

## 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.

**23 February 1988**

**24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER FOR TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

**17 May 1988**

**62. Hungerford Refrigeration Pty Ltd**

Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. Did the Territory Insurance Office pay outstanding tax bills incurred by Hungerford Refrigeration or Rupert Hungerford; if so -
  - (a) were the payments for company tax;
  - (b) group tax; or
  - (c) an individual's income tax.
2. Is the TIO's investment in Hungerford Refrigeration secured; if so -
  - (a) in what ways is it secured; and
  - (b) what assets is it secured against.
3. Who first identified Hungerford Refrigeration as a prospect for investment in the Northern Territory.
4. Who made the first approach to Hungerford Refrigeration for it to transfer operations to the Trade Development Zone.
5. Why did the directors of Hungerford refuse to provide directors' guarantees to meet any debts incurred by the company.
6. What were the full terms agreed for the transfer of Hungerford Refrigeration to the Trade Development Zone.
7. What departmental evaluations were made of the Hungerford Refrigeration company; its prospects, its projects and its products.
8. What departmental evaluations were made of the reports prepared for the TIO and the TDZ on the prospects of Hungerford Refrigeration.

9. What is the full extent of public funding (including TIO involvement) in Hungerford Refrigeration.
10. Was a directive issued by the Hungerford Refrigeration Board for the company to pursue local orders rather than export orders; if so, why was this done.

**16 August 1988**

**64. Tenth Anniversary of Self-Government**

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Can the Chief Minister provide an itemised account of the expenditure on the celebrations for the tenth anniversary of self-government.

**4 October 1988**

**66. Sentencing under Criminal Code**

Mr COLLINS to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

In court cases relating to slayings as heard by the Alice Springs Court since the introduction of the Criminal Code 1 January 1983 -

1. How many people have been charged with a slaying offence.
2. How many people have been convicted of -
  - (a) murder;
  - (b) manslaughter;
  - (c) committing a dangerous act; and
  - (d) other.
3. What is the average head sentence imposed by the judge on the above convicted persons.
4. What is the average actual sentence served by the above convicted persons.

**67. Treatment of Ear Infections in Schools**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. What are the number and percentages of school-age children, by rural school in the Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine areas, that have:
  - (a) glue ear;

- (b) perforated ear drums; and
  - (c) educationally significant hearing impairment.
2. How many of the schools mentioned in question 1 above have Health Workers involved in full time campaigns at the school to treat the conditions.

**68. Leased Premises**

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How much space being leased by the NT government as at 1 October 1988 -
- (a) was occupied; and
  - (b) was unoccupied.
2. What are the locations/addresses of the above leased areas.
3. In each case, what is the length of the lease.
4. What is the monthly cost of leasing those areas not occupied.
5. Are there cleaning contracts for the unoccupied leased areas; if so, what is the monthly cost of the cleaning contracts.

**22 November 1988**

**69. BTB Campaign**

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. Under orders issued pursuant to the BTB Campaign in the regions: Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Barkly, Katherine, Victoria River, Arnhem Land and Top end; how many (a) cattle and (b) buffalo have been -
- (i) destocked;
  - (ii) shot on property; and
  - (iii) trucked for slaughter.
2. What are the current herd numbers on a best estimate basis for each of the abovementioned regions for (a) cattle and (b) buffalo.

23 February 1988

20. **Staffing of Giles House**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many staff are employed at Giles House.
2. In which categories are these staff employed.
3. How many people have held the position of Superintendent at Giles House during -
  - (a) 1984;
  - (b) 1985;
  - (c) 1986; and
  - (d) 1987.
4. Of the other staff employed at Giles House, how many changes have there been in each category of staff in 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

ANSWER

1. As at 11 August 1988 there were 17 staff employed at Giles House.
2. Categories of staff employed were:
  - 1 x A8 Superintendent
  - 3 x A6 Senior Groupworkers
  - 10 x A5 Groupworkers
  - 1 x A3 Receptionist
  - 1 x Cook
  - 1 x Domestic
3. Number of occupants in the position of Superintendent were:
  - (a) 1984 - 2
  - (b) 1985 - 4
  - (c) 1986 - 2
  - (d) 1987 - 1
4. Staffing changes against positions other than Superintendent at Giles House:

Category	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
3 x Sen Groupworkers	4	4	21	10
10 x Groupworkers	7	10	24	20
1 x Receptionist	2	1	1	2
1 x Cook	1	1	1	2
1 x Domestic	0	2	1	2

**23. Advertising - Channel Eight, Darwin**

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How much did government departments and authorities spend on advertising on Channel 8, Darwin in 1987.
2. What was the breakdown of that amount by department and authority.

ANSWER

ORGANISATION	AMOUNT
Department of Education	2 372
Road Safety Council of the NT	16 282
Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries	615
Department of Health and Community Services	18 941
Department of Lands and Housing	1 730
Department of Transport and Works	11 712
Northern Territory Racing and Gaming Commission	64 357
Power and Water Authority	2 370
Department of the Chief Minister	2 238
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TOTAL	\$120 617
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The above figures have been extracted from accounting records for the year 1987.

Departments and authorities not listed above had nil expenditure in relation to the question asked.

17 May 1988

**42. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

29 applications have been made by Northern Territory government departments and authorities under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act 1982.

The purpose of each request was as follows -

1. To obtain copies of Commonwealth Department of Education documents relating to the decision not to grant AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY to Northern Territory students.
- 2-3. To obtain details of Commonwealth tendering procedures and the application of those procedures to the awarding of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands shipping services contract (2 requests: 1 to Department of Arts, Sport, Environment, Tourism and Territories and 1 to Department of Administrative Services).
4. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding his decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 26 March 1982 on the Kaytej, Walpiri and Warlmanpa Land Claim.
5. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 30 September 1981 on the Warlmanpa, Walpiri, Mudbura and Warumungu Land Claim.
6. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs re decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 31 March 1982 on the Yutpundji-Djindiwirritj (Roper Bar) Land Claim.
7. To Department of Aboriginal Affairs pursuant to S.54 of the act, for a review of decision to make deletions from documents, produced in response to 6 October 1983 application in respect of the Warlmanpa Land Claim. Further documents were produced by the department on 24 May, 12 June and 18 June 1984.
8. To Minister for Primary Industry regarding communications between the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Commonwealth; the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union and the Commonwealth; and the Meat Inspectors' Association and the Commonwealth (i.e. the 'Mudginberri Dispute').
9. To Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations regarding communications as detailed in previous item ('Mudginberri Dispute').
10. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land comprising part of the Tennant Creek Water Control District, recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 26 March 1982 on the Kaytej Land Claim.

11. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land comprising part of the Tennant Creek Water Control District, recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 30 September 1981 on the Warlmanpa Land Claim.
12. Application to the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations pursuant to S.54 of the act, for review of decision to refuse access to documents said to be 'not relevant to the terms of the request' of 21 August 1985 ('Mudginberri Dispute').
13. Application to Department of Primary Industry, pursuant to S.54 of the act, for review of decision to refuse access to documents said to be 'not relevant to the terms of the request' of 21 August 1985 ('Mudginberri Dispute').
14. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Sir William Kearney, in his report of 4 March 1985 on the Mount Allan Land Claim.
15. Further application for letter referred to (but not supplied) in documents produced in response to original application of 21 January 1986 in relation to the Kaytej Land Claim.
16. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant area recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 2 July 1981 on the Alligator Rivers, Stage II Land Claim.
17. Further request (by telex) to Department of Aboriginal Affairs re minister's decision on Alligator Rivers, Stage II Land Claim.
18. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant Areas 1 and 2 of the Finnis River Land Claim as recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Toohey, in his report of 22 May 1981.
19. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service regarding documents relating to 'Kakadu National Park, or any part of it, its environment and cultural and natural heritage'. (1987 World Heritage Listing).
20. To Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment regarding 'Kakadu National Park ...' (1987 World Heritage Listing).
21. To Minister for the Environment and the Arts regarding research undertaken/being undertaken in relation to Kakadu National Park and the proposed World Heritage Listing of Kakadu, Stage II. This request covered documents created from 8 July to 26 October 1987 (i.e. since last request).
22. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service re research undertaken/being undertaken in relation to Kakadu National Park and the proposed World Heritage Listing of Kakadu, Stage II. This request covers documents created from 8 July to 26 October 1987 (i.e. since last request).



23. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding decision to grant land recommended by the former Aboriginal Land Commissioner, Mr Justice Maurice, in his report of 17 July 1987 on the Jila (Chilla Well) Walpiri Land Claim.
24. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding information in the Department of Arts and the Environment on any arrangements concerning management, etc of Katherine Gorge National Park or any part thereof. Relates to anticipated ministerial decision re Jawoyn (Katherine Area) Land Claim.
25. To Director, Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Purpose of request same as previous item.
26. To Minister for Arts and the Environment. Purpose of request same as previous 2 items.
27. To Chairman, Aboriginal Development Commission regarding information relating to Chilla Well Pastoral Lease No 764 and the Jila (Chilla Well) Walpiri Land Claim. Relates to proposed review of the decision of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in respect of the Jila Well Land Claim.
28. To Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding advice given by any person on the preparation of an answer given by the Hon Ian Viner in the House of Representatives on 17 November 1976. Relates to consideration of stock routes by the federal government during debates on the principal Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill in 1976.
29. To Minister for Transport requesting access to the working papers of the Independent Economic Inquiry into Transport Services to the NT (Hill Inquiry).

**43. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to TREASURER

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**44. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**45. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**46. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**47. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.

2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**48. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**49. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**56. Applications Under Freedom of Information Act**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many applications under the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act have been lodged by the departments and statutory authorities for which you are responsible.
2. For what purpose was each request made.

ANSWER

Refer to answer provided to Written Question No 42.

**16 August 1988**

**65. Darwin Private Hospital**

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many private ward bed nights have been leased back to Royal Darwin Hospital during the last 6 months.
2. What have been the monthly occupancy rates for both the public wards and private wards during the last 6 months.

3. How much rent will Health and Life Care be paying the NT government for the land on which the new private hospital is being built.
4. How much money has the NT government contributed towards the establishment of the new private hospital.
5. If Health and Life Care sell their private hospital, will there be a breach of contract. If so, what conditions of the contract would have been contravened.
6. To what extent has the initial projected cost of the new private hospital been exceeded and supplemented by NT government expenditure.
7. What level of federal subsidy has been received during the last 6 months for the private wards.
8. What is the expected level of federal subsidy to be provided over a 12-month period for the new private hospital.
9. Will the private hospital be providing a rehabilitation service; if so -
  - (a) at what cost will it be provided to the NT government;
  - (b) how will it be made available to clients, who do not have private hospital cover; and
  - (c) how does the government intend to apply the Work Health Act provisions.
10. What arrangements have been made with doctors for -
  - (a) the provision of specialist services at the private hospital; and
  - (b) remuneration of specialist doctors for their services.
11. What cost sharing arrangements have been entered into enabling economies of scale to occur between the Royal Darwin Hospital and the private hospital for -
  - (a) ambulance services;
  - (b) pharmaceutical products;
  - (c) x-ray films and equipment; and
  - (d) laundry and catering.
12. What arrangements have been made to contract out pathology, radiology, catering and any other services to the private sector.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

ANSWER

1. 17 bed days.
2. There are no public wards in the Darwin Private Hospital and it is presumed this question relates to the Royal Darwin Hospital.

Occupied bed rates for the last six (6) months for both hospitals are as follows:

<u>Month</u> <u>1988</u>	<u>RDH*</u> <u>Occupied</u> <u>Bed Days</u>	<u>Combined</u> <u>Occupancy</u> <u>Rates</u>	<u>DPH**</u> (assuming 72 beds equipped)	<u>Occupancy</u> <u>Rates</u>
August	8858 (601)	94%	NOT AVAILABLE	
July	8593 (557)	86%	1042	47%
June	7750 (523)	86%	897	42%
May	8453 (550)	91%	983	44%
April	7550 (480)	84%	924	43%
March	8298 (651)	89%	1013	45%

\* Figures include both private and public patients, figures bracketed are the number of private patients.

\*\* Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd figures are based on midnight bed-state only and do not include day patients.

3. The lease is between the Northern Territory and the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd. The value of the lease was \$600 000 and is convertible to freehold when all requirements of the lease have been finalised.
4. No money has been contributed by the NT government.
5. The Crown Term Lease and Development Agreement are between the Northern Territory and the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd.

There is nothing in the agreement preventing a change in the corporate structure of the lessee company or sale of the property. However, any sale involving a change of lessee will require consent by the minister under the Crown Lands Act for transfer of ownership.

6. The NT government has not subsidised the project which was completed under the contract price.
7. Direct Medicare subsidies to private hospitals terminated on 1 October 1986 and no federal subsidy was paid to Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd.
8. As per question 7, no subsidy applies.

9. The Darwin Private Hospital has rehabilitation service facilities in the new building as was required by the Development Agreement. However, there has been no decision about if and when the facilities may be commissioned.

In relation to the Work Health Act provisions, if a patient has an approved claim for workers compensation and rehabilitation treatment is necessary, then the insurer will be responsible for the cost of same.

10. (a) Applications for visiting Medical Officers rights are scrutinised thoroughly and appointed with specified clinical privileges. These arrangements have been approved by the Chief Medical Officer and are common to private hospitals elsewhere and necessary for accreditation under the Australian Council of Hospital Standards.

In line with part-time employment conditions in the Northern Territory Public Service, the Department of Health and Community Services is considering part-time employment for some staff medical officers who wish to treat patients in the Darwin Private Hospital, providing there is no conflict with their obligations to the Royal Darwin Hospital.

- (b) Remuneration for specialist services will be by direct patient billing as currently applies to private patients in the Royal Darwin Hospital, but is a matter between the patients and the specialists concerned.
11. (a) St John Ambulance will continue to provide all ambulance services for patients of both hospitals.
- (b) The Royal Darwin Hospital supplied the Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd with most of its pharmaceutical supplies at cost plus 10% until 6 October 1988. This arrangement has now been terminated. However, arrangements have been made to cope with any emergency situation until Darwin Private Hospital establishes its own pharmaceutical service.

It is anticipated that a private pharmacy will lease part of the facilities to establish its business. However, certain specialist services, eg total parenteral nutrition, could be uneconomical for them and may be requested from Royal Darwin Hospital. If this occurs these will be charged at the commercial rate.

- (c) Radiology services for the interim Darwin Private Hospital were provided by Royal Darwin Hospital. Charges were levied by hospital specialists exercising their Rights to Private Practice. A limited service is being provided to the new facility by Royal Darwin Hospital pending a long term decision by Darwin Private Hospital about future arrangements.

- (d) Royal Darwin Hospital is supplying a laundry service to the Darwin Private Hospital for both general use and for operating theatre use. The charge is based on weight.

Darwin Private Hospital Pty Ltd has arranged its own catering services and is not utilising Royal Darwin Hospital catering facilities in the interim facility.

12. It is unclear whether this question relates to the Darwin Private Hospital or the Royal Darwin Hospital as arrangements for pharmaceuticals, radiology, laundry and catering are covered in the answers to question 11.

Ministerial Expenses

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the light of events in Queensland, the Territory public has the right to ask him to give his personal and unequivocal assurance that there have been and are no rorts operating in relation to his Cabinet's ministerial expenses. Does the Chief Minister give that assurance and, secondly, will he undertake to establish procedures for full public disclosure of ministerial expenses?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I certainly am not aware of any rorts of the system being used in the Northern Territory in relation to ministerial expenses. The system is well defined in the Northern Territory and there are guidelines available to those people who are able to claim expenses, such as ministers, departmental heads and the like. I see no reason why the Leader of the Opposition would infer in any way from events in Queensland that this government is not acting with total propriety. I do not see any reason why we should provide information for the Leader of the Opposition to go on fishing expeditions, which is what he wants to do. Every time that a minister might use his ability to entertain people in the Northern Territory, obviously the Leader of the Opposition would like to know who, why, where and when. I think that a request for such information would be totally unreasonable and, in fact, I do not believe that it would be provided by any government in this country.

Library at Karama

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There has been some comment in relation to libraries, the importance of community access to them and the provision of government funds for the stocking of those libraries. In light of that, can he indicate what progress has been made and what plans there are to establish and stock a library at Karama?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. I understand that he is circulating a newsletter within his electorate stating the need for a public library in Karama in the not-too-distant future. I understand that he is very disappointed because he has been trying for a long time to have a complex developed in the Karama area in which a library could be situated. The Northern Territory government is committed to providing book stocks, furniture and equipment to establish a library in the Karama area.

I am sure that all members of the Legislative Assembly and, in fact, many people throughout the community are aware of public concern in relation to the book vote. Indeed, this morning, I tabled a petition in relation to that very matter. Some of the comments which have been made are a little disappointing. Library funding was increased in the 1988-89 budget from \$4.894m in 1987-88 to \$5.623m for this financial year. That represents a 14.8% increase. The book vote was maintained at last year's level and priority was given to purchasing monographs which are hard-cover volumes which minimise problems in long-term collection and storage. Librarians were involved in that decision-making process. However, I acknowledge the public concern and I will endeavour to do something about it.



Often, the opening of new library facilities puts pressure on funds which are used to provide magazines and the other items referred to in the petition. Those items are very popular in the community and it is natural for an outcry to occur when funding for them is reduced. I am sure that the member for Karama would not accept that the library proposed for his area should be sacrificed in order to enable libraries in Darwin, Casuarina and Nightcliff to provide their customers with magazines. I think that he would be disgusted by such a proposal. Similarly, I am sure that the existing libraries would not appreciate the member for Karama sticking up a poster in an empty shop saying that books could not be provided in that area because the money was being spent to provide magazines for the Darwin, Casuarina or Nightcliff public libraries.

There is great interest in libraries throughout the Northern Territory. The member for Barkly has written to me in relation to library services in his area. We have opened new libraries at Palmerston and Jabiru. We have done a great deal. I am not saying that we should not open new libraries because of the need to maintain book stocks in existing libraries. We have to provide library services to meet the needs of people throughout the Northern Territory and our commitment to that is shown by the fact that, at self-government, we had only 4 libraries and since then we have opened 23 public libraries. We have increased public library book stocks significantly, to include over 245 000 items. The country borrower service has been extended and service points have been opened at Darwin, Gunn Point Prison, Darwin Hospital and on board the oil rig Jabiru Venture. We have made a strong commitment to providing library services and we will do everything in our power to ensure that we are able to maintain a reasonable book vote.

The government is committed to expanding the library services. Let us not forget that. I have mentioned the areas that we have catered for over the years since self-government and I am happy to indicate to the member for Karama that the government is committed to providing book stocks, furniture and so on for a library at Karama. I indicate that the government will be endeavouring to reinstate the book vote to an acceptable level during the coming year. I want to make that clear. We have not just been bloody-minded about it. We have to provide services to people throughout the Northern Territory and it is very difficult ensuring that all people are catered for. However, during the course of the coming budget process, I will endeavour to reinstate the book vote to an acceptable level.

#### Ministerial Expenses

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Will he table in this Assembly the guidelines that are in place that determine the travel and expense arrangements entered into by ministers and senior public servants?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am prepared to advise the Assembly of the arrangements under which ministers and senior public servants are allowed to use their expense allowances. I point out to the honourable member who, in his earlier question, seemed to draw some inference from events happening in Queensland into a Northern Territory context, that I would ask him to be very cautious about implying that practices may exist in the Northern Territory such as those that are coming to light before the Fitzgerald Inquiry. They range pretty broadly over there. It would be unfortunate if the Leader of the

Opposition sank so low as to imply, in relation to all those people who hold positions in the Northern Territory similar to those held by people in Queensland who have found themselves in trouble as a result of the Fitzgerald Inquiry, that perhaps they have something to feel guilty about. It would be most unfortunate and unkind of him to imply that in any way in relation to the very dedicated people who are working for the benefit of the Territory rather than, as he seems to be doing, working to tear us all down at every opportunity.

Consultation on Amendments to Mining Act

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Is he aware of statements made on ABC radio this morning by the member for Nhulunbuy about lack of consultation in respect of amendments to the Mining Act? Can he confirm that the honourable member has been left in the dark?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, it was somewhat of a shock to me this morning to hear some of the statements made by the member for Nhulunbuy, the opposition spokesman on mining matters. If the honourable member is in the dark about this matter, it must be because he has taken an unfortunate knock on the head and suffered a bout of amnesia.

On ABC radio this morning, he said that he could not comment on the Mining Act amendments because he had no knowledge of them and implied some sort of fault on the government's part in failing to consult the opposition on this matter. I find it odd that the honourable member has forgotten completely the special briefing on the amendments that he was given on 3 October by senior officers of the Department of Mines and Energy - the Director of Mines, the Director of Special Projects and a member of my staff. At that time, he was offered the opportunity of further briefings and he responded that he merely required copies of the minister's notes. He failed also to mention that he was given a copy of the second-reading speech via the member for MacDonnell, and that he was again offered further briefings. I understand that the member for MacDonnell may not have actually delivered that particular document but it was delivered to him last evening at about 6 pm by a member of my staff and he undertook to forward it to the member for Nhulunbuy who was not in Darwin at the time.

Mr Bell: That is the last time that I will talk to a member of your staff and give an undertaking to pass anything on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, that is an example of the cooperation that we receive from the opposition. There will be no more speaking to my staff - for which they will be grateful, I am sure - by the honourable member for MacDonnell. However, an attempt was made to pass on the second-reading speech to the member for Nhulunbuy via the member for MacDonnell.

Mr Speaker, I guess we could improve on that situation. We could give the honourable member an annexe at my office. We could make him cups of coffee and hold his hand 24 hours a day. I could fly over to Nhulunbuy a couple of times a week and bring him up to date on the latest gossip. Other than that, I do not see how we could have been more cooperative with the member ...

Mr Smith: Perhaps he could fly to Moscow to meet you.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, he did not even arrive in Darwin until late yesterday, and it is a fair way from Moscow. But I got here yesterday without too much trouble. In short, he has had ample and adequate opportunity and all the consultation that he wanted, and his comments on radio this morning were really unjust.

Some of his statements were incredible. I will give an example. The interviewer: 'Normally, when there are so many changes being made, would there have been some effort to liaise with you or at least let you know what is going on?' This question was directed to a member who was briefed on 3 October by the Director of Mines within the Department of Mines and Energy. The member for Nhulunbuy replied: 'For the smooth passage of any legislation, I think it is worth while for the appropriate person in the opposition to be notified and, indeed, to be briefed on whatever legislation is going to be introduced. It certainly makes for a smoother passage of legislation'. That came from the member who had had a briefing by the department. Officers in the department went to a great deal of trouble and offered him every opportunity for further briefings. He went on to comment about the industry and said that the industry had not been consulted.

In a speech that will be given by the President of the Chamber of Mines tonight, he will discuss the amendments and the consultative process. For the benefit of the member for Nhulunbuy, let me mention some of the matters that will be covered in that speech. Indeed, I hope to see the honourable member at the Chamber of Mines dinner this evening. The president will say that the amendments to the Mining Act follow the closest possible consultation between the NT Chamber of Mines and senior officials of the NT Department of Mines and Energy, a situation which indicates the very satisfactory working relationship which has been developed between the chamber and the Department of Mines and Energy. That is what will be said in tonight's speech. Indeed, I have been conducting one-to-one consultations with Cliff Emerson on this matter. The carefully considered amendments have been canvassed throughout wide cross-sections of the community, not only within the mining industry.

The member for Nhulunbuy did himself no credit at all when he said on radio this morning: 'I would have thought that there would have been the simple introduction of a new act rather than introducing a whole raft of amendments which will just make it that much sloppier'. The Chamber of Mines has strongly endorsed the amendments and the honourable member's comments downgrade the legislative process and the consultative process. I hope that the member will go on radio tomorrow to correct some of the statements which he made today.

#### Flood Mitigation Works and Recreation Lake at Alice Springs

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Has the contract for the removal of sand from the bed of the Todd River been completed? If so, what effect is that expected to have in terms of flood mitigation? It is understood that the investigations into the foundations for a flood mitigation lake at the Telegraph Station were delayed for some time. What stage has this project now reached and when is it anticipated that it will be completed and a decision made? Recent radio comments stated that the recreation lake investigations have been completed. Can the minister give his assurance that no work will be undertaken on the recreation lake at Emily Creek that may be detrimental to the flood mitigation dam at the Telegraph Station?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will do better than simply give answers to those questions. I will provide the member for Flynn with a full briefing from the department. I think it would be very worth while for him to take the opportunity to receive such a briefing. Indeed, a considerable amount of work has been carried out. I have some updates on sand extraction that I can make available to him, but I take this opportunity to offer him a briefing on the complete flood mitigation strategy that is being carried out at the moment. I am sure that the answers to his questions will be provided. However, I will take the questions on notice, with the exception of the question on sand extraction. I will provide the answers during the course of these sittings. In relation to such an important issue, he should avail himself of a briefing from the department.

I can advise the honourable member that about 85% of the Todd River sand extraction program has been completed and the remaining work is due to be completed very shortly. All sand channel improvement work upstream of the causeway has been completed, most of the dead timber upstream has been removed and all vegetation has been removed from the islands downstream of the causeway. Work still to be done - and it may well have been done in the course of the past week - involves the removal of bamboo clumps and a number of uprooted stumps upstream and removal of sand islands downstream.

