

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.

19 August 1986

4. Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. What action has been taken by the government on Part 1 of the Report of the Inquiry into Freight and Related Costs which was tabled on 1 March 1984?
2. What further action is being considered?
3. What action has been taken or is being considered in respect of Part 2 of the report of that inquiry which was tabled on 30 August 1984?

7. Gregory National Park - Lands Acquisition

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

1. What pieces of land have been acquired for the proposed Gregory National Park?
2. What was the price paid for each piece of land?
3. How was the price for each piece of land determined?

8. Litchfield National Park - Lands Acquisition

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

1. What pieces of land have been acquired for the proposed Litchfield National Park?
2. What was the price paid for each piece of land?
3. How was the price for each piece of land determined?

10. Darwin Institute of Technology - Staffing

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Has the government reached any redundancy agreement with staff currently teaching in the Bachelor of Arts course at the Darwin Institute of Technology or does the government propose to negotiate such redundancy agreements; if so, what are the costs of any such redundancy agreements made to date and projected costs of further agreements expected to be made?

6. Will students pursuing Sociology as a major or minor stream in the Bachelor of Arts degree at DIT be able to pursue Sociology as a major or minor stream at the University College; if not, what arrangements does the government propose to accommodate those students wishing to pursue Sociology at the University College?

14. Court Proceedings - Northern Territory Government

Mr B. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Since self-government, in what proceedings has the Northern Territory government been involved before either the High Court or the Federal Court?

15. Travelling Allowance - Member for Barkly

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

1. What was the total amount of money claimed by and paid to the member for Barkly in travelling allowances for the year 1982-83?
2. In respect of that money, was the member for Barkly directed to pay any amount back to consolidated revenue by the then Chief Minister (the Hon P.A.E. Everingham) or the then Treasurer (the Hon M.B. Perron); if so, what amount was paid into consolidated revenue?
3. Is there documentary evidence as to the amount of money which the member for Barkly was directed to pay back; if so, will the Chief Minister provide a copy of that evidence to the Leader of the Opposition?
4. Has the member for Barkly been required to pay back any amount of travelling allowances claimed in similar circumstances at any stage in subsequent years?

**16. Travelling Allowance Documentation
Member for Barkly**

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Are the following documents for the period 1 January 1980 to date available:

- (a) copies of all travelling allowance forms tendered by the member for Barkly;
- (b) copies of any debt notices raised against the member for Barkly;

9. Did the then Chief Minister take a trip to Singapore earlier in the year; if so, did he fly direct from Darwin or via a southern port?
10. Who was involved in the Northern Territory government delegation and what was the cost of this trip?

18.

**Credit Cards
Legislative Assembly Office-holders
and Public Servants**

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

What were the individual total amounts paid by the Northern Territory government for each American Express Corporate Credit Card held by office-holding members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and senior public servants for the years from 1980-81 to 1984-85 and for the first six months of the year 1985-86?

19.

**Travelling Allowances 1983-84
Former Chief Minister**

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

1. What was the financial breakdown which would fully account for the \$22 315 in travelling allowances paid to the member for Barkly in the year 1983-84?
2. Is there any supporting documentation; if so, will the Chief Minister provide a copy to the Leader of the Opposition?

20.

**Overseas Travelling Allowance
Member for Barkly**

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the \$300 shown to have been paid out to the member for Barkly for travelling allowances for overseas trips in 1983-84 (provided to the Leader of the Opposition in a recent answer to Written Question No. 14 - see Question Paper No. 8, dated 18 March 1986) an accurate representation of the facts?

24. Cost of Rangers at Yulara

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. What is the estimated total cost of stationing the Conservation Commission Rangers at Yulara for a full year?
2. Is this total cost borne by the Northern Territory government?
3. How many Rangers are employed at Yulara?
4. How much does the Northern Territory government pay out in rent on their behalf and to whom is the rent paid?
5. What parks do they service?

**26. Liquor
Revenue, Rehabilitation and Preventative Programs**

Mr EDE to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. What annual income does the Liquor Commission of the Northern Territory generate?
2. How much does the Northern Territory government spend on:
 - (a) rehabilitation programs for alcoholics; and
 - (b) preventative programs in relation to alcohol use?

27. Aboriginal Community Funding

Mr EDE to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. What amounts were provided for Town Management Public Utilities (TMPU) funding of each Aboriginal community for 1984-85?
2. What amounts were specifically allocated for fuel costs for electricity generation on each Aboriginal community for 1984-85?
3. What amounts were provided for TMPU funding to each community for 1985-86?
4. How much have the amounts of the allocations in 3 above been reduced pursuant to the new policy of 'user pays' for essential services?

19 August 1986

1. **Tourist Commission - Financial Statements
1984-85**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Did the Treasurer approve an extension of time, under section 68(1) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission to prepare a submission to the minister on its financial statements for the year 1984-85; if so -

- (a) how many extensions did the Treasurer approve;
- (b) what was the length of time of each extension; and
- (c) what were the reasons for approving each extension?

ANSWER

No.

- (a) None.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Not applicable.

2. **Tourist Commission - Financial Statements
1983-84**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

Did the Treasurer approve an extension of time, under section 68(1) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, for the Northern Territory Tourist Commission to prepare a submission to the minister on its financial statements for the year 1983-84; if so -

- (a) how many extensions did the Treasurer approve;
- (b) what was the length of time of each extension; and
- (c) what were the reasons for approving each extension?

5. Beaufort Hotel - Government Rented Space

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How much space is the government renting in the Beaufort Hotel complex?
2. At what rate, or rates, is this space rented?
3. On what basis are the payments for the rented space arranged?
4. How much money has the government paid so far in:
 - (a) rental; and
 - (b) fitting out expensesfor this space?

ANSWER

1. 2,116.6m² over levels 5, 6, 7 and 8.
2. Rental Rate - \$150m² per annum - i.e. \$317 490 per annum.
Lease Term - Five years plus five years option.
Lessee Outgoing - telephones, cleaning, tenancy power (excluding air-conditioning power), proportionate increases in rates and taxes.
Lessor responsible for all other outgoings.
Rent Reviews - every two years at market value.
3. The draft memorandum of Lease provides for the lease rental to be paid monthly in advance.
4. (i) Under agreement with BRI the government has paid \$1 600 000 being five years' rental in advance. This amount will be fixed for the term of the first lease, and represents a considerable saving to government.
(ii) No funds have been expended yet. The costs will be incurred in a contract for \$173 610 with Wasco Installations for supply and installation of fixed and moveable partitions and approximately \$70 000 for electrical, telephone and data services to the office space and minor adjustments to lighting, air-conditioning and fire detection systems.

8. The applicant offering the second highest nett present value was selected.

The highest nett present value is not the sole selection criteria. One party of a Joint Venture, which offered a higher nett present value purchase price, has established a record of poor performance and tardy payment of accounts and wages. This record raised doubts as to the Joint Venture's ability to meet the government's targets, and its suitability as a major participant in the development of Katherine during a period of intense activity.

9. Palmerston Corporation

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. Has the Companies Office been involved in any investigation of the activities of former directors of the Palmerston Corporation, particularly in relation to share and premium calls and insolvency trading?
2. Does the government have any plans to consider action against former directors of the Palmerston Corporation on these matters under the terms of the Companies Code?

ANSWER

1. The Corporate Affairs Office (formerly the Companies Office) has been involved in such an investigation, but not in relation to share and premium calls as these do not involve possible offences under the Companies Act. The investigation into whether the company was trading while insolvent is continuing.
2. Whether or not action will be taken against former directors of Palmerston Corporation Limited pursuant to the Companies Act depends on sufficient evidence being found to support such proceedings.

25. Nuclear Conflict - Central Australia

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

1. Does the Federal government acknowledge that in the event of a superpower conflict there would be a specific risk of attack on the joint facilities such as Pine Gap?
2. Did the Dibb Report recommend that a comprehensive survey of towns like Alice Springs should be undertaken with a view to developing contingency civil defence plans to be utilised in the event of a nuclear conflict?

'One of the major concerns of Australians is the prospect that the joint facilities may be nuclear targets in the event of a nuclear conflict.'

During the same speech Mr Hayden emphasised the importance of those joint facilities including Pine Gap:

'There will be no arms control agreement between the superpowers unless each side is reasonably confident the other cannot cheat on that agreement. That is a fact of life. Both superpowers are deeply suspicious of each other. Both insist on effective monitoring and verification of any treaty on arms control into which they enter. To this point neither has been able to agree on full on-site inspection of arms control agreements between them. The only way therefore in which those agreements can be verified is by what is termed National Technical Means of Verification. It is highly unlikely that some major arms control agreements between the superpowers would have been concluded if there had been no Pine Gap or Nurrungar. If we were to abolish Pine Gap and Nurrungar, we would be seriously damaging the prospect of agreements on the limitations of nuclear arms between the superpowers. Once again we would have achieved exactly the opposite of what we would have set out to achieve.'

2. Mr Paul Dibb in his Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities makes the following statement relating to civil defence policy implications.

'While accepting the general unlikelihood of nuclear conflict, this Review judges that a comprehensive survey of the towns of Exmouth, Woomera and Alice Springs should be undertaken with a view of developing contingency civil defence plans for those centres.'

