

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II

FROM 22 NOVEMBER 1977

58 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

With reference to the legal opinion being prepared for the Trustees of the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund by Mr Ian Barker, Q.C.

What were the instructions given to Mr Barker by the Trustees, and from what source is Mr Barker to be paid for this opinion and under what authority?

64 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

In respect of each of the following organizations -

- (1) Central Australian Aboriginal Medical Service;
- (2) Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service;
- (3) Central Australian Aborigines Congress; and
- (4) Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, Alice Springs -
 - (a) what numbers of persons are employed;
 - (b) what are the designations, remuneration received and other employment benefits of employees;
 - (c) who is responsible for the hiring and firing of employees;
 - (d) are the organizations' financial records and expenditure subject to audit and, if so, what are the details of such requirements; and
 - (e) are vehicle records and logbooks kept?

65 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

What is the generating capacity of electricity generators at the Daly River Mission?

What is the peak or maximum demand for electricity at the Daly River Mission?

If the generating capacity is in excess of demand, what modifications, if any, have the generating units had?

FROM 29 NOVEMBER 1977

67 Mr PERKINS to Mr ROBERTSON

Is he aware that the erection of a demountable primary school building for the Haasts Bluff community has not taken place as proposed for September of this year in the Commonwealth Government's New Works Program for 1977-78?

If so, will he advise when the erection of the primary school building is to commence and when it will be ready for use?

68 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Has the Majority Party considered the effect on the validity of Northern Territory legislation of Australia's ratification of international treaties and covenants dealing with economic, political and social rights?

Given the undoubted power of the Commonwealth to legislate in the N.T., has the Majority Leader received advice that there is a difference in substance between the Commonwealth's power to legislate in the N.T. (and in the A.C.T.) to put into effect its treaty commitments, and its power under the external affairs power of the Commonwealth Constitution to enforce such legislation on the States?

If so, has the Majority Leader requested a study of N.T. legislation to see whether there is any conflict between N.T. ordinances and international covenants ratified by Australia? In particular, has he requested an examination of whether the present N.T. Social Welfare Ordinance stands up to international covenants pertaining to racial discrimination and whether existing prison facilities in the N.T. meet the standards laid down in international covenants and treaties?

70 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware that the Apprentices Ordinance 1948 does not comply with the requirements of International Labor Organization Convention No. 65 - Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) 1939?

Will he advise when the Ordinance will be amended to comply with the requirements?

71 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

How much was paid to each member of the Assembly by way of travelling allowances in the 1976-77 financial year?

90 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

Is it a fact that the Beatrice Hill Research Experimental Station is to be handed over from the Department of the Northern Territory to Professor Harry Messel of Sydney University to house him and/or his academic staff whilst they are carrying out their radio experiments on our crocodiles?

What is going to happen to the present D.O.N.T. staff working and housed there, to all the facilities, laboratories, workshops, equipment and livestock, and to the vital research work on animal and pasture production that has been conducted in this area for a number of years?

How much money has been allocated or will be allocated by the Government to Professor Harry Messel, and how much to animal and pasture research in this area?

Who is going to benefit from this research of Professor Harry Messel, the Northern Territory people, the Sydney University or the United States interests that are partially financing this research?

Who decided that crocodile research is more important to the Northern Territory than farming research that is aimed at assisting the farmers and cattlemen in the Top End?

91 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr STEELE

Does he intend to introduce legislation to control the use of antibiotics in stock feeds, and if so, when?

92 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

1. Why is the notice in Gazette No. 46, 18 November 1977, appointing the Territory Parks & Wildlife Advisory Council over the signature of the Administrator, and not the executive member as required in the Territory Parks & Wildlife Conservation Ordinance?
2. What are the qualifications of each of the members of the Council with respect to Section 80(8) of the Territory Parks & Wildlife Conservation Ordinance?
3. Who were the unsuccessful candidates to the Advisory Council and what were their qualifications with respect to Section 80(3).

95 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

How many times has the Darwin Citizens' Council met?

How many times did each Member of the Darwin Citizens' Council attend those meetings?

96 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

How many times has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission met?

How many times did each Member or their Delegate attend those meetings?

6 DECEMBER 1977

132 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

1. What were the staffing levels, section by section, for each six months, or at least yearly, in the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch since 1972?
2. How many professional and technical staff are in the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch, and how many, on average, are there in similar branches in each of the States?
3. How many professional conferences do professional staff of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch attend each year compared to their counterparts in each State, and why are they so few?

150 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

1. What is the membership of the Tender Board?
2. Who chooses the members?
3. Who decides the duration of membership?
4. Does a position on the Tender Board attract a cash emolument?

5. What criteria are used in appointing members of the Tender Board?
6. Are reasons for accepting a particular tender made public and if not, why not?
7. Has an unsuccessful tenderer any way of airing what he may feel is a definite grievance against the decision of the Tender Board?

151 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is it a fact that Aboriginals living in humpies in the NT will be required to pay \$2.00 a fortnight for garbage collection and maintenance of parks and gardens as from January, 1978?

Is it a fact that Aboriginals living in Stage 1 houses will be required to pay \$5.00 a fortnight for such services under proposed new scales?

Is it a fact that Aboriginals living in Stage 3 houses will be required to pay \$35.00 a fortnight for rent as compared with \$13.00 a fortnight as from January next year?

152 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he advise when the Commonwealth Government proposes to transfer power to the NT Legislative Assembly to legislate completely on electoral matters in the Territory?

Will he advise when the Assembly Executive is likely to introduce legislation on electoral matters in the NT?

Will he advise whether the recommendations of the Chairman of the NT Country Liberal Party following the recent Legislative Assembly election on August 13 will be incorporated in such legislation?

153 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is it a fact that the Alice Springs Criminal Investigation Bureau maintains secret files on the activities of local prominent citizens?

If so, why and under whose instructions?

154 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware of the shocking conditions of the corrugated road to Uluru National Park and of the reported claim that more than 2,000 vehicles have been repaired in the National Park in the first 9 months of this year and that nearly 300 cars and coaches had been repaired at Curtin Springs in the same period?

If so, will he advise what action his Department proposes to take to improve road conditions to Uluru National Park?

179 Mr DOOLAN to Mr PERRON

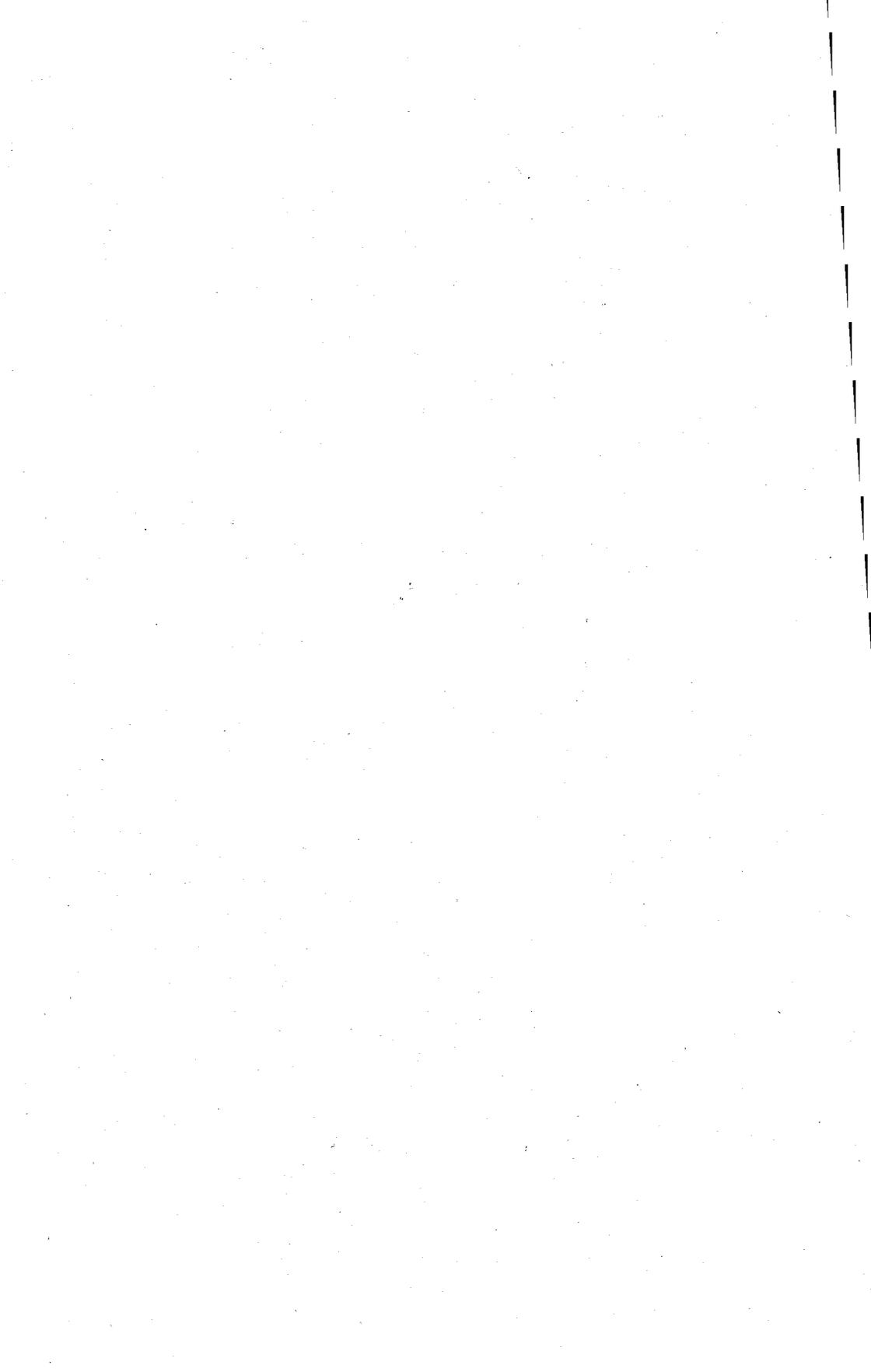
Have tenders been called for a new workshop and stores complex at the Stokes Hill Power Station?

If so, to what stage has work proceeded?

If tenders have not been called, why not?

180 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

1. Has a timetable for the complete undergrounding of cables of the electricity distribution system been established?
2. If so, what is it?
3. Has the Majority Party a policy that all cables must be underground?



1 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he supply a breakdown of the Territory unemployment figures based on age groupings for the following classifications:

- (a) sex;
- (b) educational background;
- (c) racial origin;
- (d) marital status;
- (e) number of dependants; and
- (f) type of job sought (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled)?

ANSWER

There are 4,002 persons registered as unemployed in the Northern Territory as at the end of August grouped in the following classifications:

(a) Sex

3069 Males 939 Females

(b) Education Background

There are no statistics recorded on Educational Background.

(c) Racial Origin

Unemployed persons are grouped into only two race categories which are Aboriginal persons (including Torres Strait Islanders) and Others.

Aboriginals 1311 Others 2691

(d) Marital Status

There are no statistics recorded on the Marital Status of male registrants. However, figures are available in the case of women.

Married 182 Unmarried 757

(e) Number of Dependants

Details of unemployed persons with dependants are statistically recorded at the end of April, July and October. From a total of 3944 unemployed persons in July there were 675 with dependants consisting of 595 males and 80 females.

(f) Type of Job Sought (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled)

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rural	400	1	401
Professional	36	33	69
Clerical	89	453	542
Skilled	323	1	324
Semi-Skilled	790	22	812
Unskilled	1298	9	1307
Service Occupations	127	420	547
	<hr/>		
TOTALS	3063	939	4002
	<hr/>		

2 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

1. What estimated expenditures in the Allocation of Funds (Supply) Ordinances 1977-78 were varied?
2. On what days were they varied?
3. Who authorised the variation?

ANSWER

The following information is supplied in answer to the Hon. Member's question -

Estimated expenditures in the Allocation of Funds (Supply) Ordinances 1977-78 have not been varied.

3 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

1. Is the Arafura Men's Hostel to be closed?

If so

(a) when?

(b) what use will be made of the land and existing buildings?

ANSWER

The above question is still under consideration and until a decision is made no details are available.

4 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

1. Were those prisoners in Fannie Bay Gaol who were entitled to vote in the Legislative Assembly elections allowed to do so?
2. Was a request made on polling day to the Cabinet Member for Law to authorise travel of prisoners to a polling booth to enable them to vote?
3. If such a request was made, was it refused?

ANSWER

1. The only restriction on voting by any prisoner at the Darwin Gaol eligible to vote in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly elections, was that the vote should be made through postal voting. The prisoner would be required to vote for candidates in the electorate for which he was enrolled. Applications for postal votes closed at 6 p.m., Friday, 12th August.

No prisoner sought to lodge a vote either prior to or on polling day. For security reasons and staff availability it would not be practicable for prisoners to travel to polling booths to vote.

All prisoners had full exposure to election details through normal television and radio programmes. As well the daily newspaper is purchased by prison authorities and circulated to prisoners wishing to read it.

2. I understand that the Cabinet Member for Law was approached with a request that prisoners be allowed to leave the prison to travel to a polling booth sometime during the afternoon of polling day.
3. On making inquiries and being advised in the terms of the answers to question 1 above, there was no reason to approve prisoners leaving the prison to travel to a polling booth.

