

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

An asterisk preceding an entry in the index indicates
that an answer has not yet been received.

NOTICE GIVEN ON DATE SHOWN

From 18 November 1980

Government Assistance for Tradesmen to Visit Remote Areas

44 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What assistance will the government provide to enable electrical, plumbing and building tradesmen and inspectors to visit remote centres such as Borroloola to assist home owners?

From 24 February 1981

Electricity Supply

133 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Will electricity to be reticulated to the new water supply at Donkey Camp near Katherine be extended to cater for consumers and future subdivisions on the Gorge road, and to Katherine Gorge?

From 2 June 1981

Interest Rate on Loan to Northern Meat Exporters Pty Ltd

195 Mr MacFARLANE to TREASURER

What rate of interest is being charged on the \$1.4m special assistance loan granted to Northern Meat Exporters Pty Ltd?

From 18 August 1981

Rape in Southern Region

210 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. (a) How many rapes have been reported in the Southern Command region since 1 July 1980 to 10 June 1981, (b) how many have resulted in charges being laid, (c) what is the state of these charges, and (d) have any reports of rape been false?
2. What facilities and resources are available for the psychological counselling of women raped in (a) the Alice Springs region, and (b) the Tennant Creek region?
3. Has he received any representations from women's organisations regarding the level of rape counselling services in the Territory?
4. If so, (a) what organisations have made representations, (b) what has been the basis of these representations, and (c) what has been his response?

Darwin Hospital Pathology Laboratory

224 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. Can he inform me as to the fate of the pathology laboratory at the Darwin Hospital?
2. Has he considered the future of the laboratory in the light of a lack of such scientific facilities in the Department of Primary Production?

From 24 November 1981

Sexual Assault Cases

379 Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH

How many sexual assault cases have been seen at the major Territory hospitals in (a) 1980-81, and (b) 1979-80?

From 1 December 1981

Liquor Campaign

500 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. How much is being spent on the 'Boozers are Losers' campaign?
2. For what reason was the contract awarded to a southern firm?
3. Has any contact been made with the liquor industry with a view to controlling the nature of liquor advertising?

Collia Tin Mine

512 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

As a number of people have lost their savings in the Collia tin mine affair,

- (a) what detailed action has been taken by the Department of Mines to settle the matter;
- (b) how much money has been lost by people involved;
- (c) how much did Mr Ken Day receive for the tin he mined from Collia;
- (d) why has he not explained in the Legislative Assembly what action the government has taken;
- (e) did the Department of Law recommend that anybody be charged over the affair and, if so, why was not that recommended action proceeded with;
- (f) was the government's lack of action coloured by the fact that Mr Day was once the head of the Progress Party, whose votes had helped the Country Liberal Party;
- (g) what is now being done about the matter; and
- (h) are police trying to contact the previous leaseholder who disappeared and, if so, do they know in which state he is residing?

Public Housing in NT - Applications

513 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many applications for general public housing were received during (a) 1979-80, and (b) 1980-81, and how many applications were outstanding at (c) 1 July 1980, and (d) 1 July 1981 in (i) Darwin, (ii) Alice Springs, (iii) Tennant Creek, (iv) Katherine, (v) Nhulunbuy, and (vi) Pine Creek?
2. How many outstanding applications were there for general public housing (a) at 1 July 1980, and (b) at 25 June 1981?
3. How many applications for general public housing were received in the financial years (a) 1979-80, and (b) 1980-81?

4. How many applications for general public housing were cancelled in the financial years (a) 1979-80, and (b) 1980-81?
5. How many tenants were accommodated in the financial years (a) 1979-80, and (b) 1980-81?

Internal Reviews of Health Department

517 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. He stated during the June 1981 sittings that his department had reviews taking place on all aspects of medical services offered to the public, and referred to an internal review of community health services. What were the details and outcome of this review?
2. In regard to other internal reviews conducted during the past year, (a) in which areas were they conducted, (b) who have the committees comprised of, (c) how many times have they met, and (d) what has been the outcome of these reviews?
3. How many internal reviews are being conducted at the moment?

From 9 March 1982

'Fellow Territorians' Circular

564 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

What was the cost of a circular letter dated October 1981, addressed to 'Fellow Territorians' and signed by the Chief Minister?

Geoffrey Peter Bellenger

611 Mr MacFARLANE to CHIEF MINISTER

1. Has his attention been drawn to the hardship suffered by Geoffrey Peter Bellenger, who was injured by a truck on a pedestrian crossing in Alice Springs on 23 May 1975 and who has not yet received any compensation for his injuries or costs?
2. Was the driver of the truck involved in the incident charged with any offence?
3. Is any of the almost 7 years delay between the injury and compensation attributable to any shortcoming or congestion in Northern Territory courts?

Liaison between Government Departments

618 Mr MacFARLANE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is there liaison between the Department of Lands, other departments and statutory bodies such as Telecom on the provision of services such as electricity, water, sewerage and telephone for new private or government subdivisions?

From 16 March 1982

Male Public Servants

640 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

As at 30 April 1981, what was (a) the average male earnings in the Northern Territory Public Service, and (b) what were the numbers and levels of the males?

Motor Vehicles - NTEC

645 Mrs LAWRIE to TREASURER

1. How many motor vehicles are (a) owned by NTEC, (b) what classes of vehicles are they, and (c) in what numbers?
2. To which designations of NTEC employees are these vehicles allocated and allowed to be driven to and from work?
3. Is it a fact that a lawyer retained by NTEC has an NTEC vehicle assigned to him for his personal use?

Houses, Darwin City Council

649 Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is he aware of (a) the number of houses owned by the Corporation of the City of Darwin, and (b) to what use these houses are put?

From 25 May 1982

Repairs and Maintenance, Rapid Creek Primary School

657 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What plans does the department have to (a) repair and cyclone proof the roof of the older part of the Rapid Creek Primary School, including the covered way area, (b) paint, (c) replace furniture, and (d) repair gutters in the older part of the school, and (e) bituminize the school carpark?

National Parks, MacDonnell Ranges

663 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer to question No. 586 regarding the gazetting of a MacDonnell Range National Park and ask:

What other 'acquisition proposals are proceeding satisfactorily in the Central and East MacDonnells', and for what purposes is the Conservation Commission seeking to acquire such land?

Education Staff, Banka Banka

670 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many staff positions does his department fund at Banka Banka?
2. Of these, (a) how many are members of the community, and (b) how many were recruited from outside the community?

Blasting, Sadadeen Hills

675 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What consultation took place, if any, with Aboriginal traditional owners and other citizens before officers of his department commenced blasting a section of the Sadadeen hills to enable erection of a water tank?

From 3 June 1982

Mt Wells Battery

697 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Is the area of the Mt Wells Battery still part of the Ban Ban pastoral lease?

2. If so, is this the reason for the delay in full payment of Jingellic Minerals to the government for the Mt Wells Battery and associated leases?
3. If so, when will this be resolved?

From 17 August 1982

Publicity Officer, Yulara

707 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

What (a) qualifications were required by the Conservation Commission of applicants for the recently-advertised position of Yulara Publicity Officer, (b) how many applications were received, and (c) how many applicants were interviewed?

Coal-fired Power Station

719 Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

1. Will a crushing mill for converting lump coal into powder for use in the proposed coal-fired power station be constructed in Darwin?
2. If so, (a) where will it be constructed and (b) what is the anticipated cost?

Power Plant, Newcastle Waters

723 Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

1. When was Newcastle Waters (a) provided with a public power supply, and (b) what was the cost of the provision of that power supply?
2. What is (a) the capacity of the Newcastle Waters Power Station, (b) how many consumers are using the power, and (c) how many people from Newcastle Waters township signed a petition seeking the provision of a public power supply in October 1980?

Access Road, Bynoe Harbour

728 Mr DOOLAN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Further to his answer to question 652 (a) what future development does he envisage for the small community at Belyuen which he said generates traffic volumes warranting upgrading the road to the standard presently being constructed, (b) to what additional development in the pastoral, mining, fishing and recreational industries is he referring, (c) fishing and mining by whom, (d) what amount of capitalisation, (e) mining for what, (f) what type of pastoral and recreational development, where, when, by whom and at what capital outlay, and (g) where does the road through Bulldog Pass lead to, or is it part of the main Bynoe Harbour access road?

2 km Drinking Law

731 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

What was (a) the cost of preparation and distribution, including postage, of the 2 leaflets, (b) the cost of the recent TV advertisements, and (c) the cost of recent newspaper advertisements regarding the 2 km drinking law?

From 12 October 1982

Essential Services, Aboriginal Communities, 1982-83

735 Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. What amount is being allocated for (a) essential services in 1982-83 and for which Aboriginal communities, (b) what are the proposed projects, and (c) what projects have been completed?
2. How many Aborigines (a) have been, and (b) are employed with the essential services program, (c) what training are they receiving, and (d) from whom?
3. What improvements are to be carried out in respect of (a) a water supply, (b) provision of toilets and showers, and (c) upgrading of, and access to airstrips?

Radio Station Costs

736 Mr BELL to TREASURER

What was the cost of establishing radio stations (a) 8CCC-FM, and (b) 8 TOP-FM, and what is the budget allocation for each in (c) 1981-82, and (d) 1982-83?

Grants-in-aid, Community Service Organisations

753 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

How much money under the grants-in-aid scheme was given to community service organisations in 1981-82?

From 16 November 1982

Government Printing Office - Financial Statements

760 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. Why were no instructions issued to prepare a statement of accounts for the Government Printing Office for the year ending 30 June 1979?
2. Why did financial statements comprising a profit and loss statement and a balance sheet for the Government Printing Office for the year ended 30 June 1980 vary from the form approved by the Treasurer?
3. Were the financial statements for the Government Printing Office for the year ended 30 June 1981 presented in a form approved by the Treasurer?
4. What steps have been taken to ensure adequate documentation exists to allow for an accurate calculation of current asset item Work in Progress?
5. What explanation is there for the accumulated loss of \$223 918 for the Government Printing Office for the year ended 30 June 1979?
6. The Auditor-General's report states that action was taken after 28 February 1981 to remedy shortcomings in the financial statements supplied for the Government Printing Office for the financial year ending 30 June 1980. What were these shortcomings and how were they corrected?
7. Why was a replacement page substituted in the notes to and forming part of the financial statements for the Government Printing Office for the financial year ending 30 June 1980 on 23 February 1982?
8. When was the statement of accounts for the Government Printing Office for the financial year ending 30 June 1981 forwarded to the Auditor-General?

Education Budget, 1982-83

761 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In regard to the 1982-83 Education Budget:

1. what are the specific budget allocations for each primary and secondary school in the Northern Territory;
2. what is the overall allocation for remedial teachers in the Northern Territory education system;
3. what is the budget allocation for teacher recruitment;
4. what is the budget allocation set aside to establish and implement testing procedures and tests themselves;
5. in the sections of education budget where both Territory and Commonwealth money is spent, what is the actual allocation of each; and
6. what capital works items are budgeted for and what is the breakdown of their allocations?

Visit to Singapore

763 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. On his latest overseas trip, when did he depart from the Northern Territory and when did he return?
2. Apart from launching the roll on-roll off facility in Singapore, what other official functions did he have, and on what dates?
3. How many people were in the official party and what were their names?
4. What was the total cost for the official party of (a) travel, (b) daily allowances, and (c) entertainment expenses?

Pastoral Properties - Breach of Covenants

765 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. Why did the government decide in 1980 not to take action against pastoral lessees in breach of their covenants?
2. A recent report on the ABC program "After 8" stated that 59% of pastoral properties in the Victoria River district, 66% in Darwin and Gulf regions, 23% in the Barkly region and 25% in Alice Springs region were in breach of their covenants.

In each region, how many properties in breach of covenants were (i) locally owned (i.e., owned in the Northern Territory), (ii) owned by Australian interests outside the Northern Territory, and (iii) owned by overseas interests?

3. In each region, what were the main breaches of covenants recorded?
4. In each region, what percentage of pastoral properties in breach of covenants had more than one breach?

Motor Vehicles - Department of the Chief Minister

766 Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;

- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Department of Law

767 Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Primary Production

768 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Industrial Development and Tourism

769 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and

- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Treasury and NTEC

770 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In (1) his department, and (2) the Northern Territory Electricity Commission -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Department of Lands and Housing

771 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Department of Education

772 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Community Development

773 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;

- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Health

774 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Mines and Energy

775 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Transport and Works

776 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;

- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Motor Vehicles - Youth, Sport and Recreation

777 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT and RECREATION

In his department -

- (a) how many government motor vehicles are on issue to the department;
- (b) what criteria are used to determine who uses government vehicles;
- (c) what is the general policy on officers garaging government vehicles overnight and at weekends;
- (d) what proportion of the vehicles are (i) garaged centrally, and (ii) garaged at officers' homes overnight and at weekends;
- (e) where vehicles are garaged at officers' homes, what restrictions are placed on their use; and
- (f) what steps are taken to ensure that these restrictions are observed?

Apprehension without Arrest

778 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Since its inception in 1979, in regard to Division 4 of Part VII of the Police Administration Act, on a yearly basis -

- 1. how many persons have been apprehended;
- 2. how many of those apprehended were (a) Aboriginal, and (b) non-Aboriginal;
- 3. how many of the persons apprehended were subject to subsequent apprehension;
- 4. what is the average period of apprehension;
- 5. how many persons were released under the provisions of section 131(1); and
- 6. how many persons were dealt with under section 132?

Community Health Medical Officers

779 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

How many community health medical officer positions (a) existed, and (b) were vacant at 1 November 1982?

Kirton and Whiting Report

780 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

What were the (a) consultants' fees, and (b) other costs incurred by his department in the production of the Kirton and Whiting Report on Urban-based Community Health Centres?

Specialist Medical Officers

781 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

What (a) number, and (b) description of specialist medical officers -

- (i) employed by his department in the year ended 31 October 1982 have gone into private practice and have entered into sessional or similar

arrangements with the department;

- (ii) employed by his department at 1 November 1982 are expected to enter private practice prior to 1 November 1983 and are negotiating sessional or similar arrangements with the department;
- (iii) positions existed in the department at 1 November 1982;
- (iv) positions vacant at 1 November 1982; and
- (v) does the department plan to be employing at 1 November 1983?

From 25 November 1982

Darwin Central Zone Sewerage Treatment Plant

782 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. What were the modifications to the Darwin Central Zone Sewerage Treatment Plant recommended in the consultant's report of 1980?
2. What modifications have been made to the plant?

Katherine House

783 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

What criteria are applied in admitting residents to the students' hostel, 'Katherine House'?

Aboriginal and Islander Medical Service

198 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. What is the present staffing of the Aboriginal and Islander Medical Centre? Are there plans to increase the staffing levels and, if so, what positions?
2. What are the functions and duties of the Aboriginal and Islander Medical Service?
3. During the 6 months to 31 May 1981, (a) how many Aboriginals have been treated per week by AIMS, (b) what are the major categories of illness, and (c) where do the Aboriginals, in the main, come from?
4. How many Aboriginal liaison officers are attached to Casuarina Hospital; what hours do they work; and are there plans to increase the numbers?
5. Are any Aboriginal liaison officers to be employed at Darwin Hospital?

ANSWER

1. The Aboriginal and Islander Medical Service is currently staffed with a senior liaison officer, 4 liaison officers, 1 trainee liaison officer and 1 trainee receptionist. No representations have been received for an increase in staff.
2. The service is essentially concerned with liaison, support and transport of Aboriginal people in the Darwin area. The end result is facilitating communication between Aboriginal people and existing health services and ensuring that Aboriginal people are able to avail themselves of the existing services to the fullest extent.
3. The Aboriginal and Island Medical Service does not treat patients. There were 6125 people transported by AIMS from December 1980 to May 1981 with the majority being either picked up or delivered to locations such as Darwin Hospital, Bagot Reserve, Darwin Central and Nightcliff Community Health Centres as well as various hostels and fringe camps. From January 1982 to July 1982, approximately 14 500 people have been transported by this organisation whose services now extend as far south as Adelaide River.
4. & 5. There are 2 Aboriginal liaison workers at Darwin Hospital.
Hours of work are: 1 liaison officer 0840 - 1730 hours; and
1 liaison officer 1000 - 1830 hours.

There are no plans to increase the numbers.

Security for Belongings of Hospital Patients

225 Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

What arrangements are made to ensure the security of the belongings of hospital patients, for example psychiatric and geriatric patients, who are unable to care for themselves?

ANSWER

Personal effects of geriatric patients in the Harry Chan Ward, apart from anything needed by the patients, are secured by nursing staff. Money is banked by a social worker directly into the patient's own bank account.

Valuable property belonging to short-term psychiatric patients is kept in a locked area if the patient does not wish to care for it or is unable to do so. Long-term patients' valuables are handled by the social workers.

Receipts are issued for cash or valuables stored on behalf of general hospital patients. Money belonging to patients may be collected in whole or in part on request.

Psychiatric Services

534 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. For what reason is psychiatric services included in the general administrative expenditure for health services?
2. For what reason has the level of funding for psychiatric services been reduced from \$510 000 to \$475 000? Where will this cut be felt?

ANSWER

1. The amount allocated for psychiatric services in the general administrative expenditure for health services reflects the payments to be made to interstate institutions in respect of Territory patients. The costs of maintaining psychiatric services within the Territory are included in the general operating costs of the hospitals.
2. The reduction in the level of funding from \$501 000 in 1980-81 to \$475 000 for 1981-82 reflected the lesser number of Territory patients being accommodated at high cost institutions interstate. The estimate for 1981-82 was based upon the actual expenditure incurred for the 1980-81 period as shown below:

	<u>Estimate</u>	<u>Actual Expenditure</u>
1980-81	\$ 501 000	\$ 457 131
1981-82	\$ 475 000	\$ 566 068
1982-83	\$ 500 000	\$ 84 850 (as at 31 August 1982).

Doctor-Patient Ratios in NT

538 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

1. What is the current ratio of doctors per patient at each hospital in the NT?
2. What are the duty rosters of doctors and nurses? How does this compare with last year?
3. Is the percentage that salaried doctors can earn on top of their income to be increased from 25%? If so, to what level?

ANSWER

1. The ratio is shown as a ratio of patient per salaried doctor. Figures for 1981 and the first half of 1982 were as follows:

<u>Hospital</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
Darwin	4.14	4.54
Alice Springs	5.43	4.96
Katherine	22.75	17.42
Tennant Creek	14.42	8.01
Gove	16.71	12.21
NT Average	5.57	5.36

The figures are based on the ratio of salaried doctors to the average daily occupied beds for the June quarters 1981 and 1982. The number of doctors does not include private practitioners and specialists of whom there are 67 currently practising in the Territory, many of whom have hospital visiting rights.

2. It is not feasible to describe the duty rosters of doctors and nurses. Rosters differ from one specialist area of a hospital to another, and from one hospital to another. However, if the honourable member would nominate which area he is specifically interested in, I will provide him with a sample roster for that area.
3. No.

Drilling and Exploration, Magellan Petroleum

667 Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

1. What are the details of the current drilling program being pursued by Magellan Petroleum in central Australia?
2. What is the (a) registration number of, and (b) nature of exploration on each E.L. held by the company?
3. What funding has been committed to the exploration program either (a) in general, or (b) for each E.L.?

ANSWER

Magellan Petroleum Australia Ltd has net interests of 25.52% and 12.20% in oil permits OP175 and 178 in the Amadeus Basin where the most intensive exploration work is progressing at present.

Pancontinental Petroleum Ltd, the operator in these permits, has drilled the Wallaby, Dingo and Mt Winter wells in the last 12 months. Up to 4 further wildcat wells are expected to be drilled in the coming year.

Magellan also has an interest in OP165 in the Ngalia Basin and, of course, the 2 Mereenie leases, PPL4 and PPL5. As operator in OP165, Magellan drilled the Davis 1 well last year.

Oilmin NL is the operator at Mereenie where the wells East Mereenie 5 and 6 are being progressed. Up to 18 further appraisal wells may be drilled over the coming 2 years.

The total commitment by all interested companies in exploration in the Amadeus Basin is well in excess of \$10 million over the 5 year permit term which expires in May 1982 for OP175 and October 1983 for OP178. These costs cover seismic work and exploration drilling but not the Mereenie appraisal program.

Roads - Pastoral Properties

727 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

On how many pastoral properties (a) does the government maintain roads from station boundary to the homestead, (b) what is the longest length of road maintained under this system, (c) what is the average length of road maintained, and (d) what was the cost of maintaining these roads in the 1981-82 financial year?

ANSWER

- (a) 150 pastoral leases.
- (b) 60 km to Western Creek.
- (c) Average length of road within a pastoral lease: 17.5 km
Average total length of pastoral access road: 31 km.
- (d) Average cost of maintenance: \$200 km/year. (Total length of pastoral access roads is approximately 4650 km).

Loan - Katherine Meatworks

729 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. Was a government loan made available to the operators of the Katherine meatworks?
2. If so, (a) was this loan to the value of \$1.4 million, (b) what is the current status of this loan, and (c) is it being serviced correctly?

ANSWER

A Commonwealth loan was made available to Northern Meat Exporters Pty Ltd, operators of the Katherine meatworks.

Repayments are being made in accordance with the agreement and the amount of the loan is \$1 000 000.

Buffaloes

732 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

1. How many buffaloes have been received at the government's facility at Annaburro Station?
2. Have the suppliers met the conditions required in terms of buffalo type and age?

ANSWER

1. The marshalling facilities at Annaburro Station are an integral part of the buffalo domestication program and were established by the government to receive, test and quieten young female buffalo. 435 head of buffalo have been received and a total of 700-1000 is expected for the year. The government is satisfied that progress is being made with this unique program.
2. All animals received at the facility have been satisfactory in terms of type and age, although there have been 2 deaths from unspecified causes and 2 animals were destroyed for humane reasons.

'High Rise' Development, Alice Springs

737 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

1. How many applications for 'high rise' development - that is, for buildings of more than 3 storeys - in Alice Springs have been received by the Planning Authority in the 12 months to 1 August 1982?
2. Has the Planning Authority rejected any such applications outright considering the height constraint currently imposed by the 1980 Alice Springs Town Plan, or has the authority advised developers to put their plans 'on ice' until it has considered more carefully the issue of 'high rise' development in Alice Springs?
3. What is the nature of the Planning Authority's consideration of the issue of 'high rise' development in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

1. One.
2. The application received was deferred by the Planning Authority pending consideration of a height policy for buildings over 2 storeys and the provision of car parking spaces.
3. Proposed alternative height policies were exhibited at the Alice Springs Show and continued on public exhibition for 42 days to 12-August 1982.

Twenty-three submissions and 2 petitions relating to the matter have been received. The Planning Authority is to further consider the matter.

Industrial Subdivision, Alice Springs

738 Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Is the government considering any alternatives to the Sadadeen East location for its planned Alice Springs industrial subdivision, bearing in mind the disputed nature of the Sadadeen East site?

ANSWER

The government examined alternative locations for industrial subdivision in 1981 and found that significant cost penalties were involved. An approach to the Commonwealth to obtain financial cover of the additional costs was unsuccessful. The matter was referred to by the Chief Minister in the Legislative Assembly on 2 December 1981 - pages 1805 to 1812 of Hansard refer.

Access Road, Beetaloo

741 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Bearing in mind that the route for the realigned section of the access road to Beetaloo Station has been determined in consultation with traditional owners and that large numbers of stock are expected to be turned off in the near future, when will work to upgrade the access road be completed?

ANSWER

Upgrading work will commence in mid-October and should be completed in mid-December.

Stormwater Canal, Tennant Creek

742 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. Does the government plan to upgrade the main town stormwater canal located adjacent to a motel, caravan park, residential areas and a school in the northern and eastern areas of Tennant Creek?
2. If so, when is the work likely to commence?

ANSWER

1. No.
2. Not applicable.
3. The drain to which the question refers is one of a number of drains being considered by an inter-organisational committee formed to examine the various aspects of drains in centres where local government operates. The committee has not yet reported.

Planning of any upgrading is impracticable until the government has had an opportunity of studying the committee's report.

Roads, Plenty-Sandover Region

743 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer to his press release of 28 July and ask what are the details of

the government's 'plans to improve pastoral roads' in the Plenty-Sandover region?

ANSWER

A recent development study of the central Australian road network identified priorities for the improvement of road services in the Plenty-Sandover area.

The major works planned to be undertaken in our forward program include the following:

- Continuation of upgrading and sealing of the Plenty Highway. We hope to get beyond the 100 km mark in 1986.
- In addition to work presently under way on the Mud Tank to Delny road, there will be further development of the network in the Dneiper-McDonald Downs area.
- A new link is planned from Ammaroo on the Sandover Highway towards Murray Downs.

Further development of rural arterial and local roads in the area will be considered for inclusion in later programs.

Causeway, Alice Springs

744 Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When does he expect the extent of residential development east of the Todd River and south of Heavitree Gap will be sufficient to justify reviewing the location of the existing causeway, which is a government undertaking revealed by him in his latest communication to me on the subject?

ANSWER

The causeway across the Todd River at Heavitree Gap provides a convenient flood-free crossing of the river for a considerable number of people for most of the year.

At this time development at the east of the Todd and south of Heavitree Gap does not justify an additional crossing.

A crossing at a site south of the existing causeway has been considered, however it is difficult to predict just when traffic volumes will reach a sufficient level to warrant its construction.

Solar Power, Yulara

746 Mr BELL to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he detail his department's plans for using solar energy as a means for supplying power to Yulara village, described in 'The Age' of 11 August 1982, as a 'solar power tower'?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory government has had protracted discussions with the McDonnell Douglas Corporation concerning a solar thermal power station, commonly known as a solar tower, since mid-1979. These discussions have centred on a 1-2 MW power tower-type station, sited at the planned Yulara tourist village.

