

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order.

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

397A Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Has the Tourist Board considered tourist promotion for the Nhulunbuy/Gove area during 1975 and, if so, in what form will it be promoted?

ANSWER

- (a) No.
- (b) The extent of tourist promotion activities of the Tourist Board is limited by the subsidy provided by the Government.
- (c) Furthermore, to effectively promote tourism in regional areas of tourist potential, requires a full study of all resources, access, services and the development of an effective marketing strategy.
- (d) A Tourist Development Study of the Northern Territory is expected to be undertaken during the 1976/1977 financial year, and such action as is then recommended in the final submission, will be considered for implementation by the Tourist Board.

751 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Was a meeting between representatives of Nabalco and the then Department of the Northern Territory held at Gove on 28 June 1974 to discuss pollution and did an officer of the Department of the Northern Territory state at that meeting "that it would be greatly to Nabalco's and the Department's disadvantage if the public knew the degree of pollution occurring at present"?

ANSWER

(1) A meeting was held at Gove on 28 June 1974 between Nabalco staff and the then Northern Territory Department officers. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss environmental matters in connection with the operation of the alumina plant and associated works.

Subsequent to the meeting Nabalco agreed to carry out works to improve environment control. In the fifteen months since the above meeting most of these have been completed satisfactorily. A consultant is presently engaged by the Company to examine and recommend means of effecting further improvements.

(2) The Department is unable to comment on the second part of this question as details of any discussions at the above meeting are regarded as confidential.

754 Mr PERRON to Mr POLLOCK—

1. How many buildings on Aboriginal settlements or reserves belonging to either government or semi-government organisations have been destroyed by fire in the last ten years?
2. What was the construction cost of these buildings?
3. What was their replacement value?
4. What types of buildings were damaged?

ANSWER

1. Seventeen buildings have been destroyed by fire.

2. The approximate construction cost of these buildings was \$214,500.00.

3. Three residences have been repaired at a cost of \$9,000.00.

A contract for \$334,056.00 was let to rebuild Oenpelli Hospital (not completed).

A contract for \$358,200.00 was let to rebuild Umbakumba Infirmary, as a hospital (not completed).

Cost to date for replacing Warrabri School is approximately \$508,814.00 including landscaping.

Two schoolrooms at Bamyili were replaced by transportable classrooms costing \$63,486.00.

Warrabri Hospital cost approximately \$232,352.00 to rebuild (not completed).

Rebuilding and relocating of the Maningrida Sawmill cost approximately \$100,000.00 including equipment.

Total cost—approximately \$1,605,908.00.

4. Types of buildings damaged were:—

3 Residences	1 Aboriginal Single Quarters
3 Schools	2 Hospitals
4 Aboriginal Houses	1 Infirmary
1 Clinic/Stores	1 Cottage
1 Sawmill	

755 Mr PERRON to Mr POLLOCK—

What have been the monthly outpatients attendance figures at the Tennant Creek Hospital over the last 3 years?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75	1975/76
July	1,445	1,620	1,626	2,438
August	1,339	2,619	1,512	1,557
September	1,276	2,547	1,069	1,795
October	1,424	2,016	1,504	
November	1,340	1,476	1,432	
December	1,386	1,340	2,514	
January	1,071	1,276	1,584	
February	1,320	1,412	1,413	
March	1,387	1,380	1,171	
April	1,464	1,457	1,489	
May	1,839	1,384	1,711	
June	1,428	1,128	1,868	

756 Mr PERRON to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Do Aborigines in isolated parts of the Territory co-operate with other Territorians in the control and prevention of bush fires?
2. Is it a fact that Aborigines refuse to fight fires unless they are paid overtime?

ANSWER

1. Generally speaking, Aborigines in isolated parts of the Northern Territory co-operate with other Territorians in the control and prevention of bush fires. As is the case with other people in the Northern Territory, it is likely that there are exceptions to this and it is known that some Aborigines have in fact caused bushfires in the pursuance of their traditional way of life. Wherever possible, this practice is discouraged and attempts are made to have them understand the environmental dangers inherent in this practice.
2. There are many instances throughout the Northern Territory of Aborigines having taken an important part in fighting bush and other fires without having sought or been paid overtime. No doubt there are Aborigines who like some non-Aborigines would expect to be paid overtime. The attitude of these people would probably be that if there are other workers as against property owners, who receive such remuneration such as grader drivers etc. then they would expect the same sort of conditions.

