

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

Questions are printed in numerical order

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II

FROM 22 NOVEMBER 1977

58 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

With reference to the legal opinion being prepared for the trustees of the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund by Mr Ian Barker, QC -

What were the instructions given to Mr Barker by the trustees; and from what source is Mr Barker to be paid for this opinion and under what authority?

64 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

In respect of each of the following organisations -

1. Central Australian Aboriginal Medical Service;
2. Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service;
3. Central Australian Aborigines Congress; and
4. Aboriginal Hostels Ltd, Alice Springs -
 - (a) what number of persons are employed;
 - (b) what are the designations, remuneration received and other employment benefits of employees;
 - (c) who is responsible for the hiring and firing of employees;
 - (d) are the organisations' financial records and expenditure subject to audit and, if so, what are the details of such requirements; and
 - (e) are vehicle records and logbooks kept?

FROM 29 NOVEMBER 1977

92 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

1. Why is the notice in Gazette No. 46, 18 November 1977, appointing the Territory Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council over the signature of the Administrator, and not the executive member as required in the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance?
2. What are the qualifications of each of the members of the council with respect to section 80(8) of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance?
3. Who were the unsuccessful candidates to the advisory council and what were their qualifications with respect to section 80(3)?

FROM 6 DECEMBER 1977

151 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is it a fact that Aborigines living in humpies in the NT will be required to pay \$2.00 a fortnight for garbage collection and maintenance of parks and gardens as from January 1978?

Is it a fact that Aborigines living in stage 1 houses will be required to pay \$5.00 a fortnight for such services under proposed new scales?

Is it a fact that Aborigines living in stage 3 houses will be required to pay \$35.00 a fortnight for rent as compared with \$13.00 a fortnight, as from January next year?

FROM 28 FEBRUARY 1978

181 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

When will the third bore at Batchelor be equipped with a dual diesel/electric pump?

191 Mr PERKINS to Mr ROBERTSON

Will he advise when and where the Community Access Centre for Alice Springs will be provided?

Will the facilities and resources of the proposed Community Access Centre be made freely available to other local community organisations, including Aboriginal organisations?

What is the total staff establishment and salary levels proposed for the Community Access Centre?

Will this centre replace the functions of the Alice Springs Regional Council for Social Development?

212 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

1. What investigations have been made to date into the purchase of Willeroo-Scott Creek, by the Northern Territory executive?
2. Has any money been spent in travel or otherwise to investigate the proposed purchase?
3. If money has been spent on travel or otherwise, on what authority was the money spent?

220 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

1. Has approval been given, and if so when, for the erection of five town houses on Lot 1776, Banyan Street, Darwin?
2. Have objections been lodged to the zoning of Lot 1776, Town of Darwin, as R2 in the Darwin Town Plan?
3. If these objections are upheld, will the building be allowed to proceed?
4. Is the sewerage system in the area presently overloaded, and does it occasionally overflow?
5. What steps are being taken to upgrade the sewerage system in the area, in view of the zoning of the area for medium density housing in the Darwin Town Plan?

221 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

With reference to moneys invested by the Northern Territory Housing Commission in 1977 -

- (a) where was the money invested, for what periods of time and at what rate of interest; and
- (b) how much was loaned to the Home Finance Trustee, for what period of time and at what interest rate?

222 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

How much, in total, was paid by the Australian government to employers of apprentices in the Northern Territory to cover days lost due to school in the financial year 1976-77?

223 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

In respect of the new Darwin Town Planning Scheme that is on public exhibition until 30 March 1978 -

- (a) how many objections have so far been lodged; and
- (b) how many permits to build have been issued since 1 January 1978 in respect of parcels of land that have been subject of public objection?

224 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr EVERINGHAM

- (a) Were the establishments of all branches and sections of Australian Public Service departments that were transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978 fully staffed on 1 January 1978?
- (b) If the answer to (a) above is "no", how many vacant positions were transferred from the Australian Public Service to the Northern Territory Public Service on 1 January 1978?

FROM 7 MARCH 1978

249 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

In the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch in the Top End:

1. How many veterinary officers are available to help small farmers?
2. Briefly what are the complete additional areas of concern of these veterinary officers?
3. How many stock inspectors are available for help for small farmers?
4. How many extension officers are there, whose main work is to help and give field advice in situ to small farmers?
5. In what specific fields do these extension officers operate?
6. What are the future plans of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch field extension officers to actively encourage the small animal and crop landholders to realise their full potential to build a stable base of agricultural production for the undoubted benefit of all of us in the Northern Territory?

250 Mr PERKINS to Mr PERRON

Further to my question 190 concerning stage 4 of the Alice Springs Powerhouse, will he advise whether the generating sets to be installed will be

compatible with existing sets and therefore save on tooling up and maintenance costs?

251 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Further to my question on notice No. 154 concerning the conditions of the road to Uluru National Park, will he explain what steps will be undertaken to upgrade the road to Uluru National Park, given that the term "re-sheet" usually refers to the sealing of the road and given that this road is not sheeted?

252 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. (a) What was the nature of the "political and industrial surveillance" which was carried on by Special Branch up to the time of its disbandment?

(b) How many people and of what rank were in Special Branch at the time of its disbanding?

(c) Were any files, dossiers, records, memoranda or notes held by Special Branch on private individuals who had not been charged with a criminal offence or were not under investigation for alleged criminal offences? If so, what became of those files, dossiers, records, memoranda or notes at the time of its disbanding?
2. What precise functions of Special Branch were taken over by the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Police Force when Special Branch was disbanded in August 1973? Which duties formerly performed by Special Branch have been added to the work of the Criminal Intelligence Section since August 1973, and at whose instigation?
3. When was the Criminal Intelligence Section of the Police Force created? What duties was it intended to perform? At whose instigation and for what reasons was it created? What duties does it presently perform?
4. Were any members of the Criminal Intelligence Section or any other section of the NT Police Force aware of, present at, or in any way involved in, illegal entries into premises of any organisations, businesses or individuals at any time in 1976 or 1977?
5. What is the present strength of the Criminal Intelligence Section, and what was its strength in August 1973?
6. Since August 1973, have any and how many men or women formerly working in Special Branch commenced or performed duties in the Criminal Intelligence Section?
7. Does the Criminal Intelligence Section compile any information or material on NT residents who are known or believed to be opposed to the Joint Space Defence Research Establishment but who have committed no criminal offence in respect of that opposition?
8. Does the Police Commissioner or do any officers of the NT Police Force have an arrangement for the supply of political or industrial intelligence to any section of the Australian Security Service? If so, what is the basis?
9. What steps has the Majority Leader taken to assure himself that the Police Force does not compile information of a political or industrial

nature on individuals within the NT who have not committed any criminal offence?

10. Have any wiretaps, telephone interceptions or other methods of electronic surveillance or eavesdropping been employed by or records of information so obtained been compiled by or kept by any members of the NT Police Force on any and how many occasions in each of the years since August 1973?

If so, on each occasion such methods were adopted -

- (a) by whom was the surveillance authorised;
 - (b) was the surveillance made on an individual or organisation who was or whose members were suspected of having committed a criminal offence; and
 - (c) on how many occasions were criminal charges laid against individuals and what charges were so involved on each such occasion?
11. Has any section of the NT Police Force at any time since August 1973 supplied information of a political or industrial character concerning individual residents or groups within the Northern Territory to any organisations or bodies funded by, or under the authority of, any foreign governments? If so, which organisations, and which foreign governments?

253 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Has the Northern Territory Port Authority signed a lease agreement with V.B. Perkins and Co? If so, when? If not, why not?

301 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he give an undertaking to this House that the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission will not alienate any vacant crown lands to become a national park or reserve until any Aboriginal land claims over such lands are heard according to due processes of law?

300 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Who is on the regular mailing list of the NT executive for press releases?

302 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Why is it that some residents of Wulagi have been waiting for up to 15 months for the installation of private telephones?

303 Mr ISAACS to Mr ROBERTSON

In the 1976-77 financial year, what was the amount of financial assistance provided by the Majority Party government to each Northern Territory amateur sporting body?

304 Mr ISAACS to Mr TUXWORTH

Why is the fully-equipped dental therapy clinic at Wulagi School not in operation?

65 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

What is the generating capacity of electricity generators at the Daly River Mission?

What is the peak or maximum demand for electricity at the Daly River Mission?

If the generating capacity is in excess of demand, what modifications, if any, have the generating units had?

ANSWER

The following information has been provided by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in answer to the question:

"There are at present three generators installed at Daly River - two 100 KW units and one 200 KW unit. The generating capacity of the generators is 400 KW.

The peak demand is in the vicinity of 180 KW and the prime generating source is the comparatively new 200 KW generator. The two 100 KW generators provide a standby capacity of 100% generation in the event of any shut-down for maintenance or for other reasons."

67 Mr PERKINS to Mr ROBERTSON

Is he aware that the erection of a demountable primary school building for the Haasts Bluff community has not taken place as proposed for September of this year in the Commonwealth government's New Works Program for 1977-78?

If so, will he advise when the erection of the primary school building is to commence and when it will be ready for use?

ANSWER

1. Tenders were called in September 1977 as programmed.
2. An acceptable tender was received.
3. Estimated completion date is April 1978.

It appears there again exists a confusion between 'tender target date' and 'completion date'.

68 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Has the Majority Party considered the effect on the validity of Northern Territory legislation of Australia's ratification of international treaties and covenants dealing with economic, political and social rights?

Given the undoubted power of the Commonwealth to legislate in the NT, has the Majority Leader received advice that there is a difference in substance between the Commonwealth's power to legislate in the NT (and in the ACT) to put into effect its treaty commitments, and its power under the external affairs power of the Commonwealth Constitution to enforce such legislation on the states?

If so, has the Majority Leader requested a study of NT legislation to see whether there is any conflict between NT ordinances and international

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

covenants ratified by Australia? In particular, has he requested an examination of whether the present NT Social Welfare Ordinance stands up to international covenants pertaining to racial discrimination and whether existing prison facilities in the NT meet the standards laid down in international covenants and treaties?

ANSWER

Yes.

Advice is hardly necessary as the position is obvious.

Not applicable.

71 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

How much was paid to each member of the Assembly by way of travelling allowance in the 1976-77 financial year?

ANSWER

Travelling allowance paid to each member of the Legislative Assembly during 1976-77:

Miss E.J. Andrew	\$ 2,542.00	Mr M.J. Ballantyne	\$ 4,537.00
Mr N. Dondas	\$ 287.00	Mr P.A.E. Everingham	\$ 287.00
Dr G.A. Letts	\$11,444.00	Mr J.L.S. MacFarlane	\$ 3,178.00
Mr G.E. Manuell	\$ 2,199.00	Mr M.B. Perron	\$ 377.00
Mr D.L. Pollock	\$ 6,513.00	Mr J.M. Robertson	\$ 2,114.00
Mr R. Ryan	\$ 1,230.00	Mr R.M. Steele	\$ 594.50
Mr G.E. Tambling	\$ 1,246.00	Mr H. Tungutalum	\$ 1,094.00
Mr I.L. Tuxworth	\$ 7,494.00	Mr R.W.S. Vale	\$ 2,976.00
Mr R.J. Withnall	\$ 574.00	Mr R.J. Kentish	Nil
Mrs A.D. Lawrie	Nil		

90 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

Is it a fact that the Beatrice Hill Research Station is to be handed over from the Department of the Northern Territory to Professor Harry Messel of Sydney University to house him and/or his academic staff whilst they are carrying out their radio experiments on our crocodiles?

What is going to happen to the present Department of the Northern Territory staff working and housed there, to all the facilities, laboratories, workshops, equipment and livestock, and to the vital research work on animal and pasture production that has been conducted in this area for a number of years?

How much money has been allocated or will be allocated by the government to Professor Harry Messel, and how much to animal and pasture research in this area?

Who is going to benefit from this research of Professor Harry Messel, the Northern Territory people, the Sydney University or the United States interests that are partially financing this research?

Who decided that crocodile research is more important to the Northern Territory than farming research that is aimed at assisting the farmers and cattlemen in the Top End?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

It is not proposed to "hand over" the Beatrice Hill Research Station to the Sydney University. However, the Department of the Northern Territory has been approached to provide accommodation to the research team under the direction of Professor Messel and consideration is being given to sub-leasing two houses and a single men's quarters and amenities block at Beatrice Hill.

The Beatrice Hill Research Station and Coastal Plains Research Station were amalgamated in 1973 and have been operated as a single research station since that time. All the research facilities at Beatrice Hill will remain under the control of the department and all research programs will continue.

An allocation of \$50,000 for the 1977-78 financial year was made in the Northern Territory budget to the Sydney University for the research program undertaken by Professor Messel. This amount represents an increase over the previous departmental allocation of \$20,000.

Appropriation for research activities at Coastal Plains Research Station for the 1977-78 financial year is \$358,754 including expenditure on repairs and maintenance and capital works.

As in the case of all fundamental research it is not possible to predict the ultimate outcome but it is expected that all contributory sources to the program stand to benefit.

91 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr STEELE

Does he intend to introduce legislation to control the use of antibiotics in stock feeds and, if so, when?

ANSWER

No formal approach has yet been made to me for the introduction of such legislation. However, I have been informed that officers of the Department of the Northern Territory are preparing instructions for the introduction of a bill for an ordinance entitled "Stock Feeds and Medicines" which, when finalised, will be forwarded for my consideration.

95 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

How many times has the Darwin Citizens' Council met?

How many times did each member of the Darwin Citizens' Council attend those meetings?