The plant proposed for Yulara, or other remote site, consists of reflecting heliostats (mirrors reflecting sunlight in a fixed direction), a tower-mounted central receiver, a molten salt heat transfer system with

heat storage and a conventional steam turbine generator system. Initially the plant will generate 1 MW although it can be upgraded to 2 MW. There is also potential for waste heat to be utilised, which could increase the plant value markedly.

As the accepted commercial value of the plant, in terms of liquid fuel saved, is considerably less than its estimated cost of \$16 million, funding from an external source is required. The Department of Mines and Energy has ascertained that the technology is acceptable, the project will conserve liquid fuels, the cost of future plants is projected to be less than commercial plant value and there is significant technology transfer benefit to Australian industry.

The government is currently considering the funding options open to it. The outcome of these deliberations will affect the future of the project.

School, Lake Nash

747 Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to an advertisement lodged by the manager of Lake Nash Station in the 25 March edition of 'Queensland Country Life' seeking the services of a mechanic in which conditions of employment listed included the phrase 'no school' and ask, will he take steps to inform or convince the manager of Lake Nash Station that the Department of Education does indeed operate a school on that station?

ANSWER

I am quite sure the manager of Lake Nash is aware that there is a school on the station and the remainder of the statement/question is thereby rendered pointless.

Community Government, Borroloola

748 Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. Does the majority of the Borroloola community oppose the introduction of community government?
2. If so, will the government continue to negotiate the introduction of community government despite the fact that the community generally opposes it?
3. If the government concludes negotiations, what is the likely date for the introduction of community government at Borroloola?

ANSWER

1. Residents of Borroloola have not made an application for the introduction of community government. However the government has been assisting a body elected at a public meeting to become incorporated as the Borroloola Progress Association. A dispute has arisen within the community over the composition of the executive of that association.
2. The government has not been negotiating the introduction of community government at Borroloola. Although a dispute still exists, the Borroloola Progress Association is proceeding with its plans for incorporation. It is understood that the Borroloola Aboriginal Council has now decided to commence incorporation proceedings.
3. The dates when the Borroloola Progress Association and the Borroloola Council are to be incorporated are not known.

Alpurrurrulam Community

749 Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Following receipt of a letter sent to his department dated 28 May 1982 from the Alpurrurrulam community at Lake Nash which states: 'We want to tell you that we do not want to move to Bathurst Downs. We want to stay here in this country, Lake Nash, that we call Alpurrurrulam.', does he acknowledge that the Aboriginal community wants to remain in its present location at Lake Nash?

ANSWER

Present indications are that the Alpurrurrulam community do not wish to move to Bathurst Downs although they had originally expressed a desire to do so and had themselves selected the proposed site.

Further discussions will be held with the community as soon as the water situation at Bathurst Downs has been clarified.

Tourist Operations Standards

750 Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM

1. As a rule, does the NT Tourist Commission critically assess the standard and quality of a tourist operation before it offers the operation promotional support?
2. If so, what general procedures are followed to make such assessment?
3. If consumer opinion indicates a tourist operation is sub-standard in any respect, does the Tourist Commission consider withdrawing its promotional support from this operation?

ANSWER

1. Yes.
2. New tourist operators are required to serve a probationary phase for 12 months to ensure the standard of their product meets market demand as well as to achieve a demonstrative indication of the operator's willingness to provide a first-class service during both peak and off-peak seasons. Brochures are held under the counter and distributed on a request basis only during this trial period. At the conclusion of 12 months the product and service is critically evaluated before full support is given and publications are placed on the shelves of the tourist bureaux.
3. Yes, where an operator's performance is the subject of consistent consumer complaint or that performance is identified clearly to being of detriment to Northern Territory tourism.

Parkinsonia Eradication

751 Mr BELL to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Does the government offer incentives to pastoralists and other persons to control and eradicate the noxious species *Parkinsonia* before it affects access to stock-watering places and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

The control of weeds on private property is the responsibility of the owner. The Department of Primary Production has an extensive program designed to assist pastoralists in the control of *Parkinsonia* and other noxious weeds. This program includes the distribution of specific agnotes

to all pastoralists. In instances where it has been necessary to issue a notice under the Noxious Weeds Act, the government may provide direct assistance with the provision of chemicals, equipment, and labour.

Loss of productive capacity of land is considered to be sufficient incentive in itself for pastoralists and other people to control and eradicate weeds.

However, in cases where this inducement is not adequate the government has regulatory powers under the Noxious Weeds Act.

In addition the government has allocated funds in the current budget to provide a dollar-for-dollar subsidy for the purchase of herbicides to control noxious weeds including *Parkinsonia*.

Grants-in-aid, Community Service Organisations

752 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT and RECREATION

In 1981-82, under the grants-in-aid scheme to voluntary community organisations working in the youth, sport and recreation fields, how much money was given to organisations for (a) administration, (b) equipment, (c) facilities, (d) salary subsidies, (e) special projects, (f) training-coaching, and (g) travel subsidies?

ANSWER

In 1981-82 the following amounts were given to organisations working in the youth, sport and recreation fields:

(a) Administration	\$	37 924	(e) Special projects	\$	148 858
(b) Equipment	\$	88 767	(f) Coaching-training	\$	13 178
(c) Facilities	\$	1 123 491	(g) Travel subsidies	\$	175 845
(d) Salary subsidies	\$	239 320			

Further expenditure occurred under the youth, sport and recreation heading as follows:

Aboriginal Recreation Program	\$	395 317
Vacation Care	\$	85 945
Life Be In It	\$	22 000

Total youth, sport and recreation grants-in-aid 1981-82 is \$ 2 330 645.

Farm-fuel Projects

754 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Is the government giving any encouragement to farm-fuel projects and, if so, can he give brief details?

ANSWER

There has been little Australian activity in recent times in successful projects by the private sector involving the production of alternative hydro-carbon fuels from farm crops.

The government believes that it is pointless diverting resources into this area at this time, and will maintain a watching brief over the academic research projects being conducted in other states.

The government has given maximum priority to the development of a viable agricultural and horticultural industry in the Territory and to the eradication of bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis. Efforts in this direction are being maximised and will not allow any direct involvement of a significant nature in an area of research which is the development of farm fuel crops where the outlook for success is quite clearly less encouraging.

BCF Fire Extinguishers

755 Miss D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. Is he aware that some state fire prevention authorities recommend against the use and installation of bromochlorodifluoromethane (BCF) fire extinguishers in confined spaces, and in hospitals, nursing homes and child care centres?
2. Is it proposed to replace BCF fire extinguishers in hospitals in the Northern Territory?
3. Is it proposed to discontinue the use of BCF fire extinguishers in any other types of public buildings in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The fire safety authorities in NSW restrict the use of BCF in the non-ambulant areas of hospitals and other health care establishments.

1. NEW SOUTH WALES restricts the use of BCF extinguishers in the non-ambulant areas of hospitals such as intensive care and post-operative wards only.
2. MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE - The use of BCF extinguishers is not recommended in hospital areas where non-ambulant or respiratory patients are accommodated.
3. CANBERRA ACT - No restrictions in patient accommodation areas.
4. ADELAIDE METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE - Restrictions on use of BCF in hospitals.
5. PERTH METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE - No restrictions on use of BCF in hospitals.
6. BRISBANE METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE - No restrictions on use of BCF in hospitals.
7. NORTHERN TERRITORY FIRE SERVICE - No restrictions on use of BCF in hospitals except in confined spaces, intensive care and non-ambulant areas.

Supporting Data

All inert-gas fire extinguishants are irrespiratory to a greater or lesser degree. The basic aim in extinguishing the fire is to replace the oxygen in the air with the inert gas. Thus the flame is starved of oxygen and dies - just as a person would if he or she remained in the oxygen-deficient atmosphere. For this reason all such extinguishers carry a warning about use in a confined space and or the need to ventilate the area before re-occupation.

BCF (the trade name for bromochlorodifluoromethane) has an advantage over most other extinguishants in that it is suitable for use in all classes of fire, viz., electrical, oil, paper-wood, etc. Most other extinguishants are not suitable for one or other class of fire, e.g., CO² is not recommended for a typical paper/wood/waste type of fire, a water extinguisher should not be used on cooking fats, electrical or petrol/oil fires, and so on.

BCF is approved by the Australian Standards Association.

BCF has slight anaesthetic properties, and for this reason only the smaller sizes are recommended for smaller rooms.

In summary, the products of combustion - should a fire occur - are far

more dangerous to the patients than the effects of using a BCF extinguisher. Further, the acrid smell of BCF when used on a fire would automatically prompt people to move out of the room or away from the area, hence the restrictions on usage in non-ambulant areas.

BCF, weight for weight, has a higher inhibitory factor (extinguishing concentration) than all other inert gases. For example, when compared with CO² (carbon dioxide) the smaller 1 kg BCF is twice as effective, and in the larger sizes the effectiveness is increased by a factor of 4. Thus smaller extinguishers more easily handled by females can be installed in most locations.

BCF, when used in a fire, will leave hydrogen halides in the atmosphere. There are easily detectable by odour at as low a level as 3 parts per million. At about 100 parts per million, strong irritant effects are experienced making occupancy of a room uncomfortable - but not necessarily dangerous. Tests have shown that 50 000 parts per million should be considered the maximum exposure limit.

BCF is approved in UK and USA in addition to 20 other countries.

The Northern Territory Fire Service does not see any reason to vary its present procedures regarding the use of BCF in hospitals and similar institutions.

Residential Tenancies

756 Mr R. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In regard to residential tenancies:

1. What is the average bond paid in respect of (a) 1 bedroom units/flats, (b) 2 bedroom units/flats, (c) 1 bedroom houses, (d) 2 bedroom houses, and (e) 3 bedroom houses?
2. In respect of categories (a) to (e) above, how many leases are there existing at present?
3. What is the average term of residential leases?

ANSWER

Assuming the question relates to Housing Commission tenancies -

1. Security deposit charged general public tenants is \$50 for all units of accommodation throughout the Territory. Northern Territory public servants and pensioners are not charged security deposit.
2. 6540 as at 22 October 1982.
3. Statistics are not kept on average lengths of tenancies. Tenants are located and retain the accommodation for an indefinite period.

System-wide Testing in NT Schools

757 Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What steps have been taken to introduce system-wide testing into NT schools?
2. (a) How many people will be involved in the implementation of system-wide testing, (b) how much will it cost, and (c) how much time is it likely to take on the part of the professional people involved?

ANSWER

1. A working party has been established to plan and supervise the imple-

mentation of the testing program. It is intended that these will be developed for trial early in 1983 and hopefully introduction in urban schools in the second half of that year for years 5 and 7. Testing in Aboriginal schools for years 5 and 7 will be undertaken in 1983. The working party will also be making recommendations on appropriate form of school-based screening programs in the early childhood years.

2. (a) There will be teacher involvement through part-time attendance at working party meetings. There will be 5 teachers involved in each of the 3 levels in English and in mathematics, i.e. a total of 30 teachers for 5 days each, or a total of 150 teacher days.

- (b) Costs of the exercise will be met from within departmental funds.

It is estimated that the costs will be in the order of \$15 000 for the employment of relief teachers where this is necessary whilst teachers involved in the working party discussions are absent from a class, as well as the salaries of approximately 2 full-time staff.

- (c) One officer will be involved full-time. Part-time input will be made by officers of the Evaluation and Assessment Unit as part of their normal duties.

Loan to Government Printer

758 Miss D'ROZARIO to TREASURER

1. Why were the terms and conditions of a government loan of \$3.5 million to the Government Printing Office not established at the time the loan was made?
2. Have the terms and conditions of this loan yet been settled and, if so, when did this take place?

ANSWER

The question has been asked in 2 parts, but it is simpler to provide one answer covering both parts.

The amount of \$3.5 million shown in the financial statements of the Government Printing Office as a fixed asset borrowing, represents the value of capital assets acquired by the Government Printing Office from funds provided by the Commonwealth government and the Northern Territory government.

Of that amount, \$2.5 million relates to the building, which was constructed by the Commonwealth government and handed over to the Northern Territory at no cost. There is no obligation on the Territory to repay that money to the Commonwealth and it is considered that the placing of an obligation on the Government Printer to repay the funds to the Territory would achieve very little. It would only increase the Government Printer's costs, which are passed on to departments, and the overall effect would be simply to inflate both the receipts and payments sides of the Budget. These funds might be regarded as the government's equity in the Printing Office.

On the question of funds provided for capital purposes by the Territory since self-government, there is an argument that these should be treated as loan funds and should attract an interest charge to reflect the cost of the funds and, in some measure, to place the Government Printer more on a commercial basis. The government believes that, as far as possible, the full costs associated with its various functions should be fully brought to account and that hidden subsidies are to be avoided. However, this principle needs to be balanced against the undesirable bloating of

the Budget that would result if all the various agencies of government were to charge one another for services provided.

After considering these factors, I have decided that funds provided to the Government Printer by the Territory government are to be treated as loan funds. The various amounts provided since self-government are to be consolidated as at 1 July 1983. The aggregate amount thus obtained will be regarded as a loan repayable on demand. The interest rate to apply from 1 July 1983 will be 10% per annum and will be subject to review from time to time.

Book Purchases - NT Library Service

759 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What was (a) the value of books purchased by the Northern Territory Library Service since 1 January 1982, (b) from which suppliers or book-sellers were these purchases made, both Territory and interstate (c) is the library service still purchasing books direct from publishers, and (d) what was the total expenditure by the library service on book purchases in the financial year 1980-81?

ANSWER

(a) Value of books (and films) purchased by NTLs since 1 January 1982 (15 December-15 October 1982) - \$332 733.

(b) Northern Territory

Northbooks	\$ 52 119	
Bookworld	\$ 10 500	
Education & Technical Books	\$ 5 363	
Territory Book Depot	\$ 8 220	
Paul France	\$ 14 851	
Miscellaneous suppliers	\$ 3 852	\$ 94 905

Interstate

James Bennett, Sydney	\$ 35 198	
Dunn & Mason, Melbourne	\$ 14 854	
International Subscription Agency, Brisbane	\$ 18 343	
Miscellaneous suppliers (books)	\$ 13 605	
Antiquarian book dealers	\$ 8 640	
Miscellaneous suppliers (films)	\$ 53 280	
Miscellaneous suppliers (music and spoken word cassettes)	\$ 15 499	
Miscellaneous suppliers (microfilms)	\$ 8 572	\$ 167 991

Overseas

Cambridge Jackson	\$ 9 707	
Woolstons & Blunts	\$ 12 699	
Bumpus, Haldane & Maxwell	\$ 5 850	
Blackwells (serials)	\$ 42 581	\$ 70 837
		\$ 333 733

(c) The NTLs does not as a rule purchase direct from publishers. There are very occasional exceptions to this such as:

1. Small and obscure publishers (e.g. Summer Institute of Linguistics, Bamylili Literature Production Centre).
2. When publishers do not offer trade terms (e.g. limited editions from Landsdowne Pr.).

- (d) The total expenditure by the library service on book purchases in the financial year 1980-81 was \$ 413 673 (includes books and films).

Education Budget, 1982-83

762 Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In regard to the 1982-83 Education Budget and referring specifically to the following page numbers of Budget Paper No. 4 of 1982-83:

1. DIVISION 44

(a) Page 5:

- (i) What is the explanation for the variation between what was allocated under administrative expenses last year (\$38 000) and what was actually spent (\$166 000); and
(ii) why is there such a significant increase in duty travel included in the 1983 budget?

(b) Page 6:

How much is allocated to the biennial conference of the Australasian Institute of Inspectors of Schools?

(c) Page 7:

- (i) It appears that about \$61 000 was underspent last year in the area of administrative expenses, management services. What is the explanation?
(ii) What was the nature of the 'recent management reviews' referred to in the budget paper to explain the 1982-83 allocation in this area?

(d) Page 8:

What is the explanation for the underspending of about \$44 000 in the area of administrative expenses, educational facilities, last year?

(e) Page 10:

The government appears to have overspent about \$50 000 in the area of administrative expenses, professional services last year. What is the explanation?

(f) Page 19:

Why is there a reduction in the requirement for recruitment in the general administrative expenses section of the education budget?

(g) Page 20:

- (i) On what does the government base its assertion that demand for student assistance schemes seems to be stabilising; and
(ii) what was the reason for under-expenditure of \$100 000 last year?

(h) Page 23:

What additional loans does the government expect the independent non-government schools to take out that requires an extra \$82 000?

(j) Page 33:

- (i) What is the explanation for the apparent underspending by about \$124 000 in the transition from school to work program last year; and
(ii) how is the extra allocation likely to be spent this year?

(k) Page 34:

- (i) Will the extra funding in Aboriginal Education Assistance mean the Aboriginal teacher replacement program will be fully catered for?

(ii) Why was only \$83 000 of last year's allocated \$125 000 for the December-June period spent?

(m) Page 35:

The government appears to have underspent in the area of non-government student hostels by \$53 000 last year. What is the explanation?

2. DIVISION 46

Page 43:

The government appears to have underspent in the 3 main areas of expenditure for the Community College of Central Australia: i.e.

<u>Allocation 1981-82</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
\$ 1010	\$ 870
\$ 382	\$ 362
\$ 208	\$ 162

What is the explanation?

ANSWER

1. DIVISION 44

(a) Page 5:

(i) The variation between the administrative expenses appropriated for the Executive activity and the actual expenditure in 1981-82 related to the cost of the department's interstate travel program.

In previous years the costs of interstate travel had been shown across the full range of Education activities but in October 1981 it was decided that the full cost should be shown in this activity to achieve tight control.

(ii) The seemingly significant increase in duty travel relates to the provision of \$120 000 for interstate travel in 1982-83. In fact the increase over 1981-82 is \$6000 or 4.2% and is less than the actual increase in air fares and travelling allowances.

(b) Page 6:

The allocation for the biennial conference of the Australian Institute of Inspectors of Schools is \$15 000.

(c) Page 7:

(i) The underspending in the management services activity in 1981-82 was the result of the late delivery of office machines purchased in line with the recommendations of the Price Waterhouse Management Review.

(ii) The recent 'management review' was the Northern Territory Advisory Committee on Technology in Education conducted by Price Waterhouse. The reference in the Budget Paper relates to the general equipment and machines allocation which provides for the purchase and hire of computer and word processor visual display units and photocopiers to implement the recommendations of the review team.

(d) Page 8:

The underspending in the education facilities activity in 1981-82 is attributable to the late delivery of furniture and fittings items. Part of this was caused by poor performance by contractors but another contributing factor was the failure of a local company which had been a major supplier of wooden furniture.

(e) Page 10:

The apparent overspending in the administrative expenses for professional services was in fact the result of transfers into and out of the activity during 1981-82 as part of the process of adjusting to the activity budgeting format.

The transfer out related to expenditure on professional development and the operational grant to approved education centres shown against 'other services' in the 1982-83 Budget Paper No. 4, page 10. The transfer in covered the cost of payroll tax, recreation leave fares and transport previously shown in the general expenses item.

(f) Page 19:

The reduction in the provision for recruitment reflects the department's assumption that the level of Northern Territory Public Service recruitment action will diminish in certain areas because of the increasing stability of existing staff.

(g) Page 20:

(i) At the beginning of 1981 a number of new schemes were introduced but at that time very little information was available as to the likely claims against these schemes. As a result of the 1981-82 experience, the department is in a better position to project usage and in this sense the demand has stabilised.

(ii) The expansion of student assistance schemes introduced during 1981-82 and the estimated increase in awareness of the various schemes and benefits were expected to cost an extra \$273 000 on top of a baseline budget for 1981-82 of \$626 000. In the event the demand was considerably less than had been anticipated resulting in a shortfall of \$98 000.

(h) Page 23:

The additional loans which the department expects to service during 1982-83 would take account of the following building projects -

- (i) St John's College - Library and associated specialist rooms;
- (ii) St Paul's Primary - Library, Nightcliff;
- (iii) Catholic High School - Stage I, Alice Springs; and
- (iv) Catholic Primary School - Stage I, Sanderson.

(j) Page 33:

(i) The underspending in transition school to work in 1981-82 resulted from the fact that the forward program agreed to by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory ministers did not prove as adaptable to the Territory as had been hoped.

(ii) In regard to the 1982-83 financial year the department is examining program options to ensure that full expenditure is achieved and that value is obtained from Commonwealth funds.

(k) Page 34:

(i) The Aboriginal Education Assistance Scheme provides for the payment of Aboriginal teacher assistants in homeland centres (outstations).

(ii) The shortfall of expenditure was caused by the need to clarify the nature of Commonwealth responsibility for funding in the long term.

(m) Page 35:

The shortfall in expenditure occurred due to the closure of John Paul Hostel at Alice Springs.

2. DIVISION 46

Page 43:

Explanations in relation to underspending in Community College of Central Australia.

Sub-division 1 (Salaries and Allowances)

Throughout the year the college had difficulty in recruiting suitable teaching staff and in consequence the level of staffing throughout most of the year was less than the establishment provided for in the appropriation.

Sub-division 2 (Administrative Expenses)

The underspending in this area is attributable to the following:

- delays in fulfilment of overseas library orders;
- due to the difficulties in recruiting staff the placement of orders by the program coordinators were delayed and consequently orders were not fulfilled in time for full expenditure to be achieved; and
- delays in placement of orders for furniture and fittings requirements at the Sadadeen campus. The resulting revote expenditure will be reflected during 1982-83.

Sub-division 3 (Capital Items)

Delays in placement of orders for new plant and equipment at the Sadadeen campus. The revote expenditure will be reflected during 1982-83.

Statements of Accounts

764 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Under section 30(1) of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act*, for which government undertakings has he directed that statements of accounts be prepared?
2. In each case, when did he first direct that such statements of accounts be prepared?

ANSWER

1. The government undertakings for which directions have been given under section 30(1) of the *Financial Administration and Audit Act*, are the Darwin Omnibus Service and the Government Printing Office.
2. The direction in relation to the Darwin Omnibus Service was given on 29 February 1980 and in the case of the Government Printing Office on 21 August 1980.

Guarantee to Federal Pacific Hotels

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Has the government given a guarantee to Federal Pacific Hotels that it will not allow any other organisation to set up a casino-type operation in the Territory? If so, what is the life of that guarantee?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would refer the honourable member to the relevant legislation on the subject which, if I recall correctly, provides that, for a fixed period, the Northern Territory government can only issue 2 licences to operate casinos in the Northern Territory.

Fire in Jape Building

Mr LEO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he yet provide information related to the issue of a certificate of compliance prior to the occupation of the Jape building and breaches of the terms of that certificate?

ANSWER

My department does not issue these certificates of compliance. I think the honourable member is referring to whether the fire brigade approved the installation of the equipment that was in the Jape building before it was occupied. I said at the last sittings that, whilst there had been irregularities relating to some of the equipment installed, that had since been cleared up and the fire brigade is satisfied with the fire equipment installed in that building now.

North-south Rail Link

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware that it appears that consideration has been given to running the north-south railway up the existing Stuart Highway completely bypassing the town of Batchelor? With a view to the development of the town of Batchelor, what will the Chief Minister do about this?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in summary, it is a question of whether the railway should go through Adelaide River or through Batchelor. It would be pretty difficult to run the railway through both places without doing quite a spectacular zigzag. We want this railway. I am fairly content to allow the organisation which knows best about railways - that is, the Australian National Railways - to determine the course of the line because, obviously, whilst effecting economies during construction, it will want to serve areas which will attract to the rail the greatest number of consumers and the greatest volume of freight. I am aware that the likely corridor in the Batchelor area will not pass through the town but the preference of ANR is for an alignment close to the Stuart Highway. If there were major developments likely to occur at Batchelor of a nature that could seriously influence rethinking the route of the proposed rail, I would be prepared to make the appropriate representation but, I do not think this is the case at the present time.

A bridge exists over the Adelaide River which was used by the old railway. Whilst I am not certain about this, I believe that some of the bridges used by the old railway may well be suitable for the new rail construction. Obviously that is something which must be borne in mind. Mr Speaker, whilst I would like the rail to meander through every town in the Territory, unfortunately it is not possible. However, I am quite sure that Batchelor, through its very close proximity to Adelaide River and to the route of the railway, will derive a great deal of benefit from it.

Crown Land at Myilly Terrace

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Are negotiations still continuing for a change in usage of the vacant Crown land at Myilly Terrace formerly occupied by Flagstaff House and, if so, what is the status of these negotiations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question is not absolutely clear to me and perhaps she could expand it a little further. The Crown land she refers to has been vacant since the cyclone in 1974 and I am not au fait with what the honourable member means.

Mrs LAWRIE: Mr Speaker, may I amplify by saying the last time I asked the question, the honourable Minister for Lands and Housing admitted that discussions were under way with the Commonwealth Department of Defence with a view to perhaps rebuilding a house there. I am asking him if there have been further negotiations and, if so, what the outcome was. Last time, he knew what I was talking about.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members should make questions very clear so that ministers know what their questions are about.

Mrs LAWRIE: I cannot be clearer than that.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I apologise to the honourable member for Nightcliff for not recalling in fine detail every conversation that I have had with her.

Mrs LAWRIE: It was a question in the Assembly.

Mr PERRON: I answer her question by saying that the Northern Territory government is still negotiating with the Commonwealth on a number of sites for a residence for the commanding naval officer in the Northern Territory.

Location of Admiralty House

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has consideration been given to moving Admiralty House from its position on the Esplanade to another site?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, consideration has been given to this matter. In 1979, the Commonwealth identified areas of the Northern Territory which it sought to have vested in the Commonwealth as freehold land following self-government

and an arrangement was made that, when this particular site on the Esplanade in Darwin was required for development, the Commonwealth would hand it over to the Northern Territory. That time has arrived. There are indications that the site is required for development now and the Northern Territory government has taken the matter up with the Commonwealth in accordance with its agreement.