5 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

1. How much of the \$20,000 for the Primary Producers Board mentioned on page 18 of "Explanations to the Allocation of Funds (Supply) Ordinance 1977-78" has been spent?
2. How many meetings of the Primary Producers Board have been held since June 30, 1977?
3. How much has been paid to the Chairman of the Primary Producers Board in -
 - (a) fees;
 - (b) allowances; and
 - (c) travel and subsistencesince June 30, 1977?
4. How much has been paid to each of the members (other than the Chairman) of the Primary Producers Board in -
 - (a) fees;
 - (b) allowances; and
 - (c) travel and subsistence.since June 30, 1977?
5. How many meetings of the Primary Producers Board were held in the 1976-77 financial year?

6. How much was paid to the Chairman of the Primary Producers Board in the 1976-77 financial year for -
 - (a) fees;
 - (b) allowances; and
 - (c) travel and subsistence?
7. How much was paid to each of the members (other than the Chairman) of the Primary Producers Board in the 1976-77 financial year for -
 - (a) fees;
 - (b) allowances; and
 - (c) travel and subsistence?

ANSWERS

1. \$3,357,000
2. Two
3. (a) \$ 2,100.00
(b) \$ 635.00
(c) Nil
4. (a) \$ 270.00
(b) \$ 187.60
(c) \$ 164.20
5. Fourteen
6. (a) \$12,140.00
(b) \$ 2,514.00
(c) \$ 2,506.00
7. (a) \$ 1,694.00
(b) \$ 962.00
(c) \$ 1,466.00

Please note, these amounts were paid to only one other private member.

33 Mr DOOLAN to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. Has he seen the report of the Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory?
2. Does he agree that the report is highly critical of the complementary legislation introduced into the last Assembly?
3. Will he give an undertaking that any future complementary legislation to the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 will implement that recommendation of the Joint Select Committee's Report?

ANSWER

1. Yes
2. This question is out of order.
3. I have indicated to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the 2 land councils that I accept in principle the recommendations of the Report.

34 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

What stage have negotiations reached between the Australian Government and the Anglican Church regarding the future of Carpentaria College which is rapidly deteriorating?

ANSWER

Negotiations between the Department of the Northern Territory and the Carpentaria College Council are at the stage where the College Council has been advised that a surrender of the lease could be accepted on the basis of write-off of the loan debt owed by the College Council to the Government.

Compensation payable on surrender of a Special Purposes Lease is limited to that which would be the value to the Government of the improvements on the land.

Previous proposals for use of the buildings by various Government agencies could not be justified owing to the high cost of repair and reconstruction needed.

35 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Is it true that the Government is hiring tools and equipment for work on the No. 4 generator at the Stokes Hill Power Station due to cuts in capital expenditure? Is this resulting in more cost than if the tools were purchased?

ANSWER

Generally, tools and equipment are purchased to meet essential requirements in the maintenance of major capital items, including the Stokes Hill Power Station.

However, there are occasions where tools and equipment are hired for specific jobs where the purchase of capital equipment would not be justified.

In some instances, there have been continuing needs for specialised tools and equipment and this has resulted in greater costs than if these were purchased at the outset.

59 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he inform the Assembly whether the Majority Party intends to oppose the Borroloola and the Warlpiri Aboriginal land claims about to be heard by the NT Aboriginal Land Commissioner and, if so, why?

ANSWER

The Majority Party does not intend to oppose the claims. It proposes however to put a statement of facts before the Commissioner.

60 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. When is he going to announce the appointees to the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission and Advisory Council?
2. Will provisions be made for Aboriginal representatives to be appointed to both the Commission and the Advisory Council?

ANSWER

1. As soon as possible.
2. Membership will be determined by the Administrator in Council and the Executive Member after consideration of all the applications for appointment to the positions. Consideration would certainly be given to suitable Aboriginal applicants.

61 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

When does he anticipate that the Northern Territory will have a differential cost of living index?

ANSWER

1. The Australian Bureau of Statistics produces an experimental index of relative food prices for Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Nhulunbuy measured against the weighted average of the six State Capitals. Because of severe conceptual and practical problems there are no plans to expand this index to non-food items. These problems include establishing a satisfactory set of weights for a standard "basket" of goods and services as well as the conceptual problems in establishing new techniques for handling items which are not common in all centres (eg. winter clothing in Darwin) and for adjusting prices to remove the effects of quality differences for items where brands and styles etc., vary from centre to centre.
2. For Darwin the Australian Bureau of Statistics plans to begin publication during 1978 of a Monthly temporal price index for the Food Groups of the Consumer Price Index regimen.

62 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Are new cars on order for the Traffic Section of the NT Police? If so, how many are on order and, of these, how many are for Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine?

ANSWER

The approved establishment of traffic vehicles is, Darwin six, Alice Springs four and Katherine two. There is no traffic section at Tennant Creek. There are twelve vehicles on order to replace the vehicles currently in use at the three centres.

63 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

In regard to winter uniforms on order for officers attached to the police Traffic Section in Alice Springs -

- (a) What are the details of the uniforms; and
- (b) will all officers in the section receive them?

ANSWER

All members stationed at Alice Springs have been issued with pullovers. Arrangements are in hand for the issue of five leather jackets for use by members of the Alice Springs Traffic Section engaged on motorcycle duties.

66 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

What is the generating capacity of electricity generators installed at Pine Creek?

What is the peak maximum demand for electricity at Pine Creek?

If the generating capacity is in excess of demand, what modifications, if any, have the generating units had?

ANSWER

There are two generating sets at the Pine Creek Power Station. One unit has a capacity of 474 kilowatts and the other has a capacity of 370 kilowatts.

The maximum demand recorded at the Pine Creek Power Station reached 165 kilowatts during September this year.

Both generators at Pine Creek are driven by Dorman model 12 cylinder diesel engines which are capable of producing 474 kilowatts with turbo chargers fitted and 370 kilowatts with the turbo chargers removed. The output of one of the sets was reduced from 474 kilowatts to 370 kilowatts by the removal of the turbo charger equipment during an overhaul in March this year. It is planned to reduce the output of the second set in a similar manner during an overhaul scheduled for December this year.

69 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Is his answer to Question No. 2 still the same as at today's date?

ANSWER

Yes.

70 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware that the Apprentices Ordinance 1948 does not comply with the requirements of International Labor Organisation Convention No. 65 - Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) 1939?

Will he advise when the Ordinance will be amended to comply with the requirements.

ANSWER

Yes, my attention has been drawn to the discrepancy between the Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention 1939 and the Apprentices Ordinance. The Convention provides for the abolition of penal sanctions for breaches of contract of employment, though not for the abolition of the normal civil action for breach of contract. I understand that the committee of experts of the International Labour Organization has indicated that the Convention is not confined to penal sanctions applying particularly to indigenous workers.

The responsibility for the Apprentices Ordinance at present rests with the Federal Minister for Education but will be transferred to the Assembly on 1 January 1978. I regard the provision of industrial training as being of major importance for the Territory and have already initiated a thorough review of the Apprentices Ordinance. This review will include a consideration of the Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention 1939.

72 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Have instructions been issued to members of the Commonwealth Employment Service in relation to inquiries from members of the public about the availability of employment in connection with uranium mining development at Jabiru?

If so, what are these instructions and on what grounds were they issued?

ANSWER

No.

93 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is he aware that counsel for the Chief Secretary's Department told Mr Justice Toohey that he understood that the Chief Secretary would require to see copies of any statements to be presented by employees of Departments under his control prior to their being admitted as evidence before the Aboriginal Land Commissioner?

Is it the intention of the Chief Secretary to have these statements censored prior to their being admitted to evidence?

Has he been asked by either counsel or Mr Justice Toohey to give an assurance that witnesses who have given evidence in the Borroloola land claim and who are employed by the NT Museums and Art Galleries will not be prejudiced in their careers within the public service for giving such evidence?

Has he declined to give such an assurance? If so, why? If not, will he now give an assurance that no action will be taken to inhibit or prejudice the careers of such employees?

ANSWER

I am not so aware. The statement for use by counsel was -

"The N.T. Executive announced to this Commission at the commencement of this hearing its intention of maintaining a completely neutral stance on

the matter. The Executive was disturbed that despite this policy certain of its officers had given evidence on behalf of a party to these proceedings.

It is its intention to maintain its policy of complete impartiality in these matters.

The Executive has now directed all officers of the Northern Territory Public Service that they are not to give evidence on behalf of either applicants or objectors. The only exception to this policy is that any member of the N.T.P.S. presently in evidence before the Commission will be permitted to complete that evidence.

The Executive would however freely grant its approval to any officer of the N.T.P.S. whom the Commission believes may assist it with evidence of a factual nature being called before it by the Commission."

That statement was distributed to all units of the Northern Territory Public Service.

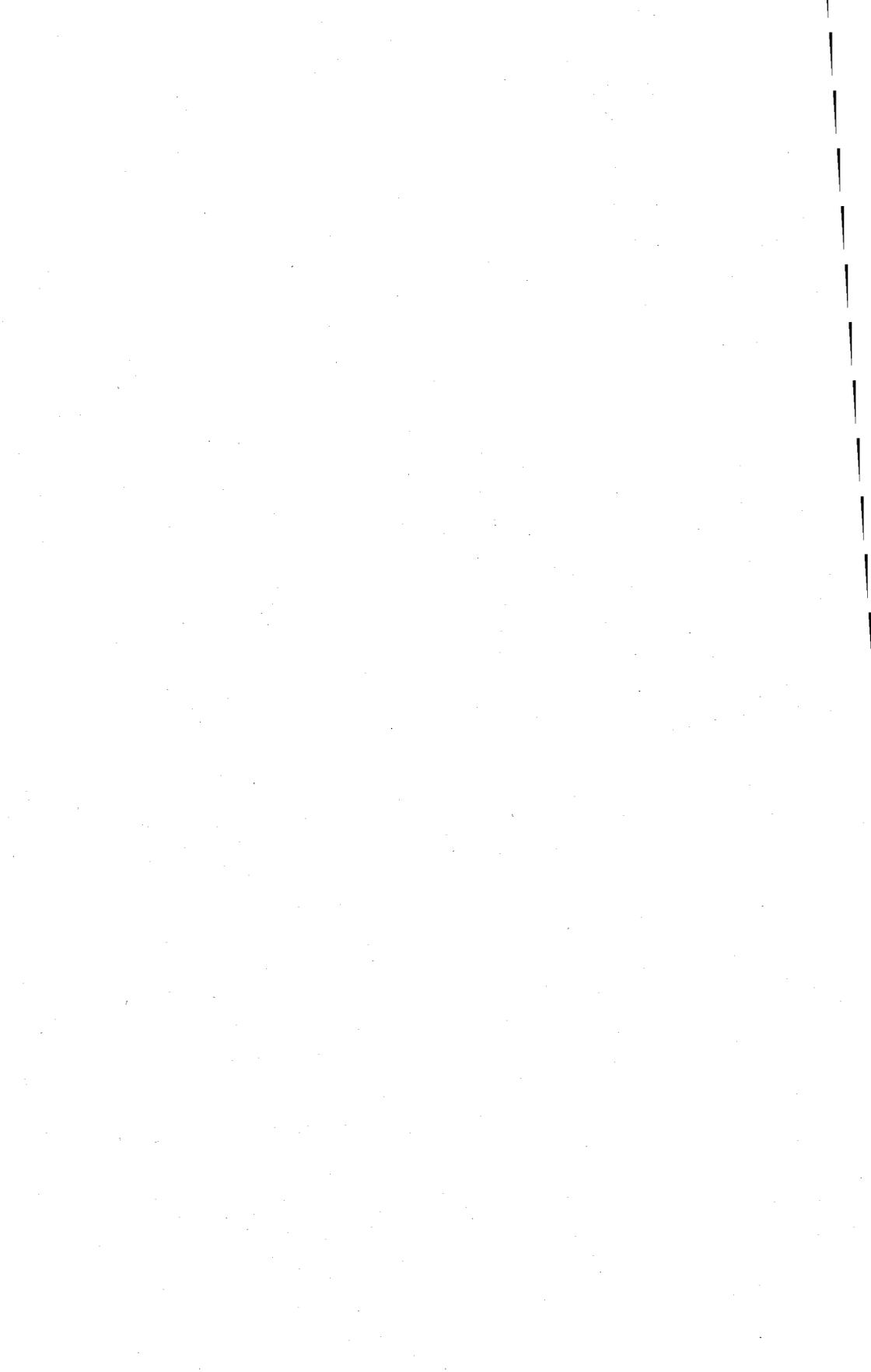
94 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is it a fact that the Pine Gap Joint Defence Research Facility is to be expanded in the near future with a further facility to be established adjacent to the Alice Springs Airport? If so -

- (a) what is the purpose of this extension?
- (b) who will pay the bill for the extension?
- (c) what will be the cost of the installation?

ANSWER

No.



73 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Can he now confirm that the Arafura men's hostel is to be closed and if that is so, can he inform this Assembly what use will be made of the land and existing buildings?

ANSWER

In anticipation of a question on this subject, I sought some information over the past couple of days. All I have been able to ascertain is that to date no decision has been made on the future of Arafura Hostel, but that one is expected in the new year.

74 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

He will, of course, have seen the posters put up around the town by the Police Association advising the public of their displeasure with the federal Criminal Investigation Bill. Would he undertake to ascertain from the Police Association what specific objections they have to what clauses of that bill, and table that statement in the House so that it can be debated rationally here?

