

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II

QUESTIONS NOT ANSWERED BY 21 DECEMBER 1976

FROM 17 NOVEMBER 1976

1550 Mr BALLANTYNE to Dr LETTS

Has there been a feasibility study made in the Northern Territory for the use of the Northern Territory rivers to load and transport live cattle for export?

FROM 7 DECEMBER 1976

1625 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS

What is necessary to raise the Alice Springs Abattoirs to export licence standard?

1626 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK

Has a water filter been fitted at the departmental residence of the Director of Health in Darwin and, if so, was the filter installed at departmental expense and how much did it cost?

FROM 21 DECEMBER 1976

1628 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK

Could you please advise the following in respect of -

- (1) Central Australian Aboriginal Medical Service;
- (2) Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service;
- (3) Central Australian Aborigines Congress;
- (4) Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, Alice Springs -
 - (a) The number of persons employed;
 - (b) Titles and remuneration received, and other employment benefits;
 - (c) Who is responsible for the hiring and firing of their employees;
 - (d) Are the organisations' financial records and expenditure subject to any audit requirements, if so what;
 - (e) Are vehicle records and logbooks kept?

1629 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING

1. Can he advise the name of the contractor company in charge of the construction of the Timber Creek Police Station?
2. Is it true that this company is having financial difficulties?
3. Is the construction of the Timber Creek Police Station on schedule in keeping with the requirements of the Department of Construction?
4. If not, what are the problems and why the delays?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1197 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW

1. As at 30 June 1975 and 1976, how many members were physically attached to the CIB Inquiry Section at -
 - (a) Darwin
 - (b) Alice Springs
 - (c) Katherine
 - (d) Tennant Creek, and
 - (e) Nhulunbuy?
2. What support sections are available to the CIB, such as breaking, consorting and drug squads and how many members does each of these squads have?
3. Are any of these squads in the CIB to be expanded in the coming six months and, if so, by how many additional members and what new positions are proposed?

ANSWER

	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
1. (a)	17	20
	+ (Women Police 7)	+ (Women Police 7)
(b)	7	7
	+ (Women Police 2)	+ (Women Police 2)
(c)	1	1
(d)	1	1
(e)	1	1

Owing to the accommodation problem in Darwin after 25/12/75 necessity required that members be assigned to temporary duties in other areas as follows:

30/6/75

- (a) 14
+ (Women Police 2)
- (b) 12
+ (Women Police 2)
- (c) 1
- (d) 2
- (e) 1

The physical strength as at 30/6/76 was as follows:

- (a) 18
+ (Women Police 4)
- (b) 7
+ (Women Police 2)

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

(c) 1

(d) 1

(e) 1

2. The Criminal Investigation Branch has the full support of all sections of the Northern Territory Police Service. The establishment of No. 1 Division, 'C' District consists of the -

1. Criminal Investigation Branch - 20 members

2. Criminal Intelligence Section - 3 members

3. Drug Squad - 2 members

4. Stock Squad - 2 members

3. No.

Nil.

The establishment of 'C' District is continually under review but any increases are dictated by Government policy and availability of finance.

1199 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW

1. Is the Stock Squad of the NT Police presently functional?

2. How many members are there in the squad?

3. What vehicles are attached to the squad?

4. How many horses are attached to the squad?

5. How many cases has the squad investigated in the period 1 January 1976 to 30 June 1976?

6. How many kilometres has the squad travelled in the same period?

7. How many nights have members of the squad spent away from home on duty in the same period?

8. How many pastoral properties in the -

- (a) Darwin Gulf District;
- (b) Victoria River District;
- (c) Barkly District; and
- (d) Alice Springs District

has the squad visited in the past 12 months?

ANSWER

1. Yes.

2. 2.

3. Nil. The squad members have access to the 'C' District and General Duties ('D' District) motor vehicle pool.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

4. Nil. If horses are required they would be obtained on a hire basis.
5. 4.
6. 1100.
7. 3.
8. (a) 5
(b) Nil
(c) Nil
(d) Nil

The squad is only required to attend other Police Districts when an inquiry is beyond the resources of local police.

1375 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

1. What is the cost of supplying and installing a water meter on a residential block in Darwin and how much has been spent for this purpose in the last eighteen months?
2. What is spent annually on the maintenance of water meters in Darwin?
3. How many water meter readers are employed in Darwin and what are their total annual wages and allowances?
4. What are the other annual administrative costs to the Government for the collection of excess water charges?
5. What revenue is derived annually from excess water charges in Darwin on -
 - (a) residential blocks; and
 - (b) parks and recreation areas under the control of the Corporation of the City of Darwin?
6. What proportion of the total revenue from the supply of water is represented by the amount collected for excess water charges?

ANSWER

1. The cost of supplying and installing a water meter on a residential block in Darwin is \$40.00, divided equally between the cost of the meter and the installation cost. In recent years supply and installation costs have been as follows:

1972/73	\$39,736
1973/74	\$40,855
1974/75	\$15,327
1975/76	\$76,759

The above figures do not include cyclone damage replacement costs, however in 1976 abnormal costs were incurred in replacing damaged meters on construction sites.

2. The annual cost for maintenance of water meters in Darwin is about \$25,000.
3. One permanent water meter reader (Clerical Assistant Grade 2) is employed in Darwin while the water inspector (Clerical Assistant

Grade 4) carries out monthly check reads on large consumers for part of his time. For six weeks of the year an additional three readers are required (Water Inspector and two clerical assistants grade 2). Total salary payments are about \$14,000 per annum. A proportion of this cost is applicable to meter reading outside Darwin.

4. No records are maintained of other administrative costs for the collection of excess water charges in isolation from water and sewerage billing costs.

The administrative costs for staff involved directly in billing for all water and sewerage charges is \$35,000 and the proportion for water accounts is approximately \$20,000.

Fifty percent of water accounts involve an excess charge calculation and this is estimated to require 25% of the time taken to produce an account. Approximate other administrative costs in the collection of excess charges is therefore \$2,500.

5. (a) No recent statistics are available for excess water charges applicable to residential blocks only. Based on the distribution of charges in the charge year 1971/72, the latest year comprehensive statistics were extracted, the following estimates have been made for total excess charges, all consumers and excess charges residential blocks only.

Charge Year	Estimated Total Excess Charges	Estimated Excess Charges Residential Blocks Only
1971/72	\$439,000	\$57,500
1972/73	515,000	67,500
1973/74	670,000	88,000
1974/75	788,000	124,000
1975/76 (Cyclone Disaster Regulations applied)		NIL
1976/77	942,000	148,000

The above figures for excess charges on residential blocks do not include charges applicable to flats, domestic residences on business premises or domestic premises on Defence property.

- (b) Excess water charges for parks and recreation areas controlled by the Corporation of the City of Darwin have been:

1971/72	\$20,500
1972/73	28,500
1973/74	38,000
1974/75	40,000

These include the two public swimming pools and the Mindil Beach Caravan Park.

6. Estimated excess water charge expressed as a percentage of total water revenue in Darwin and the Northern Territory is -

(a) Darwin	68%
(b) Northern Territory	68%

1376 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING

1. Has the attention of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission been

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

drawn to any instances of "jerry-building", in particular, the structure in the course of erection on block 2911 Fannie Bay?

2. Was a "stop work" notice issued by the Building Board in respect of the structure on block 2911?
3. Has the connection of water, installation of a toilet and shower room and the connection of electricity to the block been carried out since the issue of the "stop work" notice?
4. Were these services provided in conformity with the relevant regulations and the work carried out by licensed tradesmen?
5. Is it the intention of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to prosecute the owner of the block for any violations of the Building Code perpetrated in the last three months?

ANSWER

1. Yes, the attention of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has been drawn to instances of "jerry building" including the structure on lot 2911 Conigrave Street, Fannie Bay.
2. Yes, a Stop Work Notice was issued on August 20, 1976. An inspection on September 29, 1976 showed that the notice had not been complied with and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission was informed.
3. Water supply, sewerage and drainage connections existed prior to the issue of the Stop Work Notice. (The water connection was made by the Department of Construction on August 19, 1976.)

A temporary electricity connection was made on September 28, 1976 following the receipt of a completion notice on September 16, 1976.

A toilet and shower room was installed after the Stop Work Notice.

4. Yes, the services were provided in conformity with the relevant regulations and the work carried out by licensed tradesmen.

The premises were inspected by the Department of Health who consider power, water and drainage satisfactory.

5. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission proposes to review the matter in November and if the position is still unsatisfactory the Commission will prosecute under Section 15 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act.

The occupier of the lot now has a caravan on the site and has undertaken to remove the unsafe parts of the structure.

1548 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH

I refer to the Taiwanese fishing boat and its catch sold recently for \$6,000 and \$1,000 respectively and ask -

- (a) which government department handled the sale;
- (b) was any valuation or assessment of value of the boat and catch obtained by the department;
- (c) did the department advertise or otherwise offer the boat and/or catch for sale either by auction, tender or private treaty;

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

- (d) how many offers to purchase or approaches with a view to purchase did the department receive;
- (e) what was the amount of each offer received;
- (f) When, how and by whom was the decision made to sell the vessel for \$6,000 and the catch for \$1,000;
- (g) was the sale for cash or on terms and, if cash, was it paid before the boat was released;
- (h) if the sale was on terms, what were the terms;
- (i) what was the cost to the government for arresting, escorting and detaining the vessel?