Recently, the National Trust forwarded a nomination to the National Heritage Commission for this particular building to be entered into the National Heritage Register. At present, it is on the interim register and objections are being sought. The Commonwealth has asked the Northern Territory to replace the residence of the senior naval officer in the Northern Territory as part of the arrangement and that is agreed to by the Northern Territory government. Negotiations have continued with the Department of Administrative services with a view to finding suitable premises or a suitable parcel of land for the Commonwealth on which a house can be built. We have said that the present building for the senior naval officer on the block on the Esplanade will be moved at Northern Territory government expense and erected on another suitable site if that is the Commonwealth's wish.

Mr Speaker, this matter is one of particular interest at present. The residence in question is not of particular historical or architectural significance for the Northern Territory. In fact, those points have been outlined in an objection to the National Heritage Commission. It was built in the period 1937 to 1939 and moved to its present site in 1951. The building has been considerably modified over the years with extensions and changes to its style. We believe that it does not have any particular significance when compared with other buildings in the Northern Territory. There are a couple of examples of particularly fine homes of that era. In particular, Audit House has been supported by the Northern Territory government to the degree that it has been vested in the National Trust. Funds will be spent on restoration work to bring it up to a standard that can withstand the climate in the Northern Territory. There is no particular historical significance to Admiralty House other than the fact that it has housed successive naval officers commanding the northern area. The ground put forward by the local National Trust and the National Heritage Commission for its registration is that the building survived the Second World War and Cyclone Tracy and, for those reasons alone, it is an important building. Many houses - some of them much older than this one - survived both the Second World War and Cyclone Tracy. I do not think that that in itself is a particularly good argument for its preservation.

Mr Speaker, the site is a fairly attractive one. The old house is set in a very nicely kept garden that is a credit to the Navy. The government has supported a number of historical projects for preservation at taxpayers' expense. Naval Headquarters was reconstructed at a cost in excess of \$700 000 and probably will continue to consume a reasonable proportion of public funds for maintenance. It has been turned into the office of the Administrator. It is a very fine building and certainly we give our full support to its preservation for future generations. Lyons Cottage is another example. It is only a few feet from the house we are talking about at present. It has been preserved at government expense. Indeed, an annual subsidy will be paid by the government, presumably forever unless a sponsor can be found, for that building to be preserved for future generations. There are other examples around the Territory and in Darwin. I refute any suggestion that the Northern Territory government is not interested in the preservation of suitable historic buildings. However, people must bear in mind that, once a

decision is made to preserve a building on a site, it will mean a cost to the community, not only for the upgrading of the building but for ongoing maintenance work. It will mean a continuing drain on the public purse and the site in question would be lost where such preservation is agreed to. Therefore, such decisions should not be taken lightly. They are decisions that may mean costs to the community for 100 years. Such projects must be carefully assessed prior to any government deciding to support a permanent national heritage listing and the continuing preservation of any particular building.

Sewage Treatment Plant

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Since the Darwin Central Zone Sewage Treatment Plant opened, it has been considered necessary to man it on a 24-hour basis. What major modifications have been made to the system which will now enable it to be operated safely on a 40-hour per week basis? Will he give the Assembly an assurance that no health and environmental problems will result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, presently the treatment plant has been operating on a 3-shift basis requiring a manning level of 15. When the treatment plant was first constructed, it was designed to be fully automated. We are moving towards automation in an effort to reduce the expense of operating the facility. The people working in that area have been informed that the manning level will be reduced from 15 down to 7 by 10 December. Once full automation is effected, if a fault occurs an alarm bell will ring in a security firm's premises and that firm will then notify an officer that something is wrong at the plant and he will go straight there. It is said that that can be effected within one hour.

The plant was commissioned in 1977. It was designed to treat sewage for a population of 40 000. With an additional stage, it would have treated sewage from an estimated population of 80 000. The plant is currently treating sewage from an estimated population of 15 000. On current predictions, it will be many years before that population approaches 20 000. The department has been concerned for some time by the high cost of operating the plant relative to the population served. It is approximately 4 times the cost of that for the remainder of Darwin.

A consultant report in 1980 recommended modifications to the plant and a reduction in staffing levels. Certain modifications have been made. A recent review of the plant's operation and the consultant's report resulted in modification to operation and staffing arrangements which will take effect from December 1982. Under the new arrangements, the plant will be manned for 1 shift, 5 days a week instead of the 3 shifts, 7 days a week. This will involve a reduction in staff from the present establishment of 15 to 7. Surplus staff will be redeployed to other sections maintaining essential services. When unmanned, the plant will operate automatically as desired, with the exception of the sludge vacuum filters. The vacuum filters, which remove water from the treated sludge prior to its removal from the plant in solid form, will be operated only while the plant is manned. The volume of treated sludge is well within the capacity of the 2 vacuum filters operated on a 1-shift basis. During unmanned operation, crucial items of the plant will be monitored automatically. Operators will be called out to attend plant malfunctions.

Operators of the plant were informed of these arrangements on 12 November and held a stop-work meeting on 15 November. No industrial action has been taken or foreshadowed. In the event of strike action, the plant will be operated by management and other staff as was the case during the recent industrial action associated with terms of employment.

With regard to my giving an assurance to the honourable member for Fannie Bay that there will be no health risk, I can give a partial assurance because, if this plant were to break down in the wet season, with the quick flow some water would certainly move, not into Ludmilla Creek but into the ponds without that effluent being treated. My officers advise me that the risk to health in that circumstance would be minimal.

Review of Local Industry Preference Policy

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has any review of the local industry preference policy for public contracts been undertaken and, if so, what are the results?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the department is constantly reviewing procedures for the letting of contracts. Recently, I made an announcement. We were looking for a way whereby nominated subcontractors could be identified by the department to enable them to put bids in for various types of work. This particular request was given to us by the Master Builders Association. What was happening was that each time a job appeared in the paper or the Gazette, nominated subcontractors had to ask almost for pre-qualifications. What will happen now is that a nominated subcontractor will file particular information with the department. When he puts a bid in for a particular job, he will be assessed on that information. He would have to do that on a yearly basis. The only time that would change would be if a nominated subcontractor were heavily involved in other work within the department and the department considered that that particular contractor's resources might not be able to stand any new work. The department would call in that particular person and discuss it with him to see whether he had the resources. We are constantly reviewing the tendering system. As I said at the last sittings, we had problems with it in the public works area. To avoid confusion, the department is trying to work out a firm strategy that will be known by all.

Sale of Land Subdivided at Mataranka Station

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

I understand that one of the blocks produced by the subdivision of Mataranka Station is to be offered for purchase to a Mr Roy Lumpa of Hollister, California. Will he explain why this was done and why the usual conduct of a ballot amongst selected applicants was not resorted to in this particular case?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I wish to confirm to you and other honourable members that the honourable member for Tiwi's assertions substantially represent the facts. You might wonder why I am answering this question. It is because of my close involvement in this particular transaction.

The honourable member will appreciate that my government has applied itself energetically to the development of a cropping and horticultural industry in the Northern Territory. Government initiatives in this area include the setting up of ADMA, the establishment of ADMA farms and the acquisition of suitable properties for similar agricultural development in the near future. Other initiatives include the introduction of the successful crop contract scheme, the provision of various agricultural subsidies proposed by the Cropping Development Committee and intensified research by the Department of Primary Production into the agronomy of potential crops such as sorghum, mung beans, soya beans, maize, rice and so on. Horticultural research has also received priority attention with the development of a major and expanding section within the Department of Primary Production which has already produced results which herald valuable future horticultural dividends. However, such research needs to be complemented by horticultural know-how and we have been fortunate to attract some people to the Territory with considerable expertise who will augment the solid core of Territory pioneers, such as the Herseys, the Dahlenbergs and others, who have brought horticulture in the Territory to where it is today. The development of a mango estate at Manbuloo is another initiative which will be of major value to the Territory while the recent entry upon the scene of a South Australian grower with a proposal to produce onions and potatoes in the Katherine area could be another milestone in the agricultural development of the Territory. I understand that he has now purchased a farm in the Katherine area.

It is against this background that the offer to Mr Roy Lumpa was made. Mr Lumpa is a Californian farmer with extensive experience and expertise in modern methods of horticulture and cropping production under irrigation on a large scale. His knowledge and experience will be of immense value to Territory agriculture. Mr Lumpa is greatly attracted to the Territory and has expressed a wish to settle here. After considerable negotiation, he was very nearly successful in purchasing Willeroo Station but lost out to the present owners at the last moment, and not for want of the necessary finance. He then put in a bid for Mataranka, Roper Valley and Coolibah Stations as a joint venture with a local interest but this was thwarted by the government's compulsory acquisition of Mataranka. In these special circumstances, and with the advice of the minister and the Department of Primary Production at the time the decision to acquire and subdivide was made, I offered Mr Lumpa the opportunity to purchase one of the subdivisions of Mataranka Station at a price to be negotiated after valuation. In all the circumstances, the sale of a section of Mataranka to Mr Lumpa represented, in my view, an honourable course of action and I hope that it will have the desired effect of securing for our agricultural industry invaluable know-how to the long-term advantage of the Territory. The decision was mine and that is why I have answered the question.

Commuter Airline Licences

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Did he state to the Katherine and Tennant Creek town councils that a condition of the granting of commuter airline licences for services linking Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs on weekends was that the fares of passengers required to back track would be no higher than the direct air fare? If so, has this been enforced?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the time of negotiations with Airlines of Northern

Australia for a reduction of the service from the 7-day-a-week Fokker to a 5-day-a-week jet service with commuter services operating on the weekend between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs on Saturdays and Sundays and Katherine to Darwin on Saturdays only, it was hoped that the on-through fare would not be passed on to the commuter. TAA did not accept the proposal for the on-fare and, in some cases, people travelling TAA were forced to pay the additional money. I believe that further arrangements have since been made with the airlines that people will not pay the on-through fare. If they are paying it, I have not been advised of it.

Oil Storage Area at Frances Bay

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

When is it expected that the relocation of the oil storage area at Frances Bay will be effected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no specific date has been set for relocating the oil storage area that is currently in the heart of Darwin. However, it is quite obvious - and certainly this should be clear to the honourable member for Sanderson - that, at some time, such an oil storage area should be relocated on the outskirts of the city in a far more suitable location. The recent announcement took a few people by surprise. It should not have taken very many people by surprise because anyone who thought about it carefully would see that it is quite obvious and inevitable. At present, the government is examining alternative sites around Darwin suitable for a future tank farm. Once such sites are identified, lead time can then be drawn up for the infrastructure timetable and the costs involved in having alternative storage built. This would have to be done before existing storage can be shut down. Without question, it will be quite a few years at the earliest. I could not put a specific time on it.

Darwin Civil Airport Terminal

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

The indecision of the federal government in choosing a suitable site for its tactical fighter base has raised the question of the future of the proposed Darwin civil airport terminal. Is the proposal to build a new civil airport terminal for Darwin being proceeded with as planned and, if so, is he able to indicate when building is likely to commence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, one could have a field day with a question like that, but I will attempt to be brief. The federal government announced its intention to upgrade the Royal Australian Air Force base - it is not a civilian airport - at Darwin to enable that base to cater for FA-18 fighters which it is purchasing from the United States. In the interim, the base was to handle Mirages that are to be withdrawn from their present station at Butterworth in Malaysia. They are to be based at Darwin until they are phased out of service in 1986 or 1987. In any event, all this caused the Royal Australian Air Force to decide that it needed a greater area of land at Darwin air base and that it required the removal of the existing civil terminal and general aviation area.

In a way, that is a blessing in disguise because it requires the construction of a new civil terminal capable of handling domestic and international arrivals with some degree of civilised decency rather than as happens at present. The general aviation area at Darwin air base is very overcrowded at the present time and lacks facilities. I know of at least 2 large general aviation firms operating throughout Australia that have wanted to establish in Darwin which would have been of considerable benefit to the Northern Territory, particularly with the facilities they could have provided. But there was absolutely nowhere that the Department of Transport, as it then was, could accommodate them so these establishments went to other places; in one case, to Townsville. Therefore, it was with considerable enthusiasm that I greeted the announcement that not only was a new domestic and international terminal to be built but, also, a new and expanded general aviation area was to be provided on the northern side of the existing runway.

Then there was a change of ministers, a change of chiefs of general staff and, of course, a change of mind as well. The Royal Australian Air Force and the Department of Defence have since been looking at a proposal to very much upgrade the base at Tindal. I understand that that close examination is continuing and that everything points to the FA-18s being based at a much upgraded air force installation at Tindal with perhaps some sort of army establishment nearby as well. I greet the news also with great enthusiasm, although at this stage it does not have the strength of federal Cabinet endorsement.

Mr Speaker, the position as I read it at the moment is this. Firstly, I have been assured verbally, but have not yet received anything in writing, that the civil air terminal will proceed on the northern side of the runway and will, as far as possible, adhere to the timetable announced by the Minister for Civil Aviation, Mr Wal Fife, when he was in Darwin in June or July of this year. I await written confirmation of that. I do not have any certain information on the general aviation area at this stage other than that it will be expanded. It may possibly remain in the same area when the final decision on FA-18s going to Tindal and Tindal being upgraded is made. I am afraid that that probably will not take place until the new year because of the detailed studies that are needed and are still continuing, and because it will cost a mint of money which I will be pleased to see spent in the Territory. I am sure that you, Mr Speaker, will be pleased to see it spent in the Katherine area. But that decision will not be firm till after Christmas, even though I had hoped for it earlier.

The Mirages will come to Darwin next year as planned I believe and housing will be rented for the personnel who will accompany them. Those personnel will be moved into Darwin progressively during 1983. I hope that I have covered all aspects of it. I have covered the civil terminal, the general aviation area, FA-18s and Tindal and Mirages and Darwin. I think that that is about it. I am very hopeful that this considerable expenditure of funds will take place, particularly as it relates to the defence of northern Australia, which I, you and many members of this Assembly have said has not been particularly well looked after by this or any federal government since the Second World War. If Tindal is upgraded, it will represent a very major advance for northern defence. The Northern Territory government is cooperating to the fullest extent with the Commonwealth and I know that the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments both intend to involve the Katherine municipality as soon as that preliminary planning reaches a stage where firm decisions can take place.

Tancred Meats Application for Pastoral Leases

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Was a meat producer and processor, Tancred Meats, prevented from taking over 3 pastoral leases in the Territory? If so, what were the grounds for rejecting the applications?

ANSWER

I have no application before me on the subject the honourable member refers to.

Report on Horticultural Seminar in Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Has he received a report and recommendations from the recent horticultural seminar held in Alice Springs? If so, is it intended to release the report to the public?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the seminar to which the honourable member refers was conducted by members of various departments concerned with providing land, water and expertise for the further development of horticulture in central Australia. The member for Alice Springs attended and his contribution was greatly valued. A report will go forward to government and Cabinet will consider its findings in due course.

NT Unemployment Rates

Mr DOOLAN to CHIEF MINISTER

In a recent radio talk he indicated that the employment situation in the NT was better than in southern states and gave some figures purporting to prove this as a fact. As the unemployment rate in Aboriginal communities runs between 30% and 70%, have these communities been taken into consideration in assessing the NT rate of unemployment?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, yes, the unemployment rate in Aboriginal communities has been taken into account in assessing the total employment situation in the Northern Territory. I am prepared to agree with the honourable member for Victoria River that unemployment amongst Aboriginal people is a very vexed problem. It is a problem that concerns me and I frankly confess that I do not have the answer. But if you have a moment, Sir, I would like to postulate some of the problems.

The problems are, of course, that Aboriginal people live, generally speaking, in areas remote from those markets and services that one usually requires to generate industry successfully. Unless you can stimulate industry successfully, you cannot generate any meaningful number of jobs. As you know, Sir, in most Aboriginal communities of any size in the Northern Territory there are already local government-type organisations that are established and funded by the government and that employ, I think, as many people as they reasonably can on projects around the community. Of course,

whenever government funding has been channelled into these communities in the form of facilities, my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works, has ensured that as many of those contracts as possible go to Aboriginal people. If they cannot manage them, then they have as much participation in them as is reasonably possible. I know that an amount in excess of \$1m, if not millions of dollars, has actually gone to Aboriginal communities in terms of direct contracts in the last year or 2. That is one of the problems: remoteness.

Another problem is education and training. People just do not have job options these days unless they have a pretty highly sophisticated degree of education. While I am on my feet and answering this question, it might be a word to the wise to say that parents who are thinking of removing their children from school at the intermediate stage - I think it is called grade 10 these days - this year could well consider, if their circumstances allow it, enabling their children to go on to matriculation. I say this from a general observation of job columns here and elsewhere in Australia. I can remember when I was in about grade 8 some girls left my class in primary school to become hairdressers and to do apprenticeships. I noticed an advertisement for hairdresser apprentices the other day that said matriculation would be required.

Mr B. Collins: That's absolutely ridiculous.

Mr EVERINGHAM: All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that that is what employers are asking for. If an applicant does not want to meet the employer's requirements, I guess he or she will not get the job. I am simply passing on my observations. I am not saying that it is right or that it is wrong; I am saying that that is the employment market of today.

It occurred to me a few years ago that the only industry that I could think of - aside from mining to some degree - that offered considerable employment potential for Aboriginal people if they wished to involve themselves in it - was the tourist industry. Of course, they do not have to let tourists into their communities. They can let tourists view attractions near their communities or they can set up facilities away from their communities that might interest tourists; that is, if they want them to come. As you and other honourable members of this Assembly know, Mr Speaker, I wrote a circular letter to all Aboriginal communities, I think in 1979, inviting them, if they were interested in the tourist industry and its potential for job creation, to make contact with me or my officers. At the time, I was criticised for sending that circular by, I think, the very honourable member who asked me the question this morning. It might be that I was also criticised by the now Leader of the Opposition who was then the member for Arnhem.

Mr B. Collins: No!

Mr EVERINGHAM: The fact is I drew considerable criticism from honourable members opposite for daring to suggest that Aboriginal people might be interested to consider the potential for employment afforded by the tourist industry. I have not received any real response to my letter from any Aboriginal community. The offer is still open. It always is. If anyone has any better ideas on how Aboriginal people can gain useful employment certainly I would like to hear them. I have been waiting now for several years to hear any better ones.

Policy Statements on Education

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I remind him of previous commitments he has given on this matter. Will he be tabling any policy statements on education during the current sittings of the Legislative Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not anticipate being in a position to do so at this sittings.

Prevention of Pests and Diseases in Horticultural Industry

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

What is being done to ensure that adequate precautions are being taken to prevent any undesirable pests such as fruit fly and also diseases that might have a very damaging effect on our newly-emerging horticultural industry in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The honourable member refers to a very serious matter. It is not possible to guarantee that such pests and diseases will not occur in the Territory. It is possible only to reduce the risk of entry of any pest or disease to the Territory and such reduction relies heavily on cooperation from the community, particularly tourists. The government has legislation to apply quarantine restrictions if required and these have been successful in situations such as the recent advent of Mediterranean fruit fly in Alice Springs. Additionally, the government currently seeks to strengthen its control over the possible importation of diseases from our southern neighbours through regulations requiring specified produce to be certified free of pests or diseases before importation.

Department of Primary Production entomologists and pathologists continue to monitor for new pests and diseases including those which may be imported from overseas. Eleven monitoring stations have been maintained around the Northern Territory coastline since 1975 to prevent the importation of fruit fly species not endemic to the Northern Territory. Additional stations are located at Adelaide River and Katherine. A monitoring network has been established at Alice Springs to provide an early warning against any future visitation of Mediterranean fruit fly. The Christmas holiday season is again close and many people will be travelling back to the Territory from eastern and southern states. These travellers can help to ensure the Territory's freedom from some insect pests and diseases by contracting the Agricultural Quarantine Service in Darwin before bringing any plant or fruit material into the Northern Territory. If Territory residents plan to bring back with them seedlings or cuttings, they should be careful to deal with only reputable nurseries that produce high quality stock which is certified free of pests and diseases.

Salt Water Crocodile

Ms D'ROZARIO to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Conservation Commission made representations to the federal

government to transfer the salt water crocodile from Appendix 1 to Appendix 2 of the Convention of International Trade on Endangered Species and, if so, what was the outcome?

ANSWER

As I have advised this Assembly previously, in answer to questions about crocodile farms and preservation of crocodiles, the government has taken steps to have the *Crocodylus porosus* transferred to another schedule of the CITES agreement which relates to endangered species so that the offspring of crocodiles that are captured in the wild may be harvested for commercial purposes as well as being used to re-stock areas where the crocodile population is depleted. I think, from memory, the proposal has gone through the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers. I have not been to the last couple of council meetings because they have been held too far away or at inconvenient times. The proposal has been ably guided by the Director of Conservation, Dr Goff Letts. In fact, there is not really much need for me to go when I can send Dr Letts. Recently, he attended a conference in Zambia or Zimbabwe that also related to the CITES. I understand that this subject was raised at that time and apparently was favourably received. Further steps are now being taken. I could have given a much better answer if I had had time to check the details. I would suggest that the honourable member for Sanderson write to me and I will send her a very detailed reply. In essence, the proposal to transfer them from one schedule of the CITES agreement to another is proceeding. At this stage, to the best of my knowledge, although it appears to be a tortuous and wearisome exercise, it has not met with any substantial mishap.

Alice Springs Town Basin

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has he any plans to implement a plan of management to control the water level in the Alice Springs town basin?

ANSWER

The short answer is yes. Hopefully, early next year, the department will carry out a survey in that area for the requirements of management strategy.

Administrative Arrangements Orders on Collection of Archival Material

Mrs O'NEIL to CHIEF MINISTER

The Administrative Arrangements Orders determined by the Administrator gives responsibility for archives to the Department of Community Development. However, a notice recently published in the official gazette of the Northern Territory Department of Education advised that that department had received a request from the Chief Minister's department regarding collection of archival material. While the collection of archival material is very valuable and admirable, will the Chief Minister ensure that the legal requirements of the Administrative Arrangements Orders are recognised by his department with regard to archives?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since I know nothing about this matter, it is difficult to answer. But I am not sure who in the Chief Minister's Department would be

seeking from the Department of Education material to go into archives. I suppose that it is possible that someone in the Chief Minister's Department has done something to stimulate the consciousness of other departments in relation to the preservation of material of historic importance. Of course, there is a history unit in my department which, no doubt, because it is pretty close to this sort of thing at all times, has archival material in the forefront of its thinking. I will certainly look into the matter. There is certainly no intention on my part to usurp the archival function. I would suggest that, if anything has been done in relation to seeking this material, it has been done for a genuine purpose. In the final analysis, it seems to me that all that really matters is that the material is stored and preserved, not so much who stores and preserves it. But I agree that the establishment of a central archive has been vested in the Department of Community Development and I will look into this matter.

Private Hospital in Darwin Hospital

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for HEALTH

I understand that negotiations are under way for the lease of an entire floor of Darwin Hospital to a group wishing to establish a private hospital there. Could he indicate to the Assembly what stage these negotiations have reached and which floor is to be transferred, if any?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can advise the honourable member that she has part of the story right. It is probably the wrong part that she is placing greatest weight on. I am happy to advise the Assembly that within the Darwin Hospital management there is a group of 3 or 4 people which has been investigating the possibility of a privately-operated ward within the Darwin Hospital. There are several reasons for this matter being considered. I will run through them for the benefit of honourable members so that, if there are any aspects that people would like to bring to my attention as time goes on, they can be fed back into the department and considered by the parties who are looking at the program.

There is no doubt that there is a desire within the community for people to have access to private beds within hospitals. Given our present state of development, it is possibly not viable at the moment to have a private hospital anywhere in the Northern Territory because the economics are not there for it to survive. Very definitely, there is a need because the evidence shows that there are many people in the Northern Territory who pay top-of-the-scale medical insurance fees so that they are covered for private hospital accommodation. Given that people pay premiums for this, it is not unreasonable, if it is possible, for us to try to provide private accommodation within the infrastructure that we have. I do not think it is any secret to the honourable member that we have a little excess space at the hospital at the moment.

It is not a new scheme. It is not outrageously adventurous. It is practised in about 5 to 7 major hospitals throughout Australia at the moment. The Queen Elizabeth in Adelaide, I understand, has a private section where people can choose to have private beds and private ward status if they so wish. They pay accordingly for the service. There are other hospitals in other states that do the same thing. About 2 months ago, a team from the Darwin Hospital made an investigatory study of how these private ward facilities operate in major hospitals elsewhere. I have not read the report

in detail but the consensus of the team was very simply that it is possible to have a private ward inside a major institution like the Darwin Hospital. It functions quite satisfactorily in other places and it would be possible to do it here. There are a number of matters that need to be resolved: where in the existing infrastructure would we put it, what sorts of costs would be incurred to create private accommodation, how would it function, how would it relate to the other hospital facilities that operate, what charges would there be for a facility of this nature and would the charges in fact be sufficient to warrant the department in this case providing the private accommodation. Mr Speaker, the team is looking at that fine detail now.

If any honourable member would like to make suggestions or seek information on the proposal, I would be quite happy to make available what I know about it. It is not as though we are re-inventing the wheel. We are trying to provide for the people of the Northern Territory a facility that exists everywhere else in the country and one that obviously ...

Mr B. Collins: Boring, boring.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I am obviously not boring enough because he is still awake, but I will work on it.

Obviously, people have an expectation for this sort of facility because they pay for it in their medical benefits fund subscriptions. If they are prepared to pay for it, we ought to endeavour to offer it if that is possible.

Isolated Students' Benefits

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is there any reciprocal arrangement between the Northern Territory, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland - that is, the border states - so that isolated students known as 'border students' can obtain isolated students' benefits regardless of the state or territory in which they choose to receive their education?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, before I could deal with this question in any depth, I would have to do some research on the matter. It seems to me that the matter falls primarily within the Commonwealth's responsibility. That being the case, of course, it does not matter where one resides. There is an entitlement to assistance for isolated children. The parents in fact are entitled to the assistance. The Northern Territory's assistance would relate purely to people within its political and geographic boundaries and would not extend across any border. I have no idea what arrangements the states have for their students but, to the best of my knowledge, there is no reciprocal arrangement other than that already in force pursuant to the Commonwealth's provisions.

