

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II

1123 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN -

Will he attempt to obtain and table in this House the volume of freight brought to Darwin by government departments in the last 3 years and also details of its method of transportation?

ANSWER

I will attempt to obtain that information.

1124 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN -

Will he obtain from the Minister and table in this House the figures and the rationale on which the decision was made to close the North Australia Railway?

ANSWER

I will attempt to get the information.

1125 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON -

Can he supply any details on the \$1.1m deferral of local government projects for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Owing to restrictions placed on Commonwealth expenditure for 1976-77, some projects proposed by both the Corporation of the City of Darwin and the Corporation of the Municipality of Alice Springs have had to be deferred. The main projects which had been proposed for next financial year and for which funds will not be available are as follows: in Darwin, the northern suburbs swimming pool complex of \$300,000 and also stage two of the Winnellie Road reconstruction; in Alice Springs, the construction of the Alice Springs Civic Centre of \$0.5m and the construction of the Alice Springs municipal depot at \$300,000. Owing to some special circumstances which have arisen, the Alice Springs municipal depot is still under review but it is unlikely that funds will be available for it to proceed in 1976-77. Some deferral of projects proposed under the dollar for dollar subsidy will also be necessary. However, the identification of individual projects which will not proceed in 1976-77 will be a matter for discussion between the respective corporations and the Department of the Northern Territory. Operational subsidies paid to both corporations will remain untouched.

1126 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH -

Has the Australian Atomic Energy Commission withdrawn from the Northern Territory exploration scene and, if so, how much will we save in this financial year and will this money be transferred to the Northern Territory Mines Branch to continue basic mapping and research?

ANSWER

From the best of my knowledge the Atomic Energy Commission has not withdrawn totally from the Northern Territory exploration scene, and that in fact the small cell of the force that was previously here will remain until the end of this dry season to complete a pro-

ject that it had underway and which is well worth completing in view of the amount of money that has already been expended upon it. I believe further that any withdrawal this financial year will result in a saving of between \$0.8m and \$0.9m to the Atomic Energy Commission. I have made an approach to the Minister for National Resources that this money and some 10 geologists be transferred to the Northern Territory Mines Branch to continue basic mapping and any other geological work that needs to be done.

1127 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

Can he advise me where funding for the Regional Council of Social Development comes from and the annual amount of such grants? What are the names of the current officers of the Regional Council of Social Development?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

1128 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Can he advise whether the reconstruction of the Stuart Highway through the foothills into Alice Springs will proceed as planned this year?

ANSWER

I am unable to answer that question as there is still no word from the Government as to the implementation of the second 3-year road program to upgrade the Stuart and Barkly Highways. The Alice Springs hills area was to receive priority when the program begins but at the moment no information has been given as to when this is likely to begin. I hope it comes through shortly.

1129 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TUXWORTH -

When did the Ayers Rock Advisory Committee last meet and when is it meeting again? At what stage is the development planned for the new Ayers Rock village, and will the Government's financial restrictions impose a delay on this development?

ANSWER

The Ayers Rock Advisory Committee last met on 30 October and at that meeting the committee assessed a panel of names of people who would be suitable consultants to carry out the project. They further appointed especially a sub-committee to receive and assess applications from these consultants. At present, the situation is held up because of the Government's financial attitudes towards the hiring of consultants. An application is currently before the Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr Adermann, and the Treasurer. As soon as funds have been approved for the appointment of the consultants to continue with the plans for the developing of the village, the chairman of the Ayers Rock Advisory Committee will call a meeting forthwith.

1130 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS -

In view of the Prime Minister's promise to turn on the lights, when will the right honourable gentleman reach for the switch that will

disperse some of the gloom in the cattle industry?

ANSWER

I can assure the honourable member that the Prime Minister and the Government are reaching for the switch. It is only just a matter now of when the circuit will be completed. The question of the difficulties of primary industry and the support needed for the North was discussed with the Prime Minister only last Saturday. I understand that progress is being made in an examination of a number of suggestions put forward by the Cattle Producers Council and other parties. I hope that an announcement on some of these will be heard in the near future.

1131 Mr ROBERTSON to Miss ANDREW -

In the knowledge that she has not, nor will she ever have, any control over the Commonwealth Police Force about whom the question is concerned, would she inquire into and inform the House whether or not it is a fact that Commonwealth Police Officers are being given economy leave fares in lieu of first class, contrary to their awards and conditions of service; Commonwealth officers were enticed to serve in the Alice Springs area by false promises of fully furnished and equipped housing; Commonwealth officers are only paid a car allowance between Alice Springs township and the Joint Defence Space Research facility if they also carry 2 other officers as passengers and does this practice in many cases involve a net loss to the car owner because of increased insurance rates on that vehicle? Would she also obtain a copy of the Commonwealth Police Officers' Determination and conditions of service and table the same in this House?

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

1132 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr RYAN -

In the light of the statements which appeared in the press last night wherein he noted that the Minister had based his decision to close the railway on departmental advice, would he consider setting up a select committee of members of this Assembly to examine the North Australia Railway and its viability and ask the Minister for a stay of execution pending the report of that committee so it can give further advice to the Minister?

ANSWER

This may be a possibility, however, I would have to discuss it with other members of the Executive and report our decision to the Assembly.