757 Mr PERRON to Mr POLLOCK—

Does the Department of Aboriginal Affairs have an active fire prevention service or regular fire brigade operation on any settlement or Aboriginal reserve?

ANSWER

At present, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has no regular fire brigade operating on Settlements or Aboriginal Reserves. However, it is proposed that locally based firefighting teams be trained by the Fire Brigade. This training will be reinforced by regular inspections of Fire Brigade officers who will provide additional training to volunteers.

There is already an auxiliary service manned by volunteers at Bathurst Island (which can service Melville Island if required).

A proposal has been made that a one-bay station be built to serve communities of 500 persons or more. The planning of these stations is to be carried out jointly by the Chief Fire Officer and officers of the Department of Housing and Construction.

About 30 Aboriginal communities could warrant need of this training programme. Letters of advice have been sent to all Aboriginal communities and missions in terms of the type of fire fighting equipment required.

762 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

1. When was Lot 4967 excised from Lot 265, Nightcliff?
2. For what purposes was it excised, what is its present zoning and is it still under the control of the Corporation of the City of Darwin?

ANSWER

1. Lot 4967 was never excised from Lot 265. It was surveyed as a separate lot for the purpose of a car parking area. This did not eventuate and the lot was subsequently included in the adjoining reserve.

2. See answer to Part 1 above. Lots 4967, 265, 532 and 207 are included in Reserve No. 1243 for the purpose of the recreation and amusement of the public, proclamation of which appeared in the Northern Territory Gazette dated 4.12.1968. The Corporation of the City of Darwin is the trustee as appointed by notice appearing in the Northern Territory Gazette dated 26.2.1969. Darwin Town Plan zoning is Public Recreation Reserve and Darwin Reconstruction Commission Planning Guideline shows the land as Open Space 1.

763 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Has consideration been given to the surfacing of the road from Dhupuma College to Gove Airport?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs advises that it has not programmed for the surfacing of the road from Dhupuma College to Gove Airport.

765 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH—

1. Is the Mereenie Basin from which Alice Springs draws its present domestic water supply adequate for the town's future needs?
2. Can the Mereenie Basin sustain a small farm area with irrigation in addition to providing an adequate town supply?
3. What investigations are being made by the Water Resources Branch to locate additional ground water supplies to assist the resettlement of small farmers and what priorities have been given to this work?
4. Will copies of reports prepared by Water Resources Branch be made available to Members of the Legislative Assembly?

ANSWER

1. The Mereenie Sandstone is but one bed within the Amadeus Basin. The Mereenie Sandstone Aquifer by itself is an enormous storage containing more water than Alice Springs would be likely to use in 1,000 years. Although sufficient water will always be available, by about 1983, when regard is given to economical pumping costs, pumping from the present borefield is likely to be more expensive than the cost of establishing a new borefield. Assuming a second borefield is established then, these two borefields would be adequate until the year 2,000 when a third borefield could be required. The Mereenie aquifer is able to support many of these borefields.
2. The Mereenie Sandstone is accessible at points along the James Range some 60 km south of Alice Springs. Development of borefields or even single bores along the James Range might sustain quite large farm areas. Bores at the James Range would not affect water storage at the town borefield. The scope for development at James Range is under investigation.
3. Water sources better suited to irrigated agriculture than the Mereenie Sandstone aquifer are known. But, presumably the question concerns farmers working 15 ha or smaller blocks, such as might be suited to horticulture or fruit growing. Since a near town location is preferred by most of these farmers Water Resources Branch currently is working on an assessment of the availability of water suited to irrigation in the present farm area or adjacent areas. The work has an immediate priority.
4. Reports of water resources investigation are available for perusal. However, not all are in a form suitable for public distribution.