ANSWER

Firstly, I have not actually seen these posters around town but I will make it my business to attempt to obtain a copy of the poster that the honourable member refers to. In relation to the particular bill which I understand would have now dropped out, the federal parliament having been prorogued, I would certainly be prepared to ask the Police Association what their objections are. I think that perhaps before any statement is tabled in this House on the matter, I would prefer to discuss the reasons that I get from the Police Association with the honourable member for Nightcliff.

75 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

Is it a fact that the Roper River settlement has recently bought 110 tons of beef from Cairns meatworks and that retail outlets at Gove and other places are also obtaining their meat supplies from the same source? If this is a fact, why cannot supplies be provided from within the Northern Territory in view of there being Aboriginal-run cattle stations adjacent to Ngukurr?

ANSWER

My understanding is that it is true, that beef is being supplied from outside the Northern Territory to places like Gove and Groote. The reason is the cost of transport and the quality of the beef. It is probably well known that many quality cuts have to be brought into the Northern Territory. I do not know the short term answer but, in the future, we will have to try to improve our production and rationalise our transport costs.

76 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it a fact that there is a study being carried out on the possibility of draining the Marrara swamp area for mosquito eradication purposes and, if so, what stage are these investigations at?

ANSWER

The question should have been directed to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission because, in 1976, it commissioned a firm of engineers called Willing and Partners and the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation to conduct a stormwater drainage study. The Department of Health provided information on the mosquito hazards associated with these two areas and the consultants came up with three possible courses of action. The recommendation was to accept the third of them; the formalisation of the swamp to form a lake. The department is unaware of any further action in this regard.

77 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Have the regulations for the Construction Safety Ordinance been completed? If not, what is the hold-up? If they have been completed, why haven't they been brought into effect?

ANSWER

The regulations for the Construction Safety Ordinance have not been completed. It is not entirely our fault. I have talked in recent days to the people in charge of this business and they will bring it forward as fast as they can.

78 Mr OLIVER to Mr ROBERTSON

Despite the diligent efforts of the staff at Traegar Park School, there is a disturbing rate of truancy. Could he inform the Assembly of the rate of truancy at Traegar Park School over 3 years, and can he compare that rate with the average rate in the Northern Territory and the nation as a whole?

ANSWER

I had some warning of the question, but it is a matter of finding the information. I did do a little bit of research on it because he previously expressed his concern to me; it isn't a Dorothy Dix question at all. The level of truancy or what you might call "absenteeism" as opposed to truancy in the Traegar Park School is extremely high. The overall average in Northern Territory government schools, the only information that I was able to obtain, is 13%. This, in itself, is an extremely high figure. The Aboriginal rate is regarded as being about 20.6% and the urban rate is 10.1%. Over the three years 1975 to 1977, the rate at Traegar Park School was 24.3% in 1975, 35.9% in 1976 and 27.4% in 1977. It does seem to me that a determined effort must be made, and not so much by the teachers who are doing their utmost. I do

believe we must look towards officers of the department who are more involved in its social field, to speak to parents and find out where the difficulties lie. It is extremely disturbing that this percentage should pertain to Traegar Park School in Alice Springs and 13% overall in the Northern Territory is not what you would call good. I think it is something that the department should devote a little more attention to and it is certainly something that I will be pursuing with the department.

79 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON

Will the Housing Commission be building houses at Nhulunbuy in the next 2 years? If so, what style of house will be built in that area and what will be the approximate cost of the houses?

ANSWER

For the first time this year, the Housing Commission has provided in its allocations for the building of 19 houses at Nhulunbuy. At present, negotiations are being pursued at Nhulunbuy with a view to preparing site development work to allow for construction to commence at an early stage. It is envisaged that timber frame houses will be built at Nhulunbuy. The design will reflect a primary concern for adequate ventilation and cyclone proofing in line with the Housing Commission's experience of building in tropical areas. The estimated cost of the houses is in the vicinity of \$45,000 to \$46,000 each.

80 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware that the Federal Leader of the Opposition's promise to build a new wharf at Fort Hill was recommended by the Bureau of Transport Economics? Has the Prime Minister given a similar undertaking and has the executive member's cabinet considered the report and made a recommendation?

ANSWER

We are well aware of the Leader of the Federal Opposition's promises. At this stage, we are looking at an early submission to go to government. We made a statement in recent months about our proposition to fund a land-backed wharf and that would have been a Commonwealth funded proposition, not a Territory funded proposition as other people would have you believe. We are looking at it now and it is just a matter of finalising the documents and taking them to the government to let them have a look at it.

81 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

In view of the amount raised by the dingo tax, which would hardly pay the salary and expenses of one dogger and certainly not one of the clerical staff to administer it, and having regard to the nuisance value of collection and to the depressed state of the cattle industry, has consideration been given to the stopping of this ridiculous impost and if not, why not?

ANSWER

I do not know if Mr Brennan is around but he was a great champion of the dingo tax. In fact, he wanted to have it doubled on many occasions when he was the member for Elsey.

I have a prepared reply to this question. A dingo tax is imposed on all pastoral leases in the NT of 5 cents per square kilometre. Last financial year a total of \$13,532 was collected, \$7,418 north of Tennant Creek and \$6,114 south of Tennant Creek.

No doggers are currently employed. There used to be an establishment of six. However, in recent years only two have been employed. One of those retired nearly three years ago and his position was transferred to Wildlife as an industrial position. The other dogger died some six months ago and the position has been transferred as a mechanic at Nourlangie, also with Wildlife.

Consideration has not been given to cutting out this tax. During the last financial year an aerial baiting program was carried out at the request of pastoralists, using 1080 poison. Government involvement was two men for one week and one man for four weeks, advising the pastoralists on how and where to bait. Road transport was provided by the department with the pastoralists providing the aircraft. Six pounds of 1080 poison was supplied at \$64 a pound at department cost.

Calf losses of 3% up to 5% are estimated - this is not from the 1080 - with some pastoralists claiming a much higher figure. Regardless of the nuisance value and the state of the cattle industry, dingo control is considered essential by both pastoralists and wildlife officers.

82 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TUXWORTH

I preface this by saying it is a question I have asked unsuccessfully for six years. Is it the intention of the Majority Party and the executive member responsible to introduce legislation controlling the use of antibiotics in stock feed and, if so, when?

ANSWER

I would ask that that question be placed on notice.

83 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr STEELE

With the introduction of TAA and Ansett DC9 aircraft to Gove, what arrangements have been made to improve the mail service to Grootte Eylandt and Gove and, further, will MMA be phased out of the operation because of TAA coming into this area and what will be the fate of MMA's F28 aircraft?

ANSWER

We are greatly concerned at the service, particularly that Groote Eylandt has been reduced, in fact, cut in half. It is a little early to say with any degree of certainty what effect the introduction of the weekly DC9 services of both TAA and Ansett to Gove will have on the other services, including mail services to Groote Eylandt and Gove. It would appear that MMA has adopted a wait-and-see attitude and will not be introducing any additional services on these routes until there is a demand for additional traffic on days other than the TAA and Ansett services. We are investigating the possibility that either MMA or Connair could put on an additional service and we have already done the sums on what it would cost to do so. The honourable member would appreciate that Connair certainly could not become involved in the operation unless it was profitable, and with the outmoded aircraft Connair is using, an additional service could be operated at much lower cost by a company using modern aircraft. So it would appear that if there is to be additional services, MMA is in a better position to operate this service than anyone else. As to the fate of the F28 aircraft, I do not think this is a matter of any seriousness at the moment, MMA, of course, operate quite a number of these aircraft on intrastate services in Western Australia, and as it is part of the Ansett operation, I would think that if there are any surplus aircraft, which I doubt, they could probably be absorbed into Ansett's operation elsewhere.

84 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Can he advise what arrangements are being made to transfer homes owned by the North Australia Railway in the Parap area to the Housing Commission or other Northern Territory housing authority, and when will residents be informed of what is happening to their houses?

ANSWER

The Housing Commission is negotiating with the North Australia Railway for the possible takeover by the Housing Commission of houses in the Northern Territory currently owned by Australian National Railways. I can assure the honourable member that in such negotiations, should these negotiations result in an actual transfer of those houses, the rights of the existing tenants in the houses will be fully protected. This is one of the prime concerns of the Housing Commission; during its negotiations it is bearing this in mind and minimising any possible disruption that may occur to tenants who are in those houses at the present time.

85 Mr DONDAS to Mr ROBERTSON

Is he able to indicate what steps of preparedness the NT Emergency Services have taken for the oncoming cyclone season?

ANSWER

I can well understand the honourable member for Casuarina asking that question. The first meeting of the Disaster Council has been held at which the disaster plans for the Northern Territory were endorsed. The Northern Territory's control zones under the Disasters Ordinance have now been agreed to, and I must say I would like to commend the various departments - the Department of Construction, the Police Force and my own Emergency Services unit - for the effort they have put in to date. I think, logistically and in terms of training, mobility and knowledge, we are very well prepared for any eventuality in the nature of cyclones or, indeed, for any other type of disaster that may occur.

However, in answering this question, I could not let the opportunity pass without making some criticism of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Department of Northern Territory in its complete lack of funding in the area of making secure public shelters. I am extremely concerned that, through my department and through the various units which will be involved in the case of a cyclone, we are going to go to the people and tell them they can come to certain buildings within this city and feel safe therein. I am afraid they cannot. The funds which have been previously allocated for the purpose of making windows safe from flying glass have been withdrawn and there is absolutely no chance now this season of these being reinstated and work being done. It is considerable expense; it is in the six figure area, I call now upon the Department of Northern Territory to comply with its responsibility to this city and make those shelters safe for the people of this city.

86 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

The following information is requested concerning the Northern Territory Environmental Council: how much is the budget allocation; how is the money distributed; is the money being spent in accordance with government guidelines on spending; how do you qualify as an environmentalist; and how much of the budget allocation is being spent in the southern region of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I did have forewarning of the question. There is no allocation in the Northern Territory budget for the Northern Territory Environmental Council. However, the 1977-78 federal budget provides \$300,000 for grants to voluntary conservation organisations to assist with their administrative expenses. How is the money distributed? The allocation of funds has not yet been determined but will be done by the minister who is advised by the Australian Heritage Commission. Is the money being spent in accordance with government guidelines? If an allocation is made to the Northern Territory Environmental Council, it will be spent in accordance with the government guidelines on spending. In answer to the fourth question, there are no special qualifications required for people to become environmentalists. One should become actively involved with one of the member groups

of the council. In relation to the fifth part of the question, funds allocated to the Northern Territory Environmental Council would not be designated to particular areas but would be earmarked for special projects,

87 Mr DONDAS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it the intention of the Health Department to use the completed staff quarters at the Casuarina Hospital before its opening some time in 1979?

ANSWER

The short answer is no. However, I believe there will be a small team of commissioning people established in the quarters during the initial periods of establishment.

88 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

Could he advise what response he has received to his correspondence to the minister regarding the advertising of staff positions for the national park.

ANSWER

I assume that he is referring to my correspondence with the Minister for Housing, Environment and Community Development. The short answer is that I have had no reply.

89 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

How many times has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission met? How many times did each member or his delegate attend those meetings?

Mr SPEAKER; I think questions like this should be placed on notice but if the honourable Executive Member for Finance and Planning has the answer, he may go ahead.

ANSWER

I do not have an answer to that question and would ask that it be placed on notice.

97 Mr HARRIS to Mr ROBERTSON

Is it accepted that some services provided by the Regional Councils for Social Development in Alice Springs and Darwin were useful and of benefit in our community and, if so, what is being done to see that such services continue?

ANSWER

I would certainly agree that there were functions carried out by both regional councils in Darwin and Alice Springs which were quite useful to the community and it is vital that these programs be maintained but, I believe, they should be maintained in a more efficient and productive manner. For instance, there was a program being conducted by the Regional Council for Social Development in Darwin called the Homemaker Service. This, of course, was one of the reasons why the executive, through me, decided not to continue public funding because it turned out that the Community Development Branch of the Department of the Northern Territory has its own homemaker service. It would certainly be my intention, as from July next year, to see that that service is in fact strengthened. In Alice Springs, also, they produced a community guide which I think everyone recognised as an extremely valuable community program. I can see no reason why we cannot continue that program through our present resources.

The main function, I think, that the regional councils provided to the community was to give access to typing and photocopying and that type of activity to groups which would normally find secretarial fees or, alternatively, the purchase of equipment for secretarial purposes quite beyond their reach. It is my intention, upon the acceptance of the functions now carried out by the Department of Northern Territory, to establish access offices in all centres in the Northern Territory. This can be done virtually within the present staff structure or with minimal additions. It would be my proposal, and certainly it would be my instruction to my department under such circumstances, that these be virtually independent offices - offices in my mind which people could go for the purpose of having this type of work done. The type of people I visualise using these particular access offices would be those that would normally be eligible under the guidelines established by the executive for eligibility to community grants - that is, organisations which are constituted and which are of a non-profit and self-help nature.

98 Mr ISAACS to Mr TUXWORTH

Has the Department of Health sufficient vaccination needles and personnel to cope with the current problem of Vietnamese immigrants? Can the executive member assure the Assembly that everything is being done to stem the current tide of these immigrants? Is he aware that the situation is causing great concern to everyone in the community, not least the vast number of migrants already in Australia who are having great difficulty in bringing their own relations to Australia to join them and also the workers who face the pressures and insecurity of the current unemployment position? Has he heard that, because of the new diesel motors and some modern navigation aids on board some of the refugee boats, there is concern that the refugees are part of a well orchestrated organisation?