All this work has been done in close liaison with the Aboriginal custodians. Sometimes that has meant work has not progressed as quickly as envisaged but I must commend the custodians for their willingness to assist in the flood mitigation exercise and their valuable assistance. Indeed, I spoke to those people. The member for Braitling accompanied me at the time and it was really a worthwhile meeting with those people. Certain trees were duly fenced off. A new access track was opened on the casino side of the river and it passed close to a large tree which the custodians considered to be significant. The tree was duly fenced off and all parties were happy with the outcome.

This is a sensitive issue and we are progressing slowly on it in full consultation with the people involved. I hope that a satisfactory resolution to the flood mitigation problems for Alice Springs will be forthcoming early next year.

ABS Statistics on Territory Population

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister was reported in Monday's NT News as saying that the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures pointing to a Territory population decline were incorrect. Could he explain why he believes that this is so and what does he believe is happening with the Northern Territory population figures?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in so far as the population figures affect the employment figures in the Northern Territory, I will accept the question otherwise I would pass it on to the Chief Minister. For some time, many comments have been made with regard to the population decline. Yesterday, the NT News had a headline on page 2: 'Huge Drop in the NT Population'. It referred to a downturn of 900 people between June 1987 and June 1988. Quite clearly, that

was the case shown according to the ABS figures but, as I have pointed out a number of times over the last few months, those figures are contradictory. In fact, right underneath that headline yesterday was another headline: 'Record Numbers Face Exams'. It indicated that a record number of Territory students were sitting for Year 12 examinations this month and that the minister had said that 1155 full-time and part-time students were taking the South Australian publicly examined and school assessed examinations. The number was an increase of 251 on last year's figures, which would not indicate a decline.

In January 1988, the labour force was 67 200. In June 1988, it was 70 700 and, in October 1988, it was 73 000. That is an increase of 5800 from January to October this year.

From December 1987, private telephone connections, over and above disconnections in the period December 1987 to June 1988, were up by 535, which hardly indicated a decline in the population. Private electricity connections over disconnections were up by 397. General connections were up only by 3, but private connections were up by 397. Bank deposits increased by \$6m. Car registrations were up by nearly 100 from September 1987 to September 1988, 348 to 440, hardly indicating a decline in population over that same period.

Mr Ede: How many houses?

Mr McCARTHY: Mr Speaker, I will talk about the housing area. Certainly, in that last 12 months, almost 300 houses in Darwin were vacated by the air force. Those people have not left the Territory. Some have, but they were replaced by people from south who moved into Katherine. The population of Katherine is up significantly. We cannot lose that number of people from the Darwin population without showing some sort of an anomaly, and that is what has been shown, an anomaly and nothing more.

#### Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, I have provided the minister with a copy of a press release by Mr Koh and Mr Clarke in relation to the Darwin International Grammar School. He may wish to comment on the accuracy of that press release in his answer to my question. Did he undertake a rescue operation on behalf of the Darwin International Grammar School, and was he in charge of negotiations with a Japanese consortium for the rescue of the school? Is it not a fact that, on 8 November, when negotiations that he initiated had reached a critical stage, he chose to go overseas on a trip? In doing that, was he not simply walking away from those parents who had made commitments to the school and leaving in the lurch the creditors, who now stand to lose quite substantial funds as a result of the crash, and so has failed to protect their interests?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in order for fair answers to be given to the questions that have been raised, and at the risk of it sounding as if I am ducking those questions, I ask that they be referred to the Minister for Education. If the honourable member wants to hear the full story and the answers to his questions, I ask that he refer them to the Minister for Education.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The questions are redirected to the Minister for Education.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will have a great deal of pleasure in answering these questions because, quite frankly, the honourable member is way off track. There has been a considerable amount of comment of late about this particular exercise. We need to make it very clear to the opposition and to the member for Barkly exactly what the situation has been in relation to this issue. I am sure the public is very much aware of the situation. Mr Speaker, let me put it very clearly. DIGS was to be a private school and private companies are involved. No government money has been involved to this date. The assistance that we have offered is in line with normal government policy on funding provided to non-government schools, and there would be no call on government assistance until the school had opened. That is very clear.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is not interested in hearing what the facts are. He interjects continually. I will get to the point that he raised about the involvement of the Minister for Industries and Development. I might say that the minister is to be commended, not condemned, for his efforts in trying to salvage this project. If the honourable member will wait and listen we will come to that particular matter.

The subject of the land has been raised. It is Crown land under a development lease ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: He sold the farm.

Mr HARRIS: There is a performance clause in that development lease which makes it a requirement of the owners to construct school buildings to the tune of something like \$7m by the end of January 1989 and, if they are not able to do that, the lease will revert to vacant Crown land.

The company ran into difficulties in attempting to raise finance, and that is no secret. In fact, I made a statement in August about that because I was concerned about the financing of this school. Obviously, the opposition is not aware that these concerns came to the government's attention at an early stage and that the government took appropriate action. I will read from a press release dated 5 August 1988:

The education minister, Tom Harris, says that, despite strong community support for plans to establish an international grammar school in Darwin, efforts to find commercial backing for the venture seem to have encountered difficulties. The minister says that, although supporters of the school are searching for an alternative through which the project could still be saved, prospective parents and students should now consider alternative arrangements.

Again, I was making it very clear that problems were being experienced with obtaining finance to get that worthwhile project up and running.

Mr Harris said he is deeply disappointed to have received information on further difficulties with a worthy venture which could offer choice in education and opportunity for business and the community in Darwin and throughout the Northern Territory.

Members of the opposition continually knock this issue. We are trying to provide opportunities for students in the Northern Territory. We do not want

them running interstate. We should be able to provide the necessary standard of education in the Northern Territory and we need to cater for the kids from the bush electorates, electorates like those of the members for Barkly, Stuart and MacDonnell. Those areas need to be catered for and we should have facilities that will meet that need.

The press release continued:

Mr Harris said he had first expressed concern about the project 1 month ago after hearing of its failure at that time to attract bank finance.

This press statement was released in August. One month before that I was very aware of the time needed to get the school up and running, the time needed to get high school facilities in place, not primary school facilities, to enable parents to have their children educated correctly. That was no big secret. We knew, the parents knew and the community knew that there were problems. Obviously, members of the opposition are finding this out only now. The press release continued:

Mr Harris said he was reluctant to do anything which could undermine the future of the school but he believed that the time had come and parents and students should be informed about the school's prospects. He said a senior officer of the Education Department had been fully briefed on the project. He would be readily available to parents who had children enrolled in the grammar school and who sought assistance in making alternative arrangements.

That officer is Dennis Hawes and he is still available. I urge parents who do have a concern to ensure that they contact him.

Following that press release, meetings were held with parents - and some of the members of this Assembly attended those - to try to save this project. This has not happened suddenly and the opposition knows that. We were concerned and we informed the parents that there was a problem. At that stage, none of the creditors had any chance whatsoever. They were looking right down the barrel, and that is a fact. It has not happened suddenly; it has been going on since August.

The owners attempted to raise finance but there was no sign of any realistic financial support forthcoming. Only after all of these efforts had been made by the current owners and by other people in the community who wanted to get this project up and running, only after all of those avenues had been explored, did the Minister for Industries and Development become involved as a facilitator, a person who was trying to bring together the vendors and potential investors in an effort to put that private project together. That is when the honourable minister tried to arrange the meetings between these people. He was trying to save this worthy project and that was his only part in this whole exercise.

The opposition is trying to create the impression that there is something underhand has occurred. We are interested in getting that school up and running and we always have been. The honourable minister is to be commended for his efforts. I emphasise again that that was the only part that he played. At that point, the project was in the hands of the private vendors, private investors and private creditors. Could I say that those creditors, who in August were looking right down the big black hole with no chance of getting any money whatsoever, would have had some chance of getting some of

their money back if the minister had been successful in bringing these people together. There was a chance. As far as the creditors are concerned, can I indicate very clearly that it is not my role to provide information in relation to their financial dealings. That is a matter for them to declare. If honourable members want that sort of information, they should go to the current owners or to the creditors themselves. Honourable members would be aware of many of the companies involved with this project. It is unfortunate that private negotiations have broken down. There is still a proper process that they can undertake to seek a return of the money that they have invested. Anyone in the private sector knows that. It is not up to the government to become involved. If members want the names, they should approach the owners or the creditors themselves.

Finally, there is a most important point. I am aware that Andrew Macle hose has written a letter to parents informing them that registration and application fees will be returned this week. All money collected by way of those fees was paid into a trust account and some of that money is now being returned.

Mr Speaker, on this side of the House we are committed to ensuring that the private sector plays an important role in the education system in the Northern Territory. In the states, about 25% of the education system is within the private sector. In the Territory, the figure is about 16%. I ask members of the opposition to address the real concerns of people in the bush and to try to think about Territorians generally. They should not simply knock projects. We want projects to get off the ground and the opposition should be assisting, instead of looking for scuttlebutt to use to attack the government. I do not mind the opposition trying to do that but it should give some thought to the community and to the efforts of people such as the Minister for Industries and Development. He has tried to get this project up and running and that is the only role he has played.

I reiterate that I am very disappointed that it has not been possible to get that Darwin International Grammar School up and running. It would not be fair if I were to say to parents that there was a chance of its operating next year. We all know that it will not and we have made that very clear. I am even more disappointed that the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, continually carps about such matters instead of trying to do something for the education of children in the Northern Territory.

#### Crocodiles

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

This question relates to an answer which the minister gave to a question from the member for Ludmilla on 11 October this year. The minister concluded his answer with this statement: 'We have a program for the removal of problem crocodiles. It removes them as effectively as shooting does. The crocodiles are becoming a valuable resource. In the very near future, crocodile farming will probably rival the pastoral industry as a source of income'. How many problem crocodiles have been removed under the Conservation Commission's program this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, during the last sittings of this House, I advised members of my enthusiasm about the growing importance of crocodiles in the Northern Territory's economy. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of the



excellent work of Conservation Commission staff in protecting the public from crocodiles which obviously pose a significant danger to people and livestock. I stress that because, regrettably, a particular member of the crossbenches was not above using the unfortunate death of a young man in a remote area to run a scare campaign about the dangers of crocodiles in an attempt to score political points. Unfortunately, that member seems to feel that that is an appropriate direction to take.

We have established permanent crocodile traps in the Darwin Harbour and these are supplemented by night-time ranger patrols each fortnight. A similar system operates in Nhulunbuy and at Borroloola, with some activity also occurring in the Ngukurr area. Since 1 January this year, the Conservation Commission has removed a total of 112 problem crocodiles, most of which have been relocated to crocodile farms. Of these, 11 have been caught at Nhulunbuy, 5 in the Borroloola area and 4 in the Ngukurr area on the Roper River. The other 92 have been removed from the Darwin Harbour between Charles Point and Tree Point. The commission also is supervising the removal of freshwater crocodiles from the Manton Dam area by the proprietors of the crocodile farms. That dam is to become a significant recreation area for Darwinians and, obviously, the removal of freshwater crocodiles is important in that context. In Darwin, Nhulunbuy and Borroloola, rangers will continue to monitor and remove any nuisance crocodiles, particularly over the forthcoming breeding season when there is considerable movement of animals from location to location.

Call at Question Time

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to SPEAKER

Mr Speaker, what was the reasoning behind your allocation of the call for questions without notice in the last sittings of the Legislative Assembly on 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13 October when I did not receive recognition from the Chair at all, despite constant and repeated attempts on my part? I was not apprised of any unparliamentary behaviour on my part that would have attracted this dismissal of my attempts at recognition.

ANSWER

I assure the member for Koolpinyah that it had absolutely nothing to do with unparliamentary behaviour. Whilst I am sometimes reluctant to make personal problems public, I think the honourable member leaves me no option. Some months back, I had an operation on my left eye for the removal of a cataract. During the last sittings, that eye was playing up and my vision to the left side was something of a problem. I apologise to any member on my left side who did not receive a call. However, if any honourable member wishes to examine the records of questions asked on a balance system by either side of the House, those records are readily available.

Community Government

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

How many communities in the Northern Territory have adopted community government and are any other communities considering such a proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the matter of community government is fairly dynamic at present. Whilst this question was asked at the last sittings, I am pleased that it has been asked again. Since the last sittings, we have had an increase in community governments and a number of other communities are currently talking to the Northern Territory government about community government. The number of community government councils currently in existence is 14 and there are 20 councils under the Local Government Act, 6 of which are municipal councils. The most recent council is at Daguragu which is based at Wave Hill, the township where land rights were born.

I have been concerned for some time that the very real and genuine effort of the Northern Territory government to establish local governments in Aboriginal communities was being damaged by the efforts of the bureaucracy of the land councils to thwart any move to lessen their own power. There is no intention nor any possibility that the Northern Territory government could take away any powers from land councils. Their powers are provided to them under federal legislation and no legislation of the Northern Territory has any ability to take away the provisions of the Land Rights Act.

If land councils have a problem with community government, it is a problem associated only with the fact that people at the community level are having a say in their own affairs. We all know that that is difficult under the present Land Rights Act. In fact, under that act, the powers are too often with the bureaucracy and the bureaucracy controls the community. Community government provides for communities to have a say, to make their own laws, to set their own boundaries and to handle their affairs as they see fit. That has not been the case with the land councils and the restrictions which their bureaucracies impose on communities. In the East Arnhem area and in other parts of the Northern Territory, we are seeing a push on the part of various communities to try to establish their own land councils. I applaud their efforts. They have recognised that there is a better way and that they can handle their affairs more effectively at a local level.

Recently, I have raised my concerns about land councils with the federal Ministers for Local Government and Aboriginal Affairs. I am concerned about the efforts of the land councils to oppose the very genuine movement towards community government in the Northern Territory. The land councils have denied that they oppose this but I have clear written evidence that that is not the case. People who are presently considering community government in their areas have told me that the land councils have informed them that they are keen to do away with the Territory's community government legislation and to replace it with their own. Every time that we have managed to get a community government in place during the last couple of years, a process which takes some years in terms of negotiating boundaries and the particular local parameters, the land councils have moved in in our wake. This has occurred at Borroloola, Belyuen and Ngukurr, where the land councils have attempted to change the directions that have been set by the communities and to insist that they look at establishing councils under federal legislation.

We know that the federal legislation provides only for Aboriginal people. It gives no power to Aboriginal councils to control Europeans living in their communities. Our legislation is far superior. Local government is a state and territory responsibility, recognised by the federal government, and the federal minister has reassured me that that is her view. Unfortunately, the land councils are attempting to cause problems and, in that context, I am very pleased that the Northern Territory's fourteenth community government council

has been created at Daguragu in my electorate. That means that every major community in the Katherine region is now under community government.

Clearly, community government will expand. Every community which has opted for it states that it is the best method that it has ever had for handling its affairs at community level. I am proud to say that the scheme is making great inroads in communities throughout the Northern Territory. We need to make greater inroads in the Centre, where the land councils have made it very difficult for us in the past. I believe that, given time, we will be able to establish community government in central Australia with the same effectiveness as we have done in the Katherine area and the Top End generally.

Darwin International Grammar School

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer to the honourable minister's reply to the previous question on this subject in which he stated that Darwin International Grammar School was a purely private enterprise and not the concern of the government. For his benefit, I would like to quote from a press release issued by Mr Koh and Mr Clarke from DIGS and Education Holdings. It states: 'The government negotiated with the Japanese consortium. The proprietors of DIGS never met the buyers. All negotiations were conducted by the government and the owners of DIGS were not aware of the details of those negotiations'. My question is: how can the government walk away from any responsibility it may now have to the creditors of that failed enterprise given that, if that press release is correct, the scrip for all the shares in DIGS was delivered to the government? I ask the minister whether he had any agreement to disclaim any liability to the creditors of DIGS after having become the holder of the DIGS shares?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a nonsense. What are you on about, Brian?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Ede: You took it over.

Mr HARRIS: Took it over nothing!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Both honourable members will address their remarks through the Chair.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the notion that we took it over is a load of nonsense. I said very clearly that the creditors were in trouble back in August. They were already committed then. The Minister for Industries and Development should be commended for trying to give them some chance of getting their money back. That is what he did. That is the only role he played. He tried to bring things together and ultimately, unfortunately, that did not happen.

I do not know what the member for Stuart is on about. We have tried very hard, and we will continue to try, to have a grammar school developed in the Northern Territory. Indeed, I hope that members opposite will help us to do that. It is important to be very clear that, in this particular instance, a private investor was considering taking over the shares of the current owners. That has not occurred and that is the end of the story.

'The Territory on the Move'

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Has the Chief Minister done anything about publishing an addendum to 'The Territory on the Move' so that people interested in the booklet's contents will have access to a list of contact persons, with their telephone numbers and addresses, and so that the booklet will have a practical use?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not initiated any action to publish an addendum to the booklet setting out the Territory's economic development strategy. Indeed, this is the first time that I have heard of such an idea.

Mr Collins: I talked about it during the debate on the economic development strategy.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, if the honourable member raised it in the last sittings, I apologise for the fact that I have not heard about it before. Perhaps the honourable member raised it during the adjournment debate or at some time when I may have been absent temporarily from the Chamber.

The development strategy is an excellent document which has been distributed very widely throughout the Territory. I am sure that people who are of a mind to seek further information about any of the directions outlined in that document would be able to obtain a copy of the Northern Territory Government Directory which lists all the departments in the Northern Territory and key people to be contacted. Of course, phone calls to ministers' offices would certainly result in people being directed to the appropriate area within the government where they can obtain information. Indeed, I am sure contact with members would also result in their being pointed in the right direction. I do not see any point in printing additional lists of names and phone numbers and circulating them to thousands of people who already have the document right across Australia, not only within the Northern Territory. I am sure that it will not deter any of those people who are keen to help us develop the Territory.

State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

When did the government agree to pay a developer's fee to Tipperary Developments?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the Acting Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to ask the first of the questions which were referred to by his leader last night. I wonder whether he wishes me to answer all 6 questions now or simply to answer this one.

Agreement on the development was reached after lengthy negotiation with Tipperary Developments. It was formalised in a signed agreement on 28 October 1988 and the public was informed of that through a media briefing on 31 October.

Domestic Cat Problem

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I preface my question by giving some background information. One of my constituents alleges that a problem exists in relation to the keeping of cats by a neighbour. This matter has come to the attention of several ministers. The Minister for Lands and Housing, the Chief Minister and the Minister for Health and Community Services are all familiar with it. Can the Department of Health and Community Services do anything to alleviate my constituent's problems in relation to the keeping of cats by a neighbour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, we certainly cannot afford to get this one by the tail. I am aware that the honourable member's constituent has complained about his neighbour's cats and their smell to members of the Legislative Assembly, including ministers, to officers of my department, the Ombudsman, the NT Planning Authority and the Darwin City Council. Mr Speaker, I can assure you that he is a very frustrated gentleman. The apparent lack of administrative action by this or any other arm of government has led to his complaint being the subject of articles in the NT News. It has also been mentioned on 3 radio shows.

In terms of my department's role, the first issue is whether it has powers to prevent loss of amenities due to infringements by a neighbour. The short answer is that it does not, provided that there is no contravention of public health regulations and no threat to public health. Secondly, is it reasonable that a large number of animals be kept on a small suburban block? The answer is that, unless there is demonstrable risk to public health, the matter should not concern the Department of Health and Community Services. It is more appropriate that control of domestic pet numbers be managed at a local government level. What is appropriate on a 5-acre block at Humpty Doo or a small suburban allotment should be a matter for the relevant local government authorities rather than the Legislative Assembly whose decision would impact on the entire Northern Territory.

In several states, local councils regulate the number of cats which can be kept on an urban block through appropriate by-laws. The department has

provided copies of these by-laws, together with a letter from myself, to the Darwin City Council. The council has the power to introduce by-laws along similar lines if it considers it appropriate. My department arranged for the Ombudsman to take a role in the matter as a conciliator. Since the owners of the cats do not appear to be breaching any legislation, there is no means by which my department or any other departmental or local government authority can retrieve the amenity which the complainant alleges he has lost due to the alleged unpleasant cat odours.

In fact, since the meeting was arranged between the Ombudsman, the complainant and the owner of the cats, the complainant in fact has taken civil action against the owner of the cats. The Ombudsman will take no further action until that action has been resolved. It is quite apparent that any legislation that I might initiate to try to control the frustrating problem that this complainant has would relate to the entire Northern Territory and would therefore be inappropriate. It is a matter for local government and I suggest that all local governments throughout the Northern Territory take this matter into their thoughts and try to do something about it because this person is extremely frustrated by the inaction.

#### State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Has a fixed price for the State Square project been arrived at and, if so, what is it? If not, at what stage of the development does the minister expect that the fixed price will be arrived at?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I note that this is a question that the Leader of the Opposition posed yesterday, but he found it too difficult to hang around to hear the answer. Quite simply, if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or the absent Leader of the Opposition had listened to the debate and had taken note of what has been presented to them over a long period about the fixed fee, they would realise quite simply that the fixed fee is arrived at when all of the subcontract packages have been tendered on, accepted and summarised - that is, added together, for the benefit of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. That would then form what would be a fixed price that would be non-variable by rise and fall and which would remain for the duration of the project unless, of course, the government saw fit to amend the extent of the work or other such matters that would form a legitimate variation at our demand. With that exception, the price would remain constant for the duration of the project.

Mr Ede: When do you expect that?

Mr FINCH: When the last of the subcontract packages have been determined and that process completed.

With regard to the Supreme Court building, 2 buildings are involved. The Supreme Court is moving immediately - as one could hear if one opened one's ears - to the adjacent building. There is fast tracking of design and subcontract package documentation, that is the plans, specifications and bills of quantities, and they are currently being put together for excavation and then the basement. Subsequent packages will be forthcoming over the next 2 months. When the final package is tendered on, we will have the fixed price.

Mr Ede: It could be a year or so.

Mr FINCH: I will repeat for the member for Stuart that, depending on the rapidity with which all the packages can be put together, one would expect that, within that 2- or 3-month period, the final fixed price will be determined. What is important is that the agreement has in place the mechanism for obtaining that fixed price. The project control group will determine the size and content of each of the subcontract packages, who will tender on them and who will have the power to vet those tenders. Allowance must be made for a normal tendering period of 2 or 3 weeks for each package and post-tender assessment of a short period of a week or so or perhaps longer if there are complications in assessment. Assessment relates to price as well as local content. What is in place is the mechanism for moving to the fixed price. There will not be any rise and fall formula as is the normal case with projects of a similar size.

#### Gurig National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

I remind him of work that has been progressing for some time in respect of the development of a tourist resort at a location called Coral Bay within Gurig National Park. What progress has been made on that proposed wilderness resort at Coral Bay?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the wilderness resort proposal at Coral Bay in the Gurig National Park is an extremely exciting project. Honourable members will recall that, in April this year, agreement was reached between the Cobourg Peninsula Sanctuary Board and Coral Bay Wilderness Pty Ltd to open the way for a \$7m development to proceed. The intention is to construct a wilderness lodge with 32 double rooms, with a high level of privacy and high-quality support facilities. The government has been advised by Coral Bay Wilderness Pty Ltd that all the conditions for the project to proceed have been met, including the locating of a suitable water supply which was causing some problems, and the project is to go ahead. Design work and some of the prefabrication for the materials will occur over this wet season and builders are expected to be on site in late March or early April next year. I believe the resort is scheduled to open in April 1990.

The Territory government strongly applauds the project as an important development for the Territory tourism industry in general and for the particular region. I think it is worth while mentioning that it is a good example of cooperation between the Northern Territory government and the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Cobourg area. As members are aware, many years ago, the Territory government negotiated an arrangement with the traditional owners of the Cobourg Peninsula which resulted in the setting up of a board which was controlled by the traditional owners. As a result, the Conservation Commission has been involved in running the park according to a plan of management. Things out there are working extremely well.

The Coral Bay Wilderness Resort is an example of the enlightened approach adopted by the members of the board and the community there. It is an example to other Territorians of the positive results that can occur when there is cooperation. It shows the willingness of the Territory government to proceed in cooperation with traditional Aboriginal people.

State Square Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In response to my last question, he did not give an answer in relation to the Parliament House. I am sure that he would like to answer it now. I ask him also why Tipperary Developments is still in control of the State Square project when it has ceased to be a private development and has become entirely a public project?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, the timing in regard to Parliament House will be far more normal, if you like, as opposed to the fast-track approach with the Supreme Court building. The timing for construction is late next year, around September. The documentation will be completed at one time although there will also be subcontract packages. The project team will be able to put out to tender at the one time all of the subcontract packages for Parliament House. In the middle of next year or a little later, we should have the fixed price for Parliament House.

The justification for continuation of control by Tipperary Developments is its proven track record as a developer and its performance. It has a reputation for being able to get on with the job and produce results. More importantly, over a period of 14 months, it was involved in the planning of the precinct - the landscaping, location, and stages of the development of the project. It was involved from the beginning. Obviously, the company and its consultant team have an intimate knowledge of the project. That includes the interpretation of the client requirements for both the Supreme Court and for the Parliament House as it is now developing.

It would have caused disruption to an extremely tight program, among other things, to have paid Tipperary Developments off as was suggested by some members of the opposition, the crossbenchers and by the 5-firm consortium. It was suggested that we should pay the development fee, bid the company goodbye and use its idea. The government is not prone to behaviour of that sort. We did not act in that manner in respect of the John Holland slipway at Frances Bay nor in respect of the Hans Voss proposal at Kahlin Bay where the government has been asked to become involved in the ferry terminal and charter boat facility. This government is not about dumping those who have put in great effort and gone to great expense at high risk to come up with proposals leading to what is a very worthwhile project that this government has sought to put into place very quickly.