ANSWER

The following table gives full details of membership of the Darwin Citizens' Council and attendance at its meetings -

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Name	Date appointed	Meetings attended*	Meetings eligible	Resigned (R) or current member (C)
Mrs C.D. Allridge	16/5/75	33 (6)	41	(C)
Mr I. Barker	16/5/75	3 (-)	6	(R)
Mr J. Isaacs	16/5/75	15 (1)	31	(R)
Mr M. Jacob	16/5/75	35 (2)	41	(C)
Rev. D. McKenzie	16/5/75	4 (6)	17	(R)
Mr J.W. Nixon	16/5/75	9 (-)	41	(C)
Mrs J. Parish	16/5/75	19 (-)	41	(C)
Dr L. Reid	16/5/75	23 (-)	26	(R)
Mr E.A. Robertson	16/5/75	8 (4)	19	(R)
Mr D.W. Veal	16/5/75	36 (-)	41	(C)
Mr J.B. Waters	16/5/75	14 (-)	41	(C)
Mr J. Wilkins	16/5/75	28 (7)	41	(C)
Mr R. Chin	16/5/75	22 (11)	41	(C)
Mrs N. Fuchs	16/5/75	6 (-)	8	(R)
Mrs J.M. Muras	9/7/75	16 (3)	23	(R)
Mr R.I. Textor	16/5/75	15 (-)	41	(C)
Mr R. Tipungwuti	9/7/75	4 (8)	35	(C)
Mr B. Valadian	9/7/75	8 (-)	18	(R)
Canon C. Wood	9/7/75	8 (2)	18	(R)
Mr W.K. Lang	18/8/75	27 (4)	33	(C)
Mr H.C. Harrison	9/7/75	19 (6)	35	(C)

* (Additional meetings where leave of absence was granted are indicated in brackets.)

96 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

How many times has the Darwin Reconstruction Commission met?

How many times did each member or their delegate attend those meetings?

ANSWER

1. 43.
2. The Reconstruction Commission advises that this information is confidential to the commission.

132 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

1. What were the staffing levels, section by section, for each six months, or at least yearly, in the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch since 1972?
2. How many professional and technical staff are in the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch and how many, on average, are there in similar branches in each of the states?
3. How many professional conferences do professional staff of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch attend each year compared to their counterparts in each state, and why are they so few?

ANSWER

The following information has been provided by the Department of the

Northern Territory:

1. Staffing statistics are not maintained on section by section basis. However the following tables which show the dates of major changes to branch staffing levels may be of assistance to the honourable member.

(a) Staff

Approved establishment		Ceiling	Employed
Month/Year			
July 1971	228	213	205
July 1972	228	211	212
September 1973	246	211	210
July 1974	265	217	223
November 1975	234	217	215
January 1976	239	221	201
February 1976	239	215	201
March 1976	239	199	194
April 1977	227	-	191
August 1977	207*	-	178

* Transfer of Land Conservation Section to Forestry, Fisheries and Land Conservation Branch.

(b) Industrial employees

Approved establishment		Ceiling	Employed
Month/Year			
July 1971	115	57	55
July 1972	58	54	57
September 1973	63	57	62
July 1974	69	69	62
November 1975	69	69	60
January 1976	69	69	63
February 1976	69	69	62
March 1976	69	62	62
April 1977	62	-	62
August 1977	56	-	58

2. There are 54 professional and 52 technical staff currently employed in the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch. Information on state departments of agriculture is not readily available and it would take considerable time to collect and collate the figures.
3. As it is not known how many professional conferences are attended by state officials, such a comparison cannot be made.

150 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

1. What is the membership of the Tender Board?
2. Who chooses the members?
3. Who decides the duration of membership?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

4. Does a position on the Tender Board attract a cash emolument?
5. What criteria are used in appointing members of the Tender Board?
6. Are reasons for accepting a particular tender made public and, if not, why not?
7. Has an unsuccessful tenderer any way of airing what he may feel is a definite grievance against the decision of the Tender Board?

ANSWER

The following information has been provided by the Department of the Northern Territory concerning its Tender Board:

"It is assumed that the question is related to the Tender Board of the Department of the Northern Territory. There are also tender boards in the Department of Construction, Education and Health in the Northern Territory.

1. Chairman - Assistant Secretary, Finance Supply and Vehicles Branch.
Deputy Chairman - Director of Supply.
Member - Director of Accounting.
Executive Member - Officer in Charge of Procurement and Contracts.
2. The members hold their positions ex officio.
3. See reply to 2.
4. No.
5. See reply to 2.
6. A summary of contracts let is published by advertisement in the Northern Territory Gazette; the summary includes a brief description of the goods or services, the value of the contract and the name of the successful tenderer; an unsuccessful tenderer may be informed of the unit prices of the successful tenderer.
7. The unsuccessful tenderer may enquire of the Tender Board the reasons why his tender was unsuccessful; if not satisfied with the answers given by the Tender Board an unsuccessful tenderer would have the normal means of airing a grievance including an approach to the permanent head of the department, the member of the Legislative Assembly, the minister, or may lodge a complaint with the ombudsman."

152 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he advise when the Commonwealth government proposes to transfer power to the NT Legislative Assembly to legislate completely on electoral matters in the Territory?

Will he advise when the Assembly executive is likely to introduce legislation on electoral matters in the NT?

Will he advise whether the recommendations of the chairman of the NT Country Liberal Party following the recent Legislative Assembly election on August 13 will be incorporated in such legislation?

ANSWER

1. During 1978.

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2. During the life of this Assembly.

3. The principles to be incorporated in the legislation have not yet been determined.

153 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is it a fact that the Alice Springs Criminal Investigation Bureau maintains secret files on the activities of local prominent citizens? If so, why and under whose instructions?

ANSWER

No.

154 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware of the shocking condition of the corrugated road to Uluru National Park and of the reported claim that more than 2,000 vehicles have been repaired in the national park in the first nine months of this year and that nearly 300 cars and coaches have been repaired at Curtin Springs in the same period?

If so, will he advise what action his department proposes to take to improve road conditions to Uluru National Park?

ANSWER

Yes, I am aware that the road is in bad shape. I am also aware of the claims that a large number of vehicles have had to be repaired in the national park.

This road is still the responsibility of the Department of the Northern Territory. I am informed by that department that in addition to the normal routine grading, gravel patching and maintenance of drainage structures, an amount of \$100,000 has been made available this financial year to re-sheet 30 km of the road near Curtin Springs.

179 Mr DOOLAN to Mr PERRON

Have tenders been called for a new workshop and stores complex at the Stokes Hill Power Station?

If so, to what stage has work proceeded?

If tenders have not been called, why not?

ANSWER

Tenders have not as yet been called for the new workshop and stores complex at Stokes Hill Power Station.

In keeping with normal programming procedures, this project has been allocated a target date for the calling of tenders of February 1978. It is anticipated that tenders will be invited at that time.

180 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

1. Has a timetable for the complete undergrounding of cables of the electricity distribution system been established?

2. If so, what is it?

3. Has the Majority Party a policy that all cables must be underground?

ANSWER

A timetable for the complete undergrounding of the electricity supply distribution system has not been established. Electricity supply to Anula and Wulagi is underground and it is proposed that the new suburb of Malak also be underground.

Wanguri and Tiwi are being undergrounded as part of the restoration work presently being undertaken.

A working group which was formed to facilitate the establishment of the Northern Territory Electricity Commission recently recommended that distribution systems be permanently restored to overhead standard for all residential suburbs where a damaged overhead system exists. Upgrading or redesign, as necessary, to improve reliability and load capacity is to be included in the restoration works.

The Majority Party is in agreement with this policy.

182 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. What sections of which acts or ordinances specifically enable Australian public servants to carry over their recreation leave credits into the Northern Territory Public Service; and
2. Which sections of which acts or ordinances enable Northern Territory public servants to carry over their recreation leave credits to the Australian Public Service?

ANSWER

1. Section 84(2)(f) of the Public Service Act and section 41(9) of the Public Service Ordinance preserve the recreation leave entitlements of officers and employees of the Australian Public Service transferring to the Northern Territory Public Service; section 64 of the Public Service Ordinance preserves the recreation leave entitlements of other Australian Public Service officers and employees who accept appointments to the Northern Territory Public Service.
2. Regulation 120F of the Public Service Regulations made under the Public Service Act preserves the recreation leave entitlements of former officers of the Australian Public Service who are transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service and later return on transfer or promotion to the Australian Public Service.

183 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. What position does Mr H.C. Giese hold in the Northern Territory Public Service?
2. Does Mr Giese still occupy an office in the MLC Building?
3. Does Mr Giese also occupy an office in block 2?

ANSWER

1. Mr H.C. Giese occupies the position of Senior Executive Officer, level 2 in the Northern Territory Public Service.

2. No. This office was used by the commissioner designate of the Electricity Commission and is now being used by the director of the Office of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

3. Mr Giese occupies an office in block 2.

184 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Are Northern Territory public servants entitled to an emergency air fare on appointment?

ANSWER

There are no provisions which entitle employees of the Northern Territory Public Service to an emergency air fare on appointment.

Northern Territory Public Service conditions do, however, provide for employees to be credited with a recreation leave fare on appointment which may be used with the commissioner's approval in special circumstances within the first twelve months of service. In addition, provisions exist for employees to be granted air fare entitlements to receive medical treatment where it is certified that the necessary treatment cannot be obtained at their station, and provision also exists for fares assistance to be provided for a close relative in certain circumstances where an employee becomes critically or dangerously ill whilst he is absent from his headquarters on duty.

Firm determinations have been made by the commissioner prior to Christmas incorporating the above principles. However, because of drafting delays, bylaws have not yet been printed and tabled. Despite this, in the meantime, the conditions will be applied administratively as necessary by direction of the commissioner.

185 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

On what basis are employees of the Northern Territory Public Service entitled to departmental housing?

ANSWER

As the government housing function is still the responsibility of the Commonwealth government, employees of the Northern Territory Public Service are entitled to government housing on the same basis as officers of the Australian Public Service.

186 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Will he advise when the realignment of the Barkly Highway and the bridging of the Ranken and James Rivers will commence, and what timetable for completion is proposed?

ANSWER

The responsibility for the Stuart and Barkly Highways still rests with the Department of the Northern Territory. I have made strong representations to the Minister for the Northern Territory to have the realignment of the Barkly Highway and the bridging of the Ranken and James Rivers commenced in the financial year 1978-79.

187 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Has consideration been given to the establishment of suitable trees in

the car parking area of Alice Springs airport?

If so, what action is proposed by your department or the appropriate Commonwealth department to establish trees, which would improve the aesthetic quality of the area and which would provide necessary shade for vehicles and persons?

ANSWER

Due to the rapid growth of traffic through Alice Springs in the last few years, it has been necessary to extend, as far as funds will allow, the facilities at the airport.

Further growth in the future will require not merely extension but a complete review of the layout of the apron and building area. We have carried out preliminary studies in this direction and it becomes increasingly apparent that the car parking facilities could be entirely changed from its present configuration.

For this reason no provision has been made for minor improvements such as tree planting. However, when funds become available for implementation of the replanned layout, no doubt provision will be made for tree planting as appropriate.

In the short term, the existing car park was not designed to accommodate trees, because of the extra costs involved in providing more area, maintenance of the trees and the extra water required for their upkeep.

188 Mr PERKINS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it a fact that a feasibility study into a recreation lake for Alice Springs is being carried out at the moment near Jay Creek Aboriginal Community?

If so, on what specific sites is the study being carried out and has there been prior consultation with the Jay Creek Aboriginal Council about the study?

ANSWER

1. No feasibility studies are in progress although three stream-gauging stations are being maintained to provide data for any future study and as a part of the Central Australian hydrologic recording network. The last feasibility study was of a preliminary nature only and was presented in an internal branch report in 1973 and dealt with two of the three sites. The contents of this report together with available data from a third site were used in a published Department of the Northern Territory report in 1975. Apart from the maintenance of the gauging stations the only work carried out since 1975 has been a small amount of topographic surveying mainly at the third site known as Birthday Gap.
2. Two of the sites, known as Ildjarabada and Pyberinge, are on Jay Creek respectively about three and ten kilometres upstream from Iwupataka and are located on the Jay Creek Reserve. The third site, Birthday Gap, is on the Hugh River on Owen Springs pastoral lease. When investigations into the former two commenced in the 1960s consultation was had with the then Northern Territory Administration Welfare Branch. In November 1975 a day was spent examining the three sites by the Alice Springs district engineer with four members of the Central Lands Council. At the time the Aborigines expressed general interest in the prospect

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of a recreation lake which would possibly be owned and managed by Aboriginal people but pointed out that the traditional land owners of the area reside at Hermannsburg and not Iwupataka. The Water Resources Branch of the Department of the Northern Territory appreciates the interest of the Iwupataka people and the traditional land owners in respect of any proposals and there will certainly be consultation before any new investigation work proceeds in the future.

189 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

Will he advise when the major rural road development program, involving the upgrading of the major multi-purpose roads in the Northern Territory, will be commenced? Which rural roads specifically are to be upgraded? What timetable of completion is proposed in each case?

ANSWER

The major rural road development program is still the responsibility of the Department of the Northern Territory. Very little has been done about sponsoring a development roads program over the last two years, but I have made strong representations to the Minister for the Northern Territory to have the Petermann Road and Yuendumu Road upgraded as a matter of priority. When we assume full responsibility for roadworks in July one of my first tasks will be to develop a major rural road development program.

190 Mr PERKINS to Mr PERRON

Will he advise when the investigation and design work on stage 4 of the Alice Springs powerhouse is likely to be completed?

What action is proposed to be taken upon completion of the investigation?

ANSWER

All investigations have been completed and design work to the extent necessary to take the project to the point of examination for final construction approval is well advanced.

Assuming this approval is received in April 1978, it is anticipated that tenders would be called during October 1978, allowing the first of the proposed new generating sets to be commissioned in May 1981 and the second new generating set in October 1981.

210 Mr PERKINS to Mr STEELE

How much will have to be paid to update and upgrade storage and marketing facilities and other installations in respect of the Willeroo Project?

ANSWER

At this stage, the information is not available.

211 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

1. How many staff and in what designations are attached to the Majority Party?
2. How many staff and in what designations are attached to the Opposition?

ANSWER

The following are the staffing details for the Majority Leader, Deputy

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Majority Leader, Executive Members in Cabinet and Leader of the Opposition:

Majority Leader and Chief Secretary and Executive Member for Law

Private secretaries	3
Personal secretary	1
Steno-secretary grade 2	1
Clerical assistant grade 3	1
	<hr/>
	6

Deputy Majority Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Planning

Private secretaries	2 (1 vacant) approved 27/2/78
Steno-secretary grade 2	1
	<hr/>
	3

Executive Member for Resources and Health

Private secretary	1
Steno-secretary grade 1	1
Clerical assistant grade 2	1
	<hr/>
	3

Executive Member for Community and Social Development

Private secretary	1
Steno-secretary grade 1	1
	<hr/>
	2

Executive Member for Transport and Industry

Private secretary	1
Steno-secretary grade 1	1
	<hr/>
	2

Total 16

Leader of the Opposition

Private secretaries	2 (1 vacant) approved 13/12/77
Steno-secretary grade 1	1
	<hr/>

Total 3

The above does not include part-time assistance in electoral offices as provided for members under the determination of the Remuneration Tribunal.