1133 Mr BALLANTYNE to Miss ANDREW -

Last year, there was appropriation made for some five police boats. Will consideration be given to purchasing a police boat for Gove this year and, if not, will she take the matter up urgently with the Commissioner?

ANSWER

I shall make representation to the Commissioner on the subject of the supply of the police boat for Gove.

1134 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN -

When will repairs be effected to the domestic airport facilities at Darwin airport?

ANSWER

At the last sittings, I did advise that cosmetic repairs to the terminal building were to be effected. To date, that has not started, however, I have spoken to the DRC and have been advised that tenders have closed and they should be announcing the successful tenderer within the next week or two.

1135 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK -

I refer to the Aboriginal advisory body that was set up some time ago to advise the Administrator on local Aboriginal affairs. Is this body still functional and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge, this body is not functional. I do not know the reason why but I will endeavour to find out if there are any basic reasons behind the non-activity of this committee and advise the House later.

1136 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK -

What facilities are presently available for the holding of female prisoners in Darwin and what facilities are expected to be available in the near future?

ANSWER

Some facilities are from time to time available at Fannie Bay for the temporary holding of female prisoners. However, the practice is at the moment to transfer female prisoners from Darwin to Alice Springs where facilities are available. Consideration is being given to improving the former female block at the Fannie Bay Gaol to make it habitable and this is still being considered. However, at this stage, we do not want to spend a lot of money at Fannie Bay because we have no intention of that facility being able to linger longer.

1137 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Dr LETTS (by leave): I wish to answer a question asked by the honourable member for Nightcliff last week. She asked about the intention with regard to the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory residing in Darwin. The information I have received is that it is the intention of the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory, Mr R.S. Livingston, to move to Darwin when accommodation can be made available. It should be noted, however, that at the present stage of constitutional development in the Northern Territory, the occupant of this position must spend considerable time in the national capital. It may be of interest to note that Mr Livingston has visited Darwin on 8 separate occasions since the beginning of the year.

1138 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): I wish to answer a question by the honourable member for Nightcliff. She asked if it was possible for me to table a detailed and accurate statement of the deferrals and expenditure in the field of education for the 1975-76 year. I am advised by the Department of Education that it is not responsible for cash expenditure on specific capital works projects. Expenditure, and hence deferrals of expenditure, are controlled by the Department of Construction and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. The department suggests that the honourable member for Nightcliff redirect her question to the Executive Member for Finance and Community Development.

1139 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN -

Can the honourable member advise me whether he has given any consideration to the appointment of a commission of inquiry into overall Northern Territory transport needs?

ANSWER

As a result of the honourable member for Nightcliff's question yesterday concerning the possibility of a select committee of this Assembly to look into the North Australia Railway decision, we had discussions within the party and it was felt that it would be more appropriate and possibly more all-encompassing if we asked the Federal Government to conduct a Royal Commission into the complete transport system and problems which exist in the Northern Territory. In view of this, I am foreshadowing that tomorrow I will move that this Assembly ask the Federal Government to conduct a Royal Commission into transport in the Northern Territory. We will also be requesting that the decision to close the railway be put off until this Royal Commission is able to give its findings.

The honourable member for Nightcliff did ask me whether I would be able to table papers giving the figures showing the reasons why the NAR had to be closed down. I regret that I will be unable to officially table these papers in this Assembly.

1140 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS -

Is he able to indicate whether the Katherine meatworks will open this year and, if so, when? And also, is there any change in heart by the Federal Government in relation to carry-on finance for the beef industry?

ANSWER

I believe that honourable members would have heard the announcement last night and again this morning about the opening of the Katherine meatworks. The announcement emanated from the companies concerned, and I understand it to be a correct statement of the position that, following on the Federal Government's conditional agreement to vary the terms of repayment of the debt owed to them by Northmeat, an arrangement has been entered into between Norwest Abattoirs, the Wyndham people, and Northmeat to reopen the Katherine meatworks under the management of Norwest.

It is proposed that it will be opened in July. I cannot give the honourable member the exact date but from previous discussions with the meatworks people it would take about one month from the time of reaching the decision to open to get it operational again, so I hope that that would mean very early in July. This will make a significant contribution to beef producers in the Northern Territory, particularly in the northern half of the Territory.

I have some authoritative information that there has been an approval for a considerable extension of the carry-on finance scheme. It is something in the order of \$600,000. I am trying to get confirmation of this from the office of the Minister for the Northern Territory today; I have an arrangement to speak to him at lunch time on the telephone and I may be able to confirm the situation there this afternoon for the honourable member. These 2 decisions taken together, if the second one is correct, will be of major significance to the viability of the beef industry of the Northern

Territory in 1976.

1141 Mr STEELE to Dr LETTS -

Following on his remarks concerning the Katherine meatworks, is he able to inform the House that the credits due to the Katherine meatworks will still apply during this killing season?

ANSWER

I understand that they will. Even though a meatworks does not open or operate it still has an entitlement to the credit allocated to it at the start of the year. I believe that in the case of the Darwin meatworks, which will not be opening this year, its credits still hold and in fact have been transferred by some arrangement to Norwest. I trust that the Katherine credit will still apply in the case of Katherine. Indeed I do not believe they would be opening if this was not so, otherwise they would have difficulty in disposing of their meat to the normal export outlet, the American trade.