Water Bores in Darwin Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the unsatisfactory water situation in many places in the rural area, will he agree to change the system of obtaining an advice bore to include all landholders in the rural area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer is no. I am not prepared to change the existing system which relates purely to pastoral and agricultural properties. The honourable member referred to those people living in the immediate rural area. We have facilities in the Water Division of the department which supply advice to rural landowners regarding their water situation. My department, with that of the Minister for Health, has a caravan situated in that area to provide information to people seeking assistance there. I understand that that caravan will be moved to another location in the next week or so to allow other members of the rural population access to that particular infrastructure for advice.

Bus Passes for People Receiving Benefits

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Is he aware that, while persons receiving age and invalid pensions, supporting parents' benefits and unemployment benefits are entitled to bus passes in the Darwin area, those receiving sickness and special benefits are not? Would he consider extending the entitlement for bus passes to cover persons receiving sickness and special benefits?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the general question of assistance to pensioners and the aged has been raised on a number of occasions here. I am quite sure that any

honourable member who looked at the budget papers would be well aware of the extent of the Northern Territory taxpayers' commitment to that cause out of Northern Territory revenues. There is a limit to the amount of assistance government can give. There are probably additional recipients of Commonwealth pensions and assistance over and above those mentioned by the honourable member for Fannie Bay who are not in fact receiving assistance under Territory schemes.

Recently, I initiated an examination of the entire range of assistance which is and can be made available to the various recipients of Commonwealth benefits. If we start in an ad hoc way to include people, one at a time, in the list of beneficiaries of Territory subsidies already made available, eventually, because of the quite proper process of pressure - that is, after all, why we are here - we will have to admit all recipients of Commonwealth subsidies to benefits under our own schemes. If honourable members look at the budget papers, I believe the commitment at the moment, in all forms, exceeds \$1m for a pensioner population the size of the Northern Territory's. The various options to include the complete range of Commonwealth beneficiaries as being eligible for Territory schemes range between an additional \$600 000 and \$1.2m. When honourable members make representations of this type, we must at least endeavour to stick to it within reasonably affordable boundaries or, alternatively, start to look at programs which we would have to cut to admit all recipients of Commonwealth benefits. If we did that, we would lose control of that section of the budget entirely because a Commonwealth government of one persuasion or another has it open to it to vary the eligibility criteria for recipients of Commonwealth benefits at will. If we had a policy that would pick them all up automatically, we would lose control of our own budget as a result of the Commonwealth varying its budget. I do not think anyone would want to see that sort of irresponsible management.

Purchase of Housing Commission Homes in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Have the Housing Commission and Nabalco yet reached an agreement which would allow the sale of Housing Commission homes to interested tenants in Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

In relation to the negotiations between Nabalco and the Northern Territory government in so far as subleasing land at Nabalco is concerned to enable persons to purchase their own houses, we believe that Nabalco is considering the final document at this time in Sydney. We hope to hear from the company any day now. It is holding a meeting in Sydney to consider this document which we hope will eliminate all areas of disagreement between the 2 parties and enable people at Nhulunbuy to purchase their own homes.

School of Health Research

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for HEALTH

It was reported in the NT News some time ago that part of the old Darwin Hospital facilities would be used to establish a school of health research. Was that report correct and, if so, what form of tenure will the school of health have over those facilities?

ANSWER

I have not seen the report to which the honourable member refers. However, I point out, and I have said this in the Assembly before, the Department of Health no longer has any jurisdiction over the buildings and facilities on the original Darwin Hospital site. They were transferred to my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works, some months ago. I am able to say that the department is very supportive of the higher learning program that could be established in conjunction with the new university of the Northern Territory. I understand that discussions have taken place between medical and administrative personnel of the department and the Planning Vice-Chancellor of the university. I have no further information on what progress has been made. Certainly, there would have to be room for research in that area because we have so many health considerations in the Northern Territory that are unique in Australia. I will endeavour to obtain some details for the honourable member in relation to the premises, the costs and the areas of activity that we would be involved in if such a program proceeded.

Darwin Community College Students

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

My question concerns the Darwin Community College where third-year students in the 4-year certificate course for medical laboratory technicians have just been advised that the course has been cancelled. Would he indicate what procedures are under way to allow them to finish their final year and gain the certificates?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been expecting this question. It is necessary to look at the history of the course. It was originally conceived between the then Commonwealth Department of Health and the Darwin Community College in late 1966. That is confirmed by a letter from Dr Shaw of 19 April 1977. I have looked right back through the documentation on this matter and it seems that the Darwin Community College has done all in its power to maintain the course and its viability. With the passage of time, the requirements of the medical profession and the para-medical profession areas naturally change. The medical laboratory technicians certificate, as it was then known, is no longer necessarily appropriate to modern training requirements at the Darwin Hospital. Nonetheless, it is not a matter of the students having been informed just recently. I am informed that counselling of these students has been going on for quite some time. The majority of them have taken electives in similar disciplines. The Darwin Hospital, under the present government's administration, will continue to honour its agreement with the college. The 3 students who wish to continue the certificate course will be able to do so. The arrangement was that the college would be the facilitator of the course and the Darwin Hospital would provide the lecturers. We are all aware of the difficulties imposed by a transient population although this is now steadying. Nonetheless, the part-time lecturer in the very important area of what is called histo-pathology left this year and this led to the deletion of units 1 and 2 this year from the college. The college has done everything it can to recruit another lecturer. Another lecturer simply is not available. Therefore, the Darwin Hospital has done the right thing. Those 3 students will be continuing the course. The balance will be continuing electives selected by them as a result of counselling.

There is one other person who is not employed by the Darwin Hospital and

is unlikely to be so employed. That person has been told that, if he wishes to continue with the course on a part-time basis, then the facilities of the Darwin Hospital and the college will be made available. That does not mean to say that, at the end of the line, there will be employment for that student in the Darwin Hospital system. It is not as bad as the honourable member for Nightcliff originally thought. Let us face it, requirements change. We cannot continue a course indefinitely if it is no longer appropriate to the needs of the employing institution.

Mr Speaker, I think the hospital and the college have acted in good faith at all times in this matter. It is just unfortunate that students get caught up in these difficulties. We try to avoid them. I am sure the hospital tries and I am sure the college tries. Nonetheless, situations like this will occur from time to time. Institutions such as the college and the hospital, or any other employing or teaching agency, must minimise the effects of changing technology and changing course requirements as far as possible.

Social Workers at Darwin Hospital

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is it the intention of the Department of Health to reduce the number of social workers working in Darwin Hospital and, if not, what is being done to fill the 4 positions that have remained vacant for several months?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no knowledge at all of any proposition to reduce the number of social workers in the hospital. I will endeavour to get information requested in the second part of her question.

Gunn Point Prison Farm Horticultural Produce

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he assure me that Gunn Point Prison Farm will receive help and assistance from the Agricultural Development and Marketing Authority in the coming year to market its horticultural, and any other produce where necessary, whilst realising that the interest of private growers has to be watched but also having regard to the interest of wholesalers supplying the general market?

ANSWER

I can give that assurance. Arrangements have been made with the Department of Community Development in respect of produce from Gunn Point Prison Farm. We do not want it to be in competition with the local growers. We would provide assistance to market that produce interstate.

Concessions on Electricity Connection in Rural Areas

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Will the government consider the spreading of fees relating to the connection of electricity to rural areas so as to minimise the financial burden that will arise if total payment is required at the time of installation and will the government consider any concessions to producers involved in important horticultural production that might promote a more rapid development of that particular industry?

ANSWER

The first part of the honourable member's question relates to current requirements by the Northern Territory Electricity Commission that any cost in excess of \$2000 for connection of electricity to a rural block is paid by the applicant at the time of connection. We need to consider NTEC's point of view that it is an authority which is required to operate as efficiently as it can. It already provides this direct subsidy of \$2000 per block for connections. Some connections to small farms, as distinct from rural residential areas, really amount to very substantial sums. I recall applications for electricity connections which would probably cost in the vicinity of \$30 000 to \$40 000 each. Of course, NTEC's subsidy towards that figure is only \$2000 leaving a very substantial sum to be picked up by the applicant if he wishes electricity to be connected.

It has been put to me that perhaps NTEC could collect the balance over a period and thereby extend what would be a loan to applicants. Unfortunately, the reticulation of electricity throughout the Northern Territory is undertaken by NTEC with loan funds that are raised by the Northern Territory government, on its behalf, at interest rates of some 16% to 17%. NTEC advanced the argument that an applicant could obtain a loan himself at similar interest rates or better rather than have NTEC extend credit to him at the 16% or 17% rate. As far as NTEC is concerned, there is not really very much room for movement.

If, to promote agriculture, a policy decision is taken that subsidies should be provided for these facilities, that will be handled by another department and not NTEC. Such matters should be referred to my colleague, the honourable Minister for Primary Production, whose department funds various forms of assistance to the farming sector of the Northern Territory.

The honourable member also asked whether different electricity rates could be struck for the rural sector so that agricultural activities, such as irrigation, could be charged at a lower rate. From NTEC's point of view the problem is that it is charged with the responsibility to raise as much income as it reasonably can to try to supplement the very substantial subsidies which are applied to it. As all honourable members know, at the present time some 50% of all electricity supplied by NTEC is paid for by the Australian taxpayer. It is therefore very difficult to make concessions to one area only of the consuming public. NTEC argues that, if there are to be concessional electricity rates - be it for farm production, pensioners or whatever - then government should address that through the relative department and make a conscious decision to provide additional subsidies over and above those provided to generate electricity in the Northern Territory at the present time.

To answer the questions of the honourable Leader of the Opposition, NTEC must keep its accounting systems as straight as it can and be seen to be operating as fairly as possible right across the board. Any contemplation of subsidies should be addressed through channels relating to the industries concerned.

School Visits by Community Health Sisters

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH

Why has the Department of Health stopped daily visits by community health sisters to the Rapid Creek School?

ANSWER

The honourable member asked me that question yesterday and I undertook to get the information for him. As soon as it is in my hands, I will convey it to him.

Coastal Plains Research Station Staffing Levels

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he assure me that staffing levels at the Coastal Plains Research Station are adequate considering the work that is done there and the programs already in motion?

ANSWER

There are 6 staff at the Coastal Plains Research Station and another 3 at Beatrice Hill. It could be said that there is insufficient staff for the amount of work that must be done. Both establishments are very important research centres for the government. The development of the buffalo program is centred at Beatrice Hill and a wide range of activities is being undertaken at the Coastal Plains Research Station. Mr Speaker, we would like to increase the staff but we must consider other policies and other programs that we are pursuing. For the time being, there will be no increase of personnel at those establishments.

Redeployment of Grumman Trackers for North Australia

Mrs LAWRIE to CHIEF MINISTER

The defence committee examining the future of fixed-wing naval aircraft concluded its deliberations and presented its report on 11 November, which is fitting, because it is Remembrance Day. Can he advise the Assembly if he has received any advice from the Minister for Defence as to the likelihood of redeployment of Navy Grumman Trackers in the north Australian area?

ANSWER

The question sounds like something from 'Those Wonderful Men in their Flying Machines'. However, I have not received any word on the deliberations of the committee on naval fixed-wing aircraft. In fact, I think it likely that the time of that committee is fast drawing near because the word around the traps seems to be that very shortly there will be no further speculation about an aircraft carrier for the navy. I assume that, if it does not have an aircraft carrier, it will not need fixed-wing aircraft.

In any event, the Minister for Defence has not yet chosen to confide in me the results of the deliberations of this committee. As the honourable member for Nightcliff advised us that it reported to the minister only on 11 November and today is 17 November, I do not consider that the Minister for Defence, with his many other responsibilities, including the possible establishment of a major airforce base at Tindal near Katherine, has been derelict in his duty in not yet sending a copy of that report for my perusal. I am mindful that Grumman Trackers could make a contribution to surveillance in the Northern Territory but I would draw also to the attention of the honourable member for Nightcliff the fact that, if the Grumman Trackers are placed here, it will undoubtedly lead to the displacement of other people who are presently engaged in that surveillance work. That is an aspect that

should be borne in mind because a considerable number of pilots have been recruited to man and run the existing surveillance facilities. If the Grumman Trackers were to be based here to augment those facilities I would be happy but, I would not like to press for them to be based here to replace the existing facilities. I would like some clarification from the honourable member for Nightcliff as to what she is about. Perhaps she could refer to that in the adjournment debate this afternoon. I have always been quite favourably disposed, and have pressed the minister, to base the Grummans here but on the basis that they did not supplant the existing civilian pilots and operations which provide a reasonable level of surveillance within the constraints that are placed on them.

Employment Hot Line

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of proposals to establish an employment hot line as mentioned on the front page of the NT News yesterday? Does the government support such a move?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am delighted with the move of the NT News to establish an employers' hot line. I would like to read to you and other honourable members details of the service that the NT News proposes to provide free of charge. I think it is an important community service and the derisive noises emanating from the corner by the honourable member for Nightcliff and other members opposite show that they apparently do not regard the question of unemployment very seriously because here is a positive move being made by the local paper as a community service. I have criticised the paper frequently but here is something positive. I will just read this if I may:

The NT News will offer employers a free hot line classified advertising service as from tomorrow. The number to telephone is 816589. Employers with jobs to suit Territory school leavers should phone this special number. The job descriptions will be taken down and double column display classified advertisements printed free of charge. In Alice Springs, the Centralian Advocate will offer the same service.

Mr Speaker, I hope that we can extend the same service to other Territory centres even if on a limited basis. I would certainly like to ask you, Sir, to suggest to the Editor of the Katherine Advertiser that he provide a similar service. Perhaps you would be happy to make telephone facilities in your electorate office available to help run the service. I am sure my colleague, the Minister for Health, would be happy to do the same with the Tennant Times and I hope that the honourable member for Nhulunbuy and the Gove Gazette could put their heads together. I think this is very worth while. I am pleased to see it and I know that it will be of service to employers and to school leavers alike.

Timber Creek School

Mr DOOLAN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I asked this question at an earlier sittings. Has he yet made a firm decision on the location of the school at Timber Creek, whether it is to be at Bulla Camp on Auvergne Station or Timber Creek township itself?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the difficulty I indicated at that time still applies: the lack of stability in the population in both of those centres. Indeed, this problem haunts us more than any other in the delivery of school-type education facilities to remote communities, Aboriginal communities in particular. There is such a high level of mobility among the children that it is almost impossible to set up a permanent school in many of these areas. Mr Speaker, the position has not altered since that time. There is insufficient evidence available to me to justify the establishment of a permanent school. When I have sufficient evidence of stability of population and student numbers then, of course, in the normal course of events, a school will be provided in one or other of the centres.

Former Health Department Stores in Fannie Bay

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has a decision been reached as to the future use of those government buildings in Fannie Bay formerly used as Health Department stores?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Cabinet has given approval to make the facilities known as the Parap health stores available to sporting organisations. The property is actually in 2 sections. At the front is the administration section and the rear section is the old warehouse area which is quite a large facility that will provide a home for the Northern Territory Gymnastics Association and the Northern Territory Badminton Association. A smaller facility will be made available to the Darwin Sub Aqua Club. These organisations have been approached by the government with a proposal that they take over these facilities, purely for recreational services, on a 3-year basis so that, at some later stage we can evaluate the decision that we have taken now.

The important thing is that the facilities will be made available to these sporting organisations. Last year, in the 1981-82 budget, the Northern Territory government made some \$1.1m available to sporting and youth organisations for facilities. Construction of the Marrara Indoor Sports Stadium will start next week. I shall officiate at a turf-turning ceremony on Friday of this week which will allow construction to commence. That complex will cost \$3m, Mr Speaker. Recently the Northern Territory government announced that stage 2 of the Marrara Indoor Sports Stadium will commence. That is a basketball stadium. That involves \$4m this year. I estimate the value of the health store to be in the area of \$0.5m, so that \$4.5m will be going to sport. This is contrary to a particular statement made by the shadow spokesman for sport in a recent newsletter that he circulated in the community that there was to be a downturn in funding to sporting organisations in the 1982-83 financial year. Once again, I believe he has communicated concern to the community because he is not up with the facts. He is always moving around advising sporting organisations that there will be less funds this financial year than last year.

Taking all those things into consideration, Mr Speaker, I believe that the Northern Territory government is moving in the right direction because, in this financial year alone, 1982-83, in excess of \$4.5m will go to sporting facilities. I believe that the sporting community really appreciates it. In fact, the response that I have had from the organisations to which this allocation has been made at Fannie Bay was overwhelming. They are delighted

and look forward to being able to move into the premises in a couple of weeks' time when we have finalised the details of the lease arrangements.

Social Workers at Darwin Hospital

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for HEALTH

This relates to my previous question concerning social workers at Darwin Hospital. In view of the vacant positions that currently exist for social workers at Darwin Hospital, what are the reasons for transferring social workers from Darwin Hospital to the Health Department secretariat?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that is a question that should be reasonably directed to the Secretary of the department. I will obtain a reply from him for the honourable member.

Land Acquisition for Railway

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A corridor of land will be required for the railway that will pass through the Northern Territory. Knowing that this proposed corridor will pass over freehold land in several places, who will acquire the land, the Northern Territory government or the Commonwealth government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the agreement which exists between the Northern Territory government and the Commonwealth government in relation to the corridor from Alice Springs to Darwin, to the best of my recollection, requires that the Northern Territory government as its part in support of this act of national faith will indeed provide the corridor for the project. This will mean that the Northern Territory government will acquire the area of land required to enable the corridor to be settled. I hope to be in a position fairly shortly to announce at least the actual properties. We have held up a number of subdivisional applications until such time as the corridor is quite clear. Hopefully, we will have information for the public on that subject soon. Honourable members will be well aware that the corridor may, in fact, cross Aboriginal inalienable freehold and the Northern Territory government has no power whatsoever to acquire such land. That land will have to be acquired by the Commonwealth as it is the only instrumentality in this country that has the power.

BTB Eradication Strategy

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Has the northern Australia sub-group of the national BTB planning group completed the preparation of its strategy for the eradication of both brucellosis and tuberculosis in northern Australia? If they have completed it, will the minister make the document available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the group has just about finalised its deliberations and is trying to get some early information for the industry. We have communicated

with the federal minister and asked him to convene a special meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council towards the middle of December so that some of the items that have been put forward as firm proposals by the industry and the Western Australian, Queensland and Northern Territory governments can be recognised by the Commonwealth in the budget process. Whether or not it will do that remains to be seen. I have had no advice from the Commonwealth in respect of its intentions. The report that the honourable Leader of the Opposition talks about can be made available at a later time. It is not available at present.

Film Libraries

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has the government decided whether it will amalgamate the public film library and the Department of Education film library?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was not even aware the matter was under consideration. It may have some merit and I will take it up.

Hardship caused by Housing Act

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The Housing Act passed at the last sittings will cause some hardship to Territorians who entered into various home loan schemes before that act was passed. Is he investigating this matter further and, if so, at what stage are his investigations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the new Housing Act passed by this Assembly at the previous sittings cannot be brought into operation until such time as regulations have been prepared. A number of submissions made to me by various parties who are concerned that regulations are being drafted to require people in certain classifications - particularly public servants who resigned from the public service - to go on to an escalating interest rate basis, have been taken into consideration. We have sought details of their income and mortgage levels with a view to ensuring that the regulations will not cause undue hardship. Certainly, it will cause those persons to pay more money than they would have had they not left the public service. However, the matter is somewhat complex and I propose, during the course of these sittings, to make a ministerial statement on the subject to give honourable members information to relay to their constituents whilst we are waiting for regulations to be prepared and promulgated.

Joint State Commonwealth Meat Inspection Service

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

What is the current state of negotiation between the Northern Territory and Commonwealth governments with regard to the establishment of a joint state Commonwealth meat inspection service?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory has been in the forefront in Commonwealth state discussions on the proposal for a joint state Commonwealth meat inspection service and riding instructions have just been given to the Chief Inspector of Stock for the Northern Territory to talk to the Canberra officials about a final proposal which would embody the requirements of both the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory. We have proposed a service to be run by the Northern Territory with the Commonwealth providing an official as the number 2 in the service. We would provide an agency arrangement ex officio under the Commonwealth powers. Certainly, we are ready to go. The Commonwealth is not quite in a position to adopt our proposal just at this time.

Tour of Aboriginal Health Facilities by Journalists

Mrs. O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

What was the cost of the intensive tour of Aboriginal health facilities in the Northern Territory recently organised by the Department of Health for a considerable number of journalists from southern states?

ANSWER

If the honourable member can contain her impatience for a few more hours, this afternoon I will inform her and her colleague, the mental giant on the backbench ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order, the honourable member will withdraw that remark!

Mr TUXWORTH: I withdraw that remark, Mr Speaker, about the honourable member. I was being very careless with the truth, Mr Speaker. I will canvass all the points raised by the honourable member and the opposition spokesman on health in the adjournment debate this afternoon. I am sure they will find that interesting.

Committee Examining Safety of School Crossings

Mrs LAWRIE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the committee he established to examine the safety of school crossings finished its deliberations and presented a report and, if so, would he make that report available to honourable members?

ANSWER

I thought that the honourable member for Nightcliff would remember that she asked me that question at the last sittings or the sittings before. I called for a report from this committee late last week. I have not, to the best of my knowledge, received that report and I will certainly produce it for honourable members' information as soon as it is to hand.

Truancy in Alice Springs Schools

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has he any plans to combat the high truancy rate in the Alice Springs area?

ANSWER

I have no specific plans to combat it other than those that I outlined in the second-reading speech of the Education Amendment Bill which is before us and which was designed to establish school councils. Obviously, the answer to that problem depends on closer cooperation between parents and the school system. That is what the legislation seeks to effect. As the matter will probably be debated later today, there is no need for me to add further to it now. However, I have had discussions with a number of principals in Alice Springs, a primary school principal in particular. The problem - which must obviously worry the honourable member for Alice Springs - is very serious indeed. The general standard of schools' performances must be affected by such things as truancy. I am among the first to accept that. Nonetheless, the answer lies in close cooperation between parents, teachers and the education system. That is what we are seeking through the legislation which is before us.

Export Licence for the Tennant Creek Abattoir

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Has he received any advice as to the status of an export licence for the Tennant Creek abattoir for the 1983 killing season?

ANSWER

The short answer is no.

Advertisements in United States to sell Pastoral Land

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What investigations has the government made into recent misleading advertisements in the United States about pastoral land available for sale in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

The Department of Lands has not made any investigations in regard to the allegations that appeared in the press. Perhaps the honourable member could refer the question to the Attorney-General. I have not consulted with him but he may have taken some action.

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I refer my question to the Attorney-General.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did not take any action, I must confess, because I did not see what action I could take. The advertisements apparently appeared, if they appeared at all, in the United States of America. My jurisdiction does not extend there. It is very difficult to imagine what course of action one might have taken had one tracked down the newspapers in which the advertisements appeared. If they appeared, and if one wanted to rectify the position one would have had to bear the cost of inserting other advertisements more or less setting out the correct position. That could have been considerable. I am afraid that I did nothing in the hope that people who

saw this advertisement, if in fact the advertisement appeared, would be cautious and careful people and would try to check out for themselves the veracity of any statements made in the advertisement.

Medical Engineering Services Contract with Department of Health

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is the Department of Health negotiating currently with a former departmental employee to have medical engineering services currently performed by the medical engineering services branch in Alice Springs carried out on contract? Will this involve the sale or lease of a substantial amount of departmental equipment and machinery to the private sector?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has asked a question about which notice should have been given. It will require a fair amount of research to answer it in detail. I will endeavour to get the information and send it to her.

Answer to Question

Mr TUXWORTH (Health)(by leave): The honourable member for Millner asked why has the Department of Health stopped daily visits by community health sisters to the Rapid Creek school? Mr Speaker, I regret that I did not have this answer earlier. The honourable member gave me notice yesterday and I am grateful for that. It just was not in my hand at the time he asked this morning. The answer is as follows. Parents have a responsibility for the health of their children and this should not be abrogated to teachers at school who then have to call on community nurses to take the place of doctors, the profession best trained to look after sick children. Parents should be contacted in each instance when a child is ill but, where this is not possible, school staff should have the authority to take whatever action is required and the parents should be advised as soon as possible thereafter. Community health nurses will visit primary schools on a regular basis as a part of the schools' health screening program. They are not there to replace doctors and provide treatment for specific illnesses. I am advised that the practice of a nurse attending to children at school and providing treatment is not in the best interests of the children themselves and that, if a child requires medical attention, a doctor should be consulted. There are sufficient GPs in Darwin to provide the required service and departmental medical officers attend at departmental health centres. In the event of an emergency, the child should be taken to the casualty department of the Darwin Hospital. There is a specified routine for school personnel who take children to hospital from school.

Answer to Question

Mr EVERINGHAM (Chief Minister)(by leave): Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Sanderson asked me about changing the status of *crocodylus porosus* from one appendix to another of the Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species agreement and I am able to answer her question more fully this morning. Appendix changes can only be made at a full CITES meeting and these are held biennially. The next such meeting will be in May 1983 at Botswana or possibly Geneva. Now there is a contrast, Mr Speaker. In conformity with CITES regulations, an application for a change of appendix rating was made to the secretariat in May 1982. Australia is party to the convention and such applications are forwarded through the Department of Home

Affairs and Environment, although the case was compiled largely by a working party of CONCOM which is the Council of Nature Conservation Ministers of which I am chairman at the moment. This council endorsed the application. The application was referred to the crocodile specialist group of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and discussed at its meetings in Africa in September. Those are the meetings I mentioned yesterday that Dr G.A. Letts attended on our behalf. Some progress was made in putting forward the CONCOM viewpoint, although it was clear that some countries have reservations and consider the application a little premature. According to Dr Letts, this is conservation politics at an international level and we have a tough battle ahead. It is expected that Dr Letts will be invited to be a member of the Australian delegation. Supplementary information is now being prepared in support of our earlier application. Dr Letts' assessment is that, if we do not succeed in 1983, we have excellent prospects of success at the following meeting in 1985. *Crocodylus johnstonii*, for the information of honourable members, remains on appendix 2.