ANSWER

- 1. Attorney-General's Department did not handle the sale, it was handled by the Department of Primary Industries.
- 2. The valuation was carried out by officers of the Department of Primary Industries on the valuation of the vessel and the catch.
- 3. The department did not advertise the vessel or the catch for sale, either by auction, tender or private treaty.
- 4. Only one offer was received to purchase the vessel.
- 5. & 6. The value of the offer was \$6,000 for the vessel and \$1,000 for the catch.
- 7. & 8. The vessel was sold for cash before the boat was released.
- 9. Not applicable.
- 10. Because some 9 Government departments and agencies were involved in the arrest, apprehension, court procedures, storage, wharfage and disposal of the vessel, it is impossible to give any correct cost incurred by the Government.

1549 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW

How do the recent increased allowances for isolated children compare with increased school allowances to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders under the ABSEG scheme?

ANSWER

A.B.S.E.G

1977

Living Allowances - junior grades	\$440 pa
Living Allowances - senior grades	440 pa
Books and clothing allowance	250 pa
Plus, for students in the two senior grades boarding for the first time or involved in a change of school after initial enrolment	50 pa
Personal allowances - junior grades	1.50 pw
Personal allowances - senior grades	3.00 pw
Boarding allowances -	

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Boarding schools	\$1450 (max.)
Hostels	28 pw
Private	20 pw

ASSISTANCE FOR ISOLATED CHILDREN

	<u>1977</u>
Basic Boarding	\$500
Additional boarding (max.)	450
Correspondence (basic)	200
Correspondence reimbursement (max.)	300
Second home - 1 child	500
- 2 children	925
- +3 children	1275
Short term boarding	15 pw

1551 Mr VALE to Mr TAMBLING

Is he aware that, at the public auction of land in Alice Springs at the end of September, the shopping complex designed to service the new Racecourse West subdivision was passed in through lack of bids? How was the reserve price determined and will this price be reviewed in order that the block can be re-offered with some hope of a sale eventuating and the development of the block taking place at an early date.

ANSWER

The shopsite, Lot 4583 Town of Alice Springs, was passed in at the land sale held on 30 September 1976,

The reserve price of \$84,620 for Lot 4583 was the cost of servicing the lot and is in accordance with the formula for determining the reserve price of commercial land approved by the Minister.

The department is at present making preparations for the release of industrial land in Alice Springs. The target date for this sale is January, 1977 and it is proposed to offer Lot 4583 again at that time at the same reserve price.

1552 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS

When will the ordinance passed by the Assembly on 27/5/76 to amend the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance receive assent?

ANSWER

The Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance 1976 which was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 May 1976, was reserved by the Administrator on 30 September 1976, and now awaits the Governor-General's pleasure.

1553 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW

How many persons have been convicted for drug offences in the Territory in the last two years and in each case -

- (a) what was the name of the person convicted;
- (b) what was the date of conviction;
- (c) what was the drug involved; and
- (d) who was the Magistrate who presided at the hearing?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

298. (1 December 1974 - 30 November 1976).

(a) It is not our policy to divulge this information.

(b) Refer Appendix "A".

(c) Cannabis	272
Heroin	11
L.S.D.	10
Morphine	1
Dangerous Drugs	1
Hashish Oil	1
S.T.P.	2

(d) Not available from our records.

Appendix 'A'

<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>	<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>
LSD	3/12/74	Cannabis	11/07/75
"	3/12/74	"	9/06/75
Cannabis	2/12/74	"	26/06/75
"	3/12/74	"	13/06/75
"	5/12/74	"	13/06/75
"	5/12/74	"	20/06/75
"	9/12/74	"	10/06/75
"	12/12/74	"	27/06/75
"	24/12/74	"	27/06/75
"	12/12/74	"	17/06/75
"	13/12/74	"	17/06/75
Heroin	14/11/74	"	1/07/75
Cannabis	23/12/74	"	18/09/75
"	10/02/75	"	27/06/75
"	20/02/75	"	27/06/75
Heroin	14/03/75	"	27/06/75
Cannabis	12/03/75	"	3/07/75
"	21/03/75	"	3/07/75
"	26/03/75	"	28/08/75
"	26/03/75	"	3/07/75
"	26/03/75	"	7/07/75
"	26/03/75	Dangerous Drugs	8/07/75
"	26/03/75	Cannabis LSD	11/07/75
"	26/03/75	Cannabis	18/12/75
"	3/04/75	Heroin, Hash Oil	13/08/75
"	12/06/75	Cannabis	28/07/75
"	3/04/75	"	13/08/75
"	11/04/75	Morphine	18/08/75
"	11/04/75	Cannabis	18/08/75
"	29/04/75	"	18/08/75
"	23/04/75	"	20/08/75
"	23/04/75	"	20/08/75
Cannabis LSD	17/04/75	"	28/08/75
" "	17/04/75	"	28/08/75
" "	17/04/75	"	20/08/75
Cannabis	8/05/75	"	8/09/75
"	8/05/75	"	27/08/75
LSD	8/05/75	"	27/08/75
Cannabis	17/07/75	"	25/08/75
"	15/05/75	"	28/08/75

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>	<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>
Cannabis	28/08/75	Cannabis	27/01/76
"	28/08/75	"	27/01/76
"	11/08/75	LSD	2/02/76
"	25/08/75	Cannabis	27/01/76
Heroin	12/09/75	"	2/02/76
Cannabis	19/09/75	"	8/02/76
"	19/09/75	"	27/01/76
"	19/09/75	"	6/05/76
Heroin	23/09/75	"	29/01/76
Cannabis	30/09/75	"	15/01/76
"	29/09/75	Cannabis LSD	13/02/76
"	1/10/75	Cannabis	13/02/76
"	3/10/75	"	19/02/76
"	29/09/75	"	24/02/76
Heroin	26/09/75	"	23/02/76
Cannabis	22/09/75	"	23/02/76
"	3/10/75	"	9/02/76
"	8/10/75	"	3/03/76
"	14/10/75	"	26/02/76
"	8/10/75	"	5/03/76
"	16/10/75	"	25/03/76
"	20/10/75	"	10/03/76
"	20/10/75	"	17/03/76
"	21/10/75	"	22/03/76
"	21/10/75	"	24/03/76
"	21/10/75	"	30/03/76
"	21/10/75	"	29/03/76
"	21/10/75	"	29/03/76
"	17/03/75	"	29/03/76
"	20/10/75	"	29/03/76
"	11/11/75	"	22/02/76
"	20/10/75	"	2/04/76
"	18/11/75	"	5/03/76
"	7/10/75	"	5/03/76
"	7/10/75	"	5/03/76
"	10/11/75	"	7/04/76
"	12/11/75	"	1/04/76
"	17/11/75	"	9/08/76
"	1/12/75	"	9/08/76
"	26/11/75	"	9/08/76
"	1/12/75	LSD	9/08/76
"	1/12/75	Cannabis	9/04/76
"	1/12/75	"	9/04/76
"	1/12/75	"	9/04/76
"	5/12/75	"	22/04/76
"	1/12/75	"	13/04/76
"	8/12/75	"	13/04/76
"	3/12/75	"	2/11/76
"	24/12/75	"	14/04/76
"	6/01/76	"	21/04/76
"	6/01/76	"	3/05/76
"	6/01/76	"	3/05/76
"	6/01/76	"	3/05/76
"	22/12/75	"	13/05/76
"	18/12/75	"	13/05/76
"	17/12/75	"	11/05/76
"	13/02/76	"	29/04/76
"	20/01/76	"	28/05/76
"	15/02/76	"	5/05/76
"	10/06/76	"	12/05/76

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>	<u>DRUG TYPE</u>	<u>DATE OF CONVICTION</u>
Cannabis	10/05/76	Cannabis	6/08/76
"	25/05/76	"	20/08/76
"	11/05/76	"	20/08/76
"	14/05/76	"	20/08/76
"	31/05/76	"	20/08/76
Heroin	2/07/76	"	24/08/76
Cannabis	2/07/76	"	20/08/76
"	28/05/76	"	20/08/76
"	1/06/76	"	24/08/76
"	10/06/76	"	28/10/76
"	22/06/76	"	28/10/76
"	23/06/76	"	28/10/76
"	22/06/76	"	25/08/76
"	8/07/76	"	15/09/76
"	29/06/76	"	15/09/76
"	29/06/76	"	30/08/76
"	29/06/76	"	30/08/76
"	29/06/76	"	13/09/76
"	5/07/76	"	31/08/76
"	5/07/76	"	2/09/76
"	5/07/76	"	3/09/76
"	5/07/76	"	16/11/76
"	21/06/76	"	7/09/76
"	6/07/76	"	29/09/76
"	16/07/76	"	13/09/76
"	16/07/76	"	16/09/76
S.T.P.	11/08/76	"	16/09/76
Cannabis	7/07/76	"	16/09/76
"	7/07/76	Cannabis STP	5/10/76
"	7/07/76	Cannabis	15/09/76
"	14/07/76	"	20/09/76
"	26/07/76	"	20/09/76
"	22/07/76	"	15/11/76
"	22/07/76	"	28/10/76
"	22/07/76	"	25/10/76
"	27/07/76	Heroin	13/11/76
"	27/07/76	"	19/11/76
"	11/08/76	"	13/11/76
"	27/07/76	"	10/11/76
"	22/07/76	"	10/11/76
"	4/08/76	Cannabis	4/11/76
"	3/08/76	"	4/11/76
"	13/08/76	"	12/11/76
"	17/08/76	"	12/11/76
"	17/08/76	"	24/11/76
"	9/09/76	"	24/11/76

1554 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK

How many Aboriginal people on settlements and reserves are in receipt of unemployment benefits through the Department of Social Security?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

There were 63 payments of unemployment benefit being made to persons on settlements and reserves as at 8/11/76.