Mr SPEAKER :

Before calling the Executive Member for Resources and Health, I would point out that some of these questions are far too long. They should be split up into a couple of divisions to allow the members time to answer them properly. It is in the interest of all members seeking information that full information be provided on questions without notice, otherwise the questions should be placed on the notice paper.

ANSWER

In replying to the honourable member's question, obviously parts of it are outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Health in the Northern Territory and, indeed, the Commonwealth Department of Health. I am well aware of the concern in the community, Mr Speaker, about the entry of illegal immigrants into Australia and the threat they pose to the Northern Territory. It was with this in mind that I have asked the Department of Health to prepare for the Assembly a position paper relating to the quarantine facilities and the exact catering arrangements for these people in the Territory and I would hope that that paper will be available for members of the Assembly today.

Just as an aside, Mr Speaker, I have no objection to answering these questions at any time. However, if the honourable member would give me half an hour notice, it would give me an opportunity to provide him with a full answer.

99 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it a fact that in the Howard Swamp area sand miners are operating beyond their proper leases, with very unfortunate effects to the surrounding environment? If this is a fact, why has no action been taken to stop them acting in this manner?

ANSWER

Again if the honourable member had given me an indication of the area which was of concern to her, I could have done a little research and answered the question in detail. However, Mr Speaker, this question is in line with a barrage of others I have received from the member for Tiwi who is also expressing concern about the removal of sand and gravel and the general extraction activities in that 32 square mile area and the surrounds of Darwin proper.

Mr Speaker, this is a historical problem that has been with us for some time and honourable members might like to look sometime at a map we have prepared that shows existing sand and gravel leases and extractive leases which have been with us for many years and form almost a patch-work quilt on the Darwin scene. Since the acquisition of the 32 square mile area several years ago - for which the government paid many, many millions of dollars - the sand and gravel extractive activities have continued unabated and this is to our executives' point of view a totally unsatisfactory arrangement. It seems mindless, Mr Speaker, to spend millions of dollars to acquire land for subdivisional areas and then have another department issuing leases for extractive works to be carried on in that area. We would like to see it halted as soon as possible.

On top of the existing operations, Mr Speaker, there are also an additional 20 applications for further leases in the pipeline from people who would like to have available sand and gravel for their operations and most of them are of a minor nature. A meeting was held two or three weeks ago with the Executive Member for Finance and Planning, myself and Department of the Northern Territory officials concerning the problem and it was agreed that there should be no further leases issued within the areas mentioned by the honourable member and that, in fact, it would be ideal if the leases which already exist there could be cancelled and transferred to another area, so that persons operating these leases will do less damage than what has already been done but also be given an opportunity to continue their operations.

Mr Speaker, the actual mechanics of bringing this matter to an acceptable resolve have yet to be worked out but I can assure members on both sides of the House that we are aware of the problem, we are very conscious of the unsatisfactory nature of it and we will work to bring it to a conclusion as soon as possible.

100 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr TUXWORTH

What stage has been reached with the erection of a health centre at Howard Springs and, when finished, what facilities will the centre provide?

ANSWER

I would ask that the question be placed on notice.

101 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

In view of the fact that no prisoner who was eligible to vote by postal vote in the Legislative Assembly election exercised his right to do so, will he ensure that prisoners are made aware of their right to vote in the forthcoming federal election and that the voting is facilitated by distribution of postal vote application forms in Northern Territory prisons?

ANSWER

I hope the honourable member was not implying that the prisoners at Fannie Bay were deliberately denied access. Indeed, the opposite is true. Facilities were in fact made available and no one chose to exercise those facilities. It is an area that concerns my Director of Correctional Services and he too was wondering why. Certainly, I will undertake a program of education through the Director of Correctional Services and see if they in future do not choose to exercise their right to vote.

102 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

Can he give an indication if and when the speedway will be relocated?

ANSWER

The speedway will be shifted without any doubt but I cannot say when this will happen. There are a number of departments involved in this area, particularly the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for the next month or so. I would suggest that, when the town planning function is

transferred to the Legislative Assembly, we will see more rapid action than we have seen in the last few years. There have been calls for the relocation of the speedway and once again I hope to be able to demonstrate that, with the transfer of powers, the Northern Territory Assembly will respond to local demands.

103 Mr DONDAS to Mr ROBERTSON

I refer to my question without notice yesterday regarding the preparedness of the Counter Disaster Organisation. Could he give details of the precise position regarding public shelters in Darwin because the answer he gave yesterday causes me some concern?

ANSWER

I hope I did not give the impression yesterday that there are not widespread shelters available to Darwin people. It is necessary to bear in mind that numerous houses and flats have been constructed within the code of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Certainly, a vast majority of Darwin people would now be housed in coded buildings. The precise position is that the archives building will take 500 people, the Wanguri Primary School 1,500, the Tiwi school 1,500, Nakara school 1,500, administration blocks 4,5,6, and 7 will take between them 2,800, motor vehicle registry will take 500, Howard Springs school 1,280, Nightcliff High School 1,900, Casuarina High School 1,550, administration block 8 1,750 and Kormilda College 2,000. This gives us safe shelter for 16,780. The reference I made yesterday was to requirements from the federal government. The matter is quite beyond our resources. If we had the money, I can assure the House that we would appropriate a million dollars plus to it. The requirement is to put screens on the windows of certain of these buildings and this would either create a more comfortable shelter for those who are there or enable another four or five thousand to go into them. At the moment, people cannot shelter in areas adjacent to windows; they must use rooms which are protected or the lobbies or corridors. It is just a matter of putting screens over the windows and design work has been done on this. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission knew what was necessary, my department knows what is necessary; it is just a matter of the Department of Northern Territory getting its priorities sorted out and making funds available as a matter of priority.

104 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Which executive member will have responsibility for the Coordinator-General? Will the position be part of the new administration?

ANSWER

Whilst my views are not quite firm on this, I do think that the Department of the Chief Secretary will probably retain responsibility for the position of Coordinator-General, at least during the course of the current administration.

105 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

What will be the relationship between the Coordinator-General and the Director-General of his department? During these sittings, can he table the duties of each of the positions?

ANSWER

The Director-General is the Director-General of the Chief Secretary's Department in the Northern Territory Public Service. The Coordinator-General will be a subservient official to him within the department and he will have the responsibility of coordinating various functions as outlined in my speech on the address in reply yesterday. I outlined the duties of the Coordinator-General yesterday, I do not see any need to table any further statement in regard to that. I would be quite happy for the Leader of the Opposition to discuss with the Public Service Commissioner the duties of the Director-General.

106 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr EVERINGHAM

Does he know for a fact that the Department of Construction is preparing at one of its southern offices the design and documentation for a new Legislative Assembly building? If he does know this for a fact, can he inform the House where this building is to be located?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I rather think that this is your prerogative. I really know nothing of the matter except certain rumours. I would suggest that the question could be better directed to yourself.

107 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it true that the latest official figure for VD in Maningrida amongst the natives is 86%? This figure was published in the National Times.

ANSWER

I saw the article in the National Times alleging that this figure of 86% was in fact a reality and I took it up with the Department of Health. It would appear that the statement was pure sensationalism and probably designed to sell newspapers. I believe that it is a slight and a libel upon the Aborigines at Maningrida because the Health Department records show that no such situation exists. We have no isolated figures for Maningrida. On a Territory-wide basis the Aboriginal community has a 48% factor as far as gonorrhoea is concerned and the European community has a 55% contamination factor. There is no doubt that there is a great increase in the incidence of syphilis in the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. It is not an increase that is confined to Maningrida or to the Northern Territory. In fact, the Health Department records show that only 5% of the population at Maningrida has in fact been registered with this disease.

108 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

This question relates to a question I asked without notice at the last sittings. He advised me to put the question on notice which I did at that time, although it only appears with yesterday's date. It is question No. 58, regarding the reference to the legal opinion being prepared for the trustees for Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund by Mr Ian Barker. I ask, what were the instructions given to Mr Barker by the trustees and from what source is Mr Barker to be paid

for this opinion and under what authority? I would ask the Majority Leader when I can expect to receive a reply to that question.

ANSWER

In answer to the honourable member's question, I believe I am not going to be permitted to make available the information requested by her - firstly, the instructions and so on given to Mr Barker, on the basis that this information is privileged. As to who is paying for Mr Barker, the Attorney-General or the Department of Northern Territory will be paying Mr Barker's fees in this matter.

I might indicate to the honourable member, however, that I have been pressing this matter since the last sittings of the Assembly - in fact, before that. The position now is that we actually have an opinion from Mr Barker which was sent back some months ago to the Commonwealth Solicitor-General for comment because the two opinions were in conflict. As yet we have no response from the Commonwealth Solicitor-General. My regular communications with the Minister for the Northern Territory by telex on this subject lead me to believe that the Solicitor-General might be getting around to giving the matter his attention. I have indicated to the Minister for the Northern Territory that I consider the position to be one of grave concern, if not embarrassment, and that I propose, as soon as the Northern Territory assumes responsibility for the Department of Law, to use that Department of Law to get this legal situation in connection with the termination of the Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund cleared up once and for all.

110 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

What use will be made of the site at Stokes Street, Parap which was formerly occupied by the Parap infant school?

ANSWER

I cannot quite recall how the block was zoned in the recent town planning which was displayed by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. If my memory serves me correctly, the site was reserved for a government institution. However, I could be wrong and I will delay answering that question until the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has completed the review of objections to the town plan. The powers of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in relation to town planning will still exist until January and they would be the only people who could determine what that site could be used for up until that date.

111 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr TUXWORTH

Is dental staff available for the dental clinics which will open for the school term 1978 in the Anula and Wulagi school buildings?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to find out the answer today.

112 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can the government guarantee that all refugees have landed at Port Darwin and that none have entered Australia in deserted areas of the coastline?

ANSWER

In the time available to me since notice of that question was given to me, I have been unable to ascertain from the government whether it can give such a guarantee. Obviously, communication will have to be had with the various defence forces concerned and the Immigration Department.

I think the question raises a particular problem that is vexing the Darwin community and in fact the Northern Territory and even the whole of Australia at the moment, judging by the concern expressed through the media and expressed to me personally by various individuals to whom I have been speaking. And I, not least, and members of the Majority Party, I am sure, and all members of this Assembly are concerned about this peaceful invasion. We are concerned for the job security of Australians who are perhaps threatened in that quarter by the admission of these significant numbers of unauthorised immigrants. We are concerned particularly in the Northern Territory about the question of disease entering, because we are the front line here; it is we who will have to bear the burden of the assault and it is our community that will suffer in body and in its pocket as well if disease is permitted to enter into this community through these vessels and the people on them coming without necessary supervision into northern Australia. We have at the moment a blue tongue scare which is seriously affecting the Northern Territory cattle industry and one wonders how that particular disease came to Australia some years ago, as perhaps it did, and one wonders whether any other diseases are at the moment on their way to Australia in some of the other boats that we are told are on the way.

This morning I was able, through the kind permission of the Director of Health, to make a personal inspection of the quarantine station at East Arm and I inspected there the system of medical checks on all these people. There are a considerable number of people there at the moment - over 150. I observed that they are being processed regularly through the facilities there. They are undergoing a list of checks that is a foolscap page long. I understand that this present lot will be evacuated to the south some time this evening in anticipation of others arriving.

I also understand that perhaps the health risk may not be as grave as one would expect. However, I would not want any risks to be taken. The Director of Health explained to me that these people are at sea for at least 14 days in these crafts. The period of quarantine for smallpox is 14 days and 5 days for cholera.

Presumably, if any of these people had contracted diseases, they would arrive in Australia either very sick or they would not have arrived in Australia at all. Despite that, every possible precaution is being taken and I understand two doctors and two additional nursing staff will arrive in Darwin this afternoon from the south to strengthen the facilities at East Arm. I am also concerned, Mr Speaker, about the question of surveillance, so that we

will have adequate notice when these vessels are arriving. In that regard, I sent a telegram to the Prime Minister this morning asking him to establish a Commonwealth, state and Territory study of the problem as a matter of urgency. I said Commonwealth, state and Territory because I believe that the states of Queensland and Western Australia could well be involved and should be brought in at this early stage. I told the Prime Minister that the Northern Territory executive believes that no solution will be found to the problem of the unauthorised entry of Vietnamese vessels carrying refugees until the situation is examined by all interested parties. The Territory is vitally interested as it is in the front line of this peaceful invasion. The Northern Territory executive believes that it has a specific interest and is prepared to play its part in assisting the federal government to cope with the problem.

This brings me back to the point of the question about whether the government could guarantee that these people are not landing on the coastline in places other than Port Darwin. Probably Northern Territory officials such as police and wildlife rangers could come into contact with them first. That is why we want to be involved. It was said in this House yesterday that there appeared to be a concerted move on the part of these people to enter Australia and that there was evidence concerning new engines in these boats to support this. I made a particular point of checking this out whilst I was at the quarantine station this morning and I was informed that there is in one of the vessels a relatively new American Caterpillar diesel engine. Apparently, and one cannot vouch for the authenticity of this, the story that one is told, is that this group was lead by a farmer who took this engine out of his American tractor and installed it in his boat with a different gear box and differential. Presumably American equipment is lying around in South Vietnam after the period of Americans' involvement in the Vietnamese conflict. This sort of thing is being checked by the Immigration Department and I believe that, if the stories given by these people prove to be false, then action will have to be taken and certainly they will lose the sympathy of the Australian people. It may well be that there is an organised traffic going on. I would not put anything past unscrupulous people and certainly there appear to be enough of those in certain points of the globe near to us. We must put pressure on Indonesia and Malaysia to cooperate with us so that we can enforce our immigration policies. The pressure should be along these lines: "If you, our near neighbours, will not cooperate in this, how can we regard you as our friends?"

