unemployment in the area, and his personal vote will no longer be available. These facts, combined with an anti-Government swing which is normal enough at a by-election, must put the future of Bass very much in jeopardy.

If Bass is lost, the Government's majority in the House of Representatives will be reduced to three, leaving it in a manageable but not comfortable position. The question is, therefore, whether Mr Barnard's appointment — to Sweden, or Denmark, or wherever it may be — is to take effect immediately. There will certainly be pressure for him to postpone his move, perhaps until the next Senate

election, on the ground that Labor's cause would benefit from the holding of the Bass by-election at the same time as a national poll. But there are better reasons for taking the plunge without delay. A re-run of Mr Crean's long-drawn-out agony of last year would be undesirable, to begin with.

In addition, Mr Barnard's departure presents Mr Whitlam with the opportunity, which he is bound to welcome, to initiate another Cabinet reshuffle after the election by Caucus of a new minister. The possibility of a "spill," involving the election of a whole new ministry, seemed to have been ruled out by the failure of such a move earlier this week. It remains unlikely, though less so than a few days ago. Yet it would be a salutary step for Caucus to take, because Cabinet clearly needs a substantial injection of new blood. The recent performance of a number of its members, including senior ministers such as Dr Cairns, Mr Connor and Mr Cameron, has been anything but impressive.

A "spill," though much to be desired, would admittedly be awkward on the eve of an unusually important Budget, but the Government is not lacking in capable replacements for the senior, or junior, ministers whose administration has been less than satisfactory. Furthermore, in spite of Labor's disposition to downgrade the importance of defence policy, there can surely be little doubt that, with the sweeping reorganisation of defence administration just announced by Mr Barnard, a strong minister is needed to handle the portfolio — certainly one of higher calibre than a junior office-holder whose name is already being put forward. What is essential, too, is that the whole Barnard episode and its consequences should be tidied up quickly and not be allowed to drag on.

In high circles

A ROUND kite has been invented to celebrate the bi-centenary of the independence of the United States. At first glance this might seem an unusual way to celebrate. What, after all, is so special about a round kite? Well, its designer says it is the first round kite ever to be perfected, and since he is a distinguished academic, as well as a kite enthusiast, this must be so. He is, in fact, Professor Floyd Cornelison, head of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, and a psychiatrist of repute. He has dedicated his kite to the memory of the great Benjamin Franklin, a founding father of the republic and (here is the point) one of the most celebrated kite-flyers in history.

It should be stated at once that, although Mr Franklin was a diplomat and statesman, he was also a scientist, and his kites were scientific in purpose, not political — most of them were, anyway. He used them in experiments with electricity, and they helped to prove the efficacy of the lightning conductor. Clearly there was nothing

political in that. As a recreation, of course, kite-flying has been popular for centuries, and not only among the young. Many adults find it more soothing than fishing—and often more productive. At least a kite-flyer can be reasonably certain of having something on the end of his line. Stories about kites that got away, no matter how large, are comparatively rare.

Indeed, the kite-flyers of old England are almost as famous as her fishermen. A sure place to find them is Kensington Gardens, London, on a Sunday morning. They gather there to fly their noble kites and exchange kite lore and kite law (for example, since the coming of the aeroplane it has been forbidden to fly kites at more than 500 feet. So who needs aeroplanes?). If you are seeking another kind of kite you need not, of course, look further than Canberra, where kites are flown hopefully every day and often twice on a Sunday morning—and are ruthlessly abandoned as the need occurs. Like so much else in that strange city they come and they go—with the wind.

MARTIN PLACE: THE GRANITE PLANS ARE FALLING ONE BY ONE BEFORE THE ADVANCE OF INFLATION

By HELEN FRIZELL

SYDNEY will not get the Martin Place of its dreams. Because the city must economise there will be no waterfall, no restaurant and no granite-faced flagging in the Pitt-Castlereagh Street block.

Alderman Leo Port, chairman of the City Council's Martin Place Sub-Committee, said yesterday that this cost-cutting proposition goes before the council on Monday.

"We're trying to do as much as we can to improve the public environment," he said, "but we must live within our means, or we'll finish up like New York City."

In 1973, the estimated cost for the Pitt-Castlereagh block — with waterfall, restaurant and granite-faced flagging — was \$600,000. In 1975, with updated costs, this jumped to \$1,300,000. Our budget is \$900,000. We must stay within that. Cutting out the waterfall and restaurant will save over \$400,000. City rates rose 37 per cent last year. We can't afford to spend more than that."

The waterfall could be built later, says Mr Port — if Sydney gets the money, or if some generous business or ethnic group donates \$77,000 to build it.

The waterfall, as drawn in Action Plan No 24 for the Martin Place Pedestrian Precinct of the City of Sydney Strategic Plan, was to have been at the Pitt Street end of this "Terrace Block."

Clarke Gazzard, Architects, who prepared the plan in 1972, described the waterfall and restaurant thus:

"The raised terrace on the western end of this block terminates in a 50ft long waterfall-fountain plunging 10ft from the terrace to the Pitt Street level into a pool. This water display will be a dramatic feature of the whole development."

"The terrace will be available for a much-needed outdoor cafe-restaurant. Provision would be made for part of the terrace to be roofed. Sliding glazed walls

No ice rink, restaurant or waterfall

will shelter the terrace in winter or during inclement weather."