1142 Mr STEELE to Mr SPEAKER -

I refer to an article in the NT News yesterday concerning an unnamed member of the ALP executive calling for your resignation, sir. Can you tell us your intentions?

ANSWER

At this stage, I have no intentions of taking the honourable gentleman's advice.

1143 Mr VALE to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he advise what type of lease will be offered to the Central Australian Racing Club for their new site presently under construction on the Stuart Highway south of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

I am advised that a special purpose lease is proposed for the race club and that it is currently before the Minister for approval. Conditions attaching to the lease will be that public facilities ought to be constructed to cater for at least 500 people and that boundaries should be fenced within a period of 2 years and fire-fighting equipment installed to the satisfaction of the Administrator. Plans for all development will be subject to the approval of the Urban Development Branch and it will be a requirement of the club to conduct 10 race meetings per year.

1144 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN -

Is there a maintenance program for the 92 Commonwealth houses at Nhulunbuy? If not, will a plan be implemented in the future and will the honourable member seek to have all houses installed with airconditioning in the forthcoming budget appropriation?

ANSWER

I would ask that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy place the question on notice so that the appropriate department can look into the matter.

1145 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

He is no doubt aware that certain homes now owned by the Department of the Northern Territory - I say now because some of them were previously owned by public servants and reverted to the Commonwealth - are being restored only to their pre-cyclone condition with no strengthening and no cyclone proofing at all, apparently under a direction from the DRC. Could he advise this House of the rationale for this decision and also if legal opinion has been sought in the event of another blow and those houses dis-integrating would adjoining people have a claim against the Commonwealth for this peculiar action?

ANSWER

My understanding is that where minor repairs are being made to Commonwealth properties then the full cyclone code provisions are not applicable. However, where any major work is being undertaken, it is to meet the full requirements of the building code. I will investigate the question further and provide the member with a more comprehensive answer to this question.

The issue of legality of claims has I believe been raised on a number of occasions and my understanding is that there is no case for claim. It not only would apply to the government sector for restored buildings that are in a substandard state but you must also take into account that a number of private sector houses have also been restored without the full cyclone proofing.

1146 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Miss ANDREW -

What are the police doing about the hooligans who hang about terrorising people at Knuckeys Lagoon and Railway Dam?

ANSWER

I do not know but I will endeavour to find out.

1147 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

Of the recorded \$2.5m loss attributed to the North Australia Railway last year, what percentage was attributable to Cyclone Tracy reconstruction?

ANSWER

I would ask that the honourable member place the question on notice. In doing so, I would like to point out that, over the last week, I have had several pages of questions concerning the closure of the North Australia Railway and requesting information which is very difficult to get quickly. The answers have to be got from various departments; they cannot all be answered by the railways. I have to do this inquiring myself and I regret that I have been unable to get the time to sit down at the telephone for about 2 hours and ring all the people necessary. I ask the member to put the question on notice and I will also attempt at some time today to get some answers to other questions which have been asked. Those that I am unable to get answers for I will see that the answers are transmitted to members after the sittings.

1148 Mr VALE to Mr TUXWORTH -

Can he advise what progress is being made by Mount Isa Mines with their McArthur River development?

ANSWER

To the best of my knowledge Mount Isa Mines is still proceeding with its plan of development. The most recent news I had of it was some 6 to 8 weeks ago when the company went to Borroloola and McArthur River and took a papier mache model of the proposed development to explain to Aborigines living in the area just what the development would look like on local terrain, how much land use would be involved and where this land lay in relation to Aboriginal sites in the area. This manoeuvre was taken at the initiative of the company in conjunction with the Northern Land Council and to the best of my knowledge it was a very successful exercise in that it made the Aborigines more aware of the company's intent. I think the long term planning for the project will continue and to the best of my knowledge it is going to take some 10 years before the project comes on the scene.

1149 Mr KENTISH to Mr POLLOCK -

I preface my question by referring to a statement on infant mortality among Aborigines in the Northern Territory released recently by the Health Department.

1. Would he ask the Health Department to provide the number of births and infant deaths of Aboriginal males and females for each year from 1968, or any such earlier date on which similar records were maintained by the Health Department?
2. Would he ask the Health Department to indicate why it has provided a single index for each of the several years rather than a 5-year moving average which it is understood could statistically be a more reliable guide to such figures?
3. What has been the 5-year moving average from the time when the Health Department first maintained such records?

ANSWER

I have already asked the Health Department to provide me with those statistics and they are, I believe, being prepared at the moment. I should be able to advise the member later today or tomorrow of the figures.

1150 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

The Nightcliff Community Health Centre is working out of a room at the Nightcliff High School. What arrangements has the Health Department in hand to re-establish the centre and provide it with the proper facilities?

ANSWER

This problem of the Nightcliff Health Centre has been one of concern to the department for some time and they have made arrangements to lease premises in Phoenix Street. However, these premises require partitioning and associated work and about 3 months ago I

quire partitioning and associated work and about 3 months ago I made representations to the Department of Administrative Services to finally come good with the funding required for that work. That funding has been made available by the Treasurer - I think about 2 months ago now - and each week the Department of Construction has been assuring the Department of Health that the work will be finished in 4 weeks. However, as of yesterday, the situation was still the same as it was several weeks ago - the work will be finished in 4 weeks. The department is applying continual pressure but unfortunately it is out of their hands at the moment. They are very anxious to get into these new premises because the present facilities at the Nightcliff High School are far from satisfactory.