113 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Has he received a legal advising regarding the Darwin Co-op Taxi Company's \$200 levy on all cab drivers? If so, what steps has he taken to stop it?

ANSWER

I have not yet received an advice from Crown Law and obviously, without that advice, I would be unable to take any action.

114 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr TUXWORTH

What progress has Mount Isa Mines made in solving its ore treatment problem and when can we expect it to get into full production and

thus open up the McArthur River area, create jobs and so assist the Northern Territory in its overall economy?

ANSWER

The honourable member kindly gave me notice of this; the company has provided me with the following information:

Following initial teething difficulties, the pilot plant at McArthur River has been operating on a 24-hour basis since August at a rate of 50 tons per day, 5 days per week. The flow-sheet circuitry is being developed and test work is proceeding at a satisfactory rate of progress. It is too early to make any positive predictions regarding achievable grade and recovery of lead and zinc and the concentrates. The present program is expected to take 12 months after which results will be assembled and assessed,

While the decision to develop the McArthur zinc lead ore body to a full scale mine will be primarily dependent on the development of a suitable technology to extract the minerals, there are a number of other factors of major importance. Chief among these are the international market price of metal, the world demand for lead and zinc, the availability of a suitable gulf port and the capital cost of the project. The engineering and economic feasibility studies are in progress but, at this stage, no realistic forecast can be made as to when the McArthur River mine will come into production.

115 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Could the proposed sessional committee of this Assembly on the environment have its scope enlarged at a later date to cover other areas of mining development within the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

At the present, I understand any mining development that may take place will take place within the proposed boundaries of the Kakadu National Park. I would have thought that it would have been sufficient at this stage for the terms of reference to go that far. If there should be uranium mining or development outside the boundaries of the park, certainly consideration would be given to enlarging the terms of reference and scope of the committee.

116 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Is it true that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at the request of the Administrator-in-Council has approved the building of a house on part of the Fannie Bay Gaol land, despite objections from the Town Planning Board?

ANSWER

I would have to investigate the matter and report later. However, I do point out that the workings and decisions of the Administrator's Council are not subject to tabling in this House in all cases. However, obviously a number of decisions that are made at the Administrator's Council or Executive Council level are published. I will endeavour to seek what information I can and table it during these sittings.

117 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr STEELE

Has he any further information on the cutbacks in the air service to Groote Eylandt and also the scheduling service between Gove, Cairns and Darwin?

ANSWER

It is a fairly confused position at the moment. The service has been reduced from four per week to Groote Eylandt down to two. I have had some exchange of correspondence with MMA in Perth. Because of the introduction of the 2 DC9s weekly between Gove and Darwin which offer 96 seats, there is an over-capacity which can only be adjusted by reduction of the F28s. The introduction of any other operator will only aggravate the position as far as MMA is concerned. They say that they will monitor the situation flight by flight and will increase services immediately the traffic levels justify it. This is nowhere near good enough and we will not slow down our efforts to try to get some sort of service between Groote Eylandt and Darwin.

118 Mr OLIVER to Mr EVERINGHAM

Does the Majority Leader see any merit in the suggestion by the federal Opposition Leader that members of parliament should publicly disclose details of their personal assets and financial holdings?

ANSWER

I have been listening to the rather pious hypocrisy of the federal Opposition Leader for some ten days now in respect of members of parliament disclosing details of their financial holdings. I can only speak for the members of the Country Liberal Party in this Assembly. We are quite prepared to make public details of our assets and financial affairs. I do believe that all candidates for public office should consider doing this and, in fact, the CLP candidates are prepared to do so. I challenge the ALP candidates for federal office to make their financial arrangements public and to deny unequivocally that they have ever participated in tax avoidance schemes.

119 Mr COLLINS to Mr ROBERTSON

Could the honourable member advise me of what action has been taken on the matter I raised yesterday concerning the non-replacement of the welfare officer at Gove?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. In addition to the concern raised by him, I was also approached by a very annoyed, honourable member for Nhulunbuy. I had a member of my staff speak with the Social Development branch of the Department of Northern Territory, to reflect my great concern at that situation. Of all things, I was told that the branch is now 20 under its ceiling, but it cannot bring itself up to its established ceiling because the Department of Northern Territory as a whole is in excess of its ceiling. What an extraordinary thing! The whole area of Nhulunbuy, Gove and Elcho Island is denied the full-time services of this officer and its just entitlement in this direction

because the Department of Northern Territory cannot adjust, within itself, its own staffing arrangements. However I am advised that Elcho Island, which is the main problem area, is being served from Darwin. Thank you, very much.

However, there is one mitigating circumstance in this, and that is that Elcho would have to be served from Nhulunbuy anyway which requires flight to Elcho Island. I am informed the time interval for that flight is about the same as it would be from Darwin, because they would normally use the same commercial aircraft. Personally, I think the whole thing is a disgrace.

120 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

Given the present controversy over the Darwin City Council's campaign to put top soil on nature strips so that ratepayers can grass and water them, has he had a submission from the corporation regarding a rebate of water charges to those people who comply with the corporation's wishes? If so, what is his executive's attitude?

ANSWER

I have had no such submission from the city council.

121 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

On Tuesday the member for Arnhem claimed that you and officers of the Northern Territory Public Service had erred seriously in the gazettal of the names of members of the Wildlife Advisory Council of the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. I would like to ask two questions. First of all, how did this occur and, secondly, when will it be rectified?

ANSWER

When the assertion was made by the honourable member for Arnhem in the House the other day, I felt almost as though I was in the position of catching the bishop with his fingers in the till, because the gentlemen responsible for carrying out the functions of gazettal have, to my knowledge, been men of near perfection, I had not known them to make a mistake before and I was most alarmed at what the honourable member had to say. The matter was taken up and the reply is simply this. The original ordinance No. 23 of 1977 provided that members of the advisory council, other than the directors, were to be appointed by the Administrator-in-Council, under section 80, part 2. The second ordinance No. 24 of 1977 amended section 80, part 2, by removing Administrator-in-Council and inserting Executive Member. That amendment was made by section 26 of the second ordinance. The commencement of section 26 of the second ordinance is expressed to be the date of commencement of section 3 of the first ordinance, the principal ordinance. Section 3 is the section of the principal ordinance which repeals the National Parks and Gardens Ordinance and the Wildlife Conservation and Control Ordinance. Section 3 has not been commenced; therefore, the appointments by the Administrator in the gazette were valid.

122 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

In the lane at the rear of the old Vic building there is a notice on the gate saying that cars can no longer park there as from a certain date as the bulldozers are moving in. My question to the honourable member is, can he advise the House if the facade of the Vic - and there are many recommendations to keep this particular part of Darwin's history - is also to be bulldozed or is it intended that the redevelopment preserve that facade?

ANSWER

I believe the developers of the old Victoria Hotel site, who are proposing to commence work this week, fully intend to keep the whole facade of the Vic Hotel and any other portion of the stone work and style that can be preserved. This is being incorporated in the overall development. I believe I am going to receive a couple of copies of the drawings and proposals of the development there, and I would be happy to let the honourable member peruse those when I receive them if she wishes. Whether I have any particular assurances - I do not believe at this stage there are any assurances in law, and I certainly have not received any, that these people will behave in the manner we would like them to. I do not know that there are any laws that can force them to, but I do believe their intentions are good. Their intentions are to preserve as much of the historical aspect of the old Vic Hotel as they possibly can, because they do appreciate and realise its value to Darwin and to that central Smith Street area.

123 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON

This question concerns the laying underground of power to the Head Street subdivision in Alice Springs. Can he advise if it is a fact that the high voltage power lines will be underground and the low voltage line will be overhead cable and, if so, why?

ANSWER

The advice I have on this subject is that there will be some underground and some overhead construction of electricity reticulation in the Head Street subdivision in Alice Springs. The advice is that low voltage reticulation will be overhead except for several short cabled sections in walkways and parkways. Some of the high voltage reticulation is to be underground. There are five substations in the subdivision and the high voltage supply for three of these will be underground due to their location near walkways and parkways. Reticulation to the remaining two substations will be overhead. That is all the information I have had provided on this subject. I notice that in that advice there is no explanation as to why that is the case. However, I am sure there are good technical reasons for planning the reticulation as they propose. We do intend, as a policy in future, to have as much power reticulation as economically reasonable laid underground in Alice Springs, realising the aesthetic value of the Alice Springs township and the impact on tourism if we continue with the awful pollution of overhead electricity reticulation, as has been done in the past.

124 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Can he inform this Assembly what mechanism was used to give liquidity to the Home Finance Trustee in October this year?

ANSWER

I do not have that information immediately to hand, I certainly can obtain it and I will seek to table the answer to the honourable member's question on the next sitting day.

125 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

Can he advise the House of the sulphur content of the fuel presently being used at the Stokes Hill Power Station? If I could just explain, the reason for my question is that with serious emission from this station and rain, we have sulphuric acid pitting buildings and landing on clothes in the immediate vicinity, actually destroying them once the sulphur content is too high.

ANSWER

I certainly cannot give the honourable member this information off the top of my head; it is a little too technical for me. However, I will undertake to supply the information that the Department of Construction can provide for me and advise her later during these sittings.

126 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr ROBERTSON

Has any progress been made on the site for the museum? Is there a plan for the building of the new museum in the next 12 months and has a cost estimate been given on this? Is there any other way that they can spread their wings to other centres such as Nhulunbuy and Alice Springs?

ANSWER

The answer to all four questions is yes. There has been a site selected. There is still the usual bureaucratic problems in actually having it finalised but I am very confident that that matter is now very close to resolution. Architectural plans are in a very advanced stage at this time and the cost estimate is roughly \$5m. Cabinet will be considering in the next financial year the commencement of funding that particular program. It will, of course, have to consider that priority in line with all of its other pressing priorities. The best method would probably be to phase it over three budgetary periods.

In respect of Alice Springs, most certainly there is an area set aside there and that program is well advanced. I am quite certain that the Museums and Art Galleries Board and Cabinet will be most anxious to extend programs through the Territory, particularly by way of travelling displays.

127 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr STEELE

In view of the recent reports of new airport facilities to be erected in Brisbane in the next couple of years, when will substantial improvements be made to the civilian terminal at Darwin airport, particularly in view of the desire of both parties to improve tourist facilities in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

In recent weeks, we have had discussions with the Department of Transport people and we are waiting to hear what their intentions are.

128 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it a fact that rats have been found on the Vietnamese vessels entering the Darwin harbour?

ANSWER

My understanding is that three rats have been found on the vessels that have put into Darwin port in recent days. These animals were found after the quarantine people had fogged and smoked the vessels to get rid of any lice and disease that may be on them. They were dead when they were found.

129 Mr COLLINS to Mr ROBERTSON

My question concerns a press statement made this morning by the NT Teachers Federation. Is it a fact that the Education Department intends to increase the rentals on teacher housing in Aboriginal communities?

ANSWER

I have not seen the press statement referred to by the honourable member but I recall something on ABC news this morning, I am seeking information on that and will be pleased to communicate it to him later in the day.

130 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr TUXWORTH

What exactly is being done to stop any contamination of the timber and wood around the wharf and harbour area and other boats that meet Vietnamese boats now streaming into Darwin? What is the exact position regarding the complete and utter destruction of any livestock, animals, birds or animal substance found on these Vietnamese boats?