766 Mr WITHNALL to Miss ANDREW—

1. Is the use of the gas turbine alternator necessary for the supply of electricity in Darwin at the present time?
2. Is the high noise level from the installation normal for this equipment or does the equipment require adjustment?
3. Can silencers be fitted and, if so, will the use of the equipment be restricted until the silencers are fitted.

ANSWER

1. At present the No. 5 generator (23.5 MW) at Stokes Hill Power Station cannot be utilised due to maintenance and repair of cyclone damage to the unit's chimney. This means the maximum output of the remaining four sets at the station is 47 MW. As maximum demand to date this year has been 42.3 MW it is necessary, when one of the above units is out of operation or cannot be run to maximum level, to supplement supply by use of the gas turbine.
2. The noise level of the unit is currently abnormally high as the original silencer has had to be removed due to metal deterioration.
3. Action is currently being taken for the procurement of a new and improved silencer for the turbine.

The noise pollution problem is recognised and, while the silencer is not fitted, every endeavour is being made to restrict the use of the gas turbine to occasions when its use is absolutely essential.

768 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

1. At what Capital City airports throughout Australia is there provision for parking for a period in excess of 24 hours?
2. Why is there no provision at Darwin Airport for parking for a period in excess of 24 hours and up to seven days?

ANSWER

1. Adelaide.
2. Space allocated on Darwin airport for civil air operations inadequate for car parking requirements.

771 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss Andrew—

What steps are being taken to bring the Land and Business Agents Ordinance 1974 into operation? This ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council. When is it likely to come into operation?

ANSWER

This particular ordinance has been under review for the last 6 to 8 months and it is impossible to implement it in the Territory under present circumstances. Discussions have been held with the Real Estate Institute on several occasions and research is now being carried out into interstate legislation which indicates that many changes have to be made. It is hoped we will bring in new legislation or considerable amendments to the current ordinance in February.

772 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

At the previous sittings of this Assembly there was some discussion on possible use of the former Frances Creek mining site as a temporary jail. Has any further discussion ensued on this and, if so, what is the outcome?

ANSWER

It is true that the Frances Creek mining site has been considered and, in fact, it has been inspected by myself and officers of the Department of Northern Australia including the Administrator and representatives of the Prison Officers Association as a possible site for a prison. At this stage, the situation has not advanced any further. I understand that the former government was seriously considering acquiring the site to use for something but, whether it ends up as a prison or not, I could not say at this stage. I have my doubts because I think that the facilities that we planned for Berrimah could serve the Territory quite adequately in the immediate future. No final decision has been made and the area is being kept in mind as a possible site for a prison farm or training centre.

773 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

There was an announcement that a fence would be put around Fannie Bay Gaol. How much money has been authorized to be spent on the so-called rehabilitation in the short term at Fannie Bay and for how long is it expected that the remnants of Fannie Bay will be used as a jail?

ANSWER

I am unable to say exactly how much money has been allocated because this has been a matter for some conjecture for some weeks. A fence is to be built around Fannie Bay Gaol. It will be gold colorbond. The material is being assembled at the moment and it is hoped that it will be erected in the immediate future. Two demountable units have been placed at the jail to be used as offices and a medical centre. Temporary repairs have been effected to two of the blocks which are fit for use and some repairs are to be effected to the kitchen and dining area. Originally about \$50,000 was spoken of but I think that these repairs will cost more than that. Just how long it is to remain there is a matter of concern. I have been emphasising that it should be an absolute minimum period. We have previously heard in this Assembly that it may be for 2 years but I would hope that it would not be for a longer period. It is a matter of planning and the provision of funds for the facilities at Berrimah which would obviate the need for any use of Fannie Bay.

774 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

When will the remnants of the Rapid Creek Infant School be made safe? There is a drive to make private premises safe but this must be the worst hazard in the entire area?

ANSWER

I believe there is a program within the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and in co-operation with various government departments to upgrade and made safe all public buildings. I will pursue the specific matter that the honourable member raises and make information available to her.

775 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

Can she give any explanation for the frequent power cuts in the central city area of Darwin which do not seem to be connected to normal maintenance and repairs?