1627 Mr WITHNALL to Mr RYAN

What is the reason for the failure to commence the Motor Vehicles Ordinance No. 76 of 1972?

ANSWER

When the Motor Vehicles Ordinance No. 76 of 1972 was passed by the Legislative Council it was thought that Licence and Registration records at the Motor Vehicle Registry would be placed on computer within a short period of time. Several complications arose precluding this and it is only now that the records have been computerised.

The Ordinance provided for the prescription of all M.V.R. forms in Regulations rather than in the body of the Principal Ordinance. As computerisation meant a change in design of some of these forms, commencement of the Ordinance was delayed pending redesign.

The Legislative Draftsman is in the final stages of drawing up Regulations to give effect to the Ordinance and it is expected that commencement will eventuate within the next few weeks.

1630 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

Would he make a statement to this House regarding the future supply of electricity to consumers?

ANSWER

I hope to make a statement on the electricity supply in Darwin later on during these sittings.

1631 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

Because of the expected power cuts through the coming months, would it be possible for the Electricity Supply Undertaking to broadcast on the local radio stations the expected duration of the cuts and the areas in which they expect them to occur?

ANSWER

It is not always possible to determine how long a power cut will be. It sometimes takes a certain period of time to establish exactly where the fault has occurred. It has been the practice in the past that, when information is given out and cannot be adhered to for one reason or another, it seems to aggravate the public somewhat. I will undertake to have a talk with the electricity supply people and see if we cannot organise some more efficient method of public notification than exists at present.

1632 Mr STEELE to Mr RYAN

The honourable Executive Member is aware of the awful congestion and traffic problems at Darwin airport, particularly on a Friday night when several aircraft have to discharge and load passengers. Will he take steps to have a plan prepared that will allow for the quick dispersal of passengers and vehicles from the airport, and will he, in the preparation of that plan, consult with the Minister for Defence regarding the desirability of obtaining a one-way outlet for traffic through the RAAF base?

ANSWER

I am aware of the problem that exists at the airport, particularly on Friday nights. It does occur during some of the day flights when more than one aircraft arrives. I do not know whether I will be able to have a plan prepared because the organisation of the airport comes under two Commonwealth departments. The whole area is on a defence base, so the overall controllers would be the Defence Department. However, I think the airport itself comes under the control of the Department of Transport. I will undertake to write to the Minister for Transport and ask him if he could get his department to look at the problem with a view to trying to overcome some of the congestion that occurs at the airport.

1633 Mr VALE to Mr TAMBLING

Can he advise when the Valuer-General will next visit Alice Springs to value homes occupied by government employees who wish to purchase those homes?

ANSWER

I have been informed by an officer of the Valuer-General's Department that an officer will be in Alice Springs in the week commencing Monday 6 December.

1634 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

If Housing Commission tenants had applied to buy their Housing Commission homes prior to Cyclone Tracy, are they eligible to participate in the six per cent home loan finance scheme?

ANSWER

I understand that the terms of eligibility for the Home Finance Trustee six per cent concessional loan scheme do include provisions for people who had established negotiation to purchase at the day of the cyclone with the scheme for the sale of government homes to public servants or had established a commitment of sale with the Northern Territory Housing Commission. I will have the matter checked further and advise the honourable member.

1635 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK

Can he advise if the position of Executive Director with the Centralian Aboriginal Congress, a position which was recently filled, was advertised? Under what circumstances were the applicants interviewed and by whom?

ANSWER

I do not know. I do not recall seeing any advertisement of the situation and news of the appointment came as quite a surprise. I will endeavour to ascertain the information if the organisation will provide it.

1636 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS

I refer to the two remaining pilot farms on the Adelaide River. Can the honourable member inform me what is the current position of the leaseholders after 7 years of negotiation with federal governments?

ANSWER

What I know of the present position is as follows. The Minister for the Northern Territory has established - wait for it - an interdepartmental committee to attempt to finalise the settlement with the pilot farmers at upper Adelaide River. An officer of the Department of the Northern Territory rang me yesterday to indicate that the interdepartmental committee will be visiting the Northern Territory on or about 20 December. They have asked to see me, and no doubt other people, and I understand that they have been asked to compile a report which will be the basis of a submission to Cabinet some time about January or February next year. That is the present state of the business. I would add by way of comment that I believe that this particular case is one of the darkest blots on the escutcheon of Canberra administration which I have come across in my time here. It is absolutely appalling that these two families have to go through yet another Christmas after, as the honourable member for Arnhem has indicated, about 7 years of uncertainty, not knowing what the future holds for them. I know it is a complicated and difficult matter and the situation is somewhat different in respect of the two farmers, but no-

body can tell me that after 7 years of consideration we really require another interdepartmental committee and that somebody cannot make a fair equable and just decision in this matter. I am appalled by information that I have to give to this Assembly.

1637 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS

Why has the Ombudsman Ordinance not been assented to? Has he had any discussions and, if so, what, with Commonwealth ministers on the subject of an ombudsman for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Ombudsman Ordinance, to use its nickname, has not been assented to because the Federal Government, in particular the Federal Government before this one, believed that the right thing to do was to establish a Commonwealth ombudsman service with a branch of that service to look after the interests of the Northern Territory people. I did draw attention to the argument that most of the public servants in the Northern Territory are Commonwealth public servants and therefore it is appropriate for the Commonwealth agency established for this purpose to look at such complaints. I do not accept the validity of that argument or the actions which the Commonwealth has taken. I can only say that, as the new Northern Territory Public Service comes into existence and expands, any case which formerly existed for having our complaints for Northern Territory people put before a Canberra based ombudsman will soon disappear. I have made this point of view known to the Minister for the Northern Territory and I would hope that some sort of local appeal will be instituted as soon as possible in the Northern Territory.

1638 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

This is a question that I have asked for the past 6 months. Can he yet indicate when the sale of Government homes will recommence in the Darwin area and upon what terms and conditions?

ANSWER

As I have repeatedly replied to the honourable member for Nightcliff for the last 6 months, I have again referred this matter to the Minister for the Northern Territory and to the Department of the Northern Territory. I understand that the settlement of the details is bogged somewhere between the senior officers of the Department of the Northern Territory and the Department of Treasury. I am unable to provide an answer to her question.

1639 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN

Can he advise this Assembly of the determination by the Department of Transport for resiting of the railway marshalling yards and passenger terminal in Alice Springs? If not, when does he expect to be in a position to advise this Assembly of a new railway site?

ANSWER

I do not have any information relating to the proposed new site. I will contact the Minister for Transport and ask what the situation is.

1640 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS

When is it likely that commissioners will be appointed to inquire into the Lottery and Gaming Ordinance?

ANSWER

I cannot tell the honourable member when this information will be available. She asked a similar question at the last meeting and I indicated that I believed that the appointment was pending. I pointed out that it would be the Administrator's privilege to make the announcement when the information was available. I understand the matter has advanced a little since I gave that answer. Once again, I referred the matter this morning to the Canberra administration. This is another situation where what should be the simplest of procedures is being impeded because more than one department is involved down there. I rang Canberra this morning and I believe that we are very close to getting the reply which the honourable member for Nightcliff seeks. I hope that we may get it during these sittings.

1641 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW

Can she advise the last date of the Police Commissioner's visit to stations outside of Darwin? When does the Police Commissioner again propose to visit those areas?

ANSWER

I understand that the Police Commissioner last visited Alice Springs at the end of May 1975. Other stations were visited during October 1974. It is anticipated that he will be making a tour of as many stations as possible outside of Darwin early in the New Year.

1642 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH

Have petroleum leases and applications lodged by Magellan Petroleum and Oilmin for areas within the Amadeus Basin been granted? Is it a fact that the companies concerned have lodged writs against the Australian Government and the Administrator of the Northern Territory for failing to issue these leases?

ANSWER

As yet there have been no leases issued for the areas to which the member alludes and it is my understanding that an action between the principals of the exploration licence areas and the Government has begun.

1643 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW

Is it a fact that two new police motor bikes are in storage in Alice Springs? How many police bikes are in service in Alice Springs? How many police officers are attached to the Traffic Section in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I did have some warning of this question. I understand that two police motor cycles are held in storage in Alice Springs to replace the two existing motor cycles currently in use. The motor cycles in use are due for replacement during February 1977 and the authorised establishment of motor bikes, I suppose, is only two. The authorised strength

of the Alice Springs Traffic Section is one second class sergeant and eight constables.

1644 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN

It was reported yesterday in the press that he did nothing to help settle the firemen's recent dispute. Is that report in fact true?

ANSWER

In answering this question, I intend to go into a little detail to put the record straight. It was reported yesterday that a couple of gentlemen involved in the activities of a couple of unions stated that, apart from the fact that I have all the hallmarks of an adolescent - I do not know whether to take that as a compliment or not. "He has acted in a very irresponsible manner and has made no attempt to solve the dispute." This was stated by Mr Bonson the secretary of the Firefighters Association. On Thursday 25 November at 10 o'clock in the morning, I rang Mr Bonson and told him that I was going away at 1.30 and asked if there was anything that I could do to have the dispute solved. After a couple of hours on the telephone to Mr Bonson and the Assistant Secretary of the Department of the NT, I was able to arrange a meeting for 1.30 that afternoon in the office of the First Assistant Secretary. I left this city and from Mt Isa I rang the First Assistant Secretary at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He informed me that the firemen did not turn up for the meeting. I thought this was rather strange because Mr Bonson had indicated that he was going to attend that meeting and, from the discussions that I had had with both of the gentlemen concerned, I felt that the strike could have been fixed up there and then.