ANSWER

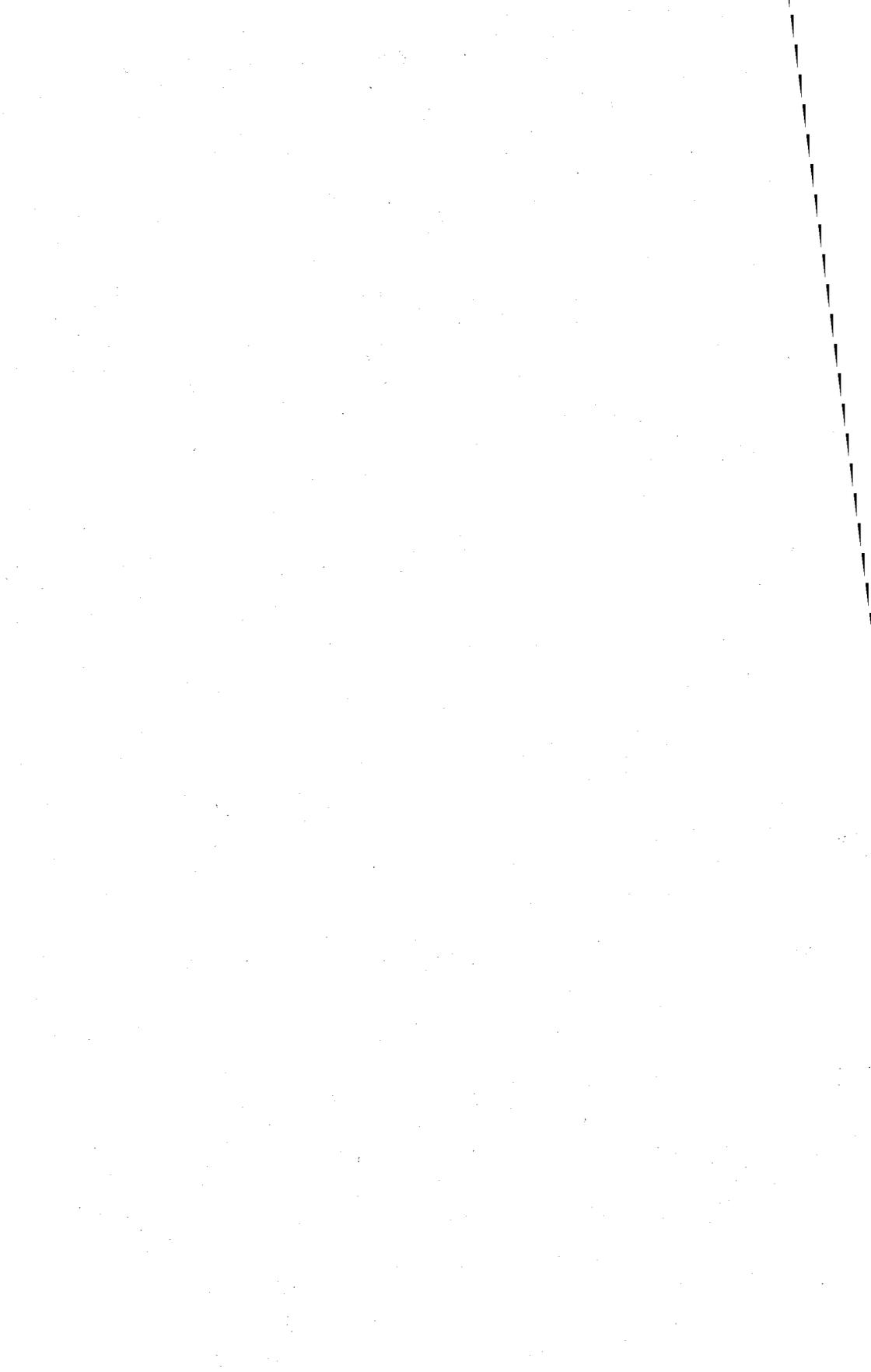
I am unable to answer the first part of the question but I will endeavour to have an answer later in the day. The answer to the second part of the question is that any animals or livestock that are found on these vessels are disposed of by the Animal Industry Branch post haste.

131 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TUXWORTH

For what purpose did an officer of the Department of Health, Canberra visit the Gove Hospital recently? If it was to do with staffing could he tell me the result of that visit?

ANSWER

There was a visit by an officer from the Department of Health. He was not there for staffing reasons but purely for familiarisation.



133 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can he advise if any services in the Northern Territory police need to be reduced or removed?

ANSWER

I certainly am not aware of any police services that are likely to be reduced. Additional money needs to be spent on upgrading police equipment and facilities, and it is the policy of the Majority Party to ensure that this is done as well as to improve the conditions of the police.

134 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr EVERINGHAM

In view of the Majority Leader's statement to this House concerning the transfer of Australian public servants to the Northern Territory Public Service on 22 September 1977, is he aware that some officers of the Australian Public Service whose positions are to be transferred on 1 January 1978 have been informed by their department that they have no choice but to transfer to the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

I am not aware of any direction given by any department of the Australian government to officers of the Australian Public Service that they have no alternative but to transfer to the Northern Territory Public Service in due course. However, I would certainly hope that all persons employed within the various Australian government departments which are to be transferred to the control of the Legislative Assembly would wish to join the Northern Territory Public Service where their conditions and entitlements of service will be preserved and in fact improved.

135 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

Will objectors to the Darwin reconstruction plan be advised in writing of the results of their efforts?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has advised me that objectors whose objections were overruled will be advised in writing by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. However, it is not intended to advise those whose objections were accepted. The acceptance of their objections will appear in a plan which will presumably be adopted by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission after they have completed processing all of the objections.

136 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

Where objections were not upheld and there has been a change in the zoning of areas under the new draft plan which was on display, is it intended that following passage of certain legislation in this Assembly, building in accordance with the new draft plan can proceed although it is quite different from that on the original plan? I give, as an example, the erection of high density dwellings where

once it was single storey, R3 instead of R1. Is there to be a further delay of three months or is building to be allowed to commence immediately?

ANSWER

The honourable member refers to legislation before this House, as I understand it, relating to town planning measures which are being adopted to ensure the smooth transition of planning authority in Darwin after the demise of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. If I understand her question correctly, the situation as proposed will be that a plan that is to be adopted by the Administrator-in-Council will come into force as from 1 January 1978, and applications for development will be processed against that plan. In a circular which I sent yesterday to all members of the House, I indicated that amendments would be introduced during the committee stages of the Town Planning Bill before the House which would provide for that same plan to be on display for a period of three months from 1 January, whereby objections to the plan could be lodged during that period, as well as it having full statutory authority.

137 Mr DONDAS to Mr ROBERTSON

What steps are being taken by the Assembly executive to establish an office of ethnic affairs and immigration in the Northern Territory Public Service?

ANSWER

Members who were in the previous Assembly will recall that the then Majority Leader made an undertaking to the Northern Territory, that an office of ethnic affairs would be established, most likely at that stage within the Chief Secretary's Department. The present Majority Leader has decided in consultation with the executive, that that should properly come across to my department, the Department of Community and Social Development. We have arranged, through the Australian Public Service, for the secondment in the first week of February next year for three months of Mr Les Liveris who will be very well known to many honourable members here. He is a man, as we all know, who has been involved in this field for many years. He was born in Darwin and I think my thanks should go to the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs for making him available to us. His three months period of secondment will be sufficient to set up an office of ethnic affairs within the Northern Territory Public Service.

138 Mr COLLINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is he aware that some officers of the Australian Public Service who currently enjoy professional classification in the Australian Public Service have been advised by their departments that, when their positions are transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978, their re-entry into the APS can only be at equivalent clerical designation?

ANSWER

I am certainly not aware of these statements which are emanating from the Opposition this morning and which may well be mere matters of

rumour and conjecture, I understand that the positions of Australian public servants transferring to the Northern Territory Public Service and back to the Australian Public Service are protected by statute and regulation. I would think that what the member for Arnhem has said is a mere matter of rumour and conjecture without foundation in fact.

139 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

Nightcliff Primary School is on the civil works program for tenders to be called in February. Is it a fact that no work is to be commenced and no money expended before the end of this financial year? This would mean that the Nightcliff Primary School has slipped off the program and will not be ready for occupancy at the beginning of the school year of 1979.

ANSWER

I will undertake to provide an answer later in these sittings.

140 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr ROBERTSON

In his capacity as a member of the Further Education Council, will he inform the House when the council will next meet and advise us of the functions of that council?

ANSWER

I won't take the House's time up with a statement of responsibilities of the Further Education Council other than to say that the Majority Leader, in moving the motion of my appointment to that organisation, did indicate its principal roles last week. It is basically an advisory body to the Minister for Education and it will plan the future of post compulsory education in the Northern Territory, including such matters as a practical rural college at Katherine. The committee last met on Friday. It is not proposed now that it should meet until about next February. It has formalised a detailed study of further education in Central Australia and it is currently working on the exact structure of post compulsory education throughout the Northern Territory. The present minister has indicated quite clearly that he will be very sympathetic to the advice of the Further Education Council. In fact, this particular minister is one of the best with whom we have dealings. The organisation is comprised of three members. It has the Director of Education of the Northern Territory, Dr Eedle, the Principal of the Darwin Community College, Mr Flint, and myself as its members.

141 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is he aware that some officers of the Australian Public Service whose positions are to be transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January next year have been advised that, if they decline to transfer to the NTPS, they will no longer be employed by either the APS or the NTPS from the date of the transfer of their positions?

ANSWER

In answering the question, which appears to be part of a concerted campaign this morning by the Opposition to undermine the confidence of the public service in the Northern Territory, I would say this: that I am not aware of any such proposal. I do not think the question does him a great deal of credit. I will certainly ascertain the facts in relation to this matter and I propose making a statement to this House in relation to these aspects of the public service tomorrow morning,

142 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr STEELE

Is there still only one officer engaged in animal quarantine in Darwin at present and, if so, what steps has he taken to ensure that other services can be provided to back up this man?

ANSWER

I can confirm that there is only one quarantine officer employed through the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch. I have had discussions with officers of that branch but I have not yet taken it up at a ministerial level. Because of the whole range of quarantine and disease control problems that we are currently faced with due to the peaceful invasion of our northern shores, these matters have been taken up directly by the Majority Leader with the Prime Minister.

143 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

I understand that there has been some negotiation between the council, the Darwin Community College and the Minister for the Northern Territory about provision of additional areas of land adjacent to the college to meet present and future building needs. What stage has been reached in these negotiations, particularly in respect to a decision on whether any land will be available? No provision for such development is apparent in the present Darwin Town Plan. Would he make urgent representation to the Minister for the Northern Territory to ensure that the appropriate allocations of land west and north of the present site will be made available as a matter of urgency so that the council may proceed with its planning to meet the future post-secondary needs of the Northern Territory community?

ANSWER

I have been advised by the Department of the Northern Territory that negotiations between the Darwin Community College and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission last year for adjoining land were hampered by the existence of an adjoining subdivision lease. The Minister for the Northern Territory advised the Chairman of the Darwin Community College in October 1976 of this issue and its implications. The Minister for the Northern Territory is not in a position to allocate land already alienated and alternative split campus sites are still available. If the land in the subdivision lease does become available, it has been indicated by the minister that he will immediately inform Senator Carrick on the matter. This would then allow the Darwin Community College to make its approach and justify a further land allocation. In regard to the zoning of this block, the land adjoining the Darwin Community College is a lease already

proposed for urban development, There have been negotiations going on for a very long time under both federal governments, as a matter of fact since the cyclone, over what I would call the mess at Brinkin - a subdivision which was proposed and has never been proceeded with - and I think it is a shame that after nearly three years of so-called negotiations between governments and the company concerned, no solution has been found to this matter, I believe that had land been the subject of transfer to this Assembly at a much earlier date than is proposed, the matter would have been well resolved. Unless there are some breakthroughs in these negotiations so that the future expansion of the Darwin Community College onto that site can be resolved, well then, the matter may well have to wait until the handling of land is transferred to this Assembly, I can assure members that a decision and a solution to the problem would be found very quickly.

144 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

My question to the Majority Leader is the last stanza to the symphony of the Opposition. What steps will the Majority Leader take to ensure that summary dismissals will not occur amongst public servants upon the transfer of certain functions on 1 January and 1 July next year? Specifically, I ask this question in relation to day labour, employed by the Department of Construction and the Department of the Northern Territory.

ANSWER

May I say that it certainly was the last stanza in what I would call the subversive symphony coming from the Opposition this morning - an attempt to subvert and undermine the confidence of the public service. The public service knows that its rights and entitlements to employment are protected by statute. I can assure this House unequivocally that there will be no summary dismissals from the Northern Territory Public Service.

145 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

As he is aware, the Corporation of the City of Darwin is presently spreading top soil on nature strips for adjoining leaseholders, hopefully, to plant with grass, trees and shrubs, etc. Unfortunately, on certain blocks in my electorate at least there is no leaseholder. I am talking of blocks where there are derelict Housing Commission homes, blocks without occupants, Who will accept the responsibility for planting in these circumstances?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no idea who will accept responsibility of these blocks. I have noticed that there are a number of blocks in addition to housing blocks where the city council is spreading soil on the footpath with the expectation perhaps that someone is going to plant grass on them and water them, including footpaths past schools and past existing city council parks. I suggest that if the question is placed on notice for the member concerned with local government affairs, he may be able to seek an answer from the Corporation who really should be the people to answer this.

146 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can he say whether all departments and sections to be transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978 have fully staffed their establishments? If not, how many vacant positions will be transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978? How many vacant positions at branch head level will be transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be placed on notice. She is asking for a great number of statistics which I obviously do not have to hand at the moment. May I say that I regard the series of questions asked by the Opposition this morning as base electioneering and an attempt to alarm civil servants in this Territory. I reiterate that the rights of civil servants are protected by statute and regulations and those rights are honoured and respected by me. Far from self-government meaning a lack of employment opportunities in government service, I can assure this House that, at the present time, there are before the Northern Territory Public Service Commissioner applications to create no less than 700 additional positions in the Northern Territory Public Service.

147 Mr DONDAS to Mr STEELE

What initiatives has the Department of Transport taken to construct an overpass or footbridge near the Rapid Creek Shopping Centre on Trower Road?

ANSWER

I have already said that I would make approaches to the Department of Northern Territory to examine its budget and identify spending areas by which we could usefully satisfy some of the community's requirements in regard to footbridges. We have made that identification and we have passed our thoughts to the Minister for the Northern Territory. There has been some correspondence between the Minister for the Northern Territory and the DRC. I saw the Minister for the Northern Territory yesterday and I am hopeful of getting a satisfactory reply on this matter in the very near future.

148 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

I ask about the "Life. Be in it" program which we have seen advertisements about on television. Did the previous executive make a commitment to involve the Northern Territory in this program which I understand originated in Victoria and, if so, what action is being taken to involve the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The previous executive never made any commitment but I have. I have seconded to my Department of Local Government, a senior recreation officer of the YMCA for a period of 12 months. He is heading up the "Life. Be in it" program for the Northern Territory. The Majority Party will involve itself very extensively in this very worthwhile program.

