

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order.

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

123 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

1. Is it a fact that there is dissatisfaction with the system which prevents children living within a one mile radius of a school using the school bus?
2. Is it a fact that people living within the limit cannot send their children back to the pick-up point, even if it is only a hundred yards (or metres) away?

ANSWER

1. Dissatisfaction with the 1 mile limit was expressed by a small number of parents at the commencement of the 1975 school year. It appears that the majority of parents now appreciate the practical consideration which led to the introduction of the limit.
2. At present, children living within a 1 mile radius of their school may walk back to a bus pick-up point. Should overcrowding of buses occur in the future, the acceptability of this practice may be reviewed.

149 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

1. How are enrolments at the Darwin Community College estimated?
2. What was the total of tuition hours at the College in 1974?

ANSWER

1. Enrolments at the College are not estimated; they are actual, physical enrolments. Total number to date is 1,710.
2. The total number of tuition hours at the College in 1974 was 36,616 hours.

151 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

When will the Stuart Highway to Beswick Station road be sealed, as was promised in 1973?

ANSWER

The sealing of the road Stuart Highway to Beswick Station has been economically justified. The present programming is for the 1975/76 financial year. The first stage will be from the Stuart Highway to Bamyili and depending on budgetary considerations and road construction priorities, work should commence within the programmed period.

157 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

Have any plans been made to set up a Roads Authority in the Territory along the lines suggested in the motion passed by the Legislative Council on 21 August 1969?

ANSWER

No legislative action has been taken to form a Roads Authority along the lines of the motion passed by the Legislative Council in August 1969.

The Government introduced the Rural Road Conference in 1970 to give the private sector the opportunity of advising the Government on road conditions and priorities. This conference has been continued bi-annually since that date and members of the Legislative Council have been invited and have participated.

These conferences will continue and Members of the Legislative Assembly will be invited. Interested organisations are also invited to advise the Government on their local area priorities for roads and any problems that exist. All suggestions are considered by the Government when compiling the forward roads programme.

158 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. How does the government collect fines from convicted Aboriginals who are destitute?
2. If Aboriginals are unable to pay the fines does the Department of Aboriginal Affairs advance them the money?

ANSWER

1. The Aboriginal community is treated in exactly the same manner as in the case of members of the wider community. An Aboriginal either pays the fine or serves a short prison sentence which usually accompanies such convictions as an alternative punishment. The Aboriginal Legal Aid Services are also available to all Aboriginals in Lower Courts.

2. No.

161 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

On the ABC News on 23 February 1975 mention was made of 10 English Sparrows at Gove—will they be destroyed?

ANSWER

1. Officers of the Wildlife Section of the Department of the Northern Territory are investigating the report of English Sparrows at Gove. If the birds are identified as English Sparrows they will be destroyed.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

163 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

1. Has the Government any intention of stocking lakes like Lake Woods with fish?
2. Have local residents expressed interest in such projects?
3. Would Murray Cod be suitable stock?

ANSWER

1. The government does not have any immediate plans for stocking lakes such as Lake Woods with fish.
2. Interest in such projects by local residents have been received by the Department of the Northern Territory in the past, however, details of such requests are not available due to cyclone damage of Fisheries Section records.
3. Murray Cod is not considered to be suitable stock for such a project as it is a species which lives only in temperate climates.

167 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

I refer to the article "Lawyer Angry" in the November/December 1974 issue of "Bunji" and ask, is Mr Brennan correct in his assertions that the Government is not carrying out Mr Justice Woodward's suggestions?

ANSWER

No. The Government has already accepted in principle the recommendations made by Mr Justice Woodward. It is expected that supporting legislation entitled "The Aboriginal Land (Northern Territory) Bill" will be introduced in the next sitting of Parliament. Two interim Land Councils have been established within the provisions of the Report and are beginning to function effectively.

168 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Which of the Gibb Committee recommendations has been accepted and implemented?
2. If none has been accepted, and if none have been implemented, what grounds have there been for refusing the recommendations?

ANSWER

The recommendations of the Gibb Committee were accepted in principle by the previous Government in 1972, and have also been endorsed by the present Government. No recommendations of the Committee have been specifically rejected. The recommendations of the Committee occupy 7 pages of the Committee's report and involve a number of different departments. Of those matters which are the primary responsibility of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, progress has been achieved in several areas.

The Committee's recommendations on land tenure and the possibility of excising suitable area from pastoral leases were complicated by the subsequent appointment of an Aboriginal Land Rights Commission. However, negotiations with pastoralists have continued throughout the period since the report of the Gibb Committee was accepted and a number of pastoralists have agreed to surrender areas of land for tenure by the resident Aboriginal community. In no case has excision action been completed, but the necessary surveys have been or are being carried out.

With regard to improvement of accommodation and facilities for Aboriginal groups on cattle stations, bores have been sunk for village development purposes on six stations, test drilling has been carried out on four more properties, a water storage and reticulation system has been completed at Maryvale, and two other systems are under construction at present at Ti Tree and Utopia. Financial assistance has been provided to several Aboriginal Communities including Roper Valley and Elsey to purchase vehicles, plant and equipment, or tools and materials for temporary improvements to services or accommodation in those communities. Full scale housing programmes are being developed in a number of areas and are already under way on two properties. With so many Aboriginal people and so many communities involved, the process of improvement will continue: "inevitably extend over many years."

The various recommendations concerning employment and vocational training have been understudied by the Department of Labor and Immigration, the Department of Education, and in some instances by the Miscellaneous Workers Union. Such matters as rates of pay, award coverage for domestic employees, slow worker provisions etc. are now the subject of an application by the Union before the Arbitration Commission.

169 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

1. What amounts of freight and passenger traffic over current traffic are required to warrant the DC9 aircraft operating between Alice Springs and Darwin calling at Katherine and Tennant Creek?
2. Will he ask the airlines to replace their Fokker Friendship services with a single DC9 aircraft operated by each airline alternately?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

Ansett Airlines and T.A.A. currently operate Boeing 727 aircraft on services between Alice Springs and Darwin. This aircraft type is preferred to the DC9 on this route because the latter aircraft is subject to performance and payload restrictions as a result of the high temperatures experienced in that area.

The aerodrome at Tennant Creek is not suitable for Boeing 727 aircraft. DC9 aircraft are only permitted to make limited use of the aerodrome.

Even without these aerodrome limitations, the airlines estimate that the passenger traffic at Katherine and Tennant Creek would have to increase threefold to justify the use of DC9 aircraft on services to those centres. With the present level of passenger traffic the change from 727 to DC9 aircraft would result in at least a 50% reduction in the frequency of services to Katherine and Tennant Creek.

Another point to be taken into consideration is that passengers travelling between Alice Springs and Darwin would be greatly inconvenienced should aircraft be required to call at Katherine and Tennant Creek en route.

172 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. How many Aboriginal settlements have communal eating facilities and which are they?
2. How long has each been established?
3. Has this method of feeding people—
 - (a) raised health standards;
 - (b) provided motivation; or
 - (c) deprived Aboriginal families of independence?
4. Will communal eating facilities be abolished and, if so, when?