With regard to who should take the initiative in developing civil defence plans Mr Dibb states:

'The Commonwealth should take the initiative in this planning, although relevant state authorities should be fully involved. While the principle that civil defence should be a state responsibility is generally sound, that principle was accepted before the joint facilities became operational. The Commonwealth is responsible for their establishment in Australia, and it has direct access to the intelligence expertise necessary for judgments about measures such as evacuation. A Commonwealth lead in this matter would be an appropriate response to the special nature of the risks associated with the presence of the joint facilities, and would provide a training model for state authorities should future circumstances require a greater civil defence effort'.

identifies functional requirements and allocates responsibilities to specific organisations. The overlap with the capacities required for natural disasters which are addressed in the plan and civil defence requirements would be considerable. The plan therefore contributes significantly to any civil defence operation.

The Commonwealth government has recently indicated that some action is being taken to provide state/Territory governments with civil defence policy so urgently required.

6. The Northern Territory Emergency Service does possess a range of radiation monitoring equipment which was provided by the Commonwealth government in the late 1960s.

Because of the requirement for frequent calibration of the equipment, the Northern Territory, along with most other states, has accepted the offer by the Commonwealth to have the equipment stored and maintained at the Army Ordnance Depot at Bandiana, Victoria. Only a small quantity of the equipment is held in Darwin for training purposes.

The equipment is long overdue for replacement and the Commonwealth government is currently evaluating updated equipment for issue to states and Territories.

Australian Economy

Mr POOLE to CHIEF MINISTER

What were the circumstances that led the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, to refer to the Australian economy over the weekend as being like the crisis of war?

ANSWER

The statement made by the Prime Minister over the weekend that the Australian economy was in a state of crisis equivalent to war, paralleled that of the Treasurer, who said that if something was not done to counter it, Australia was headed towards becoming a banana republic. As recently as June this year, the Prime Minister and the federal Treasurer were making comments about how well the economy was going. Eventually the circumstances of economic reality penetrated the minds even of the federal government, following the collapse of the Australian dollar, the blossoming of the foreign debt, the blow-out in the deficit, increasing unemployment and rising inflation. In fact, all the indicators pointed to a major recession hitting Australia.

Perhaps I could refer to a few of the events that occurred in the last 3 years and led us to this state. GDP growth was negative for the last quarter. Since Labor came to power, the Australian dollar has declined 26% on the trade weighted index, 25% against the US dollar and 46% against the Japanese yen. I might say that in late 1984 and early 1985, the federal Treasurer quoted the strength of the Australian dollar as a measure of the economic performance of the federal government. If he talks about the strength of the dollar being a measure of the government's economic performance, then its weakness must be also.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to quote endless statistics, but let me say that what has led to the state of our economy boils down to one fundamental thing: the fairy tale that the Australian public was sold by the Labor Party in February and March 1983. At that time, the economy was not in good shape; no one could deny that. No one could say that the Fraser government had the economy in good shape at that time. The parties went to the election saying that we had to make some hard decisions because Australia was living beyond its means.

Under the current Prime Minister, Labor sold a dream to the Australian people. It said that it had a magical cure. It said that it could reduce unemployment and inflation whilst maintaining the standard of living. The facts of life were that even a miniscule understanding of economics indicated that it was not even mathematically logical to argue that case. I do not take much pleasure in standing here now and saying that, in February 1983, I made these comments and continued to make them throughout 1983 and 1984. I took the jibes of the opposition members when I continued to stand up and say the economic accord and the policies of the federal government were disastrous for this country because they would create the sort of economic environment we have now.

In 1984, the shadow treasurer was saying what a wonderful economic policy the federal government was following. The Leader of the Opposition was making the same sorts of comments and jibing at anyone who criticised that wonderful economic policy. They have done Australia a grave disservice because they have been forcing it to live on credit. If you live on credit, eventually

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, without going into great detail, I will quote a few simple statistics. In answer to a previous question I mentioned that in the last quarter GDP growth in Australia was negative. Since Labor came to power, the dollar has declined by 26% on the trade-weighted index, 25% against the US dollar and 46% against the Japanese yen. Mr Speaker, as you and every Australian knows, that collapse has been most apparent over the last 3 months with a catastrophic decline in the value of the Australian dollar, as the full impact of massive international deficits, which are increasing in the order of \$1400m per month, starts to bite into the international money markets. The unofficial propping up of the dollar by the Reserve Bank, and other manipulations, are not even strong enough to maintain the dollar because of the damage that has been done.

In terms of trade, Australia's export rating has dropped from 14th to 23rd, since Labor came in. Australia's terms of trade have deteriorated by 56% since 1953-54 and, since March 1983, they have deteriorated by 15%. Australia's foreign debt is rapidly approaching \$90 000m. It is anticipated that it will be in the order of \$100 000m by the end of this financial year. It has doubled since Labor came to power. It was \$33 000m in March 1983 and \$56 700m in June 1986.

Whilst incurring that international debt, the federal government spent \$1000m in foreign aid last year. Last year, \$1000m was spent on foreign aid while we accumulated some \$14 000m in international debt. The federal government needs to realise that we are becoming a third world country because of its policies; soon we will have to apply for international aid instead of giving it. Much of this economic difficulty has been created by federal government expenditure. Government expenditure has increased by 4.8% per annum since Labor came to power. In 1985-86, government expenditure was \$879m above the budget estimate. That is a quote from Messrs Walsh and Keating from 25 July 1986. The current account shortfall, a trade deficit, topped \$14 000m for the 1985-86 financial year; a record high, and well over Keating's budget prediction of \$10 700m. That figure exceeded by one-third the deficit for the previous year. It is the equivalent of 6.1% of the monetary value of Australia's GDP. This is the largest proportion for more than 30 years, Mr Speaker. Per capita of population, it is the biggest current account deficit in the industrial world and, in absolute dollar terms, it is exceeded only by the United States.

Mr Ede: Boring!

Mr HATTON: It is the highest current account deficit of all 24 countries and ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Chief Minister will resume his seat.

Constant interjections are distracting to members who want to hear the answers to questions. I would remind honourable members also that this particular section is broadcast, and it is my belief that members of the general public would also like to hear the questions and the minister's replies. Out of respect to the members in the Assembly and the general public, I ask that interjections be kept to a bare minimum and that there be no running commentary.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we recognise quite well that Northern Territory people are more than interested in all of these issues. Certainly ...

Mr B. Collins: You are not going to tell us, are you?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, we recognise quite well that the Northern Territory community is more than interested in all of these issues and, certainly, we recognise the need to advise the Northern Territory community of what is happening. I have no intention of avoiding the issue. On many occasions, the government has tried to get a fundamental point through the thick heads of the opposition members. The effort was being made long before I was in the Assembly. I have read debates in which previous ministers and Chief Ministers tried very hard to assist the gentlemen opposite to come to grips with the fact that, when a commercial negotiation is under way, or the conclusion of an arrangement is close, it is inappropriate to debate the pros and cons or the likely outcome of such negotiations. As soon as these matters are resolved and we can tell the community with authority what is happening, we will do that.

AUSSAT Facility for Borroloola

Mr EDE to MINISTER for BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY and COMMUNICATIONS

I refer to the minister's numerous statements about the communication facilities AUSSAT is providing, free of charge to the government, for installation at Borroloola. What is entailed in those facilities? Will they be retained after the 6-month free trial period? If so, at what cost, and who will bear that cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, communications generally in the Northern Territory are at a very exciting stage. However, the offer from AUSSAT to Borroloola, which has been written about in the popular press with a fair degree of journalistic licence, was received by myself only 2 days ago and is a result of discussions that I had recently with AUSSAT in Sydney. Effectively, AUSSAT has offered the Northern Territory government the use of a communication system that will allow voice contact between a major community, such as Borroloola, and a major government PABX system. The offer received from AUSSAT includes various options for extending that service beyond the 6-month trial period.

All of these issues are relevant to a very important aspect of the Northern Territory's development. A select committee travelled far and wide throughout the Northern Territory investigating communications requirements. We have held discussions with Telecom on the possibilities of using a hybrid system integrated with its DRCS system. We have had discussions with the Department of Communications in Canberra with regard to the difficulties the Territory has in establishing a hybrid system within the Communications Act and the policy of the Department of Communications.

Suffice to say that technology changes every day and no one would be more aware of that fact than the member for Stuart. I am in the process of compiling the latest information on technology, and the latest offers from AUSSAT for presentation to Cabinet. When I have presented all the options to Cabinet, I will announce the outcome of those discussions to the people of the Northern Territory, and I shall write directly to the member for Stuart.

should be proud of the achievements of the opposition. It will not even recognise that the federal government is finished and that it has sold Australia out. Some people in Papua New Guinea are seriously considering coming down to Australia to do their weekend shopping because the price of the Australian dollar is so low now that it would be economical for them to do that. Of course, we have had a few imports from New Guinea over the years, including the member for Stuart himself. Perhaps it is a conspiracy, as I have often said in this Assembly.

In short, I believe that the Northern Territory economy is really at the beginning and not at the end like that of the rest of Australia, which is crumpling under the burden of social welfare payments and subsidies to industries which long ago ceased to be efficient or effective in terms of international trade. The Northern Territory is set to project itself as an example to the rest of Australia. The Territory will show what can be done, if the federal government will get off its back.