1151 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK -

Can he tell me if there is any indication when the Full Bench will make a decision on professional health officers' salaries?

ANSWER

This is a continuing saga in relation to the salaries for professional officers in the Department of Health. The situation as I understand at the moment is that Mr Justice Coleman, who has been a delegate of the Full Bench hearing submissions, has reported to the Full Bench and they are to sit again on 22 June. However, it is not certain just when they will hand down a final decision. It is hoped that it may be late in June - that is, later this month - but there will be nothing before 22 June unfortunately.

1152 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON -

This question is asked on behalf of the member for Elsey. Can he advise when meters will be installed in taxis in Katherine?

ANSWER

I understand that regulations are being drafted under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance to provide for meters to be installed in taxis in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The regulations have to be considered by the Administrator's Council. Although I have not been given a time for their presentation to the Administrator's Council, I am told that it is expected that it will not be long. We can expect taxi meters in these areas in the near future.

1153 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW -

My question concerns her Native and Historical Objects and Areas Preservation Bill serial 107. Having listened with interest to the second reading speech and read the bill, I realise that the bill does not in fact do what was intended or implied in the speech as it does not relate to areas. Is it the honourable member's intention to amend the bill at a later date to relate it to areas or is it the intention to proceed with the bill in its present form and introduce other legislation dealing with areas?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Nightcliff is quite right. In the original discussions, it was planned to include areas, however, it has been since discovered that this is a very complex piece of

legislation because of the various types of leases and legislation concerning land. My intention will be to continue with the legislation as it stands at the moment assuming passage at the next sittings and, at a later date, introduce legislation which will then cover areas.

1154 Mr STEELE to Miss ANDREW -

I have had representations from 18 mothers concerning the half yearly intake at the Ludmilla School. Will there be no half yearly intake this year or is she able to provide some other information?

ANSWER

The Education Department this year has adopted a policy whereby children once they have reached the age of about 4 go to pre-school and this is considered the commencement of their primary schooling. Once children have enrolled in a pre-school, they have commenced their formal schooling and they continue in accordance with the policy of a particular school. There is no mid-year intake as such anymore because this policy involves a continuous flow of children from the pre-school to grade 1 or preparatory stages. The children who have entered grade 1 at this stage of the year will not normally proceed to year 2 until the 1978 year. Therefore, children entering year 1 later than this year will not be disadvantaged. The problems at Ludmilla are mainly in terms of staffing and actual accommodation. The flow will be facilitated as soon as possible, however, it must be clearly understood that the children are in fact at school by virtue of the fact that they are in pre-school and they will be flowing up through the system at their own rate of readiness.

1155 Mr VALE to Mr POLLOCK -

What assistance will the Department of Aboriginal Affairs give to the Warramunga Pabulu Housing Association in obtaining accommodation for the fringe dwellers in Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has made an announcement that only funds for the Northern Territory housing associations that are needed to meet their legal obligations will be provided until such time as a full review of the system which has been applied in recent times in relation to housing association has been made. However, there are problems like those at Tennant Creek where a great deal of money seems to have been expended and very little housing has been provided and fringe dwellers are continuing to be disadvantaged. This matter is being investigated by the department at the moment and perhaps I might be able to give some further advice later.

1156 Mr MANUELL to Mr RYAN -

What level of wages and salaries was incurred by the North Australia Railway last year and of that amount what savings will be made by retrenchments with the closure of the line?

ANSWER

I would ask him to place that question on notice.

1157 Mr STEELE to Miss ANDREW -

Complaints have been received about trail bike riding from citizens in my electorate around the Ludmilla area and I ask a series of questions. Under what section of the ordinance can the police act? Does the ordinance need strengthening? Is it a manpower problem? What is the solution?

ANSWER

The area under question is under the control of the Aboriginal Land Council and as such is private property. No power is conferred on the police force to enter upon private property under these circumstances to prevent such a nuisance. There is no particular ordinance, however, I believe that legislation concerning trail bike riding is under some consideration by the Majority Party. It is not a manpower problem; it is really a legal problem. I am advised by the police that the solution is for the Legislative Assembly to determine the official attitude to trail bikes on private and unalienated Crown land and pass appropriate legislation if necessary.

1158 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

Has he seen press reports recently, that health ministers are to consider the introduction of limitation of smoking in restaurants at the next meeting of state health ministers in Adelaide? Will the Executive Member be attending that meeting and what attitude will he adopt?

ANSWER

I did read that article actually and I have not got a smoker's cough as I am a non smoker. Hopefully, I will be attending and the attitude I will be taking will be one of reason. I do appreciate the fact that some people do appreciate having a smoke after or during their meal and those pleasures should be perhaps enjoyed by those persons. However, as a non smoker and as a large section of the community are non smokers, I feel that frequently smokers in restaurants and other places show a general lack of consideration for persons who do not smoke. Perhaps there is some need for smokers in restaurants to give more consideration to non smokers.

1159 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING -

Are there any commercial development proposals being considered by the DRC at the moment for Casuarina?

ANSWER

I am aware that the staff at the DRC are currently looking at the planning proposals for the Casuarina area and they do include commercial developments. I believe the paper on this matter will be coming before the next meeting of the DRC.