Before I sit down, I would just like to dwell a bit on this irresponsibility. The irresponsibility was on the part of the union because it cost the men in the Northern Territory Fire Brigade somewhere in the vicinity of \$40,000 in wages. If they had taken my advice and guidance back on the 25th, they might have saved about \$30,000 of that. I will leave it to this House to decide who is irresponsible.

1645 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS

Are there regulations drafted under the new Public Service Bill and, if so, when will they be made available to honourable members? In relation to clause 28(2) dealing with the filling of vacancies, could he advise to what class of person that refers?

ANSWER

Draft regulations have been prepared. They are to be regarded as a working draft at this stage, to be used for comments and constructive criticism and will undoubtedly be subject to amendment. They have been prepared, they are now available and I will see that the honourable member for Nightcliff and the honourable member for Port Darwin get a set this morning.

I will have a look at the section to which the honourable member refers in the second part of her question and provide advice later this day.

1646 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr POLLOCK

Was on 8 May 1975 an application taken out in the Alice Springs Children's Court by a welfare officer of that town for a declaration that

an illegitimate Aboriginal child, Freddy, be deemed a neglected child? Was the application served on the child's mother on the same day? Was the child's mother at the time of such service in the Alice Springs Hospital with a broken leg? Was legal aid made available to the mother? Was the application heard in the Central Australian Children's Court on 9 May, the following day, without the mother being present? Was the welfare officer in charge of the application aware that the mother was in hospital? Was the Crown Law Office or Legal Aid Service involved in the application? Was the Children's Court told that the child's mother was in hospital? Was the child declared neglected and given to some European parents for adoption? Was the mother's consent to adoption obtained? Finally, did the lack of the mother's consent lead to a great and apparently expensive legal battle and disruption of the lives of the foster parents?

ANSWER

I was given warning of this question and I have received certain advice on the answers. I hope that I will be able to reply suitably to the honourable member.

I am advised that the mother of Freddy - just as background to answering the question - has been known to the Welfare Branch and Social Development Branch for quite a period, for at least 8 years, during which time she has abandoned all 4 of her children. I believe 3 of them have become wards of the state - wards of the Director of Social Welfare in the Northern Territory. The child Freddy is a specific case of a child who, despite continual medical attention over 6 months and counselling of the mother, was, in the opinion of the examining doctor, in danger of dying from malnutrition as a result of neglect. It was the opinion of the doctor that the child would only thrive if given foster care. The charge of neglect arose from police finding the child abandoned outside the Alice Springs Hotel. It was the fifth time in a period of some 6 months of the life of the child that it had been found abandoned or had been returned to hospital. So the answer to the first part of the question is yes.

On the second part of the question, I am unable to advise the honourable member.

The third part of the question was, "At that time was the child's mother in the Alice Springs Hospital?" The answer is yes.

"Was legal aid made available to the mother?" I do not know.

"Was the application made in the Children's Court on 9 May without the mother present?" Yes.

The welfare officer did know that the mother was in hospital.

"Were the Crown Law Office or the Aboriginal Aid Service involved in the application at the time?" No.

"Was the Children's Court told that the mother was in hospital?" I do not know.

Mr Everingham: Why?

Mr POLLOCK: Because I was not there at the time. Nobody seems to know here and I am unable to find out,

"Was the child declared neglected and given to some European foster parents for adoption?" The child was declared neglected. He was finally placed with European foster parents for fostering. I believe that 18 months later the foster parents applied to adopt the child. Prior to placing the child with the European foster parents, inquiries were made to see if one of the mother's relatives would be prepared to foster the child and care for it. These inquiries were made without success.

"Was the mother's consent for adoption obtained?" No. Attempts were made to find the mother, and it appeared to officers trying to find her that she had gone bush and was deliberately evading contact with the Welfare Branch.

In relation to whether the lack of the mother's consent led to a great and apparently expensive legal battle, the application to dispense with consent was made by the foster parents. I do not know whether it involved them in great expense. Under the Adoption Ordinance, the judge, on application, can dispense with consent in certain cases. One of the grounds to justify this application for the dispensing of consent is where the parent has neglected the child. Perhaps it needs to be pointed out that, during the period of fostering, some 18 months or more, the natural mother did not come near the child.

1647 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW

Will plans for the proposed high school at Nhulunbuy be made public and, if so, when?

ANSWER

I do not know whether the plans are yet available; I certainly have not seen them if they are. I am sure they will be made available to the public when the department has the plans.

1648 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN

Can he advise whether or not it is a fact that work on the bridge presently under construction over Chinaman's Creek in Alice Springs has been suspended because of the water table level and because the Department of Construction made an error in the survey of the location of the bridge and positioned it too close to the old railway line?

ANSWER

I believe that construction has been halted on the bridge. I will check with the Department of Construction to confirm whether the honourable member for Stuart's claims about the incorrect location of the bridge are correct.

1649 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH

At the last sittings and the sittings before that, I asked the honourable member certain questions regarding a Taiwanese fishing boat. Can he tell me whether the department concerned made an assessment of value of the Taiwanese fishing boat and, if so, what was that assessment?

ANSWER

The Department of Primary Industry have advised me that, in these cases, they do not have an official assessment made by boating experts on the value of these vessels. They rely mainly on the purchase price paid for the vessel as a measure for estimating its value. With regard to the vessel that the honourable member referred to, the vessel was unable to be brought into Australia because of our ship building regulations. The only value that the boat had was the value that the owner was prepared to pay for it - \$6,000.

1650 Mr VALE to Mr SPEAKER

Are you aware that the Parliamentary Record number 14 has pages 23 to 47 bound upside down again? This has occurred on previous occasions. Will this matter be referred to the Government Printer?

ANSWER

I am not aware of this fault. I will take it up with the Publications Committee.

1651 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK

Does the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs intend to visit the Northern Territory this month? What centres will the Minister be visiting if he does tour the Territory?

ANSWER

I have heard on the grapevine that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is visiting the Northern Territory during this month. However, like most ministers visiting the Territory, he has not extended the courtesy of advising members where he might be from time to time so we have an opportunity to discuss local problems with him. I do not know when he might be here.

1652 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS

When will the regulations under the Northern Territory Public Service Ordinance be tabled in this House and open for debate?

ANSWER

According to the normal practice of making subordinate legislation, the regulations will be finally formulated after the final form of the principal ordinance is known. The regulations will then be submitted to the Administrator in Council and then will come to this Assembly. If the ordinance is passed at the current sittings, then the regulations should be available at the next sittings in their final form, subject to examination by the Subordinate Legislation Committee.

1653 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW

When will the decision be given to recognise public holidays for the Northern Territory Police Force, Christmas and New Year holidays?

ANSWER

That is a question we would all like to know the answer to. Just to give a bit of background, the Police Association put in a log of

claims for all sorts of assorted determinations on 21 June of this year. They still have no reply and a young gentleman from the Industrial Affairs Branch of the Department of the Northern Territory told the Police Association the other day that if it got to the point of the Arbitral Tribunal the Department of the Northern Territory would not be ready to put their case before the judge because they had not had time to prepare it. It has been with them since 21 June and I think that a certain gentleman within the Department of the Northern Territory should pull up his socks and get moving.

1654 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN

The honourable executive member will recall that at the last sittings I asked certain questions regarding the Northumberland Insurance Company and its demise, and the possible - in fact probable - bankruptcy of persons who have been sued and thought they were indemnified by the Northumberland Insurance Company. I am now asking the honourable Executive member, in view of the fact that the Government apparently does not propose to underwrite companies that it authorises pursuant to the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, and that therefore such authorisation is absolutely worthless, does the Government propose to continue with the system of authorised third party insurers?

ANSWER

I understand that the Government is going to continue with authorised insurers; I have had no instructions to amend the ordinance. However, I think the honourable member for Jingili has a good point and, as I have said before in answer to questions concerning Northumberland Insurance, it is a sad situation where people in good faith take out insurance then find that when the insurance company goes through the hoop they are left holding the bag. The Government has expressed a desire to keep out of the whole affair; they do not appear to be interested in helping to foot the bill and, as I explained before, neither do the insurance companies. I intend talking to the member for Jingili because I believe this is an extremely important matter and hopefully we can come up with something and ask the Government to give some assistance. Unfortunately, we do not have any real power in this area and we can only ask the Government if they would be of some assistance.

1655 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN

Is the honourable executive member aware of a recent press statement, reputed to be attributable to the Federal Minister for Transport, stating that there would only be need for a review of the present railway line from Alice Springs to Maree, in terms of repositioning a siding north of Tarcoola, if Lake Eyre South was to overflow and inhibit railway traffic between Maree and Alice Springs? Has the honourable member taken any steps to inquire as to whether Lake Eyre South is likely to overflow in this coming wet season and, if it is not, whether this means that we can expect the Central Australian Railway to remain open from Maree to Alice Springs?