Meat Industry Bill

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

When does he intend to introduce into the Assembly the Meat Industry Bill?

ANSWER

I am hoping that the bill and the second-reading speech will be available today. If the contents are satisfactory, we should be in a position to introduce the legislation next week.

Construction Work at Heavitree Gap

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise the Assembly of complete details pertaining to the construction work presently under way at Heavitree Gap in central Australia?

ANSWER

A contract worth \$486 740 was let to Dissen Constructions on 8 October 1982 to upgrade the Stuart Highway at Heavitree Gap in Alice Springs. This work is part of the national highway program. The work at Heavitree Gap consists of raising the level of the highway by up to 1.5 m to provide immunity from the 1 in 20 years flood. In addition, the road will be widened and a footpath-cum-cycle way will be provided. In conjunction with this work, a large trunk water main will be installed.

King's Canyon National Park

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

At what stage are negotiations with the lessees of Tempe Downs Station on the acquisition of portions of that particular lease for the purpose of creating a national park in the area of King's Canyon?

ANSWER

The protracted negotiations with the lessees of Tempe Downs to obtain the very valuable tourist and recreation area at King's Canyon on that pastoral lease have broken down. Action is being taken by the government in the interests of Northern Territory people to acquire the land concerned from the pastoral lessees because of its very distinct importance to the Territory. Indeed, the area is thought to be amongst the top 4 national park areas in the Northern Territory. Because of its importance to tourists and conservationists, we felt that it was simply not good enough to let go altogether simply because we could not obtain agreement from the lessees to purchase that section of the property by negotiation. Unfortunately, acquisition measures are being taken now.

Safety of Pedestrians at Casuarina Shopping Centre

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What steps are being taken to ensure the safety of pedestrians at Casuarina Shopping Centre and the retail premises in that vicinity?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Sanderson raised this question in the adjournment debate yesterday afternoon. I had the department prepare a brief regarding action proposed in that area. Representations have been made by the Department of Health to the Darwin City Council concerning crossing facilities for pedestrians near the intersection. Signalisation, including pedestrian facilities at the intersection, has been advanced. Work is expected to be commenced in early 1983 and to be completed by July or August. In the interim, the Darwin City Council is being approached for assistance to provide a temporary pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of its section of Trower Road. This will be removed when there is permanent installation of traffic signals.

I agree with the member for Sanderson that a great deal of development is taking place in that particular area. The opening of Casuarina Plaza has exacerbated the problem because people are moving between the Casuarina centre and the plaza. With the Department of Health taking office space and other administrative areas in Casuarina Plaza, the traffic has definitely increased. Taking this into consideration, I asked my department to make some investigations. It said that it would install this crossing as soon as possible.

Herbicide Subsidy Scheme

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he assure me that all areas controlled by the government will be maintained free of noxious weeds as an added incentive to people to participate in a newly launched herbicide subsidy scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government is responsible for many land areas, including road reserves and government properties such as the Department of Primary Production research farms. Within its financial and manpower limitations, the government has attempted to contain infestations of noxious weeds and minimise their rate of spread to new areas. There has been a very rapid spread of some noxious weed species, for example, noogoora burr, and a costly major campaign would be required to eradicate such outbreaks if, indeed, eradication is considered feasible. The government has sought to increase vigilance and activity against noxious weeds on all land. The Department of Primary Production aims to control noxious weeds on its research farms. In some cases, initial control by herbicides is feasible. However, in other areas, longer-term control may well be secured only through biological control agents. The government recently introduced a herbicide subsidy scheme to encourage property owners to control weed infestations on their land. It is obvious that the government must make every effort to prevent reinfestation from weed areas under its control. Mr Speaker, the department is reviewing its total legislation on weeds and its programs. It is our wish to conduct a public seminar so that new legislation can be brought before this Assembly in the first sittings in 1983.

Traffic Corridor for Brinkin Residents

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has a study been done relating to a traffic corridor for the residents of Brinkin and, if so, what are the results of that study? If not, what options

is Cabinet considering to get Brinkin residents to and from their homes at peak hour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Nightcliff asked that question several sittings ago. At that time, I said that Cabinet was not considering a causeway across Rapid Creek to relieve the traffic that may be generated from Brinkin. Cabinet still has not taken any action and, in fact, the matter has not been discussed since the honourable member asked the question last. A traffic study is being carried out by the department to establish what traffic uses Trower Road and Lakeside Drive. Results of that study are not yet available to me. As soon as they are, I will pass them to the honourable member for Nightcliff. At this stage, Cabinet has no plans for a causeway in the Rapid Creek area.

Tempe Downs Lease

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to the answer to a previous question. What is the anticipated time-scale for the acquisition measures he referred to in his answer in relation to the Tempe Downs lease?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot give a specific timetable. I have signed the necessary documents to initiate such an acquisition. There is a statutory series of procedures to be undertaken in accordance with the Lands Acquisition Act, notices to be served and then, depending upon the response to those notices, possibly a pre-acquisition hearing and then an acquisition hearing and so on. I refer the honourable member to the Lands Acquisition Act for specific details. I understand that it could take some months.

Disposal of Poisonous Substances

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for HEALTH

A service club in Darwin, with the cooperation of certain government departments, is to conduct a pick-up of poisonous substances in the Darwin area. Does he have any information on the methods by which it is proposed to dispose of these substances once collected?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my short answer is no, but I assure her that, if there is any way that the department can cooperate with service clubs in such a project, we will be only too willing to do it. If she would like to give me the name of the clubs at a later time, I will ask the department to contact them and see that everything is done in a formal manner.

Prison Farm for Southern Region

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What progress has been made regarding the proposed prison farm for the southern region?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I dare say this is a question that the honourable member for MacDonnell would have asked had he had the opportunity. In answering this question I might make some observations about the comments of the honourable member, if the Assembly will permit me. Mr Speaker, the position is that negotiations are proceeding successfully with the holders of a pastoral lease for the excision of an area of land from that pastoral lease for the purpose of establishing a prison farm. Quite obviously, and as the honourable member for MacDonnell was well aware, it is necessary not only for the excision to take place by negotiation but also, of course, to find suitable water. We have so far sunk 2 successful bores. While the quality of water from some samples from these may be marginal, we believe that it can be treated at a reasonable cost.

The honourable member to whom I referred earlier mentioned the lack of relevant appropriations in the budget which this Assembly has recently considered. That demonstrates the total lack of understanding of the opposition in respect to monetary management. What an absurd proposition it would be to tie up in a budget a sum of \$600 000 to \$1m for the purpose of establishing a prison farm at a time when the government was in no position to know whether or not that prison farm could proceed. I noticed the rather remarkable anxiety displayed by the honourable member for MacDonnell to excise land from a pastoral lease. I have yet to hear him suggest that it would be proper to excise land from Aboriginal land for the same purpose. It seems, Sir, that pastoralists ought to expect to have land taken from them compulsorily yet a Labor government would not support the prospect of public purpose lands being acquired, where needed, from Aboriginal land.

Mr Speaker, it is envisaged that the prison will hold between 40 and 60 medium-security prisoners. A staff of some 20 prison officers will be necessary initially. To give honourable members and the public some concept of the enormous expense of operating the prison system in the Northern Territory, it would be true to say that we could block-book an international hotel such as the Travelodge, put every prisoner in the Northern Territory in it, and then send the taxpayer quite a good refund cheque. The expenses are enormous in a prison farm where 1 prison officer is needed for every 2 prisoners just to run a reasonable program. Obviously, the government must be certain that a proper result will flow from this sort of expenditure. We believe it will.

This government announced its intention to establish a prison farm in the southern region. In fact, it will be a combination of a prison farm and a normal correctional institution. I would envisage it as a place that people would be somewhat discouraged from ever visiting again and I do not mean that in the sense of any form of cruelty being used. Nonetheless, it will be a place where work will be the essence. Let me make that point quite clear. 'Hard labour' will mean just that. It is hoped that the prison farm will be operational by the end of this financial year subject to the necessary investigations which I have already outlined. The Cabinet subcommittee on establishments has endorsed the necessary number of prison officers who will be required to run the institution. I can assure the Assembly that, when the problems I have outlined are overcome, necessary funds will be made available.

Alice Springs Prison Farm

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

My question refers to his answer to the previous question. Had these

bores been sunk before the excision had been finally negotiated?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, once again what an extraordinary demonstration of total lack of understanding of reasonable use of taxpayers' money. What an idiotic thing it would be to excise hundreds of hectares of land from a pastoral lease and go through all the legal procedures necessary to do that, on a blind speculation that there might happen to be water there. Is the honourable member suggesting that we wander around the Northern Territory, excise 15 or 20 areas of pastoral land in the southern area, go through all the procedures with the Registrar-General, do all the planning and then think about getting our pick and shovel out and digging for water? The question contains the most preposterous proposition I have heard in this Assembly since the honourable member opened his mouth last night.

Aerial Medical Service

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Will he advise the proposed fate of the Nomad aircraft presently being used by the Aerial Medical Service?

ANSWER

The saga of the Nomad aircraft has been with us for a long time. In view of the Auditor-General's report and a news item last night, I do not think it is unreasonable that the matter be canvassed again because it really is a difficult problem for the Northern Territory. For the benefit of members, the Nomad aircraft were phased into the Northern Territory in the 1976-78 period. In fact, they were to replace the Doves that had been operating with the Northern Territory Aerial Medical Service. The government of the day took a decision to use an aircraft which was not recommended by people in the Northern Territory or by advisers in Canberra representing our interests. It was a political decision which governments are entitled to take that we would have these aircraft and not only would we have these aircraft but we would have 6 of them; and God protect us from our friends.

The difficulties that arose with the aircraft were many and varied and were compounded by the fact that it was a brand-new unproven aircraft being used in a very remote part of Australia without the normal maintenance facilities that one would expect to have to support a new aircraft in an operational phase with less than 12 000 hours experience. Even though the Department of Health in Canberra took the matter back to Cabinet twice to try and have it reversed, having been presented with a fait accompli, the department's job was to try to make the Nomads work. In fairness to TAA and Ansett, which have both been responsible for maintaining the aircraft, and the officers of the department who have put in a lot of effort, the exercise has been an extremely difficult one.

The aircraft cost in the order of \$360 000 to \$600 000 each. That was the first and the last price for them as they were delivered to the Northern Territory. The 6 aircraft would have had a value in the order of \$2.5m to \$3m at the factory gates at the time that they were delivered. That is quite an investment, Mr Speaker. Our experience showed that the operating costs for the aircraft, not taking into account capital, was \$400 an hour. For \$400 an hour, you can go to the airport and hire about the flashiest aeroplane there. For \$400 an hour, we have had a plane that has spent most of its time on the

ground or on blocks in an unserviceable condition. As well, it flew at about 120 miles an hour at less than 9000 feet and with operating performance that was less than satisfactory for the very high temperatures in which it had to function. In essence, the operational problems in central Australia were so difficult that, in 1980 when the department was handed over to the Northern Territory, after discussions with Dr Gurd and other personnel, I asked that the 2 aircraft in Alice Springs be returned to Darwin. You can fly these planes anywhere you like but you cannot take them more than 50 miles from a maintenance depot. Because of the maintenance problems we have had in the Centre and the difficulties of operating the aircraft in very high temperatures, the 2 Alice Springs aircraft were returned to Darwin. I subsequently asked the Royal Flying Doctor Service to step in and fill the gap and it has been doing that job for us for 2 or 3 years now. It is working fairly well. From time to time the Royal Flying Doctor Service thinks it should get more money than it is getting. Nevertheless, the service it provides is a very good one and I would hope in the course of time that its activities in the Territory would spread.

Mr Speaker, we plugged along pretty well whilst operating 4 aircraft out of Darwin and 2 out of Nhulunbuy. However, during the times the aircraft were on the ground, we were not able to provide a service. The planes were not always available when the staff were ready to go. The number of hours we were getting out of each engine and the very simple faults that were developing with the planes were a bone of contention for the maintenance people, for the pilots, for our staff and for the people we were trying to service in the remote areas.

In April last year, a series of events caused some concern and, in fact, caused a representation from the Nurses Federation to be made to myself about the performance of the planes. We had 3 incidents in a period of several days which concerned me so much that I asked the Regional Director of East Arnhem to give me a brief on the problems we have had with the planes up until 6 months ago when Ansett took over the operation of the planes at Gove.

I would like honourable members to listen because it is not an easy problem. I am not reflecting in any way on TAA or Ansett. On 13 April 1981, DHU shed part of the right main undercarriage wheel rim. Take off was aborted and the flight changed to DHQ. The wheel rim was found on Groote Eylandt. Delays on that day resulted in the pilot being forced to have 14 April 1981 off. On 22 April 1981, DHQ took off at 8 am but returned due to problems with the generator. It took off at 9.58 am but the wheels and undercarriage were not retracting. It returned to do test landing and hoping to break the circuit. It was unsuccessful and took off again. It repeated the circuit then landed at 10.07 am - flight cancelled. Upset and emotional patients were returned to hospital to be readmitted.

On 24 April 1981, DHQ was sent to Darwin for mechanical checks. It returned on 27 April 1981. On 28 April, DHP's engine overheated. The changeover to DHP flights was a day late due to unexpected changeover of aircraft. On 5 May 1981, DHU's undercarriage would not retract after leaving Mililingimbi. Work was carried out on remainder of sections. It was replaced with DHP on return to Gove. On 5 May 1981, DHP starboard engine overheated on Lake Evella trip. Power to this engine was reduced. On 13 May 1981 DHU was grounded at Numbulwar due to raised oil pressure. Staff had to be collected in DHF which upset routine flights for the day. On 14 May 1981, GFC was chartered to take pilot, engineer and spare parts to repair DHU. It was paid for by NTAW. On 18 May 1981, MAF was chartered for an unlicensed airstrip medical evacuation - stretcher case; cost \$51. The Nomad was not

available due to routine flight. On 22 May 1981, MAF was chartered for an unlicensed station. On 25 May 1981, DHU went on a Gove-Darwin leg mercy flight, resulting in pilot out of hours. On 26 May 1981, routine rostered flights were cancelled due to DHU being in Darwin. DHF was unserviceable due to loose engine mounting and faulty navigational equipment. It was serviceable after 1400 hours. However, the chief pilot was off due to being out of hours. On 27 May 1981, DHF went on a Gove to Darwin emergency evacuation. On 27 May 1981, an executive air charter Gove-Numbulwar-Groote-Gove cost \$427 due to DHF being in Darwin. DHP was unserviceable in Gove - metal chips found in the oil - and was out of action from 1150 hours.

Mr Speaker, this page goes on and finishes with a story about a plane that had to come back following the coast because one engine shut down 50 miles out of Gove. That is about 3 or 4 months in the saga of the operation of running Nomads in the Northern Territory.

The dilemma is with us. It is being worked on feverishly by ourselves, NTAW and other people in the government who have an interest. I think the fact that the Commonwealth government decided this year to close the government aircraft factory is really a testimony to what I am talking about. We have been handed a lemon. I guess the consoling feature of it all is that we did not pay for the planes other than meeting the cost of trying to maintain them in an experimental period. Our challenge now is to find an alternative system to evacuate patients in the Northern Territory and provide routine medical visits for people. For some 5 months now, officers of the Department of Health and NTAW have been assessing the qualities of a variety of aircraft and the department has been re-assessing its modus operandi for providing services to the Northern Territory's widespread population. At this stage, there are no firm proposals to replace the Nomad aircraft with any type of plane. The studies are proceeding. These are very involved because we have to provide a service to so many varying types of community over such a widespread area.

In closing, I would like to say that the comments by the Auditor-General in his report are noted and understood and are not treated lightly by the department. There are limitations on how we can respond to his comments given the situation that we are in. We do not wish to sign a formal contract for the aircraft. We would like to negotiate an arrangement to have an alternative aircraft replace them. It would be silly for us to go through that process of negotiation at the same time as we are signing a contract for the maintenance of the existing aircraft.

Mr Speaker, I would like also to pay tribute to the staff who have flown in the Nomads for a long time. They have done it very loyally. I received a representation from the Secretary of the Royal Australian Nursing Federation Northern Territory Branch in September this year saying that it was very concerned at the risks to which its members were exposed due to the poor performance of the aircraft. That was one of the factors that instigated the removal of the aircraft from Gove. I would like to assure the Assembly that every effort is being made to rectify the situation. It is a problem that would affect every electorate in the Northern Territory. If honourable members have a particular problem in their electorate with the operation of the Aerial Medical Service I am sorry but we are doing all we can in the circumstances to correct the situation.

Rental Rebate Recipients

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

It would appear that the Housing Commission rent increases are announced at the same time the pension increases are announced. On occasions, this causes some misunderstanding for rental rebate recipients. Is it necessary for Housing Commission rent increases to be announced at the same time as pension increases are announced?

ANSWER

Unfortunately, to some degree, it is. Calculations of rents for pensioners in the Northern Territory for their Housing Commission accommodation is in fact 15% of their income. That is quite a concession and is very heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. Of course that situation does not prevail only in the Northern Territory but also across the country. All states receive their funding under the Commonwealth States Housing Agreement. The Commonwealth has been urging the states to accept uniform policies of rent setting, particularly for those persons in the community who are unable to pay what is being termed these days as an 'economic rent' or 'market rent'. Indeed there are a great many, apart from pensioners, who simply cannot pay a level of rent to the Housing Commission which would even sustain a break-even point on the cost of administration of those houses. Therefore, those people are entitled to rental rebates and the rebates are based on a formula related to income.

The pensioners are in a slightly different situation because their rent is determined as 15% of their income. Clearly, whenever pensions rise, Housing Commission rents for that category rise as well. I point out that the Housing Commission takes only a percentage of the increase. I can understand why pensioners feel a bit aggrieved that they receive advice in the mail or through the press that they have an increase in their pension of a few dollars and, shortly after, they receive a notice saying that their rents have increased. From their point of view, it seems that the government is always grabbing away at the small funds they have. I am not sure of the actual rents but I believe that pensioners are entitled to single-bedroom accommodation from the Housing Commission for about \$7 to \$12 a week. This is not really a great deal of money when one considers the accommodation that is provided. However, I can understand that some pensioners feel that it is inappropriate that, every time they receive an increase to their pensions, there is an increase in their rent. I assure them that we obtain the best deal we can for them in this regard. The government really does not have a great deal of power to vary the system that we are locked into at the present time.

Workmen's Compensation for Crews of Vessels

Mrs O'NEIL to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware that persons employed on vessels working out of Northern Territory ports, for example prawning boats, may not be covered under the Northern Territory Workmen's Compensation Act and is consideration being given to a solution to this problem?

ANSWER

I have a vague recollection that this question was raised with me quite some time ago. I am not certain of the position. There could be

jurisdictional problems. If the honourable member would like to write to me on the subject, I will ensure that she gets a detailed response.

Tourist Groups Ltd

Mr VALE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Can he advise why contracts with Tourist Groups Ltd have not yet been signed for leases of both the Katherine and Malanka Lodges?

ANSWER

Earlier this year, the government leased hostels in the Northern Territory to private enterprise groups. In regard to the Tourist Group Ltd's successful bids for Katherine and Alice Springs hostels, they were required to take up occupancy fairly quickly after the tenders closed. The group has managed to pay its rent in advance as required under the terms of the contract. However, the company is having some difficulty in putting together the financial guarantees required by government to complete the necessary requirements formally. Until such time as the financial guarantees can be put together, and I think they are in the order of \$260 000 for a performance bond, the government will not enter into a formal lease contract. Certainly, the situation has gone on longer than we had expected and we have been placing increasing pressure on the company to produce the performance bond as required so that a lease can be signed. However, the rent payable for the property is being met by the company so we do not have concern that the government is losing revenue. We will continue to exert pressure. If we are convinced it cannot put the performance bond together, obviously we will have to review the contract.

Diploma Course in Community Health Nursing

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Could he briefly advise whether a diploma course in community health nursing will be offered in 1983?

ANSWER

As a result of cooperation between the Department of Health, the Darwin Community College and the Northern Territory Committee of the College of Nursing Australia, a Diploma of Applied Science course in community health nursing will be offered at the Darwin Community College next year. The course will, at first, be a 1-year full-time course although I hope, at a later stage, it will be possible to open the course on a part-time study basis. The accreditation of the course was approved last week on 11 November and the path is now clear to commence the course in February. This is another first for Territory nurses as it will be the first diploma-level nurse education course ever offered in the Territory. Along with the midwifery nurse education program, which commenced in Darwin and Alice Springs this month, the course is the result of a review of nurse-education needs carried out earlier this year.

Mr Speaker, I believe that arrangements for the diploma course have been carried out with great dispatch and efficiency. Credit for this significant achievement must go to the nurses on the Northern Territory Committee of the College of Nursing who put in a great deal of their own time in developing and

attaining accreditation for their program. I might also add that the committee met all the costs and I, for one, congratulate the nurses for their initiative, dedication and application in seeing the project through to completion.

Dump for Disposal of Hazardous and Noxious Materials

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

What is the current status of a proposal to provide a dump in the Darwin area for the disposal of hazardous and noxious materials?

ANSWER

I do not have the details. I recall reading a briefing note on this matter quite recently and I think the best way to answer the query would be for me to write to the honourable member in due course.

Regulations for Commercial Vehicles

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is it his intention to issue an easily understood guide to new safety and loading requirements for commercial vehicles and, if so, when might such a guide be available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member to place the question on notice.

Motel at Jabiru

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he give me details of the building of a motel at Jabiru and under what conditions it will be open for business?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Tiwi would be aware that, under the special conditions on which Jabiru was established, there are some problems in relation to the establishment of what one would call normal town facilities there. The restrictions on motel and other tourist development are placed by the Plan of Management of the Kakadu National Park, are the relevant authority. The plan prohibits the development of any facility to accommodate visitors even, apparently, business people and others with legitimate concerns in Jabiru. Despite strong representations to the Australian government by the Territory government, there has been no relaxation of the Commonwealth stand.

Our government is now exploring other options, for the tourist trade in any event, and has commissioned the Territory Development Corporation to undertake a study of possible sites for tourist accommodation facilities required in the Alligator Rivers region. I have suggested to the Prime Minister that a major tourist accommodation development along the lines of the Yulara Tourist Village could be contemplated and I am currently awaiting a response from him. However, in the meantime, to meet the demands arising from permitted visits to Jabiru by persons having business in the town, the

Jabiru Town Development Authority is moving quickly to establish a hostel which will provide superior accommodation to that currently existing in the construction camp. This is a ghastly waste of public funds when a small motel of, say, 20 or 30 units, probably with a restaurant, could be permitted to be built in the town and would afford a useful facility for the townspeople and visitors alike. However, such is the intransigent nature of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service that no such thing will be contemplated.

Medical Reports for Workmen's Compensation Claims

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is it true that patients requiring a medical report in the course of making a claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act are asked to pay the Department of Health \$100 prior to receiving such report and, if that is true, does he intend to allow the practice to continue? I might just add that some of these patients are in fairly dire financial straits.

Mr SPEAKER: Will honourable members keep their questions as brief and as much to the point as possible.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the department charges for reports sought by legal personnel or insurance companies in relation to workmen's compensation claims. The level of charge for those reports varies. I am not aware of the case mentioned by the honourable member where somebody has been asked to pay \$100 prior to receipt of the report but, in any event, I think that, if we are doing that, the account should be sent not to the individual but to the legal firm or the insurance company that sought it. In fact, the honourable member for Nightcliff raised a similar problem with me some time ago and I thought that it had been solved. If it has been solved in Darwin and not at Nhulunbuy, I will take it up with the Secretary of the Department of Health and see what can be done to regularise the matter.

Post-graduate Courses in Northern Territory

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can he give details of any post-graduate courses available, or soon to be available, in the Northern Territory?

Mr B. Collins: There are heaps.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just pointed out that there are heaps. I do not know to what the honourable member refers. One might assume that it is to the proposed school of tropical medicine. Perhaps at another time, we can clarify the particular question which the honourable member wants to ask.

Dismissals and Resignations of Executive Public Servants

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Following my question to the Chief Minister on 13 October about dismissals and resignations of public servants in the executive division, is the report he undertook to compile available?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have received certain information from the Public Service Commissioner. However, I have not yet compiled a report. I might say that I am quite happy to provide all the raw information to the honourable the Leader of the Opposition on a confidential basis. Since everyone's name and pack drill is given in this raw information when preparing a formal report, I will be seeking to give people as much anonymity as possible. I am quite happy to send the material that I hold to the Leader of the Opposition. If he could have his staff contact mine later during the week, I will mail it off to him.

Sales Tax on Freight Subsidy Scheme

Ms D'ROZARIO to TREASURER

Has he undertaken a detailed assessment of the economic benefits of the government's sales tax on freight subsidy scheme and, if so, would he make those findings available to this Assembly?

