

PART II

THE QUESTION PAPER

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

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

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

NOTICE GIVEN ON DATE SHOWN

6 March 1985

Legal Representatives

1 Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Which legal firms and companies represent or are retained by Northern Territory government departments or statutory bodies and, specifically, how many departments or statutory bodies retain or are represented by Morris, Fletcher and Cross?

16 April 1985

King's Canyon Development

3 Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

In his press release of 20 February 1985 he said, in relation to the proposed tourist resort development at King's Canyon, that the Northern Territory government would "ensure that there is no repeat of Yulara where infrastructure for Aborigines was promised by the Commonwealth but not provided".

To what infrastructure is he referring?

Agent, TIO Building, Katherine

4 Mr SMITH to TREASURER

1. In appointing a letting agent for the TIO building in Katherine, were tenders called?
2. If not, how was the letting agent chosen?

Grants-in-Aid, Sporting Bodies

6 Mr SMITH to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

How much money has been given to sporting organizations over the past five years under the Grants-in-Aid scheme in (a) Nhulunbuy; (b) Katherine; (c) Tennant Creek; (d) Alice Springs; and (e) Darwin?

23 April 1985

Aboriginal Staffing - Nyirripi School

7. Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Does the agreement with the federal government on funding for setting up Nyirripi school contain a section

on Aboriginal staffing levels; if so, is it being adhered to; and, if not, why not and when will it be?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Leased Properties in Alice Springs

2. Mr BELL to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS and HOUSING
 1. Which properties within the Alice Springs town planning area are leased by Northern Territory government departments or statutory authorities?
 2. Who is the owner of each of the properties referred to above?
 3. On what basis is the cost of the lease determined?
 4. What is the cost of each lease referred to in 1?

ANSWER

The following schedule provides details of office and warehouse space leased by the Northern Territory government in the Alice Springs town planning area.

Additional or substitute leases are constantly being negotiated as the needs arise.

The schedule is set out so that the answers to parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 are contained in the relevant columns. In addition, a general explanation to part 3 is provided as an attachment to the schedule.

PROPERTY 1.	OWNER 2.	FACTORS AFFECTING COST OF LEASE (SEE EXPLANATORY NOTE) 3.	COST PER ANNUM \$ 4.	
Marinucci Building	Gino Nominees Pty Limited	Tenancy 1	Rent	18 063
		Rent review every	Outgoings	1 481
		2 years at market	Additional	3 187
		value. Premium	(Partitions)	
		paid on fit out		<u>22 731</u>
		Tenancy 2	Rent	14 875
		Rent review every	Outgoings	1 261
		2 years at market	Additional	3 110
		value. Premium	(Partitions)	
		paid on fit out		<u>19 246</u>
Minerals House	Augvert Pty Limited	Rent reviews	Rent	136 233
		after 1 year then	Outgoings	24 595
		every 2 years at	Additional	46 356
		market value. Premium paid on fit out and solar air-conditioning		<u>207 184</u>

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PROPERTY 1.	OWNER 2.	FACTORS AFFECTING COST OF LEASE (SEE EXPLANATORY NOTE) 3.		COST PER ANNUM \$ 4.	
National Bank Building	D.K.B. Investments Pty Limited	Tenancy 1			
		Rent review every	Rent	19 026	
		2 years at market	Outgoings	4 687	
		value		<u>23 713</u>	
		Tenancy 2			
		As above	Rent	10 215	
			Outgoings	2 524	
				<u>12 739</u>	
R.E.L. Building	Ryan Nominees Pty Limited Leigh Nominees Pty Limited Early Pty Limited G.R.&I.R. Waterson	Rent review every		Rent	33 264
		2 years at market	Outgoings	14 990	
		value.		<u>48 254</u>	
T.I.O. Building	T.I.O.	Tenancy 1			
		Rent review every	Rent	15 707	
		2 years at market		2 068	
		value		<u>17 775</u>	
		Tenancy 2			
		As above	Rent	8 927	
			Outgoings	1 177	
				<u>10 104</u>	
1557 Elder Street	J.G. Hawkins G. Liddle P.G. Howard - Trustees for G. Liddle	Rent review every		Rent	13 120
		2 years at market	Outgoings	1 473	
		value		<u>14 593</u>	
1575 Wilkinson Street	N.J. Picken A.M. Picken	Rent review every		Rent	25 900
		2 years at market	Outgoings	6 870	
		value		<u>32 770</u>	
431 Gap Road	J.F. Ryan I.C. Ryan	Rent review every		Rent	115 793
		2 years at market	Outgoings	44 762	
		value		<u>160 555</u>	
444 Stuart Highway	Sadida Investments	Building No. 1			
		Rent review at	Rent	44 587	
		market value.	Outgoings	9 040	
		(2 year lease only)		<u>53 627</u>	