ANSWER

With regard to the Central Australian Railway, I believe that the comments made by the honourable member for Alice Springs are correct. I am not aware at this stage whether or not they expect Lake Eyre to fill up this year. I do not know whether or not it is going to fill up and if it is going to cause a problem. I hope that it does not. I

will have a look at the matter and see if I can find out exactly what is in mind. When we took the problem up with the Minister for Transport when he was up here, we asked him what was going to be done with the new railway line, and he was of the opinion that it would be best to proceed at least to the border before any decision was made to set up a staging station there. However, if the line does go under water, maybe there will not be any alternative but to bring the staging station down quite some way into South Australia which would be completely unsatisfactory for Alice Springs and tourism. We will have to wait and see what happens with Lake Eyre.

1656 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK

Is the honourable member aware that the Yirrkala Dhanbul Association proposes to build a council chamber at Yirrkala? If so, has he any idea of the cost of such a building, and when is it likely to be commenced?

ANSWER

I do not know but I will endeavour to find out and advise the House later on in the week.

1657 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr PERRON

What is the number of unemployed at present in Australia and the number of unemployed in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Figures supplied to me by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations indicate that as at 6 December, 272,518 persons were registered as unemployed in Australia and 1985 of them in the Northern Territory.

1658 Mr DONDAS to Mr TUXWORTH

When will the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau be re-established in Darwin?

ANSWER

The honourable member may be referring to the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau Head Office which is currently sited in Alice Springs. The bureau is still operating in Darwin as a sales office but there is no immediate plan to return the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau Head Office to Darwin. However, I believe that it should return to Darwin as soon as it is financially and practically possible.

1659 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH

How many people is it estimated that the uranium mining industry will employ in the Northern Territory, firstly, in the construction phase and later in the mining and processing phase?

ANSWER

I have had forewarning of this question and I have been unable to ascertain figures relating to any development by Pancontinental and Naranda on their respective projects. However, the proposed develop-

ment of Jabiru in the construction stage would involve a work-force of some 600 to 800 men for a period of 3 years and subsequently drop to 250 to maintain the operation. The development of the Queensland Mines operation at Narbalek would involve a construction force of some 300 to 400 men for two and a half years and subsequently drop to about 180 men to maintain the operation.

1660 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr RYAN

How many fire officers are there in the Northern Territory fire service and how many, under the new bill, are senior officers and where are they?

ANSWER

There are 16 officers in the Northern Territory Fire Brigade. I am not quite sure where they are all located and I am unaware of the number of senior fire fighters or their location. I will get this information and relay it to the honourable member later in these sittings.

1661 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN

At the last sittings, I asked him certain questions regarding a lease that had been granted in Darwin some years ago for the purpose of establishing a marina. Has he any answers to those 4 or 5 questions?

ANSWER

I rang the Assistant Secretary concerned with land this morning and he informed me that an answer is in fact in the system somewhere. I asked him if he could possibly get it out of the system and up to the Assembly so that I can give the honourable member an answer so that he may have a happy and worry free Christmas.

1662 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW

What measures has she taken to reintroduce vagrancy laws for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The Police and Police Offences Ordinance is currently under review with the idea of replacing it with 2 separate ordinances. The matter of vagrancy no doubt will be raised during the preparation of these bills.

1663 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH

I asked a question at the last sittings regarding the government member on the Tourist Board sacking himself from the board by not attending 3 consecutive meetings. The honourable executive member was going to find out why this happened. I would like to know why.

ANSWER

I have sought from the Chairman of the Tourist Board in writing, the reasons for the non-appearance of the government member at the meetings. As yet, I have not received a reply but I assure the honourable member that I will do everything in my power to see that he gets the information.

1664 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS: The honourable member for Nightcliff asked a question earlier and I am now able to answer it. Clause 28(2) of the bill is related to the draft Regulation 4 which indicates that for the purposes of section 28(2) of the ordinance a vacancy with a designation of superintendent or above in the police force may be filled by an appointment, transfer or promotion made by the Executive Member. That is the Executive Member as distinct from the Chief Executive Officer as the principal ordinance states in most cases. This is similar to the present provisions applying in the police force except that we have raised the ante from sergeant first class where it now stands to positions of superintendent and above. There may be from time to time other classes of employees who could come under prescription by regulation but, at the moment, I have no others in mind.

1665 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

Can he give any explanation for the frequent power cuts in the central city area? These do not seem to be connected to normal maintenance repairs.

ANSWER

The central city area has been subject to power cuts whenever the electricity supply has to rotate power cuts resulting from generation failure or from failure in the transmission system. Since the number 5 generator at Stokes Hill has been out of action, the gas turbine at Snell Street has been operating for about 12 hours a day. This generator has shut down several times lately as a result of low oil pressure. The city area is also affected by lightning strikes down the track. Since the cyclone in 1974, the electrical transmission system has not had the usual capacity to isolate power failures to one area. Therefore, although it may not be raining in Darwin, there could be an electrical strike down at the 20 mile or 30 mile, which will put the Darwin city area out as well.

1666 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS

I preface my question by remarking that, since this Assembly was elected in October 1974, we have seen in Darwin a cyclone of immense magnitude which resulted in an almost complete turnover in the population. We have seen in Darwin new areas developed as a result of that cyclone and, in Alice Springs and other Territory centres, we have seen shifts in population by reason of new subdivisions being developed. I can think of 2 residential areas in Alice Springs which exist now and which did not exist in October 1974. What steps have been taken which might lead to a redistribution of electorates before the next election for this Assembly?

ANSWER

I am aware that some citizens of Darwin and the Northern Territory have written to the Minister for the Northern Territory suggesting that this question of population balance and possible redistribution be looked at. I did receive a copy of a letter which a group of citizens in the Howard Springs area of the electorate of Tiwi had written, pointing out that there had been a significant growth of population in that area. We are all aware of the development of the new suburbs of Anula and Walagi on the eastern side of the Sanderson electorate. Having this in mind, I have already discussed with the Minister for the Northern Territory, the almost certain need to have a redistribution. A census was taken this year which provides some basis for an electoral redistribution committee to work from plus other information which they would need. I pointed these matters out to the Minister and he gave me an assurance that machinery would be set in motion to do so. I now propose to write to the Minister formally as Majority Leader later this week and ask for confirmation that the redistribution question will be officially examined and for some idea of the timetable which he may have in mind, probably starting early next year, to make sure the necessary machinery is set up and the work carried out so that the people who are already members of the legislature or who have an interest in perhaps nominating before the next election may be aware, well in advance, of what the new boundaries might be.

1667 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN

Can he offer me any explanation as to why subscribers making telephone calls from Darwin to interstate areas on STD cannot enjoy the benefit of the recipient of the call being able to identify the call as an STD call by identification pips?

ANSWER

I believe the pips were not reintroduced after the cyclone. I am not aware of any reason why they should continue to be excluded from our STD calls. I will contact the local Telecom man today and see if we can get some answer which may further enlighten us on that particular item.

1668 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS

Is it a fact that wildlife rangers have been instructed not to shoot feral animals even if they be in such fragile areas as Cannon Hill and that as a result of this instruction, the land is being severely disturbed? If it is a fact, can the honourable Majority Leader advise what steps he will take to correct this?

ANSWER

I am not aware of whether it is a fact that such instructions have been issued but I will make inquiries from the Chief Inspector of Wildlife and the head of the branch in which his section is located to determine the nature of any such instructions which have been issued. I can imagine that in that particular arm of government it is a very sensitive question at the moment because there has been a good deal of publication given to the fact that there was a shoot-out of cattle south of the Daly River some weeks ago. That matter has become the subject of a dispute and is still as yet unresolved as I understand it. I will find out what directions have been issued and if the directions are not sensible, if there has been an over-reaction, then naturally I will use what influence I can at this stage to bring about a more sensible policy, bearing in mind that hopefully after the 1st of January I will be able to have a much greater say in that policy. It does appear, from my knowledge of the subject, that there is some ambiguity or confusion possibly existing between 2 areas of legislation on the statute books of the Territory. One is in respect of the Crown Land Ordinance which refers to ownership of cattle on vacant crown land areas and refers to the apparent or reputed owner of such cattle as establishing ownership; and then there is the Wildlife Conservation and Control Ordinance, shortly to become the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance which has references to feral animals. The question of the definition of exactly what is feral and what is domesticated may need clarification in our legislation. If that is so, I undertake to take the matter up and to achieve necessary amendments to the legislation.

1669 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON

Does the Price Controller, in determining the price of bread, take into account power failures which cause loss to production and waste for the manufacturer?

ANSWER

The current price of bread in Darwin does not contain any contingency

for loss by the manufacturer as a result of power failures. The Price Controller can allow for recovery of a loss sustained from power failure. However, the loss would have to be documented and proven. I am advised that an application for a price increase on these grounds would not be entertained unless a substantial sum was involved.

1670 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN

Is it a fact that private individuals who engage in private export activities overseas, and if they are successful in gaining an export sale, upon their return may apply to the Department of Overseas Trade for reimbursement of a percentage of their fare costs for their overseas travel?

ANSWER

I am not aware of the answer to the honourable member's question. I think it is going to take some time to get an answer and therefore ask him to put the question on notice.

1671 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Dr LETTS

Can he advise me whether it is proposed that the Tiwi Land Council in addition to the Northern and Central Land Councils will be set up at the commencement of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act? Can he find out and inform me what arrangement will be made for local descent groups to seek title to the land when the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act commences? Can he advise me how many Aboriginal groups, and from what location, have requested the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to approve the application to set up a local land council?