We have stuck with people who have been innovative, people who have put forward concepts and worked tirelessly over a period of 14 months. Of course we have stuck with them, and quite justifiably so. What amazes me is the lack of support that we probably ought to have from members on the crossbenches in particular who, one assumes, are free-enterprise oriented. It may be presumptuous of me to suggest that the member for Koolpinyah is free-enterprise oriented so I will exclude her from my comment. However, I would have thought that those members would have supported this government sticking with people who have come up with developments. Not only is the government justified in sticking with that project manager, the financial arrangements we have with the company are most appropriate and extremely fair to the Territory taxpayer. As I say, the developer ought to be totally supported, at least by members on the crossbenches.



Manton Dam

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

I have had a long-term interest in the use of Manton Dam as a recreational facility. What progress has been made on upgrading this facility and when will it be opened?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, he has been well known for his participation in aquatic sports in recent times. The Manton Dam project will offer a great opportunity for boating personnel to participate in the sports that they love so much, particularly during the wet season. In short, work to prepare Manton Dam as a public aquatic recreation facility is largely complete. All that really remains to happen is for sufficient wet season rain to fall to fill the dam. I guess this is the most nervous part of the decision that I have taken to open up Manton Dam. There is a 16-inch gate valve at the bottom of the wall and we were not able to drain the water out of the dam and therefore we put 2 12-inch siphon pipes over the top of the wall to drain the dam. That all looked pretty impressive. I went out there recently and it had drained it. I have been practising rain dances ever since in the hope that the dam will fill this year. A great deal of work has been put into clearing the dam and removing dead trees.

I understand that, at the moment, there are 20 crocodiles that have to be removed. They are believed to be freshwater crocodiles although there are conflicting reports about that. However, they are very large freshwater crocodiles. In fact, one of them is believed to be in excess of 3 m in length. I spoke in the Assembly previously in response to a question which I think the member for Koalpinyah asked about the dam. I said then that the people cutting down the trees with chain saws insisted on the presence of an armed croc spotter to watch them as they walked out into the water. That work is all but completed now. The road into the area has been completed. I understand the last pour of concrete has been completed for the boat ramp and it is all ready to go. It is a magnificent boat ramp and could quite easily accommodate 4 or 5 boats at a time, and the road also is particularly good.

The tree clearing has been completed, as I said, and the access road and car park are nearing completion. Tenders for the barbecue area closed earlier this month and this work is expected to be finished by early February. The allocation for this major exercise was identified in the 1988-89 budget as \$930 000. When completed, Manton Dam will offer residents of Darwin and its environs and, no doubt, a large number of visitors and tourists, a superb recreational water facility. It will fill an important community need for power boating and related activities such as water skiing, and a recreation environment free from marine stingers and crocodiles.

My latest advice is that Manton Dam should be open to the public some time in February next year, and I remind honourable members that the only factor that will stop that from happening is if the amount of water that is present in February is inadequate. All indications are that we will have an early and a large wet. I believe it will be a magnificent facility, and I look forward to seeing all honourable members out there. Perhaps we could have a barbecue and a water ski competition there. Members of the opposition and members on the crossbenches might like to challenge the government benches to some sort of water ski competition. I would encourage that as an ideal way of doing it. The first competitor should do 3 or 4 laps of the dam just in case there are

any crocodiles after the Conservation Commission has finished clearing them, but I have every confidence that commission officers have identified the 20 crocodiles. They have spent considerable time and effort identifying them and I would really like to ...

A member: We don't want to know their names.

Mr COULTER: In response to that interjection, they have identified them. They are well known to the Conservation Commission.

A member: Have they gone?

Mr COULTER: No, not yet, but they will be gone by February.

#### Corporate Plan for Department

Mr LEO to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer to an answer that the minister gave to a question I put to him on 13 October when he told the House that the Department of Labour and Administrative Services had employed the consultants Network Australia to develop a corporate plan for the department. Has that corporate plan been completed and will he provide a copy of that corporate plan to members of the House who may wish to have one?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the corporate plan has been completed, and I am quite prepared to provide a copy for the honourable member.

#### Pornography Pedlars

Mr COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

My question is in 2 parts. First, is the Chief Minister aware of a quote from John Howard in the Bulletin of 22 November: 'I am amazed, and I believe hundreds of thousands of decent Labor voters will be amazed that the government has been so gutless on this issue and has capitulated to the pornography pedlars of Canberra'. That quote related to the decision on X- and R-rated videos. Secondly, has he received a letter from John Howard which read something like this: 'I am amazed and I believe hundreds and thousands, well maybe tens of hundreds, of decent CLP voters will be amazed that the government has been so gutless on this issue and has capitulated to the pornography pedlars of the Territory'?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not strictly sure I got the gist of the honourable member's question. Matters relating to censorship belong primarily to the Attorney-General.

In regard to correspondence to myself, I do not recall receiving any such letter from the federal Leader of the Opposition along the lines that the honourable member indicated nor do I recall seeing in the Bulletin the article he mentioned. Sadly, because of time constraints, I do not have much time in which to peruse the Bulletin.

Kakadu National Park Fees

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TOURISM

I preface my question by saying that I was in Kakadu National Park a few weeks ago and I was appalled at the standard of management of the park and the lack of maintenance of some of the facilities there. Some of the walkways at Obiri Rock had been burnt to a cinder, obviously by a fire that had been very small and easily containable. It was still smouldering some hours or perhaps some days later. I was not particularly impressed with the standard of management there. Is the minister satisfied with the recent announcement from the federal minister responsible that the proposed entry fees will now be set at \$5 rather than the previously proposed \$10?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. It was an interesting press release that the honourable Minister for the Arts, Sport and the Environment, Senator Graham Richardson, issued last week and it was made more interesting because of its timing. Obviously, it was designed to gain maximum media attention. It was issued at 4.21 pm on Friday afternoon which I think every politician in Australia knows is a good time to issue something when you want to hide it.

It is quite apparent that the federal minister has ignored completely the comments and the requests that have come from myself, the Chief Minister, the tourist industry and the tour operators seeking some relief from this very high fee which, we are told, will come into effect from 1 January 1989. The imposition of fees was suggested originally by the ANPWS as a means of controlling visitor numbers. I believe that, in the days when fees were discussed originally and were implemented at Uluru National Park, \$1.50 was widely suggested as being an adequate fee. It is quite funny that the original charge proposed by Senator Richardson was \$10 per person, and this included the cost of a video presentation at the ranger's headquarters which cost a fee of \$3.

The Senator has announced now that the daily visitor fee will be \$5 for adults or a maximum of \$20 per family. We have a distinction in the Northern Territory. Uluru and Kakadu National Parks are now the most expensive parks in Australia, and I think that is disgraceful. These new fees will cover entry, recreational fishing, remote-area camping and ranger-guided tours. The video presentation will still attract a separate charge of \$3. This means that Senator Richardson has graciously responded to whoever wants to claim to have lobbied successfully - for example, our own Northern Territory Labor Senator Bob Collins or our Northern Territory member, Warren Snowdon - by reducing the fee by the great sum of \$2. Fantastic, Mr Deputy Speaker!

But what about the independent tour operators who provide their own guided tours? How much can they deduct from the \$5 entry fee to compensate them for not needing a park ranger to help them? Incidentally, in his press release, he states in the last paragraph: 'The minister stressed that the lower charges were an interim measure to soften the impact on the tourist industry. The effects of the new charges will be reviewed. If there is an increase in fees, he said, they will not apply before 1 July 1990'. Very condescending, Mr Deputy Speaker.

As has been stated previously in this House, we are not opposed to the user-pays principle and this would mean that guided tours, camping fires, film

presentation, the use of gas barbecues and hot water would be paid for by those using them at fair and reasonable prices. However, surely everybody realises that 99% of the people who visit the park do so on coach tour packages and are probably in the park for a period of 3 or 4 hours? Only a fraction of the 0.25 million people who visit Kakadu will need the services provided by the ANPWS. Territory families should be able to visit Kakadu or Uluru freely and at any time. It is their Territory. Why should they have to pay? The federal minister claims that the Commonwealth has spent considerable funds in providing high-class visitor facilities at Kakadu. In fact, one of the federal ministers made the statement a few weeks ago that the total amount of money that had been spent was about \$20m over the last 5 years.

On 15 November 1983, the then Leader of the Opposition in this House, now Senator Bob Collins, announced that the federal government was about to unveil tourist development plans for Kakadu, for facilities costing more than \$30m. He also foreshadowed the expenditure of another \$40m on park infrastructure. 3 days later, on 16 November, Labor's media machine in Canberra lifted the expected federal contribution to Kakadu's development to \$36m, and said it would be spent over 6 years.

On 18 November 1983, Prime Minister Bob Hawke at last made his grand announcement. The amount was not \$30m but \$70m, plus additional expenditure of \$36m over 6 years. On the same day, Senator Collins followed his leader and claimed that the initial investment by the federal government would be a magnificent \$20m which would create about 1500 new jobs, 200 more than the number promised by this big-noting leader in his press release. Of course, there was an election on at that time - an election for the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. You could tell because, later on the same day - 18 November 1983 - the Labor media machine put out information which promised that Hawke's \$36 commitment was likely to be only the start. Using the old ploy of 'government sources', it was announced that up to \$270m of government and private funds would be committed to Kakadu over 5 years and that the total federal expenditure was expected to be around \$72m. Of course, where private enterprise was expected to find and spend the other \$198m was not explained.

On the following day, 19 November, the then Minister for the Environment, Barry Cohen, issued a press release in which he said that federal government expenditure would be \$70m spread over 6 years. He said also that private investment in the same period would be \$40m and spoke of 1400 additional jobs. The Prime Minister could not restrain himself. He had election promise fever. On the same day, he told the media that there would be a \$70m public works program for Kakadu and that private enterprise was to invest \$40m in the same 6-year period. Still on the same day, the media was later told that the federal government was anticipating \$117m in government and private expenditure over 6 years and that this included \$36m already approved by Cabinet.

The vote-buying spree by his federal colleagues was far too much for the then Leader of the Opposition. On the following day, 20 November 1983, he issued a press statement saying that a Territory Labor government would negotiate with its Labor colleagues in Canberra to set up a branch of the federal Department of Housing and Construction in Darwin to help spend the \$70m that the federal government had promised to spend at Kakadu over the 6-year period. The federal Minister for Housing and Construction, Chris Hurford, weighed in to back him up. Months later, on 24 May 1984, he confirmed that he was considering the establishment of a Darwin branch.

Now let me go back to the election promises. On 21 November 1983, the Prime Minister spoke again of the \$36m that he was to spend at Kakadu over the next 6 years. Not to be outdone, Barry Cohen issued a statement on the same day in which he referred again to a total government commitment of \$117m. The machine was still working. Two days later, references were made to Hawke and Cohen spending \$70m over 6 years at Kakadu and creating 1600 permanent jobs. A week later, the then Leader of the Opposition must have thought that was a bit too rich. He spoke to the media about the \$70m creating 1300 new jobs, dropping permanency and 300 jobs in the process.

Since that time, 5 years have elapsed. Precious little of the promised \$270m, \$117m, \$110m, \$72m, \$70m, \$40m, \$36m or even \$30m - if you take the lowest figure provided - has been spent at Kakadu. We acknowledge that some road sealing has been done. There are some new buildings for the rangers and some wooden steps around several sites. Apart from that and the provision of signs, little has been done. The crocodile hotel has been built but the federal government had precious little to do with that. Now, however, it is asking for huge fees at Kakadu and Yulara.

Mr TIPILOURA: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! I think the honourable minister has answered the question. Frankly, I think he is carrying on too much.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr POOLE: It is asking for huge fees at Kakadu and Yulara. Does it need the money to honour its promises or is it trying to turn the parks into areas for use by rangers rather than the public?

#### BTEC Procedures

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH TO MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Accreditation of properties, with status ranging from highly infected to clean, is a feature of the BTEC program which comes within the minister's portfolio responsibilities. Bearing in mind the extreme undesirability of placing cattle from an infected property in proximity to cattle from a clean property which, I believe, would completely cancel out the clean status of those cattle, can the minister inform me whether it is correct that cattle from dirty properties destined for slaughtering at local abattoirs for the purpose of a carcass competition at the Darwin Show in July were housed at the Darwin showgrounds? Did all the other cattle at the show come from clean properties? Did the housing of the cattle from dirty properties change the clean status of all other cattle at the Darwin Show and, subsequently, the status of the properties to which they returned?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have no knowledge whatsoever of the matter raised by the honourable member. I am happy to have it investigated and to report back to the Assembly at an appropriate time.

#### Bus Stop in Coconut Grove Area

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

In prefacing this question, I remind the minister of my successful representations to him in relation to the need for a pelican crossing on Bagot

Road in the vicinity of the Millner Supermarket. That crossing significantly assists students of Millner Primary School who reside in Coconut Grove, as well as the pensioners and other people who live on the Coconut Grove side of Bagot Road. I also remind him of representations that I have made on behalf of citizens in that area for a bus stop to be located closer to the pelican crossing, particularly so that aged pensioners returning home from Casuarina Shopping Square do not have to walk too far. Can the minister advise me of what progress has been made in relation to that bus stop?

ANSWER

Mr Deputy Speaker, I well recall the honourable member's representations. In fact, I thought they were most unusual at the time, given that the area is well within the electorate of the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Hatton: Somebody has to look after them.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nightcliff is probably very correct in looking after the interests of residents of Coconut Grove. I commend him for his interest in the pensioners who live there. As honourable members would be aware, I have a commitment to the aged and those people who are theoretically enjoying their retirement.

Mr Bell: I suppose you will be there one day.

Mr FINCH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I certainly intend to retire in the Territory. Given the support which this government provides, the Northern Territory would have to be the most desirable place in Australia for pensioners to reside. I can advise the member for MacDonnell that the statistics support that. The increases in the aged population of the Northern Territory far outstrip the rate of natural growth. That is because people are now coming here to retire because support for pensioners is so great.

To turn to the subject of the member's question, following representations by the member for Nightcliff, the Darwin Bus Service installed a temporary stop close to the pelican crossing on the eastern side of Bagot Road. The purpose was to make it as easy as possible for pensioners returning with their shopping from Casuarina Shopping Square to cross Bagot Road safely. Some minor difficulties were encountered in providing a suitable location that was far enough from the crossing itself and the bend on Bagot Road near the Nightcliff Road intersection. That provides a temporary solution until such time as the Jape people proceed with their development. A slipway enabling buses to move off Bagot Road safely will be installed together with a new bus stop, probably complete with seating, which will provide much safer access for buses and passengers. Those works, together with the sheltered bus stop on the opposite side of Bagot Road, will bear witness to the very effective representations made by the member for Nightcliff in the absence of any from the Leader of the Opposition. That representation is leading to most appropriate solutions.

#### Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I am sure that this question without notice will come as no surprise to the Chief Minister, who will recall my question on notice about his use and his government's use of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information Act. I am sure that the Chief Minister will remember, as he reaches for his briefing

notes, that his written reply advised me that his government had used the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation on no fewer than 29 occasions.

By way of further preface, I would like to point out that the Chief Minister's look-alikes, the federal Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, and the NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, have both commented on that legislation during recent weeks. In the former case, the substance of the comment was that the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation ought to be extended. In the latter case, Mr Greiner advised that his government would be introducing freedom of information legislation. I ask the Chief Minister whether he is aware of his own use and his government's use of the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation? Is he aware of the views of his Commonwealth and New South Wales counterparts? Does he support them and does he support freedom of information legislation to the extent that he will introduce it in this fair Territory?

ANSWER

The member for MacDonnell is about to find out, as we have enunciated on a number of occasions, that the CLP is not part of the federal Liberal or National Party. The CLP is a party wholly constituted within the Northern Territory and has no masters outside the Northern Territory. I am certainly aware that the Northern Territory government has used the Commonwealth Freedom of Information legislation to obtain information on a number of occasions. Indeed, it was I who authorised the answers to the member's questions on notice. I am very much aware that we have taken those opportunities and indeed we will continue to do so when we see fit. However, that does not convince me that there is a need for such legislation in the Northern Territory. I do not propose to elaborate much further at this stage. I anticipated some debate on this very subject during the course of these sittings. Rather than bore honourable members today, we will save it up until then.

TB Cases West of Alice Springs

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Are officers of his department taking action to deal with the apparently high number of tuberculosis cases in the area west of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Once again, I had to organise its being asked through the backbench of the Country Liberal Party, the only effective opposition in the Northern Territory. Of course, the reason for that is that the shadow spokesman for health matters is not very diligent in carrying out his duties. That is why we have to use these tactics.

Analysis of data regarding tuberculosis in the Alice Springs and Barkly regions has shown a consistently higher incidence of reported tuberculosis over the past 8 years from the Hermannsburg, Papunya, Areyonga and Haasts Bluff area than for the Northern Territory generally and other parts of central Australia. The actual number of cases reported from that area since 1980 is 15. Treatment of clients and follow-up of contacts have been occurring as cases are identified. However, in view of the ongoing nature of the problem, additional measures are considered essential in order to decrease the incidence of tuberculosis in those communities. Mantoux testing, with

subsequent chest x-ray only where clinically indicated, will be implemented for children under 14 years. Portable x-ray equipment has been sent from Darwin and will be used for the Alice Springs survey.

#### State Square Project

Mr TIPILOURA to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What portion of the \$1.75m payment to Mr Warren Anderson's Tipperary Developments covered documentation costs and, secondly, what was the exact financial formula applied in calculating the \$1.75m payment to Mr Warren Anderson's Tipperary Developments?

ANSWER

In arriving at the fee of \$1.75m, cognisance was taken of a great number of factors. The fee was not based only on the experiences of the Department of Transport and Works and local industry. Statistics and information from right around Australia were evaluated in order to arrive at an appropriate fee for the developmental work. One is not in a position to indicate all of the individual components for a very good and logical reason. The developmental fee does not encompass only the return to the developer for his concept, the high risk investment that he has made through the engagement of consultants and the putting together of all of the various drawings etc. In this case, it involves also a great deal more, and I refer to the working up of the program to the starting point of detailed documentation. That includes the conceptual floor plans, the interpretation and the sketching of client requirements through the various proposals. The range of work included the evaluation of the government's requirements for office space, currently and for the future, the interpretation of usage of both buildings in the precinct, and the production of detailed sketch plans, models and perspective drawings.

Mrs Padgham-Purich interjecting.

Mr FINCH: Yes, some of the very raw sketch proposals, cost evaluations and area requirements that were part of the original office building, whilst only minimal, would have been part of the expense to which the developer was put. The study for the original office building was included.

Also involved was liaison with the NT government and its officers to finalise the design requirements and the production of developed sketch plans and detailed cost plans. It was necessary to obtain the approval of the Territory government through the Department of Transport and Works. There was the submission of the maximum guaranteed cost of the works, including provision for escalation and various other components such as consultants' fees. The company was responsible for the early commissioning of consultants, the preparation of the cash flows accordingly, and the production of the construction programming to meet the government's requirements.

In the early days, one option was that the 2 buildings would proceed together. For very logical reasons, such as meeting the government's requirements as well as other practical considerations, construction of the 2 buildings has been planned to occur almost 12 months apart. Thus, there is development of the various construction programs and the cash flows. It has to be ensured that various components of the works do not overlap. It is not desirable to place a demand on concretors on both projects at the one time. That would have the adverse effect of overheating the demand on certain sectors of the trade capacity in the Territory.



The company carried those costs throughout, including the travel costs of various consultants and other people associated with the development of a project. It absorbed all of the preliminary design costs. All of those matters were taken into consideration in the justification of the fee. The determination of what was a fair and reasonable fee was based on a great deal of research. It was clearly established that, at the very least and where no risk is involved, fees of 1.5% to 3% of the value of the works is the normal developmental figure. That applies throughout Australia in respect of government and private developments.

The question that then arises is whether that percentage is applied to the \$87m pure building cost, to the \$100m total development cost or to the original \$300m proposal. A large part of the effort related to the early stages of the concept. In terms of the real cost of reaching that starting point, I have spoken with a local developer. I would urge honourable members who wish to take this matter further to talk developers in Darwin or in Alice Springs and ask them what it actually costs to get to the starting point. On 1 project in Darwin, which has a civil construction content of some \$13m, the development cost of consultants, architects and engineers is in excess of \$1m. That is before the project is up and going. The justification is there. Information that has been gathered indicates once again that, in the private sector in Sydney and Melbourne where developments are hitting a peak, where there is no risk component, 4% to 6% is a more than reasonable fee. When there is risk - that is, where there is a risk affecting returns against the investment because the development relies on rentals and other factors - that fee shoots up to anywhere around 17% to 22%.

Certainly, in this case, the developer, Tipperary Developments faces a reduced level of risk but, nonetheless, there is some residual risk. Where the developer has done all of that developmental work of producing drawings after drawings and models after models ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: When are we going to see them?

Mr FINCH: ... a figure of \$1.75m which, in round terms, is probably 1.75% if you want to use the \$100m figure simplistically, is seen to be more than reasonable. By the time Tipperary Developments has paid out its consultants, the residue will be only a minimally reasonable figure for the developer's fee. As I mentioned earlier, it has been acknowledged by a number of members and certainly by the construction industry that Tipperary Developments is more than entitled to recompense for its efforts. There is more than enough justification for that fee. If honourable members want any further proof, I am more than happy to show them the various models, plans and perspectives. I am sure those alone would justify the \$1.75m.

Myilly Point

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the minister to recent reports about Henry and Walker retaining rights over Myilly Point. Who holds the title to the land, is the government currently engaged on capital works on the land, and what is the status of those works in terms of the tenure over the land?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory holds title to that land. I am not aware of any major capital works being carried out on the land that is held by the Northern Territory. The member for Stuart may be referring to some development in the Cullen Bay area or possibly in relation to the University College. The member is quite correct in saying that Henry and Walker hold development rights. As I said, I have no knowledge of any work being carried out but, if the honourable member would like to provide some details, I am sure that I would be able to provide the information to him regarding those details.

Tipperary School Closure

Mr DONDAS to the MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the current edition of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation newsletter, there is an account of the circumstances which resulted in the recent temporary closure of Tipperary School. The account states that the former head teacher is a casualty of the closure. Is that account correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. Whilst I would not use the exact term 'casualty', the teacher who was at Tipperary has been moved. I point out that that was done only after a correct and proper procedure had been carried out. Quite frankly, I was disgusted by the Teachers Federation newsletter, particularly by inferences made in it. It was an inaccurate report and it really displayed an uncaring attitude on the part of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive.

Yesterday, the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive showed its total lack of concern for its own members when it had the chance to grab a few cheap headlines. I think members are getting to the stage where they have had a gutful of the comments that are being made by the Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive. In the report, the federation compares the action taken by the department with its action in cases like the ones which occurred recently at Imanpa and Belyuen. I will read out a section of this newsletter. The school referred to is Tipperary. I quote:

Once again, following departmental policy, quite correctly, the senior officer present immediately closed the school. The teacher concerned immediately packed up and left. A similar event occurred at Belyuen some weeks ago and the school remained closed until negotiations had been conducted and the head teacher reinstated. This was not the case at Tipperary. Within 24 hours, the school was open, with staff contacted overnight in Darwin. The reopening had been arranged by the minister and very senior departmental officers. Power and influence had their effect.

What a load of nonsense! I noted last night on the television that the secretary of the Teachers Federation, Mr Col Young, was saying that strings were attached to this particular issue. What about the situation where teachers requested to be removed from places such as Imanpa because they felt threatened? We took action there. Was I then seen to have a string attached to the teachers? It is the same when I do something for someone like Bakamana Yunupingu. We set up a program to help him. Have I strings attached to Bakamana Yunupingu? We provided a school at Hermannsburg. Do I have strings attached to Gus Williams? What a load of nonsense! It really is.

We have been through all this. In relation to Belyuen, for a long period the community refused to negotiate. The department was trying to have the school discuss the issues which were of concern. When discussions were permitted with the council members, a solution suitable to both parties was found. We allowed the community to discuss the issues with the department and an agreement was drawn up. We told the community that we wanted the teacher to return and it agreed to that in line with the conditions drawn up in the agreement. Thus, in respect of Belyuen, it was a situation where the community would not meet initially when the department had requested meetings. After those meetings were held, an agreement was reached and the teacher was returned.

At Tipperary, we were able to negotiate immediately because they wanted to get the school open as quickly as possible. Again, we told the community that the teacher had the full support of the department and myself. She wanted to return there and sections of the community refused to agree to that. We support our teachers but we cannot allow them to return to a situation where confrontation and other serious problems will result. It would be grossly incompetent of us to set up a situation which could explode.

Let us compare the situation at Imanpa. There the 2 teachers felt threatened, and we took them out. We negotiated with the community and replaced the teachers only when the community had agreed to accept its part in the partnership required for education. Again, we listened to the concerns of the community and we took the necessary action. The Northern Territory Teachers Federation executive does not understand the need for this kind of partnership. A lack of stability within a community will affect the children, the teachers and everyone concerned. If there is a problem, we have to act on it. The member for Stuart will remember the situation at Soapy Bore when 2 teachers were fighting with one another. That had nothing to do with their ability to teach but the community saw that that was disruptive and those teachers had to be removed.

Mr Ede: They didn't have any teachers for 2 months.

Mr HARRIS: Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart is trying to oppose the principles involved with teaching in remote communities and providing stability in such situations.

When the situation at Tipperary blew up, the member for Stuart wrote to me saying that the school should be kept open at all costs. Also, the secretary of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation wrote to me saying that the school should be closed until the issue was resolved. It was resolved very quickly.

The executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation has shown a shameful lack of understanding of and commitment to education. Through an editorial in its newsletter, the federation has sought once again to raise the

issue and bring it out into the open. A couple of weeks ago, the teacher involved in the Tipperary incident visited my office and spoke to a member of my staff. She said that she was sick of the publicity and that she wanted to get on with her life. We should respect her right to do that. Yesterday, however, the executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation, which is supposed to represent the best interests of teachers, arranged for its secretary, Col Young, to have a television interview about the Tipperary matter. Unfortunately, the interview about the teacher who is embroiled in all of this trouble was arranged conveniently for the time when the teacher was due to visit the union office. That is a terrible situation to have with the federation executive which is supposed to be looking after the interests of teachers and to be concerned about teachers. The teacher walked into the office where cameras and a journalist were waiting for her. I understand that she walked out and refused to be filmed or interviewed, and I cannot blame her for that. The department does not blame this particular teacher in any way whatsoever for what occurred at Tipperary, and I make that very clear. We are pleased with her record as a teacher and we made that point clear to the Tipperary community.

Mr Speaker, what a shameful way for the Northern Territory Teachers Federation to represent its members that it should allow a camera crew to film during sensitive talks with a union member. I understand that the federation has denied setting up the visit of the television camera crew but, if the federation did not set up this particular meeting, one must ask who did. I look right across very squarely at the master of the 30-second grab, the member for Stuart, who is very able at putting the fear of God into the community about a number of issues. He will make a statement, a 30-second grab which has nothing to do with the situation at hand, and it is reported in the media even though it is completely off the track. If the federation executive has not been involved in this exercise, has not tried to raise this issue, then I wonder who did.

#### Myilly Point

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer to my previous question to the minister. He has admitted that Henry and Walker retain development rights over Myilly Point. The capital works that have occurred in that area include the university and further developments to the university. We need to know for how long the development rights are to be retained by Henry and Walker, whether there is any possibility of them exercising their development rights and so impinging on the university or at what stage the university may have to move from that area. What is the situation with regard to tenure over that part of Myilly Point which is covered by the university and are there any proposals for the development of or handing back to the government of the balance of Myilly Point?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is rather better. I wish the honourable member had asked the question in that form in the first place. The government's intention has always been that the university would be at the old hospital site for a temporary period only. I recall that, when I was the Minister for Education, that was set as a 10-year period. At this stage, I do not believe there has been any change in that policy by the government. The long-term aim has always been that the university campus would be developed in the Palmerston area. As honourable members know, a site of some 200 ha has been set aside in

Palmerston on University Avenue. That is a further example of the foresight of this government in planning for the future. The development of the University College and now the Northern Territory University on the old hospital site is another example of an initiative which members will recall was opposed bitterly by members of the opposition at the time. It is an example of how this government fought very hard and long, for and on behalf of Territorians, to ensure that Territorians had the opportunity to obtain education that was equal to that offered in other parts of Australia.

At this stage, our policy has not changed. I believe that, with the establishment of the Northern Territory University and the amalgamation of the DIT with it, we will see quite rapid developments in relation to tertiary education in the Northern Territory which will provide opportunities for Territorians and encourage young Territorians to stay here to complete their education and contribute to the Territory. I remind the community in general of the great furore and opposition mounted by the Labor Party to what we were trying to do a couple of years ago and the great outcry it raised against this government working very hard to establish tertiary education facilities for young Territorians. We are very proud of what we have achieved in that regard. The quality of the people involved at the university is something that all Territorians can be proud of, and I certainly see very exciting things happening in that area in the future.

#### Visitor Attitudes to the Northern Territory

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TOURISM

Have any studies been done on the attitudes of visitors to the Northern Territory, and what is the status of the Northern Territory in the southern marketplace as a holiday destination?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the NT Tourist Commission carries out a number of studies during the course of its operating year. Its attitudinal survey is designed to determine whether people are satisfied with their trips to the Northern Territory. The survey of perceptions of the Northern Territory in the marketplace is carried out and updated regularly.

First, the commission surveys non-visitor attitudes in 5 capital cities, seeking to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. The information on satisfaction levels is obtained from questionnaires which are distributed throughout the tourist industry. People who have visited the Northern Territory are able to return their completed questionnaires when they go home. That information is used to assess visitor satisfaction levels. In a continual monitoring program, questionnaires are administered in group sessions which are aimed at providing feedback on the effectiveness of the commission's advertising program.

Overall, I am pleased to report that the findings are very positive and reassuring. They indicate that the Northern Territory has a strong destination appeal. Its unique features have been highlighted and the Northern Territory can rightly claim ownership to the title of the real outback or the real Australia. Advertising has certainly heightened awareness of the Territory as a destination. There are, however, some specific gaps and problems in our product range and presentation. Those have been identified. They will need to be addressed and, in some cases, I believe that some new investment opportunities will be created.

Visitor satisfaction is very high in a number of areas, including traveller assistance and information provided by our own Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureaus, quality of service and accommodation and tour operator staff. It is very pleasing to be able to say that because I do not think the same would have applied 5 or 6 years ago. The personal warmth and friendliness of Territorians is obviously an important factor. Everyone would appreciate that, if you go on holiday to a specific area and people are not friendly towards you, you might as well not have gone there. It is quite apparent from all surveys that the personal warmth and friendliness of Territorians is a highlight of holidays.

Safety and security are very important issues for international travellers. Members may recall that, a number of years ago, Hawaii was named in the media as a violent place which ought to be avoided as a holiday destination. The effects of that media attention were quite apparent. Visitation decreased markedly and it took some 3 years of strong marketing, together with an effort to police and change the social environment in Honolulu and throughout the Hawaiian Islands, before visitor numbers increased again. I would imagine that Australia gained some of Hawaii's customers in that period.

Poor satisfaction levels generally related to restaurants and nightlife, the variety and diversity of holiday experiences and the experience of history and culture, which a number of people in this House have spoken about with regard to the cultural and historical aspects of holidays in the Northern Territory. I assure honourable members that the Tourist Commission is currently addressing these deficiencies with the appropriate authorities and with the tourist industry.

With regard to people who actually have not visited here, there is a wide affection and desire to see the Northern Territory. This preference is clearly expressed in a comparison of the appeal of various national destinations. In all those surveys, Queensland is quite prominent. However, I am pleased to say that the Northern Territory is very strongly in second place. I guess it is pertinent to know that the Tourist Commission is - and has been doing so for the last few months - undertaking joint promotional activities with Queensland in the international marketplace to promote the northern Australian concept. I think that is a very positive direction for the marketing to be heading.

Northern Territory appeal is broader than the active adventurous holiday. Over the past few years, that adventure holiday has achieved a good spot in the marketplace but it is not the only thing. Apparently, among average potential visitors, the passive alternative environment of peace, tranquillity and open spaces holds a strong appeal. Prime consumer potential for Northern Territory holiday-makers is restricted to specific target markets identified in these studies. Whether we like it or not, consumer attention is focused primarily on 4 major destination areas: Darwin, Alice Springs, Kakadu and Ayers Rock. Opportunities exist to capitalise on the outback personality, both scenic and human, to involve the holiday-maker in the holiday experience, rather than leaving him to passive observation of the attractions.

With regard to the effectiveness of our own campaigns, the television campaign, which is the map ad that has been running over the last 12 months, has certainly established the Northern Territory's uniqueness and heightened awareness substantially. Unaided recall of the NT campaign was the strongest of any individual advertiser and second only to the cumulative recall of Queensland covered by Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation and very

strong private resort advertising. Obviously, that is one advantage that Queensland has over the Northern Territory. With a much wealthier and more widely based tourist industry in terms of infrastructure, there is much more television activity by private enterprise.

The most strongly recalled elements for the Northern Territory were Ayers Rock, Kakadu and our wildlife, animals and birds. I think those sort of comments lay augur well for the opening of the Berry Springs Wildlife Park and tourist attractions such as that.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It is not open.

Mr POOLE: It will be opened fairly early in the new year.

It proves what we have been saying for years: the Northern Territory's unique attraction is based on its parks. Certainly, there is heightened awareness of the Aboriginal involvement in tourism. Looking at bookings that are coming through the system for the coming year, it is quite apparent that we can all look forward to a very successful tourist season. In fact, one operation in particular has told me that it has increased its bookings by 40% in respect of coach companies alone. This is an attraction that is fairly close to Darwin. Next year, there will be increased visitation to the Northern Territory and we will pick up some of the market areas that we lost during Expo.

#### Salaries Section at Alice Springs Hospital

Mr FLOREANI to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I received a deputation representing a number of nurses working at the Alice Springs Hospital complaining about their pay section. Typical complaints are: penalties, loadings and overtime paid 6 or more weeks late, incorrect rates paid, receiving someone else's pay, deductions being sent to the wrong places and loading penalties not paid. Obviously, something is wrong. Would the honourable minister undertake an investigation into the efficiency of the hospital's salaries section?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not spoken to the A4s who would be handling that situation but I am sure that I can make inquiries on behalf of the member for Flynn. I am sure that he could have made inquiries himself by ringing the regional director in Alice Springs. However, I will take on board his question and provide details to him.

BTEC

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

During the last sittings, the honourable yet thersitical Deputy Leader of the Opposition made certain claims about rorting in relation to BTEC. The minister called on him either to substantiate those allegations or to apologise to the public servants and members of the industry whom he had seemed to seriously malign.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I seek your guidance as to the use of the epithet 'cynical' in relation to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think it is imputing improper motives to him. I seek your

direction but I trust that, after your deliberations, you will require the member for Karama to withdraw that particular reference.

Mr PALMER: Speaking to the point of order, Mr Speaker, I did not call the Deputy Leader of the Opposition 'cynical'. I called him 'thersitical', Mr Speaker, which means loud-mouthed or scurrilous. He can take it either way he likes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the member for Karama has lowered his own noose by explaining his comment. He is now asked to withdraw.

Mr PALMER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw unreservedly.

The minister called upon the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to substantiate his claims or to apologise to the members of the public service and the industry that he had seriously maligned. Can the minister advise the House what action has been taken following from the allegations made by the member for Stuart?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Karama for his question. No doubt honourable members will recall the disgraceful performance of and the unfounded allegations made by the member for Stuart during the last sittings. Unfortunately, the member for Stuart has neither substantiated his claims nor sought to apologise to those people whom he brought into question. On the contrary, he has tried unsuccessfully to perpetuate his charade of being a knowledgeable and concerned representative of the rural industry. By his words and actions, he has shown himself to be neither.

We were told that the honourable member had been advised by someone that these rorts were occurring and that it was up to the government to weed out the information and prosecute the offenders - in effect, to stop the rorts. The government would wholeheartedly put a stop to any rorts if there were any to be found.

Certainly, some similar but more detailed allegations were made some years ago and these were investigated in detail by both federal and Territory police but were not substantiated, and I have explained all of this previously. The inability of the member to provide facts clearly illustrates his lack of awareness and genuine concern for the industry. I guess that that was best illustrated by the opposition's failure to nominate a primary industry and fisheries spokesman. It is interesting to note from the list of members that all honourable members are provided with that, among the shadow ministry and opposition office holders, neither the member for Stuart nor the Leader of the Opposition has responsibility for primary industry and fisheries.

Mr Ede: I have.

Mr REED: Well, you might update your information so that everyone will know and so that the industry will be aware ...

Mr Bell: You should see the latest government directory. When are you blokes going to get your act together? We still have Steve Hatton as Chief Minister in that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!



Mr REED: ... who to look to for assistance for its members. It is a clear indication of the lack of sincerity of the opposition towards the primary industry sector of the Northern Territory.

I have clearly illustrated that, if he gives me more positive information, not generalised hearsay but a definite allegation, I will immediately pass that information to the police. Mr Speaker, make no mistake, anyone found ripping off the system, as the member for Stuart has alleged is occurring, will be prosecuted with the full weight of the law. All we need is for him to provide the facts necessary to proceed, but that is what the member for Stuart has been unable to do. I wrote to the member for Stuart and to the Leader of the Opposition following the allegations made during the last sittings. As recently as 11 November, the member for Stuart wrote to me, ignoring my request for more information but telling me that I am now to blame for the rorts. This is the latest push. I am now to blame. Do not worry about the truck drivers and the people in the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the pastoralists who were all accused during the last sittings of ripping off the system, I am now to blame. He tells me that I cannot be talking to the pastoral industry or I would be receiving similar information. There are 40-odd pastoral leases within the honourable member's electorate. I do not know how many pastoralists he has been speaking to. Last time, the allegation was that there were hundreds of pastoralists who were opposed to the system. We have yet to see that substantiated.

Mr Speaker, I have been talking to the industry and the message I get is that the member for Stuart does not know what he is talking about. He does not understand BTEC and he does not understand the pastoral industry. In raising the issue at the last sittings, opposition members clearly underestimated industry support for the BTEC program. They grabbed a tiger by the tail, and it is clear that they had to let it go pretty quickly. They could not come up with anything, and the response that they received from the industry and the fact that the program had been well supported led them to release their grip on the tiger's tail. As a further indication of that, the silence on the question from opposition members during these sittings has been deafening. Clearly, they were embarrassed by the allegations that they had made but could not sustain.

From my contact with the industry, I know that there are problems with the BTEC program. These are usually 1-off situations between individual pastoralists and my department, and we work together to resolve them. There are some individuals who are against the aims of BTEC. They are not representative of the industry as a whole. Nevertheless, we are prepared to listen to them.

As an indication of the support that the industry provides to the scheme, honourable members would be aware that, on Wednesday 2 November, the Cattlemen's Association published in a full-page advertisement in the NT News a letter written to the Leader of the Opposition putting clearly the support by the Cattlemen's Association for the BTEC program and requesting a response from the Leader of the Opposition. I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition or, as we have just been advised, the shadow spokesman on primary industry and fisheries, has responded to this open letter from the Cattlemen's Association.

Mr Ede: I respond to the pastoralists. I talk to them.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, there you have a clear indication of the irresponsible attitude of the honourable members opposite and their insincere approach to primary industry. They have not responded to the principal

industry association in the Northern Territory. If that does not illustrate clearly the lack of concern for and awareness that they have of the industry, nothing will.

The member for Stuart has raised serious issues because he has scented what he believes is a hint of corruption. At present, he stands guilty of slandering hard-working pastoralists, transport workers and public servants because of his belief. I have asked him to tell me why he is so convinced that the system is being ripped off. He has replied by repeating his vague generalities. He must be convinced that he is right, regardless of what myself or members of the pastoral industry have told him, otherwise he would have apologised for his remarks.

Mr Speaker, the Buffalo Industry Council, another association representative of the industry in the Northern Territory, has also come out in full support of the BTEC program.

Mr Ede: It is not representative.

Mr REED: The member for Stuart is fully aware that it is the legitimate association representing the buffalo industry in the Northern Territory. The honourable member can choose to ignore it because its views are embarrassing to him but he cannot get away from the facts.

On the basis of the member for Stuart's actions so far, I have no alternative but to assume that he has nothing of substance with which to support his allegations. He has done nothing but repeat his own time-worn generalities to the extent that even the media is sick of hearing them. If it is his philosophy to convict on the basis of such flimsy evidence, Territorians can be grateful that he will never become the Attorney-General of the Northern Territory. Members opposite will never govern in the Territory if this is an indication of how they operate. To base an investigation program on the information provided by the honourable member to date would be as effective as chasing ghosts. I certainly do not intend to waste taxpayers' money in pursuing this matter unless the honourable member gives me information of greater substance.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries is reading a copious prepared response. As far as I am concerned, the business of this House would be enhanced if he were to use the opportunity available to him to make a ministerial statement.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: The fact of the matter is ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BELL: ... that he has the opportunity to ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is the second or third time in the last few days that the honourable member has continued to talk over my request for order. If he does it again, I will name him.

Once I am satisfied that there is or is not a point of order, I will interrupt any speaker to deliver my ruling. There is no point of order.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I do not deny that I have been quoting from some documents. I have also been explaining the facts of this issue. It is clearly a matter of great sensitivity to members opposite. They are grossly embarrassed by the path which they embarked on at the last sittings. They made false allegations. They have been unable to substantiate the allegations made about members of the industry and the officers of my department. I will continue to pursue this issue until such time as the member for Stuart substantiates his allegations or apologises to the large number of Territorians who have been smeared by them.

#### Inspections of Grape-growing Properties

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I believe that the minister is aware that apparently inspectors from the federal Department of Primary Industry have been going around to every table grape property in Australia and investigating the varieties of grapes being grown. I ask the minister to explain the purpose of this inspection, which is obviously very expensive. What are the implications for the Australian table grape industry and, of course, the growing Territory table grape industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a fact that members of the federal Quarantine Service have been inspecting the grape-growing areas of the Northern Territory and, indeed, of the states of Australia. The problem relates to the alleged import of certain varieties of grapes without the approval of the owner of the rights to those varieties. The question has been a long-standing one. The matter has been raised with the federal member and the quarantine responsibility lies with the federal government. The issue lies solely within its sphere of influence. I understand that some grape vines in the Northern Territory may be suspect and are of concern to the Commonwealth in relation to this alleged breach of varietal rights.

It is not an issue that falls directly within the responsibility of my department. However, it is creating considerable interest and concern in the grape-growing industry throughout Australia. I understand that, if the matter is not resolved, produce currently due for harvest cannot be exported. That is a requirement of the quarantine regulations. If areas are placed under quarantine, it could cost Australia in the order of \$3m in export income during this financial year. I repeat, however, that it is a Commonwealth matter and is not being dealt with by my department.

#### Housing Package

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I refer the honourable minister to comments by the federal Minister for Housing on ABC radio this morning, including the statement that he intended to send officers of his department to the Territory to discuss the Territory government's new housing package. What effect, if any, will this have on the Territory government's proposal to introduce the package on 1 December?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, first, I will state quite categorically that it makes no difference whatsoever to the Territory government's intention to introduce the housing loan package on 1 December. I would like to take this opportunity to

assure all Territorians that we will be proceeding to implement the schemes outlined in my statement on Tuesday. It is interesting to look at the result of the Leader of the Opposition's attempts to torpedo this scheme. Terry the Terminator went down ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will refer to honourable members by their correct titles and he will withdraw that reference.

Mr MANZIE: I withdraw the remark, Mr Speaker, and I refer to the Leader of the Opposition.

What did he achieve? Part of the interview this morning was quite enlightening, remembering that this was a result of a meeting which was supposedly about a major breach by the Territory government of an agreement between governments - the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement. Do not forget that the political career of the Leader of the Opposition rested on the trip to Canberra - and if it does not, I believe that it should. When asked about the new scheme, the federal minister said: 'Well, I am still a little bit in the dark'. He is still a little bit in the dark! The Leader of the Opposition was said to have gone down to explain in detail what the terrible Territory government was doing. What in the world did the Leader of the Opposition do? Did he use a couple of days flying time and have a cup of tea down there? He was reported as going down to provide information, yet the federal minister is still in the dark. That is something that needs to be answered when the Leader of the Opposition returns.

I was pleased to hear the federal minister say: 'I am not averse to what, in round figures, I understand Mr Manzie is proposing. I can see some very good reasons for that and I want the people to be reassured about that and Mr Manzie'. Obviously, he was under pressure to support his political colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, but he was making it quite clear that he supported what the Territory government was doing. When asked whether I should have contacted him, he retorted that he thought that would have been in the spirit of the agreement. I suppose that one cannot argue against that. As I said the other day, there was talk between officers and the loan scheme proposed by the government does fit within the parameters of the agreement.

When asked about his interpretation of the so-called clause 27(1)(a), he pointed out that there is a little bit of semantics in that. In other words, he was admitting that it could be looked at in the way the Territory government had looked at it and that interpretation means that the Territory government has the ability and right to make these proposals and carry them out. When the federal minister was asked whether he would be vetoing the scheme, he said: 'From what I have seen at this stage, I doubt if we will be. From the information received last night, I think basically it is what needs to be done'. The report finished by saying that both Warren Snowdon and Senator Bob Collins had welcomed the Territory's proposed scheme and, 'although they joined Terry Smith in his talks with Peter Staples, in fact Senator Collins is reported as saying the scheme is the best in Australia'.

I would like to make it quite clear that I believe the federal Senator is quite supportive of the Territory government and embarrassed by the fact that the Leader of the Opposition took it on himself to go down to Canberra. Obviously, that in itself intimates that he believes that the Territory's federal members could be inept in doing their jobs. I think that all Territorians would totally reject that proposition. I believe that he realises now that what he did was actually incorrect in fact. I think that anyone who heard the federal minister today would realise that he was

endorsing what the Territory had done. I hope that Australian Airlines was broadcasting the ABC this morning because it would have enlightened the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, in this context, it is important to point out what moneys are spent in the Northern Territory on housing and what part of that is Commonwealth money and what part is Territory money. I will run through the figures for a couple of years. In the year 1986-87, a total of \$31m was provided by the Commonwealth. Of that, \$12m was tied and \$18m was untied. That was out of a total of \$129m that was spent by the Territory government on housing. In 1987-88, the Commonwealth's contribution dropped a bit to \$30m. Of that, \$13m was tied and \$16m was untied. That was out of a total of \$119m spent by the Territory government on housing. In 1988-89, we have budgeted to spend \$124m on housing. Of that, the Commonwealth contribution is \$30m, of which \$15m is tied and \$14m is untied. The untied figure keeps dropping. I think honourable members should know that, of our total housing expenditure, only 25% is Commonwealth funded and, of that, only \$14m is untied. I think it is also worth noting that, under the CSHA, the Territory must spend a minimum of 50% of untied funds on rental housing. Actually, we spend over 60% of our untied funds on rental housing. We spend 38% on home purchase assistance.

Working on the basis of 600 people taking out loans over a year, the new scheme, which will be commencing on 1 December, will cost \$230 000 in its first half year of operation and it will cost \$1.7m in the first full year. It has been calculated that, to provide similar assistance under NTHPAS, the cost would have been \$16.8m. That shows the effectiveness of the new scheme and puts paid to any argument that the new scheme is not an effective use of money. It is also worth while repeating that the Territory government produces 75% of the funding for housing in the Territory. I can recall that, a few years ago, the Wran Labor government did not provide any money in New South Wales to match the Commonwealth contribution.

I repeat that anybody with any sympathy for the Leader of the Opposition would have squirmed with embarrassment when he heard the federal Minister for Housing on the radio this morning as, I am sure, members opposite squirmed. I repeat my assurance to all Territorians that we will commence the new loans scheme on 1 December. I believe that all Territorians should be fully aware of the cheap, nasty, hollow and cynical attempts of members opposite to torpedo this scheme. Territorians should be thankful that the attempt failed.

#### Overseas Trip by Minister for Industries and Development

Mr LEO to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Will he give a full report to the House on achievements resulting from his most recent trip to Europe and Asia? Yes or no?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, before I give an answer, I wonder if I may refer briefly to some of the matters that I may explain more fully if and when I give such a report. In Paris, I was able to talk with representatives of Elf Aquitaine. We spoke about bringing gas onshore from Bonaparte Gulf. Elf Aquitaine has now dispatched a specialist to look at some of the gas proposals that we are putting together in the Northern Territory and he will be in Australia next week. I would like to have the opportunity to discuss that next week, perhaps by way of ministerial statement.

In Dusseldorf in Germany, we spoke with representatives of the chemical company Uhde Hoechst and the giant steel manufacturer Ferrostaal, also in relation to gas-related projects. In fact, a representative from Uhde will be in the Northern Territory next Tuesday evening and the Chief Minister and myself will be dining with him. There is an immediate result there.

In Moscow, we spoke about a range of matters, including manganese. The Russians are very interested in increasing their manganese supplies. Already they receive some 100 000 t from Groote Eylandt and they are talking about ferro-manganese smelters and so forth. We spoke about a range of other things including, of course, the railway development. I understand that there will be a Railnorth meeting in Sydney on 12 December. A representative from Russia will be in Australia next week to discuss the situation in relation to non-ferrous metals. The Russians are particularly interested in diamond mines. They are involved with Ashton at Lake Argyle and are aware of the trough which, they believe, extends into the Northern Territory. A range of options and opportunities are available there.

My visit to China related mainly to the Trade Development Zone. I was fortunate enough to be there at the time of the signing of the alumina contract, which is a first. It is a 3-year contract for 100 000 t a year, which is worth approximately \$120m. That is the first time that a mining company has done business in China with an end-user. That was significant.

There were also significant opportunities in relation to the Trade Development Zone. Representatives of CITIC, the merchant bank which is the economic wing of the Chinese government, are coming to the Territory in February. They are looking at joint-venturing goldmines. The bank has been involved in discussions with North Flinders Mines, but that company is involved in litigation in Victoria at present and the bank had difficulty in buying into the project. It is looking to invest up to \$20m in goldmines in the Northern Territory. The Chief Minister met with its representative earlier this year and they will be here again in February. That is pretty exciting stuff. Indeed, it is also exciting and significant that the second-most powerful man in the Chinese government will be travelling through Darwin today. The Attorney-General will be meeting with him at 12 noon today.

When providing a brief statement to the House next week, I will describe the trip in general terms. In my period as Minister for Mines and Energy, I have sought aggressively to open up as many opportunities as possible. We have changed legislation and we have sought investment and venture capital for resource development. We have gone out into the international market. We have involved people in the development of our hydrocarbon resources in the Timor Sea as well as onshore. Honourable members will know that we will drill some 25 wells in the Territory this year, which is more than in all of the other states combined.

On Sunday, a representative from Singapore Offshore Petroleum Services will be in the Northern Territory. We are looking at the development of an offshore base here. Indeed, I had the opportunity last Sunday, when I was with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, to explain the concept of the development of that base here. He was very supportive of and very sympathetic towards the development that has been carried out in the Territory, particularly in our hydrocarbon area.