1160 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr RYAN -

What steps has he been taking in the last few days to ensure that people being displaced from their work by the closure of the NAR are going to be found work in Darwin or at least in the Northern

Territory? Can he let us have any further information as to the future of the ANL shipping fun from the east coast to Darwin and what is happening about the early implementation of the next 3 year road program for the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

During the discussions that I had with the Minister for Transport last Friday, I did stress the need for urgent consideration that people displaced by the decision should be given every assistance to find suitable employment within the public service for those who wish to stay in the Northern Territory. I might add that they have been offered jobs south - that was an undertaking that the Minister made - but I pointed out to him that many of these people are long-term Territory residents and as such have no interest whatsoever in getting a job in Port Augusta. I feel that he has recognised this need and he assured me last night that he was looking into this matter quite seriously and I am hopeful that he can come up with a solution to the problem. I have been having discussions with the unions concerned and I will be sending a telegram to the Minister putting forward areas that the unions feel are important with regard to replacement, housing, possible compensation for people who have to move elsewhere etc. They will also look at the problem of long service leave whereby they may come up with a pro rata settlement for people who wish to leave the public service.

With regard to ANL, we have possibly deferred a decision. The Minister has asked ANL to review the situation. The loss last year was something like \$13m or perhaps that is their expected loss this year. He has asked them to have a look at the situation and he was going to possibly make a decision based on what they told him. He was under the impression that we do not utilise fully the Darwin Trader. I made it quite clear to him that I believe that he was getting wrong advice on that matter because to my knowledge the Darwin Trader, if it has not been fully utilised over the last 12 months, has almost been fully utilised. It is a fact that the next Darwin Trader due in is full and, in fact, freight has been refused because the ship can take no more loading.

The Minister took this information coupled with the fact that we are losing the railway. I pointed out that there was no chance of having a satisfactory road system without some supplementary transport from the sea. I feel that I have impressed upon the Minister the need to retain that service. I also mentioned that, in view of the fact that the road would be used more with the railway being closed, it is about time that the Government made a decision to implement the second 3 year road program and get rid of the problems of which we are all too well aware - Newcastle Creek, Alice Springs hills, Adelaide River, Pine Creek etc. In view of their decision, they must quickly implement this road program. He agreed that that was important and he was going to look at that. He did make the point that it is not his responsibility to look after the roads in the Northern Territory and that it was the Minister for the Northern Territory's job. I agreed with him but I pointed out that he, as a Cabinet Minister, could possibly influence decisions in the Cabinet. I also spoke to the Minister for the Northern Territory last night and mentioned the same points to him regarding loss of jobs and the 3 year road program. I am quite sure that they are well aware of the serious effect that the

decision to close the railway has caused; I am hopeful that they will be able to act upon it and keep the hardship that may be suffered by people affected by the closure down to a minimum.

1161 Mr WITHNALL to Mr POLLOCK -

I refer to his statement in this Chamber when he introduced the Radiographers Bill relating to the use of x-ray equipment by chiropractors and ask him whether the statement he made then had the support of the Director of Health? I also ask him if he will obtain and table in this Assembly, before the bill is further considered, a statement of the conditions which the Director of Health would impose under clause 19(2) of the bill?

ANSWER

I am not quite sure which section the honourable member is referring to but I feel that the sections which he is referring to are sections which have been initiated through the Majority Party and not by the Department of Health. I will get from the Director of Health his opinion and considerations and endeavour to have them tabled.

1162 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN -

In view of the fact that the northern rail track is reported to be in poor condition, is there any move to keep the roadmaster and necessary personnel and gangs engaged to put the track into good order and to maintain it in good order during the period that the railway is not functioning?

ANSWER

Because we have been concentrating, up until now anyhow, on trying to convince the Government that it would be better to keep the railway open, I have not made any inquiries as to what their plans are for the maintenance of the railway. The statement made by the Minister was that they were not closing it but it had been "mothballed", and quite obviously that is a fact that some form of maintenance would have to be kept up so that the rail would be in a satisfactory condition to open should the need arise in the future. I assume that the department would be making some announcement about this part of the operation, but I will make inquiries of the Minister to find out what plans they do have for the maintenance of the facilities.

1163 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr POLLOCK -

When will the children's creche be ready for operation at the Gove Hospital and will this centre be staffed? If so, will the staff be full time employees?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be placed on notice.

1164 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH -

Are metal producers within the Northern Territory subject to price control by the Prices Justification Tribunal? If so, why? And do these controls apply to exports?

ANSWER

I have a part answer to the question. I will endeavour to get the complete answer and reply some time today.

1165 Mr VALE to Mr TAMBLING -

Can he answer a question concerning a caravan park site auctioned at Borroloola 2 years ago and which has not been developed? Will it be forfeited or another site made available by auction?

ANSWER

Some information was provided with regard to the caravan site and the conditions of lease that were taken up at auction to yourself, Mr Speaker, some months ago. That position has not altered. I have sought in recent days information from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to ascertain what the wishes of the community that took up the lease at that auction are, and what their initial proposals are. As soon as this information is available, I will pass it on.

1166 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

I am aware that he is intending to ask for a Royal Commission into transport problems in the Territory. Has he had an indication from the Australian Government or any of its Ministers as to whether this will be agreed to by them?