213 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

1. Is it the government's intention to restrict Professor Harry Messel's occupation to the present drawn up area on the Beatrice Hill Research Station?
2. Is it a fact that Professor Harry Messel has expressed a wish to move into occupation of certain laboratories, offices and housing at Middle Point?
3. What is being done to put a stop now to any further encroachment on our valuable facilities by Professor Harry Messel?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ANSWER

1. When the Department of the Northern Territory was approached & to provide accommodation for the University of Sydney research team
2. a preference was expressed for an area providing laboratory, office and residential facilities. These facilities exist at the Coastal Plains Research Station at Middle Point but are adequate only for station personnel. The residential and amenities facilities at Beatrice Hill was offered as an alternative. Occupation will not be effected until additional residential accommodation is available at the Middle Point location for the station staff now at Beatrice Hill.
3. Further requests for assistance are not anticipated but if any are received they will be considered on their merits.

214 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

1. Why was a surprise visit of the Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory necessary to the Beatrice Hill Research Station prior to the announcement of Professor Harry Messel's proposed occupation; who accompanied the secretary; and on what advice was this visit made?
2. What was the outcome of this visit, having regard to the fact that the common courtesies of prior notification of this visit was not made to any Beatrice Hill Research Station staff?

ANSWER

1. The Secretary of the Department of the Northern Territory has visited Beatrice Hill and Middle Point several times, the most recent occasion being on 17 November 1977. This visit had been arranged some weeks in advance. He was accompanied by the Director-General of the Chief Secretary's Department (Mr M. Finger), the Acting Director of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch (Mr J. Mailath), the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Housing Branch (Mr T. Fegan) and Professor Messel.
2. The outcome was a decision to offer the facilities at Beatrice Hill.

215 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

Regarding Professor Harry Messel's occupation of the Beatrice Hill Research Station, is it the intention of the government to update, paint and repair the quarters to be occupied in view of the fact that they have not been updated, repaired or painted for the present staff of the Beatrice Hill Research Station during the past ten years?

ANSWER

The government does not intend to carry out any special maintenance or painting prior to the occupation of the Beatrice Hill Research Station by the University of Sydney/Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. The quarters will be left clean and tidy and in a habitable condition.

216 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

What are the terms of occupation of Professor Harry Messel at the Beatrice Hill Research Station, and how long will his occupation last?

ANSWER

The conditions under which Professor Messel's group would occupy the

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Beatrice Hill Research Station are:

- . initial tenancy period of ten years;
- . twelve months notice should either party wish to vary this period;
- . University of Sydney/Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission's joint crocodile research program will be responsible for all ongoing repairs and maintenance to buildings and services, for the payment of electricity and other charges and for general supervision and security during the occasions when officers of the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch are absent from the area;
- . the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch will have access to various facilities including power, water, telephone and roads;
- . stock watering will have first priority for the water supply.

217 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

- (a) Has the environmental impact statement on the siting of the second powerhouse at East Arm been completed?
- (b) If not, when is it likely to be completed?
- (c) Will the statement be made public?

ANSWER

- (a) No.
- (b) It is anticipated that the draft environmental impact statement will be completed during April 1978.
- (c) The draft environmental impact statement will subsequently be made available to the public in accordance with the administrative procedures under the Environment Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act 1974-1975.

218 Mr ISAACS to Mr ROBERTSON

- 1. Has his department been requested by the Department of the Northern Territory to pay Humphries and Muller \$11,200 as a result of expenditure incurred at the time of the cyclone?
- 2. Has his department paid the amount and if not, does it intend to pay?

ANSWER

- 1. On 19 October 1977 the Director of the Northern Territory Emergency Services forwarded a claim for payment from Humphries and Muller for \$11,193.88 to the Northern Territory Director, Department of Finance and Planning, who in turn submitted the claim to the Department of the Northern Territory.

In view of the time lapse between the date of receipt of the goods, which were the subject of the claim, and the transfer of the Emergency Services function to the Northern Territory Public Service, the Dept of the Northern Territory sought the advice of the Department of Finance, Canberra, for its decision as to the area of responsibility for payment of the account.

2. The Department of Finance, Canberra, on 3 January 1978, advised that responsibility for payment was that of the Department of the Northern Territory and payment was subsequently made on 17 January 1978.

219 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

1. How many work-related accidents occurred in the Northern Territory during 1974-75, 1975-76 and 1976-77?
2. How much was paid out in workmen's compensation claims in 1974-75, 1975-76 and 1976-77?

ANSWER

The information sought in these questions is not readily available from statistics held anywhere in Australia in the form required. Inquiries have begun in order to collect and collate the information and will be made available when the data comes to hand.

225 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

How many taxi plates are currently on issue in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Hobart and Canberra?

ANSWER

The number of taxi plates on issue are: Sydney 3,451, Melbourne 2,877, Adelaide 842, Perth 813, Brisbane 1,336, Hobart 241 and Canberra 104.

Figures are for 28 February 1978 for all cities except Sydney and Melbourne where the applicable dates are 31 January 1978 and 30 June 1977 respectively.

226 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Can he advise if officers of the Grants Commission have completed an assessment of Northern Territory revenue and expenditure needs and, if so, is he prepared to table the assessment in the Assembly today?

ANSWER

The officers of the Grants Commission have not completed an assessment as indicated by the Opposition Leader. Whilst the Grants Commission has assisted us in an informal manner in our talks with the federal government, it has no powers whatsoever under its charter, under the Grants Commission Act, to become fully involved in revenue and expenditure assessments for the Northern Territory.

227 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can he inform the House about a recent incident allegedly involving a police officer at Hooker Creek?

ANSWER

There are a number of allegations in relation to various incidents. My answer may take some time but I hope that I will have the indulgence of the House as I understand that this matter has received wide publicity not only in Australia but also overseas. The allegations which were made against the police officer at Hooker Creek were received from a Miss Ditton of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service who wrote to the Commissioner of Police alleging that a constable at Hooker Creek was involved in a theft of Toyota parts from the Lajamanu Council and had constructed a vehicle from the parts for his own use, that the constable was involved in the theft of a generator from Yuwarli Housing Association and that the constable was seen driving his police vehicle out of the housing association yard with some piping belonging to the association. The incident was reported to the administration officer and, shortly after, the constable ordered three of the housing association's vehicles to be put off the road as unroadworthy. The allegation was that the constable's action amounted to abuse of his position and discrimination. The fourth allegation was that there was a "row" between the Lajamanu Council and the police after which the constable put the sanitary truck off the road for four days for being unroadworthy. It was alleged that the constable's action was an abuse of process. Fifthly, on 17 October last year, Miss Ditton of the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service wrote to me alleging that on 29 July last year the constable was asked by the Lajamanu Council to prevent a truck load of liquor from entering the reserve. He intercepted the vehicle and directed its driver to stop in front of the store. Seventy flagons of wine were unloaded from the truck. The constable lined the flagons up outside the store and shot some of them with a rifle. It is alleged that at least three people, and possibly more, received minor injuries from flying glass. Sixthly, it was also alleged that, on 29 August 1977, the constable collected nine youths from around the settlement, chained them together and put them to work pulling grass. He threatened them with a stick and hit two of the youths with the stick.

A man called Clin Coburn, the manager of the Yuwarli Housing Association, also wrote to the Commissioner of Police making allegations similar to 1, 2 and 6 aforementioned. The investigations of these allegations was undertaken by Inspectors Hovey and Young, Detective-Sergeant Marchant and Detective MacLeod. The constable concerned was closely questioned and statements were taken from most of the people at Hooker Creek who could shed light on the matters.

The conclusions of the investigators: firstly, in relation to the theft of Toyota parts, there appears to have been no substance in this allegation. The constable did build a beach buggy but with parts he obtained from the dump; with the exception of the cabin chassis, the parts were not Toyota parts. No Aboriginal complained to the police that the constable had stolen Toyota parts.

Secondly, the theft of the generator: there appears to have been no substance in this allegation. The constable apparently rebuilt the generator from parts he found at the dump and sold it to a man at the Wave Hill store. Again, no Aboriginal complained to the police that the constable had stolen a generator. Incidentally, so I am informed by the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, Inspector Young says that at the Hooker Creek dump there are some 100 abandoned vehicles and electrical equipment including washing machines and air coolers. It appears that from time to time usable equipment is dumped if it breaks down.

Inquiries are being pursued regarding the involvement of other people in the theft, if any, of vehicle parts and a generator, but it is not expected that the constable will be shown to have been implicated and the police do not believe that he was.

Thirdly, removal of the pipes and ordering vehicles off the road: it is nowhere suggested that the constable was stealing the pipes which apparently were used to build a mustering yard as part of the settlement's cattle project. No complaint was made about the pipes so there is no point in pursuing the issue. The allegation that the constable abused his position by unreasonably ordering that vehicles should stay off the road is without substance. No one complained to the police about any such order.

Row, ordering sanitary truck off the road: the investigators found no evidence of any row that occurred between the council and the police. The sanitary truck was a tractor which had no lights and another policeman, not the one concerned, ordered that it be fitted with lights. It is to be noted that none of the first four allegations were substantiated and no Aboriginal appeared to be interested in complaining to the investigators about any conduct of the constable in this regard.

As to the allegation in relation to the shooting of the flagons and chaining of youths, the following is the position. Shooting the flagons: the incident undoubtedly happened. A utility load of liquor arrived at Hooker Creek; it contained 70 flagons of invalid port. The constable destroyed some of the flagons by shooting them. Three men and possibly more received minor injuries from flying glass. The Lajamanu Council certainly approved of the destruction of the liquor but there is some dispute as to whether or not council members approved in advance of the method of destruction. The constable thought that he was acting properly by bringing home to the people that taking liquor into the reserve was a serious offence. In the view of the Solicitor for the Northern Territory, there is no criminal charge which could profitably be laid, but the constable in his opinion was guilty of a serious error of judgment.

Chaining the youths: on 29 August, the constable put nine youths to work clearing an area of grass and rubbish. They were hobbled with leather hobbles for about 30 minutes, but worked for two or three hours. The constable assisted to put the hobbles on. The youths were wearing long trousers and suffered no injury from the hobbles. The reasons for the incidents are as follows: firstly, the youths in question had previously offended against the law and had been previously punished tribally. On the night of 28 August, they interfered with two motor vehicles. The constable arrested them; he could see no point in charging them and taking them to

court and he wanted to make an example of them in a way approved of by the council men. The men decided that it would be a good idea to make the youths publicly work for the community as a punishment. The hobbles were put on with the approval of the men of the council to stop the youths running away. Apart from statements from two of the youths, there is no evidence that the constable struck them although a number of bystanders were present. There is no doubt that the incident occurred with the approval of at least some of the community's adult Aborigines, including the council leader Maurice Luther. Apparently the lesson was not lost on others because the crime rate dropped considerably after the youths were publicly chained. Again the Solicitor for the Northern Territory sees no virtue in bringing any criminal charge but again the constable was plainly guilty of a serious error of judgment.

A number of the people at the settlement have paid tribute to the constable's attitude to Aborigines. Two respected white people at the settlement are the school principal, Mr Holt, and an adult educator, Mr Creepers. Both agree with the public destruction of the liquor, although they think the method was unwise. Both agree with the hobbling incident and they are adamant that neither incident met with any general disapproval at the settlement.

228 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Is the Executive Member for Transport and Industry aware that the Northern Territory Port Authority has not presented audited accounts for the financial year 1975-76 and 1976-77? Can he assure the Assembly that the audited accounts will be tabled this session?

ANSWER

I do not know if I am in a position to give that sort of an assurance until I can talk to the Port Authority about their accounts. Certainly, today, I will ring the Port Authority and discuss their accounts with them and, if possible, present them during this sittings.

229 Mr HARRIS to Mr ROBERTSON

The need to have a museum permanently established is of the utmost importance. With this in mind, has any decision been reached as to the positioning of the museum and, if so, is he able to indicate in what area the museum is to be built?

ANSWER

The location of the new Darwin based museum and art gallery is the subject of an executive submission which I have called for. The balance to be met, of course, is one between architectural excellence and the best possible access to the public, both by local Darwin people and of course our most valued visitors from interstate. The Museums and Art Galleries Board has made a recommendation which is supported by architectural plans. The Executive Member for Finance and Planning is having his department give us planning and alternative options in relation to the best possible location for this very expensive and very much needed facility in Darwin. I would hope by the next sittings of the Assembly, if not before, to be able to make an announcement through the executive as to its exact location.

230 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

Is he aware that the Housing Commission has not formally submitted finan-

cial statements to the Auditor-General for the financial years ending 30 June 1975, 1976 and 1977? Is he aware that annual reports have not been tabled in this Assembly for periods since 1972-73? What action has he taken to ensure that the financial statements will be submitted to the Auditor-General and that annual reports will be tabled in this Assembly?

ANSWER

I think it would be more appropriate for this question to be placed on notice, Mr Speaker. However, I can indicate that I am aware that there is a back-log of work to be done by the Housing Commission in order to meet its statutory requirements of tabling its annual reports in this House. The delay is primarily caused by the difficulties that have been experienced, not only by the commission but other aspects of government in Darwin, since Cyclone Tracy. Every action is being taken to enable it to bring its audited accounts up to date so that the reports can be tabled in this Assembly at the earliest possible date.

231 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise the present progress and status of the Tarcoola to Alice Springs standard gauge rail link?

ANSWER

I have obtained a brief report on the progress of the railway line. Earthworks and line are in the vicinity of Mount Willoughby in South Australia. The line is about 50 kilometres behind the end of the earthworks. Contracts have been let for the next stage to Kulgara, for line construction and for bridge construction over the Finke and Hugh Rivers between Kulgara and Alice Springs. The line is expected to reach Kulgara in January 1979. The current rate of progress would see the line in Alice Springs by the projected time of 1981. A decision on the terminal location in Alice Springs is yet to be arrived at.

232 Mr PERKINS to Mr ROBERTSON

Is he aware that the last audited report for the Darwin City Council tabled in the Assembly was for the year ended 30 June 1974? I ask, will he undertake to table the audited reports of the Darwin City Council since that date during the current Assembly sittings?