ANSWER

The ESU have considerable difficulty with vandalism around the Darwin area. For example, wire and other debris has been thrown over power lines causing failures. I cannot give the honourable member the reason for the power cuts in the centre of the city but vandalism added to the fact that many of the electricity connections around Darwin are of very poor quality at the moment have caused many failures. However, I will endeavour to provide further information for him this afternoon.

776 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

How many motor vehicles has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission purchased or leased in the last 6 months?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to obtain the information and make it available to the honourable member.

777 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

What steps are being taken to provide parking space at the Darwin Airport for a period of longer than 4 hours?

ANSWER

I do not know that there are any steps being taken to extend the parking time at the airport. I only became aware of the fact that there is not 24 hour parking when I was given a ticket. I believe that one of the reasons that they do not want 24 hour parking is that they consider that the present parking facilities are inadequate and it would cause congestion during the normal day to day flights. I will speak to the people concerned and see if there is any possibility of getting 24 hour parking.

778 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK—

Is he aware of the shortage of nursing staff at Katherine Hospital?

ANSWER

I am aware of the situation there. The Katherine Hospital nursing staff later this month will be reduced from an authorized strength of about 44 down to 26. This is a matter of concern to the Health Department and to all members. A motion was passed at the last sitting of this Assembly expressing concern that the staffing of hospitals would become critical if something was not done to provide adequate facilities and conditions for employees. The former minister and the department have been unable to heed the Assembly's advice so far and, as a result, the situation is becoming grave in Katherine and throughout the Territory.

779 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

When will the Alawa Preschool re-open?

ANSWER

I do not have that information available. However, I will endeavour to provide it by the end of the day.

780 Mr BALLANTYNE to Dr LETTS—

In the light of the present election, will steps be taken to streamline the Electoral Office's services for towns remote from Alice Springs and Darwin in the case of future snap elections?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Nhulunbuy has raised a matter which has troubled members of this Assembly and interested members of the public over many years: the difficulty in trying to ensure that people in the remoter parts of Australia have the opportunity to vote at elections. This becomes particularly difficult with elections held at short notice and the out-back mail services simply do not cater for a situation where you have nominations closing a fortnight before an election and postal votes have to be sent out and returned within a certain time. All that we can really do is continue to bring to the Chief Electoral Officer's notice the problems that exist and to make suggestions as to how they might be solved. I do not think that the Northern Territory will ever fit neatly into the Australian Electoral Act and Regulations which are designed with a view to places where mail services are more regular and people are more accessible. We have found out at past elections over several years that it is quite clear that some hundreds of people do not vote—people who would like to vote—because they do not receive their postal vote in time or they cannot get it back in time. I do not know what the full answer is except that we must keep working closely with the electoral officer to try to improve the system.

781 Mr KENTISH to Mr TAMBLING—

In view of the fact that some ordinary home builders are paying fees up to \$2,000 for architectural and engineering advice before they can commence building, when will the Building Board carry out its own assessment of these things?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has been periodically looking at the provisions of the Building Manual. There is an assessing group looking at that particular document at the moment to facilitate the private sector applications in Darwin. As to the timing of any relaxation of requirements with regard to an engineering certificate, I am unable to give any indication as to when this might happen.

782 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Have any citizens in the Darwin area been prosecuted for illegally operating caravan parks?

ANSWER

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

783 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN—

I refer to a bill on the notice paper dealing with the lowering of the time limit for P plates on cars. Has he referred this legislation to the Road Safety Council and, if so, have they indicated support or any other feeling on the matter?

ANSWER

I have not referred it to the Road Safety Council. I spoke with the police and members of the Transport Planning Branch of the Department of Northern Australia. I am the chairman of the Road Safety Council and nothing has been said to me about it. The police are quite happy with the bill.

784 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK—

Does the chairman of the Hospital Advisory Board in the Northern Territory require permission before escorting visitors on inspection tours of hospitals?

ANSWER

I don't know the formalities of the requirements for chairmen of advisory boards before inspecting hospitals. I would imagine that, as a common courtesy, before an inspection he would communicate with the person running the place to ensure that it would be convenient. However, I will make some further inquiries and advise the member.

785 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Dr LETTIS—

You will have heard of the infestation of the oriental fruit fly on Bathurst and Melville Islands. What steps are being taken to eradicate the flies from these and other affected areas?