149 Mr DOOLAN to Mr TUXWORTH

When may I expect a reply to at least some of the questions raised by Mr Jack Langley of Mount Wells and forwarded to the honourable member by me on 6 October last? When can I expect a reply to the questions raised by the Northern Territory Miners and Prospectors Association and forwarded to the honourable member on 10 November last?

ANSWER

The points the honourable member raised with me were the prerogative of the Northern Territory Mines Branch and I have sent his correspondence relating to those matters to the Mines Branch for a reply. The honourable member can be assured that the day I have a reply, he will get one from me.

155 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

He has indicated that he is making representations to the Prime Minister as the need arises regarding the refugees presently arriving in Northern Territory waters. Following a news item this morning that one group has landed on the northern coastline, can he indicate if he has received from the Prime Minister any assurance that surveillance will be increased so that quarantine and other facilities which may be needed on the coast can be provided?

ANSWER

I did in fact last week make representations in the form of a long telegram to the Prime Minister asking that surveillance procedures be stepped up. I understand that two Orion reconnaissance aircraft have now been based in Darwin. In addition, I asked the Prime Minister to arrange for all interested departments, including the Northern Territory departments, to be brought together to make the necessary arrangements for the carrying out of quarantine and health procedures in the event of these refugee boats landing at some isolated point of the coast line. In fact, a senior member of the Department of Immigration arrived in Darwin on Tuesday afternoon and I believe that, since then, he has had discussions with representatives of all local departments involved. We are particularly interested from the point of view of police and wildlife rangers. I understand that steps will be taken as a matter of urgency to implement the measures of agreement reached between these various officials. I am certainly very much aware of this problem and it is causing me great concern. I do think that I should make it plain that personally I have no opposition to Australia taking into this country as many refugees as it can reasonably accommodate. However, I do believe that these refugees should be brought to Australia through the normal processes. The best way to facilitate this would be for a taskforce to be organised as a matter of urgency and sent to Southeast Asia to process the people whom we are going to take. We would then be in a position to take a rather more determined stand against any unauthorised persons seeking entry.

156 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr EVERINGHAM

What security of tenure do the Aborigines around Knuckeys Lagoon have and what acreage is involved in view of the proposed expenditure of \$80,000 in this area?

ANSWER

The Aboriginal people living in the vicinity of Knuckeys Lagoon have no security of legal tenure at this stage. Prior to the passing of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976, these people entered an Aboriginal land claim to the interim Land Commissioner for land in the area and this claim was heard, though the recommendations of the interim Land Commissioner are not available to me. After the passing of the act, the land in question, because it is urban land, could no longer be the subject of an Aboriginal land claim. It became subject to what is known as a needs-application for land which would be dealt with by the Department of Northern Territory under the normal land administration arrangements. Such an application for about 200 acres of vacant Crown land in the area on which these people are now camped was made to the Department of Northern Territory, Advice received by

the Aboriginal Development Foundation and the Knuckeyes Lagoon Aborigines is that a decision on the application would not be made for at least 12 months as there are policy implications in respect of the future expansion of Darwin. Funds have been and apparently will continue to be expended on camp improvements for these people. This expenditure is of the order of \$10,000 per annum and provides for basic improvements.

157 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

Can he say whether inequities arise from the policy of minimum guarantees for rural extensions to the electricity system? Has he seen a legal opinion which suggests the removal of these inequities? Is he considering taking action to amend the ordinance to remedy the situation?

ANSWER

Certainly, I am aware of inequities in the minimum guarantee system that applies to mainly rural areas in the Northern Territory for the supply of electricity. I have not seen any legal opinion which suggests that the system be dropped. Certainly, we are working on legislation to completely replace the legislation under which these arrangements are made at the moment. This will be in the next year's legislation to set up the electricity commission.

158 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

Is it true that the Building Board has not been issuing any building permits for the past two weeks because of a misunderstanding between the Town Planning Board and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission?

ANSWER

This matter has caused me some concern over the last few days since I learned that the processing of applications for development by the town planning section, as agents for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, has been delayed somewhat. One of the prime causes has been the great amount of work that is involved in completing all the necessary arrangements after the display of the Darwin Reconstruction Plan, the processing of objections that were received to that plan and the preparation of information to be sent to the Minister for the Northern Territory. This work is nearing finality at the present time and I am advised that processing of applications through the town planning section has recommenced. The non-contentious applications, as far as zones are concerned, are being held for presentation to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission at its next meeting on 16 December. It has been normal practice in the past that any contentious applications whatsoever in matters relating to town planning are referred to the Darwin Reconstruction Commission for a hearing and a decision. So I am pleased to say that the blockage which has existed over the past couple of weeks, I understand, is being cleared at the present time.

159 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Have undertakings been given to uranium producers in the Northern Territory to supply power to the uranium province? If so, what steps has he taken to protect the interests of consumers in the event of the project being halted in mid-stream?

ANSWER

The very limited information I have on this subject is that such an offer has not been made.

160 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is the honourable member aware of a meeting to be held of all interested parties in Darwin to discuss the drainage of both Leanyer and Marrara swamps? The parties that will be attending are the Friends of the Earth, the Citizens Advisory Council and the Environmental Council.

ANSWER

That would sound to me to be an unholy alliance. I am not aware of the parties that are involved in such a meeting but I believe there is a meeting to be held next Monday by both the Department of Housing and the Department of Construction, and a second one on the same afternoon to be open to departmental officers from Health and Construction to discuss with interested members of the public concern over the Leanyer and Marrara swamp areas. I believe that Dr, Quinn, who is in charge of environmental medicine at the hospital, will be attending on behalf of the Department of Health and this is an ideal opportunity for members of this House and members of the public to meet with the committee to discuss what needs to be done in relation to the draining of the swamp and solving the problem.

161 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Is it the Majority Party's policy that Northern Territory electricity rates will be no more than coastal north Queensland rates?

ANSWER

Yes,

162 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

Regarding the spreading of topsoil on nature strips and footpaths by the Corporation of the City of Darwin, who will assume responsibility for grassing, watering and tending those strips where there is no occupant or tenant of an adjoining property?

ANSWER

I am advised by the deputy Town Clerk that the council has undertaken that responsibility, It will continue to look after nature strips outside of vacant blocks and will attend, more particularly, to a number of corner footpaths which are overgrown and becoming a traffic hazard.

163 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr STEELE

When will the tropospheric scatter communication system be installed at Groote Eylandt to tie in with the Nhulumbuy exchange? How many channels will be used? What services will be added other than the telephone? When will this system come into operation?

ANSWER

The Gove-Groote Eylandt tropospheric system is to be installed by BHP as a privately constructed and owned system. It has to meet Australian Telecom standards and specifications. It is to be a 12 channel system and, as such, will have no TV transmission capabilities. The projected date of completion is March 1978. I have asked for further information on access to the system by others than BHP.

164 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

Can he advise when construction of the new Nightcliff Primary School, as programmed in the budget, is likely to commence and if it is expected that the school will be ready for occupancy at the beginning of the 1979 school year?

ANSWER

My answer is based on information given me by the department, and I note the honourable member is always very careful to point out that I have liaison responsibilities for education, so the information I have is not of my own knowledge but that given to me by the department. The program is still current and they anticipate commencing construction in May 1978, with tenders being called on time in February 1978.

The projected time for construction, according to the Department of Construction advice, would be about 52 weeks. The method of construction which is going to be used is very similar to that which was used at the Berrimah gaol, which is the new engineering technique of modular construction. Using that particular technique of construction, they anticipate that there is a very good chance of the time period for construction being somewhat less than 52 weeks. Indeed, if the firm - whoever gets that contract - does as well as those who are building the Berrimah gaol, then it will certainly be ahead of schedule. If those things occurs, then it will be available for occupancy by students within the first term of 1979,

165 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise the current position concerning the ban on cattle movements within Central Australia or out of Central Australia?

ANSWER

The current position is very bad for the Northern Territory. The South Australian government has declined to accept cattle from Central Australia although, of course, there is no midge carrying the virus existing in Central Australia. The Queensland government, although it has found the same insect in its own territory, has decided to place a ban on Territory cattle. The Western Australian government is in a more ludicrous situation in that the boundaries of stations in the same regional or geographical area, the same rainfall-type area, are separated by three strands of barbed wire and the movement of cattle through that barbed wire to the next place is prohibited.

I think the situation is getting out of hand. I think it is a hoax.

I think it is about time that someone came clean on this particular matter. I believe that Victoria and New South Wales have threatened Queensland and South Australia, and said if you accept Northern Territory cattle, we will not accept your cattle. I think it is about time the federal Minister for Primary Industry stepped in. At the present moment we are denied access to northern markets because of this stupid hoax situation.

166 Mr COLLINS to Mr PERRON

What steps have been taken to overcome staff shortages, high turnover of staff, training deficiencies and the lack of reference drawings and schematic diagrams at the Stokes Hill Power Station?

ANSWER

I cannot supply a detailed answer to that question just off the top of my head. I know there has been some action to alleviate some of the shortages in the day-labour area by allowing local people to have the authority to recruit within certain levels, whereas this was formerly prohibited under an absolutely absurd arrangement which existed up until quite recently. However, if he would like to place that question on notice, I am sure we could supply a more detailed answer.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

167 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: The member for Arnhem asked me in the adjournment debate last Wednesday who wrote my previous speech. It implied, to my way of thinking, that my husband did. The answer to the honourable member's question is that I wrote my speech. I am very disturbed at such typical male chauvinism, exhibited by a member of the Opposition, because they would all have us believe they are in the forefront of believing equal rights, equal opportunity and equal consideration should be extended

Mr ISAACS: A point of order, Mr Speaker! As I understand it, question time is for questions to executive members or to members who have a certain responsibility in the House. The member for Tiwi can make a statement on this matter but now is not the appropriate time.

Mr SPEAKER: I am not quite clear on this particular point but standing order 91 says:

Questions may be put to a Member, not being an Executive Member, relating to any bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the Assembly, of which the Member has charge.

I think this is a border-line case where a question was asked of the honourable member. She had leave and I think she has completed her answer. Therefore, my ruling is that the member was out of order.

168 Mr HARRIS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Has an agreement been reached with the minister with regard to the finalisation of the handover of the Department of the Northern Territory functions to the local executive?

ANSWER

I understand from the Minister for the Northern Territory that a cabinet decision was taken some little time ago that all functions of the Department of the Northern Territory would be handed over to the local executive as at 1 July 1978. I understand the term "all functions" includes the functions of land and mining.

169 Mr DOOLAN to Mr PERRON

Have tenders been called for a new workshop and stores complex at Stokes Hill Power Station? If so, to what stage has work proceeded? If tenders have not been called, why not?

ANSWER

I know that the workshop and stores complex is on the current year's works program but I have no idea of the stage it has reached. I ask him to place the question on notice.

170 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

My question is asked on behalf of the member for Elsey. What steps are being taken to ensure that surveillance of foreign fishing vessels in Australian waters is being maintained, having regard to the strain placed on Navy resources in their efforts to ensure early detection of refugee vessels?

ANSWER

May I say, Mr Speaker, that you appear to be an oracle because I have in front of me a report from the Northern Territory News of 31 March 1976 where you were reported as saying: "I anticipate that they will come from the north, some thousands of family groups in an armada of fishing vessels for a peaceful invasion of northern Australia". This is what is happening at the moment, Mr Speaker. Your gift of prescience has been greater than that granted to the rest of us. It is my intention - and I am maintaining pressure daily - to see that our surveillance facilities are increased. In fact, I am also taking the opportunity to pressure the federal government to step up our defence capability in northern Australia. I really consider our defence capability here to be pathetic. This has really shown this up. We now must see the fruit of years of neglect of our defence forces and cuts in defence spending. There is very little that Australia could do if it were really menaced by other than a peaceful invasion.

171 Mr PERKINS to Mr PERRON

Will he make available to the Assembly the investigation into the accounting procedures of the electricity service carried out in the last year?

ANSWER

I am not sure what document the honourable member is referring to. There was an inquiry into the electricity system in the Northern Territory and that was tabled in this House and made quite public. I assume that he is referring to a ministerial inquiry commissioned in 1976 to report on the financial aspects of the electricity supply in

the Northern Territory. This was a completely internal document; it was a departmental report to a federal minister and is certainly not available for tabling in this House.

172 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

In a press statement, the Minister for Health recently announced the setting up of a national pathology accreditation advisory council, Will this council operate in the Northern Territory and is there a need for this type of council?

ANSWER

I would say that there is a most definite need throughout Australia for this type of council. This has been proved by the rip-off that has been carried out by pathology agencies operating throughout Australia. This is the response that the Minister for Health has taken. The council will be set up both on a federal and state level to operate in tandem with each other. It would be necessary for the Northern Territory to introduce complementary legislation for it to have its own council. At the moment, our pathology services are carried out by the Department of Health in the Northern Territory. There are no private operators in the field and, while it would be essential for us to have legislation to set up a council to keep a watchful eye on private operators, legislation will not be necessary until they appear on the scene.

173 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Has the timetable for the complete undergrounding of the electricity distribution system been established? If so, what is it? Has the Majority Party a policy that all cables must be underground?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be placed on notice.

174 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TUXWORTH

Last week, I asked about the actions of sand miners operating in Howard swamp area. He gave valuable information in his reply but it was mainly to do with outstanding lease applications. What action has been taken to stop sand miners operating quite illegally in areas outside their lease? If no action is being taken, why not?