The time has come now for value-added, downstream processing of both our minerals and our hydrocarbons and this is the next phase that we will enter into aggressively. It is an exciting time for Territorians. Oil and gas are

now worth around about \$400m to us, and minerals are worth about \$1200m to us. Let us hope that we can enter this new and exciting stage of downstream, value-added processing of our huge resources in the Northern Territory aggressively, to develop those resources, provide meaningful, full-time jobs and really catapult the Northern Territory into the international marketplace. I will be providing that statement.

Central Australian Honda Masters Games 1988

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I preface the question by complimenting the minister and his departmental people on the excellent job that was done in organising the 1988 Central Australian Honda Masters Games. During the course of those games, there was considerable discussion about the every extensive amount of media coverage that was being achieved around the world. The honourable minister gave some very exciting news in the course of that discussion, but we found that the latest cynical response emanating from central Australia emerged from the member for Flynn when he undertook to consume a wheelbarrow load of salami if the honourable minister's statements were correct.

I have 2 questions for the minister. First, can he verify the accuracy of his statements and, secondly, if he can, could he organise for a wheelbarrow load of salami to be delivered to the member for Flynn on about 4 December because I will be in Alice Springs at that time and will look forward to witnessing its consumption?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, particularly the first part of it which I wrote for him. I understand that the member for Flynn is fairly new to this Legislative Assembly and, I suppose, also to the responsibilities of various members, but I must say that I was rather surprised that he was the only person in the Northern Territory or Australia or, for that matter, throughout the world, who had any criticism to make whatsoever of the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games. I will refresh the memory of honourable members by quoting from his press release of 20 October: 'It is not appropriate for Mr Dale to claim that our games' - note 'our games' - 'are being televised in 65 countries, when everyone in the television industry knows it is nonsense. If Mr Dale can prove that coverage was transmitted in 65 countries, I will eat a barrow load of salami in the Todd Mall'.

I suggest that the diet promoters get the 'before' photos now before the honourable member rushes out to arrange his public salami eating orgy. I will outline the invaluable international and national publicity central Australia received as a result of the games that the member for Flynn was so quick to knock. Film North Productions of Darwin won a contract to produce 2 video documentaries and a number of commercials about the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games. As a bonus for the games' publicity program, Film North was able to supply several video news items plus a short documentary package direct to the national Channel 10 network. Most were what are known as 'human interest' items. For example, 1 feature item distributed through Australia's Channel 10 national news network, which supplies programs to metropolitan as well as country stations, featured a relay team of Queensland women athletes, each well over 60 years of age, who compete regularly together. Other news items covered a range of Honda Central Australian Masters Games sports plus what are known as 'colour pieces' about central

Australia taken at Standley Chasm, Ayers Rock, the Olgas etc. Tourist developments at Hermannsburg were also covered. The Channel 10 news distributed this throughout its national network. There were a number of live broadcasts direct to Good Morning Australia in which sporting legends, such as Dawn Fraser, told a national audience that sporting facilities in Alice Springs were almost as good as those she had just left at the Seoul Olympics. Sky Channel is still running a 10-minute documentary on the games.

The value of such publicity and promotion of central Australia, in support of the Northern Territory tourist industry, cannot be calculated. But television coverage of this year's Masters Games did not stop inside Australia. I have received telexes and statements from Film North and the overseas bureau manager of Network 10 Australia. These show that several news items and a 3-minute documentary devoted to the 1988 Honda Central Australian Masters Games were snapped up by the American Cable News Network for broadcast on its weekly international news, World Report.

The Cable News Network, based in America, is the largest cable television network in the world. Honourable members will be aware that cable television network viewers pay a monthly subscription to receive programming direct to their homes. Cable News Network head office in the United States has supplied the following figures for its paid-up, worldwide audience: in Europe 100 million, in Japan 70 million, in the United States of America 70 million and, in South America, 70 million. For the benefit of the stomach of the member for Flynn, these audiences alone total 310 million. This news network supplies its programming direct to networks in 83 countries, not the 65 that I mentioned, with audiences totalling tens of millions on top of those that I have already mentioned.

The items that I described were distributed worldwide by Cable Network News to a paying audience. That cost the Northern Territory government nothing. Film North has earned some extra money for supplying the footage to Channel 10 and Cable Network News but the big winner has been the Territory tourist industry. I would suggest to honourable members that, by chance, the makers of Cavali Venator salami have also been big winners. This was the preferred brand mentioned by the member for Flynn in one particular interview with ABC radio news. Let me add that, in that radio interview, the member for Flynn had the very good grace to mention that he would pay for the barrow load of salami himself.

In his original press release criticising the Honda Central Australian Masters Games, the honourable member suggested that I had a habit of playing loose with the truth. If he wishes to contact my office, I will pass on names and telephone numbers of the appropriate television network personnel who can confirm the information that I have provided today. For the record, I table a letter received from Film North Productions signed by its director. It gives the details and talks about the distribution through places such as the Far East, Japan, the Pacific Islands, China, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Zimbabwe, all Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada.

Mr Speaker, I table also the now infamous press release by the member for Flynn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member wishes to have those documents incorporated into Hansard, rather than tabled, he must seek leave.



Mr DALE: I seek leave to table these documents and for them to be incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

NATIONALS                    M E M B E R   F O R   F L Y N N  
Northern                      E N Z O   F L O R E A N I  
Territory

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Barrow Full of Salami

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Press Release 20 October 1988

National Party member for Flynn Enzo Floreani said today he was astounded at Minister Don Dale's statement in the advocate implying he is against the Masters Games.

Mr Floreani said that he had been an active participant in both Masters Games and fully supported them.

Mr Dale's statement is simply a political gimmick to hide the lie made in his statement regarding television broadcast to over 300 million viewers in America. 'Mr Dale has a habit of being loose with the truth', Mr Floreani said.

Mr Floreani believes the Masters Games are a most successful initiative by the government and would fully support its expansion and heavy promotion.

It is not appropriate for Mr Dale to claim that our games are being televised in 65 countries when everyone in the television industry knows it is nonsense! If Mr Dale can prove that coverage was transmitted in 65 countries I will eat as barrow load of salami in the Todd Mall.

F I L M

N O R T H

P R O D U C T I O N S

Film & Video Producers

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Mr Mike Dale.

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Darwin NT 5794

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The Mall, Alice Springs

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24.11.88

Dear Mike,

Listed are the outlets we provided stories and footage of the Masters Games.

1. Network Ten News.  
Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Canberra and regional stations.
2. Good Morning Australia to over 100 stations throughout Australia.
3. We also presented two live eye's direct to the the Good Morning Australia programme from Alice Springs.
4. C.N.N. Worldwide Cable Network 83 countries worldwide.
5. N.H.K. Japanese Television (70 million audience).
6. Wide World of Sport.
7. Sky Channel 1 x 15 min. Doco (for repeated airings).
8. Channel 8 Darwin.

As well C.N.N. goes to 83 countries world wide including the following:

Far East, Japan, Pacific Islands, Australia, China, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Zimbabwe, all Latin America, Caribbean, Canada.

Yours faithfully,  
Danny Sim  
Director.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, so that the member for Flynn can illustrate this to all the people throughout the Northern Territory, I have arranged that, at 9.30 next Wednesday morning outside of this House, Film North will be present to witness the member for Flynn carrying out his promise. I do ask for one concession, Mr Speaker.

Mr Collins: It is supposed to be the Todd Mall.

Mr DALE: Mr Speaker, the honourable member might compromise on the location in which he carries out his promise in that he did accuse me of not telling the truth. I think that I have proven that I have. The compromise is that Film North will be outside of this Assembly next Wednesday morning at 9.30 and the distribution of the coverage of my giving the honourable member his first taste of the salami will be covered throughout those stations that I have already mentioned.

#### TABLED PAPERS

Expenditure Guidelines for Ministers and Departmental Heads.

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, during question time on Tuesday 22 November, I undertook to provide honourable members with the guidelines and procedures currently in force for ministerial and departmental head expenditure. I table the documents.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS  
State Square Project

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, on Tuesday night, the Leader of the Opposition asked 6 questions pertaining to the State Square project. I note that a token follow up on those has been made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who is opposition spokesman on transport and works. Some 3½ questions remain unanswered. However, 1 of those questions is a repeat and I think that illustrates that the opposition has now exhausted its token opposition to the State Square project.

The first question asked when I would table the agreement between Tipperary Developments and the Northern Territory government. I inform members that for me to do that would be totally inappropriate and certainly unnecessary. Therefore, I will not be tabling the document itself. We have revealed the basic content and conditions of the agreement. Naturally enough, there are matters in the agreement which are commercially confidential. However, honourable members would be aware that we have taken the most unusual step in this circumstance of revealing actual payments etc. There is no other project management agreement that government or private enterprise has made public previously. I do not intend to set a precedent by tabling that agreement.

The member for Barkly requested the tabling of the agreement also but, as he would be well aware from his own experience as Chief Minister, the tabling of documents such as the agreement on the pipeline was totally out of the question. Quite appropriately, at that stage, he did not release the details of such matters. Generally, the document reflects the normal type of project management agreement which the Department of Transport and Works uses with the various firms that do business with us in terms of project management. It has additional localisation components and contains all of the relevant clauses and conditions of contract which one would expect in relation to such things as time of construction, rise and fall and fixation of the prices, all matters which I covered yesterday in response to questions. They are in addition to the important clauses which will ensure localisation.

The second question was partly answered yesterday. It asked, first, when the government agreed to pay the developer's fee, and I answered that. The latter part of the question asked, and I quote: '... and have the claims for payment been ordered?' Given that the quote comes from the Daily Hansard, I suggest that 'audited' was meant rather than 'ordered' which would not make sense. The claims for payment have not been audited as such. They are processed by the project control group under the auspices of the Department of Transport and Works and, as with all matters pertaining to the department, will come under the normal government audit system. The opposition's fixation with audits is quite surprising, particularly now that it seems to focus on audits and financial advice from southern firms. I am not sure why the Leader of the Opposition does not have the confidence in the Northern Territory ...

Mr Perron: He doesn't trust anyone up here.

Mr FINCH: It is probably more a case of people having stopped talking to him.

The third and fourth questions were answered yesterday. The fifth question asks: 'Does the agreement contain any meaningful clauses relating to local involvement in the project?' Of course it does. These clauses relate to localisation of the design, which means designing to local conditions as

well as local supply of materials. The project control group, which is the administering body, has the entire say in relation to what materials and other design components will be included. Naturally enough, where there is an option of using materials of different types, those that are available locally will be specified. The agreement relates also to the methodology of selecting subcontractors. Of course, they need to demonstrate their bona fides as local concerns employing local people and purchasing materials locally. These matters all form part of the process which will be administered through the project control group under the basic head agreement.

The sixth question, which was somewhat confusing, asked: 'What is the format that was used to calculate the \$3.75m developer's fee?' Of course, there is no \$3.75m developer's fee. The amount is \$1.75m. Perhaps the question intended to refer to the 3.75% project manager's fee. In either case, it is a repeat of the first question or has been answered elsewhere.

The member for Koolpinyah asked whether the State Square project was linked in some way to the Berry Springs Wildlife Park. That is not the case. There is no hidden deal anywhere in this agreement. It is a straight agreement between the government as the client and Tipperary Developments as the deliverer of services both in the development process and now as project manager with the task of ensuring that the job is constructed to government requirements. It is as simple as that. There are no hidden deals, as intimated by the member for Koolpinyah. It is all aboveboard and open.

The member for Barkly referred to scandals in an interview on ABC radio the other day. He said that the State Square project was the greatest scandal that has hit the political scene in Australia for about 30 years. He is familiar with political scandals. I would assume that his reference to Queensland making State Square look like small beer is quite correct. I understand his sensitivity regarding some Queensland people. I understand that the Fitzgerald Inquiry is identifying some people who are among those who bankroll his party. Of course, the member for Barkly's comments about the State Square project were nonsense. He talked about the \$100m. That matter has been addressed already. It is useless to talk about anything other than current net value. There is no way, in 10 or 20 years time, that the federal Parliament House will be referred to as anything but a \$1200m project. The relevant sum is the cost at the time of construction.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I close by mentioning a couple of minor points which are important in terms of putting the entire matter to rest. The member for Barkly referred to his diary notes. I need to correct him because I also make diary notes, particularly when I have meetings with him. His reference to a 10% commission was totally incorrect. He asked me what fees would be paid to Tipperary Developments. I said that they were not yet finalised. When asked to make a guess, I refused to do so. When he suggested that the amount would be 10%, I refused to acknowledge that it was accurate in any way. I wish it to be recorded that I consider that the member for Barkly has made an untrue statement in that respect. His comment about \$13m-worth of landscaping was also untrue. The amount of \$13m, which takes the cost from \$87m to \$100m, is comprised of design and consultant fees, project management fees, landscaping and State Square itself.

Mr Deputy Speaker, that ought to finalise all matters pertaining to State Square. Arguments put forward by the opposition and from the crossbenches have studiously avoided the facts, as gimmickry always will. It is time to let people get on with the job. I am confident that this government will go into the next election with the State Square project having a triple A rating.

Proposed Amendments to Federal Airports Corporation Act

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Is he aware of an amendment proposed by his federal colleague, Mr Blunt, to the Federal Airports Corporation Act last week which reads:

That the bill before the federal House be referred to the Standing Committee on Transport Communications and Infrastructure for inquiry and report with particular reference to the following:

- (1) the powers and responsibilities granted under Federal Airports Corporation legislation;
- (2) the value of assets transferred by the government and the basis for financing the corporation with particular reference to the implications for charges imposed by the corporation;
- (3) the corporation's plans for developing its airports and, in particular, its proposals for Sydney, Brisbane and Perth Airports;
- (4) the procedures adopted by the corporation for its commercial activities, with emphasis on requirements and procedures for calling tenders and letting contracts;
- (5) the implications of the Federal Airports Corporation monopoly petition for the aviation industry, in particular, general and sports aviation and non-scheduled airline and charter operations;
- (6) the appropriateness of the Federal Airports Corporation's monopoly position in the deregulated aviation industry;
- (7) the legislative basis, financial structure and incorporated objectives of the corporation; and
- (8) the corporation's organisation, structure and staff numbers?

Can the minister see that, if passed, these proposals would have disastrous consequences for progress on the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports? What did he do to dissuade his Canberra colleagues from pursuing this particular proposal which, thankfully, did not get up? What is he doing to dissuade his Canberra colleagues from seeking to push this particular resolution through the Senate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I clearly understand the embarrassment and concern of the Leader of the Opposition in this matter. He left this House last week for 2 days to go to Canberra on some new-found mission to save potential home buyers in the Northern Territory. While he was there, what did he do apart from sitting beside a pool sipping on a cup of tea? Mr Speaker, I put it to you that he did absolutely nothing.

Mr Smith: Are you going to answer the question?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, I will answer the question and I will answer in my own way. If I sound frustrated and annoyed, that is because I share the frustration and annoyance which all Territorians feel at the lack of activity by the federal government in relation not only to Territory airports but to airports throughout Australia. I am not familiar with the detail of all points put forward by the shadow spokesman ...

Mr Smith: Why don't you get on top of it?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, we will get back to who should be getting on top of what later. I can understand the deep frustration which is felt, not only by the federal opposition but Australians generally with the Federal Airports Corporation and its lack of action.

Mr Speaker, I will tell you why there is a lack of action. It is because the Federal Airports Corporation, supposedly formed to take the monkey off the federal government's back by relieving it of the pressure of meeting its commitments in relation to airports around Australia, was snookered right from the start by the extremely high capital valuations put on existing facilities paid for by the taxpayer long ago. In most cases, they were paid for decades ago. Artificial valuations have been put on facilities, forcing the FAC to charge users at a rate which is 3 or 4 times what it should be, a rate which will be reflected no doubt in costs to passengers. No doubt the opposition spokesman has quite correctly raised some concerns about the FAC, where it is going and why it is going there.

Perhaps this issue could encourage a positive approach from members opposite because, to date, they have not put a single constructive point to their colleagues in Canberra. They have left everything to their 2 federal colleagues who, I must acknowledge, have made some constructive attempts to solve the problems at the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports. These people opposite have been content to sit on their butts and do absolutely nothing while not only the travelling public of the Northern Territory goes down the drain but tourism itself is hampered. Indeed, the overall development of the Northern Territory is hampered.

The federal opposition spokesman has recognised that the FAC is frustrated by the constraints placed on it by the federal government and is attempting to seek some rectification. There is no doubt that the subject of the airports will continue to be raised in this Assembly and I will ensure that I pursue it to the absolute end. I will not rest while these honourable members opposite are content to sit back and do nothing. They come up with nothing more than negative bagging of everything that this government or its colleagues in Canberra do.

#### Trade Development Zone

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

In previous debate in this House, the honourable minister referred to the Hong Kong based company, Hengyang, and its plans to move into the Trade Development Zone. Have those plans come to fruition and, if so, when does the company plan to start operations at the zone?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Ludmilla for his question. Indeed, Hengyang will be in the zone and operating before Christmas. There will be

140 employees of that firm. It is the first time that we have been able to bring skilled workers to Australia and 27 Chinese girls arrived in the Northern Territory yesterday to take up positions with Hengyang. I am happy to announce that some 4 employees from a now defunct textile factory in Tasmania have been relocated in the Northern Territory to take up positions with Hengyang. There were 500 applicants for the 140 positions in the textile industry.

It is the success story to cap off what can only be described as an interesting year for the Trade Development Zone. Last night, I had the opportunity to be present with all the people that have made it happen, and I pay particular tribute to the Miscellaneous Workers Union and to the trade union movement in general. Who would have thought 3 years ago that I would be standing up in the House and talking about a blooming textile industry in the Northern Territory, in particular in Darwin? If it had been said in this House that we would have 200 people employed in the textile industry before the end of 1988, the member for Barkly would have had the member who said it locked up.

However, it has happened and I think it is a tribute to the dedication and hard work of many people. The immigration department has worked very hard and so have the ladies involved in the English as a Second Language program. The courses that are being run for the new intake of people into the zone are excellent. It is a credit to those people. The Commonwealth Employment Service has contributed too. I understand that either the member for Stuart or the member for MacDonnell questioned the cost of putting out pamphlets for the Commonwealth Employment Service to recruit people to this particular company. That was put under severe questioning at the height of the Trade Development Zone debate. I would like to pay particular tribute to the ladies and men in the Commonwealth Employment Service who have worked so hard conducting interviews and providing the facilities to bring those job opportunities into the Trade Development Zone and into the Northern Territory in particular.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to make any further statement on the zone but I can tell you that 1989 will be the year of the Trade Development Zone. I see a smirk ...

Mr Ede: Let us hope so.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, of course, the member for Stuart has always been a supporter of the Trade Development Zone. I ask honourable members to cut out the little article that appeared in the Sunday Territorian some 2 months ago which said, 'TDZ in Crisis', because that is really what started this debate off. They should pin it to the fridge and we will have a debate about it next June. We will consult the public record and note what was said about the TDZ. We will then see members opposite run and duck for cover.

Hengyang is now negotiating for stage 2 in the Trade Development Zone. It is a warehouse of the same size as the one that it is already operating in. Indeed, the machinery has arrived and is being put in place at this moment. The opposition should watch my lips: it is actually happening at the moment. We are now talking to the company about stage 3. One of the parent companies is from Shenzhen which the Chief Minister and myself have had the opportunity of visiting. The parent company turns over \$US2000m a year from mainland China. In fact, it provides 50% of all the perishables that enter Hong Kong. To have companies with such backing coming into the Northern Territory at the speed that they are is a tribute to the dedication of Ray McHenry in

particular. Scurrilous attacks have been made on him by members of the opposition and the crossbenches from time to time. Let us see where they stand in relation to the Trade Development Zone next June. When we look at the 'TDZ In Crisis' headline on the fridge, we will have the member for Barkly saying that he has always supported the Trade Development Zone. The excuse for the comment will be that it was only the way Coulter handled it and, if it had not been for Coulter running it, everything would have been all right. There will be 1000 excuses.

We are proud to have Hengyang in the Trade Development Zone. Whilst I am on my feet, can I also say that I am very proud to have Darwin International Textiles in the Trade Development Zone, and I welcome the wife of the proprietor, Helena, and the 2 children who have just arrived - in fact, they began school here at the start of this week - and the proprietor's mother who was visiting China to say goodbye to her relatives because she was off to live in Darwin. Mr Speaker, if you think that the immigration debate has not caused us damage over there and that we are not in real trouble now, I will tell you that there has been a 50% downturn in business migration. This country cannot afford that and I hope that the standard and quality of debate will be raised in this Assembly because the quality of the debate has done some terrible damage to us.

I congratulate the Chief Minister on his statement. I have modified it a little and I have been telling the people in China, Hong Kong and Singapore that it does not matter what the colour of your skin is or the shape of your eyes and that, in Darwin, those things are about as important as the colour or the shape of your car. In the Northern Territory, we live multiculturalism. Mr Speaker, go out in the streets and have a talk about multiculturalism. Nobody will be able to tell you what it is, but we live it, breathe it, sleep it, play sport with it, do business with it and it is alive and well in Darwin. It is that attitude which will promote us in the Asian countries and bring in more firms such as Darwin International Textiles who, in the near future, will be producing over 2 million garments in the Northern Territory with that 'Made in Australia' stamp on them. That is just part of the success story of the Trade Development Zone. Stay tuned for further announcements for all the knockers that have put it down recently.

#### New Parliament House

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

Arguably, the new Parliament House will be the most important public building undertaken in the Northern Territory in the next 15 years. Does the Chief Minister believe that the new Parliament House design will be determined in part or wholly by the design of the proposed Supreme Court building?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would see the matter of the design of the new Parliament House to be largely in the hands of the New Parliament House Committee which will consider the requirements of parliament in the forthcoming decades. As honourable members know, a great deal of work has been done by that committee over several years. I understand that it is meeting occasionally these days to finalise the requirements of the new Parliament House in terms of floor space, facilities and equipment, requirements which will determine, to a large degree, the shape and size of the building.



As for the architectural qualities of the building, I suggest that it would be improper for the architects not to take into consideration the building's site which, of course, will be opposite the new Supreme Court which has already largely been designed. The design should also take the setting into consideration on the site where we sit today. In summary, the Supreme Court building will have an impact on the design of the new Parliament House, as will many other factors. As honourable members would be aware, when the New Parliament House Committee completes its work, it is required to report to this parliament. I am sure that will occur in due course, whereupon this House will have the opportunity to debate its report.

#### Commonwealth Funding for Higher Education

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I remind the minister that, on Friday, it was reported that the Commonwealth had agreed to provide \$50m for higher education in the Northern Territory, an amount which included support for the new Northern Territory University. Subsequently, the interim chief executive officer for the university, Professor Caro, stated on last Friday's 7.30 Report that he was disappointed with the allocation. Could the minister comment on the allocation and clarify whether he regards it as being sufficient properly to launch the new university?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, at the outset, I must say that I was somewhat surprised at the glowing comments that were made in relation to the federal government's funding of the Northern Territory University, particularly the comments made by the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon. I have been most disappointed in the level of funding that has been proposed. We have fought very hard in this Assembly to reach the stage where we are today. I do not need to go into the history of that. All Territorians have ever wanted is to have the same opportunities as other Australians. We wanted access to a university in our own Territory and we have gone through a very difficult period. We have agreed to a merger of the University College of the Northern Territory and the Darwin Institute of Technology and there has been a great deal of heartburn involved in that exercise. I would have expected that, at the least, the federal government would have respected our efforts to comply with its wishes. Having to come to grips with what it was proposing was difficult in itself.

Unfortunately, it would appear that the understanding reached between officers of the Northern Territory government and officers of the Department of Employment, Education and Training have not been reflected in the federal minister's financial package. I will be speaking to the federal minister about that at a later stage. The level of funding that is proposed is a disappointment and I think that many people in the Territory will be disappointed by it. It is all very well to fund our Northern Territory University at the national average. I would remind members that, during the establishment years, there are other costs that need to be catered for and that, during their formative years, other universities throughout Australia received financial assistance to take account of the fact that they were opening and establishing a new university. I do not see why we should be treated any differently.

I will be approaching our 2 Senators, Senator Bob Collins and Senator Grant Tambling, in relation to this matter. I believe those 2 members

have the interests of Territorians at heart. I hope that they approach the federal minister with a view to obtaining additional funds during our university's formative years. I make it clear that I do not hold a grudge because of the fact that West Sydney has received \$150m under the Dawkins plan. It is a new university and good luck to it. However, I would expect a further announcement from the federal minister in relation to the assistance that is to be given to the establishment of our university.

I call also on members of the opposition - and I have given the member for Stuart some correspondence in relation to our efforts - to have the federal minister look at the situation here.

Mr Ede: I have never received any.

Mr HARRIS: I will check that. You asked for the correspondence and I want you to help us. I hope that the opposition will start to make an effort towards gaining for Territorians what is rightfully theirs. It can help in this exercise. It does not mean that the Leader of the Opposition has to fly to Canberra to make these things come into being. He can do it from here and opposition members should work very hard to ensure that we receive what is rightfully ours.