Economic Growth in the Territory

Mr SETTER to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the appalling economic crisis created by the federal government's policies, what will the Territory government do to sustain economic growth in the Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Treasurer has outlined the intrinsic strength of the Northern Territory economy due to the sound economic policies of successive CLP governments. This government has a proud record of growth which is significantly above the national average, and it has continuously maintained a balanced budget, something envied by all other governments in Australia.

Because of its intrinsic strength, our economy will prosper, but that will not happen by itself. We must respond to the challenges of increasing interest rates, inflation, and the decreased value of the Australian dollar. The Territory government has already responded with significant initiatives to reorganise and redirect the focus of government. When we announced our intention to do this, there was some derisive comment from the opposition.

Mr Speaker, I ask you to recognise one fundamental point. When an economy is bad and a market is shrinking, either you can choose to contract, hold onto your place and try to survive the recession, or you can become proactive by endeavouring to obtain a larger share of the market. We can do that in the Northern Territory. We can get a larger share of the Australian market, and we can profit by our unique geographical advantage in being on the doorstep of South-east Asia, which is still the fastest growing economic zone in the world. We will not achieve this by sitting in Darwin. We must go out and market strongly. We must organise government to minimise red tape and restrictions on business. We must work to develop proper incentives and promotions to encourage further expansion and development of industries. This will ensure that our potential is realised.

Our government has created departments for all 5 key economic areas of the Northern Territory. Each has primary responsibility for promoting the expansion and development of that particular sector of our economy. First, there is primary production. Next, there is secondary and tertiary industry, oversighted by my colleague, the Minister for Business, Technology and

would be incurred in order to develop it so that it could be built upon. Secondly, several trees in that area have been listed as sacred coolibahs. There are 130 or 140 coolibah trees in that area.

The information I have given to the member in the past is the same today. I will be establishing a working party to look at the issues that I have mentioned this morning. That working party will comprise members of the Departments of Health, Housing, Lands, and Treasury, and its membership will be drawn from Alice Springs. I ask the member for Sadadeen to look into the question of whether aged people wish to be situated in a village-type development as compared with integration with the general community.

I look forward to hearing comments from that group. The government is examining the proposal. When I receive information, I will be able to inform the member for Sadadeen about which direction the government will take.

double-digit unemployment this year. This estimate is based on what we could unravel from the budget figures.

The government's estimates on economic growth are overly optimistic at 2.25%, particularly in the light of figures for the last 3 quarters, including the first quarter of this year, of nil or negative growth. The government says there will be a 2.25% growth in GDP this year. Nobody believes that figure except the federal government.

Mr Ede: You are a knocker.

Mr HATTON: The member for Stuart thinks I am knocking. Well, Australia is in real trouble. We have had a parody of discussions about prices in war economies, and so on. But what does the government produce? It produces a load of nonsense to put before the Australian people. It says it will cut \$500m from welfare payments. How? By being more diligent in policing welfare payments. Governments have been saying that for 20 years, and have been unsuccessful for 20 years! I hope the government can do that, but there is no reason to believe that it will be able to.

I hope the government achieves a \$3500m deficit but, more importantly, I believe all Australian wage and salary earners, and that includes members of this Assembly, should say to themselves: 'Australia cannot afford increases in our wages or conditions of employment for the next 12 months, at least.' We should fight against any wage increases, in the interests of Australia. The people of Australia need to do it if their leaders in the federal government and the trade union movement will not accept the fundamental logic that we are pricing ourselves out and trying to live beyond our means. We must hold down the cost of production in order to give industry a chance to create the jobs that are needed in this country rather than simply feeding into a leisure-led recovery.

Payments to Public Servant

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he inform the Assembly and the taxpayers of the Northern Territory how much it cost to backdate the appointment of Keith William Ward to the public service so that he would receive 5 years' benefits for not working?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members will be aware that at the weekend there was advice that the Public Service Commissioner, exercising his responsibilities under the Public Service Act as an independent Public Service Commissioner, took a decision in March 1986 to employ Keith Ward and to deem that employment to be retrospective from 1981. I think the date given was 14 March 1981. Obviously, that raised a number of issues, and there were allegations of a cost of some \$50 000 to the Northern Territory taxpayer. I was as surprised and concerned as were other citizens of the Northern Territory about that figure and have asked for a detailed report from the Public Service Commissioner. On Monday I received a preliminary report from the Public Service Commissioner which, quite frankly, posed more questions than it answered. I have asked for far more detailed information.

As to the actual costs, I am advised that there was a payment to Mr Ward of some \$14 000. I do not have the exact figures but there were payments for annual leave entitlements accrued as a consequence of the determination made by the Public Service Commissioner.

Redevelopment of Tennant Creek Airport

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What are the implications of the allocation announced in last night's budget of some \$1m for the redevelopment of the Tennant Creek Airport and airstrip, and can he give me an undertaking that that redevelopment will be adequate, sufficient and timely to ensure that F28 air services to Tennant Creek are not interrupted during this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the announcement in the budget last night did not give me much cause for joy in regard to the Tennant Creek Airport. Members will be aware that over the last 3 weeks pavement failure has occurred at the Tennant Creek Airport, and that that inspired a cartoon recently in the Northern Territory News. More importantly, the announcement that the federal government will only upgrade the pavement at the airport will create some problems as far as F28 services are concerned.

Recently, a meeting was held between the Tennant Creek Town Council, the member for Barkly, myself, and the federal minister, Peter Morris. At that time, we told him that Ansett, which operates the regional airline service, wants to maintain the F28 service in and out of Tennant Creek as part of that regional network system. Mr Morris indicated at that time that he only had \$31m to look after all airports and it would be almost impossible to justify the expenditure of some \$4.7m to enable the continuation of an F28 service in and out of that region. He intimated to us that we would be far better off if we were to use smaller aircraft, commuter-type aircraft. We asked him what kind, but he could not tell us. Nevertheless, he said that he would be pleased to receive a further report from the Northern Territory government and the Tennant Creek Town Council. That report was finalised, and was forwarded to Mr Morris on 15 August. Apparently, in the framing of his budget and allocation of funds for the upgrading of that facility, that report and its recommendations were not taken into consideration by the federal minister. We cannot condone his attitude that the Tennant Creek area should be maintained by commuter services. The only thing I can say to the member for Barkly is that we will use our best endeavours to ensure that F28 services are used in and out of Tennant Creek.

Payments to Public Servant

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware that, in 1982, Keith William Ward was paid full recreation and long service entitlements together with superannuation benefits for his period of employment with the Australian Public Service Association for the period 1 July 1981 to 25 August 1982 and that this period of employment occurred after the date of retrospective employment of Mr Ward this year with the Northern Territory Public Service? Is he aware that, as a result, Mr Ward received for that period a double recreation entitlement of 12 weeks for 1 financial year, double long service leave and double superannuation credits? What does the Chief Minister intend to do about this situation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was not aware of the benefits received by Mr Ward. In the report I received on Monday, I was advised that those details were in the

government, so we can allow private enterprise to develop a new terminal which could be in use within 2 years. The federal minister procrastinates, and says that Territorians, government and opposition politicians included, are all part of a cargo cult. A cargo cult! He says that the demonstration at the Beaufort Hotel was disgusting, absolutely disgusting. I told him that I believed it showed the general feeling of the community. It was attended by members from both sides of the Assembly. I told him some of his Labor colleagues were present. He did not acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition and Mr Reeves were there, together with several others.

The Commonwealth does not want to spend any money on the Darwin Airport. We could save the money if it would give us the land it started to develop on the northern side. We will facilitate private enterprise; we will not even use Northern Territory government money. We have people writing to the Chief Minister, almost on a weekly basis, with requests to build a private airport. But Mr Morris is saying: 'No you cannot do that because really it is a defence area'.

Let us look down the road, at what could happen in 20 years' time. We may have to move out of the Darwin Airport because of expanding defence requirements. Maybe we should start looking very closely in the next 6 to 12 months, to see if we can identify a small portion of land that could be used for an international airport. I am not saying that we should do that, but unless there is a change of government - and let us hope that at the next federal elections there will be - Northern Territory people and international travellers are going to suffer.

Breeding Native Birds

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Because of my personal interest in wildlife conservation and the interests of certain farmers and pastoralists, I am aware of a suggestion for a program to catch native birds and breed them in captivity, put forward to the minister by one of my constituents. Can he advise what the Conservation Commission is doing to implement a sensible program of conservation through catching native birds and breeding them in captivity?

ANSWER

The problem of the capture of native species for sale or trade has been of concern to conservation ministers and people involved in the trade for a long time. Honourable members are very well aware of the problems associated with the proposed uses of crocodiles in the Northern Territory and the lengthy and costly program of preparing a case for farming them. That is a problem that will probably be with us for some time.

With regard to the capture of native species of birds in particular, the Northern Territory has a range of pest species such as cockatoos. These are causing considerable trouble. Mr Speaker, you have given me a significant ear-bashing over the last few months in relation to cockatoos damaging the ovals in Alice Springs. There is a lot of pressure from people to be able to capture those birds and sell them on the Australian and international markets rather than finding ways of destroying them to keep them off those ovals. We have a number of pest species in the grain-producing areas and there is a need to control their numbers. Currently, people can obtain a licence to destroy those birds but they cannot get a licence to take the birds live for trade. That seems to be an anomaly that we should be addressing.