ANSWER

No, I have not had an indication from any members of the Federal Government as to whether or not a Royal Commission would be acceptable.

1167 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

The Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, has stated that there will be a conference for state and federal ministers to discuss the new hospital arrangements under Medibank. Has the Executive Member for Social Affairs been invited to attend the conference on June 11?

ANSWER

Yes, I have been invited by the Victorian Minister for Health to attend the meeting in Melbourne next Friday. It is a meeting initiated by him. I was also invited to attend a meeting today in Melbourne of departmental heads as a preliminary to next week's meeting, but unfortunately as the Assembly is sitting I am unable to attend.

1168 Mr MANUELL to Dr LETTS -

My question is asked on behalf of the member for Elsey. Is it economic for buffalo meat to be sold for 23 cents per pound in Adelaide and why should there not be a profitable trade in beef at 75 cents per pound in the United States?

ANSWER

I do not know that 23 cents per pound for buffalo beef in Adelaide is in fact the price but I would imagine at 23 cents per pound buffalo beef should be profitable, bearing in mind that buffalo beef is sold for two distinct purposes. The question did not indicate which use we are talking about; it is sold both as pet food and also for human consumption. I do understand also that an even higher price range has been offered for buffalo beef in Australia this year and is being taken advantage of by several operators for export overseas to both north America and Europe as game food. In that regard, it is

in the same classification as deer meat which is exported regularly and annually from New Zealand to European and other markets. It commands a premium price because of the fact that it has the label of game attached to it. Logically, we might argue that being game and being field killed is a disadvantage rather than an advantage but that is a consumer preference over which we have no influence.

As far as the market price for beef in America is concerned, I believe I have already answered that question earlier in this session. I referred to the effect of international market and trade situations on the price of normal export beef in Australia. I do not think I have anything further to add to that answer.

1169 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW -

On 17 June 1975 the honourable member tabled a paper entitled "The Katherine Project 1969-73" which was programmed to adapt the schooling process in the interests of Aboriginal students in Northern Territory schools. Could she advise me what benefit this report has had?

ANSWER

I do recall tabling that paper and in fact I am very familiar with the Katherine project having worked very closely to it for a period of time. However, I request that the question be placed on notice because the answer requires some degree of research.

1170 Mr MANUELL to Mr TUXWORTH -

Are there any plans at this stage by the owners of the Warrego smelter to re-open the smelting plant and, if so, when?

ANSWER

In reply I would offer the information that was published by the board of directors of Peko Mines in the last 2 weeks. The directors have assessed the possibility of entering the international copper market again with the product of blister copper and they anticipate that if the continued price rises in copper continue at the present rate for the next 24 months, they will be able to get back into the market in July 1978. However, before the smelter and the mining of copper can begin, the company will be committed to 21 months work and modification on the smelter at a total cost of some \$7.8m. To go ahead with these plans, the company will have to decide in the next 3 months whether it wishes to enter the market again in July 1978 so that the modifications can be completed by that time.

1171 Mr DONDAS to Mr POLLOCK -

When will the mothers' home in Tiwi be opened?

ANSWER

I cannot tell the honourable member when it will be opened. This matter was raised some time ago and there were some structural problems in relation to the handover of the building which was originally commissioned by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. In the latter times, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs decided it did not require the building and would hand the building over to the Department of Health. The latest situation is that the

Department of Health has decided that they do not want the building and it will go back to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs. I am still pursuing the matter.

1172 Mr EVERINGHAM to Mr TAMBLING -

My question concerns about 100 houses of a prefabricated type of construction which are being constructed around the town for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. I understand about 20 of these houses have been completed and a number of them have been offered to public servants as accommodation and have been turned down. I understand also that it is possible that these houses, being unacceptable to public servants, may be offered to the Housing Commission. If the houses are unacceptable to the Housing Commission as well, what is to be their fate?

ANSWER

I assume the honourable member is referring to the 100 homes being built for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission by the Department of Construction's day labour team. I also have heard that public servants are opting for the more desirable, more expensive and larger homes coming from the other contracts arranged by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. This is an internal matter within the Department of the Northern Territory with regard to the housing allocation, and people do have an option open to them. It may be rather interesting to see when a different form of rental is charged or if the Government's home sale scheme is re-introduced, whether those same public servants will opt for the more ivory castle type of home. It will be interesting to see if they then perhaps elect to take a home which costs less and therefore is not of the same standard as in some of the other contracts.

I am aware that initial discussions have taken place with the Housing Commission to see if the Northern Territory Housing Commission is interested in having a number of these homes added to their stock of homes available. I do not know what action the Housing Commission is proposing. I would feel that they ought to ask for a fairer spread of the market just as the public servants are doing.

1173 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

In Katherine, there are 14 adults with 16 dependent children who have been in Katherine for 18 months and who have recently been advised - these are public servants - that the date of their priority has nothing to do with their appointments as permanent public servants to the public service but to their arrival in Katherine. They have just been advised that in fact they are not considered to be on the Katherine staff. They are still considered to be attached to Darwin which is a long way to travel to and from work. I ask the honourable member what is the present situation regarding these people; are they to be housed in Katherine and on what priority?