ANSWER

1. Aboriginal settlements that have communal eating facilities are: Bamyili, Beswick, Hooker Creek, Delissaville, Amoonguna, Areyonga, Haasts Bluff, Docker River, Warabri, Papunya, Yuendumu (temporarily closed).
2. Provision for communal eating facilities at these centres were generally included in the initial planning for the settlement, so most have been operating for over twelve years.
3. The question of whether this method of feeding people has raised health standards must be looked at in light of the fact that in a number of Aboriginal communities people were not receiving an adequate diet for reasons beyond their control and that this method made food available to all. The establishment of community eating facilities was in response to a desire to improve dietary standards but this action alone has been shown as not sufficient by itself to raise the general health standard of a community. However, it must have often meant the well-being of people who may otherwise have gone hungry. The system has not been without criticism, which has usually been that communal eating facilities deprived Aboriginal families of independence. Whether this is so is difficult to objectively determine as it is impossible to isolate this facet of life in the changing circumstances of Aboriginal settlements from other conditions which may have resulted in reduced independence and initiative.
4. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs, in recognition of unsatisfactory elements in this method of feeding people, has embarked on a programme to replace community kitchens with facilities which are more in line with those that exist in the wider Australian community. This would include the passing of communal dining centres from government management to become the responsibility of the Aboriginal community, if and when they indicate that they are prepared to accept this responsibility, the provision of financial assistance to enable an Aboriginal group to undertake the development of a cafe, restaurant or "hasty tasty" as a business enterprise. Either of these sorts of undertakings would provide an avenue for Aboriginals to purchase meals if they so desired: The most important aspect, however, is the upgrading of accommodation for Aboriginal families to enable them to store, prepare and cook food as part of their normal way of life, thus eliminating the need to make use of communal facilities. This phasing out programme is continuing at a rate that is most suited to the social and economic conditions existing in each Aboriginal community at the present time.

179 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

In view of the increase in petrol prices as a result of the removal of the petrol subsidy, is any action to increase the mileage allowance rates paid to persons travelling on Government or official business particularly in areas similar to Borroloola where petrol costs 93 cents per gallon?

ANSWER

The rates of mileage allowance paid to Government employees are determined by the Public Service Board. It is understood that there is no immediate proposal to increase the rates as a result of the removal of the petrol subsidy. Reviews of mileage allowance and other conditions of service are reviewed from time to time by the Joint Council (a high level employer/employee body) and no doubt the removal of the petrol subsidy will be taken into account by the Joint Council when next reviewing mileage allowances.

181 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

How often are roadside verges graded back to protect the bitumen edges of the following sections of roads:

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Pine Creek to Elliott section Stuart Highway;
Carpentaria Highway;
Tablelands Highway;
Barkly Highway;
Roper Road; and
Victoria Highway?

ANSWER

Depending on soil type, type of vegetation (grass growth to edge of bitumen is encouraged to stabilise shoulders) and need, the shoulders of the roads, under normal circumstances are graded as shown:

Stuart Highway—Pine Creek to Elliott: once every 1—2 years.
Carpentaria Highway: once every three years.
Tablelands Highway: desert country only, once every 18 months.
Barkly Highway: once every two years.
Victoria Highway: once every two years.
Roper Highway: once every three years.

185 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Do Aborigines at Elsey Station, Hodgson Downs Station, Roper Valley Station, Urupunga Station and at Borrooloola receive their financial entitlements regularly?
2. What is the effect on these people of the rural recession?
3. Are routine medical services provided for the communities at each place and are they provided with reticulated water and electricity and septic tanks?
4. Are telegraphic, mail, road and air communications provided by the Government for these people or are they dependent for such things on the goodwill of pastoral managements?

ANSWER

1. That part of the Question which refers to "financial entitlements" is assumed to mean entitlement to Social Security benefits and not wages. The five communities mentioned are all visited regularly during the "Dry" season, while Borrooloola has a resident departmental adviser. On present information, the residents of these communities are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled but departmental officers keep the situation constantly under review. If there are any delays in payments, these are normally caused by seasonal conditions leading to disruptions in mail services or the movement of claimants from one place to another.
2. The principal effect of the current rural recession on people in these communities has been that of unemployment. It is now more difficult to obtain work, and when they do obtain work it has recently tended to be of a short duration.
3. Routine medical services are provided by the Department of Health who have nursing sisters regularly visiting these stations or, in the case of Borrooloola, have a permanent clinic established in that centre. The Aboriginal villages at Elsey, Hodgson Downs, Roper Valley and Urupunga do not have electric power supplies.
At Borrooloola, electricity is due to be connected to a number of houses within the near future. At Elsey and Urupunga there is no reticulated water in the village areas, and there is limited reticulation at Hodgson Downs and Roper Valley. The last two communities also have septic systems installed but they are of limited capacity.
4. The telegraphic, mail, road, air and communications services are all provided by the Government or subsidised by the Government, though not without charges. The delivery of these services does depend in many areas upon the co-operation or goodwill of the local pastoralists.

187 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

1. Does the ABC transmit short wave programme from the Darwin studios as well as broadcast programmes and, if so, what effort is made to publicize the short wave programmes for the benefit of those outback residents who cannot hear broadcast programmes?

ANSWER

A shortwave frequency broadcasting from Shepparton in Victoria was allocated during the emergency following cyclone Tracy as a back-up for ABC Radio 8DR in Darwin.

This has now ceased and it would appear that the cyclone has seriously delayed the introduction of a fulltime shortwave service for the Northern Territory.

190 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. What is the reason for Aborigines at Borrooloola living in appalling conditions far worse than those at Lake Nash Station?
2. When will reticulated water, toilet and ablution facilities be provided for these people?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

1. The Department of Aboriginal Affairs questions the validity of the first part of Question No. 190 and does not agree that Aboriginals at Borroloola are living in conditions far worse than those at Lake Nash Station.
2. The diminished level of town services that have been made available at Borroloola have been largely due to the very poor water supply. This is a problem that faces all the town's people of Borroloola. The difficulties of obtaining the water and the storage problems make the provision of water closet system impossible.

The Department is currently considering proposals to upgrade the water supply and other steps are being taken to improve the living conditions amongst the Aboriginal population at Borroloola. These improvements include the connection of the reticulated water supply from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs bore to six Aboriginal houses. The Mobile Works Force has been instructed to construct demountable toilet and ablution facilities. In addition to these improvements, the six houses which were constructed by Mobile Works Force have recently been connected to power.

Another problem which has recently inhibited further growth of facilities at Borroloola is the indecision about its future location due to the problems associated with the flooding of the McArthur River. This is a matter which is still being considered by the Department of the Northern Territory.

193 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Will he obtain the following information from the Director of Emergency Services:

1. On how many occasions, since 1 February 1975, has the Director of Emergency Services or his delegates used the powers vested in him by the following paragraphs of sub-section (1) of section 10 of the Cyclone Disaster Emergency Ordinance:
 - (a) entry into land or building;
 - (b) closure of roads;
 - (c) destruction of buildings;
 - (d) destruction of animals;
 - (e) requisition of property;
 - (f) shutting off of electricity or water;
 - (g) closure of buildings;
 - (h) setting up of first aid posts;
 - (i) requirement that persons be vaccinated;
 - (j) suppression of disease and pests;
 - (k) control of supplies of food, etc.;
 - (l) street clearance;
 - (m) regulation of movement of goods;
 - (n) steps to prevent looting?
2. In the exercise of the power vested in him by paragraph (8) of section 10 (1), how many persons has the Director or his delegates refused entry to the cyclone disaster area?
3. Of the persons refused entry, how many were former residents of Darwin wishing to return?
4. What action has been taken by the Director of Emergency Services to implement the requirements of the law as set out in section 10 (3) of the Ordinance?
5. Will the Director give the Assembly an assurance that no person who was a bona fide resident of Darwin on 9 January 1975 has been prohibited from returning to Darwin?