The Public Service Commissioner took this particular decision in his own right, in March this year. As a matter of principle, I do not agree with retrospective employment of any person. As to whether it has occurred before, I am not aware of any previous such incident. However, I am advised by one of my government members that it happens regularly. If it does, I would like to know a great deal more about it. My understanding from the Public Service Commissioner is that it is not a regular occurrence for a person to take up employment and then to have the commencement date backdated so as to cause a benefit to that person by way of accruals. It would seem to be inappropriate.

I must say that in the case of Mr Ward there are also a number of questions surrounding the circumstances of the termination of his employment with NTEC in 1981. We are seeking to obtain details, because they could impact on the current situation. In defence of the Public Service Commissioner, it was his view that an injustice had been done to Mr Ward in 1981, when Mr Ward found his employment with NTEC terminated as a consequence of his decision to form and take up work with the Northern Territory Public Service Association. At that time, Mr Ward was treated differently to all other union officials in permanent employment with the public service, who are deemed to be on leave without pay when employed by their union. I refer to full-time officials of the ACOA by way of example. They receive the leave-without-pay provisions, as Mr Ward is doing now, and they would accrue public service benefits other than those received through the union movement. That is my advice from the Public Service Commissioner.

Katherine Fire Station Manning Levels

Mr STEELE to CHIEF MINISTER

Why have manning levels been reduced at the Katherine Fire Station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there have been approaches to and negotiations with the union representing the fire services throughout the Northern Territory. Part of those negotiations concerned a change in the operation of the system for the provision of fire services in the smaller towns, including Katherine.

Basically, rather than having a large, manned station, more emphasis will be placed on the volunteer fire services in Katherine and Tennant Creek. A number of technological changes have enabled efficient and effective provision of fire services with minimal manning of the fire station by permanent fire officers, and more extensive use of volunteer firemen. These matters are part of a total package of negotiations with the trade union and have been accepted by the fire services as appropriate and reasonable. Apart from the improved communication technology, the basic system of operation at Katherine will be almost identical with the system that has been operating successfully in the township of Nhulunbuy.

Payment to Darwin Businessman

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he confirm that during his time as Minister for Ports and Fisheries, the Northern Territory government paid Darwin businessman, Mr Roger Rooney, a substantial sum of money to vacate his lease of the East Arm wharf and, if so, can he advise how much was paid and when?

one place in Australia where people who want to develop our resources can come to live.

Effect of Increased Fuel Costs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to TREASURER

What are the implications for the Territory economy of a 3¢ a litre rise in the cost of petrol and diesel?

ANSWER

Some time ago, I was interviewed by a reporter from the Northern Territory News and he asked me what were my gravest concerns about the federal budget. He wrote that my gravest concerns related to fuel because the Northern Territory is about fuel. The Territory is reliant on fuel to a degree that is not witnessed anywhere else in Australia. The Minister for Tourism spoke yesterday about attracting the tourist who travels in his own vehicle. The Leader of the Opposition supported him and said that he believed that was the way to go. At a time when world oil prices are falling, the Australian motorist is expected to pay more. The leader of the National Party has calculated that we could drop the price of fuel by 23¢ and the country could begin to develop again.

Mr Ede: Oil exploration.

Mr COULTER: There is no oil exploration; everybody has shut up shop. This is the budget that will get everything going again. I guess if we add 3¢ a litre to the price of it, everything will happen again as the member for Stuart suggests. Oil companies will become rich. Oil companies will not receive anything from this increase. It will be used to fuel the social welfare programs of the Australian Labor Party. That is where this fuel money will go and we have seen it happen before.

The Australian Labor Party added 0.5¢ a litre to finance the Australian Bicentennial Roads Program, and by that means charged prawn trawlers for road tax. That is the type of logic demonstrated by the Australian Labor Party. This increase will have a disastrous effect on the Northern Territory. Look at the cost to Aboriginal communities; the cost of supplying distillates. \$6.7m a year is spent to supply fuel to Aboriginal communities, of which they have to contribute about \$1m. It is a token gesture. We all remember how the honourable members opposite jumped up and said 'shame' that we even dared try to recover \$1m from that \$6.7m. It will not take them long to work out what an extra 3¢ a litre will amount to for the supply of fuel to Aboriginal communities alone. Next to the reduction in the NTEC subsidy, that will produce one of the most disastrous effects the Northern Territory economy has suffered for some time.

Private Hospital Bed Subsidy

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH

In last night's federal budget it was announced that the private hospital bed day subsidy will be cancelled. Given that the Darwin private hospital development is to begin soon, what effect will that cancellation have?

Mr Speaker, I will tell you a little story relevant to this question about Kakadu National Park. It is plainly ridiculous and offers clear evidence of the discriminatory nature of budgetary measures levelled against the Northern Territory, as well as other measures. In Canberra there lives a fellow by the name of Professor Ovington. As we all know, he manages the ANPWS, the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service ...

Mr Palmer: He mismanages the ANPWS.

Mr HANRAHAN: The member for Leanyer is quite correct - mismanages.

I would like to say very clearly at the outset that the Northern Territory has fought for control of Kakadu National Park and Uluru, so that Territorians, Australians and international visitors, may reap the full benefits of these natural wonders. Unfortunately, we constantly run up against Professor Ovington, the ANPWS and the federal government. In the Draft Plan of Management for Kakadu, something unheard of anywhere else in Australia, there is mention of a specific restriction and I find it almost unbelievable. It suggests a possible lowest permitted altitude of 4000 feet for anyone flying over Kakadu National Park for the purpose of absorbing the scenic glory of one of the world's greatest natural wonders. It is almost absurd to suggest that anybody ...

Mr Dondas: It is illegal.

Mr HANRAHAN: I am aware that it is illegal, but this is the work of Professor Ovington in the interests of tourism and park management in the Northern Territory.

Bob McDonald of Kakadu Air Services, based in Jabiru, started a service of scenic flights over Kakadu some several years ago with 1 single-engined aircraft. He has developed his market, has 4 aircraft operating over Kakadu at the moment and plans to go into the purchase and possible leasing of a helicopter, for services marketed worldwide by the Northern Territory Tourist Commission. It is a very successful service. Now Professor Ovington suggests in the Draft Plan of Management that 4000 feet be the minimum height from which Kakadu can be viewed from the air. At that height not much detail is visible. It is equally ludicrous to suggest that flying at the height of 500 feet, permitted by the Department of Aviation, will be particularly upsetting to the flora and fauna that exist in Kakadu National Park. If Professor Ovington gets his way, there will be a marked increase in sales of telescopic lenses.

However, there is some hope on the horizon. The Department of Aviation designates the limit of height at which flights may travel over any of Australia's land mass. I am hoping that common sense will prevail, and this ridiculous item, this proposed height restriction for scenic flights over Kakadu National Park, will receive the attention that we are likely to suggest it deserves.

In closing, I make one simple point; the point I started out with. Evidence of this particular restriction is only the tip of the iceberg. Actually, the Territory has been suffering ad nauseam from the discretionary decisions of the federal government and its arms, such as the ANPWS. Members opposite belong to the Australian Labor Party. As such, by decree, they must support the policies of the federal Labor Party. We have seen that occur with uranium, and with national parks. The member for MacDonnell need not worry. He is over the hill as far as I am concerned. On the other hand, the Country

Assembly about mining activities. That is the good news and we will see whether he returns or not. I am sure the electors will make sure that he does not return at the next election.

The yellowcake from Nabarlek will now be sold. The federal government was one of the largest stockpilers of yellowcake in the world, which is not bad considering that the Labor Party's policy is to phase out uranium mining. The government said it would not sell uranium to France. The only damage that was done to France was that most of its company directors had to be taken to hospital for hernia problems as a result of laughing because the spot price for uranium at the time was \$16 and they had contracted to buy it at \$36. However, it seems that reason has prevailed and the federal government will now sell yellowcake.

I believe this is a step in the right direction. We all know that there are billions of dollars locked up in uranium mines in the Northern Territory. I hope that the step in the right direction continues. The Senate Inquiry into Mining in National Parks reconvened in Sydney last week and looks like bringing down a decision in November. I hope its support is forthcoming and we can get on with the development of magnificent mining developments, such as Jabiluka, which could return \$15 000m worth of wealth back to Australia. Quite clearly, the ban of sales to France did not work. The sales that will occur as a result of the federal government selling the yellowcake which it has purchased may allow us to get on with uranium mining in the Northern Territory. That was the good news in last night's budget.

\$87.50 to \$104 per annum for 1 vehicle only. Many pensioners will be pleased to learn that the biennial 50% return air fare, assessed on the value of the return fare to Adelaide and currently usable for travel within Australia, can now - on establishment of family bona fides - be used for overseas travel. Aged war service pensioners are eligible for this benefit which can, of course, be converted to cover interstate road travel.

Once again, the Northern Territory government is leading Australia in its attitude towards pensioners and aged people. We acknowledge the need to ensure that the 3 tiers of the family unit are firmly in place in the Northern Territory, and I believe my announcement yesterday shows our commitment to maintaining that policy.