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PROPERTY 1.	OWNER 2.	FACTORS AFFECTING COST OF LEASE (SEE EXPLANATORY NOTE) 3.	COST PER ANNUM \$ 4.	
	As above	Building No. 2		
		Rent at market	Rent	44 587
		value (1 year	Outgoings	9 040
		lease only)		<u>53 627</u>
3/98 Todd	J.B. & K.R. Sutton	Rent review every	Rent	6 800
Street	D.I. Baldock	2 years at market	Outgoings	1 952
	Nominees Pty Ltd	value		<u>8 852</u>
	R.F. Baldock			
	Nominees Pty Ltd			
	D. & J. Holden			
7 Ermonde	Normass Pty Ltd	Rent review at	Rent	6 980
Arcade		C.P.I.	Outgoings	2 727
				<u>9 807</u>
99 Todd	Beverley	Rent reviews	Rent	47 272
Street	Nominees Pty	annually at	Outgoings	15 800
	Limited	C.P.I.		<u>62 072</u>
55 Todd	D.K.B. Invest-	Rent reviews every	Rent	26 795
Street	ments Pty	2 years at market	Outgoings	13 700
	Limited	value		<u>40 495</u>
4492 Elder	Luedi Nominees	Weekly rental	Rent	989
Street	Pty Limited			<u>989</u>
4 Head	Helm	Annual rent reviews	Rent	14 657
Street	Constructions	at C.P.I.	Outgoings	4 223
Shopping	Pty Limited			<u>18 880</u>
Complex				
1/15 Leichhardt		Rent at market	Rent	14 245
Terrace	Red Range	value. Premium	Outgoings	1 033*
	Nominees	paid on fit out	Additional	3 100
			(Partitions)	<u>18 378</u>
Telford	Telford Inns	C.P.I. increases	Rent	6 715
Territory		every 2 years	Outgoings	200
Motor Inn				<u>6 915</u>
Leichhardt				
Terrace				

PROPERTY	OWNER	FACTORS AFFECTING COST OF LEASE (SEE EXPLANATORY NOTE)	COST PER ANNUM	
			\$	
1.	2.	3.	4.	
3/3A Gillen Shopping Centre	D. Park Park Nominees Clough Nominees	Rent reviews annually at C.P.I.	Rent Outgoings	9 217 1 553 <u>10 770</u>

*for 6 months only

The answer to 3. concerning the basis for determining the cost of each lease requires additional explanation as follows:

The cost of each lease is basically determined by rental, lessee responsibility for outgoings (e.g. cleaning, power, etc.) and additional costs by way of premiums for special lessee requirements over and above the basic space provided.

In general terms, rental is determined by negotiation between the Northern Territory government (lessee) and the building owner (lessor) and is based on market value using advice from the Valuer-General. Where the lessor and lessee cannot agree, rental is determined by an independent valuer who is registered with the Australian Institute of Valuers and who is employed in the private sector.

Lessee outgoings are also determined by negotiation. These outgoings usually accepted as Northern Territory government responsibilities in Alice Springs include cleaning, telephones, power and security. Grounds maintenance costs are usually only incurred where the Northern Territory government is a sole tenant.

Airconditioning power is usually a lessor responsibility. However where airconditioning power is a lessee outgoing, the responsibility is reflected in the lower rental paid.

In some instances additional lease costs are incurred by way of a premium on the costs of fit out items (e.g. construction of internal offices) or other lessee requirements such as special airconditioning, where such items are provided at the lessor's expense.

Major Projects Expenditure, NTDC

5. Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS and TOURISM

The statement of income and expenditure for the Northern Territory Development Corporation for the year ended 30 June 1984 has a figure of \$647 925 for Major Project Expenses.

1. What were the major projects?
2. What is the detailed breakdown of expenses for each of the major projects?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ANSWER

1. The major projects were Alice Springs Sheraton Hotel, Darwin Sheraton Hotel, and Darwin and Alice Springs casino projects.
2. The detailed breakdown of expenses are:

Alice Springs Sheraton

Travel & accommodation	\$ 1 407.10
Legal fees	\$ 56 729.55
Consultants	\$ 37 414.77
Incidentals	\$ 1 217.00
	<u>\$ 96 828.42</u>

Darwin Sheraton

Travel & accommodation	\$ 3 549.90
Legal fees	\$ 25 655.58
Consultants	\$ 7 028.37
	<u>\$ 36 233.85</u>

Darwin & Alice Springs casino projects

Travel	\$ 31 928.21
Accommodation	\$ 18 929.88
Legal fees	\$ 47 802.99
Consultants	\$414 274.62
Incidentals	\$ 1 927.11
	<u>\$514 862.81</u>
	<u>\$647 925.08</u>

Sealing of Hermannsburg Road

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Can he advise the reason why the tender recently let in central Australia for continued sealing work on what is known as the Hermannsburg road was for only 19 km when originally the proposal was to seal 33 km?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question allows me to inform the Assembly of certain problems that are arising in relation to a great amount of work that the government has planned for highways in the Territory. It is rather unfortunate but the cost of everything appears to be rising. That is certainly the case with tender prices that have been submitted to the government for proposed work on Territory highways and a number of other areas. The prices that have been tendered over the last 6 months have increased by up to 30% on what they were less than 2 years ago. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that prices are going up. Consequently, the government is unable to seal the same number of kilometres nowadays as it could 12 months ago. The government will continue its policy of providing good roads throughout the Territory but only to the extent of the money that is available.