ANSWER

1. No records are kept of the number of occasions on which the Director or his delegates use the individual powers listed in section 10 (1) of the Cyclone Disaster Emergency Ordinance. The Honourable Member will appreciate that the Ordinance was not assented to until 9 January 1975 and the validating clauses in the Bill enabled retrospective action taken by the Director or other authorised persons to be condoned. Powers have been used only on those occasions where they have been necessary for the good of the community, including public safety, sanitation, and community support purposes.
2. Many applications for entry are rejected after an oral enquiry and are not recorded. Where a formal application has been made and it is necessary to refuse entry records are kept. In the period 1 January to 14 March available records show that 365 applications for entry into the cyclone disaster area have been refused.
3. Applications made do not necessarily show if the applicant was a former Darwin resident. It is estimated that approximately half of the persons refused entry were former Darwin residents.
4. Persons to whom section 10 (3) applies are issued with a re-entry permit on request. The entry permit is used for this purpose to provide a uniform method of control at checkpoints.
5. Assembly members are assured that no person who was a resident of Darwin on 9 January 1975 has knowingly been refused permission to return to Darwin.

195 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

Does the Government intend to purchase Finnis River Station for the Aboriginal people?

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

Aboriginals have expressed a strong desire to acquire the Finnis River Pastoral Lease and there would appear to be a strong case to support the proposed purchase for attachment to the Wagait Aboriginal Reserve.

An inspection of the property has been carried out to assess its value and the feasibility of operating the area in conjunction with the Wagait Aboriginal Reserve.

At this stage however, the asking price of the owners is considered to be well above the value of the property and stock and a more reasonable price would need to be negotiated before the Department of Aboriginal Affairs could consider its purchase for Aboriginals.

198 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Why did it take a sympathetic Government 27 months to give to the Wailbri and Gurindji people title to the land formerly held by Vestey's?
2. What are the lease conditions?
3. What assistance will the new lessees get from the Government in the form of finance, consultant advice and housing?

ANSWER

1. A formal application by the Gurindji people for title to a pastoral lease over an area of 3,250 square kilometres, previously being part of the Wave Hill Station Pastoral Lease No. 529, was not made until 7 October, 1974.

The transfer of this lease has not yet been finalised due to an agreement between the Vestey group and the government that certain improvements to the area be undertaken before the handover is completed. These improvements include fencing which has been delayed by a shortage of materials and unfavourable weather conditions.

2. The conditions of the lease for this area of land are the same as those applied to other leasehold in the Northern Territory.

3. This property will be regarded as a viable economic project and funded as such when the transfer of the lease is completed.

201 Mr WITHNALL to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Over what areas of Darwin has aerial and surface spraying been carried out?
2. Has the spraying included all areas in which rotting meat was likely to be in existence?
3. Has the spraying included all areas in which pools of water in abandoned utensils are breeding mosquitoes?

ANSWER

1. The whole of the Greater Darwin Area was covered by aerial spraying some 15 times between 1 January and 26 February.

The RAAF Base and Airport area were excluded from the aerial spray rounds because of aircraft movements and these areas were sprayed from the ground by RAAF personnel.

The total urban area of Greater Darwin was covered by ground spraying twice weekly up to 25 February. Since that date problem areas as detected by the Entomology and Health Inspection units have been sprayed from the ground.

2. Yes.

3. Yes.

202 Mr WITHNALL to Mr EVERINGHAM—

1. How many permits to enter Darwin have been given to persons not resident in Darwin on 24 December 1974?
2. Has the distinction made by section 10(3) of the Cyclone Disaster Emergency Ordinance been observed?
3. Have persons been required to obtain a permit to enter Darwin notwithstanding that they were in Darwin on 9 January 1975 and, if so, why has the Ordinance been administered contrary to its tenor?

ANSWER

1. Available information indicated that 2,080 permits have been issued to persons not resident in Darwin on 24 December, 1974. Of this total 743 permits have been issued to business executive for visits of short duration and 1,337 permits have been issued to essential workers not previously resident in Darwin.

2. Yes.

3. Permits are used as the method of allowing people who were in Darwin on 9 January 1975 to pass through checkpoints. If this was not done some other form of identification would have to be issued. Permits are issued to these people on request. To the knowledge of the Director, no person has been knowingly refused permission to return to Darwin so the Ordinance has not been administered contrary to its tenor.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

205 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

When will a regional coordinator be appointed to Katherine?

ANSWER

The Department is looking at levels of representation at district centres, but no decision has been reached at this stage.

206 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDRÉW—

1. Will short courses for "Rural Technicians" be held in 1975 and, if so, who will conduct these courses?
2. Will associations such as the Cattlemen's and Northern Farmers be consulted with a view to ascertaining the need for immediate action on such facets of rural education as vehicle maintenance, welding, shoeing horses, artificial insemination, etc.?

ANSWER

1. Courses for "Rural Technicians" have not been planned for 1975 since needs have not been expressed to the Darwin Community College in this respect.
2. Associations will be, and are, given every consideration when they express a need. If the Cattlemen's and Northern Farmers Associations should desire assistance in rural education subjects then they will be assisted in every possible way. Present serious shortages of staff preclude the Darwin Community College from deliberately seeking new course offerings.

207 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

1. What toilet facilities are available for public use in Katherine including the toilet block erected by Welfare on Crown Land near proposed High Level Bridge?
2. Will facilities at the Showground/Race Course be available if required?
3. Will facilities at old aerodrome be available if required?
4. Was money allocated for a new toilet block to be erected near March's Corner?

ANSWER

1. Public toilets are situated on the corner of Giles Street and Katherine Terrace in Katherine.
2. The showgrounds are under the control of Trustees who have control over the use of showgrounds facilities.
3. The toilet facilities at the old aerodrome are being used for 13 staff of Department of Transport at the Flight Service Unit. The facilities are barely adequate for current needs and could not be treated as "public". When final decisions on the Flight Service Unit are made the building will most likely be demolished.
4. Funds have been allocated for expenditure in 1974-75 financial year for a new toilet block to be erected in the park on the corner of Stuart Highway and Katherine Terrace opposite March Motors.

215 Mr MacFARLANE to Miss ANDREW—

1. When will detailed recommendations be made regarding the facilities to be established within the proposed university college in Darwin?
2. Will the recommendations include provision of faculties of tropical agricultural science, tropical veterinary science, tropical medicine and tropical agronomy?

ANSWER

1. Detailed recommendations regarding facilities to be incorporated in a university or university college would be made when the proposed university was considered viable by the Australian Universities Commission and a Council or interim Council formed.
2. University Councils usually recommend the establishment of faculties as the community demands make a faculty viable. It would be impossible to state, at this stage, what recommendations would be made regarding faculties in any future Darwin University.

217 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

Is the "Medibank" scheme to be introduced in the Territory and, if so, how will it affect people paying accounts for medical treatment?

ANSWER

From 1 July everybody in Australia will have medical insurance cover at no direct charge.

When Medibank begins on 1 July 1975 everybody in Australia will be automatically insured against the cost of medical treatment—that is the fees charged by doctors.

Everybody will be able to claim a refund, through Medibank, of all but a small part of the fee he or she has paid a doctor. This refund is known as a Medical Benefit.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Because Medibank will provide automatic medical insurance coverage for the entire population from 1 July, it will no longer be necessary to continue paying contributions to a private medical insurance fund to qualify for medical benefits.

218 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

Have Aborigines and others on award wages, training allowances, unemployment and social security benefits been encouraged to join medical benefits funds?

ANSWER

For several years now, Aborigines have been encouraged to participate in the various medical benefit fund schemes and officers of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs have been available to assist them in so doing. While statistics are not readily available of the total number of Aborigines who have joined such schemes, it is considered that this would not be at this stage significant.