ANSWER

I am aware that the provisional Tiwi Land Council has made a request to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to be set up as a separate body on the commencement of the federal Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act. According to that legislation, the decision as to whether a new land council other than the original 2 proposed in the legislation is left to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. I am unable to advise what is in the Minister's mind at the moment or what decision he is likely to come to, but I will either personally or through my colleague, the Executive Member for Social Affairs, endeavour to find out what the policy might be. I believe somebody said yesterday the Minister is coming to the Northern Territory in the near future. I know that is so because, although he may not have contacted some other people, he did at least contact me and invite me to dinner. Thus, I have the opportunity to put that, and certain other questions, to the Minister and, as soon as I have some information, I will inform the honourable member.

The honourable member asked about local descent groups seeking title to their own lands when the act commences. I have not had many consultations or discussions on the latest amendments which have been brought in since the bill was originally introduced in June. As I understand the present amendments which have been carried by the House of Representatives, it is made clearer and probably somewhat easier for new trusts to be set up from the large existing trust which will be created by the bill in the first instance. I understand that the amendments will provide for separate trusts to be set

up out of the original larger trust somewhat more easily and without any ambiguity about it as there was previously. So I think that the amendments will make that easier, and I think that those amendments should be brought to the notice of the Aboriginal communities so that descent groups and clan groups who would wish to have their own title realised will know that the opportunity to do so is now in the legislation. I envisage that there will be quite a large number of groups who would like to take advantage of that opportunity.

Apart from the information I have already given about the Tiwi Land Council, on the third part of the question, I am unable to inform the honourable member how many other groups there might be and in what location they reside. I have requested the Minister to approve applications to set up further land councils. I will endeavour to find out that information as soon as possible and convey it to the honourable member. If I cannot find out the full information during the course of these sittings, I will give it to him as soon as it is available.

1672 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW

Is she aware that the Police Commissioner has apparently issued instruction to his officers that they are to under no circumstances discuss police problems or personal problems concerning their homes etc with the members of this Assembly? If this instruction was given, why?

ANSWER

I am not aware that this instruction has been issued and therefore I cannot give any reason.

1673 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN

What steps have been taken to upgrade the Yirrkala and Dhupuma Roads prior to the wet season, and has an inspection been made of these roads in recent times?

ANSWER

I believe that it is generally the practice to grade these roads just prior to the wet season. However, I will contact the Department of Construction and see if I can confirm that that in fact will be the case this year.

1674 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK

In view of the Federal Government's media ban on cigarette advertising, can he tell me why Darwin cinemas are able to do so during intermission?

ANSWER

I understand there are no controls over cinema advertising of cigarettes, that is why.

1675 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW

Can the honourable member advise me if there is any movement or prospect of movement concerning the Katherine Rural College?

ANSWER

I understand that the Katherine Rural College has been deferred for this year, but has been by no means taken off the books. It will possibly be put on in the next financial year.

1676 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING

Has the Department of the Northern Territory formulated any policy with regard to the sale of caravans and demountables that are no longer required by them for temporary accommodation?

ANSWER

As is often the case, I am unaware of what goes on in the Department of the Northern Territory. As far as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission is concerned, I can assure him that at this stage there has been no consideration by the commission with regard to a recommendation for a policy for either the disposal or ultimate use of either the caravans or demountables. The commission has sought information from the various interested departments and organisations or bodies, such as the Housing Commission, in a hope to prepare recommendations on such a policy.

1677 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW

Has the Director of Education reached a policy decision concerning the employment or re-employment of persons with previous specified convictions?

ANSWER

It is the role of the Commissioner of the Commonwealth Teaching Service to set policy guidelines in so far as they are beyond legislation and I am not aware that he has done so. If the honourable member for Arnhem could place the question on notice, we could perhaps learn something more about it.

1678 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

I refer to a press report of the Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission, Mr Clem Jones, visiting the Stokes Hill Power Station and subsequently making some rather disparaging remarks. Was this done in his official capacity, both his visit and his subsequent remarks, and, if so, with the knowledge and consent of the other commissioners?

ANSWER

At the last meeting of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, brief mention was made of the problems that were being encountered in a number of the operational areas attaching to the electricity supply in Darwin. I cannot recall any specific motions that resulted from that. I would not see it as being inconsistent that the Chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in his own right, by occupying that office, could make inspections of any undertaking which the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has a functional role as part of its responsibility. I believe that any action of the chairman has probably resulted from a visit that he has initiated at his own goodwill.

1679 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK

What facilities are there available for holding female prisoners at Fannie Bay Gaol or are they still being transferred to Alice Springs Gaol?

ANSWER

At Fannie Bay Gaol, the facilities for female prisoners have been upgraded and generally rebuilt and are much the same as they were prior to the cyclone. The female prisoners are being housed in the best accommodation that is available at Fannie Bay Gaol. It is Travelodge conditions compared to what other prisoners at Fannie Bay are being housed in. It is recognised that the facilities are not Travelodge facilities. The female cell block at Fannie Bay has been rehabilitated and is in use.

1680 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS

I refer to the Mailath Report. On page 33 it is stated that a rural reconstruction scheme will commence on 1 December 1977. What will primary producers do in the intervening 12 months?

ANSWER

I must confess that the honourable member for Arnhem is a little ahead of me in his study of the Mailath Report which is to be in any case debated in this Assembly a bit later on. I do not think that Mr Mailath, in the context of the report, which is one of making and giving advice and making recommendations to people to consider and possibly accept, can say that there is going to be a rural reconstruction scheme or body that is going to come into operation in December 1977. I think that is a matter still to be decided. In the meantime, the normal - or should I say abnormal - arrangements as far as they apply to the Northern Territory prevail. The Commonwealth and state ministers responsible for agricultural matters met some 6 or 7 weeks ago to examine the rural reconstruction needs for the whole of Australia and they came to arrangements and agreements as between the Commonwealth and the states as to what was required - what forms of assistance, how much money. That is pretty much cut and dried now and people in the states know where they are going in the future. We, as usual, still are not at that happy stage because our leads have to be put to the Commonwealth Government and the Commonwealth Treasury separately. They have been put to the Minister for the Northern Territory by the Primary Producers Board which has collected the information from Territory pastoralists and their organisations. I understand that the submission from the Minister has either gone to the Cabinet or is about to do so and we should expect a decision on what will apply during the next 12 months in the very near future. I make the point, though, that our case is always considered separately to that of the states and this puts us at a time disadvantage whenever any of these decisions are made.

1681 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK

Can the Executive Member advise me to the latest situation regarding the Tiwi Mother's Home and can he also tell me if it is being fully utilised?

ANSWER

No.

1682 Mr MANUELL to Mr TAMBLING

I preface my question by saying that I understand that, following the cyclone in Darwin, the Department of the Northern Territory undertook the purchase of a number of trail caravans from within the Northern Territory and without. I suspect that the bulk of the caravans may have been supplied by suppliers outside the Territory. In view of the number of purchases made and the apparent need now to dispose of some of these caravans, is it the policy of the Department of the Northern Territory to dispose of these caravans by auction within the Northern Territory alone, even though the suppliers of caravans within the Northern Territory did not participate in the original sale? If so, is it their intention to continue to do so, thereby jeopardising the economic viability of the caravan dealers within the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Alice Springs was apparently inattentive when I was answering a former question in which I supplied the information that I was not aware of any policies of the Department of the Northern Territory at this stage and nor had the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, at this stage, even considered any recommendations.

1683 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW

Has she received an answer from the Minister for the Northern Territory regarding the recent submission by the East Arnhem Teachers Federation asking for approval for the single teachers to use Commonwealth houses in Nhulunbuy on a rental basis in the light of the inadequate single accommodation as supplied for the long-term residents at the Commonwealth Hostel in Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

I have only had acknowledgement of receipt of my representation.

1684 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK

Is it true that both juvenile detention centres are short staffed and, if so, has the Executive Member made representation to the Minister for Social Welfare to have the situation rectified?

ANSWER

The situation is that there are no juvenile detention centres in Darwin or anywhere in the Northern Territory at the moment. All juveniles who are required to be held in detention are unfortunately being held in gaols. There are some homes, they are not detention centres necessarily, they are homes for children who may be made wards of the department or the director. It is acknowledged that there is some staff shortage, but there is generally in the whole social development branch an extreme staff shortage as a result of the staff ceiling situation. With the opening in February or March next year of the juvenile detention centre in Alice Springs, this situation is going to be further aggravated. Appropriate representations are being made.

1685 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK

I preface my question by saying that previously in this House I asked the honourable member as to the date of the opening of the Alice Springs Hospital and a question relating to its staff position. If I recall, the answer for the first question was quite satisfactory in that the hospital was hoped to be opened by the end of this year. I also recall that the answer to the second question relating to staff gave some cause for concern. Is the honourable member now able to tell the House when the Alice Springs Hospital will open, indeed whether it will open as a whole with all departments operating simultaneously? And what is the current staff position with that proposed new hospital?

ANSWER

The out-patients department and other sections of the Alice Springs Hospital began to become operational as from last Sunday. I understand that this week patients are being moved into the hospital generally and the hospital basically should be fully operational by the end of this week. However, it is a 280-bed hospital and the former hospital had a capacity of less than 200. There are, therefore, large sections of the hospital which are virtually closed and not in operation, partly because of the lack of patients which is perhaps fortunate. Also of greater concern is that, because of the lack of staff, it is just not practical to open sections of the hospital which may need to be in operation. I have again, in the last fortnight, written to the Prime Minister pointing out the situation in relation to the staff but again there is some committee which deals with staff ceilings and that committee unfortunately is looking at the mathematics of staff ceilings rather than the practical side.