ANSWER

The answer is no. The government has not made any further evaluation of the sales tax on freight rebate scheme. The government scheme proceeds today as it did when it was introduced. Refunds are being made to various commercial enterprises in the Territory on the sales tax component of freight. Implied in the honourable member's question was the fact that there perhaps might not be any economic benefit in this but that would be absolute nonsense. The benefits of any lesser government imposition would flow to the community. In this case, it is a Northern Territory government initiative to rebate to commercial enterprises a Commonwealth tax which, we all agree, is totally inequitable. To draw from that any inference that such rebates would not be of benefit to the community would also destroy any argument people might have that lessening payroll tax, for example, does not benefit the community because it does not go directly into the pockets of employees. Of course, Mr Speaker, that is nonsense. I think every thinking person appreciates that lesser government imposts in any area are of benefit to the community generally.

Water Points on Arnhem Highway

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In the construction of the new water pipeline along the Arnhem Highway, has any provision been made for water points for the bushfires brigade to use?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, 3 hydrants have been connected on the Arnhem Highway for that purpose.

Pay for Prisoners under Prisons Act

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I preface this by saying I tried to contact his office this morning to give warning of this question, but was unsuccessful. He has been very busy. What is the rate of pay for prisoners in Northern Territory prisons at the moment as determined under section 69 of the Prisons Act?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the exact amount is not known to me although I suppose it should be. I know it is very paltry in terms of modern day expenses. I believe that it is worth reviewing the amount made available to prisoners while they are in prison, not so much from the point of view of a prisoner earning a living while in gaol, but there is a wide range of products which individual prisoners believe are essential for their comfort while in prison, such things as tobacco, deodorant and so on. I think they can quite properly expect to have access to such goods, but the taxpayer should not provide them willy-nilly. With prices rising over the years since the original rate was set, I think it is time for a review. My department is conscious of this. I expect to discuss this with my Cabinet colleagues in the near future.

Opposition Contribution to Land Rights Debate

Mr HARRIS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the recent statement to this Assembly by the Leader of the Opposition that he is quite prepared to contribute to any constructive debate in relation to the resolution of problems in relation to the application of land rights legislation and his subsequent failure to provide such contributions, will the Chief Minister provide the opposition with a further opportunity to make a constructive contribution to the debate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the honourable member for Port Darwin for this question. An opportunity has now been provided by the government to the opposition, particularly to the Leader of the Opposition in deference to his request, for time to talk on the resolution of the vexing problems related to Aboriginal land rights. Certainly, this government would like to know the opposition's attitude to the package of proposals winnowed out through process of negotiation over many months between the government, the Commonwealth government and the various land councils. In giving notice of a motion this morning, I would like to indicate that the government is prepared to suspend Standing Orders if need be to give the honourable Leader of the Opposition as much time as he likes to talk, firstly, about my parentage and, secondly, about my contribution to these negotiations. We then would be more than happy to move for a suspension of Standing Orders to allow him time to go on at length to deal with all aspects he considers necessary to provide a relevant contribution to the government's attempts to resolve the question of land rights. Mr Speaker, I would like to serve notice on the honourable Leader of the Opposition that, so far as the government is concerned, he will have as much time as he would like tomorrow to make his contribution to this debate.

Housing Commission Sale of Houses in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

How will a price be determined for those Housing Commission houses which are sold to tenants in Nhulunbuy and will purchasers be able to avail themselves of the government's Home Loans Scheme?

ANSWER

To answer the second part of the question first, certainly occupants of government houses in Nhulunbuy will have access to the government's Home Loans Scheme when we have completed the necessary arrangements to enable houses to be sold in Nhulunbuy. Of course, that is provided that they are eligible for those loans. Loans are available only to people who are making a first home purchase in the Northern Territory.

It will be difficult to determine the price of homes in Nhulunbuy. The Housing Commission is at present sorting out with the Valuer-General how to place a valuation on homes in Nhulunbuy. Honourable members would know that Nhulunbuy has been a closed mining town since its inception. It is on a mining lease and, as a result of that, there have not been many house and land transactions in the past. Whilst I am aware that some blocks have changed hands over there for fairly steep prices, that may not be a good guide to establishing a market value because very few transactions have taken place. That is not a true reflection of the market. I cannot provide the honourable member with specific information on this question, but I am anxious to see what the Housing Commission and Valuer-General recommend to the government on the value of government houses at Nhulunbuy which will be made available for sale. Obviously, I will provide information to the honourable member in this Assembly in due course.

Leprosy Patients

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Would he advise at some stage during the sittings, the number of long-term leprosy patients who previously attended the leprosarium at East Arm who are not attending in Katherine now and their possible location? I believe some of them are living in fringe camps around Darwin without medical treatment or attention.

ANSWER

When the leprosarium was closed earlier this year, there were some 22 patients many of whom had been there for quite some time. It was determined that about 2 of them needed to be in a continuing hospital environment for their own benefit. The others could return to their own communities. Some became independent in their own right and were given Housing Commission accommodation because they were well enough to be able to look after themselves and be treated by visiting rural sisters on a regular basis. I have no knowledge that any of our former patients are living in a fringe camp environment and not receiving treatment. If the honourable member can give me names and places where these people might be, I will pass it on to the department and have it examine the matter. In any event, I will endeavour to obtain a full report on the people who were in the leprosarium for the honourable member so that her fears can be allayed.

Youth Services at Amoonguna

Mr BELL to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT and RECREATION

What is the extent of cutbacks for youth services at Amoonguna consequent upon the minister's decision in the budget?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have had some forewarning of this particular question. It is a very difficult one. The Northern Territory government budget allowed some \$411 000 in relation to services being provided by the YMCA and YWCA and other youth groups throughout the Northern Territory. Off the top of my head, I do not have details of every particular project because there are some 18 or 19 people employed in this regard. If my memory serves me right, I think we are providing some financial assistance to Amoonguna on a 6-monthly basis but I am not certain of that. I will take the question on board and provide the honourable member with the information at a later date.

Katherine Sportsmen - Travel

Mr VALE to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT and RECREATION

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Can he advise whether or not he is aware of the hardship Katherine sportsmen and women experience through having to travel so far to compete with other teams?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, you would be aware of the travel subsidy schemes that the Northern Territory government has instituted over the last couple of years to provide financial assistance to sporting organisations for participation in both national and Territory championships. Of course, the Northern Territory government is very interested in developing interaction between the various town centres but, unfortunately, there is no provision for financial assistance to teams which wish to participate from Katherine, Darwin or even Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

Just recently, I had the good fortune to open the go-kart track in Katherine. That facility will provide a good service to people in that area. It will not only be a go-kart track; it will also be a BMX track. I believe that, over a period of time, some interaction will develop between Darwin and Katherine to allow weekly competition. Currently, Rugby League and Rugby Union teams come up to Darwin on a regular basis and play in the Darwin competition. People come from Jabiru to Darwin to compete in various competitions.

Mr Speaker, I believe that, as we increase our Sports Development Fund through the revenue of Sports Lotto, at some future date some allowance may be made to help promote sporting competitions between towns. However, I am unable to give any assurance that we will be addressing that problem in the immediate future.

Policy Statements on Education

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

This question follows on a question I asked last week. Can he advise

exactly when he will be in a position to release the promised policy statements on education and explain to the Assembly in this last sittings of 1982 why these statements have taken so long given that he has had the Green Paper since March 1981?

ANSWER

A policy statement could be issued forthwith on a number of areas. Indeed, a number of them have been prepared to date. I had hoped to be in a position to release a package rather than just dribble them out like confetti at a wedding. There are a number of other issues, however, about which a great deal of further investigation needs to be done over and above that which has already taken place. We must examine areas recommended for discussion in the Green Paper; for example, senior secondary colleges. In order to take a decision in respect of senior secondary colleges, we must examine the whole spectrum of education itself. We must examine the cost of providing such a system, the impact it will have on the pattern of secondary education and the number of years that will apply to secondary education which in turn affects the number of years which apply to primary education. We must also look at the type of curriculum which those secondary colleges will have. That in turn will affect the direction of education that will apply to secondary schools and the number of years and units involved. In turn, further down the line, that will affect what happens in primary education.

Until the decision at the top of the ladder is taken, it is very difficult to make a definitive policy statement covering the whole spectrum of education from pre-school through. I know the delay must be frustrating for many who have an intense interest in the area of government White Paper policy relating to the field of education. Nonetheless, it is far better to get the act right the first time rather than patching it up over the years and adding confusion thereby. I would prefer to face the occasional criticism which is levelled, and probably justifiably, in the minds of people for not having produced these statements earlier. Nonetheless, the process of assessing the impact of all these policies on neighbouring policies must be addressed before I make a definitive statement. The aims and objectives in Aboriginal education are well known and clear. Certainly, those sorts of policy statements can be made. The basic, objective, policy statement on education is available. I think the preamble to the Education Act itself is as clear a statement of that as any that I could produce by way of a White Paper. I believe this is something which needs to be done very thoroughly in the first instance. When I am satisfied that it is in the interests of education to put the government imprimatur on that policy statement, then I will bring it forward. I do not intend to do so beforehand.

Pets at Jabiru

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Whilst taking into consideration the special conditions of the establishment of the township of Jabiru and in the interests of normal life for the people living there, can he assure me that all requests to keep animals and birds, with the exception of cats, for personal and recreational reasons at Jabiru will be treated with consideration by the JTDA?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in this context one must refer to the Plan of Management for the Kakadu National Park, the head lease under which the Jabiru Town

Development Authority was granted a right to occupy the townsite and the regulations made under the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Act. The special conditions under which Jabiru was established will clearly frustrate any attempt the government may make to seek relaxation of the current position. The Jabiru Town Development Authority is not in a position to allow pets, other than dogs and indigenous fish, to be kept in the town. The Plan of Management under which the development of the town and the national park is regulated comes up for review in 1985 and that will be our earliest opportunity to secure relaxation of any of the current restrictions should we deem it advisable. However, the extent to which the town cooperates in observing the current restrictions will no doubt have some influence on any revision of them.

Housing for Aboriginal Health Workers

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Aboriginal health workers employed by the Department of Health have indicated for some years their need for appropriate housing. Has any progress yet been made by the department towards provision of housing for Aboriginal health workers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is quite right when she says that Aboriginal health workers have expressed an interest in having accommodation made available to them in the areas in which they live. It is not an unreasonable proposition at all. One of the things that I have asked of 2 consecutive Conferences of Health Workers is that they let me know what their concept of housing is so that I can advise the Chief Minister whose responsibility it is to provide accommodation for public servants in the Northern Territory. I think that is very important because, all too often in the Northern Territory, government has built \$30 000 to \$60 000 homes out of tar and cement in its own traditional way that had no meaning for the people for whom they were built. Over a period of time, some of these places have been abandoned, some wrecked and, on quite a few occasions, they were accepted very graciously and lived in and maintained in the finest condition. Because of the diversity of our communities, I felt it absolutely essential that the health workers tell us what they believe to be the priorities for housing in their communities.

We already provide accommodation in most communities for medical staff and, where these staff are withdrawing and health workers are taking over, the health workers have said: 'Those places you built for the white sisters are not really what we want. They do not interest us. We have husbands and children and would rather live with our friends and relatives in another area'. In the last few weeks, I believe the health workers have arrived at a decision on what they see as the way they wish to handle accommodation. As I understand it, and this matter has yet to be considered by government, the health workers believe that funds for the accommodation of health workers could reasonably be made available by the government to the council or the housing association in their communities. That council or housing association would then have responsibility for providing suitable accommodation for the health workers involved. The standard and situation etc of the accommodation that is to be provided would then become a matter for the community as would the ultimate responsibility for maintaining that accommodation and the decision as to who should go into the house if the health work workers move on or whatever.

Mr Speaker, the short answer is that I have not received the proposition. I believe it exists and it sounds reasonable from what I have heard about it. In the course of time, the government will address itself to it and I will be able to pass the matter on to the Chief Minister for his final imprimatur.

Development Corporation Conference in Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Would the honourable minister undertake to evaluate the many entrepreneurial ideas put forward at the recent Development Corporation Conference in Alice Springs and advertise at least those which are judged to have the best chance of success?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have no problem agreeing with the implied suggestion that the government consider these ideas to see where they can be applied. Certainly, I think it is a good practice for the Small Business Advisory Service to conduct meetings of this nature and allow the minds of business people to range freely over subjects very close to their hearts. Indeed, I understand that at this particular meeting, pay, interest rates, the availability of land and things of that kind were very thoroughly discussed. I will take heed of what the honourable member has said and try to agree to everything he proposes.

Ro-Ro Facility for Darwin from Singapore

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is delaying the towing of the Ro-Ro facility from Singapore to Darwin? When is it expected the Ro-Ro will arrive and what effect will the delay have on the completion of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, recently I had the satisfaction of attending a launching of a Ro-Ro. We have had some problems regarding the delivery of the Ro-Ro because the main contractor, Marine Contractors, has entered into some kind of dispute with Land and Sea, the constructors of the barge of the Ro-Ro. At the moment, negotiations are being conducted between solicitors for the Northern Territory and solicitors acting on behalf of Land and Sea and Marine Contractors. I will be in the position to answer this question more fully within the next 24 hours. There are legal problems and we hope they will be sorted out in the next 24 hours. If they are, the Ro-Ro will depart in the next few days and arrive in Darwin in about 3 weeks. If they are not resolved in the next couple of days, there could be problems because it would be very unlikely that we would be able to obtain insurance for it to sail after 30 November. It is very ticklish and complicated in legal terms. As I said earlier, I will be in a position to advise the Assembly more fully in regard to that particular problem within 24 hours.

Electricity Supply for Daly Waters

Mr VALE to TREASURER

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Can he advise the Assembly what steps are being taken to provide electricity to the township and residents of Daly Waters?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am advised that the 5 or 6 consumers in the town of Daly Waters have an electricity supply. I further understand that probably it is not an entirely satisfactory one, and that steps are being considered to upgrade some of the equipment used. As far as the Northern Territory Electricity Commission is concerned, it is not in charge of the electricity supply at Daly Waters. At the time of self-government, NTEC took over most of the major operations of generating and distributing electricity throughout the Northern Territory. Quite a number of small centres, such as Daly Waters, are still under the control and administration of the Department of Transport and Works. This is largely because the towns are not served from a major power-station but have small in-house generators.

I am led to believe that the generators at Daly Waters are at the police station and there is a distribution system from there to the half dozen consumers in the town. Unfortunately, the cost of running small generators is very high and the estimated loss per annum on generating electricity for the consumers at Daly Waters is in the order of \$45 000 to \$50 000. This also takes into account the contribution for the standard Northern Territory electricity tariff which is applied right across the Territory. NTEC is not particularly interested in taking over all these small centres, not because it does not have the expertise but because picking up of such losses would further increase the very substantial losses that it incurs. Obviously, these losses are absorbed within the Department of Transport and Works' vote and perhaps some of it flows to the Department of Community Development because funds are provided for the purchase of fuel or diesel sets. In a nutshell, NTEC does not provide electricity to Daly Waters and does not propose to do so under any current arrangements. It is a very small town with very few consumers. Whoever generates electricity there will incur substantial losses. The real solution for these towns in the long term is that, as our major transmission system grows, large powerlines will be run down the track to put these small towns on a power supply from the major powerhouse. In time, NTEC would propose to supply Katherine from the Channel Island Power-station. When Darwin has a coal-fired power-station and the costs of generating electricity are reduced, the possibility of transmitting electricity down the track from Darwin will be a very favourable one from an economic point of view. At that time, I believe there will be further consideration of connecting more small towns throughout the Northern Territory to a major and more reliable supply of electricity.

Subdivision in Sanderson

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

What requirements, if any, were imposed upon subdividers in the Sanderson area in respect of the provision of public open space?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would have to seek specific details to answer the honourable member's question. I can only recall, in a very broad sense, the requirement for buy-back of land by the Northern Territory government from these developers. There was also a requirement to provide land to the government for school sites etc, as part of the lease arrangements. I will have to seek information and provide it to the honourable member in due course.

Ablution Facilities for Kargaru Bush Camp

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Has the minister received advice from his department on improved ablution facilities which are urgently required at the Kargaru bush camp in Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

No.

Student Assessment Programs in NT

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Following the minister's statement to the Assembly regarding the results of Australian studies on the student performance project, many points were raised. One of those points was that the results of the student assessment programs in the NT would be used. Could the minister inform the Assembly what progress has been made in this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am very pleased to advise the Assembly that, following the first meeting of a working party on assessment of student performance in Northern Territory schools on 18 November, consensus has now been reached on the major issues. The working party was comprised of representatives of the department, the principals association, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation and COGSO. Mr Speaker, if I may, I would like to depart from the normal procedure in question time and use notes rather extensively in answering this question. I would like the media to take note of the simplified agreement of which I shall now advise the Legislative Assembly.

The proposed guidelines were unanimously accepted and endorsed by the executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation over the weekend. I would like to commend the spirit with which the federation entered into these negotiations, notwithstanding publicity about opposition by it to so-called system-wide testing through its journals and press statements. I think the federation came to realise that there was nothing sinister in the government's proposal. There was nothing to fear from it but everything to gain from it. Again, I would like to place on record my commendation for the level of cooperation and assistance which the federation executive has given.

I have asked my staff to simplify the education jargon which was used in the agreement itself. It is designed for people in the profession and is of little use to parents or students and others vitally concerned in these matters. My staff has reduced it and I will now indicate what the agreement contains. Firstly, a report on student achievement would contain a description of the assessment program which will be related to curriculum undertaken in our schools. This would put any assessment in its correct context. Secondly, the report will indicate areas in which performance has been satisfactory on the basis of standards established by the particular subject committees and the working party. Here, the analysis would describe the results in general terms. Any more detailed analysis would be confidential but may also be used as the basis of a detailed report to principals which will allow them to compare their school level analysis with that of the overall Northern Territory analysis. Thirdly, the report will be a valuable instrument in that

it will give the department an indication of possible causes of any deficiencies in student performance together with remedial strategies to overcome such deficiencies. Examples of remedial strategies could include such things as curriculum revision, in-service activity and staffing considerations to name a few. Fourthly, there will continue to be emphasis on positive aspects of the program so that it may be developed and maintained in the interests of education in the Northern Territory. Fifthly, the report from the Northern Territory assessment program will, in the first instance, be prepared by the Evaluation and Assessment Unit of the Professional Services Branch of the department. This would then be considered by the working party mentioned before. It would then be presented to the Secretary of the Department of Education for consideration. Sixthly and finally, after consideration, the report would be released on a confidential basis to regional councils of principals, the Northern Territory Council of Government Schools Organisation and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation. Following study by these groups the report would be made available to principals, teachers and school councils. At a later date, a summary of the report would be made available for media release.

Mr Speaker, since the debate referred to by the honourable member for Port Darwin, a great deal of effort has gone into this program. It is a credit to all those who have been involved in it, not just the Northern Territory Teachers Federation but also the Northern Territory Council of Government Schools Organisation and the officers of the department. It is rare that I name any officer of my department but I would like to put on record my appreciation, and the appreciation of the government, of the efforts of Mr Geoff Spring in this very difficult exercise. I would like to put on record my appreciation of his very skilful handling of all of the people involved who had some reluctance about participating in this scheme which I believe will be of tremendous benefit to Northern Territory education.

Ablution Facilities at Kargaru Bush Camp

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I refer him to my previous question and his brief answer. Will he undertake to solicit from his department information on the current status of ablution facilities provided to the residents of Kargaru bush camp in Tennant Creek?

ANSWER

The first thing I would like to do is to assess the status, to use his own word, of the bush camp itself. If it has an appropriate status, then certainly I will look at the facilities available to it.

Water Reticulation in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the government doing about reticulating water in the rural area given the moratorium that was announced on subdivision below 20 acres about a year ago?

ANSWER

I have had forewarning of this question. So that we get the record right, I have a reply prepared because it is important. Many people in the

rural area have been wondering what has been going on.

There was a report. At the moment, the recommendations contained in that report are being studied by the government. One aspect of the study covered the provision of reticulated water supplied to the rural area. Private bores and wells will still be utilised and reticulated water only provided in instances where lot sizes prohibit certain criteria being met from within designated village areas. The cost of reticulation will be met by the developer. Consideration is being given by the Planning Authority to the lifting of the subdivision moratorium in conjunction with the adoption of a development policy designed to protect public health interests. This policy will cover requirements for proper construction standards for bores and wells and effluent disposal systems, and specified minimum separation distances between the fresh water and waste water systems.

Upgrading of Parap Primary School

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The stage 2 upgrading of Parap Primary School has not been completed because of the financial collapse of the builder. Will he ensure that such action as is necessary will be taken to have the work completed for the beginning of the 1983 school year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was anticipating a question from the honourable member regarding the Parap Primary School and the financial difficulties faced by the contractor. I would like to give the honourable member the information that I have. Without mentioning any names, the contractor is experiencing financial problems. He had apparently successfully negotiated materials from suppliers to enable him to proceed with the work on 11 November. However, a major subcontractor, Neata Glass, pulled its men off the site when it learned that the financial security arrangements had apparently fallen through. It is understood that it is waiting for confirmation of new financial security arrangements before returning to the site. Until this time, the contractor's rate of progress had been such that it was anticipated that the contract would be completed by the end of December. But this is in doubt now. Following the hearing of a petition to wind-up the company on 18 November, and in the event that the company folds up or is put into liquidation, the work will obviously take longer to complete.

We are confident, however, that the classrooms will be ready for occupation in time for the new school year. Should completion by direct management be required, we would first arrange for the classrooms to be made ready for occupation while other finishing work would be carried out after or, when the opportunity permits, during school hours.

Tourist Information Bay North of Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the fact that we have a tourist information bay on the Stuart Highway south of Alice Springs, can he advise if and when a similar installation will be installed on the Stuart Highway north of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

One will be installed north of Alice Springs. It has been brought forward on the 1982-83 minor capital works program and hopefully work will be completed by about April 1983.

Aboriginal Rangers at Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Will he give an undertaking to employ Aboriginal rangers at the Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park in numbers comparable with those employed by the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service at Kakadu National Park.

ANSWER

I should preface my answer to this question by saying that it is government policy that Aboriginal people be employed throughout the public service and not just in the ranger service of the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. Very early in the piece, I directed the attention of the Conservation Commission to government policy in that area. I understand that the Conservation Commission employs a considerable number of Aboriginal people in its ranks and that it employs Aboriginal rangers throughout the Territory. I am not in a position this morning to give any undertaking on behalf of the Conservation Commission that it will employ a specific number of rangers of Aboriginal descent in the Uluru National Park, but I can assure the honourable member that it is the desire of the government that the Conservation Commission continue to employ substantial numbers of Aboriginal people. I understand that a Cabinet submission is on its way from the Conservation Commission in relation to further Aboriginal ranger training programs and I hope that Cabinet will receive that submission before Christmas.

Community Centre for Malak

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

The YWCA has a proposal to construct a community centre in Patterson Street, Malak. Can the minister confirm whether land has yet been made available for the erection of this building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have only seen reference to it being processed through the lands allocation system. I can undertake to find out specifically for the honourable member and advise her.

Registration of Trailed Vehicles

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

A long time ago you mooted the idea of a system of interchanging

registration of trailed vehicles which may be only used intermittently to enable more rational and economical use of that registration. Has your idea grown to fruition and, if it has, could I have the details?

ANSWER

The department is investigating the scheme proposed by the honourable member for Tiwi. However, amendments must be made to the Motor Vehicles Act in conjunction with an examination of several other relevant registration issues. I have stated, on earlier occasions, both inside and outside this Assembly, that we were looking at methods to hasten the process of registration not only of motor vehicles but also caravans and trailers. The question the member asked relates to much of the same study. When I have that information, I will provide it to her.

Local Government for Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Has the government's discussion with Nhulunbuy leaseholders produced any means by which local government could be conferred on Nhulunbuy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, negotiations that have taken place to date could only be described as being in the very early stages. It is a worthwhile project for us to take on in the New Year with considerable energy now that we have the obvious support of the honourable member for that area. It is a very complex issue. Most of the government's dealings with the joint venturers, having regard to the nature of the leased land in that area, are complex by inheritance. I would anticipate that any negotiations which may lead to a formal form of local government in Nhulunbuy would take quite some time. Nonetheless, I confirm that energetic overtures will be made to the joint venturers during the New Year.

Chan Park Nursing Home

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The Chan Park Nursing Home was recently opened at Palmerston. However, there is no bus service yet between Darwin and Palmerston. Is he considering providing such a bus service in order that friends and relations may visit the patients at the nursing home?

ANSWER

At the moment, a study is being carried out but it is very unlikely that a service into Palmerston will be provided for at least 12 months or 2 years or until it is warranted. The Darwin bus service is costing something like \$2.5m a year. At this time, no funding arrangements have been made to provide an additional bus service into Palmerston. However, I have said outside this Assembly that I will be prepared to look at the possibility of private enterprise providing that service. Unfortunately, at the moment, I cannot really say to the honourable member that we will put a bus service in. However, a review is being carried out and, once we know the results of that review, the community will be advised.

Bilingual Programs in NT Schools

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Could he inform the Assembly of the present situation in respect to the evaluation of bilingual programs currently operating in Northern Territory schools? Further, does he believe that the bilingual education project is of value in the development of skills in literacy and numeracy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer to the last part of the question is a very strong affirmative. By coincidence, I have a statement which is fairly short and I wonder, with your leave, if I could deliver that in answer to the question. It is a fairly complex matter and one that I would rather not attempt to respond on off the cuff. Since in excess of \$1m a year is spent on the program, the Assembly deserves some information. Perhaps I could frame it in a statement later on this morning.

School Crossings

Mrs LAWRIE to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he yet received a report from the committee he established to examine the safety of school crossings? My insistence in this matter is because I would like it resolved before the beginning of the new school year.

ANSWER

I have received a report from the committee, which was comprised of the Police Commissioner and the Secretary of the Education Department. The Police Commissioner's recommendation was that there should be no distinction between crossings. In other words, motorists should not have to attempt to distinguish whether a particular marked crossing is a normal pedestrian crossing or a school crossing. The intent of his recommendation was that the law should be altered so that all crossings would become normal pedestrian crossings and, if schools wish to monitor these crossings, then it would be open to them to do so. I must say that I cannot find much fault with that sort of logic. If we need crossings outside schools, then why not be done with it and call them normal pedestrian crossings to which the normal laws apply. Schools can monitor them and teachers, parents or senior students can be present with flags to give motorists additional warning.