219 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

1. How many cane toads are still unaccounted for in Darwin?
2. Are the efforts to capture the toads which were being made prior to 25 December 1974 being continued?

ANSWER

Two cane toads have not been accounted for out of twenty escapees. The eighteen recovered comprised both live and dead animals and the former were all killed and preserved.

The original twenty specimens were sexed by the supplier as ten males and ten females and of the eighteen recovered out of those which could be sexed accurately, ten were females. However, the supplier's sexing is not being accepted as necessarily reliable and spotlight surveys in the release area are being continued on a fortnightly basis.

220 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

1. Are transport companies, as suggested by a letter received by a Katherine firm from a Queensland supplier, restricted to accepting only essential building materials for Darwin?
2. By what means are businesses not affected by the cyclone to function if this restriction is continued?

ANSWER

1. No. For a short period after the cyclone some restrictions were placed on unessential goods coming to Darwin. There has never been any restriction on goods consigned to Katherine.
2. As the answer to part 1 of the question in "no" this part of the question does not apply.

221 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr RYAN—

1. Does provision exist in the Motor Vehicles Ordinance as amended in 1973 for taxi plates to have a collateral value?
2. How many taxi plates have been issued since the Ordinance was amended in 1973?
3. How many taxi plates have been sold since that time?
4. What revenue has the Government collected since the 1973 amendment of the Ordinance for the issue and transfer of plates?

ANSWER

1. Yes. Section 27A refers.
2. Nil.
3. Since September 1973 the total number of transfers is 21.
4. Revenue from transfers is \$4,016.82.

222 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr POLLOCK—

1. Is the Kalano Association negotiating with Uralla Meats of Katherine for the purchase of the meat handling facility?
2. How could such a purchase with public funds be justified in view of the fact that Aborigines already own Beswick Station close to Katherine?

ANSWER

1. No. Not to the knowledge of the Northern Territory Division of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.
2. In view of the above the answer to this question is hypothetical. The ownership of a nearby station by one group of Aborigines need in no way inhibit the business aspirations of another group and in fact business relationships might well be developed between undertakings of some affinity which could enhance the justification of expenditure of public funds specifically set aside for the development of such business undertakings. This statement is of a general nature and specific cases would have to be fully investigated and judged on their merits.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

225 Mr WITHNALL to Mr EVERINGHAM—

1. Is it a fact that over 700 persons are unable to obtain payment of insurance moneys because of the delay of the Finance Branch of the Department of the Northern Territory in supplying pay-out figures of mortgages to the Commonwealth?
2. Will this situation be remedied soon?
3. When will the impossible situation created by the location of parts of the Department in Brisbane be ended?

ANSWER

1. No! Since Cyclone Tracy, more than 900 owners buying former Government houses on terms have been supplied with a calculated pay-out figure of their mortgage. On 17 March 1975, less than 50 applications for pay-out advice were being calculated or were in transit. Once applications reach the Finance Section of the Department either in Darwin or Brisbane, they are normally dealt with in three days, provided the information supplied by the enquirer is accurate.
2. As vacant positions in the Brisbane office are filled, the rate of delivery of pay-out advices can be increased if this is found to be necessary.
3. The temporary transfer of parts of the Department of the Northern Territory has been made necessary by the lack of adequate office space and houses in Darwin. Officers and their families will be relocated from Brisbane back to Darwin as soon as these facilities are available. New officers being recruited to Brisbane are being informed that their positions will be transferred to Darwin as soon as possible.

251 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

What steps have been taken to up-grade the roads from Yirrkala to Melville Bay Highway and from Dhumupa College to Gove Airport and, when will a maintenance program for roadworks in Gove be officially announced?

ANSWER

Negotiations have been carried on between the Australian Government, Nabalco and other interested parties for some time in connection with the Yirrkala Road. The present position is that Nabalco have proposed a new alignment for the road and a cost estimate is being prepared subject to this alignment proving satisfactory. The work is expected to be placed on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Works Programme for 1975/76.

No firm proposals or requests have been received for up-grading of the Dhumupa College road. When a request is received the Department of Education will arrange for the Department of Housing and Construction to provide a cost estimate.

Road maintenance in the Gove area is largely the responsibility of Nabalco. The Australian Government meets a proportion of the cost of maintenance and offers other assistance as required.

254 Mr DONDAS to Mr TAMBLING—

1. What areas in and around Darwin have been set aside (or are going to be set aside) for the dumping of rubbish?
2. What controls are to be placed on this activity?

ANSWER

1. The areas set aside for dumping of rubbish in and around Darwin are:
 - (a) Leanyer—used for wet garbage;
 - (b) Ludmilla—currently used for dry garbage and cyclone rubble;
 - (c) Frances Bay—cyclone rubble;
 - (d) Lee Point side of Leanyer—cyclone rubble;
 - (e) Howard Springs—all rubbish.
2. (a) Leanyer dump is under control of the Darwin Corporation and operated under the Local Government Ordinance and Health Regulations.
 - (b) Ludmilla is under the control of the Darwin Corporation but as the main activity is dumping of cyclone rubble, the dump is jointly operated by the Corporation and the Department of Housing and Construction. The Corporation expects to be finished with the dump by the end of the next dry. It operates under the Local Government Ordinance and Health Regulations.
 - (c) Francis Bay and Lee Point dumps are under the management of the Department of Housing and Construction and operate under Health Regulations.
 - (d) Howard Springs dump is the responsibility of the Department of the Northern Territory, is managed by the Department of Housing and Construction and operates under the Health Regulations.

306 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Will he make a statement on financial assistance for the Northern Territory cattle industry?

ANSWER

The details which I have on this subject don't come directly from government sources but from the special releases made by the Minister in the same way that the media and all other members of this Chamber receive them. The Minister indicated last week that a loan had been approved to the extent of \$1.4 million to enable the Katherine Meatworks to open in the 1975 season. I do not know when more will be known on that subject, except to say that the industry recognises that providing money to assist the Katherine Meatworks to open will not in itself be sufficient to ensure that the works can in fact operate without assistance directly to producers to enable them to get their cattle to the meatworks and still receive a marginal profit over and above their costs. In that respect, a number of proposals have been before the Minister and the government. The latest information I have is contained in a press release received from the Minister yesterday in which he said that the case for the Northern Territory to be considered for assistance to the same level as the states had been put before Cabinet and that, as soon as the terms and conditions had been finalised for the states, financial assistance would be made accordingly to the cattle industry in the Northern Territory. He went on further to say that this decision would be made in a week so that information should be available on the forms of assistance within the next week. I understand from my association with the Cattle Producer's Council that the forms of assistance which have been sought have been special finance and carry on finance at low interest rates and also assistance with freight reductions in the Northern Territory.

307 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

For the purpose of tourist buses coming to Darwin, it seems apparent that the city area has been expanded to include Adelaide River. We are told that tourist buses may not enter the city area, that they must go to Mandorah. Since when has the Howard Springs area, Berry Springs and the eastern outskirts of Darwin been in the city area?

ANSWER

The inclusion of places such as Howard Springs and Berry Springs in relation to a restriction of tourist entry is probably in conformity with the Darwin Reconstruction Act which the honourable member for Arnhem may recall prescribes a radius of 40 kilometres from the Darwin Post office as being the areas within which the Darwin Reconstruction Act operates. The government probably sees some connection between that legislation and the Cyclone Disaster Ordinance under which they administer the permit system.

308 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr EVERINGHAM—

My question relates to the state of the jury roll in Alice Springs. It was last reviewed some time ago and I am informed by the Deputy Sheriff in that area that it is very difficult now to obtain a jury. Is he aware of any plans to revise the jury list in the near future?