1686 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN

Will the feasibility corridor study be made through Arnhem Land and, if so, will the Aboriginal communities be advised in advance of any such study?

ANSWER

I assume the honourable member for Nhulunbuy is referring to a corridor study for a road. Whether or not we will have a road through Arnhem Land is certainly in extreme doubt as far as I am concerned. I do not know of any intention to hold a corridor study into a highway across Arnhem Land. If this did come about, I am sure that the Aboriginals would be amongst the first to know because the Department of Aboriginal Affairs holds the key to any development of roads in the Arnhem Land area. I certainly do not know of any proposal at this stage.

Last year at the Rural Road Conference, I asked a similar question. I asked whether or not they were going to upgrade the road, and the question was redirected to the officer representing the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. They did not seem to have any strong ideas on the matter so I am not too hopeful that we are going to see a road across to the eastern side of Arnhem Land for some years to come.

1687 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN

Has the contract for the rehabilitation of the Casuarina Fire Station been let yet? If so, when is the work likely to commence?

ANSWER

The contract has not been let. The tender has been approved and I expect that a contract would be let within the next week. I am not aware as to when it would actually be started but I would assume it would be fairly soon after the actual letting of the contract.

1688 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW

My question relates to the questions that I asked the Executive Member for Social Affairs yesterday relating to the Aboriginal child Freddy. When answering my question, he chose to fly in the face of several findings of fact made in a case in the Northern Territory Supreme Court and also chose apparently not to answer certain other questions because, his department was not strictly responsible for those areas.

Mr SPEAKER: Would you get around to asking the question please, honourable member.

Mr EVERINGHAM: Certainly, Mr Speaker. Was legal aid made available to the mother of the child? Was the Crown Law Officer or the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service involved in the application at all? Was the Children's Court told the child's mother was in hospital?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to find answers to those questions for the honourable member and report to the House later in the day.

1689 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK

I refer to a speech in Canberra on November 17 on the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Bill. Mr Calder said: "This bill, it is hoped, will give Northern Territory Aboriginals the ability to practise their laws and traditions on their own land in their own manner." Can the honourable member tell me if he is aware that this condition has not existed previously throughout most of the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I do not believe that there has been any law in the Northern Territory that has prevented Aboriginal people from carrying out their practices and customs in any part of the Territory or any part of their reserves or other areas of land which they may traverse. Whether it is their land or not is perhaps a key to the answer there. As far as I am concerned, I do not think there is any law that stops Aboriginal people from performing their culture anywhere in the Territory at any time.

1690 Mr DONDAS to Mr RYAN

Has the honourable member any assurance from the Department of the Northern Territory that disputes between a certain barge operator in Darwin and the Port Authority over compensation of lease arrangements will be resolved before the Port Authority is placed under the control of this Assembly?

ANSWER

I believe that the department is doing everything possible to resolve the dispute that has existed for some years. I did ask the Minister

whether he felt that this could be achieved by the transfer as I feel it is something that should be resolved before the transfer of the Port Authority takes place. The Minister advised me that everything possible would be done to achieve this.

1691 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

Can he yet advise us when the sale of Government homes will recommence in the Darwin area and the terms and conditions? If he cannot, can he give any indication as to when he will be able to?

ANSWER

As I have indicated before, I share the concern of the honourable member for Nightcliff but the issues surrounding both the sale of Government homes to government employees and the terms and conditions of sale of homes to eligible Housing Commission tenants have not been resolved. I am aware that the proposals in both these instances have been with the senior officers of the Department of the NT for some months and I have received no cooperation in getting the answers, I made further representations yesterday as a result of her question. I am unable to give her any joy.

1692 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN: The honourable member for Stuart asked a question concerning the bridge under construction at Chinaman's Creek. There has been a delay because of a problem in excavating for the new bridge. The excavation is fairly close to the existing railway bridge and the Railways expressed some concern that this excavation may undermine their foundations. The Department of Construction has had discussions with the Railways and I believe that they are almost ready to start construction again. They have made some changes to their original design and strengthened the road bridge foundations which should maintain the strength of the railway bridge.

1693 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN: The honourable member for Gillen asked a question concerning the number of officers and senior firefighters in the Fire Brigade and their locations. In fact, there are 15 officers. I was under the impression that there were 16, including the Chief Fire Officer. There are 15 officers including the Chief Fire Officer. There could possibly be another one in a short time anyway with the reviews currently being undertaken, but the present strength of the officers is 15. Perhaps the honourable member for Nightcliff could relay that information back to her informant. Their location is: 1 in Alice Springs, 1 in Tennant Creek, 1 in Katherine and 12 in Darwin. Senior firefighters: 4 in Alice Springs, 3 in Katherine, 3 in Tennant Creek and 11 in Darwin giving a total of 21.

1694 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN: The honourable member for Jingili asked a question concerning the marina. There was a lease granted for a marina and multi-storey building in the Doctor's Gully area. This, however, has been surrendered. Preliminary details for a proposal for a marina have been lodged with the department for examination and subsequent advice as to ways and means of bringing such a project into existence. However, this advice has not been compiled.

1695 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

Given the expected rise in housing costs due to the devaluation of the Australian dollar, would he support a move to the Minister for the Northern Territory and through him to Treasury for an increase of the ceiling of the Home Finance Trustee \$42,000 6% loan?

ANSWER

I intimated in an answer to a question yesterday that the Darwin Reconstruction Commission in looking at its program was taking into account the effects of devaluation on the costs of home building in Darwin and the subsequent effects that devaluation would have on the capital works program both for housing and other projects of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I do believe that it would be consistent with that policy to ask the Minister to review the ceiling that was applied to the Home Finance Trustee loans in Darwin which were to help the private sector. The ceiling figure of \$42,000 was originally struck on the basis of what similar contracts were costing for building of homes in Darwin by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I will certainly make a submission to the Minister and ask him to review the scheme in light of the actions also being taken by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission.

1696 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

Can he yet advise this House when the sale of government homes scheme will be reintroduced in Darwin and its terms and conditions?

ANSWER

Since question time yesterday morning, I have received a letter from the Minister with regard to the government home sale scheme. It basically referred to a submission made to the Minister by the honourable member for Ludmilla. In his reply to the honourable member for Ludmilla, the Minister has stated that his department has been working intensively on this issue for some time and has now reached the position where it is necessary only for financial aspects including interest rates to be approved by the Government. The Minister has further stated that, until these negotiations are concluded, he would prefer not to make a statement other than to say that he appreciates the advantages of housing policies which place home ownership within the grasp of the community and at the same time have the effect of building up a stable workforce. I do not have the specific information sought by the member for Nightcliff but I will certainly be endeavouring to obtain it as quickly as possible.

1697 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

I regard his answer as reasonable if the honourable member was able to inform me that he was having confidential discussions with the Minister but was not free to disclose the information. It appears that is not taking place. Hasn't the Minister announced that, as a matter of policy, there is to be in the near future a single housing authority in Darwin and, if that is a fact, would it not be logical for the Executive Member responsible to be involved in the discussions as to the reintroduction of the sale of government homes scheme in Darwin?

ANSWER

The policies relating to a single housing authority for the Northern Territory have long been established as a policy of the Majority Party in this Assembly. At a number of functions in Darwin, I am aware that the Minister for the Northern Territory has referred to the possibility of a single housing authority. I believe from my own discussions with him that he has accepted that this is one of the policies that ought to be looked at very carefully, particularly in light of the possible earlier termination of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I believe that, in the early stages of 1977, it would be appropriate for the Minister and myself to pursue the policies relating to a single housing authority. I do agree with the member for Nightcliff that any policy at the moment which relates to the sale of government homes should be carefully reviewed in light of the future policies that are to be proposed. I would hope that the Minister will give me the courtesy of looking at the proposed scheme relating to the sale of government homes.

1698 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

My question refers to his Housing Bill which would allow the sale of Northern Territory Housing Commission homes to approved tenants after 5 year's tenancy. Can he advise whether Treasury has yet given him an indication that they support this legislation or require amendments so that it can go through this House today and be brought into operation?

ANSWER

As I have indicated to the honourable member on a number of occasions, I am very disappointed at the tardy manner in which officers of the Department of the Northern Territory have processed the details of this particular bill. I have not yet received any advice, confirmation or information of the details of that bill, I have been informed by a senior officer of the Department of the Northern Territory that it is under active consideration, both by senior officers of that department and Treasury. I have no information which will enable me to proceed with the bill today.

1699 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS

Has the honourable member seen the report that 300 tonnes of kangaroo meat are to be exported to Asian markets as pet meat? Can he say whether such a market could be made available for buffalo, donkey and horse pet meat produced in the Northern Territory, and will he take the matter up with the appropriate Minister?

ANSWER

I have not seen the report mentioned by the honourable member for Port Darwin. I am aware that there has been a change in the Australian Government's policy in relation to kangaroo products, including meat; there was a complete ban on these items a couple of years ago. This has now been modified, and in conformity with the state and Commonwealth discussions and agreements on management methods for kangaroo populations, countries which accept the management and conservation methods which Australia uses are able to negotiate the import of meat. I do not know which particular market the honourable member is referring to.

Mr Withnall: Japan was the one I meant.

Dr LETTS: For any pet meat market which is available overseas and to which kangaroo meat is eligible to go, donkey, horse or buffalo meat would certainly be comparable and an adequate substitute. I will have a look at the matter in the light of the information that the honourable member has brought up here and see whether anything can be done to provide some incentive and encouragement to those who are engaged in existing industries in those fields, rather than break into a new industry which we have not got in the Northern Territory at the moment, namely the kangaroo meat industry.