Mr SPEAKER: I direct your notice to standing order 94 which says that questions fully answered cannot be renewed. Do you claim that the question was not fully answered?

Mrs LAWRIE: My point is that the question was not answered at all. Other information was given but no answer was given to my specific query.

Mr TUXWORTH: I stated in the reply, and the honourable member may correct me if I am wrong, that I did not have the specific information that she requested on that particular area, and that it was my intention to get that and also some information relating to questions that came from the honourable member for Tiwi. I sent the request to the department and, as soon as I have a reply, I will answer the honourable member's question in writing.

175 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

I refer to his reply to my question about when the town planning chief would come back to work in the Northern Territory. The reply disturbed me greatly. I have been advised that he will not return to Darwin and that he has been transferred to the list of unattached officers. Everyone knows that it takes 12 to 18 months to fill a position of this nature.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I direct that the question be placed on notice.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

176 Mr PERRON: The Leader of the Opposition asked if I could inform this Assembly what mechanism was used to give liquidity to the Home Finance Trustee in October this year. I have been advised that, in October, the Northern Territory Housing Commission agreed to invest \$500,000 in the scheme at an interest rate of 9.5%. In addition to these dealings, the Treasurer's concurrence was received for the transfer of \$1m from the 6% concessional home loan scheme for investment in the \$15,000 scheme. This transfer has been made possible by the expected tapering off of demand within the 6% scheme.

177 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

Can he advise whether the 400-seat theatre has been reinstated in the proposal to build Dripstone High School?

ANSWER

I do not know whether it is a 400-seat theatre; I think it is in the order of 300. The answer is that it has not been reinstated. I think that it is quite miserable that it has not been. I would point out to the House that the original cost estimate for that complex, inclusive of the theatre, is such that the tender price as presently exists including the theatre would be less than their own estimates. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever why that theatre cannot be incorporated in the new school. Indeed, it can be very easily incorporated because of its detached nature. As far as I am concerned, all the federal departments, including the Department of Education, have no excuse whatsoever for not providing that facility to the northern suburbs. I am continuing to apply as much pressure as I possibly can to have it reinstated.

178 Mr COLLINS to Mr ROBERTSON

I direct my question to the Executive Member for Community and Social Development, in his liaison role with the Department of Education. Is it a fact that, as claimed by Senator Kilgariff in a news report, the standard of education facilities in the Northern Territory is higher than all states and possibly better than most overseas countries?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Arnhem is calling for an opinion; that is not allowed under standing order 92.

192 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr STEELE

What is the purchase price of the NADC property at Willeroo-Scotts Creek?

ANSWER

The purchase price of the Willeroo project will be built into the final arrangements to be decided in February of next year. We are currently looking at a purchase price of around \$1.15m. This is yet to be finalised and it is a bit early for us to make a statement about the purchase.

193 Mr HARRIS to Mr ROBERTSON

I refer to cyclone educational broadcasts. Are broadcasts being made in foreign languages at this time, what is the frequency of these broadcasts and, if no broadcasts are being made, when will they commence?

ANSWER

In relation to foreign language broadcasts, the answer is no. The Good Neighbour Council is currently working with the ABC to prepare tapes for educating ethnic groups in Darwin. The languages concerned are Greek, Italian, Spanish, Yugoslav, Portuguese, French, German and Hukka Chinese. It will probably involve a continuous 20 minute broadcast on a weekly basis, as has been done in the past. Broadcasts certainly have commenced because all members will no doubt have heard the rather striking sound used to draw people's attention to it. These are currently being conducted in the English language.

194 Mr COLLINS to Mr STEELE

Under what authority is the Northern Territory executive purchasing the Willeroo-Scotts Creek properties?

ANSWER

The position is that the Northern Territory executive has decided to support farmers going into an agricultural project. It is early days as far as the final arrangements are concerned and we will set up a management scheme under statute. That will not happen until next year when all the arrangements have been decided.

195 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr TUXWORTH

Why doesn't the Forestry Branch, in a similar way to forestry commissions in the states, have a policy to sell to rural agricultural and pastoral people shrubs and trees in large quantities, for their use and not for resale?

ANSWER

It is my understanding that the Northern Territory Forestry Branch does in fact have a policy of supplying trees, plants and shrubs to any organisation or body that needs them. However, the branch is not in direct competition with people in private enterprise and sales that

would normally compete with private enterprise are carried out on a basis of the branch's ability to supply produce from time to time.

196 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TUXWORTH

I ask for the third time this sittings. if it is a fact that sand miners operating in the Howard Swamps area are extending beyond their lease boundaries, why has this practice not been stopped by the Mines Branch? This is the same question I have asked in three different ways.

ANSWER

I take the honourable member's point that it is the same question in three different ways and she has been very patient with me. However, on Friday last I endeavoured to go out and have a look at the area mentioned by the honourable member, which covers a great part of the 32-mile acquisition area that is being abused by sand miners. There is no doubt in my mind - indeed it is a fact of life - that there is quite a deal of illegal mining going on in the area mentioned by the honourable member and, in fact, in many other parts of this 32-mile acquisition area. The reason that the Mines Branch has not been policing the area is that, firstly, it does not have the staff to handle the amount of investigation that is needed. There is no doubt in my mind that we would need a team of two or three men working round the clock to be able to survey the area in the manner that is needed to stop illegal mining. As a further response to the honourable member's concern, it is my intention to introduce this morning a bill that may deter people a little from carrying out these illegal activities.

197 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

Is NADC, the owner of Willeroo, in debt to approximately \$18m? Can he give us an assurance that, if it proceeds, the project will be overseen by experts and not party hacks?

ANSWER

I am delighted to assure him that it won't be overseen by party hacks. I can't answer the first part of his question. I don't know how much NADC owes or is owed through Willeroo. I think our proposition is something that the Labor Party would have liked to have done had they been in office; it is an entrepreneurial approach to agriculture as mentioned by Mr Waters in September. We will ensure that the correct legal arrangements are undertaken and a proper financial agreement signed. There is no way in the world that we can do any more than that. We will set it up under statute in February if all these things are done.

198 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr TUXWORTH

What is happening to the Woodcutters lead-zinc ore body near Batchelor in view of the acclaim granted to its discovery in the early 1960s?

ANSWER

The Woodcutters project was established by the Bureau of Mineral Resources in the early 1960s and was subsequently tendered to private

enterprise for further investigation and development. A great deal of investigatory work has been carried out by the principals who are the same people involved in the Ranger uranium deposits. There are several further factors to be determined. One is the metallurgical problem that is involved and another is the extent of the ore body. The latter problem is holding up further exploration at the moment. The company would like to put down several exploratory holes on an area that is currently reserved as a catchment area for the Darwin River Dam. Because of the nature of the catchment area reserve, it is not possible for them to explore as they would on any other area. A plan is currently being drawn up by the environmental section, the wildlife section and the Mines Branch staff to formalise a plan of management purely for the exploration stage. It is important to point out that world metal prices will be the criterion that will determine whether this particular project proceeds. However, before the company gets to that stage, it must determine the size of the body. It could well be that the exploratory holes the company wishes to put down in the reserve will prove that the body is not of significant size as to warrant further development. Until that has been established, the program is in abeyance.

199 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr STEELE

Can he inform the House how the money is to be raised to purchase the property known as Willeroo?

ANSWER

My patience is wearing fairly thin because, in my reply to the first question on the subject of Willeroo, I indicated we would make a statement at a later stage. Just trying to be helpful, which is my usual approach, I will try to patiently explain to the honourable member for Sanderson that the financial arrangement is still to be properly finalised in February. However, what we would attempt to do is to rearrange the mortgage structure from one outfit to another outfit. We will make a statement on this at a later stage.

200 Mr DONDAS to Mr STEELE

In light of the Opposition's number of questions on Willeroo, I will also ask one on Willeroo. If negotiations are successful in that the Northern Territory executive purchases Willeroo, can the executive member advise me how many people would the project employ?

ANSWER

It is not exactly certain but we would wish that several farmers could be established there in the first year or so of the operation of the project. We expect that we would be able to place young people in employment there in training projects. I will have to ask that any further questions on Willeroo be placed on notice.

201 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it true that the reclamation work to be carried out at the Rum Jungle mine at Batchelor will cost in the vicinity of \$14 million?

ANSWER

I have no information available to me to suggest that the reclamation

work will cost \$14 million on it. I would, however, point out to the honourable member that the government has accepted the liability for this work at Rum Jungle and in the Finness River areas for which it was directly responsible in the early 1950s and, to this end, has provided \$300,000 in this year's budget for restoration work to begin. I believe a similar amount of money will be provided each year until the restoration work is completed. As to the \$14 million, I just could not comment.

202 Mr OLIVER to Mr TUXWORTH

It has come to my notice that south of and including Tennant Creek there is no resident explosives inspector. In view of the mining activities at Tennant Creek and construction work generally, has any consideration been given to appointing an explosives inspector in the southern region?

ANSWER

My understanding is that officers of the Mines Branch who carry out machinery inspections and mine inspections on mining operations anywhere in the Territory also have vested in them the control of matters that are provided for in the Explosives Ordinance. I am aware, too, that the control of explosives in civil operations such as blowing trenches for sewerage mains is an area that falls within the jurisdiction of the Commercial and Industrial Affairs Branch of the Department of the Northern Territory and while I could not comment on how that branch covers its particular area, I am aware that the Mines Branch side of it is fully catered for.

203 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

Following on from his reply to my question on notice regarding Beatrice Hill, could he tell me what are the terms of occupation of Professor Harry Messell at the Beatrice Hill Research Station and how long will his occupation last?

ANSWER

I am unable to provide that information off the top of my head. I will have to search out the information and provide it for the honourable member later in the day.

204 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

How many vets are there per 100,000 cattle in the Northern Territory, compared to the states? Why is the Northern Territory rural news magazine now printed in Brisbane, and why has this magazine been so delayed in recent months?

ANSWER

I will ask the honourable member to place his question on notice.

205 Mr OLIVER to Mr PERRON

I believe the Lands Branch is acutely short of pastoral inspectors. In view of the fact that early this year some 29 applicants, including eight from the Northern Territory, were interviewed and none selected,

despite the fact that some of the Northern Territory applicants appeared to be eminently suited for the position, my question is what qualifications are now required by the Lands Branch to satisfy its requirements in selecting a pastoral inspector?

ANSWER

I have been advised on this matter by the Lands Branch that earlier this year there were three positions advertised for pastoral inspectors, one senior inspector and two ordinary inspectors. There were eight applicants for the senior position and 21 applicants for the ordinary positions. The senior inspector was appointed; one of the ordinary inspectors has been appointed and will be gazetted on the 15th of this month. There is still one position vacant for an ordinary inspector and applicants are currently being interviewed. The qualifications required by the branch for these positions are merely a wide experience in and knowledge of the pastoral industry, rural land valuation and survey ability, and an ability to prepare plans and reports.

206 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

I ask him to be a little more patient as the matter does have some notoriety in the community. In view of his statement about legislation being passed in February regarding the Willeroo-Scotts Creek purchase, can he inform the Assembly what has occurred by way of investigation to date, has any money been spent in travel or otherwise to investigate the proposed purchase and under what authority was the money spent?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

207 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

I refer to government-owned blocks in the Port Darwin district on which residences were damaged and are now an eyesore reducing the value of privately-owned blocks in the area. Will the government say when they are going to rebuild on these areas and, if not, what are they going to do with them to maintain the equity of the private landholders?

ANSWER

The question relates to vacant land in the Port Darwin area which has not been built on to date. If he supplies me with specific lot numbers, I will endeavour to establish that they are in fact still government blocks. I will also establish whether the government intends to build upon those particular blocks or possibly sell them in the near future. I believe a number of government-owned vacant lots throughout Darwin will be sold in the foreseeable future. There are many private lots scattered around Darwin which have been sold since the cyclone and whose covenants are not due to be commenced until April 1978. Many of these blocks will remain in a fairly untidy state until such time as the owner is required to commence complying with the covenants.

208 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

Is he aware that I have issued a challenge to him to debate the new Town Planning Ordinance with him tonight at Kentish Hall in Wells Creek Road? If he is aware of that fact, can he indicate whether he accepts that challenge?

ANSWER

The member for Sanderson has been waffling in the press about a variety of matters and has given general misrepresentations as far as the recent town planning amendments are concerned. She has called a public meeting of her own on Thursday night at the Howard Springs School. I presume that, as a member of the public, I would be welcome and she is certainly welcome to come along to me to ask questions. The honourable member has had an opportunity in this House to debate the legislation. She spoke at some length on an amendment to the second-reading and then the Opposition failed to take up further debate on the second-reading speech itself after the amendment was defeated. It seemed quite obvious to me that honourable members opposite had talked themselves out on this matter.

209 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr TUXWORTH

I ask about the boats from Asia which are presently located among the mangroves in East Arm near the quarantine station. Is it a fact that they are deteriorating in their present situation? How long does he anticipate they will be left there, and does he know if they will be available for sale at some future time?

ANSWER

Being a desert man and not a seaside man, I am not terribly well up on how boats would last in that condition, sitting on mud flats, but my understanding is that any boat left sitting in the water deteriorates. The honourable member's question, as to whether the boats will be disposed of, is one that I cannot answer other than to say that, from my experience in the fisheries section, boats that were seized in that particular area were very difficult to dispose of because they did not measure up to Australian standards. I would think this situation would also apply to these boats.

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