I have asked the Police Commissioner to prepare a Cabinet submission in consultation with the Education Department for an amendment to the act. I think it would be the Traffic Act. My colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works, will need to be involved because of that. I would expect the Cabinet submission fairly shortly. I do not know what Cabinet's view will be but the force of the Police Commissioner's logic impressed me. I will be arguing for that change. Although the legislation cannot be introduced in the Assembly this year, it should be possible to introduce it in the first session of next year.

Development in Storm Surge Areas

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Following the tabling of the storm surge report, what policy does the

government have towards land development proposals that would increase the number of residential blocks in storm surge areas?

ANSWER

I cannot recall specific details of the storm surge policy in relation to further development in storm surge areas. From recollection, it is not that development will definitely not occur in storm surge areas, although the policy is generally directed towards discouraging residential development in those areas.

A statement on the subject is still on the Notice Paper. One must bear in mind that fairly extensive areas of Darwin are within the secondary storm surge zone. To discount this land altogether for productive or even for more intensive use would not be a sensible development in view of the fact that already many people live in the storm surge areas. Many dwellings in fact survived Cyclone Tracy. The Emergency Services system for cyclones in the Territory relies heavily on the fact that people will have to be encouraged and assisted out of those areas in the event of a serious cyclone threat. There is no possibility of shifting them although the DRC, at one stage during its doodling with the replanning of Darwin, proposed to wipe these areas off the map completely until the citizens told it exactly what they thought of the idea. Bearing in mind that there will be an evacuation process for persons living in these areas, we need to consider rationally the prospect of allowing further development in the area.

Darwin Waste Water Treatment Plant

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

An article in yesterday's NT News was critical of the Fannie Bay Waste Water Treatment Plant and its operations. Were any of the allegations made in that paper correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have had the allegations in the newspaper report extracted in a question and answer form so that I can provide information to honourable members. In the last 3 days, the Darwin Waste Water Treatment Plant has become an emotive issue both on talk-back and in the NT News. For the benefit of honourable members, especially the members for Fannie Bay and Ludmilla, I will answer these allegations. I hope that the Assembly will be patient with me while I go through them so that not only will the Assembly know where we stand but also the general community.

In the article that appeared in the NT News of 23 November, the first allegation was that a \$1m furnace had been shut down for 3 years because of an out-of-balance fan. When this furnace was designed, the cost of electricity was quite low and the burning of waste solids was seen as an economically viable method of disposal. With the steep rise in energy costs, this is no longer the case and, after taking advice from the Department of Health, the Department of Transport and Works elected to use the treated waste to fill the area immediately adjacent to the treatment plant. Allegation 2: 'Solids are now dumped into Ludmilla tidal flats polluting water and affecting fishing'. There is no evidence to suggest that this exercise is affecting either people living in the area or the fish. The high lime content of this sludge, resulting from the treatment process, makes it useful as a soil improver and it has been declared fit for such use by the Department of Health. The sludge

is not a problem. Allegation 3: 'Leaking of chlorine gas to the surrounding areas could be a disaster'. The leak of chlorine occurred in the chlorine room. There is a maximum discharge rate of 9 kg per hour. Obviously this would not be a major leak because within half an hour of detection by alarm sensors, the situation would be under control. If the gas storage cylinder were to rupture, it would not matter whether the men were present or not. They, and nearby residents, would have to be evacuated. I have been assured that the cylinders are extensively checked by the suppliers before refilling and that it is entering the realms of fantasy or sabotage for the idea of a disaster to be entertained. I would dismiss this allegation. Allegation 4: 'The chlorine room was not automatic and every valve had to be operated manually'. There are alarm sensors in the chlorine room - 2, in fact; one acting as a back up. As I pointed out, the maximum discharge rate is 9 kg per hour. Therefore, there is no need for concern in the unlikely event of a leak occurring. The equipment is checked regularly and repairs are carried out when required. Allegation 5: 'In the event of the Telecom lines going down and the alarm not working, leaks would continue unchecked'. The Department is at present having a new system put in. It is called a trace line. This is a direct line to Wormald which is electronically monitored every hour by that company. If this failed and the current system, which would act as a back up, did not work, the security company would call out the rostered staff who would be there until the fault was rectified. Allegation 6: 'The alarm system is presently connected to Wormald but not yet activated'. This work was carried out recently and, unfortunately, the person who made the allegation was out on strike and presumably had not made himself aware of that fact. Allegation 7: 'Some of the pipes are paper thin and leaking chlorinated water'. Close inspection of the work has not revealed this to be the case but, should any leaks become apparent, they will of course be attended to immediately. Allegation 8: 'The automatic generator did not switch on when there was a power failure'. Some trouble was experienced with this piece of equipment some time ago but it has been rectified and no difficulties are being experienced currently. Allegation 9: 'Raw sewage was discharged into Ludmilla Creek every time there was a malfunction'. There is, under normal working conditions, a holding capacity of up to 8 hours if there is a malfunction. This means that maintenance crews have plenty of time to carry out repairs. In heavy downpour conditions during the Wet, there could be a time when a by-pass situation is required. At these times, there would be a very diluted flow into the creek and the effects would be minimal and temporary. Allegation 10: 'Danger of tropical disease from outside influences because authorities insist all staff are inoculated against typhoid and cholera'. As far as inoculation against typhoid and cholera is concerned, this is standard procedure with all personnel in any type of sewerage works or sewerage-related works. Allegation 11: 'Plant now removing 8000 kg per day when only designed to remove 2800 kg per day of suspended solids'. The gentleman who made these allegations confused what is known as 'filter cake' with suspended solids. We remove 8000 kg per day on average by filter but that is not suspended solids. This is a cake consisting of solids, oils, grease, hexine extractable material and a considerable amount of water. It is estimated that the amount of suspended solids at present entering the plant is in the region of 1500 kg per day. The plant was designed to treat sewage from a population of 40 000. It is now servicing about 15 000. In other words, it has a capacity $2\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than its current operation.

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable members for their patience in allowing me to answer the allegations. These things seem to develop into emotive issues. The community should know where it stands. I would hope that the answers to the allegations will be conveyed to the public by the NT News.

Group Examining Housing Finance

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to a press release he issued on 16 March this year in which he said that a think-tank group of government and private industry representatives would examine ways of boosting the amount of housing finance available to Territorians. Was that think-tank group in fact formed? If so, what policy initiatives flowed from its deliberations?

ANSWER

The think-tank group was formed and is still doing its work. Quite a range of innovative options has been put together by the group concerned in discussions with building societies and banks. I think we are hamstrung a little by the conservatism that seems to be inherent in financial institutions in this country. We need to examine truly innovative methods of using money. As was indicated in the budget speech, the government is prepared to put some funds towards an innovative scheme, yet to be designed, to extract more private funds for housing in the Northern Territory. The options are continuing to be explored. It is not a project that the government can undertake on its own. We cannot have sole control because we need the complete cooperation of financial institutions concerned. They will need to provide additional loan funds for housing in the Northern Territory and treat applications for housing in a different fashion than in the past otherwise we will not change the status quo at all. The matter has not been put to rest at all; it is still quite active. It is something that simply cannot be resolved easily or quickly. We will have to keep working at it until we find a resolution.

Technology Kit for Singapore Government

Mr VALE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

I understand that, following the recent government private sector business mission to Singapore, arrangements have been made to present a kit of Northern Territory technology to the Singapore government. Can he advise details of this?

ANSWER

As honourable members will be aware, a total of 12 Territory businessmen participated in the recent mission to Singapore and a number of important trade discussions were initiated. One of the mission members was John Parry of Quack Pest Control who has developed a system of injecting chemicals underneath trees to protect them from insect attacks for up to 25 years. Mr Parry had discussions with the Singapore authorities responsible for Singapore's Garden City and beautification schemes and they were most impressed with this technology. I have had communications with the Singapore Minister for National Development, Mr Teh Cheang Wan, the Singapore Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, Mr Key Chin Hin, and the Singapore Trade Development Board on Mr Parry's behalf.

I have also been in touch with Miss Jenny Lim who assisted our trade mission in so many ways. For the information of members I would like to read Miss Lim's communication which was received this morning: 'I am confident that our government and its relevant authorities concerned would certainly be much obliged of the presentation of technology contribution to our garden

environment. Singapore is a garden city and modern technology schemes are both a major aim and concept of our honourable government rewarding performances in the republic. Your attentive gestures towards our republic's surroundings will no doubt enhance deep appreciation of your keen participation in similar paramount objectives. I have liaised with Mr Chan Jin Fo, Deputy Director of our Trade Development Board, who has kindly agreed to coordinate this assignment with the board of authorities concerned who have received already your request. I will be in touch shortly regarding arrangements'.

Members will be aware that Mr Parry developed a unique system for treating trees against insect pests. In the simplest description, the technology involved use of an air-powered hydraulic jack to supply the tree's root system with chemicals which crystallise and keep white ants and insect pests away for between 10 and 25 years. I would like to place on record my appreciation to Mr Parry for deciding to present this technology free of charge to the Singapore government as a goodwill gesture. Mr Parry's decision will contribute towards the already substantial goodwill which exists between the Northern Territory and Singapore.

Government Staff Housing Scheme

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Last week in the adjournment debate, I outlined problems facing permanent public servants who wish to purchase their houses under the government staff housing scheme when the tenancy was placed originally in the spouse's name. Could the honourable minister advise if he has had time to study the problem and whether he has found a solution?

ANSWER

I have not had time to get to the bottom of this matter as yet. I have provided my staff with the information given to me by the honourable member. The Housing Commission, in conjunction with the Public Service Commissioner, is preparing a briefing for me with the options spelled out and reasons for actions taken to date. Hopefully, in the not too distant future, those papers will be with me and some decisions can be made.

Gunn Point Prison Farm

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he assure me that all help will be given to the Gunn Point Prison Farm in relation to the supply of equipment for its planned program for agricultural development this year.

ANSWER

Honourable members will be aware of a report by the Conservation Commission relating to the 3-year program for the Gunn Point recreational area. If anyone reads that report, he will note that a significant role is planned for the inmates of Gunn Point Prison in the development of that project. One would assume that the equipment required for agricultural projects will go largely hand in hand with any equipment required for the 3-year upgrading of the Gunn Point Recreational Reserve. At the risk of attracting the ire of the honourable member for Nightcliff, I might make the observation that, when I was out there I noticed quite a number of graders, bulldozers and slashers. I did not have a look at the toolshed but I did not see any picks and shovels around

the place. One tends to wonder what the meaning of the words 'hard labour' is.

Maco Tours

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Are the operators of Maco Tours in receipt of financial assistance from the Northern Territory Development Corporation?

ANSWER

I am not aware of any assistance to Maco Tours. I understand that it is in considerable financial difficulty at present and discussions are taking place today as to what the company's future may be.

Undergrounding of Electrical Reticulation

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

A development in McMinn Street is being frustrated at the present time through powerpole alignment. What is the government's policy with regard to the undergrounding of electrical reticulation in the older suburban areas and, in particular, McMinn Street?

ANSWER

I would wish that all my frustrations were merely powerpoles. It is not government policy generally to underground all powerlines in Darwin. Following Cyclone Tracy, it was decided to underground powerlines in the Central Business District of Darwin bounded by the Esplanade, Daly Street and McMinn Street, as well as the new residential areas in the northern suburbs. Parts of the northern suburbs and Palmerston have underground electricity reticulation. After the cyclone, Darwin Reconstruction Commission funds were provided for the undergrounding of electricity reticulation in the Central Business District of Darwin and those northern suburbs which were then under construction. All these funds were expended during the 1979-80 financial year. The Northern Territory Electricity Commission has no current plans for undergrounding existing assets in the older suburbs of Darwin but will continue to monitor areas of concentrated commercial development where undergrounding of assets may be expected to be carried out based upon the technical requirements of the particular development.

Cyclone Advice for Residents in Storm Surge Area

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

In his comments when tabling the Storm Surge Report, he indicated that public warning systems on imminent cyclone situations should contain special advice for those people living in storm surge areas. When will this be implemented?

ANSWER

Responsibility for the Northern Territory Emergency Services belongs to the Chief Minister. I am not completely familiar with the emergency procedures around Darwin other than as I outlined them to the honourable member in answer to his earlier question. I am sure that, if he cares to place the question on notice, more specific details can be provided to him.

Proposed Recreation Site at Welatje Therre

Mr BELL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

I refer him to the fact that officers of his department were pegging a road route to the proposed recreation lake site north of the old Telegraph Station in Alice Springs. Does this action indicate the government's intention to proceed with the construction of the proposed recreation lake?

ANSWER

The way the honourable gentleman keeps referring to things as facts when they are not never fails to amaze me. To the best of my knowledge, the Department of Community Development is rather short on surveyors and engineers and does not survey roads. The question itself is based on a false premiss. If the honourable member wants an answer on the attitude or intentions of the Northern Territory government - again, this is outside of my area - I am happy to answer it. On the question of whether we intend to proceed with the construction of the lake at the site referred to by the honourable gentleman, our answer is a very emphatic yes.

Pedestrian Crossings in Central Australia

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the present safety standards set on the construction of pedestrian crossings, will he give an undertaking to review these standards to allow for provision of pedestrian crossings in Larapinta Drive in central Australia and for the senior citizens in Head Street?

ANSWER

The 2 streets the honourable member mentions come under the province of the Alice Springs Town Council. However, standards are under constant review. Perhaps the question of standards could be raised in the submission to Cabinet which the Chief Minister mentioned earlier.

Accommodation for Isolated Students Attending Urban Schools

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is it the government's intention to continue to provide urban accommodation such as is provided at Katherine House for students from isolated areas attending urban schools in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as demonstrated by the fact that we established Katherine House, quite clearly the government is most anxious that this type of arrangement continue. Where resources, facilities and people to carry out the task exist, and the need exists, we intend to expand that program. I am not saying that we will duplicate the colleges of the university; that would be beyond our resources. Honourable members would be aware of the report of the Education Advisory Council on need. Clearly, I accept its observations. There is a need; there is no question about that.

I might take the opportunity to inform you, in particular, Sir, of difficulties we have at Katherine House. The family which has been running it

wishes to terminate its contract at the end of this school year. The prospects of finding people of that calibre are extremely remote. We have been attempting for some time to attract applications from people who are capable of handling a place like that. I propose, therefore, in the absence of success in attracting replacements for the existing house parents, to approach church institutions and the like to see if we can obtain interest from them to take over the management of Katherine House. Obviously, it would involve a substantial government subsidy to make the thing worth while and viable. We would not expect them to take it on at a loss. Nonetheless, we are facing difficulties in ensuring the opening of Katherine House by the beginning of next school year. Every effort will be made to ensure that Katherine House does open but, between now and then, I am afraid we are going to have to talk to a number of church groups to see if indeed they can take on the management.

The government's commitment to St Phillips College in South Australia will continue. I think that Alice Springs and Katherine would be the logical areas for any extension of the program rather than, say, Tennant Creek or Darwin, particularly Darwin. That excludes of course the need for a different type of student accommodation; for example, accommodating students to attend the Darwin Community College. These matters are not only expensive in capital; they are extremely expensive in recurrent terms. Nonetheless, within the resources available to us, it is the government's intention not only to maintain the programs of student accommodation but to increase them if we can.

Todd River Bridge-Undoolya Road Connector

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Are negotiations between the Department of Lands and the Sacred Sites Authority continuing regarding sacred sites in the path of the Todd River Bridge-Undoolya Road connector and, if so, what stage have negotiations reached?

ANSWER

Negotiations in Alice Springs with Aboriginal organisations, and even individual Aboriginals, have never really stopped. As I indicated before, the problems of settling a route for the road off the Todd River Bridge into Sadadeen and eventually towards the Undoolya area have been going on for a couple of years now. Capital works programs have been put off a number of times as a result of this inability to settle on a site. The last indication I had from officers of the Department in Alice Springs was that they were very close to a solution. I have not received any details but, hopefully, a solution has been found. Quite clearly, we cannot go on as we have in the past because that side of Alice Springs, the eastern side, has been growing all this time. There are major residential settlements. The traffic flow from east to west in Alice Springs is increasing all the time. The bridge was built as the major connector from east to west in Alice Springs but, at the moment, we have the absurdity that it virtually stops when it gets to the other side of the river and meanders through side streets. Hopefully, within the near future we can get on with the construction of the rest of the road.

TIO Investments

Ms D'ROZARIO to TREASURER

When does he propose to report to the Assembly on the number and type of investments undertaken by or on behalf of the Territory Insurance Office as he

committed himself to do on 12 October this year?

ANSWER

I do not think I undertook to do anything other than indicate by classification the types of investment of the TIO. The TIO is run as nearly as possible as an ordinary insurance company and it would be quite inappropriate for it to provide any more information in relation to its investment and loan portfolios than any other insurance company provides. Quite clearly, it is in a competitive market and needs to be seen as another insurance company that does its work well but keeps confidential those matters which should be kept confidential. This morning, I will be tabling the report of the Territory Insurance Office. I think there is some information in there that may satisfy the honourable member as to the nature of the investments of the TIO.

Encephalitis Case in Nhulunbuy

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH

Is he aware of a recently reported case of encephalitis in Nhulunbuy and will he recommend the reintroduction of direct financial assistance for effective control?

ANSWER

I do not have any information on this at the moment. I am more than happy to obtain the information for the honourable member. I will write to him after the sittings.

Land Grant in Humpty Doo

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS

Can he assure me that an application for a grant of land adjoining the Humpty Doo School and Humpty Doo High School for use as a school farm, camping area or agricultural use will be given prompt and favourable consideration?

ANSWER

The information I have is that two 15 ha sites, which sounds like a lot of land to me, have already been identified near the school. The Department of Lands is waiting further information from the Department of Education as to the suitability of the sites for the activities proposed by the school.

Child Welfare Legislation

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Child welfare legislation has been in preparation for several years by his department. When I last asked a question on it, he indicated that he hoped it would be ready this year. Can he now indicate when that legislation will be ready for introduction into the Assembly?

ANSWER

I understand the honourable member's concern about this. The matter went to Cabinet and was extensively considered. It was in a bill form at that

stage. Cabinet was of the view that a number of operational changes needed to be made to it. This affected the entire legislation and it is now back with the draftsman for implementation of the wishes of Cabinet in that regard. It is clearly impossible to introduce it at this sittings but there should not be any difficulty in introducing it in the March sittings.

Occupational Therapist for Central Australia

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can he advise if any steps are being undertaken by his department to obtain the services of an occupational therapist for central Australia?

ANSWER

I am happy to advise that the recruitment process is well under way and an appointment to that position will be made in the very near future.

Welatje Therre Recreational Lake

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to the answer given by the Minister for Community Development earlier in question time in which he gave an emphatic affirmation of the government's intention to proceed with the proposed recreational lake at Welatje Therre. Is he aware of the determined opposition to the development of this lake on the part of an erstwhile Country Liberal Party candidate employed on his personal staff?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think that I gather the drift of that almost indecipherable question. The Minister for Community Development outlined the government's position which has been well known to the honourable member opposite as well as to the general public, particularly in central Australia, for some time. The government has been negotiating with people who claim to have an interest in this area. I am not aware of the opposition to which the member for MacDonnell refers but no doubt negotiations will continue. An evaluation of alternative sites was carried out by myself as well as by the group which decided on the Telegraph Station site. I inspected alternative sites both by land and air. It is quite apparent that there is no other similar suitable site available in central Australia within reasonable reach of Alice Springs. Therefore, the government has no alternative but to pursue negotiations on the site in question if it wishes to proceed with a recreational lake for Alice Springs.

In relation to the area concerned, the government has made various offers to the people who claim to be interested and, at this stage, those offers have been spurned. The government certainly remains open to discussions and negotiations on the matter.

Welatje Therre Recreational Lake

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Would he inform the Assembly of the alternative proposals that have been spurned and which he referred to in answering the previous question?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot recall the precise details of the negotiations because they took place last year. I recall that, at one particular site, various people saw a stand of gum trees as an impediment to the construction of a dam and lake in the area because the trees would be submerged. An offer was made to construct as near as possible to that site. A tableau was set up in a building specially designed in tasteful fashion for the purpose to recreate as nearly as possible the layout with the trees. As far as I am aware, that offer was not acceptable. A sacred site, which is the principal bone of contention, is a rock in the bed of the Charles River or the Todd River. That rock would not come to any harm as a result of a dam being built. It would simply be submerged which happens already when the river runs. However, the people who claim to have an interest in the area apparently do not want it to be submerged permanently.

Batchelor College

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Could he advise the Assembly of the status of fourth year accreditation for the Batchelor College?

ANSWER

I am not in a position to give the information that the honourable member seeks. Perhaps the best thing I can do is to arrange for a briefing for the honourable member. I will personally attend that briefing to fill him in on the exact position.

Sobering-up Centres

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH

Can he give details in regard to costs, administration etc of the sobering-up centres proposed to be built by the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the honourable member for giving me a few minutes notice of this question. At this stage, we have not identified any firm capital costs since we have committed ourselves to developing these facilities in conjunction with established regional drug and alcohol groups, local government, community organisations and interested religious groups where it is possible to do so within our existing resources. However, I would be more than happy to take a submission to Cabinet for additional funds for these projects. To this end, proposals are being sought from various communities so that services and facilities may be developed according to needs they have established and identified. Until these proposals are firm and have been considered, no definite estimated costs will be available. It is not clear what method of administration will apply nor the degree of involvement of government departments.

I can assure the honourable member that the government hopes to see these facilities developed and run by community groups with support and assistance being provided, where necessary, by relevant government departments. It would be absolutely tragic if the Department of Health set out a method for handling this problem, designed only for one community in the Northern Territory, and

tried to make that apply to all the communities. Our communities differ distinctively and answers to the problems will be different in each place.

Degree Courses at Darwin Community College

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Following the accreditation of a Bachelor of Arts course at the Darwin Community College, are there any plans under way for further degree courses to be accredited at that college?

ANSWER

At the moment, no. That is not because we do not want them but because we believe the time is not right. There is little point our putting forward a proposition to the Tertiary Education Commission for a further degree course knowing full well that it has absolutely no chance of success. I have indicated previously that the next degree course we need to offer locally is a Bachelor of Science, because it is the other part of the type of degree course necessary to establish a nucleus of secondary teacher education in the Northern Territory. We are quite convinced that we would have no prospect of getting the agreement of the TEC or the Commonwealth government for the establishment of such a degree course at this time. It is obviously important that a BSc be offered as soon as possible. Negotiations are now continuing in line with the Commonwealth government's decision to establish a school of external studies to tap into the resources of a university elsewhere so that tutorial assistance may be provided for students who wish to do a BSc through the Darwin Community College. That would seem the only course of action available to us and, accordingly, it is the course we are pursuing.

Lake Nash Meeting

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

An allegation was made this morning on the ABC's After Eight program that the Northern Territory government attempted to prevent the attendance of an ABC journalist at a meeting at Lake Nash today despite the fact that the journalist was invited to attend the meeting by the community. Is that allegation correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that the Office of Aboriginal Liaison indicated to the various other parties concerned in a meeting at Lake Nash that the Office of Aboriginal Liaison and the Department of Community Development representatives would not be interested in attending that meeting if media representatives were to be present. The view taken by responsible government officials was that they were there to attempt to reach a reasonable solution of the problems relating to the people at Lake Nash and not to provide some sort of Roman holiday and spectacle for the media. I fully support the actions of the officials concerned.

Mereenie Appraisal Drilling Program

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he advise the current status of the Mereenie appraisal drilling program?

ANSWER

For the benefit of the honourable member, who has always shown a keen interest in the development of this field, since the award of the lease in November, 6 wells have been drilled by Oilmin as operators for the Mereenie joint venture. More work still remains to assess the best methods of completing the wells so as to maximise economic recovery from the field. The good news is that reserves will almost certainly be more extensive than previously thought due to the discovery of what appears to be a new oil pool on the south-east nose of the Mereenie anticline. Flows of up to 548 barrels a day have been obtained from this sector of the Mereenie anticline.

Nitrate Levels in Watercourse at Bathurst Downs

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for HEALTH

My question relates to the question I just asked the honourable Chief Minister. Is it a fact that the watercourse found at Bathurst Downs, which is the site where attempts are being made to move Aboriginal people to, contains nitrates which exceed the levels acceptable to the World Health Organisation?

ANSWER

I am sorry to disappoint the honourable member but I do not carry around in my head details of the acceptable level of nitrates in water that should or should not be consumed by humans. I am happy to tell the honourable member that I would be prepared to investigate the matter as far as it involves my department. I point out to him that the investigations and negotiations taking place at Lake Nash are primarily the concern of the Department of Community

Development, the Department of Transport and Works and the Department of the Chief Minister's Office of Aboriginal Liaison, and that the Department of Health is acting in a consulting capacity where required. If it is necessary for us to advise the responsible departments on a matter of this nature, I should imagine that the public servants involved in the exercise would be quite capable of ascertaining that information themselves.

Maintenance of Parks and Gardens adjoining Block 8

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I understand that the Department of Transport and Works has responsibility for the maintenance of parks and gardens immediately bordering Block 8 and other government buildings nearby. Do the same conditions apply to the garden area beside the police headquarters and, if so, when will the Department of Transport and Works do something about bringing this garden up to the standard of others adjoining government offices in the area?