In relation to the university, I wish they would speak to the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, and try to get him to stop being an apologist for his federal colleagues and to look at working towards helping Territorians. That is what he does not do. Every statement that he makes is negative. He needs to get his act together and talk to his colleague, Senator Bob Collins, who is interested in the welfare of Territorians. I am disappointed. We do need further assistance. I believe that the discussions between officers indicated that the situation would be different from that outlined by Minister Dawkins. I will be taking that matter up and I urge all members of this Assembly to do the same, particularly members opposite. I will be asking the member for Stuart, the opposition spokesman on education, to make representations seeking additional funding for our university during its formative years.

#### Hungerford Refrigeration

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

The TIO Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 1988 referred to 'an abnormal write-off of \$1.48m in respect of a venture capital investment in a local manufacturing company'. Obviously, that was Hungerford Refrigeration. I have 2 questions. First, why is such a write-off necessary given the oft-repeated claim that the TIO investment was secured to the extent of some \$500 000, meaning that the TIO had a first claim over payments arising out of the collapse of Hungerford Refrigeration? I understand that amounts owing to local creditors by the same manufacturing company totalled about \$460 000. On 17 May, the then Treasurer, the Deputy Chief Minister, said in this House: 'TIO has assured me that it will look closely at those in hardship, particularly those who have consistently supported the company in the past'. My second question is: what efforts has TIO made on behalf of the local creditors to reimburse them for the amount of approximately \$460 000 which they have lost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure what the preamble had to do with the question concerning the extraordinary write-off of \$1.5m. That was a decision of the TIO Board which, I am advised, was made after taking advice from professional accountants.

Mr Smith: Half of it was supposed to be secured.

Mr PERRON: If the Leader of the Opposition would like to be quiet whilst he is actually in the Assembly, he might get a response to his question.

Mr Coulter: There was something to be said for his going to Canberra.

Mr PERRON: That is very true.

Mr Speaker, the advice was that the amount should be written off. If the TIO receives some funds subsequently as a result of the liquidation of Hungerford, that would reduce the loss. In accounting terms, those funds could be recorded as extraordinary income in the following financial year. I do not see anything unusual about that. Obviously, the Leader of the Opposition is not aware that even secured creditors of a company which goes into liquidation cannot always recover their funds, and his question is somewhat nonsensical in that regard.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the situation of unsecured creditors. Until such time as the liquidator has completed the winding up of the company and the resolution of its remaining assets, it is inappropriate for any decisions to be taken in regard to the treatment of unsecured creditors.

Application for Casino at Yulara

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TOURISM

Is it correct that there is an application before the government for a licence for a casino at Yulara? If so, is it proposed to introduce legislation for this at these sittings?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. My understanding of the situation, which I will confirm later today with the honourable member, is that the licensee of the Alice Springs Casino has shown an interest in extending the operation to Yulara. I think that is all I can say at present. It is obvious that there is some discussion concerning it. To my knowledge, we have not received any firm proposal at this stage, but I will clarify that and advise the honourable member.

Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Campaign

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I preface my question by saying that, last week in this House, the member for Koolpinyah jumped on the BTEC bandwagon ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I did not jump on the bandwagon - I asked a question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PALMER: ... and made certain allegations in the adjournment about the operation of the campaign especially in relation to the buffalo industry component. Is the minister aware of those allegations and can he advise if they have any substance in fact?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and apologise to the member for Koolpinyah for not answering her questions earlier. I had intended to do so after question time last Thursday but did not have the opportunity. The honourable member raised a number of questions, some of which were based on fact and some not. The honourable member alleged that, during the course of a meeting held by buffalo industry people on Friday 18 November, staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries snuck out to Woolner Station and shot some animals that belonged to the owners of that station. I can advise the honourable member that that allegation is incorrect and the staff of the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries had nothing to do with any actions of that sort.

The second question related to a suggestion that staff of the department undertake shooting activities in various areas and that their attitude is that they will shoot the animals and sort out the problems that arise from that action later. I can advise the honourable member that this is definitely neither the policy nor the practice. In fact, animals are shot only if there is a high prevalence of disease or in circumstances where there are animals left over following mustering or pet meat operations, to reduce the number of animals that are wasted and maximise their utilisation. Of course, it is usually the case in most circumstances that agreement is reached with the landholder before shooting occurs.

The third question suggested that the honourable member had been refused advice by a senior officer of my department when she sought information. The Daily Hansard of last Thursday indicates that ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: It was before you were a minister.

Mr REED: Well, now we are going back into history. That was not indicated last week. By interjection, I am advised by the honourable member that that occurred before I was a minister.

Mr Speaker, may I just say that it is normally the practice for officers of the department to provide information if they can but, in the event that it involves a matter of policy, then the honourable member may be referred to the relevant minister. Quoting from Hansard, this was in relation to another person. The honourable member said that it was not confidential information and that she did not intend to use it in any illegal way. I think the public servant rightly felt that he could not give information in relation to another person and the advice given to the honourable member was that she should obtain it from the minister. That was probably appropriate in those circumstances. However, if the honourable member has any difficulty, I will be happy to pursue it if that still remains the case.

Another issue was raised in relation to the incidence of TB in the United States. The suggestion was made that that TB is still prevalent in the United States and I assume that the honourable member was referring to cattle. The information provided to me by senior personnel from the Animal, Plant and

Health Inspection Service of the United States, with whom I met in Darwin recently, was that, in fact, 7 to 10 herds per year of a total of 1.8 million do experience outbreaks of TB. To date this year, there have been 8 outbreaks in 4 states. I understand that Canada is free of both TB and brucellosis in its cattle herds. There is a clear indication that there is a very low prevalence of TB in the cattle herds of the United States which is very keen to ensure that the disease is eradicated.

The fifth question related to the buffalo development loans initiated by this government. The question was: has the government changed its mind in relation to the loans? The answer is no. In fact, I advise the honourable member that the loans are in fact for \$100 000, not \$10 000 as she stated last Wednesday. They are not buffalo industry grants, as she indicated, but loans. However, they can be converted to grants over a period if specific performance criteria are achieved by loan recipients. So far, 9 people have been advised of their success, contrary to the advice of the honourable member.

The member's sixth question related to the wiping out of the buffalo herd. I think the government's commitment is clear in relation to the buffalo herd in the Northern Territory. If we look back a few years, we will remember the leases provided to people wishing to commence buffalo domestication initiatives at Point Stuart. A number of domestication programs are under way in that area and I am sure that the people involved will achieve their goals and that we will see the buffalo industry prosper in the Northern Territory.

In more recent times, we have had the buffalo development loans which, as I have just indicated, are being processed at present. The days of the feral buffalo are numbered and there is no doubt about that. Hardship is resulting but there is no doubt that, without the BTEC program and the ability to farm the animals in a controlled situation, the buffalo industry would have no future. The buffalo industry's future depends on the BTEC program. The herd will be disease-free and will have access to new opportunities to enter markets throughout the world.

The honourable member alleged that, at a meeting on 18 November with 60-odd people in the buffalo industry, I did not answer any questions. I attended that meeting for 45 minutes and we were able to discuss a whole range of issues. I answered a number of questions. It would be fair to say that my answers were not fully accepted by some of the people present, particularly my response to a request that I extend the completion date for the BTEC program beyond 1992. Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to do that. It is a national program. The target has been set and there is no indication from either the federal government or the cattle industry nationally, which funds 50% of the program, that we can achieve an extension.

As a follow-up to the meeting of 18 November, yesterday morning I spent 2½ hours with 20-odd people from the buffalo industry. Again, we went through a number of issues. The honourable member has suggested that I should consult more with industry rather than just listening to advice from my department. I totally refute any suggestion that I have not been consulting. I have been doing so on a continuous basis. I am sure that most of the people who attended yesterday's meeting were satisfied with the outcome in terms of the issues raised, and with the processes which we are putting in place to deal with those issues, some of which have also been raised by the member for Koolpinyah. Those processes will ensure that the program will continue and that the buffalo industry will have a bright and prosperous future in the Northern Territory.

Population Drift from the Northern Territory

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

When will his government take constructive steps to gather firm data on the ongoing population drift from the Territory? Does he accept that, without that data, planning processes for the provision of services and for economic growth must be seriously flawed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can assure the member for Stuart that he and his colleagues certainly need not concern themselves too much about being in a position to worry about ongoing services for the Northern Territory's population, given the way they conduct themselves. There has been considerable debate in the community about statistics released recently indicating that there is a fall in the population of the Northern Territory. A great many charges and counter-charges have been made. There is no doubt that the figures indicate a trend which has been of concern to the Territory government for some time. The very latest figures relate to the June quarter of this year and are therefore 4 or 5 months old. We believe that other, more recent indicators suggest that that trend has been arrested or, hopefully, reversed. We will not know for certain until further figures become available.

The reasons for some decline in the Northern Territory population are pretty well known. For example, Telecom has relocated 200 staff to Adelaide and, no doubt, a substantial number of additional people who are members of their families. That would certainly not have helped. The Commonwealth Department of Housing and Construction has also relocated people out of the Northern Territory. Of course, some of the federal government's funding cuts in recent years have not helped either.

Notwithstanding those decisions, we have managed to maintain an environment in the Northern Territory which, we believe, is conducive to further investment and which will create jobs in the Territory. Certainly, at some time in the near future, if it has not happened already, those efforts will begin to increase the Northern Territory's population once again. In recent years, our population growth has been phenomenal and has exceeded by several times the national rate of population growth. It was inevitable that the rate of increase would decline eventually. In recent times, the Northern Territory government has taken action to ensure that there is continuing activity in the construction industry in the Top End. The State Square project, much criticised by members of the opposition and the crossbenches, is a prime example. Those members believe that a vacuum in terms of construction activity during the next couple of years will do their political cause some good. It is not surprising that they are arguing that the government should drop the State Square project.

If indications in relation to the proposed new Darwin and Alice Springs Airport terminals are correct, we really do have something to worry about. That is because the expected commencement of spending of \$30m to \$70m on the Darwin Airport redevelopment in January next year seems unlikely to occur. When the Leader of the Opposition chose to leave this Assembly in the middle of a sittings to go to Canberra, perhaps he should have addressed the issue of the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports and thereby acted in the interests of Territorians, rather than wasting taxpayers' money on the ridiculous jaunt which he undertook.

Air-conditioning of Preschools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

A report in last Saturday's NT News indicated that the Northern Territory Teachers Federation had called a meeting of preschool teachers to discuss the issue of preschool air-conditioning. Is the minister aware of this report and could he advise of his current position in relation to this matter?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the report to which the member for Jingili refers. I can say, once again, that the executive of the Northern Territory Teachers Federation is off-track. I wish that it would stop misleading its members. In fact, teachers at some of the preschools are very much aware of what the Northern Territory government is doing in relation to this. It is no secret that honourable members of this Assembly have presented petitions. The member for Jingili himself has made repeated representations on this very issue.

Mr Bell: Ad nauseam.

Mr HARRIS: Indeed, ad nauseam, but nevertheless he has been working hard for his constituents. There is no secret about what we have been doing and I have commented on that.

I have commissioned a report which again has a time limit on it. It is to be back with me by the end of January next year. I have visited a number of preschools over this period and I will continue to visit preschools. Money was identified in the budget to enable those schools which were experiencing extreme heat problems to have particular areas air-conditioned. Some schools were already obtaining quotations in relation to that.

The report will be ready prior to the date that I suggested - that is, the end of January. That report will canvass the issues. The wishes of parents who are not in favour of air-conditioning preschools have to be respected. That will be canvassed and we will be looking at those schools that have installed air-conditioning at their own expense. I know the member for Nightcliff has such a school in his electorate. There are others that have decided to air-condition their preschools. Those matters have to be looked at responsibly. The government is doing that and that is on record.

I wish that the secretary of the Teachers Federation executive would start to get his facts straight. I am disappointed. Again, I say in this Assembly that it is very difficult for me to work with failed, would-be politicians who are in these executive positions. Often, I have occasion to speak to teachers and others and I need to have their confidence. Under circumstances where there are people who have been involved actively in politics, particularly as far as the opposition is concerned, it is impossible for me to continue to have that confidence in them. I ask that the Teachers Federation executive start looking at the issues raised by its members and start trying to take note of its members views. We need that partnership. We need to be able to work together. I am happy to work together with them but I wish the secretary of the NTTF would get his facts straight before he issues press releases to the media.

Needle Exchange Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

Does he know that, according to a statement in the press of 20 November 1988, attributed to Mr Ian Lauchlan, the executive officer of the Northern Territory AIDS Council, there has been a trial run of a needle exchange program for intravenous drug users which appears to be in direct contravention of section 12 of the Criminal Code which deals with abettors and accessories before the fact? Will he institute proceedings through the normal police channels against these people for breaking the law? If not, why will these people be treated so benevolently when other people who break the law by committing traffic offences, car thefts, assaults, house-breaks etc are all charged with offences against the law?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, previously a statement was made in the House indicating that a trial needle exchange program is being operated in the Northern Territory at present. For further details on this matter, I refer the honourable member to the Minister for Health and Community Services as he has principal carriage of the subject in this House.

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I feel grave concern about the attitude of the member for Koolpinyah on this particular issue. She is trying to relate the fact that a needle exchange program for needles that she wants to use on her goats is as important as the AIDS situation that is confronting the Northern Territory. That will be the basis of her contribution to the debate on this issue when it comes before this House later today.

Mr Speaker, a trial program has been in place. It has been carried out by agreement with this House and with the police and the judiciary in the Northern Territory. A situation confronts us at this time that all responsible members of this Assembly and people in the Northern Territory will see that we must combat. Exchange programs are in place throughout Australia, bar the state of Tasmania and the Northern Territory. We have started this program following professional advice and I will be illustrating later today that that has been a very responsible move by all involved in the trial program. We will continue with that program until such time as appropriate legislation is in place.

Security and Protocol Problems at Yulara and Uluru

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his press release of 16 November in which he complained of security and protocol problems at Ayers Rock during the recent visit of the Singapore Prime Minister. Mr Speaker, I remind the Chief Minister that, with yourself, I accompanied the Governor-General to Yulara and Uluru where different administrative arrangements apply, chiefly of the government's making. I further remind the Chief Minister that during that visit there were no security or protocol problems and I further remind him that my inquiries at both Yulara and Uluru indicate that no such security and protocol problems exist. What actual difficulties do exist?



ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member refers to a press release that I issued prior to the visit by the Singapore Prime Minister to the Uluru National Park. It was issued following a letter that I wrote to a federal minister asking that the nonsense, which has become normal practice in relation to VIP visits to the Northern Territory, be set aside. It came to my attention first when I was examining with our protocol people the itinerary of the Singapore Prime Minister in the Northern Territory. As hosts to such people, we plan with them very carefully their itineraries in the Northern Territory. Indeed, we have a high responsibility for their care and for the smooth operation of their itineraries. When these people come to the Northern Territory, they stay at the very fine establishment at Yulara that the Northern Territory government had built some years ago. They are briefed in the interpretative centre there, constructed and operated by the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. We then take them to the boundaries of the Commonwealth national park and hand them over as if it were some sort of East German/West German situation.

It is absurd that Northern Territory Conservation Commission rangers are not permitted to escort or act as tour guides to VIPs travelling through Uluru. It is a classic example of the nonsense which we tolerate in the Northern Territory because we are a territory and not a state. It seems that the Northern Territory government can be trusted with a \$1500m annual budget, with 650 police, with powers to pass laws for the order and good government of the Northern Territory and with powers to appoint Supreme Court judges for life. All of those powers are vested in the Northern Territory government, but the power to operate a national park is something that we cannot be trusted with. That is absurd. I find considerable embarrassment in having to admit to VIPs, who visit the Northern Territory and who take considerable interest in the administrative arrangements of areas that they visit, that the Commonwealth government believes that areas such as Kakadu and Uluru should be administered totally by some other regime.

Once we hand the visitor over at the border to be escorted around the park by the ranger from the ANPWS whom, I am advised ...

Mr Coulter: It is true.

Mr Bell: When was the last time you accompanied someone down to Ayers Rock, Barry.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I am advised that, having handed him over to the ANPWS rangers, the Northern Territory government would have to take a step back in relation to security arrangements for the Singapore Prime Minister during the time that he was walking around that piece of territory that is alien to the Northern Territory. I find it most distasteful and unacceptable to Territorians. I will continue to work to have it eliminated.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on notice. For the the benefit of the member for MacDonnell, the answer is the Queen of Denmark.

Capricorn Productions - Contract with Tourist Commission

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

On 13 October, I asked this question of the Minister for Tourism. He promised to get back to me and he has not done so and therefore I ask the question again. During the last sittings, a statement was made that the film production company, Capricorn Productions, had failed to complete its \$800 000 contract with the Tourist Commission. Is it a fact that contract funds were used by Capricorn Productions to purchase a mobile production unit worth somewhere between \$120 000 to \$200 000? Is it also a fact that that unit was used only once or twice before being sold, with the company retaining the proceeds? What action did the minister take at that time and what action has been taken since to recover those public funds?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, firstly, I apologise to the Leader of the Opposition because I did sign a reply. I will check and see what happened to that reply which contained the information that was available through the Tourist Commission in answer to his question. My understanding of the situation is that the company concerned did buy a mobile production unit. I have no idea, but I accept it if the Leader of the Opposition says that the company paid for it out of funds that were paid to it. Obviously, I have no internal knowledge of the workings of the company. We paid it the amount of money according to the contract that ...

Mr Smith: Even though it did not perform?

Mr POOLE: No, no. There were certain performance clauses in that contract and the company was paid. The first payment was made and then the second payment was made. Then the company ran into financial difficulties. Up to that stage, it had performed to the satisfaction of the Tourist Commission. As for what happened to that vehicle, I have no idea. Officers of the Tourist Commission have tried to talk to the liquidator. They have been pushed from pillar to post, I understand, and have spoken to a number of legal people and a number of accountants. The company has now been deregistered and the directors of the company have not made themselves available to answer the technical queries that the Leader of the Opposition has raised.

Mr Smith: Another \$120 000 has gone down the drain, and no one cares.

Darwin Tourism Feasibility Study

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What is happening in relation to the tourism feasibility study being conducted in the Port Darwin area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members are probably aware that the government has commenced a study to identify the potential for developing tourism opportunities around the peninsula of Darwin, particularly around the port area. That study is being conducted in association with a study of some parts of the peninsula by the Darwin City Council and local tourist industry operators. The obvious aim is to utilise the natural environment and the

features of the port itself, including the safe harbour for fishing boats, to the best advantage. The Department of Transport and Works has engaged 2 consultants. The first is a local architectural firm, Woods Bagot, which is investigating the potential for tourism infrastructure. Its study is to be completed in December this year. The second is a local firm of consulting engineers, Sleeman Dunkley Tracy Mounsell Pty Ltd, which is looking at the impact of tourism on the operation of the port itself. That study is due to be completed in January.

A number of local businesses have come out of the woodwork and made suggestions about features which might be incorporated in the development of the peninsula. Some of those look extremely interesting. They include restaurants, fish markets and other related features. I am certainly confident that, early in the new year, in association with the Darwin City Council and the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association, we will be in a position to put to the public a comprehensive study setting out possible future directions in terms of tourism facilities on the Darwin peninsula.

Aboriginal Membership of Gove District  
Hospital Management Board

Mr LEO to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware that, according to the 1987-88 Annual Report of the Gove District Hospital Management Board, the composition of that board does not include a single Aboriginal person? Given the dependence of Aboriginal people on that hospital's services and their usage of them, will the minister undertake at the earliest opportunity to make the board more representative of the people whom the hospital services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would be absolutely delighted to have involvement from people in every community which receives the various aspects of health and community services provided by this government. However, particularly in relation to Aboriginal people, I will not countenance token representation on any board whatsoever. Recently, I had a meeting in Darwin with Aboriginal health workers from throughout the Northern Territory and several from interstate. A number of very important issues were discussed and a number of recommendations which were put to me are now being addressed. One of those recommendations addressed the issue raised by the member for Nhulunbuy, and I gave the same response as that which I have just given. The fact is that, in general terms - and I stress that that does not mean in every individual case but in general terms - the attendance of Aboriginal people at the meetings of boards to which they have been appointed has been extremely poor.

I challenged the health workers at the meeting to seek out people who would be dedicated in giving their time to serve on such boards so that they could have a very substantial input into the affairs of hospitals throughout the Northern Territory. They have taken up that challenge and I am confident that they will not be putting forward token gestures next time vacancies crop up on the various hospital boards throughout the Northern Territory. I am sure that they will put substantial people forward and I will be very honoured indeed to appoint them as their names come forward.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is he aware of the case of one Centralian pastoralist whereby mismanagement of the BTEC program cost him \$400 000 in 10 weeks this year? That followed an inaccurate test result for brucellosis and subsequent delays in getting accurate results from the department. Is he aware also of claims by another Centralian pastoralist that the losses caused by the project have now reached \$1m, and how can he possibly justify his complacent assumption that the program is not damaging the industry which he is here to protect?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, here we go again with more allegations. Unfortunately, the member for Stuart is unable or is not prepared to indicate who the people are who are concerned, which properties are involved and precisely what the problem is. As I have indicated to the honourable member previously, if he can provide me with precise information, I am only too pleased to have it investigated and I will get back to him.

Mr Ede interjecting.

Mr REED: By interjection, the honourable member is suggesting that it is one station. If he could provide some comprehensive information - and no doubt we will hear all about it today because there is an item on the Notice Paper - I would be only too happy to answer the allegations. To date, he has been unable to come up with any substantive information that can be investigated. If he can do so, I would be only too pleased to have the matter fully investigated.

Rabbit Flat Roadhouse Liquor Licence

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TOURISM

I am sure honourable members will fully appreciate the great significance of this particular question. Are there any plans to change the trading hours and liquor licence provisions at the Rabbit Flat Roadhouse?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, Rabbit Flat Roadhouse is very important to the tourist industry because of its isolation on the Tanami Road. There are problems there and we have decided to assist the operator to achieve the operating hours that he requires. After discussions with Bruce Farrands of Rabbit Flat and information provided subsequently by the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission, we have decided that it is possible for Mr Farrands to amend his liquor licence from a roadside inn facility to a tavern licence. This has ramifications for travellers on that highway. It will enable him to trade on only 4 days per week, as he has proposed, with closure on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The current roadside inn licence will continue trading until Monday 2 January.

Meanwhile, there has been an application for a new style of licence by Mr Farrands. Because of his isolation, the commission has assisted him with preparing the necessary advertisements and lodged them with the Centralian Advocate and the Government Printer with the request that the commission be billed for all costs associated with those notices. In turn, those costs will

be recovered from Mr Farrands. We thought it necessary to take this action to ensure there was no delay in getting the application before the Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission due to possible inconvenience to travellers in that isolated area. The commission has reduced the period for lodgement of objections to 14 days. The advertisement appears in the NT Government Gazette on 2 November and the commission will meet to discuss the application as soon as possible after the closing date of 16 November. I understand that is about to happen. The Racing, Gaming and Liquor Commission is still bound by section 48 of the Liquor Act and if any objection is lodged within the prescribed period, the commission must meet to discuss the validity of the objection.

Mr Farrands has been afforded every assistance in his quest to obtain a variation to his licence and he is certainly well aware of all the actions that have been taken. After discussions with the Tourist Commission manager responsible for development, Richard O'Sullivan, Mr Farrands has told us he will have no problems with a new roadside facility being developed along the Tanami Road as long as it is some distance away from his property. The Tourist Commission has since been in contact with the Central Land Council which is investigating the possibility of developing a new roadside facility on the Tanami track at the Lajamanu Road turnoff, which is some 43 km north of Rabbit Flat. Royalties received by the traditional owners from the Granites and Tanami goldmines will provide the necessary funds to develop such a facility. Talks were held with the Central Land Council on 21 October in Alice Springs regarding the matter and the Central Land Council will continue to investigate the possibility and feasibility of running this roadside facility. There is also a possibility that the new roadhouse would not be applying for a liquor licence due to the sensitivity of the liquor issues there.

The oilfield which is located fairly close to the site at Kintaro would supply water. The Jungampa Association would be the developers and incorporated in the development could possibly be a base for outstations which could be created in this area. This base could incorporate health, education and maintenance facilities. In any event, the Tourist Commission will continue to liaise with the Central Land Council on this matter.

In terms of informing the general public of the partial closure of the Rabbit Flat facility, the Australian Automobile Association in the NT is contacting all its sister associations throughout Australia to inform all members of these new trading hours. All Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau staff throughout Australia have been informed of the new trading hours and this will be conveyed to all persons in contact with the commission or a bureau who intend travelling along this road.

Mr Ede: Are you going to put signposts on the highway?

Mr POOLE: Yes. The Tourist Commission has suggested that the Department of Transport and Works erect a sign at the Western Australia entrance into the Northern Territory and at the Stuart Highway junction. It has been suggested that the sign be in Japanese, English and German and advise of the condition and isolation of the track. These signs could be similar to those used on the Birdsville Track - that is, advising travellers to carry water, food, spare fuel etc.

There are some planned changes along that highway and I guess that, as a community, we should thank Bruce and his wife for operating that very isolated facility for the last 20 years or so. It is obvious that he has decided that he wants to take a bit of a break, at least for 3 days of the week.

Administrator of the Northern Territory

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

Could the Chief Minister advise Territorians whether he and the Prime Minister have agreed on the appointment of a new Administrator or whether there are any changes to be made at all?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I propose to make a statement on the subject of the Administrator at the appropriate time. Until such time as I am in a position to do that, I do not believe it is appropriate for me to speculate on the matter.