Pensioner Concession Scheme

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he guarantee that pensioners who have lived in high-rate areas in the inner city for the last 20 or 30 years will not be forced out of their present houses by the increase in rates indicated in his announcement? To put it another way, can he guarantee that these long-term citizens of Darwin will not have to pay extra rates as a result of the change in government policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition would well know, I cannot give any undertakings on behalf of local government, and I do not intend to.

Mr Smith: Are you passing the buck?

Mr DALE: Of course I am passing the buck on to local government and that should be well and truly kept in mind in everything that I am going to say.

Mr Manzie: Why don't you get your Prime Minister to do something?

Mr Smith: You are going to lose a few votes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General and the Leader of the Opposition will cease their interjections. The Minister for Community Development will be heard in silence.

Mr DALE: If the Leader of the Opposition had been listening to a number of things that I have said over the last few days of these sittings, he would have heard me say loudly and clearly that I place considerable responsibility fairly and squarely on the shoulders of local and community government bodies to manage those areas under their control. There is provision in the Local Government Act for sporting bodies or any other organisations to apply to the councils for waivers. I believe that the concessions that we have put in place are the best in Australia. There is no way that we can cover every contingency in a scheme such as this. I believe that the scheme gets to the heart of providing the best possible concessions for the aged people in the Northern Territory. Where there are cases of hardship because of the scheme, I expect the local government bodies to take the appropriate action to alleviate that pressure.

sensible attitude of governments in relation to spending taxpayers' dollars. It appears that \$20m to \$25m is to be used to run a so-called commercial television station for a minority of people, some 20% of our community, when it has been presented to the tribunal that, in fact, there are a number of commercial organisations that could do the job at no cost to the taxpayer.

Grant of TV Licence to Imparja

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he confirm the accuracy of a statement attributed to him in the Sunday Territorian that: 'It is nothing less than inexcusable that people outside the Darwin area should be forced to receive Aboriginal television'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I cannot recall the exact wording, but that is certainly the essence of a statement that I made.

Coastal Plains Research Station

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

In view of certain reviews of policy in the Department of Primary Production regarding the use of experimental stations with relevance to research programs, what is the future of the Coastal Plains Research Station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it has a long and lasting future. The Coastal Plains Research Station, just outside Darwin, is becoming very significant in the fast-growing area of horticulture. Horticulture has the potential to be one of our larger areas of primary production. Also, buffalo domestication programs are under way there, trials of a number of fodder foods, and growth promotion in steers, which some people may object to but which, in fact, appears to have produced very good results. Perhaps of most interest to the member for Koolpinyah would be the research on goats that has been carried out at the Coastal Plains Research Station.

The Coastal Plains Research Station will continue, as will the programs in all of our research stations. There has been a rationalisation so that emphasis on particular programs is related to a specific research station rather than being spread over several research stations. The station is doing good work also on combating the infestations of mimosa, and we passed the bill on biological control last week. A number of research programs are under way there in that regard. The honourable member can rest assured that the station will continue.

Regional Airline Agreement

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The 5-year regional airline agreement with Ansett expires this month. Has this agreement been extended or renegotiated, and did the government consider other alternatives, such as calling for expressions of interest from other potential airline operators?

child care organisation. I very much appreciate their work in compiling this report and I can assure members that it is a very comprehensive document. It consists of some 277 pages, and over 50 recommendations. Given that it is such a significant document, I have asked the Department of Community Development to consider the report and its recommendations and to provide me with an assessment of both. It is my intention to provide a detailed analysis of both the report and its recommendations during the November sittings of this Assembly.

Operations of Capricornia Pty Ltd

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

It concerns another sectional interest with which he should be completely familiar, for the sake of his own political survival, if nothing else. The question concerns the operations of Capricornia Pty Ltd and Carpentaria Pty Ltd. In consideration of the fact that they are administered by directors who are senior members of the Country Liberal Party and that they operate as a fund-raising machine for the Chief Minister and other government members, could he advise this Assembly if, since attaining the office of Chief Minister, he has informed himself fully on the operations, the directors, bankers and business dealings of Capricornia and Carpentaria?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that question has absolutely nothing to do with this Assembly or my ministerial responsibilities. It relates to the responsibilities of the directors of private companies. I will advise the member that, since I have become Chief Minister, I have had some discussions within the party but have not fully informed myself on all the matters raised by him.

Northern Territory University College

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Given that the Northern Territory University College will virtually be an adjunct of the University of Queensland, can he advise whether Territory students who will attend that college next year will have access to the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as the member for Wagaman pointed out, the University College of the Northern Territory will be a college of the University of Queensland. The question of whether students at the University College will be entitled to TEAS is an important issue in the debate about the establishment of a Northern Territory university. Whether students will be eligible for benefits under TEAS or other schemes depends entirely on the Commonwealth giving official recognition to the University College, through the group called CTEC. As honourable members are aware, the University College will be located on the premises of the old Darwin Hospital, and work on the refurbishment of buildings is now under way.

Given that situation, I went to Canberra a couple of weeks ago to discuss the issue of Commonwealth recognition for the University College with my federal counterpart, Senator Susan Ryan. Senator Ryan confirmed that TEAS would become available automatically if the Commonwealth agreed to recognise the University College. She agreed that the best way for the Northern

The reason is that the opportunities are not there. We do not have a university college. We do not have a tertiary institution and we will never have one while those people are sitting over there. I wish they would mind their own business. If they were elected by the whole community to represent the community's views, it would be in order. That fellow over there, who represents a minority of Territorians, pushes his view to the detriment of ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable minister will refer to members by their proper titles.

Mr MANZIE: When the honourable member for Arafura purports to represent Territorians to the detriment of Territorians, I find it a sad day.

Young Territory students have the same right as other Australians to a quality education. The Commonwealth government withdrew funding for pre-school education last year. Do the opposition members say then that we should not provide pre-school education? Probably they would, because they are arguing that we should not establish a university college - and we have heard the present Leader of the Opposition say this - because the Commonwealth will not fund it. It is the right of young Territorians, as Australians, to receive a university education. The establishment of the University College of the Northern Territory is the cheapest and most effective way of providing that.

I find it abominable that the federal Labor government refuses to recognise that university, and therefore refuses to pay the tertiary education assistance allowance to Territory students. It is despicable. Territorians have a right to be treated like all other Australians. Those people would disagree with that.

Perpetual Pastoral Lease

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

Has the government decided that, when a perpetual pastoral lease is granted, that lease should include any pre-existing stock routes or stock reserves?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, my understanding at the moment is that a decision in relation to stock routes on pastoral leases has been held in abeyance until the federal minister introduces his legislation into the federal parliament during the spring session of that parliament. Northern Territory government policy over the years has been to include stock routes within those pastoral leases where there has been a clear and unequivocal statement that they are not needed for anything else.

Access of Children to X and R-Rated Videos

Mr D.W. COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I note that the member for Arafura has claimed in the media that the actions of the Territory government will allow children to have access to X and R-rated videos. Will the Attorney-General please advise me if this is the case?

for the purpose of creating a park. The Northern Territory Conservation Commission has been involved in extensive negotiations with the land councils, particularly over the last 6 to 8 months. It has been working with the land councils and the traditional owners of that country to develop a joint management arrangement for that park. The negotiations have been proceeding quite well. The Conservation Commission, in consultation with the Aboriginal traditional owners, had been developing, and were processing, excisions for living areas for those Aboriginal people. In the middle of these negotiations and consultations, during which the Conservation Commission worked very hard on a process of cooperation with the Aboriginal people, the lawyers of the land council jumped in and made a land grab. That was the most cynical exercise I have experienced in the implementation of the Land Rights Act.

That sort of action under those sorts of circumstances, places at severe risk the cooperative relationship that has been developing between our government and the Northern Land Council.

Sites for Waste Disposal Unit

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I refer to a statement made by the member for Barkly in last Thursday's adjournment debate. He said that 5 sites in the Northern Territory, apart from Tennant Creek, are under consideration for a waste disposal unit. He stated in that debate that the Conservation Commission had been studying environmental impacts on these sites for the last 18 months. Will he undertake to table the Conservation Commission studies for each of those sites in the Assembly later this week?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to comply with that request because as yet I have not seen the reports myself. There is a great deal of work still to be done. We are still in the process of looking at the Tennant Creek area ...

Mr Ede: Table what you do have.

Mr McCARTHY: ...I am not in a position to table anything this week. When they are available I am sure the ...

Mr Ede: List the sites.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister will resume his seat.

I say to the honourable member for Stuart that I have been fairly tolerant over an extended period of time, but constant chatter between himself and the minister is not acceptable. All comments will be addressed to the Chair and this is the last time that I will remind members of that during question time. Some members are skating on fairly thin ice. The honourable minister will be heard in silence.

Mr McCARTHY: I have completed my statement, Mr Speaker.

RCTS licences will be fully commercial; that is, they will be free to air like existing commercial television services, and viewers will not be required to pay the cost of programs, satellite links, company management and so on. The government will not countenance future requests for a change in policy which would add a subscription element to such licences, nor will the government be prepared to subsidise RCTS operations.