ANSWER

I ask him to put his question on notice.

309 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is drunkenness a crime in the ACT?

ANSWER

I must confess myself ignorant on this point. I shall do some research on it and possibly answer him in the adjournment debate this afternoon.

310 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

My question concerns the proposed Drunkenness Bill which is before the Assembly. Has he discussed with the Director of Health the implementation and the procedures in this bill and, if so, what were the results of the discussions?

ANSWER

I have forwarded a copy of the bill to the Minister for Health and I subsequently forwarded a copy to the Director of Health. I have been invited to discuss the bill with him but I haven't as yet discussed it with him for various reasons. At one stage, I was away and at another stage he was away. I certainly will be discussing it with him before the bill proceeds through final stages in this House.

311 Mr KENTISH to Miss ANDREW—

I notice a comment in the newspaper that the Australian Teachers Federation wants education authorities to introduce phonetic spelling: "said" for instance would become "sed", and "threat" would become "thret". Has this disease reached the Northern Territory yet, and, if so, how widespread is it?

ANSWER

To my knowledge this particular form of instruction is not used in the Territory except perhaps as an experiment in isolated class rooms.

312 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Can he advise the number of police officers based in Alice Springs who are trained and able to operate the breathalisher?

ANSWER

I would ask him to put the question on notice.

313 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TAMBLING—

Will 240 volt electricity from the new power house at Mataranka be laid onto houses on the east side of the Stuart Highway?

ANSWER

The topic is currently under discussion within the department. I will endeavour to obtain a full reply for him later this day.

314 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr POLLOCK—

What facilities will be made available in the event of any female being sentenced to a period of detention or remanded in custody in the Top End?

ANSWER

At the moment, there are 6 female prisoners in the Northern Territory. They are all being held at the Alice Springs Jail. Any female who is sentenced to a period of imprisonment in the Top End will be transferred to the Alice Springs Jail. Temporary facilities are being made to accommodate female prisoners in Darwin for a minimum period, perhaps overnight, until they can be transferred to Alice Springs.

315 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise the present state of the Darwin Waterside dispute which is affecting all Territory centres?

ANSWER

The present state is that it is still well on. The wharves are not back at work and they do not appear ready to start. I cannot say when they are likely to start work because I do not have a crystal ball. I will be contacting later on today some people around the town to get some indication of which way this dispute could be moving.

316 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Has the North Australian Development Corporation at Scott's Creek a chance of becoming a viable proposition?

ANSWER

I can only quote the views of the receiver for the company which appear to have been for the time being accepted by the creditors of the company. The receiver has established to the satisfaction of the creditors that there is a chance of the company working its way out of its present debt situation and back into a situation of profit. It is in the nature of agricultural and pastoral enterprises that they are long term and this process may take several years. I understand that the basis for the receiver's optimism is that there will be a substantial change in the agricultural program of Willaroo as there will be a reduction in the acreage planted to crops. It was the original intention of the project to go in for large-scale cropping but this current wet season there are some 10,000 acres of cow-feed planted and which will be harvested for seed. That 10,000 acres will be planted to a crop of sorghum next wet season to take advantage of the nitrogen produced by the legumes this year and a rotation will be developed on a 10,000 acre basis of this sort. At the same time the receiver proposes to expand the cattle breeding operations on the property using Brahmin cross females. Various propositions have been discussed with the creditors; an extension of time to put them into operation has been given and further funds have been made available by certain of the principal creditors in order to try to see the program through.

317 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

Has the Building Code which has been spoken of freely in the press been formally adopted by the commission? What action has the Commission taken to ensure that the Building Code becomes a code enforceable at law and, if the Commission has taken no such action, will he take steps to see that such action is taken forthwith?

ANSWER

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission has formally adopted the new Building Code. The legal advice which the Commission has received is that, following the adoption of the code by the Commission, no further legislative requirement exists in this Assembly or elsewhere. As recently as the last meeting, I again raised this matter as to what was the legal position and was again informed that the Attorney-General's advice was to the effect that the adoption of the cyclone code by the Reconstruction Commission did in fact give it sufficient legal standing to operate. However, I will check again on the matter with the staff of the Commission and legal advisers to see whether there is any change in the advice and, if so, I will advise the honourable member.

318 Mr STEELE to Mr TAMBLING—

Newspaper reports referred to the winning of a ballot for caravan accommodation by Mr Kirkman. How many caravans were balloted for, how many persons were in the ballot and on what housing lists do the names of these persons appear? Why were the housing lists removed from the notice board in block 7 and where can they be inspected?

ANSWER

I am informed by an officer of the Department of the Northern Territory that the newspaper report alluded to was incorrect. The caravan was not balloted for. Government department caravans are allotted by an interdepartmental committee and there also exists an accelerated priority list which was applicable in this instance. Mr Kirkman's particular requirement was for a caravan.

In relation to the second part of the question, I am also informed by an officer of the Department of the Northern Territory that lists were removed from block 7 notice board for reasons of their wear and tear. Copies of government employee housing lists are now being forwarded to each department.

319 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

I noticed recently that the honourable member journeyed to Tarcoola to assist at the beginning of the work at the new railway there. He may remember just prior to the federal elections and after the disastrous floods of 1974, the Prime Minister promised a 4-lane highway from Port Augusta to Alice Springs. Can he report on the progress of that highway? Is it started or is it finished?

ANSWER

The highway was to be a 2-lane highway, a standard highway. There has been no start on this road. During my visit to Tarcoola, I did manage to have a few words with the secretary for the Department of Transport but I was unable to speak to Mr Jones, the Minister. They advised me that the road in question is part of the national highway network which they hope to have finished completely in about 9 years. I said that I hoped that this didn't apply to the Stuart Highway because we could do with a decent road well before 9 years. He said that with the railhead reaching a certain point in about 3 years time, they will then conduct co-ordinated road and rail services through Alice Springs. I suggested that they may have to make an early start on the road from the Northern Territory border down into South Australia. He was non-committal as to when this was likely to be and, from the information that I have received from a question that I had asked in the House in South Australia, the South Australians don't expect to be making a start on that particular stretch of road for at least 2 years. The money which they had allocated to them by the Federal Government was \$16.4m for national highways in South Australia. The majority of this money will be spent on the Eyre and the Prince's highway. At the moment, there doesn't seem to be any short term start to this highway. I intend to write to the Prime Minister and send him a copy of the speech that was referred to in the question. Hopefully, he may decide to inject some money into the system so that South Australia can go ahead and produce a road that will enable us to get the goods that we need drastically in the Northern Territory.

320 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is it the intention of the Attorney-General's department to replace police prosecutors with professional prosecutors?

ANSWER

I cannot officially give the view of the Attorney General's department but I do know second hand that it is the intention of the Attorney General's department to gradually replace police prosecutors with members of the Crown Law Office staff. To my mind, this will be a mixed blessing in some cases. I would like to pay tribute to the pretty good work of members of the police force who have been seconded as prosecutors throughout the Territory. I can think of many prosecutors who are more than equal to their professional opponents. Some of those prosecutors are still around the courts today. That is why I think it will be a mixed blessing. I am not sure of the timetable but I believe it is to start fairly soon. I think that the cyclone has set the timetables back some months but I would expect that qualified solicitors would be appearing to prosecute police offences before the end of this year.

321 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Has the incidence of drug charges before the court increased or declined in the Northern Territory in the last 6 months?

ANSWER

I would ask him to put the question on notice.

322 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Before the end of the sittings, would he table a precise account of which branches of the Department of the Northern Territory have been transferred interstate, how many officers of these branches have been transferred, at what level they've been transferred and the expected date of return?

