

UTZON

IS SURE

HE'LL BE

ASKED

BACK

Mr Joern Utzon, the Sydney Opera House designer, is convinced he will be called back to complete the job within two years.

But he says he cannot afford to sit around and wait until Australia makes up its mind.

He believes it will take about a year for the panel of architects, appointed by the New South Wales Government to replace him, to realise it cannot complete the project.

Mr Utzon said this on Thursday in his last interview before leaving Australia secretly with his family, for his native Denmark.

He spoke to Mr Bjorn Westergaard, the Sydney correspondent for a Copenhagen newspaper, who was one of the few who knew of Mr Utzon's plans to leave.

Mr Westergaard said last night that Mr Utzon was disappointed about the dispute over his position and the Government's attitude, but felt the situation was "something you had to laugh about."

"He thinks it is one big laugh that the new panel believes it can finish without him," Mr Westergaard said.

NOT READY YET

"He does not feel this is the end. He considers it merely a delay.

"In the meantime—before he is called back as he is convinced he will be—he has enough business to keep him occupied."

Mr Utzon did not feel his reputation had suffered in the dispute—only that Australia had shown it was not ready for architecture like that of the Opera House.

Mr Utzon had said the project was probably 10 or 20 years too soon for this country, Mr Westergaard continued.

"He was shocked by this—and very disappointed that so few artists and writers backed him in the dispute.

"He said this was an indication of how far behind the rest of the world Australia was in cultural fields.

"He pointed to the drain to European countries of Australians seeking artistic expression. He was hoping the Opera House would provide a cultural centre for them."

Mr Westergaard said Mr Utzon had left several drawings of the Opera House with his solicitors in Sydney; but he had said that even with them, the panel of architects could not possibly complete the project in any acceptable manner.

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He had contended it was ludicrous that Mr Peter Hall and the other appointed architects believed they could finish the project when they had not even seen the drawings.

"An architect's creation," Mr Utzon had said, "is largely in his mind—no one else can copy it."

"Australia should have something of its own. Everything here is produced elsewhere—Australia has no soul of its own," he told Mr Westergaard.