ANSWER

After the cyclone, a number of staff were sent to Katherine to alleviate the housing problems in Darwin. They were told that they would be there for at least 12 months, with the promise that at the end of that period they would have the option of remaining there indefinitely or returning to Darwin as soon as accommodation became available. Location of some staff permanently in Katherine had been un-

der consideration for several years, an inhibiting factor earlier being the shortage of housing in Katherine. After 12 months the situation was reviewed and staff had by then decided whether to remain or return to Darwin. The staff positions are regarded by the branch as very suitable for permanent transfer to Katherine and a formal request for this has just been made. In addition, a request has been made to transfer the position of an Engineer Class 2 to Katherine to manage the group and carry out the functions of a district engineer. He has also requested a house. After being on the housing list for some months and under every expectation of obtaining houses from the first allocation to be made, the first 5 officers were told by the District Officer late on Friday 28 May that they had been removed from the list by the Establishments Branch in Brisbane. They were also told that 20 houses were to be allocated from the 18 June, that there would be no more houses for 2 years, and that there would be no more meetings of the IDC before the 18 June. However, following the representations of the member for Elsey and myself to the department, this matter has been reviewed - it has been a matter of a series of quick phone calls between Darwin and Brisbane - and I am pleased to advise that while no houses will be allocated before 25 June, by that date the Water Resources staff should be back on the list.

1174 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN -

Can he advise whether quality of ABC TV reception is affected by ABC economies with the micro-wave link?

ANSWER

I ask that the question be placed on notice.

1175 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

Can he advise me if there are plans on hand for expanding the strength of the Stock Squad which I understand is a one-man squad at present, it may be doubled, and does he know how the squad is currently engaged?

ANSWER

I did answer a question from the honourable member for Arnhem last week on this which indicated that a member of the Stock Squad who has been on other duties, desk duties, because of physical incapacity had returned to his normal duties in the Stock Squad. Just what those duties are, I am not too sure - we do not see a great deal of evidence of the Stock Squad operating out of Darwin. Previously they have indicated that because of the shortage of staff they were to operate essentially in response to complaints from the public rather than on a general patrol type of basis. I believe that would still be the arrangement. However, the honourable member will be aware of a notice on the notice paper concerning the strength of the Police Force, and I imagine that the question of the establishment of various sections, including the Stock Squad, may be canvassed there and that the Executive Member for Education and Law may have some information that she can pass on to the honourable member for Arnhem.

1176 Mr DONDAS to Mr PERRON -

Does the Government intend to introduce off-peak electricity charges?

ANSWER

I know of no proposal to introduce off-peak electricity charges in the Northern Territory at this time. I think this question may have arisen as a result of a recent advertisement on television in Darwin whereby a hot water system is being advertised as advising customers that they can save considerable money on off-peak electricity rates. I would suspect that the advertisement does in actual fact represent misleading advertising and, as such, I will bring the matter to the attention of the Consumers Protection Council.

1177 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Mr RYAN -

Edmund Road opposite Skewes' store at Humpty Doo needs rebuilding. Could he advise when the work will start?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

1178 Mrs LAWRIE to Miss ANDREW -

Would she table in this Assembly a detailed and accurate statement of the reduction of expenditure in operational areas of education in the 1975-76 year?

ANSWER

I will endeavour to do so.

1179 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

What plans or projects are at present in hand for the export of live cattle from Darwin?

ANSWER

I cannot give the honourable member any precise information. I ask the honourable member, if he intends to ask a question without notice where it is necessary for any Executive Member to obtain information from another place, he should at least give some indication if he wishes to get the question answered at the sitting. I ask him to place the question on notice.

1180 Mr VALE to Mr PERRON -

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. As the Borroloola Inn is reverting to a general store and withdrawing its shower and toilet facilities from public use, will the Government provide toilet and shower for the public?

ANSWER

I have heard that the Borroloola Store is intending to cancel or withdraw its innkeeper's licence. If it does, the owner will not be obliged any longer to provide shower and toilet facilities that the public can use. I am not aware of any proposals by the Government to build public conveniences in Borroloola at this stage, and I do not know if any representations have been made to the Government on this line, suggesting that the Government should build them. Until such time as some proposal is put forward, I cannot supply any

further information as to a date that such facilities might be constructed.

1181 Mr KENTISH to Mr PERRON -

My question concerns street lighting at a point in his electorate. Previously I have asked about this position and since asking I find that magnificent lights have been erected nearby at the weighbridge at Winnellie, at Showgrounds Road. But can he tell me when lights will be placed at the entrance of Farrell Crescent which is used by hundreds of people?

ANSWER

The problem in regard to lights at Farrell Crescent has been one that has bothered me for some considerable time. I am running out of things that I can do to impress upon the transport planning people exactly how serious the matter is as far as a light at the corner of Farrell Crescent is concerned. It is a situation a few miles out of Darwin along the highway where there are no particular significant land points, and when one is travelling at night it is very difficult to pick up the corner of Farrell Crescent. It is an area used by quite a lot of people; there is the caravan park nearby and caravan park people are often fairly new to town and are not completely familiar with the area and it has caused a great deal of near misses and quite a few serious accidents on that corner. I have repeatedly asked the Government to have this light installed there to illuminate the intersection and, whilst promises have been made continually, absolutely nothing appears to have been done. As the honourable member for Arnhem has said, the public weighbridge has a beautiful set of lights but it is very rarely if ever used at night. The Showground Road has a lovely light over it as well and it is used once a year for about 4 days. But the one that is nearby that is used constantly by many residents has just been ignored it appears.