ANSWER

The answer to the honourable member's question is that the matter will be investigated.

233 Mr OLIVER to Mr ROBERTSON

Is there any truth in the statement attributed to the honourable Leader of the Opposition that future ratepayers in the town of Katherine will pay more than elsewhere in the Territory?

Mr ISAACS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker. As I understand it, the question is seeking an opinion from the honourable executive member, which would be out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: The question was, is there any truth in the statement?

Mr Robertson: It's a statement of fact.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON (Community and Social Development): In responding to the question seeking a statement of facts, as to whether or not the people of Katherine would be charged rates higher than anywhere else in the Northern Territory, which I understand resulted from the honourable Leader of the Opposition's pilgrimage of mischief throughout the Territory recently, the plain fact of the matter is that we have spelled out very clearly in writing, both in offer form and in writing over my signature, to the chairmen of the town management boards in Katherine and Tennant Creek, the precise amount of ratings which a CLP government expects they should raise: 50% of the average between Darwin and Alice Springs. There are two ways of looking at the question. Indeed, it would seem to me that the honourable member was probably speaking as Leader of the Opposition and that he is indicating the policy of the ALP; if they got in, the rating would be in excess of that applicable to Alice Springs and Darwin. The people of Katherine, responding logically to this statement, will be very wary of voting ALP in any future election.

234 Mr VALE to Mr SPEAKER

Would you advise if someone has taken over occupancy of part of what is commonly referred to as the common room? If so, who is occupying those two end rooms?

ANSWER

I am not aware of anybody taking over occupancy of the common room but I will investigate the matter immediately.

235 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr STEELE

I warn him that I will ask this question interminably until I get some satisfaction. Can he indicate progress towards the establishment of a bicycle track from the northern suburbs to the city centre? At the previous sittings, when I asked a question along similar lines, he said that a feasibility study was being undertaken by his department. Is that completed and, if so, what are the recommendations?

ANSWER

I have not seen a report on bicycle tracks at this time. We are not properly in charge of most of the transport and roads areas. Although there are reports coming through, some of them do not necessarily go to me. There is still another system of government prevailing in the Northern Territory. The more quickly we get to 1 July the better.

236 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

What is the intended policy in relation to the supply of goods and services to the Northern Territory government?

ANSWER

The Northern Territory executive is investigating ways by which some preferential treatment can be given to local suppliers of goods and services so that a policy can be firmly established to come into operation from 1 July. My executive is aware of the necessity to support and promote local industries which have demonstrated their faith in the Territory by both investment and employment, and we seek to assist these people. We are having a look at schemes which are currently in operation in both Tasmania

ANSWER

In respect of the parts of the question which seek information as to the data, I would ask that it be placed on notice if he really wants the answer. But I think he has probably done sufficient homework. However, the latter part of the question shows an appalling ignorance of what rating in local government means. I would be quite happy for the honourable gentleman to talk to me at some time in order that his education might be fulfilled. The rate in the dollar has absolutely no relevance whatsoever to the amount of money you actually put in the envelope and spend to the council. It totally depends upon the amount of the unimproved capital value. It is an act of sheer mischief to suggest that people in Katherine - we might take a little time over this. I will read from a press statement on the honourable member's letterhead and I would ask honourable members to come to their own conclusion as to whether or not the implication is that the people of Katherine will be paying more than the people in the rest of the Territory.

Mr Isaacs: Good publicity.

Mr ROBERTSON: Yes, and it is quite false. Paragraph 3 of his press release of 23 February 1978:

As well, the townspeople will be paying recently imposed council rates higher than anywhere else in the Northern Territory, except for Tennant Creek.

The clear implication, designed to mislead and scare people, is that they will be paying more in real terms. That is not true at all. The fact of the matter is that the unimproved capital value in both of those centres is way below those in Darwin and Alice Springs. The reality of it, in actual dollar and cent terms, is that they will not be required by this executive - his own mob, a different story perhaps - to pay any more than half the average paid by Alice Springs and Darwin. The rest of this is just sheer mischief.

243 Mr OLIVER to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will day labour employed by the Department of the Northern Territory and transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service be in any way disadvantaged?

ANSWER

I would not think that day labour presently employed by the Department of the Northern Territory and transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service would be disadvantaged because when day labourers are transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service they will become permanent employees within the Northern Territory Public Service, and I understand they are not permanent employees in the Australian Public Service. As permanent employees in the Northern Territory Public Service, they will become entitled to be put on the same housing list as all other public servants so that is one advantage I could think of.

244 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

Is he aware that no audited accounts from the Primary Producers Board have ever been tabled in this Assembly? Can he give an undertaking that these accounts will be tabled during this sittings and, if he cannot give this undertaking, will he ensure that the unaudited financial statement be tabled during the sitting today?

ANSWER

I am not aware that the accounts have not been presented to the Assembly, I am not even aware if they should by statute but I will check the matter out.

245 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

What is happening in relation to the establishment of the Town Planning Appeals Committee?

ANSWER

The Town Planning Appeals Committee for the Northern Territory has been established. I have recently appointed three members to the Town Planning Appeals Committee and I believe a press release is going out today on this subject. The matter has only just been finalised and, for the information of members of the House, I can advise that Mr Dean Mildren will be the chairman of the Town Planning Appeals Committee: Mr Gary Hunt, an architect, and Mr Graham Chrisp, an engineer, will also be members of the committee.

246 Mr ISAACS to Mr TUXWORTH

Is he aware that the kitchen floor in the Alice Springs Hospital is not suitably tiled, causing at least one accident a week due to its non-skid surface? Is he also aware that the oven doors in the kitchen open down instead of at the side, thus making it unsafe for staff to take cooked food out of the oven? How much would it cost to have the work referred to carried out and when will it be done?

ANSWER

I am grateful to the honourable Leader of the Opposition for having given me a bit of notice on this and the reply I have for the honourable member is in this vein: that in fact two accidents have been reported in the past 12 months - which does not run at one a week - due to persons slipping on the floor at the Alice Springs Hospital kitchen. One of these involved a fracture of the forearm and the other was a fall of less significance. The floors are of a type commonly used in all hospitals and new procedures have been adopted to clean this floor in such a manner that it will help prevent future accidents. I might add, Mr Speaker, from my own experience - and I am sure the honourable Leader of the Opposition is well aware, as a man who has been around industry for a long time, that it is a catch 22 situation in providing floors in buildings - that it is the object of the Health Department to obtain the highest degree of sanitation in any kitchen, which means that the composition of the floor material needs to be as smooth as possible. To provide a safe working floor, you need a rough floor which is not conducive to good sanitation. Allied with this is the cleaning mechanisms that are used. If a petrochemical base cleaning material is used, it is almost impossible to have a non-slip floor. If a caustic base is used, then it becomes much more suitable. The points that the honourable Leader of the Opposition has raised have been taken and the Health Department has undertaken to overcome the problem.

In relation to the comments concerning the oven, new handling procedures have been devised to enable staff to avoid burns when using the ovens. It appears that it is not practicable to lower the oven to a lower level which would facilitate operating for the people in the kitchen and it has also been established, although I do not have the actual cost, that the cost of remodelling the ovens themselves to change the swing on the doors is prohibitive.

247 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

I refer the honourable member to my previous questions of 21 September and 22 November about Arafura Hostel. Now that we know the hostel is to be closed from 18 March, can he tell us what use will be made of the land and of the buildings?

ANSWER

I have no specific information to hand on this subject. However, I will seek the information and provide it during these sittings to the honourable member.

248 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON

Can he tell me at what stage is the proposed finance officers training scheme which was recently introduced in his department?

ANSWER

The finance officers training scheme which was implemented recently has actually commenced with 11 participants. Those participants who were not already working for the public service - and a number of them were - commenced with the Northern Territory Public Service last week. They went straight into an orientation course with the Community College and actually commenced the course in business studies which will lead them, hopefully, to obtaining eventually a degree in business management. The course commences this week and is expected to be over a period of three years, except of course for those persons who already have partial credits on the course.

254 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Did he hear the report on the ABC last night that North Queensland electricity rates are to rise by an average of \$2.30 per month? Does his recently announced 7% increase in electricity rates take this later announcement into account? If not, by what percentage will the Northern Territory electricity charges be increased?

ANSWER

During the course of these sittings, I propose to deliver a comprehensive statement on revenue-raising efforts and government charges increases proposed in the foreseeable future by the Northern Territory executive in relation to electricity. The documents prepared to date do not take into consideration the increases in Queensland which were only announced yesterday.

255 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise the present status of the blue tongue disease?

ANSWER

It is my wish to deliver a statement this morning covering most aspects of the blue tongue situation.

Dr Peter Hooper will be leaving Australia at the end of this week representing the Northern Territory in discussions with veterinary authorities in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Manila and Port Moresby. From the Northern Territory point of view, we are not satisfied that the veterinary authorities overseas are in possession of sufficient detailed information about the Northern Territory blue tongue situation. The Australian Bureau of Animal Health is too far removed from the detailed property disease evaluations which Dr Peter Hooper will provide. We believe that the government Bureau of Animal Health has no exclusive concern for Territory cattlemen. We are vitally concerned to ensure that cattlemen obtain good prices for their stock from the meatworks during this season. If competitive prices are not available this year, there is every chance that the industry will collapse involving a loss of millions of dollars worth of investment, not counting the personal hardships involved. We see this expedition as an important function in the marketing of Northern Territory livestock which, because of glut conditions, is essential if the industry is to survive.

256 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr TUXWORTH

Is he aware that there is a grave shortage of beds available at the Darwin Hospital at the moment resulting in the fact that a number of patients are not being admitted for elective surgery? Does he know there are two wards that are not in use because of staff ceilings imposed by the Fraser government, resulting in staff not being available to service these wards? Can he tell us what he is doing about this?

ANSWER

I am not aware that the situation is as the honourable member suggests. My understanding is that there is difficulty at the moment for doctors who wish to carry out elective surgery on their patients in booking ahead and obtaining bed space. This is normally the case. However, the floor of ward

15 collapsed resulting in the necessity for an internal re-arrangement inside the hospital and a restriction on the number of beds available. This matter has to be resolved and the Director of Health has undertaken that it will be resolved as soon as possible. The reference to staff ceilings is probably a fair comment. Since November last year, both the Majority Leader and myself have been pursuing, with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Health respectively, the possibility of having the ceilings increased in the Northern Territory Department of Health to enable several facets of health care to be improved. This is just one further instance in which the procrastination of the federal Public Service Commissioner and his unsympathetic attitude towards the needs of the Northern Territory is putting us at a disadvantage. It is a situation over which we have no control. This is a very good argument for the function of health to be transferred to the Northern Territory as soon as possible so that the problems can be given the sympathetic hearing they deserve by this executive.

257 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

Could he please give the reasons for the extended blackouts which occurred in Darwin last Saturday?

ANSWER

I have been advised by the Department of Construction that, as a result of a heavy electrical storm which hit Darwin at 2300 hours on Saturday night, many power blackouts and interruptions were caused throughout Darwin and its suburbs. Nearing the end of the storm, a circuit breaker at the system control failed to operate and a transformer caught fire. This resulted in Stokes Hill Power Station automatically shutting down and the whole of Darwin electricity supply went off. The faulty circuit breaker and transformer were isolated, and supply from Stokes Hill Power Station was progressively brought back on line with the city area first - that was out for approximately 45 minutes - and the northern suburbs last. The northern suburbs were out for approximately three hours. The repairs at the city zone substation, which incorporate systems control, were delayed due to repair crews already being out on earlier calls during the storm.

258 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

Is it intended to announce the introduction of increased registration fees for commercial vehicles and, if so, when might we expect that announcement?

ANSWER

I am not sure that I understand the question: is it proposed that an announcement be made about registration charges on commercial vehicles?

Mr Doolan: Increases.

Mr STEELE: As far as I am aware, there is no proposition before the executive to consider this matter at all.

259 Mr OLIVER to Mr TUXWORTH

Has the television advertisement promoting Northern Territory destinations been commenced and, if so, what is the response?

ANSWER

A statement was made yesterday in relation to this matter and I would just repeat it in the House for the benefit of the honourable member and others. The Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau two years ago began a very intensive promotion campaign on radio in the southern states and it did bring a lot of additional tourist business to the Northern Territory. As a result of this, the board has now embarked on a TV promotion campaign that will be extended to all the states over a period of years. As honourable members would be aware, there is a great deal of expense involved in TV advertising and the board's first effort has been directed to the city of Adelaide which is closest to us but which seems to initiate least tourist travel to the Northern Territory.

The program began last week and the report that I have had from the board is that its Adelaide office has been inundated with additional enquiries and forward bookings, in fact to the degree that the staff cannot cope with the additional work. If the response in the other cities in the next twelve months and two years is similar to Adelaide and this is any indication of what we can expect, it would not be unreasonable to anticipate a 200% to 300% increase in the actual tourist activity initiated from the southern capitals to the Northern Territory over the next two to three years.

260 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

This question is concerning the Carpentaria college. Is it a fact that the only thing holding up settlement of the dispute or the transfer from the Anglican Church to the federal government is payment of an electricity account incurred since the cyclone of some few thousand dollars?

ANSWER

I am not aware of those facts, if they are in fact facts; I will check the matter out and advise the honourable member during the course of these sittings.

261 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON

Can he tell me how many government houses have been empty for over four weeks and why?

ANSWER

I have had some forewarning of this question and I understand it relates to government houses in Darwin which have been vacant for reasonably long periods, as there seems to be occasional criticism in the community of a long waiting list yet there are houses seemingly remaining vacant around the town. The reply which has been supplied to us by the Department of the Northern Territory is a little surprising. They advise that there are six houses which have been empty for over four weeks. They also provide reasons for each of these six houses and primarily they relate in several of the cases to the fact that the houses are vacant because no one seemingly will take them. That situation relates to six of the houses. In a couple of cases there was some dispute over keys being lost and tenant's cleaning responsibilities on moving out of the house. These have been corrected and the houses put back on the offer list but they seem to be sufficiently unpopular for people rather not to move into them at all. In one case of the six houses, one lounge wall was extensively damaged by a truck delivering soil and it has been empty for some time while repairs are being carried out.

262 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr TUXWORTH

Can he inform us when dental staff will be available at the dental clinics at Anula and Wulagi schools?