That statement was made by the Minister for Communications, Mr Duffy, in October 1984. My information is that quite a large amount of government funding will be injected into the Imparja operation. It involves \$2.5m of taxpayers' money from the Australian Bicentennial Authority, \$1.8m from the Aboriginal Development Commission and a \$1m government-backed loan from the South Australian government. As media reports have said over the weekend, it is estimated that it could cost the Australian taxpayer in excess of \$22m over the 7 years for which that licence has been granted.

Mr Ede: Rubbish.

Mr HATTON: The honourable member for Stuart says that is rubbish. I say that there are real questions surrounding this, particularly when it is known that there was to be no government ...

Mr Ede: You offered \$2m.

Mr HATTON: ... subsidy of the operation.

The \$2m offer was to provide services from the government for educational and other purposes, as a user-pays service of the facility. Imparja does not have any television facilities, nor does it have a track record of performance in television broadcasting. I support the view that any television broadcast into the remote communities should properly take into account the needs of the 27% of the viewing audience who are Aboriginals. What I am saying is that the other 70% of the viewers of the Northern Territory need representation equally.

Quite frankly, I find it highly insulting to hear the views that are coming from Miss Freda Glynn, the Director of Imparja, who was quoted in the NT News last Friday as having said that the European community will still be able to see its Barbie dolls and Dynasty. If that is the extent of Imparja's understanding of the expected standards of viewing in the non-Aboriginal community, and all it intends to pump out is soap operas and Aboriginal programs, there are real concerns. Of course, that may or may not be true.

We saw the reasons for the decision for the first time this morning. The member for MacDonnell is waving around the reasons for the decision. Isn't it amazing that the member for MacDonnell, from the opposition, is able to have an entire copy of the reasons for the decision. The minister responsible for communications has been trying to get a copy of the reasons for that decision from the moment it was announced, and it arrived in his office just before 10.00 am this morning. There is plenty of evidence to indicate that this was a set-up by the federal government.

Mr Speaker, let me make a point. It would have been more than possible for Imparja to meet its intentions of providing special broadcasting services for Aboriginal people. Last week, in the federal budget, I noted that the federal government has now combined SBS and the ABC into a single organisation. We all know that the federal government was not prepared to

Carpentaria Pty Ltd

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Everyone must now concede that the operations of Carpentaria Pty Ltd are a matter of legitimate public concern and certainly a matter of concern to this Assembly. Will he give an undertaking that he is prepared to call for a total accounting of the activities of Carpentaria Pty Ltd, and a complete disclosure of its total business dealings, at least within his own party?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to give that undertaking at this stage. However, I will ask that the opposition give me all the information that it has in respect of Carpentaria Pty Ltd so that it can be investigated.

Mr SPEAKER: Some days ago, I reminded honourable members that question time is broadcast. Since I made that comment, a number of telephone calls have been received by my office saying how much the silence in which questions were asked and answered was appreciated by the general public. I would be pleased if members would continue to pay heed to that.

Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY and COMMUNICATIONS

What progress has been made on the Trade Development Zone and what level of interest is it attracting among manufacturers from respective areas?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, several negotiations are taking place with overseas investors as a result of a trip I made recently to South-east Asia. These should result in very good news for the Territory economy. However, any members of the public who are listening and all honourable members who live in the Darwin area are free to drive out and see the Trade Development Zone and the infrastructure developing there. It is a very impressive complex and one that will impact in a major way on the Northern Territory economy.

To be specific, at this stage 9 companies have signed up and are entering into the contract stage. The zone is due for completion in November. Factories will be set up between then and January and we expect the zone to be fully operational from the very early weeks of February 1987. I must add that recently we conducted a very extensive marketing campaign within the Australian business community, mainly in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The contacts and inquiries that have resulted from that campaign are very encouraging.

It has always been the intention of the government to look to Asia for the initial establishment of prospective manufacturers and businessmen in the zone and then to head into the Australian market, because it is important to have representative industries from both

I would like to report to the Assembly that, in each major capital city and country in which we have mounted a campaign to promote the zone, the results have been encouraging. There are some 7 responses from Hong Kong, and 2 from Taiwan. As a result of the recent trip to Singapore, there are likely to be another 4 companies. We are talking now about the companies coming into

The administration area at the DIT comprises a village of demountables. The accommodation in those demountables is totally inadequate. The staff do a very good job, but the conditions they work in are absolutely atrocious. However, the Leader of the Opposition would say that a separate administration can be run there without any problems.

There is a proposal before CTEC for the building of a new administration block to cater for the DIT as it is at the present time. That would cost \$1m. The Commonwealth, through CTEC, has yet to do anything about it. I have been advised unofficially that nothing will be done there until the next triennium. The Leader of the Opposition will tell us that there is plenty of room, yet the facilities are inadequate as they are.

The second aspect is that there is a need for laboratories. Laboratories are going to cost at least \$5m, and there is a need for them to be built. The Leader of the Opposition would say that does not matter because whether we go to the DIT or the Darwin Primary School, we will have to pay to put up laboratories. At the Darwin Hospital site we have the shell of a building. We do not have to build a building, we just have to fill one. However, the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe it is cheaper to build the complete facility. The whole thing just amazes me. We are talking about at least \$1m for a temporary administration centre and \$5m for a laboratory at DIT.

Without providing for any students, mind you, the Leader of the Opposition's concept would cost \$6m this year. That is just to pay for administration on a temporary basis, laboratories, staff and courses. If we are going to do that, we may as well do it at the permanent site of the university at Palmerston. This government has never stepped back from that. Palmerston is going to be the site of the university when it is permanently located. The University College is now going to the Darwin Hospital site, as has been said a number of times, because it is the cheapest option. It will give us facilities which will last for at least 10 years before we are required to move. We have buildings already located there, but the Leader of the Opposition cannot get this into his head.

He wants us to have a university college at the DIT, which will only take in an extra 20 or 30 students. He does not care about the 500 Territorians who are presently down south attending universities. He does not care. He does not care about the future of young Territorians and, most importantly, he does not care about the credibility of the standard of education that our young people are to receive. He does not care that their degrees will not be of value in our community unless they go to a credible institution. I am sure he cannot deny that the University of Queensland is such an institution. He has to learn a lesson. He has to learn about obtaining facts, digesting them, and coming up with the right conclusions because, if this morning's effort on radio is any indication, we have a big problem with his intellectual capacity as Leader of the Opposition in the Northern Territory.

Costs of Acquiring Myilly Point Properties

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LANDS

What is the cost to date, to the nearest million, for government acquisition of properties at Myilly Point?

Mr COULTER: I stand corrected. However, it was presented to the Litchfield Shire Council. It was commissioned by the Department of Transport and Works and prepared by the Water Resources Division in response to a query by land users in the area. The draft policy paper recommends a controlled release of water to ensure that water levels are maintained at a minimum level consistent with historical water flows.

The draft paper was given to the Litchfield Shire Council for comment. It is nice to have a local government body in the rural area from which departments such as Transport and Works can seek public comment. I stress that it is a draft paper designed to test reaction from ratepayers. That is all that is planned at this stage. The report was commissioned in the first place in response to a query from land users in the area. I am unaware of the names of those people. It merely seeks comment from ratepayers and I believe that the Litchfield Shire Council will address that matter. I urge all ratepayers in the area to obtain a copy of the draft report if they do not already have one. Perhaps the department can supply the honourable member with copies of the report for distribution to ratepayers in the area.

Alice Springs Sheraton

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In light of the fact that the Alice Springs Sheraton is almost entirely debt-financed, what are the details of the annual interest bill?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the annual interest bill would change somewhat from year to year. As indicated in a recent Northern Territory Government Gazette, the Northern Territory government has become an equity participant in the Alice Springs Sheraton instead of underwriting the project. That would change considerably the amount of interest that would be due and payable. If the honourable member would like to specify a particular time, I would be happy to provide him with the answer to his question.

Alice Springs Sheraton

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

In an endeavour to assist the Treasurer to provide some meaningful information, I ask him what the anticipated annual interest bill for the next 12 months will amount to?

ANSWER

I will provide that information to the honourable member during the course of the day. I do not have the figure in my head.

Mr Smith: You just offered to give it to me.

Mr COULTER: It is quite well known that the Leader of the Opposition is against the Alice Springs Sheraton development and the Northern Territory government's participation in it. As I have said over the last 2 days, the opposition has gone to great pains to tell the people of the Northern Territory what our contingent liabilities are and to say that the government is throwing away money. The type of approach that he promotes is a deep freeze one: put your budget appropriation in the bank or on the short-term

Temporary Parliament House

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY and COMMUNICATIONS

In the light of serious concern in the community about the announcement that the government is considering a temporary Parliament House in the proposed TIO building on the old police headquarters site in Darwin, will he undertake to detail the savings to the taxpayer which this proposal will bring about in the long term?

ANSWER

I welcome the opportunity to clarify some of the facts surrounding my recent announcement to this Assembly regarding the possibility of a move by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly to interim facilities. I think that clarification is needed because of the opposition's gross misrepresentations of what I actually said.

