

# Probe ordered into bushfire that threatened Canberra suburbs

**CANBERRA** — The Minister for Works and Housing (Mr. Kent Hughes) yesterday set up a court of inquiry to investigate the outbreak of one of the worst bushfires in Canberra's history. Yesterday's fire, which broke out in the early hours, threatened two of Canberra's most exclusive suburbs and forced many people, including members of the diplomatic corps, to leave their homes with personal belongings.

Announcing the appointment of a court of inquiry, Mr. Kent Hughes said it would also investigate the whole of the administration and organisation of the bushfire fighting body in the Capital Territory. The decision to set up the court follows suggestions by Mr. Kent Hughes and the chief fire officer of the

perature in Canberra was 101.9 deg., the fourth successive day on which a century has been recorded.

**Bushfire Council** (Mr. Cole) earlier this week that fires at Brindabella, just over the A.C.T. border, were started deliberately.

Yesterday's fires were swept along by almost gale force blistering hot north-westerlies, which at times reached 55 m.p.h. Throughout the day local radio stations broadcast appeals for volunteer fighters.

Only by a supreme effort by the fighters were the magnificent homes in the Mugga Way area, including several overseas legations, saved.

The neighboring town of Queanbeyan (about eight miles from Canberra) had been threatened throughout and Government employes living in Queanbeyan but working in Canberra were called from their jobs to fight the fire outside their town.

So far no lives are known to have been lost, although one family is reported to have lain in a creek to avoid being caught in a blaze.

Yesterday's maximum temperature in Canberra was 101.9 deg., the fourth suc-