ANSWER

Off the top of my head I cannot inform the honourable member on that. However, I will endeavour to get the information and advise the honourable member later in the sittings.

263 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

When will the No. 7 generator at Stokes Hill Power Station be commissioned?

ANSWER

I have also received advice from the Department of Construction on this matter, as the generating capacity at Stokes Hill Power Station is a matter of some concern to all of us here in Darwin. The official commissioning date under the contract for the No. 7 generator is 14 March. Commissioning tests and trials have been going well to date, and the machine has been on line several times and carried a load of up to 15 megawatts. It should take full load within the next few days and commissioning is expected to be before time.

264 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

My question concerns education and local legislation. Have school authorities any right to enforce the wearing of school uniforms or other regulations regarding dress? My understanding was that they did not have that right. Can he tell me whether a Darwin school, which has advised parents that girls cannot wear shorts to school, has any right to do so?

ANSWER

The honourable member raises a very vexed question. I remember the wrestles I used to have as a member of the Alice Springs High School Council prior to taking up this particular portfolio. To the best of my knowledge, the problems were never resolved by that high school council despite the presence of one of the most experienced principals in the Northern Territory, Mr Paine. I certainly will try to come up with a definite answer to the question. To the best of my knowledge, there would be no real mechanism for forcing a person to wear a particular uniform. As a matter of routine discipline within a school, it would be quite proper for a principal to enforce a standard of dress where it was for other than economic reasons.

265 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

When is it expected that the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Fund trustees will next meet?

ANSWER

I did show her yesterday a letter to me from the Deputy Crown Solicitor which indicates legal proceedings are in train. I do not expect that there is any point in the trustees meeting until after the resolution of these legal proceedings. I have certainly kept on the back of the Deputy Crown Solicitor to get these proceedings over. In my view, they have taken an unconscionably long time.

266 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr ROBERTSON

In 1977 a study of malls in the central business district of other Australian cities was jointly undertaken by the Darwin Reconstruction Commission and the Corporation of the City of Darwin. Can he tell us whether a report of this study was ever submitted to the Corporation of the City of Darwin? If a report was submitted, would he undertake to table a copy for the information of the Assembly?

ANSWER

If such a report does exist, I would be quite happy to see that it is tabled for the information of honourable members. I certainly have not heard of one though.

267 Mr HARRIS to Mr STEELE

Is it a fact that there is no fire alarm system between the fire station and some of the larger buildings in Darwin?

ANSWER

The fire console at the fire station was originally installed by Wormalds and is connected to about 130 public buildings in the Darwin area. The system had the capacity to identify six different alert signals in the particular building number from which they emanated. For technical reasons such as earth leakage, lightning strikes etc, the system has become ineffective and was disconnected about six weeks ago. The Department of Construction invited tenders, closing last November, for a new system and has had trouble in preparing a recommendation on which tender to accept. The difficulty apparently is whether the cheapest offer, which is a modification of the previous system, or a better and dearer system should be accepted. A side issue is that owners of the buildings would be required to install new black boxes at \$250 per building or a total cost of some \$35,000. About 80% of the buildings are reported to be owned by the federal government at present. My office will be seeking a conference with the Department of Construction this week to try to resolve the situation.

268 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

Is any information at present available in relation to applications, covenants or other requirements for people wishing to nominate for blocks in the Willeroo project?

ANSWER

I more or less indicated yesterday that the final management details have not yet been worked out. When that information is available, I will be the first to let the honourable gentleman know.

269 Mr HARRIS to Mr STEELE

In light of the petition which was presented yesterday seeking an overpass on Trower Road, could he please indicate what the executive will do or try to do to satisfy the request of these people?

ANSWER

The executive is very keen to see two footbridges in particular constructed in the Darwin area, the Trower Road footbridge and the footbridge opposite

the Darwin High School. We have been fighting a lone-hand battle on this one for quite some months but finally it seems that we now have a lot more people thinking our way. In fact, the experts have stood down in the face of what the community requires in this regard.

At a meeting with the council a few days ago, I discussed the matter with the mayor and the council is now on side. They are quite happy to support footbridges and we will be making a budget allocation ourselves. At a budget meeting last week we asked that certain amounts of money be set aside to accommodate these two footbridges. The DRC, through the council, was funding certain pedestrian crossings and lights. I have asked the mayor if she could recommend to the DRC that that money be put to one side as a deposit, if you like, on the first footbridge.

270 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

I remind him of my question of Wednesday 23 November last year. Can he now tell me what use will be made of the site at Stokes Street, Parap which was formerly occupied by the Parap infant school? It is zoned S1 on the new town plan.

ANSWER

I apologise to the honourable member if I undertook to supply an answer to a question and it has not been done. However, I will undertake to check the matter out today and advise her.

271 Mr HARRIS to Mr STEELE

It has been mooted that the picnic day holiday be in the month of May because of the "Back to Darwin" celebrations. I would like to direct a question to the executive member for Transport and Industry. Would he please inform me if that date has been set and, if so, what is the date for the picnic day holiday?

ANSWER

No, the date has not been set. The idea was canvassed that there should be a holiday for the "Back to Darwin" celebrations combined with the picnic day holiday. However, the picnic day holiday is now 7 August.

272 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

At the forthcoming talks between the executive member for Resources and Health and the federal government, will action be taken by him to ensure that stages 1 and 2 of the Kakadu National Park are proceeded with without the intrusion of uranium mining?

ANSWER

I am at a disadvantage; the honourable member seems to know more about the business than I do. I would ask that the question be placed on notice.

273 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

My question concerns a press report in yesterday's NT News which tends to indicate that the ALP may have received some support from within the CLP for their call for a referendum. The question is, could the Majority Leader confirm the accuracy of that report?

ANSWER

In answer to the question of the honourable member for Stuart, can I say that the ALP has received no support from the CLP for its call for a referendum - in fact, quite the reverse. I may state that the election last year was fought entirely, as I saw it, on this issue and on the issue of self-government. The press report is inaccurate in that members are, of course, obliged to present petitions presented to them by their constituents and it is customary to do so without demur.

274 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

I ask a question of the Majority Leader, which in some ways follows from the answer he just gave. Was the Majority Leader asked to present a petition relating to the referendum proposal yesterday? Does he intend to present it? If not, why not?

ANSWER

I have not been asked to present a petition by anyone. A petition was handed to me this morning by a member of my staff. I read the petition and found that the petitioners all appeared to reside in the electorate of Sanderson, so I arranged for the petition to be sent to the honourable member for that electorate.

275 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can the executive member for Transport and Industry advise the present status concerning motor registration fees for both city corporations or councils and pensioners in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

I made the honourable member for MacDonnell an offer on Tuesday which he neglected to take up. Until such time as the executive decides otherwise - and that could be in the next few months - I have approved the remittance of those fees paid by the Alice Springs and Darwin corporations for those vehicles engaged in road construction, maintenance and hygiene. This will mean that all council vehicles other than those used as private vehicles will avoid registration charges. The states do extend some concessions to municipal authorities. However, the executive will decide the future Northern Territory policy, taking into account the needs of pensioners and the subsidisation aspects of that situation.

276 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

I have before me a paper which says that the contract for street lighting on East Point Road will be suspended "while consideration of the Palmerston arterial road is still under way". Can he tell me if, indeed, consideration of the Palmerston arterial road is still under way and, if so, by whom?

ANSWER

The subject of alternative arterial roads into Darwin is under study by both planners and transport personnel to decide exactly what arterial roads should be incorporated in future works programs over the next couple of years. Papers are being prepared for consideration by the executive. Bearing on this question is the fact that moneys are due to the city corporation of Darwin for the upgrading of East Point Road and Gardens Hill Road under the package program when local government was taken over in Darwin. It was agreed that these roads would be upgraded to a suitable standard. In order to determine what standard East Point Road should be made, we have first to determine how much traffic East Point Road is liable to carry. We can then provide money to the city corporation for the upgrading under the local government agreement. There is a study being done on arterial roads generally. Obviously that study has to take into consideration the original proposals for the Palmerston arterial road and we expect papers to come forward to the executive in the near future.

277 Mr PERKINS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Will he give an undertaking to this Assembly that the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission will not alienate any vacant crown land to become a national park or a reserve until any Aboriginal land claims on those lands are heard according to the due processes of law?

ANSWER

I do not believe that question concerns the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission whose parks are pretty well defined. I would undertake to ascertain necessary information for the honourable member. Perhaps he might like to put the question on notice.

278 Mr VALE to Mr ROBERTSON

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. What will local government cost the average Katherine householder in dollars and cents more than what is being charged now?

ANSWER

That question has the ring of coincidence about. I had planned to make a statement to the House in the adjournment this evening. I hope to be able to give that information at that time.

279 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can he confirm that the police department is still part of the Chief Secretary's Department?

ANSWER

Yes, the police unit - I believe it is called technically - is for administrative purposes connected to the Chief Secretary's Department. It is not a section of the Department of Law, if that was the thrust of the Opposition Leader's question, and as far as I am concerned, it would not become part of the Department of Law.

280 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

Is it a fact that the Housing Commission has notified tenants of all its

premises that rents are to be increased by \$2 per week? Is it further true that the rent increases are to apply to all premises, regardless of whether they have been upgraded to present cyclone-resistant standards? And if it is true, will he undertake to exempt the tenants of premises that have not been upgraded to cyclone-resistant standards from the proposed rent increases?

ANSWER

I expect that such notice has been supplied to tenants of the Housing Commission of an anticipated rental increase. They are required under their legislation to formally advise in writing every tenant of the commission of rental increases and, as approval has been given for such increases, I would expect that that action is in operation. The \$2 increase for Housing Commission dwellings is across the board and applies to all forms of Housing Commission dwellings including caravans, demountables, damaged houses and upgraded houses. I will not give any undertaking that the rental increase will be rebated in the case of houses which have not been upgraded, because, in fact, the Housing Commission rental structure takes into consideration the various conditions and stages of Housing Commission accommodation already.

281 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Can he tell me what is the incidence of petrol sniffing in the Northern Territory by Aboriginals? Has it increased over the years and what steps have been taken to prevent this habit?

ANSWER

The subject of petrol sniffing amongst young people and apparently particularly amongst Aboriginal young people in the Northern Territory is a subject which has been giving myself and other members of the executive considerable concern. Unfortunately, there is not a great deal that can be done about it by the Northern Territory executive in an attempt to remedy the situation at the present time because we have at the moment no responsibility for community welfare, education or health. We would hope, when responsibility for these functions is transferred to the Northern Territory executive, to be able to initiate action in this area.

But in specific answer to the honourable member's questions of which he gave me some notice, I have ascertained the following information. It is difficult to find comprehensive figures on petrol sniffing amongst Aboriginals in the Northern Territory. A number of reports on petrol sniffing have been written and statistics relating to the times of the various investigations have been put forward. For instance, one report written this year estimates that at Yirrkala over a twelve months period 25% of the male population between 6 and 20 years have engaged in it whilst the estimate for Elcho Island is 50%, which is pretty worrying. The report suggests that the practice is also rampant at Maningrida and we heard about that from the honourable member for Arnhem yesterday, and to a lesser extent at Millingimbi and also at Lake Ewla. A report on petrol sniffing at Papunya indicated that 63 children engaged in the practice on a casual or regular basis, and I seem to recall that it was a result of this that the Papunya council made a request to the Yirrkala council to send children from Papunya to Bremmer Island.

There seems no doubt that petrol sniffing has increased over the years and a disturbing factor is that the practice has spread geographically. Areas of Central Australia where until recent years the practice was unknown now

face serious problems with it. In a report in 1972 by Dr Barry Nirlcombe, he said:

The situation is disturbing like that in other groups who perceive themselves as socially excluded. Elsewhere alcohol, marihuana, aeroplane glue, heroin and amphetamines have become vehicles of tension release during adolescence. In Aboriginal communities, if alcohol is not available, petrol serves this function, forming a habit which is said to be widespread in northern and central Australia.

The report talked about the reasons why such tensions are built up in these communities, especially amongst the young people who are torn between the demands and attractions of two cultures. A number of measures have been tried by communities and government authorities to deal with the situation, often without a great deal of success. The measures have ranged from institutionalisation through the courts for related crimes, to isolation by the decision of the community. Attempts at control by locking away petrol have generally been futile. An encouraging report has come from Papunya on measures taken to deal with the problems and I would commend to you the report titled "Petrol Sniffing - Papunya, a Community Solution". I could arrange to have a number of other reports made available to the honourable member and other honourable members if they would like to read them.

282 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

I would remind him that there is a price cutting war presently taking place between margarine manufacturers. Can he explain to me or perhaps investigate why Coles can advertise in Melbourne various brands of margarine at 59 cents and 65 cents, and at the same time they are advertised by Coles in the Northern Territory News at 80 cents - the same brands in the same quantities? Can he investigate this and get an answer for us?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for bringing this to my attention, because we are all aware - and none of us more aware than you, Sir - of the inherent penalties, I suppose, for living in the Northern Territory in terms of freight costs, which could be a partial answer. But it seems an awful lot. It is very easy to tranship containers of margarine. Most of us have just about cried our eyes out when we go to the central market in Adelaide and see a huge cabbage for 18 cents and it sells for \$1.80 here. Well, the explanation is of course freight - the third-person or middleman costs. But I will take that one on board and just see what the reason behind it is.

283 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr STEELE

What action does he propose to take to ensure the continuation of the shipping service provided by the vessel, Darwin Trader?

ANSWER

We propose to take as much action as we possibly can, inside certain limitations. Certainly, in recent months we have made many representations to the Minister for Transport and exhorted him not to make any changes to the schedule or any proposals that would disadvantage Territory people. He has promised to keep us informed in this regard.

284 Mr HARRIS to Mr ROBERTSON

I understand that the Corporation of the City of Darwin has requested

priority amendments to be made to sections of the Local Government Ordinance which deal specifically with abandoned vehicles, control of parks and reserves, and dangerous materials. Would the executive member please inform me when these urgent amendments will be introduced into this Assembly?