1700 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK

The Executive Member has been accused of making an inaccurate statement that an Aboriginal child, Freddy, had been abandoned 5 times by his mother. Did he make such a statement?

ANSWER

I did hear a report on the news that I had made a statement that an Aboriginal child, Freddy, had been abandoned 5 times by its mother. On reading Hansard, I find that I said that it was the fifth time in a period of some 6 months in the life of the child that it had been found abandoned or had been returned to hospital. I think that that is quite a different story to the report that apparently has caused some reaction from the legal officer attached to the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service in Alice Springs. It is unfortunate that he has not checked everything and has gone off half-cocked, as he usually does.

1701 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW

Following the presentation of a petition from the students of Nightcliff and Casuarina High Schools in this Assembly last session, can she advise me if she has advised the Minister of their concern and if the building of Dripstone High School has received a higher priority than it presently enjoys in the capital works program?

ANSWER

I have conveyed the message of the petition presented by the honourable member for Nightcliff. However, whilst people in the Northern Territory have made representations in every possible way to both the Minister for the Northern Territory and the Minister for Education, I am unaware of the actual priority in their minds of Dripstone High School on the current capital works system.

1702 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr PERRON

Is there any scheme to educate under-privileged people and the Aboriginal people on the role of Consumer Protection Council and how to get help from them? If not, would he ensure that such a scheme is started?

ANSWER

I will undertake to look into the matter that he has raised this morning and see what can be done.

1703 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW

How much money is spent in the Territory on bilingual programs for Aboriginal people and has the Education Department given considera-

tion to furthering the bilingual program in the Territory for other ethnic groups and Australians.

ANSWER

I ask him to place that question on notice.

1704 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN: The honourable member for Nhulunbuy asked yesterday about the grading of the Yirkala Road. Apparently the road was graded 10 weeks ago and should be graded again in approximately 4 weeks time.

1705 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK

Press reports have indicated that the St John Ambulance is introducing a subscription scheme for its services in the Darwin area. Could he inform the Assembly whether or not such a scheme will apply to areas outside of Darwin?

ANSWER

The subscription service for the St John Ambulance will be operative for the Darwin area or the Top End only. St John Ambulance has taken over all ambulance services in the Darwin and Top End area and from 1 January will be effecting charges. Subscriptions paid to the St John Ambulance service in the Top End will have effect throughout Australia for members who pay the subscription. In other Territory centres, the present system will operate. No charges are made for services provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

1706 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

Is he yet in a position to indicate when the Government home sales scheme will recommence and the terms and conditions of that scheme?

ANSWER

Since the honourable member last asked that question on Tuesday 7 December, I have made daily representations to both the Minister's office and the Department of the Northern Territory. I do not have an answer for the honourable member.

1707 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING

Has Treasury approval - or any other approval necessary - been given for the passage of the legislation before us to enable the sale of Housing Commission homes to recommence?

ANSWER

This matter is related to the former question. I understand that the discussions that are taking place are between officers of the Department of the Northern Territory and officers of the Department of the Treasury. There has been no indication at this stage with regard to the issues that need resolution before the bill before this House can proceed.

1708 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS

Is it a fact that the authorities were taken completely unawares, as some press reports would indicate, by the arrival in the last few days of a Vietnamese motor boat with a number of Vietnamese refugees on board?

ANSWER

The impression which I gained when first hearing some of the press reports does not accord with the official version of the incident. According to the official information that I have received, at 3pm on Saturday a Malay-type boat was reported in Darwin Harbour a mile and a half off North-West Channel Rock. A message stated that it appeared to have refugees on board. The boat was then tied up at Storm Buoy as directed, and a sergeant from the Darwin Police Station, along with representatives of Customs, Immigration and Health, carried out the

normal checks on that vessel. The vessel was intercepted before it became in contact with land and the normal checks were carried out.

1709 Mr VALE to Dr LETTS

My question concerns the outbreak of fruit fly in Alice Springs. Has the fruit fly been identified, what plans are in hand to eradicate the fly, and is it a fact that no legislation exists to prohibit the entry of fruit into the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The Mediterranean Fruit Fly has been positively identified in the Alice Springs area. The extent and severity of the outbreak is not yet known. Immediate action is being taken to contain and eradicate the pest which is ranked amongst the world's 6 most damaging fruit flies. The only other part of Australia in which it has hitherto been known has been the south-western part of Western Australia. I understand that it is proposed immediately to undertake ground treatment using baits and spraying techniques similar to those techniques used for Oriental Fruit Fly in Darwin in the past using a mixture of an attractant and a pesticide. It is at the same time proposed to undertake an intensive trapping campaign to survey the extent of distribution of the beast. It is intended to invoke the Northern Territory Plant Diseases Control Ordinance to gazette Mediterranean Fruit Fly as a notifiable pest and to declare an area within a 50 kilometre radius of Alice Springs as a quarantine area and, as a follow up action, to extend the survey work to outlying missions and settlements and communities from the South Australian border to Tennant Creek. In order to do this it will be necessary to use additional manpower to that which is already available. Nothing I understand is known at this stage about the source of the outbreak, which way it came in. One would guess that it most likely came from the Western Australian area, in which case it could have come in either from South Australia in host fruit or possibly even State shipping around to Darwin and down from here. Amongst the characteristics of this fruit fly that are known or believed to be true is that it does not readily co-exist with Oriental Fruit Fly, but it is a serious pest and all necessary steps are being taken.

In the Plant Diseases Ordinance, as it stands at the moment, there are powers to prevent introduction of plant material to the Northern Territory. Fruit for human consumption normally has an exemption from the certification required for other plant material; however, if a fruit is known to be infested or if the disease is declared under the ordinance, then additional steps can be taken. We will examine the legislation to make sure that it is sufficient and, if it is not, corrective action will be taken. I believe that under the legislation that already exists there are very strong powers for quarantine and for declaration of this as a notifiable disease and for appropriate action to be taken. I will report to the Assembly from time to time on any further developments in this outbreak.

1710 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN

An announcement this week in the "Australian" says: "The Federal Government has slashed its spending this financial year by \$250m". Has the honourable member's advice been sought at any level as to what part of the capital works program or any other area under his control could be cut with the least effect in the Territory?

ANSWER

My advice was not sought as to what cuts were to be made in Northern Territory capital works expenditure. I have made my own inquiries since the announcement of the saving of \$250m and I have been unable to establish whether there have been any cuts to anything in the Northern Territory.

1711 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING

What steps have there been taken to assist the residents of Anula and Wulagi in the flooding that occurs every time it rains in that area? Perhaps the honourable member could buy them a pair of boots.

ANSWER

I am aware that the Chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission flew into Darwin yesterday and I do not know if he has the same capabilities as the honourable member for Sanderson who often does play Santa Claus. Perhaps a pair of boots per family may be the immediate answer. It is agreed that the position is untenable with regard to a number of properties in the Sanderson area. This is caused largely because of the new development and the fact that vegetation and the normal suburban gardening has not yet commenced to assist with the storm water drains. I have been informed that the General Manager of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has visited the sites concerned over the past few weeks and has issued directions to provide for drainage where required.

1712 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK.

Has he heard whether the Public Service Board have made a decision on another orthodontist for the Territory? Knowing that the service is very poor in the Territory at the moment, will other steps be made to try to increase this essential service?

ANSWER

I do not know whether the Public Service Board has approved the appointment of a further orthodontist to the Northern Territory. The honourable member may be aware that the Department of Health has made submissions to the Public Service Board in a number of areas to provide increased specialist services such as orthodontists to centres outside of Darwin. However, the Public Service Board has not been particularly receptive to applications from the department which of course is hindering the general health coverage of the Territory.

1713 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr TUXWORTH

Is he aware of reports that Taiwanese fishing crews have actually landed on the Australian coast for the purpose of resupply and foraging? If so, what information can he supply to the Assembly on this matter?

ANSWER

I have heard reports alleging that foreign fishermen do camp on our coast and run pig and chicken farms to service their fleets. I have been unable to get any documented evidence from the various departments. If the question is placed on notice, I will endeavour to obtain from Immigration and Customs an explicit answer to the question.

1714 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW

Is she able to advise whether the scheduled building of Dripstone High School has been brought forward as requested by so many sections of this community?

ANSWER

No.

1715 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr RYAN

Could he advise me whether the owner of Lot B of Section 290 Hundred of Bagot at Howard Springs intends to build an engineering workshop 150 feet long on the block mentioned?

ANSWER

I do not think that I will have time today to get an answer for the honourable member. I therefore ask him to put the question on notice.

1716 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK

Is it a fact that the Acting Area Adviser at Nhulunbuy issues liquor permits for Arnhem on personal request, and without reference to town councils?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know the answer to the question. I know that the Area Community Adviser at Nhulunbuy issues the permits for the Arnhem Land area but I do not know how he goes about consultation. If he does not consult the community councils, that is quite disturbing and not in keeping with the policy being espoused by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. I will take the matter up with the department and advise the member personally later.

1717 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK

I refer to the recent increase in child endowment payments, which to some settlements brought an extra \$100,000 a year. Has there been any monitoring to see what effect this extra money has or how it is being expended in these areas?

ANSWER

I am unable to advise the honourable member on this matter. If he would put the question on notice, an answer will be obtained.

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