1182 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TAMBLING -

He has told us that the Katherine people have been reinstated on the housing list. My question is what is their date of priority? Is it their arrival in Katherine, their appointment to the Commonwealth Public Service or the date the decision to reinstate them was made?

ANSWER

My understanding is that people on the housing list have a priority established from the day they first establish that priority in the Northern Territory. I will check that this is the case for those people that are now being relocated in Katherine.

1183 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Miss ANDREW (by leave): The honourable member for Tiwi asked what the police were doing about the hooligans terrorising people at Knuckeys Lagoon and the Railway Dam. I am advised by the Police Department that there has been no disturbances reported at either locality since October 1975. The last disturbance reported at Railway Dam was on 17 July 1975 and the last disturbance at Knuckeys Lagoon on 2 October last year. Police patrols cover both areas I am assured in the normal course of their patrol duties.

1184 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr TAMBLING -

I have been coming over to Darwin for a number of months now and during that time I have noticed that Blocks 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have shocking surroundings. Would he find out if there is any move afoot to restore the sprinkler system and to beautify these buildings by grassing and planting of trees? If that move is afoot, when will it commence?

ANSWER

I am aware of proposals to totally reinstate and restore the blocks mentioned by the honourable member and the surrounds. I do not know the specific date of commencement; I have seen figures which would indicate that the major expenditure on this item will take place in the next financial year, 1976-77. I will pursue these specific issues raised.

1185 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr POLLOCK -

When was the last meeting of the Child Welfare Council held and what decisions have been made in regard to the continued operation of the council and by whom?

ANSWER

I am not sure when the last meeting of the Child Welfare Council was held but it was approximately 18 months ago. The council would not meet because at that stage there was a lack of a quorum and consideration of appointments was deferred. The whole matter of the council is being reviewed by the Department of the Northern Territory Social Development Branch with a view to providing a better child care service for the whole community. This work is proceeding at the moment and I am hopeful that in the near future something to the advantage of all will come forward.

1186 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS -

I noticed that a number of tenders are out for the taking of buffalo off Crown land. In section 22 of the tender form, there is a matter of the disposal of offal; it is to be burned or buried on site of the kill or alternatively disposed of somewhere. This is way out bush, I would presume. Can he inform me whether at the time of the shooting of the 3,000 buffalo on Woolwonga, the department concerned buried or burned all the animals and what action does the AIB or other department take to dispose of the bodies of the hundreds of buffaloes that are bogged at the end of each dry season?

ANSWER

The reduction in strength of buffaloes on the Woolwonga Reserve was after my time and I am not familiar with the details of disposal of carcasses or offal there. As far as I am aware, there are no special measures taken to dispose of animals which die naturally through bogging and malnutrition on the coastal plains region at the end of our dry seasons.

1189 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING: I seek leave to have incorporated in Hansard an answer to a question asked of me yesterday by the honourable member for

Nightcliff with regard to structural upgrading of reconstruction works. She did refer to this answer in the adjournment debate yesterday.

Leave granted.

The Building Manual requires that, where a residence is more than 50 per cent damaged, the whole structure will be brought up to cyclone resistant standards. Where the damage is less than 50 per cent, the manual requires that the new work is according to the requirements of the code, i.e. to cyclone resistant standards, and the balance of the residence requires no further upgrading work. However, the commission advises the private sector as to how it can upgrade the remaining 50 per cent at no great expense.

The type of advice that will be given to the private sector will, in fact, be carried out in the public sector, i.e. where a house is damaged and in the opinion of engineers needs some structural upgrading, this will happen.

There has been in the past a program of waterproofing and tidying up of government residences as a stage 1, which was to be followed by later upgrading. However, approximately a month ago the department was directed to carry out the restoration and upgrading of residences in one stage in lieu of two. The commission is aware that this direction has in some instances not been carried through and the commission has acquired the services of a structural engineer to ensure that this work is carried out.

In essence the General Manager believes that the Government must do to its own homes those things it advises the private sector to carry out.

At the last Darwin Citizens' Council meeting, a question was asked of the General Manager, similar to the above, in respect of defence homes and the council was given the assurance that those homes will also be structurally upgraded.

1190 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TUXWORTH (by leave): I was asked yesterday whether the activities of mineral exporters in the Northern Territory were subject to the provisions of the Prices Justification Tribunal and the information I have received is that the three exporters in the Northern Territory, Peko, Nabalco and Gemco are not controlled by the Prices Justification Tribunal because their prices are set by the department controlling exports in Canberra. However, while Gemco has both internal and external activities, the internal activities are subject to the control of the Prices Justification Tribunal, and the tribunal watches very carefully that Gemco does not rip off its parent company BHP. In relation to its export activities, it is encouraged to rip off as many people as it can as often as it can.

1191 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr RYAN (by leave): This concerns the date of the next Rural Roads Conference. Honourable members are anticipating that I might have good news for them, however, the department has been unable to set a date for the next Rural Roads Conference. They had hoped it could possibly be held in July but they have not been able to prepare anything for July so at the moment the next Rural Roads Conference is up in the air.

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