ANSWER

I suppose the question comes from the honourable member because he, as an alderman in previous years, has been frustrated by the absence of proper and workable local government amendments to allow bylaws to be appropriately made. I am doing everything I can to get a legislative proposal before this House. I am frustrated, like him, in trying to get it before this House. The history, of course, is as usual a long one, with ineptitudes I think on many sides. At the moment we have, as all honourable members will find during the course of this sittings, a very extensive legislative program to be introduced into this House. I am afraid the pressures on the drafting staff - and they have worked very well and very hard - the pressures of work on them simply mean that in some areas there are going to be delays. Unfortunately, local government seems to be one of those victims.

285 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Can he give a report to the Assembly either now or in the adjournment debate on the damage to Stokes Hill Wharf by the West Australian State Ship MV Beroona?

ANSWER

I seek leave to table a report on the damage to the Stokes Hill Wharf by MV Beroona.

Leave granted.

286 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

What approaches has he made to the federal Minister for Education regarding the reinstatement of the theatre at Dripstone High School and how successful have those approaches been?

ANSWER

I have argued with the good gentleman until I am blue in the face and the results have been nil. That does not mean that I will give up.

287 Mr OLIVER to Mr ROBERTSON

I understand that the Minister for Education is seeking advice on general schooling and staffing matters in the Northern Territory. Can he assure me that particular attention will be paid to the peculiar situation existing at Traeger Park School?

ANSWER

The problems with Traeger Park School are recognised right through the education system. In fact, it is interesting that the minister himself, in a casual conversation with me, indicated that he is aware of the peculiar nature of the requirements of the Traeger Park Primary School. It seems to be one of those problems that we have been surrounded with in so many areas in the Northern Territory in that arbitrary and baseless staff ceilings have been imposed. The difficulty seems to be to get through to the Public

Service Board, not so much to the Commonwealth Teaching Service. The attitude seems to prevail in some quarters that, unless you are a fulltime teacher in normal curriculum activities, you are not to be regarded as being a formula staff member. I understand that the Director of Education has taken this matter up on repeated occasions in Canberra and I understand now that, due to his efforts, some significant progress has been made.

288 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

I refer to his press release of 22 February 1978 in reference to the work of officers of the Grants Commission. Will he table the assessment completed by those officers?

ANSWER

I would ask the Opposition Leader to place his question on notice as I do not recall the exact terms of my press statement of 22 February.

289 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr PERRON

Is Mr Brooks still a member of the Town Planning Board? If Mr Brooks is still a member of the Town Planning Board, does he intend to terminate that appointment in view of the fact that Mr Brooks has not been resident in the Northern Territory for the last three years?

ANSWER

Mr Brooks resigned from his position on the Town Planning Board some time ago, and Mr Milburn of my finance unit has been appointed in his place.

290 Mr VALE to Mr ROBERTSON

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Will he provide details of why schools at some Aboriginal communities are not operating this year?

ANSWER

I would assume that the two schools in question are Numbulwar and Roper. On my understanding, Numbulwar is in fact still operating although there are grave causes for concern among the teachers there as to personal safety and security. The Department of Education is examining this as a matter of urgency. It is a matter of cost as much as anything else. The big problem is not so much the school itself but the security of the accommodation for teachers. There was a recent unfortunate incident there which is the subject of legal proceedings at the moment.

The position at Roper is far more serious because that school has been closed for some time now. The reason was vandalism. The toilet facilities were rendered inoperable by wanton vandalism. The extraordinary thing is that the people who caused the damage are those for whom the school was built. The town council at Roper acted very responsibly in this matter. In consultation with the Department of Education it agreed that if the school was temporarily closed it would give the council a little more ammunition to go back to the people concerned and point out to them the results of their actions. The Director of Education and the Acting Director of Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory are going out to Roper early this month to talk again to the council and it is hoped that, following that discussion and discussions with the children out there, the school will be able to open very shortly.

291 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

This question is directed to the honourable member in his liaison responsibility for education but the Executive Member for Finance and Planning may also have an interest as it concerns demountable housing. How many demountable units have been made available to the Department of Education for emergency use in the schools and are there any requests outstanding for such accommodation?

ANSWER

The honourable member for Nightcliff rarely asks questions like that; I think with anyone else I would have said put it on notice but considering it came from that source, I will make sure the information is available today, if I possibly can.

292 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr EVERINGHAM

With regard to the proposed block 8 cafeteria, has consideration been given by the government to the moving of the large pieces of kitchen equipment to certain government institutions like hospitals or hostels?

ANSWER

The block 8 cafeteria is a responsibility of the federal government - in fact, one of its statutory agencies, Commonwealth Hostels Ltd. I certainly have not given any consideration to the moving of the equipment in that cafeteria to other large government institutions. I could certainly take this up with Commonwealth Hostels Ltd and attempt to obtain such information for the honourable member before the conclusion of this sittings.

293 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr ROBERTSON

Is he aware that the Prices Commissioner's Office which has a staff establishment of twelve, I think, has recently only had two officers actually working there? Can he use his influence to ensure that the number of officers working in this important field will soon be increased?

ANSWER

I am aware of a great run down in the staff of that particular office. I would be happy to discuss this matter with the honourable member later and perhaps swap some ideas with her. I am not anxious at this stage to increase staff establishment in that direction if it proves after July that that particular move is not in the best interests of consumerism and consumer protection. I am having a complete review done and I have recently had a meeting of the full Consumer Protection Council and its public service officer to try and get, at long last - and this has been pointed out by the honourable member on previous occasions - workable, forceful and effective consumer protection legislation in the Northern Territory. I am not entirely convinced that building up the bureaucracy in that particular branch is an answer to our problem at all. In fact, it is my belief - and I have said so in this place many times previously - that that form of remote arbitrary, over-the-top price control is just nothing but an ineffectual interference in private enterprise. I do not believe it is in the interests of the consumer to do it in that manner at all.

294 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr ROBERTSON

As a decision has been made to build a new high school at Nhulunbuy, can

he tell me what steps have been taken to see that single and married teacher accommodation is built along with the school?

ANSWER

I for one certainly would not like to see a three, four or five or whatever million dollar high school built at Nhulunbuy and then find ourselves in a position where either no teacher is willing to go there because he has not got any accommodation or the day after it opens, everyone goes on strike because of unsatisfactory accommodation. The reality of it is the Department of Education and the Department of the Northern Territory, as long as that department exists - because it has responsibility for housing in that area - have simply got to get together and they have to plan and coordinate the two functions: the building of the high school and the provision of adequate and appropriate accommodation for professional people.

295 Mr COLLINS to Mr PERRON

Is it intended to change the name of the Housing Commission in the foreseeable future?

ANSWER

This matter has not been formally looked at at this stage - whether or not the title of the Housing Commission should be changed, in line with moves towards setting up a single housing authority for the Northern Territory which is the previously expressed Majority Party's policy. So in response to the honourable member's question, I can just say that no formal look at the question has been taken at this stage.

296 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

I understand that new developments have taken place with regard to Dr Peter Hooper's proposed overseas trip. Could the executive member inform the House of those developments?

ANSWER

In answer to a question yesterday I advised honourable members that Dr Peter Hooper, Northern Territory Veterinary Officer, was to undertake an overseas trip to countries which have imposed restrictions on cattle imports because of the blue tongue situation in the Territory. Members will recall that the purpose of Dr Hooper's visit was to brief veterinary officers overseas on the current situation in Australia and our own cattle movement requirements, and to seek, by personal representations, agreement on satisfactory health requirements to protect importing countries. He is the best qualified official to undertake this task. His visit was to include Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. I now have to inform the Assembly that under circumstances which I consider totally intolerable, Dr Hooper's visit has had to be cancelled. Late yesterday afternoon I was advised that Commonwealth Department of the Northern Territory senior officers had refused to approve leave for Dr Hooper so that he could undertake this very important task and that the trip would not be recognised by the federal government. The only solution was for Dr Hooper to resign, to act on the Territory's behalf. This, of course, was totally out of the question and unacceptable to me and the executive. This move by federal authorities typifies the apathy shown by them to the plight of the Territory cattlemen and is another example of remote control and a lack of understanding of local matters.

Members may be assured that I will not let this matter rest.

297 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise the current position concerning the opening of the Alice Springs abattoir for this year's killing season?

ANSWER

My limited information is that the Alice Springs abattoir, after having used the cattlemen to get themselves a US quota, is now offering prices which the cattlemen find almost impossible to accept. The abattoir is offering something like 11.5 cents per pound which is roughly the equivalent of the Adelaide prices notwithstanding the freight. Some pressure will have to be put on the meatworks to pay better prices. What they are offering is not acceptable and they need a good poke in the ribs with a sharp stick.

298 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise whether drafting instructions have been given for legislation to control the use of antibiotics in stockfeed?

ANSWER

No drafting instructions have been given for the preparation of legislation to control antibiotics in stockfeed?

299 Mr HARRIS to Mr STEELE

Why are there so few public telephones within the municipality of Darwin? Can Telecom be approached with a view to replacing all of those telephones which were damaged or removed as a result of the cyclone, with the highest priority being given to those in areas where houses were either not destroyed or have been replaced since the cyclone?

ANSWER

I do not know why. We will give them another poke with a sharp stick.

309 Mr VALE to Mr ROBERTSON

My question is asked on behalf of the honourable member for Elsey. Who will be entitled to vote at the Katherine and Tennant Creek elections for town councils?

ANSWER

The people who will be entitled to vote at the town council elections in both Katherine and Tennant Creek are those within the prescribed municipal boundaries whose names appear on the federal electoral roll. The boundaries have been determined by the Administrator in Council and are in accordance with the original plans provided with the offers. The electoral office will be providing rolls for the returning officers in both of those centres. One point that I might raise concerns the area in Tennant Creek known as the battery area. This has been excluded from the municipal boundary for Tennant Creek. As a result of information provided and some representations, there would seem no reason why the people in the battery area should not be included in the municipal boundary. The executive will perhaps be advising his Honour at a later date to have that boundary altered.

310 Mr ISAACS to Mr ROBERTSON

My question refers to the handover to Katherine and Tennant Creek of local government status. Can he assure the Assembly that all members of municipal gangs at Katherine and Tennant Creek will be retained by the new local councils from 1 July 1978?

ANSWER

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question because this has exercised our concern considerably. I have been in communication with the relevant union organiser and have in fact invited him to discuss with the Public Service Commissioner and myself the future of the municipal gangs and also the temporary employees in the municipal gangs. It would certainly not be the intention of this side of the House to see those people displaced from their employment. It is necessary for us to talk with the unions involved. Incidentally, I have heard nothing further from that particular organiser although I did send him a letter thanking him for his interest and concern in the first place. I still look forward to that meeting with the union organiser and the Public Service Commissioner in order that we may assure the future of these people.

311 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr EVERINGHAM

What price has been asked and what price is the government prepared to pay for the two station, Mudginberry and Munmalary, for final inclusion in the Kakadu National Park?

ANSWER

I am unable to provide the information sought by the honourable member for Tiwi without notice. I will endeavour to obtain that information during the course of the remainder of this sittings.

312 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr TUXWORTH

Is it envisaged that, when the Northern Territory School of Nursing is operating from Casuarina Hospital, a course in midwifery will be included?

ANSWER

I do not have the information available to answer the honourable member's question. However, I will endeavour to obtain it and provide it later in this sittings.

313 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

Have the three blocks of land on which it is proposed to build the three new neighbourhood centres been vested in the city corporation as yet? If the answer is no, could he please indicate when these blocks are likely to be handed over to the corporation?

ANSWER

I understand the Minister for the Northern Territory has approved in principle the granting of these leases to the corporation, subject to certain zoning changes which have to take place over some of them. The corporation has been advised of this commitment on 26 January this year. The leases will issue when the zoning problems are resolved and these are being dealt with by the chief planning officer in accordance with statutory requirements.

314 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr STEELE

What is the composition of the Darwin Traffic Committee? What are the functions of the Darwin Traffic Committee? Are meetings of the Darwin Traffic Committee open to the public and, if not, why not?

ANSWER

I ask the honourable member for Sanderson to place the question on notice.

315 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he advise if there has been any recent detection of the mediterranean fruit fly in Central Australia and when the embargo on the movement of fruit outside the quarantine area will be lifted?

ANSWER

Monitoring has been continued although there has been no report of flies in traps or maggots in stone fruit. Action has been taken to lift present quarantine restrictions imposed on the area of 50 kilometres radius of the Alice Springs post office. The eradication program can be regarded as being completely successful.

316 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Has a decision been made about the future of the old Darwin golf course at Fannie Bay? Will it be incorporated into the East Point Reserve or is another use being considered for it?

ANSWER

No firm decision has been taken by the executive yet as to the future of the old Darwin golf course. However, I do expect that submissions will come forward in the near future to have this matter finalised.

317 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr ROBERTSON

Could he supply me with the number of students who have received school isolation allowances, tertiary student allowances and special education allowances for the year 1977?

ANSWER

I am aware of and appreciate the honourable member for Nhulunbuy's concern in this area. It seems to be one of his more regular pursuits to ensure that people in isolated communities in his area obtain justice under the allowances scheme. I am, unfortunately, unable to give him precise details at this stage and I would undertake to do so later in the sittings.

318 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

He would be aware of my interest in the Construction Safety Ordinance. He would be aware that it was passed in December 1975. He would also be aware that the regulations were completed for the ordinance by the middle of 1977 and sent to the draftsmen, and that the non-implementation of the ordinance is causing severe safety problems to workers and sloppy building practices in the building industry. Can the executive member inform the Assembly whether the Master Builders Association has exerted an undue influence to ensure that the regulations to that Construction Safety Ordinance are not promulgated and, secondly, due to his interest in an answer to a similar question I asked him on 22 November 1977, will he inform the Assembly when the regulations will be promulgated and when the ordinance will be brought into effect?

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable member, the first part of the question is a matter of opinion. The honourable Executive Member for Transport and Industry can answer the other two if he desires.

ANSWER

I do not know if the Master Builders Association has exerted any undue influence over departmental people to stop them proposing regulations. I would have to be an oracle to even give a forecast on something like that. As far as the introduction of the construction safety legislation is concerned, I have with me at the moment a second-reading speech and I am hopeful that the legislation will be ready for introduction on Thursday.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, it would save a lot of time if questions were phrased in accordance with Standing Orders, and matters of opinion were not sought.

319 Mr VALE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Is he aware of rumours circulating pertaining to a proposal to remove air fares and accommodation entitlements from members of the Northern Territory Police Force? If so, have the rumours any basis in fact?