ANSWER

This matter is of great importance to the Territory's future potential in things like tropical fruit production. I do not have the full details as to how the department believes that this pest was introduced to Bathurst and Melville Islands. The normal way for introduction of such a pest is through infested fruit which leads one to think that controls on the introduction of fruit from others parts of South East Asia to the northern coast of Australia are not as tight as they should be. I will check this matter out with the department. There had been hopes that the Northern Territory tropical fruit production could extend to supplying things like mangoes and pineapples to the southern states. The addition of an extra pest such as this to our range would make that more difficult. On the side of comfort, there are many ecologists who believe that pests such as this find their own natural limits as the tick appears to have done in Australia. Probably this pest may not be able to survive in a more temperate climate. Despite that hope, it is necessary to take strict action for its detection and eradication. The Department of Northern Australia Agriculture Branch in conjunction with the Queensland authorities have imported a considerable quantity of pesticides. At the moment, they are endeavouring to trace and eradicate any signs of this particular pest from Bathurst and Melville Islands. I will see if they have any more up-to-date details and inform the Assembly at a later stage.

786 Mr WITHNALL to Miss ANDREW—

What action has been taken to recover or to assist in the recovery of moneys which were paid by members of the Darwin community to the organisation known as Seatoun and what steps have been taken for the prosecution of the person responsible for the fraud?

ANSWER

We have been in touch with the authorities. I will endeavour to provide the information before lunch time.

787 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW—

Under the new regulations, how are five-year-old children to be enrolled in the new school year?

ANSWER

Last week, the Department of Education issued a new policy on enrolment of children. This has been to some extent misunderstood by the community. Any child who is 5 years before the 1 February 1976 will automatically be admitted to a school. However, any child who reaches the age of 5 after 1 February must go to

a pre-school and it is then up to the teacher of the pre-school in consultation with the parents and the authorities of the local school as to when that child is admitted into grade 1.

788 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW—

Under what regulation are children required to attend pre-school? She said they must.

ANSWER

It has been a practice that children enter school at the age of 5 years. This is a departmental directive. Children are not required to go to school before the age of 6, therefore no school is forced to admit them before that age. However, they do at 5 and it is departmental policy.

789 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise me if plans are in hand to increase the parking space at the Darwin Airport and also the parking area for the light aircraft at the Darwin Airport?

ANSWER

The same question was asked yesterday by the honourable member for Jingili and I think the honourable member for Arnhem was here yesterday for question time. I did explain that there are problems out there, as we all know, and that I would be speaking to the Department of Transport to see what is being done. I did not give any undertaking to give an answer during this session, but I did advise the Assembly that I would follow it through and see if there was going to be any extension to the car parking area and whether or not the car parking times would be extended to 24 hours and in excess of 24 hours.

790 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I have asked this question both on notice and without notice at every sittings. What action is being taken to erect signs making the public aware that the riding of motor vehicles on Darwin's beaches is prohibited?

ANSWER

Following the last occasion that the honourable member addressed this question to me, I raised the matter with the Local Government Branch of the Department of Northern Australia who have informed me that there was not a budget provision at that stage to erect the signs but that they would endeavour to meet the requirements and see what they could do. I have not followed it up from that date but I will certainly do so.

791 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

Is he able to tell me whether the Darwin Reconstruction Commission has a set plan for the reconstruction of the northern suburbs and, if there is such a plan, will they make it public?

ANSWER

The honourable member's question is in very general terms and it is rather difficult to give him a specific answer. The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has advertised a general town planning scheme. At this stage it has not been endorsed formally by the Minister as required under the act. However, it is being used as the town planning guide and I would draw his attention to it.

792 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

I ask this question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. When will a motor registration office be opened in Katherine, and what action has been taken to eliminate traffic light hazards in Katherine at Lindsay Street and Cemetery Corner?

ANSWER

The situation with Lindsay Street is that I have approached the departments and pointed out that it is felt that Lindsay Street intersection should have been left more open at present because the road servicing the subdivision was not really going to be used for several years. I haven't as yet had any further remarks from them but I will attempt to get a definite answer from them tomorrow as to what plans they have for that intersection.