The Northern Territory government has received a proposal from the Territory Insurance Office to erect a multi-storey building on the old police headquarters site. Part of the proposition included an interim Parliament House facility built as part of the complex and designed in such a way that, if and when the Northern Territory government and the parliament decides to build a permanent Parliament House, the facility could be converted to another use. There are commercial decisions that need to be taken by the Territory Insurance Office. However, I took the step, in accord with protocol, of advising the Assembly of an intention to alter the terms of reference of the New Parliament House Committee so that it could rightfully investigate the proposal with the Territory Insurance Office. I will be happy to receive the eventual outcome of its deliberations. It is not the intention of the Northern Territory government, nor has it ever been, to build a new Parliament House at this stage.

In my original statement to this Assembly I outlined some of the basic savings that would be made by the Northern Territory government. I will give exact details of those savings to the Assembly at a future date. In broad terms, the Northern Territory government has a commitment to build certain infrastructure over the next 5 years. That includes a new computer house. I do not need to tell members that the Northern Territory is a leader in computerisation among Australian governments. We have successfully developed and sold systems to the benefit of many places including Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and some of the Australian states. Computers cannot just sit out in the midday sun in the car park. They require a controlled atmosphere with regulated humidity and temperature levels, and they require a specialist building to accommodate them. There is one building that fits the requirements of a future computer house. A conservative estimate of the cost to the government to construct a suitable building at this stage, would be between \$13m and \$15m, whereas to convert the Chan Building would cost a measly \$2m. Surely that makes economic sense and surely, in the light of that, the government should be permitted to make some decisions to commence investigations that will eventually save the Northern Territory government and its taxpayers quite a considerable sum of money.

Let me reiterate that it is not the intention of the Northern Territory government to build a new Parliament House, but it certainly is the intention of the government to investigate the relocation of all government departments and buildings in the light of future requirements and to the benefit of our economic position.

I will tell you something else, Mr Speaker, that the opposition should listen to. Money does not grow on trees. The extra \$4m spent by the Tourist Commission a few years ago put the Northern Territory on the map throughout Australia and the world with 'Let's be part of the story of the Northern Territory'. You do not do it for nothing.

To say, 'Oh woe, the Northern Territory Tourist Commission has only \$1.1m extra', is absolute rot. We are maintaining a service and expanding. The Northern Territory Tourist Commission will expend roughly \$1.5m this year on a television campaign and a brochure campaign aimed at the family man and the motorist. The comment by the opposition in relation to the Tourist Commission's budget this year and the moneys allocated to it 4 years ago is an absolute furphy and a misrepresentation of the facts. Members opposite know it and they should not receive credit even for raising the point.

Fringe Benefits Tax

Mr B. COLLINS to TREASURER

Mr Speaker, 2 weeks ago, following an hour's meeting I had with the Prime Minister, I made a public statement that I was confident that, after the federal budget, there would be significant changes to the fringe benefits tax. I received a message from the Prime Minister's office early this morning saying that the tax applicable to recruitment and relocation benefits is to be amended. It is more than a technical amendment, as he well knows. Has the Treasurer been advised that these significant areas of additional and unwarranted costs to the Northern Territory government and private enterprise will be removed, and can he tell the Assembly, in approximate terms, what the likely savings to the government and the private sector of the Northern Territory will be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Arafura for his question. I guess even the Prime Minister was confused because he supported this tax and told us what a wonderful thing it was and then he referred to it on Channel 7 television as a mad fringe benefits tax. You can understand the confusion on this particular issue.

Mr B. Collins: It is only a technical amendment.

Mr COULTER: Now we have a technical amendment before us.

The answer to the first part of the honourable member's question is no. When leaving my office to travel to the Legislative Assembly this morning, I was not in receipt of advice that a technical amendment would be provided to the fringe benefits tax. However, the Chief Minister and I were given an assurance during the Premiers Conference that the federal government would examine the matter, in particular the relocation expenses. We all know that some weeks later the then Leader of the Opposition travelled to Canberra. Before he went down for the job interview, the member for Arafura - and full credit to him - travelled to Canberra to put the Territory's case.

In answer to the second part of the honourable member's question, the cost saving to the Northern Territory is \$3.9m. The people at Groote Eylandt would have had to spend \$1.8m and Ranger \$800 000. A considerable sum would also have had to be spent right throughout the Northern Territory. As a result of representations that the Chief Minister and myself made in Canberra, ably

Funding for Northern Territory Schools

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Will there be any adverse effects on funding for Territory schools following the Commonwealth and Northern Territory budgets?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it would be useful to make a clear distinction between the effect the federal government's budget will have on education in the Northern Territory and the effect that the Territory's budget will have. As the Treasurer said yesterday, now is the time for responsible economic management and restraint. Nevertheless, despite severe budgetary constraints, overall levels of direct funding to schools have been maintained and there have been real increases in some areas. This is because the welfare of Territory schools and students has been given the highest priority in determining the budget for the Department of Education.

Our primary concern was to ensure that the education of students in our schools did not suffer because of economic restrictions. This has not been an easy task, particularly following the federal government's budget last week. A number of programs operating in the Territory were either abolished or cut severely, and the department's ability to absorb these cuts is severely limited. We have the impact of the fringe benefits tax to contend with, as well as an increase of 5¢ a litre for petrol and diesel, which will have a very severe impact on departmental travel costs, especially in remote places.

In that economic climate, it was no mean achievement to ensure that schools did not suffer. A number of areas have received increased funding in the Territory budget, as well as several new programs. These include additional staff to meet increased student enrolments. In other words, the student staff ratio will be maintained. We have allowed for a further 20 assistant teachers for homeland centre schools. Typical of the federal government's attitude to the Territory, their funding was discontinued. However, the Territory government has picked up that particular area and 49 new teacher scholarships will be offered next year. The Territory budget allows also for fitting out the Casuarina Secondary College library extensions, and a grant to the Marrara Christian School to provide additional help for Downs Syndrome students.

Mr Speaker, these are some of the items we have had to find funds for. As a result, the TAFE and unskilled sectors have had to suffer some cuts. For example, the department will need to cope with restrictions in the areas of administration, travel, staff and office vehicles. However, we have a commitment to provide our students with the best possible education and facilities for education. I can assure honourable members that we intend to uphold this commitment.

Residential Colleges

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is the Northern Territory government intending to alter existing residential arrangements for Aboriginal secondary students at Yirara College in Alice Springs and Kormilda College in Darwin?

stage, the Presbyterians are still very keen to take over Kormilda College and to run it as a private school, including Aboriginals from all areas of the Territory amongst the students and providing the type of education Aboriginal people are requesting from Kormilda. However, we are still a fair way from achieving any concrete results. I would also like to advise the Assembly that before anything definite is decided in regard to Kormilda College, there will be consultation with the Teachers Federation and other professional organisations which have members employed there.

Mr B. Collins: What about the consumers?

Mr MANZIE: For the member for Arafura, I will repeat that the recommendations came from consumers at the college. One of the groups that made the recommendation that this particular action be taken by the government comprised members of FEPPi, the Aboriginal consultative group to myself on Aboriginal education.

The members of the opposition do not really want to know, Mr Speaker. They are not concerned about what people involved with education say or recommend. That does not interest them. If it seems contrary to their own ideology, their bitter and twisted ideas, they do not care what the majority of people want or what the people involved want. We all know that the ALP does not really believe in the democratic process. If something does not agree with its concepts, it is no good. It is a shame, but I think that most Australians are beginning to realise that the ALP concept of democracy is different to that understood by the average Australian. As more people wake up to that fact, we will see some big changes in government in this country.

Northern Territory Abattoirs

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Following recent federal court decisions regarding Mudginberri abattoir, is he aware of any flow-on industrial disputation in other Northern Territory abattoirs?

ANSWER

It is interesting that that question should have been asked today, Mr Speaker, because this morning I heard a news report that the AMIEU was forming a \$2 company to export merino sheep. Of course, in the past the unions have strongly opposed the export of our livestock, particularly merinos. Obviously, they have experienced a change of heart and the reason they have given is that they need to pay a debt of \$1.76m to Mudginberri abattoir.

Honourable members will be aware of reports of confrontation between the union and the abattoirs at Victoria Valley and Meneling recently. As I understand the situation, the union has asked to view the abattoirs' times and wages records. If the union has reason to suspect that there is a breach of the Northern Territory Meat Processing Award, it has a right to do that. There is doubt, though, whether it has the right to do that without giving reasons. As I understand it, it has not given reasons for wanting to view those records. I guess that might be a question that will have to be answered by legal means.

On the other hand, if the union has no reason to suspect that a breach has occurred, the meat processor is not obliged to allow it in. That has been the

laws together are known as the constitutional laws. I suspect this is where the honourable member developed this idea, given his previous associations with New Guinea. The general laws must not be inconsistent with the constitutional or the organic laws. Organic laws must not be inconsistent with the constitution. Thus, in the general framework that the honourable member is suggesting there is a 3-tiered level of power: the constitution, the organic laws and the general laws.