ANSWER

No, I was not aware that any such rumours were circulating because it is a long time since I have had a chance, in fact had time, to have a drink with policemen - and that is normally where you pick up their rumours - but I can say unequivocally that there is no substantiation for any such rumours, and police entitlements to air fares and accommodation will

remain exactly as they are ad infinitum, as far as I am aware.

320 Mr DOOLAN to Mr STEELE

I draw the attention of the executive member to a report in yesterday's NT News concerning a joint fishing venture about to get under way in Victoria. Did he note that mention was made in the article of Russian interest in a similar venture operating out of Darwin? In view of this, will he undertake to seek further information and promote an investigation into the feasibility of such a scheme?

ANSWER

I do recall the article the honourable member refers to. It is of real concern to this executive that the fishing industry is not being developed in a proper and profitable manner, and we will be doing our best to look at any sort of scheme that people from overseas or anywhere else would like to put to us. It is certainly something that we want to see get off the ground.

321 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr SPEAKER

Since you last informed the House on the subject, have you received any ministerial notification or direction as to a permanent site for a new Parliament House and on the funding for the same?

ANSWER

I have had no communication of any import from the government about the site for a new Parliament House.

322 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr EVERINGHAM

What price is being asked and what price is the government prepared to pay for the Border Store, to hand it over to the Gunbalanya Council?

ANSWER

My answer to that question from the honourable member for Tiwi must be the same as my answer to her last question. I will seek the information for her.

323 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

When can I expect an answer to the question I asked on 27 February this year relating to the signing of a lease agreement between the Northern Territory Port Authority and V.B. Perkins and Company?

ANSWER

Drawing the House's attention to this question which is in today's question paper, I would point out that this is the first I have seen of it personally.

324 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON

Because government houses at Gove have been designed for airconditioning, could he tell me what steps have been taken to install units in each house?

ANSWER

The simple answer to the question is that no steps have been taken to install airconditioning in these houses. The Department of the Northern Territory has advised me that Nabalco constructed houses for their own staff at Gove and provided airconditioning in the whole house. The Commonwealth government decided to have Nabalco construct a number of similar houses for Commonwealth public servants but, because it is not government policy to provide airconditioning in its houses, the airconditioning was not included but the necessary ducting was allowed for. It would cost about \$3,500 per house to install airconditioning units and I understand the Commonwealth government has no present plans to do this. I am further advised that the tenants are not keen to have airconditioning installed because of the high operating costs.

325 Ms D'ROZARIO to Mr EVERINGHAM

When will the land valuation function which is currently undertaken by a division of the Australian Taxation Office be transferred to the control of the Northern Territory executive?

ANSWER

I believe that the responsibility for the function will be transferred to the Northern Territory executive on 1 July this year. However, at this stage, I am not aware of any proposal that the Northern Territory executive set up its own valuer-general's office. For some time at least, the Northern Territory executive would continue to use the Commonwealth Taxation Office's valuers on an agency basis.

326 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

Can he supply any details of the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication scheme for the 1978-79 season?

ANSWER

I have some information provided by the Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch. The total cost of operations for 1978-79 has been estimated to be \$1,220,000, excluding \$215,000 for compensation. This is an increase of 24½% on the estimated expenditure for 1977-78. In the 1978-79 year, they expect to make 427,000 tests for TB and 250,000 tests for brucellosis.

327 Mr DOOLAN to Mr TUXWORTH

Has an environmental clearance been given to the Mary Anne recreation lake project?

ANSWER

To my knowledge, the proposed Mary Anne dam project would not be subject to an environmental impact study.

328 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Does he intend to present at this session legislation dealing with legal aid in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

It is not the intention of the executive to present legislation dealing

with legal aid at this sittings. It may be that, at some future sittings of the Assembly, we will be in a position to present legislation dealing with the matter of legal aid. At the present time, the legal aid setup in the Northern Territory is administered by the Australian Legal Aid Office. I understand that this situation will continue until such time as agreement can be reached on legislation and an arrangement set up for the Territory to be funded by the Commonwealth to provide legal aid. At present, I am waiting further details from the Attorney-General's Department in Canberra on a number of matters that I submitted to them last year.

329 Mr VALE to Mr ROBERTSON

Can he advise any details concerning the proposed meeting in Alice Springs this Wednesday night relating to the new high school presently under construction in Alice Springs?

ANSWER

The question of the use of a multi-million dollar high school is something of a sick joke. That we should be holding public meetings to determine the future need of it must reflect - and I say this at the risk of disloyalty but I would be remiss if I didn't - some lack of planning somewhere. The Director of Education, Dr Eedle, has gone to Alice Springs to try to resolve the conflict which seems to have evolved in that town over the future of the new Sadadene High School. I do not believe the fault lies so much with the Department of Education; I think the community has become concerned to make sure that the best possible use is made of the facility. A meeting will be held on Wednesday between interested people in the town, the Northern Territory Council for Government Schools Organisations representatives and the Teachers Federation to try to resolve the question of that high school's future. Various proposals have been put forward. One is to convert it into a senior high school. I would imagine that would involve having years 10, 11, 12 and perhaps even year 9. The proposal that follows from that is that the Alice Springs High School would become a junior high school. I can imagine that the incumbent principal of the Alice Springs High School may not like that idea very much. The other proposal is to convert half of it to the use of the Alice Springs Community College, the other half being a conventional high school. The reason is that the projected population growth of the late 1960s and early 1970s simply has not come to pass and therefore there will not be the requirement for places for so many secondary students as was originally dreamed up, God knows how, by some planners. The problem in converting it for the use of the community college and a high school is its very nature. The problem lies in the nature of the plan, the nature of the architecture. It is more or less an open-plan school and, as such, there are no simply defined two halves. I cannot see that proposal working either. I hope that, with the wisdom of Dr Eedle and the help of Our Lord, we might have an answer by the end of this week.

330 Mr ISAACS to Mr STEELE

Is he aware that the rate charged by workmen's compensation insurers in respect of Territory fishermen is 35% of salary? Is he aware that this high rate is preventing development of the Territory fishing industry? Will he investigate the matter and, particularly, will he advise the Assembly at a later date why Territory rates are so much higher than those in Western Australia or Queensland?

ANSWER

Whenever I talk to fishermen, they mention the fact that they have to pay the highest rates for workmen's compensation of anywhere in Australia. I do not know how we can bring this down. The investigations that I have carried out so far have given me some information. In the states, the Government Insurance Office subsidises the workmen's compensation rate for fishermen. This is charged against other types of insurance. I am still looking at the matter but I do not know what the answer is.

331 Mr HARRIS to Mr TUXWORTH

Has approval been given for land on which to set up, in the short term, a tourist information centre to be used for the "Back to Darwin" celebrations and for a permanent tourist information centre at the entrance to the city of Darwin?

ANSWER

I do not have the information available about the provision of a tourist information centre at the entrance to Darwin. However, I can advise the honourable member that the "Back to Darwin" committee, which has been very active and very productive in its work, has sought cooperation from both ourselves and the Department of the Northern Territory in having the old tourist bureau site in Smith Street made available to place caravans or a demountable from which they could promote their "Back to Darwin" activities.

The committee has been given two caravans by the Department of the Northern Territory. The latest information available to me was that the caravans were unsuitable and that the committee had obtained, through its own devices, a 40 x 10 x 8 demountable which it intends to move on site for the period of the "Back to Darwin" celebrations.

As a further bit of information in relation to this, it is my understanding that the Tourist Promotion Association will be taking up joint office space with the Northern Territory Government Tourist Bureau when the bureau moves into its new office.

332 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Did he hear the views of the managing director of Radial Industries last Friday regarding the future of the Northern Territory economy? Will the Majority Leader approach the Australian government for additional funds for capital expenditure in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

This questions raises an interesting topic. I certainly have not heard the views of the managing director of Radial Industries on the Northern Territory economy. Perhaps, one might have thought that, if he was concerned with the Northern Territory economy, he would have made his views known to me. I do understand that this company has recently gone into either receivership or liquidation. From my practice in 1973 or 1974, I recall that the company was in receivership or liquidation at that stage. Presumably, like a number of other companies some of which have since gone bust, it was saved by the miracle of the cyclone in that there was so much work around that they managed to keep going for another few years. If this company has gone into liquidation, I am perturbed. However, it may not be the Northern Territory economy that causes these things. It may be inefficient management. It could be tendering for contracts at an unnecessarily

low rate. It could be a number of things. I do not believe it is possible to blame these things on the Northern Territory economy alone. At the present time, I have heard from substantial building contractors that there are more contracts going at the moment than they know how to cope with. That may surprise members because all we read in the newspaper is the wailing and lamentation. If members want to hear some cheerful news, then I suggest they speak to a few of the leading building contractors.

333 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

My question concerns the Housing Commission. There are many older people on low incomes who are living in single hostel rooms in this town because single people or two people of the same sex are generally not entitled to Housing Commission accommodation. Is it possible that Housing Commission policy can be changed to provide accommodation for these people or must they enter into defacto relationships to obtain Housing Commission accommodation?

ANSWER

Concerning that part of the question which asks if it is possible to alter Housing Commission accommodation eligibility policy, certainly it is. However, before giving any undertaking that such a thing will be done, I would be pleased to get copies of the Housing Commission policy on eligibility for single persons, irrespective of their age, and provide it to the honourable member. If some suggestions can be put forward, I am sure the Housing Commission will be prepared to consider them and discuss it with myself and, if there is any need for a change, then certainly we would look into it to make that change. However, I believe the Housing Commission makes considerable provision for pensioner accommodation and I know for certain that, in that particular case, it is not limited to dual units. Certainly, single pensioners have Housing Commission units.

334 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

I will preface my question with the remarks that pastoralists generally are concerned that meatworks' opening prices will be inadequate. Has the executive member taken steps to ensure that meatworks' opening prices will be acceptable?

ANSWER

I have been in touch with meatworks and producer organisations, and cattlemen as individuals, to try to get the feel of the opening rounds of what the cattle industry will do this year. It seems that some prices are fairly low and we are concerned that, with the non-existence this year of a reliable live export trade, the meatworks will enjoy a really good time.

I transmitted my views to the managing director of Alice Springs abattoir, Mr Whittaker, and he cannot be short of money because he sent me a three-foot telex reply. I should provide the House with some of this information. There is only a small bit here really. He does go fairly crook at me for trying to undermine his position as an abattoir manager; I was more concerned with the cattlemen, myself. But he did say to me in this telex that the quota provided to Alice Springs was 2,000 tons. This represents 15,000 cattle of approximately 500 lbs. He says, "Our prices are based on the current USA market values for these 15,000 and were calculated as follows: steers, 800 lbs and over - 26 cents per lb dressed weight; steers, 700 to 800 lbs - 27 cents; steers, 600 to 700 lbs - 26 cents; steers and cows, 500 to 600 lbs - 24 cents; steers and cows, 400 to 500 lbs - 20

cents; steers and cows, 300 to 400 lbs - 14 cents." He goes on to say that in recent weeks growers have confirmed to him that the Adelaide price for bullocks over 600 lbs was 11 cents, cows approximately 500 lbs - 6 cents, bullocks over 800 lbs - 13½ cents, steers and cows - 8 cents. He makes the point that abattoirs in South Australia buying those cattle also benefit from a quota which means, in fact, they could be paying those higher prices.

In conclusion, he gives a fair sort of a serve. He says, "Our prices are not unrealistic. They are all together realistic to current market conditions, painfully so for both grower and ourselves. You have asked us to ensure continued viability of the NT cattle industry to provide a return and incentive whereby cattlemen can continue to believe in its future. Your peers give the quota away to others and you ask a hundred dollar company to do what your cabinet, the federal government, stock agents, trading banks, insurance houses, American multi-nationals have failed to do: namely, underpin the industry. There was more than a touch of the quixotic which brought your people to Alice, but what you are asking of us is getting into biblical realms. We are clean out of miracles this year. You will see we sign ourselves off as Alice Springs Abattoirs Pty Ltd - not Moses Incorporated. Roger, get us the 10,000 ton quota sought and together we can part the seas, make the deserts flourish and accomplish similar Zanuck-type deeds. George P. Whittaker, Managing Director, Alice Springs Abattoirs Pty Ltd." I must say though, Mr Speaker, that my concern is with the total industry in the Northern Territory, not just with George P. Whittaker, Alice Springs Abattoirs.

340 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

Does he recall his answer to question 273 from the member for Stuart where he told him that members were obliged to present petitions that were presented to them by their constituents and that it was customary to do so without demure? Has he received a letter from a constituent with an accompanying petition calling for a referendum? If so, why hasn't he presented the petition and does he intend to do so?

ANSWER

I do recall the question from the member for Stuart. I have received a petition with a letter from a constituent of mine. On inspection of the petition, I found the signatories to the petition came from the suburbs of Anula and Wulagi which relate to the electorate of Sanderson. I have returned it to the constituent with a request that it be presented to the member for Sanderson for presentation to this House.

341 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr EVERINGHAM

I direct a question on behalf of the member for Elsey. In view of the need to prevent the extinction of the cattle industry in the Top End, will the Northern Territory executive give urgent consideration to the establishment of a Territory meat and livestock commission which will bring local knowledge to bear on providing prices for beef related to the costs of production, developing new markets and eradicating blue tongue and other diseases within the endemic areas and other problems of the industry?

ANSWER

The Majority Party certainly recognizes the tragic situation in which a good number, if not most, of Northern Territory pastoralists are now placed by the advent of the blue tongue disease, particularly within the Top End. It is the Majority Party's intention to establish a department of industrial development about which I will have more to say after question time. It is also hoped that it may be possible to establish something in the nature of a development corporation and I would hope that this corporation would take up, as one of its major objects, the promotion of sales of Territory cattle both within Australia and overseas.

342 Mr VALE to Mr STEELE

My question is asked on behalf of the member for Elsey. Does the poor quality of TV reception concern either Telecom who provide the communication channels or the ABC who pay for them?

ANSWER

I am advised that the standard of the microwave service between Darwin and Mt Isa is equal to that anywhere else in Australia. Because of the technical nature of my inquiries to Telecom, I would seek leave of the House to table this letter and have it included in Hansard.

Mr SPEAKER: I find the document suitable for insertion in Hansard. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

Mr R.M. Steele
Cabinet Member for Transport and Industry
Legislative Assembly for the N.T.
DARWIN

Dear Roger,

I hope the following notes may be of assistance to you in respect of quality of TV reception in the N.T.