ANSWER

The honourable member did ask me a somewhat similar question back in the February sittings; "What functions in the Department of the Northern Territory and the Australian Public Service will be transferred to Brisbane, and what are the classifications within these functional areas and how many people are involved". I have received within the last few days an answer from the Department of the Northern Territory. The answer which will possibly cover part of the question is as follows: "The management services function together with portion of the administrative substructure of various branches of the Department of Northern Territory have been temporarily relocated in Brisbane. The executive and policy areas of the department have remained in Darwin. Approval was given, however, for temporary relocation of three level-1 positions in Brisbane. The other classifications within the functional areas cover a broad spectrum of clerical and administrative classifications. At the present time 116 evacuees have been relocated in Brisbane and 67 people have been transferred from Darwin". I will pursue the last part of the question in relation to probable return time with the Department of the Northern Territory and advise her when I have the information.

323 Mr WITHNALL to Dr LETTS—

In view of the fact that the new Building Code states that it applies to the whole of the Northern Territory and in view of the member's statement that no law is to be made bringing it into operation, how can this code be applied outside the cyclone area without some action being taken either through the Building Ordinance or some other appropriate legislation?

ANSWER

My legal expertise doesn't extend to being able to answer the precise question asked. However, I have taken a note of the question and will pursue the matter with the Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission and find out whether it is necessary to do as the honourable member suggests and, if so, execute moves to do so.

324 Mr PERRON to Mr TAMBLING—

Are the repairs currently being effected at the Parap Theatre building of a temporary or a permanent nature? Are the provisions of the new Building Code being adhered to? Are the new town planning proposals being adhered to?

ANSWER

I am not able to give the honourable member an answer today. However, I will have discussions with the Northern Territory Building Board and the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and endeavour to give him an answer at this sitting.

325 Mr KENTISH to Dr LETTS—

Recently I was informed of a person who applied for a job with the government and he was interviewed by 3 or 4 people in the government. One of the first questions he was asked on each occasion was what were his political beliefs or persuasions. Could he tell me whether this is now standard practice or whether this would be something applying to certain categories?

ANSWER

In cases such as the allegations made by the honourable member for Arnhem, it is very difficult to find out any information in regard to such a question unless the specific instance is available. I would ask him if he would give me the fullest details that he has available of the time, place and any names connected with this incident and I shall certainly be happy to pursue the matter on his behalf and get to the bottom of it.

326 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is it the intention of the Attorney-General to combine the Aboriginal Legal Aid Service with the Australian Legal Aid Office?

ANSWER

I cannot answer for the empire-building talents of the Attorney-General because he doesn't have any control over the North Australian or Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Services. These bodies are supposedly independent incorporated associations which are funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and by reason of that fact do come to some extent under its jurisdiction. The Attorney-General does not particularly—this is entirely my personal opinion—like the concept of 2 separate legal aid services operating side by side in the Northern Territory. It would appear on the face of it to be a discriminatory practice and I can really see no good reason for it. There have been matters in relation to the conduct of the legal practitioners employed by the legal aid service and the conduct of the bodies that administer the Aboriginal Legal Aid Services which have been commented on unfavourably. I have here a judgment of the Northern Territory Supreme Court in a matter of a Justices Appeal by one George Putti against Harry William Simpson which, with the leave of the Assembly, I would like to table. This might give the honourable member for Elsey some information on how these services operate. My own view is that it would be very desirable if the Aboriginal Legal Aid Services were combined with the Australian Legal Aid Office which is doing a pretty competent job and has on its staff some pretty competent people. I can see absolutely no reason for 2 separate legal aid offices to exist side by side, not only from the cost point of view but from the appearance of discrimination.

327 Mr TUXWORTH to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that the government has increased the costs of airline rental space in the Northern Territory airports by 1,000% and if so, on what criteria did they base this increase?

ANSWER

I don't have the information required. I will get some details from the Executive Member for Resource Development and provide an answer later in these sittings.

328 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission is incomplete. It has not yet had representatives from the Darwin Citizens Advisory Committee. When is it likely that the people will be appointed by the Minister to that committee?

ANSWER

I have difficulty in answering the question precisely because part of the steps in the appointment of members is outside the powers of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. Honourable members who are familiar with the Darwin Reconstruction Act may recall that there shall be a council of up to 20 members—the actual number is to be set by the Minister—and that the procedures for the appointment of this council called for nominations to be called widely in the community. Anybody who is an elector of the Northern Territory may nominate anybody else. While nominations have been called, sufficient time had to be allowed for them to come in, not only from the people who are resident in Darwin but also Darwin residents who are interstate. Then the Reconstruction Commission has the job of making recommendations to the Minister according to what they think might comprise a representative group from a broad cross-section of the community. The Reconstruction Commission has examined people who were nominated and has made recommendations to the Minister. The matter is now one for ministerial decision. I hope that the matter will be finalised before the next full meeting of the Commission which takes place in early May.

329 Mr KENTISH to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Could he advise me of the criteria or qualifications for a person to be appointed a justice of the peace?

ANSWER

I have had a quick look at the Justices Ordinance and there are no criteria contained therein for the appointment of justices of the peace other than that the person be a resident of the Northern Territory. There are certain disqualifications but I think there are unwritten criteria which operate no doubt in the minds of the Attorney-General and the Administrator when they appoint justices. They would be such things as their known character, their ability to administer the provisions of the ordinances that may come under their scrutiny, etc.

330 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr SPEAKER—

What steps are being taken to restore airconditioning to this chamber and the lounge?

ANSWER

The matter is being discussed with Housing and Construction. A review is being made at present of the whole premises which includes premises, electrical wiring, airconditioning and such. It is expected that a report will be brought before a house meeting which will be held either today or tomorrow.

331 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr SPEAKER—

When is secretarial assistance to be provided to private members as recommended in the Tribunal?

ANSWER

The matter was taken up by myself with the Minister some time prior to 4 February. On 5 February, I wrote a letter to the Minister regarding certain matters relating to members of this Legislative Assembly. One of those matters referred to secretaries for members. A further letter has been sent to the Minister asking him that the establishment of this Legislative Assembly be increased so that these secretaries can be employed by the Legislative Assembly. I understand that the Minister is coming to Darwin tomorrow and this morning I have requested an appointment with him to further take up the matter.

332 Mr TUNGUTALUM to Miss ANDREW—

When will work begin again on Howard Springs School and when is it expected to be used?

ANSWER

The tender has already been let and rumour declares that they have started pouring the foundations. However, I am uncertain as to when the school will be opened.

333 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

Is the honourable member aware that an order of exemption under section 422A of the Commonwealth Navigation Act 1912 comes into force in the Northern Territory on 19 May this year and will have the effect of forcing some local barge and small cargo ship owners to lay off some of their existing crews? Will the honourable member ask the Minister for Transport to delay the date of implementation of the order to give local operators reasonable time to comply?

ANSWER

I am aware of the situation. I will send a telegram to the Minister for Transport asking him to delay the implementation of this Exemption Order although I would not expect a particularly satisfactory result as the Minister for Transport tends to take a rather dogmatic stand on these types of things.

334 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

How long will Mr Jim Gallacher be Acting Director of Education and is there still a teacher shortage in Darwin?

ANSWER

It is uncertain as to when the permanent director will be appointed. A number of applicants have already been interviewed but due to the fact that many of these are from overseas, it is a very long and tedious process.