ANSWER

There is some confusion as to who owns those 2 particular blocks - blocks 4794 and 4328. The Department of Transport and Works has contract for a period to maintain the block adjacent to the Chan Building in Mitchell Street. The other lot the honourable member mentioned is being maintained by the Police Force itself. I believe that a long-term solution will have to be found in regard to the ownership of those particular lots. If it is felt necessary, we could transfer those areas to the council. However, I ask the honourable member to take the problem up with the Minister for Lands and Housing who has that responsibility.

Katherine Community Health Centre

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for HEALTH

Does the Department of Health intend to divest itself of the Katherine Community Health Centre building by the end of 1982 as was recommended in the Kirton and Whiting Report on Community Health Services?

ANSWER

I have no knowledge of that recommendation in the Kirton and Whiting Report being adopted by the department. As I mentioned during the last sittings, the report was the basis for discussion and was circulated widely throughout the community. We are expecting a response from people in the Health Department in Katherine and, in fact, from other citizens of Katherine. If it is felt that the proposal by Kirton and Whiting, to shut the health centre in Katherine and transfer its activities to other areas, would be deleterious to the people of Katherine, it just would not proceed. I am not sitting in judgment in this particular matter. The proposals put forward in the report related to really very important issues and should be discussed widely through the community. When that discussion has taken place, we will be able to more seriously address ourselves to what happens to infrastructures such as the health centre at Katherine.

Port Charges

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Have new port charges been decided upon and, if so, when will they come

into effect?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Cabinet is evaluating a proposal by the Port Authority for the various charges. Until such time as Cabinet completes its deliberations, I am unable to provide the information that the honourable member seeks.

Government Meeting with Aboriginal Organisations

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Does the government intend to hold a meeting with representatives of Aboriginal organisations in the Territory as a follow up to last year's Darwin meeting and, if so, when and where?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the particular meeting to which the member refers. The Northern Territory government is continually holding meetings with various Aboriginal organisations and persons. We hold an annual meeting with Aboriginal community councils. Perhaps that is the one that he is referring to. Also, every couple of months, we hold consultative meetings with land councils and we meet with the National Aboriginal Conference representatives from the Northern Territory from time to time. If the honourable member is, in fact, referring to the usual annual conference with Aboriginal community council representatives, as far as I am aware, it will be held again next year because that is what it is - an annual conference. Where it is held is pretty much in the hands of the people who attend it and the officials who organise it. Usually, they try to hold it at Kormilda College because there is residential accommodation there. Therefore, they are limited to school holidays. They might hold it during the first or second semester break. I seem to recall attending one at least 6 months ago so it must be in the first part of the year.

Stuart Highway

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise when the remaining narrow sections of the Stuart Highway will be widened and upgraded to national highway standards?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Department of Transport and Works, with assistance from the Commonwealth government, is constantly upgrading the Stuart Highway. In fact, there is only about 500 km to go to complete the widening of that section. It is hoped that, by 1988, some 350 km will have been widened, leaving about 150 km to go. Earlier this year we opened the section between Katherine and Darwin and that has reduced the travelling time by at least 1 hour. I understand that further sections between Katherine and Tennant Creek will be widened this year and other sections between Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The government's program is to upgrade not only the Stuart Highway but also the Barkly and Victoria Highways. By 1988, hopefully, most of the Stuart Highway will have been widened with the exception of about 150 km.

Negotiations on Ro-Ro

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

On Tuesday, he indicated that, within 24 hours, he would have more definite information on the Ro-Ro dispute in Singapore. What is the current situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to advise the Assembly on the latest position regarding negotiations with the consortium and the builder. I understand that a meeting is being held in Singapore at 11.30 Darwin time. Hopefully, during the adjournment debate this afternoon, I will be able to advise on the latest position.

Government Meeting with Aboriginal Organisations

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

In my previous question, I was not referring to meetings the government holds with councils in Aboriginal communities of which I am aware. I was referring to a meeting which I understood took place last year with Aboriginal organisations, based in Alice Springs and other urban centres, such as the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress and the Institute for Aboriginal Development.

ANSWER

I do not know whether another such meeting is proposed. I will have to seek advice from my officers.

Stockfeed Mill

Mr VALE to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he advise if Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Group have prepared a report on the need for, size and location of a Territory stockfeed mill and, if so, when will the report be released and what recommendations did it contain?

ANSWER

The stockfeed mill study commissioned from the Australian Agricultural Consulting and Management Group by the NT government through the NTDC in conjunction with ADMA has been received and is under consideration by government. The report is positive in that it recommends that a market exists in the Northern Territory to establish a stockfeed mill of around 20 000 t annual capacity provided there is a modest growth in the intensive livestock industries. The government is in the process of distributing copies of this report to various organisations and potential investors who have previously expressed interest in this area. Following recent trade missions to South-east Asia, discussions were held with a Singapore company which was extremely interested in the venture and indications are that a second Singapore-based company could well be interested. A contract to construct a feedmill could be negotiated between now and early 1984 and all the indicators are positive for such a conclusion.

High School for Sanderson

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to his advice to me in August that it was not expected that a high school would be required in Sanderson within the next 10 years. In view of the large number of primary school enrolments, can he inform me whether this decision has been subject to review?

ANSWER

Following mention of this matter by the member for Sanderson and by the Chief Minister, who is particularly concerned to ensure that adequate high school facilities are made available in the northern suburbs, I asked for a complete review of projected enrolments in secondary schools in the Darwin area. On present projections there may be accommodation difficulties for the year 1985. It is anticipated that at a school such as Dripstone, it may be necessary to provide demountable accommodation for one or perhaps two years at the most. From projections available to me it appears that when Palmerston High School is commissioned, the resultant relief on high school accommodation throughout the Darwin area generally will result in spare capacity.

Sufficient capacity is indicated by the figures given to me as a result of detailed analysis by demographers in the Department of Lands and the Department of Education. Capacity is sufficient to cope without the expenditure of some \$6m or \$7m with the exception perhaps of a little bit of difficulty in 1985. I am quite sure that honourable members would not wish us to spend that sort of money if it was not entirely necessary. Capacity within the present school system will be further enhanced with the commissioning, probably in 1986, of the high school at Palmerston. Nonetheless, the government will be keeping a very close eye on the situation.

Driving Licences for 16-year-olds

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I have pursued this matter through correspondence and questions previously. What is the current position with regard to 16-year-olds in country areas who have the necessary skills to warrant the issue of a licence but who are without access to high school driving schools and thus unable to obtain a driver's licence?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am unable to provide the honourable member with any further information other than to say that the Motor Vehicle Registry is examining that particular question. However, some further advice was given to me regarding people living in the Darwin area. There could be some 16-year-old apprentices in the motor mechanic trade for whom special provisions could be made provided they were able to get their licences through the student education driving section. I will take the matter on board and endeavour to give the honourable member update information regarding her proposal.

Lake Nash Site

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the government planning to spend approximately \$1.5m to duplicate

facilities at Bathurst Downs that are currently available at Lake Nash despite the fact that the community has consistently advised members of various government departments, the Minister for Community Development and the station management, that it does not wish to move from the site it has occupied for over 50 years?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that the provision of facilities for Aboriginal people in the Lake Nash area will cost in the order of \$1.5m as indicated by the honourable Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, since the expenditure of a sum of that magnitude is no light undertaking, consultations and adequate planning should take place before authorisation of the project goes forward. I am of the understanding that officials of my department and the Department of Community Development were in fact requested, with other parties, to attempt to negotiate a living area on this station for the Aboriginal people at Lake Nash. At that time, I understand, the Aboriginal people were interested in the area known as Bathurst Downs. It has been stated recently that the Aboriginal people have changed their minds and wish to remain at Lake Nash. I understand that one of the purposes of the meeting to which the honourable Leader of the Opposition referred earlier is to try to resolve the position and find out what in fact are the true wishes of the Aboriginal people themselves rather than hear them from self-appointed spokesmen on their behalf. It is my earnest wish that the matter be resolved. It is a matter of complete indifference to the government where the people decide they want to live. We just want to know that they are satisfied with it, that there is water there and that they are going to stay there before we spend \$1.5m. I think we must do that to satisfy the taxpayers' interests.

Auctioning Darwin Primary School Land

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

It has come to my notice that the government is giving consideration to the auctioning of blocks of land which form part of the Darwin Primary School. Is he able to inform me if my information is correct?

ANSWER

I am having this matter looked into to establish exactly whether it was proposed to sell land which, as I understood it, was in fact part of the Darwin Primary School. Apparently there are a series of separate leases on the block that it occupies. I think they have been in existence for many years but have never been alienated. I am having a brief put together on the subject so that I can review the situation and any proposal to sell the blocks.

Registrar-General's Office

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

An advertisement recently appeared in the Australian Financial Review relating to the advantages of conducting a business by means of a company incorporated in the Northern Territory. This resulted in a very critical article in the Bulletin which alleged that some advantages accrued because of the unsophistication of the Northern Territory Registrar-General's Office. Does the Chief Minister consider that that statement is justified and, if he does, has he taken any action to enhance the capacity and efficiency of that office?

ANSWER

I do not consider that the statement is justified. I may as well talk now about the National Companies and Securities Scheme because, apparently, that is what the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is referring to. The position is that Northern Territory corporations are still registered, and operate, under the Companies Act as amended from time to time. Recently, laws were enacted on national corporations and securities and a uniform code now exists between the states. Quite frankly, the sophistication of that code is well beyond the capacity of the Northern Territory, in its relatively unsophisticated, developmental stage of commerce, to undertake and absorb. The position is that the provisions of the Companies Act, if properly enforced, are quite satisfactory in respect of transactions likely to occur in the Northern Territory. When one knows that the NCSC is in fact stifling commerce in the south, fouling up almost every takeover bid, causing detriment to shareholders, creating a gold mine for QCs, one shudders at the thought of NCSC provisions coming into operation in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I believe that we must have the most simple and easily enforceable laws we possibly can. Judges have said that they cannot understand legislation under which the NCSC is established. They have said: 'Do not come before me again with that sort of legislation'. Apparently, the Leader of the Opposition is advocating that we should become a party to this scheme. The Northern Territory Companies Act is sufficient unto the day. Should there be any need to revise it at any time, this will be undertaken. Staffing of the Territory Companies Office is reasonably sufficient and I might say that the service offered by the Companies Office and the courts in the Territory is second to none. In Sydney, you have to do your own searches these days. In Brisbane, you have to wait months for searches because they have gone onto microfiche and they cannot work it out. In the Territory, you have your searches done the same day and documents are on the file in a matter of a few days. Titles are registered promptly. Court delays in the Territory are minimal. In that regard, the citizens of the Northern Territory live in a good place. It could well be that any sensible entrepreneur would see these things and say, 'If you want to do business in a less complicated, speedy, efficacious way, then register your company in the Northern Territory because that is where the best possible service is from any government anywhere in Australia'.

Apprentices for Department of Transport and Works

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Following reviews which have been undertaken in government circles over the past few weeks, can he indicate whether there is to be an increase in the intake of apprentices for 1983 within his department and, if so, by how many?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the moment, I am unable to give exact details of our intake. In the debate last week regarding the employment situation for school leavers, I indicated that the Department of Transport and Works had already started to make progress in trying to encourage more apprenticeship, not only within the department but also with consultants. We are also trying to organise more apprenticeships with nominated subcontractors for the department. In the next couple of weeks, the department will have completed its review and will be in a position to make some recommendations to me for further

consideration. We are certainly very anxious to try to increase the intake of apprentices in the Department of Transport and Works for next year.

Todd River Bed

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Will he undertake to investigate and, if necessary, rectify in the interests of flood mitigation the filling of the Todd Rover bed by dust, sand and dirt held in place by the introduced couch grass?

ANSWER

I will ask my department to provide me with some information regarding this.

Elsely Homestead Film Set

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

My question concerns a saga that is becoming almost as compelling as the film. Has the government now decided to call new tenders for the relocation and re-establishment of the Elsey Homestead film set and, if so, why?

ANSWER

The Chief Minister has been handling this in his capacity as minister responsible for conservation.

Tanami Highway

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise when the next stage of upgrading the Tanami Highway will commence and details of the work?

ANSWER

Hopefully, work will commence in June 1983 on 20 km of the highway and will cost something like \$2m. I believe a further stage to seal the Papunya turn-off is proposed early in the 1983-84 financial year.

Elsely Homestead Film Set

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I redirect my question on the Elsey Homestead film set to the honourable Chief Minister.

ANSWER

Over the last several weeks, some controversy has been generated by Mr Jack Taylor, formerly of Bloodwood Caravan Park, who is now a resident of Green Park Caravan Park at Larrimah. Mr Taylor claims that it is the best caravan park in the Northern Territory. He keeps crocodiles there, perhaps to handle unwary travellers. Mr Taylor is apparently very miffed that the homestead film set is not to be given to him to erect at his caravan park and he and I had a rather heated altercation on talk-back radio a few weeks ago. He shed many crocodile tears in the course of that altercation. This

altercation, and the controversy that has been generated by Mr Jack Taylor, has trampled on the feelings of a Mrs Sylvia Wolf of Mataranka who was to have provided the land on which the Conservation Commission was to have re-erected the film set in a more permanent fashion so that it would not blow away in the wind. The Conservation Commission was to have spent something like \$80 000. It intended to erect a fence around it and Mrs Wolf was going to collect \$1 admission fee from all applicants which she was to put in a bank account with which the Conservation Commission would administer and pay for repairs.

I should make it clear that not one cent of that \$1 was to go to Mrs Wolf. She was making the land available until a recreational park of some sort is gazetted in that area and the Conservation Commission can place the set there permanently. Unfortunately, Mrs Wolf decided that she had had enough because of Mr Jack Taylor's allegations on radio, TV and everywhere else he could get his name in lights. She wrote me a very short and terse letter the other morning. She is known for her mercurial temperament. I like and admire the lady highly. She has guts and she is prepared to give things a go. Jack Taylor is the same. It is a bit of a blue between 2 pretty strong-willed people. She said: 'Well, you know what you can do with your film set'. Mr Speaker, there we were. I am jolly sick of this film set at this stage. To be honest, I almost wish the film company had burnt it.

In any event, I requested the Department of Community Development - for some reason it carries out the calling of tenders - to hurry up and advertise the thing again. I received a telex yesterday to the effect that Lambert and Sarny, the operators of the Mataranka Homestead, are now interested in tendering to put it up at their own expense, maintain it and keep it open to the public in the precincts of the Mataranka Homestead. That sounds jolly good to me. If they are the only applicants, I will be happy to authorise it.

Removal of Buildings at Dhupuma

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Does the Department of Education intend to complete the removal of the buildings remaining at Dhupuma which, at the least, are an environmental blight?

Mr B. Collins: They are a frightful mess.

ANSWER

In answer to the member's question and also to the interjection of the honourable Leader of the Opposition in which he described them as a frightful mess, I have had a number of complaints, Mr Speaker, variously describing them as a frightful mess in language which you would have me thrown out for using. I understand they are in very poor shape. What can be done about it is rather a difficult question to answer. It is my belief that the property has been vested now in Mr Roy Marika. It was part of an arrangement between the Northern Territory government and Mr Marika. It is not government property. It is not on government land. Under the federal Land Rights Act, it would have belonged to the trust but there is an arrangement, as I understand it, whereby Mr Marika is in fact the proprietor of the whole. So, it is out of the government's hands altogether.

I understand that Mr Marika put the proposition to the government that he wanted it for family purposes. I hope I am right. If not, I would be the first to apologise to Mr Marika for the error. That is my understanding of it.

In any event, it is no longer the property of the government.

I do not know what can be done. The matter was first brought to my attention about a week ago and I will certainly look into it, not so much in my capacity as Minister for Education but because I dare say the Department of Community Development would have to have some input. I will instruct officers to look into the matter and report back as soon as possible.

Services to Humpty Doo

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

As the sum of \$2 231 240 is to be expended at the Humpty Doo Village site for the provision of services of water, sewerage and electricity, when will the government consider extending these services to people who are already living in the area nearby?

ANSWER

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

Marlow's Lagoon at Palmerston

Mr HARRIS to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

It has been suggested that Marlow's Lagoon, which is the lagoon situated at the town of Palmerston, should be filled in. Is he aware of such a suggestion and, if so, can he give me some assurance that this will not take place?

ANSWER

I would hope that the honourable member does not think that I authorised the filling in of the lagoon. This rumour came to my attention a while back and I understand that it stemmed from the discovery of a large stockpile of earth in the vicinity of the lagoon. The Chairman of the Palmerston Development Authority assures me that the earth has been there for some time and has not been placed there with a view to filling in the lagoon. Indeed, the Palmerston Development Authority would not even contemplate such a move. The lagoon will form part of an area which will include a golf course. It will be one of the nicest recreational areas in Palmerston. I can assure the honourable member that there is no intention whatsoever on the part of government or its authorities to in any way interfere with the natural state of Marlow's Lagoon.

East Arm Leprosarium

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is the intended future use of the now disused East Arm leprosarium, both site and buildings?

ANSWER

The Department of Transport and Works has a caretaker role in relation to the East Arm leprosarium. In fact, any decision on it would have to be made by the Minister for Lands and Housing.

East Arm Leprosarium

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I redirect my question to the Minister for Lands and Housing.

ANSWER

It seems that I have responsibility. I cannot think who else I can pass it on to. There has been no final decision on the future use of the facilities. There are, however, a number of possibilities which I will not canvass because I cannot recall them all. I know some interest has been expressed by various people. It is tied in with the future of the East Arm area. Recently, a land offer was made to a company which proposes, initially, to put in a clinker-grinding plant and, eventually, a full cement factory. That should be a catalyst for further interest in the East Arm area to be expressed by persons proposing industry that needs to be near port facilities which, I think, in the very long term, will be at East Darwin. No specific decision has been made on the future of those buildings and the area. However, they are unlikely to remain unoccupied for very long.

Smith Street in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise what approaches have been made to him for assistance to reconstruct and widen Smith Street in Alice Springs and what action, if any, he will take?

ANSWER

I received representations from the honourable member for Stuart and the Mayor of Alice Springs, Mr Smith. I understand that the Department of Transport and Works has had discussions with the council and there is a proposal to widen Smith Street at a cost of some \$400 000. The Department of Community Development has responsibility for providing those funds. When a decision has been made to widen Smith Street, no doubt I will receive instructions from the department to proceed.

East Point Reserve

Mrs O'NEIL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has agreement been reached with the Darwin City Council as to the future management of the East Point Reserve area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the answer is no. I am still awaiting a formal response from the city council to an offer made to it to take over the East Point Reserve plus adjacent areas, including most of the former golf course. We propose to vest control in the council provided we can reach agreement on matters of principle, such as funding. I understand from the Lord Mayor that he is having some work done by council officers on costs etc and will be putting a proposition back to government in the near future.

Motor Vehicle Registration

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What stage has been reached in the adoption of national standards for the registration of motor vehicles and motor cycles?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my recollection is that a constant review is being carried out by the Motor Vehicle Registry. I will write to the honourable member advising him of the latest position.

Rural Old Timers' Association

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH

What is the current position regarding a block of land in the rural area for the Rural Old Timers' Association?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members would be aware from the statement I delivered in the Assembly some months ago that the government is seeking to identify an area of land in the rural area for the establishment of a senior citizens facility. As a result of discussions with the people concerned in the rural area, recently my department organised a bus tour of all the possible sites available for consideration. The conclusion of the group which made the tour was that the site picked out by officers from the Departments of Lands and Health was the best available. It is on the south side of Fred's Pass Reserve. I am happy to say that the Minister for Lands has agreed that about 7 ha of that 200 ha area will be set aside and held for the purpose of developing a senior citizens facility in the rural area. I hope that very early in the New Year plans will be made for the ultimate development of this area. I would be very keen to see funding made available in next year's budget at least for the development of the community centre hall. From there, the project will proceed at a fairly rapid rate.

Alice Springs Golf Course

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to this morning's news report of the successful completion of negotiations for a \$90m development on the Alice Springs golf course. Has his department been involved in those negotiations and, if so, to what extent?

ANSWER

Obviously, the government has a role in this proposed development by the Alice Springs Golf Club, the holders of a special purposes lease. Since adjacent roads and Crown land are the responsibility of the government, the department in Alice Springs was involved during the last year or so of negotiations.

Answer to Question

Mr PERRON (by leave): The honourable member for Sanderson asked me if the government would grant a lease of land to the YWCA in the northern suburbs.

I advise that a lease in perpetuity to the YMCA was approved on 17 September 1982. Issue of the title is dependent upon rezoning which is currently being processed. The title is expected to be issued in about February or March 1983. The design documentation and tendering for the youth facility is being handled by the Northern Territory Housing Commission as agent for the YWCA.

The member for Sanderson also asked a question in relation to the provision of open space in private development subdivisions in the northern suburbs. I advise that the documentation included a requirement that open space be provided at the developer's expense and handed back to government. I am advised that, in relation to open space areas in both Leanyer and Karama, the developer has to service these blocks only to the extent of providing water to them. They will then vest in the government as vacant Crown land at nil cost to the government. The government has in fact commenced landscaping of the areas concerned in Leanyer and Karama.

Environmental Impact of Proposed Channel Island Power-station

Mrs LAWRIE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

Has he received advice on any likely rise in the temperature of the water adjacent to Channel Island when the coal-fired power-station is operational and, if not, will he undertake to ask for such information?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not have any specific advice. All power-stations which require substantial quantities of water for cooling and distillation purposes usually discharge warm water back into the sea. This matter will be addressed no doubt in the environmental impact statement for Channel Island powerhouse which is being prepared at present and will go on public display later. I could also indicate that such temperature changes in the harbour would not necessarily be to the detriment of the fish. It seems that the environment can adjust to these things. I understand that the warm water outlet at Stokes Hill Powerhouse, for example, is a very popular fishing spot. The variation in temperature seems to attract small fish, and other marine life, which in turn attract bigger fish. Consequently, it is a fairly popular spot to fish. Whilst not saying that there will be no change to the marine environment in the vicinity of such outlets, it will not necessarily be for the worse.

Council Rates in Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Is he aware that in Alice Springs, the receipt of council rate bills followed closely by sewerage and water rate bills is causing financial hardship to some residents? Would he undertake to review, in consultation with the Alice Springs Town Council, the mailing dates of these accounts?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for the question. This matter has been brought to my attention by himself and other parties over the last few weeks. I suppose there is very little the council can do about the timing of its issue of rate notices. I suppose it could take on board the possibility of staggering the period of payment. That council, like any council, is tied to the financial year structure which is part and parcel of the financial management of this country. It is around October/November by the time rate

notices are issued. The same would apply to residents of Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin.

The matter goes beyond just the issue of council rates. It has been brought to my attention that the Department of Transport and Works, in the normal course of issuing accounts, has a cut-off date for payment of water bills of, I think, 20 December. Logically, there would be quarterly payments for telephone and electricity bills etc. I have no doubt at all, Sir, that this does not necessarily mean a happy Christmas at all. Council rates are \$400 to \$700 for the average residence. Electricity bills are in the order of \$130. Add bills for a telephone service etc and it can become quite a problem.

I drafted a letter for the Chief Minister this morning for consideration by Cabinet as to what the government can do to stagger bills of this nature to the community. The government cannot forgo these charges. They do not even cover the cost of providing the services. But I think we could examine the timing of some government accounts. I think that councils could look at the possibility of having 2 payments a year to cover rates instead of one, particularly if rates are charged in the period October through to Christmas. It does not help people who are looking forward to having sufficient funds for Christmas. It does not help to have to make a \$700 or \$800 or even \$1000 payment in the period November to December. To the average family, that is a lot of money.

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the problem. Certainly, the government will examine what methods can be used to lessen the impact of the timing of these imposts. The other matter, of course, is one that can be referred to local councils, and I undertake to do so.

Darwin Women's Centre

Mrs O'NEIL to CHIEF MINISTER

Will he undertake to consult with the Darwin Women's Centre organisation about the future use of the building it occupies in McLachlan Street, Darwin, before a decision is made as to the use of that building?

ANSWER

I do not have to give such an undertaking because consultations have already taken place. I understand meetings have occurred between my women's adviser and members of the collective that occupies the house in McLachlan Street. The honourable member for Nightcliff said a few words about all this in the adjournment debate the other day and I was going to address it in the adjournment debate myself.

The honourable member for Nightcliff said that a collective was ideally the organisation to run a centre such as this and that the Salvation Army was peculiarly unsuited to running it. On the contrary, my investigations would tend to disclose that only one such centre is run by a collective elsewhere and collectives have been progressively replaced. In any event, I will find those further details and say a few words on this subject in the adjournment debate today.

Consultations have taken place and included the Department of Community Development. I understand the sole reason for taking this action is that the place simply has not been run for the purpose for which it was intended.

Really it has just been used as a residence.

Use of Sanderson High School Site

Ms D'ROZARIO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has consideration been given to using the site set aside for Sanderson High School for a technical high school?

ANSWER

Consideration has not been given to that use. However, the subject of a technical high school or a vocational high school similar in philosophy to the Sadadeen High School project has certainly been considered. At this stage, as I indicated in reply to an earlier question, the government is keeping a very close watch on student population trends in the Darwin area. For that reason, I can indicate to honourable members that it is the intention of the government to keep that land for the purpose of a high school should it be so required.

There is something that I did not mention. If we were to reach the population stability that exists in the southern cities, then another high school would be necessary. There are no indicators yet but, as all honourable members and the public would be aware, because of self-government and because of many of the efforts of this government, our population is a lot more stable than it has been in the past. That stability curve is improving all the time. If we attain the same sort of stability - although I hope that we do not because that would mean that we would be stagnating - as places like Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, then it would be quite likely that we would need that site at a later time. So, it will be kept for that purpose at least for the time being.

Alice Springs Lease

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer him to my previous question. Has he decided to extend the original Alice Springs Golf Club lease and, if so, when did he make that decision?

ANSWER

This matter is the subject of a briefing from my department, which I have not yet received. I am only aware of the matter in broad principle and the honourable member may care to place the question on notice.

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