Telecom Australia as the provider of the communication channels which bring live TV transmission from other parts of Australia to the Northern Territory, and as the operator of the TV transmitting station equipment at Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs is vitally concerned with the quality of transmission and we believe that within the existing constraints the best possible transmission is being provided.

With respect to reception and area of coverage of the transmitting stations in the N.T., it is pertinent to observe that with the exception of Darwin, the transmitters are of limited power output, the stations being designed to each cover only the restricted area of the respective towns. The effective radiated power of a station is a function of the antenna design as well as the transmitter power and the antenna design is commonly arranged to concentrate a proportion of the radiated signal in a particular direction to meet specified service area needs. The N.T. stations follow this pattern and in the case of the National TV station in Darwin for example, whereas in general the nominal limit of useful signal strength extends within an approx. 50 km radius concentration of the radiated signal in the general direction of the Stuart Highway going South from Darwin ensures that this same signal strength is achieved at Batchelor which is approx. 70 km distant. Of course reception at any specific location may be affected by properties peculiar to that location - e.g. there may be isolated obstacles in the radiation path from the transmitter.

With regard to transmission of TV programmes from Brisbane to Darwin, some comment on the philosophy of a protection bearer for a microwave system and TV transmission may be relevant. Each microwave system is provided with a protection bearer for each group of main bearers (each group has from one to five main bearers) and the system design is such as to ensure that in the event of propagation fading conditions affecting a main bearer the protection bearer, which would not be simultaneously similarly affected, will automatically be switched into circuit for the fade duration which typically varies from a few micro seconds to perhaps seconds at a time. Between Brisbane and Mt Isa, the TV transmission is carried by a main bearer and substantially the protection bearer associated with this and a small group of telephony bearers will protect against short term duration fading outages of the TV bearer. The Mt Isa to Darwin microwave link was not designed to carry full time TV on a "studio to transmitter" basis although it satisfies the normal requirements of a main video link - normally used for occasional programme relay between capital cities. As the TV transmission over this section is carried on the protection bearer for the telephony system, it is subject to short duration interruptions when the protection bearer switches to maintain the main telephony system. Additionally of course, the protection bearer itself may at other times suffer momentary partial failure.

Continuous monitoring of the telephony bearer provides a record of performance of that bearer, including a record of actual interruptions and of instances where the protection bearer switched itself into circuit to prevent a telephony interruption. No such continuous monitoring of

the TV bearer is undertaken, and it is unreasonable to attempt to correlate telephony and TV bearer performance, apart from saying that a period in which a large number of changeovers to the protection bearer occurred is bound to reflect in a large number of breaks in the received TV signal.

Such information gathered from telephony monitoring indicate that performance in the wet season is noticeably worse than in the dry season. On any one day performance in the time period 2000 hrs - 2400 hrs is noticeably worse than in the period 0800 - 2000 hrs. This is a characteristic of microwave radio propagation over conditions such as are encountered on this route.

The performance during the period 0001 hrs - 0800 hrs is in fact noticeably worse than the 2000 - 2400 hr period; however, there is generally no TV interest during this period.

During October - November 1977 there were 23 outages of greater than 5 seconds duration resulting in total down time for the telephony bearer of only 0.01% time.

During December-January 1978 however, only 9 outages resulted in a down time for the telephony bearer of 0.44% time. One assumption is that performance during this period is characterised by breaks of considerably longer duration than those which occur during drier months.

A special recording analysis of interruptions on the incoming TV programme at Darwin was arranged during one day in January 1978 as a special exercise. This showed that on that particular day a total of 349 seconds of lost programme resulted, mainly between the hours of 2030 and 2230 C.S.T. Most of the breaks were short and the longest was one of 90 seconds at 2134 hours. Our shift technician manually records what he considers to be significant interruptions or bursts of interruptions where the intelligibility of programme is badly marred. On this day the only entries recorded were -

between 2030 and 2035 hours C.S.T. Total of 30 secs. marring
" 2112 " 2114 " " " " 60 " "
" 2127 " 2146 " " " " 5 mins "

A subjective interpretation of the performance on that day was that it was rather worse than average and probably only 20% of the nights would ordinarily be that bad. (This was of course only a very rough estimate).

I hope this information will be of assistance to you.

Kind regards,

*B.D. WOODROW
SUPERVISING ENGINEER*

8/3/78

343 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr STEELE

How many traffic accidents have there been in Wells Street, Ludmilla, over the past three years? Can an impact study be made of the very serious and increasing traffic problems in Wells Street?

ANSWER

It so happens I have a little information about this matter. I am advised that no realistic figures are available for the period after the cyclone until 31 October 1976. During this period, poor lighting and unsafe vehicles contributed to the high minor accident rate in the city and it would not be reasonable to use figures during this period in any evaluation of the true situation. I can say that there were ten accidents between the period 31 October 1976 to 30 September 1977, as a result of which 14 people were injured. Most of these occurred at the intersection of Wells Street and Bagot Road. The Department of Transport and Industry has now established a working arrangement with the corporation and they will be looking at the problems in Wells Street at an early time.

344 Mrs O'NEIL to Mr PERRON

Is he aware that lessees of agricultural leases in the Berrimah area who have applied to subdivide their land are being requested to supply to the Town Planning Board information relating to major drainage problems in the Berrimah area? Does the Town Planning Board not already have this information, in view of the fact that in 1974 it put forward an extensive industrial subdivision proposal in the area? If the board does have such information, what is the reason for seeking this information from private citizens?

ANSWER

I am not aware of the details of what the board may have requested of some applicants for subdivision in the Berrimah area. However, it is quite reasonable to expect applicants for subdivisions to provide evidence of their intentions as far as drainage is concerned, as there are considerable drainage problems in some of the industrial areas of Darwin. Every attempt is being made to alleviate these problems and overcome difficulties which are being experienced in developed areas, although in some cases it is too late to do very much about it.

345 Mr ISAACS to Mr PERRON

Is it true that electricity consumers will now have to pay cash on receipt of accounts and that time payment will not be permitted?

ANSWER

No.

346 Mr VALE to Mr ROBERTSON

My question is asked on behalf of the member for Elsey. In view of the filthy condition of litter bins, will they be cleaned and painted before the "Back to Darwin" week?

ANSWER

Quite frankly, I had not noticed that they were all that filthy. I must say that I am very pleased to see there are so many litter bins in Darwin. However, I think the idea is an excellent one and I will refer it to the Darwin City Corporation.

347 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr PERRON

In light of the reply to a previous question, could he advise the House why certain of my constituents who this week approached the ESU asking for time to pay their accounts were refused point blank and told that, unless they paid the account, the electricity would be cut off? I have a copy of the account if he wishes to see it later.

ANSWER

The appropriate way to go about this would have been for honourable members to take up the matter themselves with the Department of the Northern Territory on behalf of their constituents. That is a fairly normal practice. It would be difficult to try to lump all consumers in the Northern Territory into one group. Certainly, there has been in the past - and to my knowledge there has been no change - a policy whereby, if difficulties can be shown, time payment is allowed. However, at times, requests for time payment are of the order of a few cents a week in which case the account would never be cleared. No doubt some consumers are probably refused further time to pay. Every case has to be viewed on its particular merits. I suggest that the honourable member either supply evidence to myself or take the matter up directly with the Department of the Northern Territory on each individual case.

348 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr ROBERTSON

The MACOS course, "Man - a Course of Study", has been given some adverse publicity recently. Is he aware of this? Has the course been accepted for all schools in the Northern Territory? If so, have there been any complaints on the content of the course?

ANSWER

This course has not been introduced into all schools in the Northern Territory. I am advised by the Department of Education that there are 23 schools currently using the system which normally uses a rotational system for distribution of video tapes, information books and pamphlets. I am assured by the Department of Education that the course is very carefully introduced and is being monitored constantly. I think this is the type of role where school committees and school councils can become involved in parents' and friends' associations which is part of the democratisation, if you like, of education in the Northern Territory. If there was wide-spread dissatisfaction with any course introduced for educative process of our children, then through school councils and committees, the Department of Education and myself ultimately ought to have these areas of concern brought to us in order that, in response to community wishes, we can then re-analyse whatever courses we are conducting.

349 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

Why were signs erected by the land council indicating sacred sites in the Kakadu park area, protected by section 69 of the federal Aboriginal Land Rights Act, removed by officers of the wildlife section and, secondly, have these signs been re-erected?

ANSWER

I do not have any knowledge of the personal motives of the officers of the wildlife section who took down the signs.

Mr Collins: I do.

Mr TUXWORTH: I do regard the removal of the signs as a most unfortunate incident and one that should never have occurred. I have had discussions with the Director of Parks and Wildlife and I can give an undertaking now that, as soon as it is physically possible, the signs will be restored to the position they were in and when the officers go out to restore the signs, they will be taking with them a representative of the Northern Land Council, who will be able to advise the officers of the Parks and Wildlife Commission just where the signs should be put.

350 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

This question is asked having regard to his liaison responsibilities for the Education Department. Can he supply an answer to the question I asked last week, from the Department of Education of course, as to whether that department had asked the Department of the Northern Territory for demountable accommodation for use in high schools and, if so, if the request had been acceded to? He did undertake to get the information.

ANSWER

I must apologise to the honourable member for Nightcliff; the machinery seems to have broken down somewhere. If any of my staff are listening, Mr Speaker, I hope it is carried out today.

351 Mr HARRIS to Mr PERRON

Does the honourable executive member propose to follow up allegations in this House last Tuesday in relation to a member of the Town Planning Board?

ANSWER

I have requested the chairman of the Town Planning Board to inquire into the allegations made by the honourable member for Sanderson and to provide me with a detailed report of his findings. Until that report is received, no further action will be taken.

352 Mr ISAACS to Mr EVERINGHAM

He will recall a statement that he made in Alice Springs on 11 October 1977, that he had instructed statutory bodies to try to participate in the federal government youth training schemes. Can he now tell the Assembly what the situation is with regard to this matter?

ANSWER

I certainly do recall the statement I made in Alice Springs - not only did I make the statement in Alice Springs but I actually followed it up with a number of memoranda circulated on my behalf by the director-general of the Chief Secretary's Department. I am not aware whether any people were employed under these particular schemes but I could certainly ascertain that information for the honourable Leader of the Opposition. I understand that government departments are not able to participate in the scheme but I was of the understanding that statutory authorities could, in relation to attempting to relieve unemployment. For instance, the executive has introduced the finance officer-in-training scheme and I believe there is also a scheme shortly to be introduced in relation to training cadet fire officers.

353 Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to Mr PERRON

What plans are afoot for the further reasonable reticulation of electricity in the rural area? What criteria are used to establish a need in a certain area, and who are the people making these decisions? What amount of money will be allocated for this service?

ANSWER

The question requires some detailed information and I suggest that it be placed on notice so that complete details can be provided to the honourable member.

354 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr EVERINGHAM

Has the Corporation of the City of Darwin or any of its agents made an application to the Darwin Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund for moneys to enable the purchase of the block of land adjacent to the Travelodge on the Esplanade, presently occupied by the Herald and Weekly Times house?

ANSWER

I cannot give an unequivocal answer to that question this morning but I would certainly undertake to do so within the next few days. To the best of my knowledge, however, no such application has been made.

355 Mr BALLANTYNE to Mr PERRON

Did the honourable member notice a list of lots which are claimed to have vacant houses on them in the NT News recently and, if so, does he know why these houses have been vacant for so long?

ANSWER

In replying to a question earlier during these sittings as to how many departmental houses were seemingly vacant for a period in excess of four weeks, I presented a fairly short list of six or seven. Since that time an article appeared in the paper indicating that there were probably many, many more. I sought information on these additional numbers because it was obviously necessary. I am advised that two of the numbers which were listed in the newspaper were mis-stated, 6979 and 6868, and presumably were referring to the adjoining properties, 6978 and 6969. I will not bother reading all the lot numbers; if any honourable member wants to have the individual lot numbers, I can supply them. Seven of the houses are rented out to the Department of Defence as head tenants. It is a matter for the Department of Defence to allocate the actual premises. The Department of the Northern Territory intends to make a formal approach to the Department of Defence for the latter department to consider the returning of houses which cannot be tenanted within a reasonable time to the pool for reallocation to applicants on the Darwin staff housing list. Two of the other lots mentioned are rented and occupied by tenants of the Department of the Northern Territory and three are on offer to prospective tenants. House 7072 was returned to the pool on 24/1/78, 6918 was returned to the pool on 6/2/78. These three houses have been offered several times since but they were returned to the pool. The remaining house, which was taken over in April 1977 by the department, is an executive-type house held in reserve pending possible demand from the executive pool. This house has now been allocated and will be physically occupied within a few days.

356 Mr ISAACS to Mr TUXWORTH

How many staff members have been appointed to the office of the supervising scientist whose job is to see that the environment is protected in the Alligator Rivers area?

ANSWER

It is my understanding that the legislation which gives effect to the creation of the supervising scientist and his authority has not yet been introduced and passed through the federal house. We have a situation where a supervising scientist elect, Mr Bob Fry, has been appointed to the position pending the introduction of legislation and the confirmation of his position. I also understand that Mr Fry has had seconded to him, from various agencies throughout the Commonwealth, staff to supervise the whole of the uranium production scene. However, I cannot say how many there are.

357 Mrs LAWRIE to Mr ROBERTSON

Again I refer to the Department of Education and I assume his answer will be no. I must ask this question at this time of the morning so that he can take appropriate action. Is he aware that because of the extensions and upgrading of the Nightcliff High School library, that library will be totally inoperable for all of the second term at least? Is he also aware that the department has not made available to the high school any demountable accommodation to assist with rehousing either staff, students or the library, therefore rendering a large part of the school effectively inoperable? Year 11 and 12 students will be seriously disadvantaged and junior school students will not have the use of the library at all.

ANSWER

The honourable member for Nightcliff is perfectly correct; the answer to the question is no. However, if what she says is true, I can fully understand her concern. I will undertake to discuss this one personally with officers of the Department of Education this afternoon after the House rises as I anticipate that this will be somewhat earlier than normal.

358 Mr COLLINS to Mr TUXWORTH

Does the honourable member intend to advise the House on the details of the recent discussions he has had with the federal government on Kakadu National Park?

ANSWER

The short answer is no.

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