At the moment, there are only about 15 teachers in the pipeline en route here and with the large number of enrolments already declared by parents for second term, the Acting Director has sent a request to the Commonwealth Teaching Service asking them to ask state authorities if they will release teachers for secondment to Darwin for the remainder of this year to alleviate the shortage.

335 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Has he been able to obtain a copy of Dr Millar's report on detoxification centres? If not, when is it likely to be available and does he intend tabling it in the Council or making it available to members in a private capacity?

ANSWER

I made several requests to senior public servants this morning and the report is now on my desk. There are several strings attached to it in that only I may read it because the Minister has not read it yet. I was supposed to read it in a room in a government office block but I managed to avoid that condition and I am afraid I cannot at this stage report on it because I haven't read it and because I have pledged that I will keep its contents confidential until such time as the Minister has read it.

336 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

As the Minister is to be in Darwin tomorrow, would he agree to seeking the Minister's permission for other members to read this and would he also agree for the debate to proceed at this sittings until we have been able to read the report and have the benefit of it?

ANSWER

I don't think I could give an undertaking that debate on the bill will not proceed until such time as the report is released as that would tie the bill to a timetable over which I would have absolutely no control. I would not be able to have the Minister release the report if he didn't wish to. The Drunkenness Bill would not be proceeding further at this sittings in any event.

The other part of the honourable member's question was whether I would endeavour to have the report made available to other honourable members at this time. I believe that the Minister is coming to Darwin tomorrow and, at this moment, I am the only lucky member of this Assembly who will be seeing him because I am on the Cyclone Relief Trust Fund. I shall endeavour to ask him whether he would be agreeable to that.

337 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Is he aware that the vessel the "John Burke" will not be carrying sea freight goods to Gove? If so, can he inform me if alternative sea transport is available to replace this service, such as the vessel the "Darwin Trader"?

ANSWER

I was aware that there will be a discontinuation of the service of the "John Burke" to Nhulunbuy and I will attempt to get some information off the Federal Minister for Transport as to what alternatives they would consider to give this service back to the people in that area.

338 Mr KENTISH to Mr TUXWORTH—

Can he advise me whether Mr Johnstone, the manager of the Tourist Bureau has a financial interest in Mandorah or any of its related facilities?

ANSWER

I don't have an answer to that. I would sincerely hope not and I will try to get an answer this afternoon.

339 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Does the Northern Territory Building Code apply to areas outside Darwin?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory Building Code does apply to areas outside Darwin but it is possible that certain provisions relating to cyclone damage prevention will be restricted to prescribed areas such as Darwin or coastal communities.

340 Mr PERRON to Miss ANDREW—

Who authorised the removal of the soil from the area known as Pilot Hill on the foreshores of Frances Bay, what is the soil being used for and have the environmental and tidal aspects been studied?

ANSWER

I have already sent 3 telegrams to various people on this particular subject but as yet have had no reply. I will endeavour to get the answer to this question by this afternoon.

341 Mr PERRON to Mr RYAN—

Is it a fact that some 3000 waterside workers from Australian ports were levied \$10 each for Darwin cyclone assistance funds? Is it further a fact that this money was sent for distribution only amongst the 100 odd Darwin waterside workers and not for assistance to other persons in Darwin? If this is so, are not the Darwin waterside workers at an advantage compared to other workers in Darwin, as they have 2 assistance funds to help them?

ANSWER

The waterside workers around Australia were in fact levied \$10 per head to be used by the Darwin waterside workers. I believe that it is being held in a trust fund. I don't know what they intend doing with the money but I believe that they do have it.

342 Mr STEELE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Has there been any consultation between the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of the Northern Territory and this Assembly on the Karmel Report on Australia police?

ANSWER

No.

343 Mr VALE to Mr RYAN—

Has any consideration been given to using the army personnel who are presently based in Darwin to unload ships and essential goods and supplies for Darwin and other centres?

ANSWER

In making my adjournment speech yesterday, I did forget to mention that I had sent a telegram to the Minister for Defence, Mr Barnard yesterday requesting that action be taken.

344 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

At the last sittings, I mentioned a gift of the Government of India to the people of Darwin of a large consignment of tea and asked how that was going to be distributed. I believe that at least part of that tea has now arrived in Darwin. Accordingly, I ask the honourable member as a matter of some urgency if he would indicate how, when, where and to whom the tea is to be distributed.

ANSWER

I do not have the information previously sought by the honourable member for Nightcliff but I will endeavour to get something on it today.

345 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

When will the Wanguri and Nakara schools be completed and what facilities are available for mentally retarded children in the Northern Territory and especially in Darwin since the cyclone?

ANSWER

The Nakara school is now in the hands of Housing and Construction who are assessing the damage. However there is considerable difficulty with the re-carpetting of the building but the Education Department are hopeful that it will be reopened in third term. Wanguri school was rather severely damaged because it was only partially completed and it is now estimated that it will be opened in April 1976.

Although a special school is not yet operating, classes have been set up within primary schools to cater for mentally retarded children. Assistance has been given to the teachers responsible for these children in the form of special teachers aids who have had experience in dealing with mentally retarded children. The department is pursuing the policy of educating mentally retarded children wherever possible in normal circumstances.

346 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Can he inform me when the PMG will complete the new installation of post boxes at the Nhulunbuy Post Office? What other steps are being taken to improve the present appalling postal system?

ANSWER

I don't know the answer to the honourable member for Nhulunbuy's question and I will attempt to find out later on today and give him an answer either this afternoon or tomorrow.

347 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

Is he aware that when Darwin residents applying for permits to either bring back other members of their family or guests who will be accommodated in their own home were being told that in most cases it is not possible because of the strains on the food outlets in Darwin and that the commercial centre can't cope with extra people? If he is aware of this, is it intended that tourist buses bringing the estimated 14,000 people into Darwin will be fully self-sufficient and bring their own food or are they to be fed while the locals are kept out?

ANSWER

I wasn't aware of the situation described by the honourable member for Nightcliff. I believe that the proposal with regard to tourist buses is that they would be largely self contained although there may be some replenishment of resources required during the very temporary period they are in Darwin. I think that it is wrong that the authorities concerned with the administration of permits should make this information available to the people who are applying for permits because I don't believe that it truly reflects the state of affairs in Darwin. As somebody who has to do his own shopping here from time to time, that is not my experience. I shall bring this matter to the attention of His Honour the Administrator who with his Council makes representation or gives directions from time to time to the Director of Emergency Services as to the administration of the ordinance to see that that kind of misleading information might be corrected.

348 Mr ROBERTSON to Mr TAMBLING—

Will he inform me when the present prefabricated houses which are under construction will be delivered on site to Tennant Creek and are there any further tenders to be let for homes in Tennant Creek in the very near future.

ANSWER

I assume the honourable member for Gillen is referring to contracts currently being negotiated and considered by the Northern Territory Housing Commission. I do not have available the information he requests but I will endeavour to obtain it for him today.

349 Mr STEELE to Miss ANDREW—

Are insurance companies underwriting storm and tempest insurance and, if so, which insurance companies are underwriting this type of insurance in Darwin right now?

ANSWER

Earlier this week, I sent telegrams to various leading insurance companies around town but only some have replied. I believe that some companies are applying more stringent conditions to their policies. However, the replies that I have had indicate that they are writing business for their clients only at pre-October 1973 rates which is the period when the rates for such policies went down as a result of a long period in Darwin without any disasters. The companies are also inspecting premises before writing policies.

350 Mr MacFARLANE to Dr LETTS—

Is he aware of an ABC report about financial difficulties of the McArthur River Cattle Company? In view of the importance to Borroloola and the gulf area of the killing facility operated by this company, will he investigate means of ensuring that this company receives every reasonable financial encouragement to continue its operations?