Katherine Airport

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In view of the statement we heard on airports yesterday, which took up quite some of the time of the House, is he able to give any indication of what the future of the Katherine Airport terminal is to be?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, there was much discussion yesterday about responsibilities for airports and their facilities. It is fairly ironic that, while we were debating the future of our 2 major airports, information was made available to us about a fairly catastrophic decision concerning Katherine Airport. Unlike Territory-held strips, such as those at Yulara and Jabiru, and even strips like that at Milingimbi, where the Territory government accepts and meets its responsibilities most appropriately, the future of airports and facilities, such as those at Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, are in the hands of the federal government and it is quite distressing that news came through to my office yesterday that the \$600 000 redevelopment project for Katherine Airport had been scrapped. I understand that, instead, the federal government will allocate a token sum of money to repair the existing terminal.

Mr Coulter: It had better be quick. The white ants will eat it.

Mr FINCH: In fact, that is a problem. There are a number of problems associated with Katherine terminal facilities and one of them is that termites are eating the structure. We need to speak to our Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries and see if he has a special, accelerated breeding program for termites so that, perhaps, they can give us a bit of a hand.

However, it is not only termites nor the structure that are problems. Obviously, the amenity at Tindal is most inadequate, not only because of the role that Katherine and Tindal play in our tourism development but also because of the increase in traffic that will emanate from the Tindal RAAF Base facility. Whilst we were given assurances that the terminal was to be included the 1988-89 construction program, it seems that not only was the federal government going to drop that, it was not very keen to let us know about it. We found out about it almost by accident. Yesterday, officers from my department were informed by colleagues in other relevant federal departments that the terminal project had been 'deferred indefinitely'. 'Deferred indefinitely' means that we need to wait for another change in federal government, and I guess the only good point is that that is only 18 months away.

Whilst I have not had any positive confirmation or notification from the federal government, I understand that a representative from the federal minister's office has confirmed to one Northern Territory media representative that that rumour is entirely correct. I will be seeking to make further representations to the federal Minister for Transport and Communications Support to see if there is any possibility that this inappropriate and totally unacceptable move can be turned around.

Mr Dondas: I would not waste my time.

Mr FINCH: The member for Casuarina speaks from his experience with previous federal Ministers for Transport and Communications. Whilst I would not hold my breath, certainly I will be attempting to gain some satisfaction on behalf of residents of Katherine, and I am sure the member for Katherine and the people of Katherine who have put a great deal of work as a community into rationalising the initial design which was a bit grandiose. They put considerable effort into helping the federal government to come up with an appropriately modest facility at a cost of some \$600 000. I am sure they will be extremely disappointed but, on their behalf, I shall endeavour at least to have this totally unacceptable decision turned around.

#### Effects of Manganese at Angurugu

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he aware of the growing concern at Angurugu in relation to health problems associated with manganese? What action has he taken to reassure that community about those risks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that it is accurate to say that there is growing concern. There has been some concern for quite a number of years. In fact, the gentleman who was quoted on the airwaves this morning has been out there doing research. He was employed by the mining company there for some time. The Menzies School of Health Research has been involved in the situation. It is working in close consultation with the experts on Groote Eylandt and we will take advice from it.

#### Herbicide Use at Oenpelli

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES.

The ABC radio news this morning intimated that a herbicide being used for the control of *Mimosa pigra* at Oenpelli may not be approved for such broad-scale use. Can the minister clarify the situation regarding the use of that herbicide?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had a little difficulty in matching the headline with the actual substance of the news report. Honourable members will be aware of the problem which *Mimosa pigra* poses on our floodplains. It covers an estimated 30 000 ha in the Adelaide River area and another 15 000 ha in the Moil River area and western Arnhem Land. *Mimosa pigra* is a woody shrub which grows in very dense thickets and makes the land virtually useless. It has a very great impact from a conservation and recreation viewpoint and renders the land virtually useless for pastoral purposes.

The Northern Territory government initiated a biological control research program with CSIRO in 1979. Of course, programs of this nature have long lead times and the development of controls takes some time, particularly because of the need to ensure that any biological control which is introduced does not affect other plants or otherwise impact detrimentally on the environment. There is no better example of what can go wrong than what has happened with the cane toad. Whilst research into biological control continues, it is necessary to develop an integrated approach to the control of mimosa. If we sit by and do nothing, the plant will infest further areas and land will be lost for production and other purposes.

As a consequence of that, the use of Graslan 20P herbicide is to be expanded. Small areas have been trialed in recent years and it has been found that the herbicide has not spread beyond those areas. It is now necessary to determine the suitability of the use of the herbicide over larger areas. In conjunction with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Northern Land Council and local Aboriginal owners, a 2000 ha infestation near Oenpelli is being treated by the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries. The herbicide is being spread by air. Trials by the department during the last 5 years have found Graslan to be very effective in the control of mimosa. It has a number of advantages over other herbicides which warrant further trials in larger areas.

The pellet form of Graslan is less likely to drift from aerial application on to non-target areas than the liquid foliant sprays. Its residual nature can control seedling regeneration the following year, thus minimising further seed production and the need for annual chemical control. Being a dry pellet, there is no necessity to cart large volumes of water to the aircraft loading site. It is less sensitive to weather at the time of application than are the foliant liquid herbicides. The herbicide is contained in pelletised clay. After being applied from the air, it is leached into the ground following rain. It has been found to date, as I have indicated already, that the herbicide is residual and has not moved from the areas to which it has been applied. Principally, it attacks woody plants and has little effect on grasses which either regenerate from their own root stock or from seed stock.

I am sure that honourable members will agree that we cannot hesitate over the control of mimosa. If these trials continue to be effective, consideration will be given to expanding them in the hope that we can continue to apply control measures until such times as the biological control measure is introduced. Honourable members will be pleased to hear that we are working in close consultation with the Environment Unit of the Conservation Commission to monitor very closely the application of the herbicide and any other possible side effects or any drift that it might have from the site to which it is applied. We are also in consultation with the Environment Centre of the Northern Territory.

#### Dumping of Radio-active Material at Ranger

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

In the last few days, we have heard of a truckload of radio-active material being put in the wrong place at Ranger. Can he give the Assembly and the Territorians listening the details?



ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no doubt honourable members will know that the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy is required by legislation to investigate possible infringements of the highly-regulated mining procedures at Ranger. In accordance with its obligations, Ranger informed the department last Friday afternoon of just such a technical infringement. Because of a failure in a discriminator, which sorts various ore grades, a quantity of low grade uranium-bearing rock had been placed in the waste rock dump which is outside the restricted release zone. It must be stressed that the dumped rock contained extremely low quantities of uranium ore, too low to be crushed, which is why it was consigned to waste. The infringement has not caused any concern for the environment in either the Department of Mines and Energy or the Office of the Supervising Scientist.

It is a minor matter which could be described as a technical infringement. Until a full report is compiled by the department, I am unable to report the duration of the failure of the discriminator or the amount of rock placed in the waste rock dump. However, I am advised that the matter is not one which should be viewed as posing any practical threat to the surrounding environment. Were it not for the fact that Ranger is the world's most highly-regulated mine, it probably would not have been a reportable matter at all. Remedial action has been taken by Ranger in the form of a wall built around the waste rock dump and repair of the fault discriminator.

Denial of Permit to Don Dunstan

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer to the visit to the Territory by the former Premier of South Australia, Mr Don Dunstan. Why was Don Dunstan unable to travel through local government communities even though his visit was coordinated by the Office of Local Government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that is a very good question. For some time, I have been attempting to bring to the Northern Territory representatives of local government, including Ministers of Local Government and Ministers for Aboriginal Affairs, to look at community government in the Northern Territory. On 2 occasions this year, I had organised meetings, the last of which was cancelled with only South Australia being able to attend. The minister from South Australia said to me at the ministers conference in Brisbane this year that, because they were very keen to look at community government, they would have somebody come up and have a look on their behalf. The minister appointed Don Dunstan, a former Premier of South Australia, to come to the Territory to look at community government. Members would be aware that Don Dunstan played a major role in setting up the land councils in the northern regions of South Australia and has maintained a strong interest in that area. Indeed, he has been very keen to ensure that Aboriginal people have responsibility for their own affairs at a local level.

I met with Don Dunstan in Darwin. In fact, I had dinner with him last week and we discussed community government and some of the difficulties that we are facing with respect to opposition from some sections of the Aboriginal bureaucracy and the land councils. Mr Dunstan had visited Daguragu, Batchelor College and Katherine. He was due to go to Ngukurr on the last day of his visit. I have with me the approvals from the Ngukurr community for

Mr Dunstan's visit. The first one is the application form sent from the Katherine office of the Northern Land Council to Ngukurr for a permit for 3 people - Don Dunstan and the 2 people with him. That was approved by Eric Roberts and I assume that that was during November. It is dated 16 November. I have also a permit signed by Henry Ponto, who is the real traditional owner of the area and who has the authority to grant this permit. It is signed 7 November 1988. On the night before they were due to visit Ngukurr, they received a phone call at their hotel in Katherine telling them that that approval had been withdrawn by Eric Roberts who is a representative of the Northern Land Council in that area. That has caused a great furore in the area. In fact, there is considerable opposition to Mr Roberts' withdrawal of that permit.

We know that there are problems there at present. Those problems have not been brought about by actions of the Northern Territory government. They have been brought about by the direct actions of the land council bureaucracy which is attempting to hang on to the power which it currently holds over Aboriginal people at community level. I believe that the withdrawal of the permit was a clear sign of that. Mr Dunstan had been around community governments in the Northern Territory for a few days. He had picked up the vibes that community government was effective and that people were happy with the ability it gave them to decide for themselves what they should be doing at the local community level. Because he had been picking up those vibes and because, during his visit to the Northern Land Council, he had sensed that it was opposed to community government, he was starting to get the picture. I believe that is the reason why his permit was withdrawn and he was unable to go to Ngukurr on the last day of his visit.

Mr Speaker, I would like to table 2 documents - the permits which were provided. I would suggest that members peruse them. I think it is an abominable situation when an officer - not a member - of the Northern Land Council can bring pressure to bear on a member of the land council at Ngukurr to withdraw a permit for such a prominent person. In fact, I think this is probably the worst thing that the land councils have done to date in their efforts to thwart the development of community government for Aboriginal people. For the first time, it has brought home to a senior person from interstate the interference of land councils in the running of the Northern Territory and in the ability of Aboriginal people to run their affairs at a local level which can only be done effectively through community government. That cannot be done through the major land councils.

Whilst I do not go out to Aboriginal communities to talk to people about their involvement with land councils, I acknowledge that they have a concern. I support the notion that they should discuss whether land councils, as they exist currently, are appropriate to their needs. Frankly, I suspect that, if they think about it enough, they will find that they are not. I believe that they will find that community government is by far the more effective means of giving people a say in how they run their affairs at community level.

I shall be writing to Mr Dunstan to apologise for the embarrassment that was caused to him. I abhor the attempts on the part of the land council bureaucracy to thwart the development of community government for the people of South Australia.

Commuter Taxi Services at Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

The issue of commuter taxi service licences at Yulara is a vexed one. Can the minister give an assurance that the former commuter taxi service licensees will be able to advertise themselves as running taxis? I ask this because many visitors to Yulara, particularly overseas visitors, recognise the name 'taxi'. Secondly, can he explain why, after such a short trial period, the decision was taken to remove those commuter taxi service licences?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will need to get back to the honourable member with specific details. I am in a position to advise that the very vexed question of the various classifications of passenger transport licences is under review in an attempt to delineate the various classes. From one community to another, there is great complexity in terms of taxi licences, public hire cars, tourist plates, omnibuses, commuter taxis and so on.

After consultation with the community at Yulara, the commuter taxi was seen to be the appropriate class of licence there. From memory, it is a condition of commuter licences throughout the Territory that the term 'taxi' not be used. That term is restricted to specific taxi licences for which people pay an appropriate licence fee which may be as much as \$100 000 depending on the community to which it applies. I am not aware of the specific measures which are proposed in relation to the elimination or classification of the various types of plates, but I will get back to the honourable member with specific advice later in the day.

Review of School Fees

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Earlier this year, the minister called for a review of school fees. What progress has been made on the review and when will the results be known?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, members would be aware that the issue of school fees was raised because there were considerable variations in fees from one school to another. I set up a working party to look at specific matters in relation to school fees and I broadened the terms of reference so that they took in a whole range of other issues of concern in the general operation of schools. The membership of the working party included parents, principals and officers of the department. It has prepared a report which is before me at present. The report has suggested a number of new schemes. For example, it has been put to me that the phrase 'school fee' is both misleading and inappropriate and that we should be looking at using terms such as 'parent contributions'. I will be looking at a whole range of issues which have been raised.

The working party held the very firm view that school fees should be used only to enhance a school's basic education program. That is something which we will have to look at. We are responsible for ensuring the provision of funds to operate the basic education programs in schools. I will be making a decision on that particular report in the near future. At this stage, I would urge the schools to operate normally as they have in the past and, at some time in the new year, I will make a further announcement on this matter.

Planning Act

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for LANDS and HOUSING

I have asked this question before and I have written to the honourable minister about it but I have not had any reply. Will he give consideration to revamping the Planning Act with regard to the secrecy provisions now attending the meetings of the Planning Authority, the composition of the Appeals Board, the minister's intervention in development applications and rezoning applications, the subject of costs in appeals and who should pay, simplifying the appeals process, direct and indirect interests of members of the Planning Authority and more consideration for local members on the Planning Authority?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I think it would be appropriate for the detailed information the honourable member requires to be put on notice.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: I sent you a letter but you have not replied.

Mr MANZIE: I would like to clarify a couple of matters. Under the provisions of the act and in its operation, the minister does not interfere with planning processes. I remind honourable members that, in fact, the majority of people on the Planning Authority are nominees and members of local governments. Suggestions that there is no local representation are untrue. Suggestions that the minister becomes involved in any way in that planning process and influences the decisions of the authority have no basis in fact whatsoever. If the member has any evidence that I, as a minister, become involved in directing the Planning Authority and the making of its decisions, I would ask her to ask me a specific question. If she could refer to a specific area, I could give a specific answer. In fact, it is untrue even to suggest such behaviour.

Northern Territory University

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

There has been an increase in debate about the future location of the new Northern Territory University. What is to be the future location of the university? In particular, does the decision in respect of Palmerston still stand?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a very complex matter because many issues need to be looked at. Cabinet had made a decision to site the university at Palmerston and that is still on the books. The matter of the siting of the university is to come before Cabinet very shortly. I will be able to make an announcement on that by the end of the year. We are not looking at a university situation for 5 or 10 years; we are looking down the track some 50 years. We need to be sensible about it. It is not a matter of simply saying that it should go on the Casuarina campus or whatever. We have to look responsibly at the whole exercise and look to the future. I will bring this matter before Cabinet in the very near future. We have to look at population projections, accommodation, transport and a whole range of matters that are vital to the siting of the university. Hopefully, before the end of the year, I will be making an announcement as to where the new university will be sited.

Women in the Public Service

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women comprise 59% of the public service yet, on the figures supplied to this Assembly yesterday, they comprise only 12% of the positions at E4 level and above. Of course, that category holds the prime decision-making positions within the Northern Territory Public Service. How do these dramatic statistics gel with the claim of the government, particularly of the minister, that the government has an effective equal employment opportunities policy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, obviously the Leader of the Opposition has a very short memory. I read out some figures last night. I must admit that, since we do not have the latter part of Hansard for yesterday, I do not have them in front of me because I have left that piece of paper in my office. 22.75% of the E levels are women. Indeed, in my department, the Acting Secretary is a female. In the Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Health and Community Services, the Deputy Secretaries are women.

Yesterday, I highlighted for the Leader of the Opposition the women at E levels in South Australia, that well-known Labor state. I do not have exact figures in front of me, but certainly they were under 9%. In Western Australia, the figure is below 9%. In the long-held Labor state of New South Wales, which is now improving under the Liberals, the figure is 13%. We have 22.7% at E levels in the Northern Territory, yet I am being told that from 0% to 22.7% in 10 years demonstrates a failure of the equal opportunity plan. We have equal opportunity management plans in the Territory, and actions speak louder than words.

Mr Smith: Where are the actions?

Mr McCARTHY: It is happening. Mr Speaker, just look at the results: 22.7% is better than any state in Australia.

Mr Smith: Are you happy with that result?

Mr McCARTHY: No, I am not, and we are continually improving, year by year. Only in the last 12 months, the Deputy Secretary of my department appointed a woman into that area.

Mr Smith: Oh, wow!

Mr McCARTHY: The situation is improving year by year. They do not want to listen to the facts, Mr Speaker. The facts hurt because those Labor states that members of the opposition like to talk about are not doing so well. We know a great deal about Western Australia Incorporated. There are direct links down there. The figures for Western Australia Incorporated and South Australia are below 9%. In fact, it is considerably less than that in South Australia. It is improving now in New South Wales under a Liberal government. The figure is 22.7% in the Northern Territory. I cannot repeat those figures too often because they demonstrate the facts.

Tourism Statistics

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

My question relates to the recent figures he issued on the increase in tourism figures to the Northern Territory. The reason we ask the question is that considerable doubt and confusion has been created by his claim that the tourism sector has enjoyed a 22% growth. The doubt and confusion is experienced by the accommodation owners who say: 'If there has been 22% growth, why aren't we getting our share of it?' Will the honourable minister confirm that the 22% growth figure is grossly inflated by the inclusion of normal visits by friends and relatives, who do not stay in paid accommodation, and does he acknowledge that the paid, bed-night increase figure is not 22%, but 5% or 6%? If he acknowledges that, will he accept that it is vital that the industry be supplied with accurate figures for its own planning needs in future?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I guess that I acknowledge all that the Leader of the Opposition has said. The major point in any visitor survey is that visiting friends and relatives are worth as much to the economy of the Northern Territory as anybody else. They all eat, visit restaurants and buy petrol.

Mr Smith: They do not stay in paid accommodation.

Mr POOLE: The Northern Territory Monitor, which is the methodology of transcribing the statistics that are collected throughout the Northern Territory through visitor surveys, has always indicated that it includes visiting friends and relatives.

Mr Smith: The point is that people were going on the figures as given in your statement.

Mr POOLE: I pick up that point. My statement was no different from any other statement that has ever been made throughout Australia by any other tourism minister. To my knowledge, no states ...

Mr Smith: Is that an excuse?

Mr POOLE: No, it is not an excuse. I do not think an excuse is needed on a question like this. Whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not, he will find that anybody involved in small business in the Northern Territory accepts the fact that visitors to the Northern Territory, whether they be commercial travellers or friends or relatives of people who live in the Northern Territory, are a vital component of the industry. We accept that this has been a tough year. The fact of the matter is that there has been a 22% increase.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that the figure was discussed with many major hotel operators and small hotel operators prior to my announcement because I accept that statistics can be made to say anything. In making that announcement, it was very important to me that I did not give the impression that this had been a fantastic year and that everything was rosy in the tourist industry. Among the 40 or 50 hotel and motel operators to whom I spoke, the general feeling was very much along the lines suggested by the statistics released in the NT Tourist Monitor. Both major airlines reported that their percentage increases this year in the Northern Territory were in

the order of 22% to 24%. I think there was a 2% difference between the 2 airlines. Figures for visitor nights certainly reflect the increases quoted in the figures.

I cannot find any evidence in the figures which indicates that my comments in this House on a previous occasion were in any way inaccurate. The Top End showed a 17% increase. The Katherine area had a 29% increase and the Tablelands a 60% increase, most of which occurred in the Gulf area. The Centre experienced a 24% increase. Whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not, many people in the tourist industry are operating quite successfully. Visitor nights increased by 14%. Whether the Leader of the Opposition acknowledges it or not, that is a statistical fact and it relates to hotels and motels. The commercial market increased by only 6%.

Mr Smith: That is right. That is the figure that I gave you.

Mr POOLE: I have no argument with that. But, at the end of the day, the total number of people who came to the Northern Territory increased by 22%.

Mr Smith: The commercial market increased by 6%.

Mr POOLE: We acknowledge that, overall in marketing, the one area that was probably soft this year was in the coach marketing area. I spoke to a number of coach operators. We really suffered in the 1-off coach market. For years, the guy who operates the school buses in a fairly large town or small city has been coming to the Northern Territory on 1 or 2 trips. This year, they all went to Expo and there is no argument about that. I would also add that one of the larger operators of a tourist attraction in the Northern Territory - the crocodile farm in Darwin - told me that his bookings by coach companies are already up 40% for next year, and that is what it is all about. Everybody acknowledged this year that Expo was a major attraction and, in these tight economic times - and the opposition have things to answer for in respect of that with their federal colleagues in Canberra - the average Australian cannot afford to take 2 holidays. This year, many of them went to Expo. For us in the Northern Territory, whether the increase is 6% or 22%, depending on what area of the market you are talking about, is largely irrelevant. Every state in Australia, apart from south-east Queensland, suffered a percentage decline. That includes the visiting friends and relatives. The Northern Territory did not.

I am quite satisfied that the Tourist Commission responded to the market demands quite well earlier this year through the amount of money that it was able to obtain from the tourism marketing duty. It went out into the marketplace and sold extremely well. All the sales in every bureau went over budget this year. That is not to say they had a perfect year nor is it to say that everything is sweet and rosy in the tourist industry. As everybody knows, it never has been. It is a hard industry to make money in. The properties that are well-marketed, that have the right financial package behind them and that have not borrowed 99% of their money make money in the Northern Territory and always have. The properties that have a poor financial package, that are poorly marketed and that do not spend the amount of money they need to spend on marketing suffer, and they will continue to suffer, as they have in past years. I am sure some of them will continue to do so in the future.

Life Education Centres Telethon

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I refer the honourable minister to the telethon that was held last weekend to promote Life Education Centres and the increasing interest that is developing throughout Australia in this very worthwhile cause. Does he support the Life Education Centre concept and, to that end, is the government prepared to provide funds to help the Life Education Centres set up mobile caravans to serve the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question and begin by saying that I am very supportive of Life Education Centres. I think they do a wonderful job in our community. Indeed, I have had a submission from the Life Education Centres in relation to assistance that the government could give. I have been looking at ways by which we can do that. The problem is how it will fit into the education system. I have always seen Life Education Centres as being separate and assisting the education process. I can assure honourable members that that is a objective that I am moving towards. The problem is that the department, which provides a valuable service in that area as well, may be seen as taking over the Life Education Centres. I will ensure that that will not happen. However, I will seek to provide some form of assistance in relation to ongoing costs to the educator.

We support the Life Education Centres wholeheartedly. I think they do a wonderful job. Provided they fit in with our curricula, I cannot see any problem with them continuing to visit the communities throughout the Territory. I wish that more caravans were available. Obviously, as a result of the wonderful effort from the people of Australia in the telethon, they will be able to provide more caravans to meet that need in our community. We are looking at providing some form of assistance to Life Education Centres.

BTEC Program

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I remind the minister that it is now only 24 days to Christmas, which is a significant date for pastoralists in central Australia. It is the date for which there was a commitment from the minister's predecessor and himself that the impending-free line that puts restrictions on the movement of stock out of pastoral properties would be moved north to above Elliott and just south of Katherine. Will people receive that Christmas present? Will the target be reached by Christmas Day and where will the line be at that stage?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to hear that question from the member for Stuart, given the stance that he took on the issue yesterday, the strange statements that he made in relation to the BTEC program and the clear evidence that he provided that he does not understand the program and wants to write it off. Indications from the honourable member were that the 1992 target had to be abandoned. Of course, effectively that would mean that the whole program would fall apart.

Today, the honourable member is asking when the impending-free line will be moved north, as if that is a matter of great concern. He is trying to do a



little grandstanding in an endeavour to recover some credibility with the pastoral industry because events yesterday indicated clearly that he does not understand the program at all. The member for Stuart is trying to patch up the dreadful mess he made in the House yesterday and in October, when he made statements in relation to the BTEC program and the cattle industry and cast aspersions on all sorts of other people, both publicly and in this House.

I will be meeting with the Northern Territory BTEC Committee in December and relocation of the impending-free line is on the agenda for consideration and discussion at that meeting. The pastoral industry in the Northern Territory will be advised of the results of that meeting. We heard yesterday the minutes of all the meetings that the honourable member has been to. No doubt, he will obtain a copy somewhere of the BTEC Committee meeting and he might be able to learn about that. He will not be there, just as he has not been to any of the other meetings of the industry.

Mr Ede: Are you going to answer the question or not?

Mr REED: He does not go to meetings, he does not consult the industry and he does not have a clue what he is talking about when he refers to the BTEC program.

Mr Ede: Answer the question.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, the matter will be considered at the next BTEC Committee meeting and I will be able to advise the honourable member of the outcome of the discussions held at that meeting. The meeting is scheduled for the week after next and advice will be forthcoming following the decision reached at that meeting.

#### Apprenticeship Training Schemes 1989

Mr DONDAS to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Claims have been made that, in the past 12 months, the number of apprenticeship training schemes have fallen away. In view of the fact that we are now coming into the new school program for 1989, what steps has he taken in an attempt to increase the number of apprenticeship schemes that will be available in the 1989 school year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, preliminary figures for September 1988 show that the current downturn in the building industry is reflected in a downturn in that area of apprenticeships in the Northern Territory. Actually, figures for apprentices in the Northern Territory are up. The figures in September 1985 were 1283; in September 1986, 1287; in September 1987, 1265; and in September 1988, 1294 which is up 29 on the previous year. Perhaps one of the promising aspects is that there is a continuing increase in the number of females in apprenticeships in the Northern Territory. I think that reflects the efforts of my department and the Division of Employment and Training in attempting to make a greater diversity of apprenticeships available in the Northern Territory and encouraging women to take up employment in areas that have not been traditional for women in the past.