I will endeavour to find out about the motor registration office and give an answer tomorrow.

793 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS—

Can he advise what progress has followed the resolution of the Assembly to set up a commission to inquire into lottery and gaming, and has a commissioner yet been appointed to conduct the inquiry?

ANSWER

A commissioner has not yet been appointed. Approaches have been made to a number of people who were regarded as suitable to carry out an inquiry such as this. The Attorney-General's Department in Canberra was unable to assist but a couple of people on the final short list have been approached and we expect to get confirmation of their availability within the next week or two and that the appointment can proceed in the near future.

794 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING—

I previously asked the honourable member then responsible when the parole board would become operative and I was advised that there were no funds in this year's budget to allow it to commence operation. I now

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ask if funds have yet been made available so that the parole board may be formally called together and commence its operations.

ANSWER

I will endeavour to ascertain the information today.

795 Mr WITHNALL to Mr SPEAKER—

Can you inform members of the Assembly when demountable units for office purposes will be made available?

ANSWER

I have received a letter from the Director of Housing and Construction. It says that the supply of the 5 office accommodation units for the Legislative Assembly has fallen behind schedule and it is expected that the units will be one week late arriving in Darwin. Depending on the state of the rail road communications between Adelaide and Darwin, it is now anticipated that the units will be installed by 19 December 1975.

796 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

I direct my question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Is it a fact that mail sorted and ready for despatch on Friday has to wait in post offices until the following working week commences?

ANSWER

I am unable to answer that question. I suggest that it be put on notice.

797 Mr EVERINGHAM to Dr LETTS—

How do public become aware of grievances of elected members made public in adjournment debates in this Assembly?

ANSWER

Honourable members would be aware that most legislatures produce a daily Hansard, and in fact that used to be the custom with the legislature until the disruption to the printing services brought about 11 months ago. We still produce a daily Hansard but it comes out a few days late. My understanding, in answer to the honourable member's question, is that the Department of Northern Australia receives several copies of this daily Hansard. They have a particular officer appointed to be a liaison officer with the Legislative Assembly. I think it is Mr George Parker. Part of his duties is to examine the contents of the Hansard, extract comments and criticism directed at various branches and departments, and to forward them to those destinations. How effective this method is I am not sure and I am certain it will be an improvement when we can improve the production time schedule of the daily Hansard and probably widen its distribution.

798 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

I ask a question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Is it a fact that the new caravan Park in Cameron Street, Katherine will merely be a substitute for the low-level caravan park and will still leave the town short of accommodation for travellers?

ANSWER

I am unable to give a specific answer to that question. I will endeavour to obtain the information from the department today.

799 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN—

I ask another question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. When is television likely to be provided for settlements such as Mataranka which are close to transmitting towers on the microwave link from Mount Isa to Darwin?

ANSWER

In view of the difficulty in trying to get an answer to that question before we rise, I suggest that the question be placed on notice so that we can get an accurate and full answer.

800 Mr VALE to Miss ANDREW—

My question without notice is also asked on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Is there a need for a search and rescue unit in the police force, and when will the stock squad be reformed?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to obtain those answers today. Otherwise I suggest that the questions be placed on notice.

801 Mr EVERINGHAM to Miss ANDREW—

I have a further question on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Is there any plan to station a highway patrol at Daly Waters in line with the recommendations of the McKinna report, in view of the increasing number of fatalities on the Stuart Highway?

ANSWER

I do not have any information regarding the fatalities in that particular area. Once again, I would suggest that the question be placed on notice.

802 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING—

Can the honourable member advise me the current position on Home Finance Trustee loans being made available to persons owning residential property in the primary surge area?

ANSWER

Members will be aware that the Home Finance Trustee scheme is administered by the Department of Northern Australia. It is therefore under the direct control of the Minister for Northern Australia. Under the previous instructions of the Labor Party ministers, finance is not available in the primary surge zone. I am aware of a number of submissions through both the Department of Northern Australia and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission to relax that situation. However, the present Minister for Northern Australia is hampered inasmuch as he cannot reverse the policy decision during the term of the caretaker government. The matter I am sure will receive speedy attention after 13 December.

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