ANSWER

I have heard the reports of the problems of the McArthur River Cattle Company. I agree that this is a very important regional abattoir within the Northern Territory and I will take the matter up with the Minister and the Department of the Northern Territory to see if any way can be found to assist the continued operations of the industry. Indeed, some of the legislation which is being considered by the Assembly may be of assistance in that regard.

351 Mr PERRON to Mr T AMBLING—

Is it a fact that the houses built by the Housing Commission in the future will cost \$29,000 and that the economic rent will be over \$70 per week? If this is so, will the weekly income requirement of a tenant be \$280?

ANSWER

By ordinance, the Housing Commission must operate on commercial lines and balance its operational expenditure against its operational income. It must charge economical rents in accordance with provisions laid down in the ordinance but may, with the approval of the Administrator in Council, vary rents from dwelling to dwelling provided the total rent revenue is not less than the sum of economic rents for all rental dwellings at any given time. Since the commission's main function is to provide suitable housing for low and middle income earners on an economic basis at rents which they can afford, it has always been necessary for the commission to adopt the most economical form of construction consistent with sound building practice. With steeply rising building costs and interest rates, it is imperative that the commission adopt the most economical form of construction. If an estimated contract price for Housing Commission dwellings was \$28,700 and if the Housing Commission obtained its funds at an 8½% interest rate, the economic rent in accordance with the ordinance would be \$70 per week and under the income formula arrangement that would be in the order of \$280. However, if the Housing Commission obtained its finance at an agreeable interest rate of 4%, and this is currently under negotiation with the Minister for the Northern Territory, then the economic rent would be \$43 per week and the income requirement for that would be \$172.

352 Mr DONDAS to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Is he aware that there is a meeting of the Standing Committee of State and Federal Attorneys-General in Perth on the 8th and 9th of May 1975? Has he any knowledge as to whether there will be an Assembly representative at the meeting?

ANSWER

I was not aware that there was to be a meeting in Perth until late yesterday when I received information on it from Queensland. As far as I know, a Legislative Assembly representative has not been invited to the meeting.

353 Mr WITHNALL to Mr SPEAKER—

Was the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1975, passed by the Assembly on 12 February 1975, presented to the Administrator, and if so, with what result?

ANSWER

The ordinance was presented but has neither been assented to, declined assent nor reserved.

354 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr RYAN—

Can he tell me if the proposed air charter flights to Singapore by the unions will invite people from outside Darwin? If these charter trips are successful, when will Qantas or British Airways reschedule these as regular overseas flights?

ANSWER

I ask him to place the question on notice.

355 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

Can he advise me when the Stuart Highway between the airport entrance and Westco will be completed or how long it will be left in a state of half repair?

ANSWER

The section of road in question is at the moment under contract. So far as I know, the contractor has been advised that he is to go on with the job. I don't know when he is likely to start up again but I will endeavour to find out.

356 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM—

Some time ago there was a ministerial statement indicating that finance would be made available for people wishing to rebuild their homes in Darwin. I think a figure of 6% was mentioned. Has he any idea as to how this is to be distributed?

ANSWER

I wrote a letter to the secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory about this matter. I have not yet received any definite information from the Australian Government on the subject.

357 Mr MacFARLANE to Mr TUXWORTH—

Has the Northern Territory Tourist Board or the Northern Territory Tourist Bureau ever invited travel agents to inspect the attractions of the Katherine district?

ANSWER

I don't have the answer to that question and I will try to obtain it before this afternoon.

358 Mr KENTISH to Mr RYAN—

How many permits have been issued by the Fire Brigade and how many have been refused since April?

ANSWER

I would ask him to place the question on notice.

359 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

In the previous Council, I asked several questions relating to applications of certain persons for occupation of leases of land in the Adelaide River area. At that stage, the reply was that no information could be forthcoming until such time as a land use survey of the area was completed. Is this survey now complete and, if so, will applications be processed?

ANSWER

I expect to have some information on this matter later today and I will pass it on to her then.

360 Mr DONDAS to Mr SPEAKER—

When will offices for members here be opened in the northern suburbs?

ANSWER

The matter has been referred to the Minister. I have an appointment with the Minister this morning and recommendations will be made that the offices in the northern suburbs be established. If members have some intention of creating offices there, a recommendation is being put to the Minister that those members be refunded their rental expenses.

361 Mr ROBERTSON to Miss ANDREW—

Is she aware that the teachers in Alice Springs have called for a stopwork meeting at 10 a.m. to discuss among other things a continuing lack of housing and a continuing lack of communication with the Department of Education? Would she investigate the matter as soon as possible?

ANSWER

I am aware of the stopwork meeting that was to commence at 10 a.m. This morning, I phoned the Director of Education in Darwin who was unaware of the situation until he heard it over the news this morning. I also phoned a representative of the Centralian Commonwealth Teachers Federation of the Northern Territory who told me that 2 months ago a motion for a stopwork action was passed if no concrete action was taken by the Department. This action was to be taken because many teachers and their families are living in unsuitable accommodation. The demands are for a housing officer to be put in Alice Springs to act for the Education Department.

362 Mr DONDAS to Miss ANDREW—

Why are the Nakara, Wanguri, Tiwi, Anula, Karama and Wulagi primary schools all to be constructed on the open space concept? Have the views of teachers and parents been sought by the Education Department as to whether they prefer the traditional classrooms or the open space concept?

ANSWER

The design of these schools is done with consultation between architects of the Department of Housing and Construction and a committee of parents, teachers and administrative educationalists. The design of these schools will give a much greater opportunity for alternative education because of the space available. In answer to his second question, the short answer is no. However, a group of interested parents and teachers called a meeting recently to discuss the establishment of one alternative school and, as far as I know, representation has been made to the department for the provision of alternative education.

363 Mr KENTISH to Mr SPEAKER—

You may have noticed that the fans provided blow their breeze only on the front benches but nothing is blown on the unjust in the back benches. Will more fans be made available?

ANSWER

It is not intended to have any favouritism in this Chamber. However, we had discussions yesterday with an officer of Housing and Construction relating to the repair of this Chamber and other offices in the vicinity. Work is being planned and we hope that in the near future extra power points will be brought in here with the view to having more fans. We do expect that after a review on the airconditioning has been completed in the next two months, we will have this Chamber back to something like its normal condition.

364 Mrs LAWRIE to Dr LETTS—

On the subject of the free tea for Darwin, has he any further additional information as to how this tea will be distributed—by whom, to whom and when?

ANSWER

I understand that the responsibility for arranging the distribution has been delegated to the food subcommittee of the emergency services organisation. The suggestion was made that they would be contacting various service organisations such as Apex and Rotary in Darwin to see if they could assist with the distribution but I don't think any final decision has yet been made.

365 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING: The honourable member for Stuart Park asked a question relating to the Parap Theatre. I am informed that the building currently being carried out there is in accordance with the general press release that was issued earlier with specific reference to business premises whereby they were encouraged to rebuild to former code standards. Before public use may be made of any of these buildings an engineer's certificate will be required that they do conform to the old code. A certificate of occupancy would be required before public use. In this particular instance, I believe the owner has been informed that there is no inconsistency with the proposed town plan.

366 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TAMBLING: A question was directed to me by the honourable member for Elsey relating to a power supply in Mataranka. I am informed that it is the intention to hook up the east side in conjunction with the current contract.

367 ANSWER TO QUESTION

Mr TUXWORTH: The member for Arnhem asked whether the Director of Tourism of the Northern Territory had pecuniary interest in the tourist installations in Darwin or its surrounds. The answer is no.

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