One of the most effective means that we have in the Northern Territory for increasing apprenticeship numbers is our well-funded and very comprehensive school leaver program. For the last 2 years, we have put significant sums of

money into school leaver programs. This was an initiative that I brought to Cabinet last year to improve the positions available for school leavers at the end of 1987, when we knew there was a downturn and that we would need to encourage employers to take on school leavers who were coming on the labour market in fairly large numbers. That has been a very effective program. It is so effective that we have put up a similar sum of money this year, which will expand the program quite significantly, and I expect that we will be able to increase the number of trainees by up to 350 places.

As I said previously, the downturn in the building industry has caused us some concern. Apprenticeships in the building industry are down from 201 in 1987 to 176 this year. The numbers in the metal and electrical trades have shown significant increases and that is what has turned the figures around. The State Square proposal is now under way and I would expect that to improve the number of apprenticeship places in the building industry throughout the coming year. Of course, if the federal government and the Federal Airports Corporation were to come good with the developments at the Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs Airports, apprenticeship numbers would increase significantly.

The Northern Territory government is providing support for school leavers, particularly in the form of traineeships, which are the up and coming form of training for employment. Traineeship programs throughout the Northern Territory are now making significant inroads into the training of employees for all industries. I hope that we can continue this trend and I am certain that the very effective methods which have been implemented will help to achieve this.

#### Forthcoming Visit to Indonesia by Chief Minister

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

Is it a fact that the Chief Minister is preparing for a second visit to Indonesia and that, once again, he plans to be accompanied by a large media contingent? Is it also a fact that the Chief Minister has approved the exclusion of ABC television from that contingent? Is the Chief Minister aware that the ABC is the only television broadcaster which covers the whole of the Territory and can he explain his reason for excluding the national broadcaster?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer to the first 2 questions asked by the honourable member is no. However, I will expand briefly on my proposed forthcoming trip to Jakarta, hopefully to meet the President of Indonesia and senior ministers. I hope to be accompanied by some members of the media, although the contingent will not be as large as that which went to East Timor which, I believe, included 11 members of the Northern Territory media. It is proposed to take 3 members of the media on this particular trip and I have given no instructions whatsoever in relation to excluding the ABC and no proposition has been put to me suggesting that I should. If such a proposition is put to me, obviously it will be considered on its merits. At present, however, the honourable member is clearly operating on information which I do not have. If I am to make the decision, the matter will be in my hands.

Katherine Airport

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

My question follows from the question asked yesterday by the member for Casuarina in relation to Katherine Airport. On ABC radio this morning, the member for the Northern Territory, Warren Snowdon, made allegations that the Minister for Transport and Works had misled the House in relation to promises by the federal government for the construction of a terminal at Katherine Airport. Can the minister advise the House whether, in fact, he has misled the parliament and what is the true position in relation to Commonwealth promises concerning Katherine Airport?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in no way whatsoever have I misled the House or the public of the Northern Territory in regard to the Katherine Airport project. The apologist for the federal government in the Northern Territory, the honourable Warren Snowdon, is undoubtedly feeling extremely sensitive about matters relating to airports generally. In fact, Mr Snowdon accompanied me on a trip to Katherine, among other places, late last year with the then federal Minister for Transport, Peter Duncan. During that visit, preliminary plans for the new airport terminal at Katherine were relayed to myself. Warren Snowdon was there to help in canvassing comment on the design from the Katherine community. It was proposed that the terminal would be constructed in 1988-89. I took the design sketches in good faith. I was asked not to make them public and I did not do so. Certainly I canvassed the opinion of the local community, particularly the council.

Mr Collins: How could you not make them public and canvass opinion?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, the member for Sadadeen has illustrated clearly his lack of capacity in all matters throughout these entire sittings.

We provided comment to the federal department. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, the federal department wrote to us saying: 'As discussed on 20 June 1988, find enclosed copies of drawings etc for the proposed new passenger terminal'. It referred to a new passenger terminal, not repairs to a termite-ridden old building. The letter continued: 'Australian Construction Services preliminary estimate for this work is \$500 000. This proposal is currently included on our 1988-89 draft works program with a tender target date of January 1989 with completion of construction expected in December 1989'. It was signed: 'Department of Transport and Communications Design Agent and Construction Agent'. I am happy to table that letter, Mr Speaker.

From our conversations with the then federal minister, I and my department were under the very clear understanding that, subject only to budgetary control, that item was to be proceeded with. It was included on the draft program. Of course, what the federal member gave us this morning was a clear indication of the total revocation of a commitment to airports and air terminals in the Northern Territory. Mr Speaker, while airports around Australia have been upgraded over the last decade or 2 ...

Mr Hatton: And Cocos Island.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, we can include Vanuatu and all sorts of places overseas.

However, let us get back to the Northern Territory because that is what is pertinent to us and what ought to be pertinent to the federal member. Quite clearly, that proposal was to be included in 1988-89. It was clearly explained by the federal member this morning that, despite the fact that everywhere else in Australia had copped its share of the taxpayer's dollar, once again the Northern Territory will not receive a cracker. The \$95m for Darwin has gone, the \$20m for Alice Springs has gone and the lousy \$0.6m for Katherine has gone. The reason it has gone is because the federal government has decided that distribution of the taxpayer's dollar to the Northern Territory is no longer desirable and it will hand the responsibility over to the airline companies. The federal member suggested this morning that it was now Ansett NT's fault that the proposal was not going ahead.

It is very easy for the federal government to turn its back on the travelling public of Australia and the Northern Territory by saying that either the FAC or the airlines will have to carry the bundle, but it is totally unreasonable. Ansett is a commercial company and, if it were to pay the \$0.6m that should come from the taxpayer's purse for works overdue for a decade, it would have to increase its charges. That is the principle applying all around Australia. That is why the cost of airline tickets is rising. The costs have been built into the airline tickets as the federal government tries to force responsibility on the industry through the FAC or, in this case, directly.

Mr Smith: I thought you believed in user-pays?

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, of course I do, but I believe in the equal sharing of the taxpayer's dollar. If it is all right for Townsville, a Labor-held seat, to receive money for a new terminal, if it is all right for Cairns, Brisbane and Coffs Harbour to get their money, what is wrong with the Northern Territory receiving its share? What has Vanuatu to do with the Australian taxpayer?

No doubt, members opposite are ashamed of their federal colleague, Warren Snowdon, for his apologetic attitude. I have not misled the House. In fact, the journalist from Katherine yesterday went to the trouble of ringing the federal minister's office. Officers have been ringing the federal minister's office for almost a week. We cannot get a phone call returned. Is that cooperation? However, a journalist from Katherine was able to make contact. I will quote him because he had access to the federal minister's office: 'A spokesman for Transport Federal Communications and Aviation Support Minister, Mr Gary Punch, confirmed the \$600 000 development was delayed'. If it was not going to happen, how could it be delayed, Mr Speaker? From here on, we cannot rely on the local opposition or our federal member. All we can do is rely on the termites to do the job for us.

#### Darwin Taxis

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At some time during the last few days, I was given some information by a taxi driver relating to work sheets over 18 days where, to put it shortly, for a 12-hour working week, I calculate the average amount of money taken after petrol had been paid for was \$61.50 or about \$5.13 an hour. Does the minister think that adding 4 taxis to the Darwin system will assist the public when present drivers are managing to average a wage of only \$5 an hour?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the exact survey that is being completed but, through the NT Taxi Council, we do carry out surveys to gauge both the needs of and the viable return to the taxi industry. Unfortunately, there are substantial peaks and troughs in the demand for taxis. Over the last 4 days, in casual conversation, I have heard at least 4 complaints about the non-attendance of taxis in response to requests. One person waited 45 minutes or longer. This has not occurred only at peak times. One delay occurred on Saturday morning. Certainly, on Saturday evening, which is a peak period, there was another incident. After an hour, no taxi had arrived. Quite simply, there are periods of peak demand which the existing industry is unable to meet. The NT Taxi Council needs to assess the situation and develop an innovative system which will provide a comprehensive service to the general community and, more particularly, as I am sure the Minister for Tourism would agree, to the tourist industry.

Whilst we are endeavouring to rationalise the total passenger-carrying system, including private hire car and tourist plates, it is necessary to address the vexed question of numbers of taxi plates. That is the industry where prices will be reflected by demand and it is the only sector where owners of vehicles can look forward to capital gains. It is a very complex issue. That study will be used extremely constructively to assess how many extra taxi plates will be required and whether there is a need for special requirements governing restricted periods for use, type of service or whatever.

Town Camps and Local Government Councils

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Is he attempting to amalgamate Aboriginal town camps into local government councils as suggested by at least one Aboriginal organisation, and what has been the reaction to any moves for closer cooperation between these bodies?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, comments have been made that I have been attempting to amalgamate town camp organisations with the municipal councils. As honourable members will be aware, in most of the major centres there is a fairly large number of town camps. Alice Springs would be the most obvious example. Town camps are fairly prolific there and, in many cases, are carrying out functions which are quite clearly the responsibility of municipal government.

I have no wish to detract from the good work that the town camp organisations are doing. The Tangentyere Council in Alice Springs and the town camp organisation in Tennant Creek are carrying out very good work on behalf of the citizens of their communities. However, there is a degree of duplication in the work carried out by town camp organisations and municipal councils. That provides a good case for asking municipal councils and town camps to sit down together and talk about the ways in which they could come together and carry out some of those functions with less duplication.

I first raised this matter at the combined local government meeting in Darwin earlier this year. That raised a few eyebrows because it was thought that I was making an attempt to push the town camps out of existence. That is certainly not my intention. As I said, the town camp organisations are doing a great deal of very good work for their citizens. They all have workshops.

They do considerable housing and building work, mechanical maintenance and area beautification as well as providing training. In Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, they have well-established nurseries to help in the greening of those townships. Their work is excellent. However, where there is duplication, it is my role as minister responsible for local government to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are expended in the most reasonable and economical way. I have asked the town camp organisations and municipal councils, both through the forum of the combined local government meeting and at various meetings with town councils and town camp organisations, to sit down together. Through the Office of Local Government, recently I appointed a consultant to sit down with people from the town camps and municipal councils to talk these issues through.

Mr Speaker, there is not only much which municipal councils can do for town camp organisations, there is much that town camp organisations can do for municipal governments. In fact, the nurseries which they operate would be a valuable asset to any community. If the town camp organisations are prepared to grow trees for beautification in the more arid areas of the Northern Territory - and I am sure they are prepared to do that because they are looking for markets - they can be a real asset to the towns in which they live. In much of their work in mechanical and building training, they are not duplicating municipal work except perhaps in smaller centres such as Borroloola and Elliott. Generally, however, municipal councils are not involved in building and maintenance and, therefore, the town camps are not duplicating that role.

The very significant employment and training programs that I have put in place are now operating in many centres and will expand significantly in 1989. Those programs will assist town camp organisations in obtaining funds which they might miss out on if a decision were taken somewhere down the line to have less duplication of systems of local government in our major towns. It is quite clear to me and I think it is clear to every member here that there is no place for local government within local government, based on the grounds of race. There is no place for that at all. As minister, I certainly will not allow that to happen. It is my intention to continue the dialogue between municipal councils and town camps to ensure that we do not end up with duplicated local government in our centres.

#### Nhulunbuy High School

Mr LEO to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Can the minister assure myself and the parents of children attending the Nhulunbuy High School that it will have the services of a special education unit in 1989, in line with similar services provided in other high schools throughout the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am aware that the Nhulunbuy High School has had a submission before the department for some time in relation to the setting up of a special unit. Quite often, these submissions become held up for one reason or another. I believe that it has been determined that there is a need to establish a special unit at Nhulunbuy. I am looking at setting up a special unit there with a view to providing a special teacher plus an aide for 1989.

If members have problems in their particular areas, if they could contact me or my office ...

Mr Ede: I did that in relation to Willowra.

Mr HARRIS: Why don't you ask me a question about Willowra? I have been waiting for you to do so.

Mr Ede: Why don't you just give me the answer?

Mr HARRIS: Willowra is a separate issue, and I am quite happy to talk about it if the member wants to raise it. I was waiting for you. Come in spinner.

Mr Speaker, if members do have problems, they should contact me and I will examine those matters. I am not saying that I will respond to members' every desire. We have certain criteria that have to be met and we are responsible in the decision-making process. However, I can assure honourable members that such matters will be looked at responsibly. As I have indicated, we will establish a special unit at Nhulunbuy and we will have a special teacher and teacher aide over there in 1989.

#### New Land Councils

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

In the press and on radio in recent days, many comments have been made in respect of land councils and their future directions and, in particular, the possible formation of new councils. Can the minister advise the Assembly of the government's position in relation to the possible formation of a south-east Arnhem land council and similar breakaway movements referred to in the media?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have made no secret of the fact that the Northern Territory government would welcome the formation of smaller, regional land councils. However, I can assure honourable members that the Northern Territory government has not played a role in the recent events leading to the push by south-east Arnhem Land people for their own land council. It is obvious to me that, in certain areas around the Territory, Aboriginal people are expressing their dissatisfaction with the way the Northern and Central Land Councils are handling their affairs.

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act is a federal act and it is time that the federal government took some more responsibility for the administration and impact of that legislation in the Territory. The land councils are charged with the responsibility to conciliate where disputes arise between Aboriginal groups on Aboriginal land. However, these emerging land councils are saying that they have no confidence in the Northern and Central Land Councils. I am obtaining legal advice as to whether it would be appropriate to have the Aboriginal Land Commissioner investigate these situations. Most of these disputes are arising on land which was formerly reserves and became Aboriginal land by decree without investigation into traditional ownership. I think it is normally referred to as schedule 1 land.

Honourable members may be aware that the Aboriginal Land Rights Act contains provisions whereby such matters may be referred to the Aboriginal Land Commissioner. Such action would provide for an objective assessment in a less political forum. Honourable members may also be aware that the Land Rights Act required the land councils to maintain a register of traditional

owners. The land councils objected to this requirement and the act was subsequently amended to have this responsibility made a discretionary one. On receipt of legal advice, I intend to take the matter up with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

It seems to me that the Northern and Central Land Councils, as well as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, have lost touch with Aboriginal people in the Territory. Letters to the federal minister, objecting to land council activities, objecting to the proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and seeking assistance to form separate land councils, have all gone unheeded. There comes a time when these smaller groups, lacking material resources as they do, do need help to implement their wishes. Who are they to turn to? The Northern Territory government has received a written request from the South-east Arnhem Council seeking financial assistance, and government officers are meeting the council's steering committee today to consider this matter.

Members would have read the story in the Weekend Australian about the Anmatjerre group of central Australia. These people have used the small profits from its community store to travel their country speaking to all of their kinfolk to determine their views on matters such as mining, ATSIC and separate land councils. The final \$480 in their bank account was spent on bus fares to send a 4-man delegation to Darwin to appeal to the Territory government for help to have their views made known to the federal government.

Mr Speaker, I have referred to only 2 of these emerging land councils. To the best of my knowledge, 5 applications have been made to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and I am advised that there could possibly be up to a further 10. Small, regional land councils will be able to get on with the task of assisting the traditional owners manage their land, as does the very efficient and properly organised Tiwi Land Council, without having to worry about the preparation of land claims and the national political agenda. It is obvious that the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has a problem in deciding how to address this push for additional land councils in the Territory and the Northern Territory government will seek to cooperate with him, his department and the Aboriginal groups in the bush to resolve these issues constructively.

#### Parole and Early Release Policies

Mr TUXWORTH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

Is he considering any proposal to reduce the prisoner population in Territory jails by reviewing the parole periods for prisoners and allowing longer term prisoners to take the opportunity to obtain early release?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member's question gives me the opportunity to say, once again, that the most successful government in Australia today in terms of reducing prisoner numbers is undoubtedly that in the Northern Territory. Figures that I received recently suggested that, over the past 15 months, we have had a reduction of something like - and I am taking this figure from memory - 23% or 24% in our prison numbers. The best efforts of other governments throughout Australia have resulted in an increase of some 3% or 4% in their prisoner numbers. The reason for the large reduction here is the many programs that we have implemented over the past couple of years. They are all working extremely well. I include in that the community service



orders scheme and the home detention scheme which is unique in Australia and is being looked at by other jurisdictions. We are constantly reviewing all areas of correctional services. Undoubtedly, the area that the honourable member has mentioned will come under that review.

Jet-standard Airstrip for Kakadu National Park

Mr HATTON to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to discussions and previous questions concerning the desire to obtain a jet-standard airstrip in Kakadu National Park. What stage has planning reached for this project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, on the last sitting day of this year, let me relay at least some good news to the travelling public of the Northern Territory. Fortunately, the Northern Territory government has charge of airport facilities in Kakadu as well as at Yulara. We are undertaking some expansion work at Yulara to meet the very heavy tourist demand. Rather than being 10 years behind the times in so far as planning and implementation are concerned in regard to Kakadu, we are 5 years ahead. We are planning constructively and progressively for a jet-standard airstrip in Kakadu. That development has some status in the plan of management of Kakadu National Park and some studies have been under way in relation to that. In fact, I understand that a report is being finalised prior to final appraisal by the Department of Transport and Works before the next stage - that of planning the full environmental impact statement - is undertaken.

Officers of the Department of Transport and Works have been negotiating with the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service people, the Aboriginal community in Kakadu and other interested parties. A preferred site has been identified and selected to ensure absolute minimum disturbance to the environment whilst remaining quite accessible to the park itself. The Territory government has undertaken to manage the existing Jabiru strip for a further 5-year term. We have taken it over from the mining company and, unless an ore body is found near it, we will have access to it for another 5 years until the proposed \$3m airstrip suitable for F28s is completed. The new airstrip will provide excellent access for tourists, for the evacuation of medical cases and so forth. The Territory government is on target with its airport planning. In the future, travellers will be able to reach Kakadu more easily, perhaps even directly from Yulara, once access is provided via a fully bituminised airstrip of an appropriately high standard.

Demolition of Ward Building

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

What arrangements have been made to maintain work-place standards in the Ward Building whilst one end of it is in the process of being demolished? Secondly, what is the minister doing to replace the 64 parking bays which have been lost to employees in that building as a consequence of all parking spaces being utilised during the demolition operation?

ANSWER

The car parking shortfall is a non-event. Appropriate parking space has already been made available. The number of spaces previously available far

exceeded the requirements. In fact, many of the spaces were utilised by people working elsewhere in the city. We have already provided temporary car parks as well as home garaging for government cars.

Members interjecting.

Mr FINCH: If honourable members would open their ears, they would hear that there has been a full and proper assessment of the car parking needs. I understand that the parking needs of employees in the Ward Building have been met and that there are no ongoing concerns there. We are continuing to monitor the situation. We have given an undertaking to the council as well as to our employees.

As far as the work environment in the Brennan Building is concerned, of course there will be some noise disruption. That is being kept to a required minimum level under the terms of the contract, which also provides for such matters as the control of dust levels. These aspects are monitored continually and appropriately and, whilst there is some disturbance to staff, I trust that they will be satisfied that the works themselves and the jobs which are being provided are ample recompense for that short-term discomfort.

#### Northern Territory Fresh Fish Industry

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Recently, the minister visited the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority in Pymont. I might say that an early morning visit to the oyster room there can result in one of the best breakfasts available in Australia, a fact to which I am sure the member for Nhulunbuy will attest. As a result of the minister's visit, and a further visit to Darwin by the Board of the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority, can the minister advise the House what developments are occurring in the Northern Territory fresh fish industry?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as indicated by the member for Karama, we did visit the Sydney fish markets a month or so ago. We inspected the building and the new facilities which have been constructed there and found them to be very impressive. Following that visit, members of the Board of the New South Wales Fish Marketing Authority came to Darwin to look at our industry at first-hand and see what we had to offer. They were very impressed with both the quality of the product and the species of fish that were available, given that some local species are not available currently on the Sydney or the southern markets in large numbers. These include gold band snapper and red emperor.

The local company, Seanorth, a commercial fishing joint-venture, is trialing fish traps. The benefits which the Northern Territory can derive from the expansion of our fishing industry are considerable. The members of the board were very impressed with our product and with the high level of cooperation and the good working relationship between the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and the fishing industry in the Northern Territory.

The department is undertaking extensive research in the Northern Territory fishery. The results of recent research have demonstrated that the shelf life of fresh fish in the Northern Territory can be extended considerably, with resulting benefits to the industry. Indeed, tomorrow and on Saturday, a symposium will be held in Darwin, organised jointly by the NT Fishing Industry

Training Committee and the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries. The shelf-life issue will be addressed at that symposium, along with the benefits to industry. Considerable benefits and opportunities are available for our local fish product throughout Australia. The New South Wales market has a demand that exceeds the supply, and I am sure that some of the opportunities will be realised in the near future.

ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Firefighting Services in Aboriginal Communities

Mr PERRON (Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, I rise to answer a question asked of me in an earlier sittings by the member for Arafura. I apologise for the late response to this question. It became caught up in all my paperwork and I did not get to it at the appropriate time.

The question was: what action is the government taking to establish volunteer firefighting services in Aboriginal communities? The answer is that, currently, 23 volunteer fire brigades have been established by the Northern Territory Fire Service. Of these, 10 are in Aboriginal communities, some of which have been operating since 1978. There is no specific program for developing volunteer fire brigades. When any community, whether it is an Aboriginal community or not, feels that it is ready to establish a fire brigade, the council approaches the Northern Territory Fire Service for assistance and advice. Communities are expected to fulfil certain obligations before the fire district is gazetted under the Fire Service Act of 1983.

In some of the communities, members of the Northern Territory Police Force are involved in the establishment of fire brigades in their role as local counter disaster controllers. Sometimes, the firefighting equipment is located at the police station. Training has been provided by the Northern Territory Fire Service for police aides so that, where communities have not established fire brigades, there are at least people in the communities who have basic knowledge of fire protection. Within the restrictions of available resources, the Northern Territory Fire Service Rural Division provides initial and follow-up training to the communities. In fact, recently, the officer in charge of the Rural Division completed visits to a number of remote Aboriginal communities where he checked their situation and, I understand, gave some training where it was deemed appropriate.

ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Nurses Salaries at Alice Springs Hospital

Mr DALE (Health and Community Services): Mr Speaker, I gave an undertaking to answer during these sittings a question raised by the member for Flynn last week regarding a number of nurses from the Alice Springs Hospital who have complained about salary payments made to them. The complaints related to delays in receipt of penalty pay and overtime payments or incorrect rates of payments and deductions.

Apparently, the current payroll system has been a matter of concern for some time. The system is the Australian Government Payroll System used throughout Australia for paying federal government and most Northern Territory government organisations. It is a cumbersome system which does not adapt well to penalty and overtime payments. However, staff do not usually wait for 6 weeks for penalty and overtime payments, as was mentioned in this instance. In fact, the normal waiting time is about 4 weeks from the end of the relevant pay fortnight until payment is made. The time lag is a direct result of the lead times inherent in the existing salary system.

Given that salary payments are made to well over 1000 employees each fortnight in the Alice Springs and Barkly region, whilst they are unfortunate, I would suggest that some minor errors and delays are only to be expected from time to time. However, I am happy to advise the honourable member that there is some relief in sight and tenders are being called currently for a new payroll system for the Northern Territory Public Service. I envisage that this system should be in place towards the latter part of 1989. The new system should overcome most of the difficulties being experienced in the payment of salaries and the various allowances. I encourage any members of staff in the Alice Springs area who have particular difficulties to take them to the personnel manager who would be only too pleased to hear their complaints and do whatever is possible to rectify the cause.

ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Commuter Taxi Service at Yulara

Mr FINCH (Transport and Works): Mr Speaker, yesterday, the member for MacDonnell asked me some questions regarding a commuter taxi service at Yulara and, given the honourable member's absence, I seek leave to have my answer incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, with reference to the 2 questions raised yesterday by the member for MacDonnell on commuter taxi services at Yulara, I am now in a position to provide specific details. As a result of the review, the CTS licences were withdrawn and the operators were issued with motor omnibus licences. Written assurance has been given to former CTS licensees that they can continue to advertise as taxis, and they were further advised that this arrangement would be immediately reviewed should the Yulara Corporation grant permission or circumstances change to allow other operators to perform the same service as they were providing.

In answer to the second question, the trial period for the review of CTS licences was not a short period. The review was carried out over 12 months. The review was instigated as a result of 1 of the CTS licensee's wishing to sell his operations. However, his CTS licence could not be transferred. It is standard practice for CTS plates to be surrendered back to the registrar. This has the support of industry.

The review showed that a motor omnibus licence was sufficient for the service provided by the operators at Yulara. With the introduction of MO plates, the business becomes transferable but the plate has no value. The value will be in the business.

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS  
NT Government's Housing Assistance Scheme

Mr MANZIE (Lands and Housing): Mr Speaker, in response to previous questions, I have great pleasure in announcing that the Territory government's Home Loan Scheme is commencing today. It is commencing in the form in which it was introduced into this House. It is very gratifying that we have been able to provide a scheme which has received so much enthusiastic response from the community. At this stage, the Housing Commission's hotline, which was set up to provide a quick response to public inquiries about the package, has received already 450 calls from all over the Territory. Over 300 calls came

from the northern region and 120-odd from the southern region, and more than 270 of those calls were made to ask specific questions about the new Interest Subsidy Scheme or the Home Establishment Grant. We have received about 130 calls regarding the changes to the Northern Territory Home Purchase Assistance Scheme. The remainder have been general inquiries.

We have also had feedback from real estate agents and building companies saying that already there is movement in the community and an increase in interest. Everybody believes that some real benefits will be seen very soon, both in the real estate market and the building industry.

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