Economics proved more inclement than the weather.

Early this year, the plan changed again. Mr Don Gazzard, the architect, said that the waterfall would be switched to the Castlereagh Street end of the Terrace Block.

Horseshoe-shaped, and 8ft high, it would be "a sheer, shimmering fall of water."

Mr Port said that the re-planned waterfall would cut costs, and that it would be less elaborate than the one first designed.

Now — no waterfall at all.

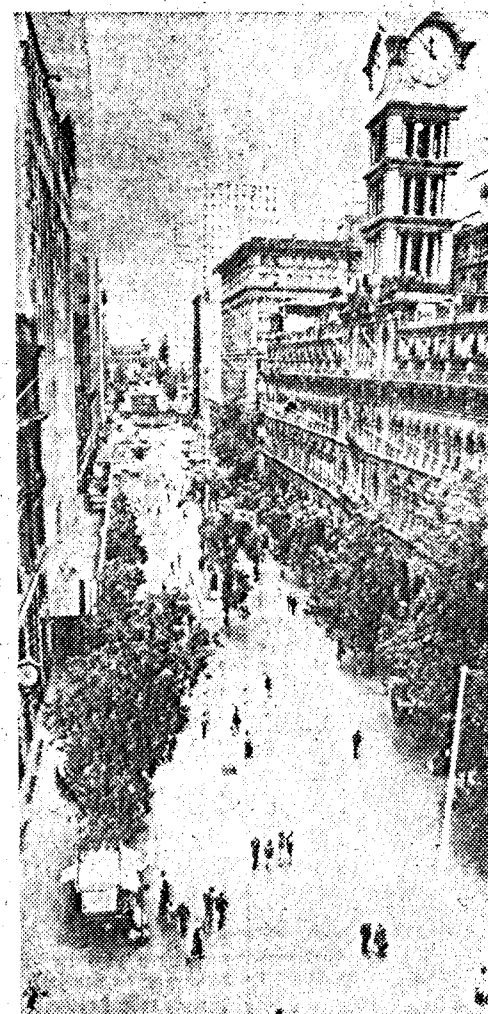
The first planned restaurant was above ground, very big and rather grand. No one tendered for its lease. A new plan put it partly underground, so that there would be more surface space and room for trees.

Now — no restaurant.

Lost long ago was the plan to have an ice-skating rink between Pitt and Castlereagh. The area was a bit small and the climate not suitable, said experts.

Until now, the street surface was to have matched the pleasant pink flagging of the GPO Cenotaph area. Now — because of expense — it will be paved in plain, pinkish, brick tiles.

"We've had to cut out the waterfall, restaurant and paving because we just can't afford these things," said Mr Port.



Then and now... Above: Martin Place before work began on the block between George and Pitt Streets. Left: Martin Place today.



The Phillip-Macquarie zone is the Railway Block.

Beneath this will be the Martin Place Station. Stage one of the station construction is in progress. Work should be finished by March, 1976.

Structural work is "largely complete" on the track (or railway line) level. Escalator shafts have been concreted. The railway concourse will be here.

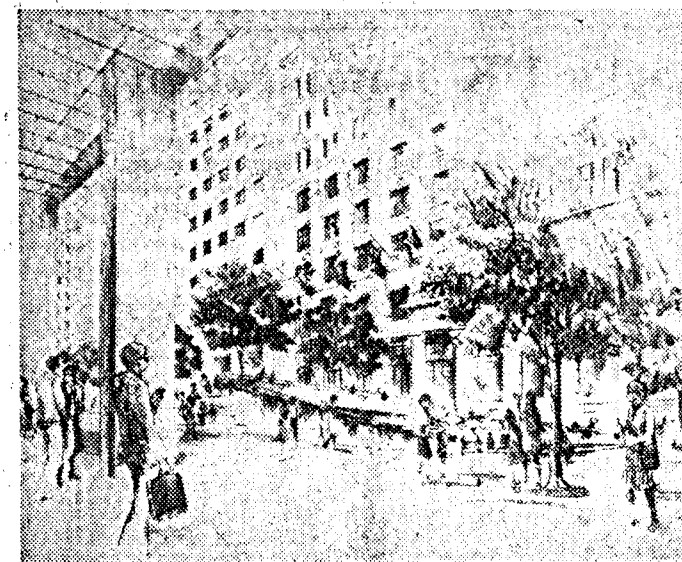
Dense sandstone lies beneath this part of Martin Place. Railway construction workers have had to excavate about 70 feet downwards. When the project is finished, the road surface will be only about a foot above the roof of the station complex.

Eventually the whole of Martin Place, except those parts carrying cross traffic, should be handed over to pedestrians. It will then become pointless to designate any part of it by the much overworked and irritatingly exotic noun "plaza."

At the moment Martin Place has been legally set aside for pedestrians from George Street to Elizabeth Street. Legal moves for the State Government to agree to the Elizabeth-Macquarie area as a pedestrian zone have not yet been completed.

The new changes will bring disappointment to many. But, as Mr Port says: "Number one priority is to create open, pleasant, usable space." Plans for this go on.

Eventually the noise and dirt will vanish. Hoardings, advertising the latest rock groups and visiting gurus, will come down. All will be revealed, and no longer will Martin Place be like Hampton Court maze — a place where you may wander in circles before finding your way out.



The restaurant... dropped for lack of funds.