In some countries, laws dealing with electoral matters for distribution of seats, the establishment of government departments, the judiciary etc, may be dealt with in organic laws. In Australia and most other countries based on the United Kingdom model, laws on these subjects are included either in the relevant constitution or are part of the general laws. That is by way of background, Mr Speaker. But I must say that I do not want enter into the discussion on the constitution and the constitutional structure of the future state of the Northern Territory by setting any preconceived rules. As was outlined in my statement this morning and, I believe, with the support of the opposition and the Select Committee on Constitutional Development, we have agreed to prepare a draft discussion document for submission to a constitutional convention and eventually a referendum of the people. To prejudge those issues, even before the select committee of the Assembly has had a chance to consider fully all the pros and cons of various options that are open to us, would be presumptuous and totally contrary to what I was trying to achieve in the statement I made this morning. I am not saying we will have organic laws or we will not. The honourable member is welcome to raise those issues and they will be considered during the process of the development of the constitutional structure at a future date.

Fred's Pass Police Office

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

What future use is planned for the Fred's Pass Police Office, which is not manned at present and used only infrequently for police purposes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Fred's Pass office has been closed as a manned police station. It has a relatively low use. Whilst I am not prepared to confirm this at present, the honourable member advises me that, basically, it is used as a crib room for the patrols that operate through the Darwin rural area. If that is the case, and there is excess capacity there, we can better utilise that facility. I am quite prepared to have that matter investigated and to work in cooperation with the Litchfield Shire Council.

IPTAAS

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH

I understand that, as from January 1987, states and territories will be taking over responsibility for this scheme from the Commonwealth. Can he give an assurance that the services provided to Territorians by the present scheme will be maintained and that there will be no downgrading of assistance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, not only can I give that assurance but I can guarantee that the many concerns that people have had in the past will be addressed. I think

Northern Territory Theatre Company

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Being well aware of the minister's long term and genuine interest in the arts, when will the Northern Territory Theatre Company be established?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I recognise that the member was chairman of that formidable committee which visited various states of Australia to investigate theatre companies and organisations involved in theatre. We were very quick to recognise some of the waste involved in presentation of the arts throughout Australia, and we have taken every possible step to establish a theatre company that will be run on entrepreneurial lines, and will give professional theatre to the people of the Northern Territory. To that end, at this stage, we have appointed an interim management committee to bring the company into being. It has appointed an executive director and he is working with the committee on the final stages of drafting the company's constitution.

Some \$0.25m has been provided in the current budget for the establishment and operation for the company's first season. I think honourable members and the people of the Northern Territory will be pleased to know that the program for the first production of the Northern Territory Theatre Company will be in March next year.

Payments to Public Servant

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Has he yet received a comprehensive report from the Public Service Commissioner concerning the retrospective appointment of Mr Keith Ward to the public service on full benefits? If so, what does the report say, and is he satisfied with it?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have received a more comprehensive report from the Public Service Commissioner in respect of this matter.

Mr B. Collins: Does 'more comprehensive' mean that he says 3 times for you not to make any statement, instead of 2?

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, if the honourable former Leader of the Opposition wanted to jump in and run the debate, he should have stayed in the job he had before.

Mr B. Collins: It was the pregnant pause. It went on a bit long.

Mr HATTON: Mr Speaker, I have received a more detailed response from the Public Service Commissioner setting out the full benefits that were received by Mr Keith Ward. I am satisfied that Mr Ward received no benefits that were inconsistent with those otherwise made available to union organisers in similar situations when on leave without pay from the public service or public sector employment.

I am satisfied that the Public Service Commissioner took the decision to deem Mr Ward to be employed retrospectively on the basis of correcting what he perceived to be an injustice perpetrated on Mr Ward in 1981.

official and received two-thirds of a teacher's salary paid by the equivalent of the teaching service in the Northern Territory at that time.

Throughout the period that he was in the teaching service, he continued to work as a full-time union official. I might say that he was on leave without pay right through until he was elected as a member of this Assembly. During that period he continued to receive: seniority; the ability to apply for promotions; to appeal against promotions; continued occupancy of a government house; the right, which he exercised in 1978, to purchase the house through a government home loan scheme; eligibility to contribute to the government's superannuation scheme; and many other benefits.

Mr Speaker, the point I make is that those conditions have been provided to union officials. In fact, with the support of the government of the day, the honourable Leader of the Opposition was actually able to provide the opportunity for a full-time teacher's federation to develop in the Northern Territory. That was because the government paid the salary of a union official for 9 months, while he went out recruiting. I do not object to that, and I want to make that very clear. I do not object to those benefits having been provided. What I do object to is political games between the ACOA and the Northern Territory Public Service being brought into this Assembly, through the Leader of the Opposition and his friends seeking to pretend that there was something special about this case.

I have stated throughout these sittings that Mr Ward was appointed retrospectively and that that was different to other situations. The circumstances differed also in that, in the beginning, he was refused the right to leave without pay. In his judgment, the Public Service Commissioner, as an independent commissioner, took a decision to correct what he believed was an injustice perpetrated in 1981. I might add that it was subject to a court action dating back to 1982 which still remains unresolved.

Undoolya Subdivision

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS

Last week, he stated that the federal government had given permission for the seismic array at Undoolya to be moved. In view of this, when can the public of Alice Springs expect to be told whether the Undoolya subdivision will be the next to go ahead?

ANSWER

The cost of moving the seismic array is being studied by officials of the Department of Transport and Works and the Commonwealth Department of Local Government. No announcements have yet been made in regard to the Undoolya subdivision because of the various factors involved in coming to a final decision. Of course, members would be aware that the sewage ponds are in the Commonage area and their final location has yet to be decided. Some pressure has been placed on the government over the last few years to relocate those sewage ponds, but that exercise will cost some \$16m or \$17m.

Other areas in the vicinity of Alice Springs are being investigated at the moment with a view to future development. Until such time as the government is in a position to make a decision in regard to the Undoolya subdivision development, I will not make any comment. An article in today's paper relates to a statement purported to have been made by Alderman Bob Kennedy. The article says that:

concede that the administrative area of the Department of Community Development has seen substantial cutbacks within this budget. The department has been trimmed to the minimum with the deletion of 3 executive positions and a staffing realignment to comply with tight budget constraints. Administrative efficiencies have been effected, while departmental resources such as cars, computers, staff training and travel have been pruned. The department will be closely monitoring its inevitable cutbacks in program areas to ensure that its clients do not fall into the poverty trap. The federal government will have to do more to play its part in achieving this also, as will local government instrumentalities, a point I have already made on several occasions during this sittings.

Benefits Received by the Leader of the Opposition

Mr PERRON to CHIEF MINISTER

In question time today, the Chief Minister provided information to this Assembly concerning benefits received by the Leader of the Opposition during the period in which he was a full-time union official. Will he have these benefits costed and converted into dollar terms for the information of this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not know what this information would add to the debate, but I ask the member to place his question on notice.

White Gums Area Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

In answer to a previous question, he quoted from a recent article in the Centralian Advocate. Will he make a detailed statement about what is planned and, specifically, what water supply arrangements are to be made in the Commonage and White Gums areas?

ANSWER

The article in the Centralian Advocate of 28 August caused many eyebrows to be raised. In my previous answer I referred to Undoolya, whereas the member for MacDonnell's question relates to the White Gums area. Let me say that I shall not be rushed into making a detailed statement about the future of the Commonage area, just because a real estate agent who happens to be an alderman on the Alice Springs Council, appears to be confused.

However, there has been publicity in Alice Springs about a rezoning proposal to enable a rural residential subdivision along Harper Road. It has been on display for quite some time, and is presently being considered by the Alice Springs Town Planning Authority. Of course, the member for MacDonnell would be aware that after an announcement was made that Leichhardt Development wished to develop that area, the Alice Springs council passed an almost unanimous resolution to try and stop it, even before it went on display. I insisted that it be displayed, and I understand that objections were made by some 13 school children, as the article said, and by other people in the area.

More importantly, the Conservation Commission has a role in considering the proposal. It will be advising the planning authority regarding a preliminary environmental report which has been prepared on behalf of the

Companies Register? If it came from the assets and income of the company, why did it not show up in the return supplied to the registrar? If it came from income, how can it be a non-trading company as it has declared itself to be?

Mr Dale: Is that the question Bob just handed you?

Mr B. Collins: I have a bit of trouble getting the call.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will resume his seat. Two days ago, the honourable member for Arafura passed a sarcastic remark from his seat and, until such time as the Chair receives a written apology, the honourable member for Arafura will not get the call from this Chair.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, I move dissent from your ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Dissent must be in writing.

Mr B. COLLINS: It is in writing, Sir, if an attendant could come and pick it up.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Can I ask the honourable member to ...

Mr BELL (MacDonnell): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr BELL: The honourable member for Arafura has just moved dissent from your ruling. It is scarcely competent for the honourable Attorney-General to persist with an answer to a question until that matter is resolved.

Mr SPEAKER: I am advised by the Clerk that there can be no dissent. The call is therefore to the honourable Attorney-General.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr B. COLLINS (Arafura): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my moving forthwith a lack of confidence in the Speaker.

The Assembly divided:

Ayes 6

Mr Bell
Mr B. Collins
Mr Ede
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Smith

Noes 19

Mr D.W. Collins
Mr Coulter
Mr Dale
Mr Dondas
Mr Finch
Mr Firmin
Mr Hanrahan
Mr Harris
Mr Hatton
Mr McCarthy
Mr Manzie
Mrs Padgham-Purich
Mr Palmer
Mr Perron
Mr Poole

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