Release of Casino Documents to Federal Member

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

At the last sittings of the federal parliament, the federal member for the Northern Territory, the Hon Paul Everingham, in seeking to justify his position on the casino affair, called upon the Northern Territory government for the release of further documents relating to the casino. Does the Chief Minister intend to respond to that request from the federal member and produce such documents?

ANSWER

Any call by the federal member to be fully briefed on the casino issue and to have access to documents is being met by me. There are documents that the member for the Northern Territory had access to while he was Chief Minister and he still has access to those documents because I have made them available to him. The question of the propriety of documents being made available to persons who are no longer members of the government is always difficult to address. When anybody leaves a legislature, there is always a level of discretion in relation to what documents should be made available to that person.

Mr Speaker, in this particular instance, I believe the federal member, my colleague, should have every opportunity to be conversant with all the details of the events that transpired for over 18 months so that he can fully defend his position and the position of our government against all the charges that have been made, charges that we just do not have any truck with at all.

Petition from Students of Darwin Institute of Technology

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The petition from students and others at the Darwin Institute of Technology that was tabled this morning states that recent administrative changes at the

institute have put accreditation of advanced education courses in jeopardy. Are these claims correct?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer is no. However, I think it is necessary to make some lengthy comment in relation to the accreditation procedures. There are many people in the community who do not really understand how accreditation operates for the many courses that we have at the institute. I have spoken to many of the lecturers at the institute and I believe that most of them are thinking in a positive manner about where we are going with education in the Northern Territory. They are interested in finding out from the government what it expects to produce from the Institute of Technology in terms of teachers in specialised areas such as science and maths. I was very pleased that this attitude was being taken by many of the lecturers at the institute.

However, some lecturers seem to believe that the accreditation of the courses is at risk. In fact, CTEC has erroneously been mentioned as being part of the accreditation process. Accreditation is a state function, and that needs to be pointed out first of all. National accreditation is via a national body made up of state representatives. CTEC has no role in state accreditation or national registration. The only CTEC involvement is the requirement that advanced education moneys be spent on accredited courses only.

In order to clarify this matter once and for all, I will outline the accreditation process. Advanced education courses are accredited and re-accredited by the responsible authority in order to qualify for Commonwealth funding. The responsible authority in the Northern Territory is the Northern Territory Minister for Education. Initial documentation is submitted to the state coordinating authority - the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education - in line with state guidelines endorsed by the national registration body, the ACAAE. An assessment panel of independent interstate experts is appointed by the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education. The panel assesses the courses in line with the guidelines issued by the national registration body and reports with recommendations to the state coordinating authority - in our case, the Northern Territory Council of Higher Education - which in turn makes recommendations to the minister. The guidelines for accreditation specify the following matters to be considered: general academic standards and practices of the institution; objectives of the particular course and methods adopted to achieve these objectives; standards for admission to the course; duration of the course, breadth, depth and balance in the subjects involved and the amount of intellectual effort required by the course; methods of assessment of student progress; relative emphasis on the teaching of skills in relation to the study or discipline; any arrangements for practical training and experience; teaching staff conducting the course, including numbers, professional qualifications and experience; and educational expertise, accommodation and practices. Mr Speaker, they are the guidelines for accreditation specifying what matters must be considered.

I would add that it has been suggested that lecturing staff will be resigning from the Darwin Institute of Technology and thus putting accreditation at risk again. Quite frankly, the turnover of staff at the Darwin Institute of Technology is not a new phenomenon. The recruitment and qualification of teaching staff for Northern Territory courses has been addressed previously by a number of assessment panels and I am sure that members who have been in close association with the Darwin Community College will be aware of that fact. Any problems are solved in the accreditation process by placing safeguards into accreditation.

Mr Speaker, again I emphasise that the Northern Territory government wants an institution that has credibility. We will be moving in that direction. I believe that many of the lecturers at the Darwin Institute of Technology are taking a positive approach in this regard.

Release of Casino Documents to Federal Member

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In respect of the undertaking just given by him to provide the additional documentation sought by the federal member, I am assuming that the documentation so sought refers to documentation other than that which was made available publicly when it was tabled in this Assembly. Will he give an undertaking that any additional documentation on the casino affair provided to the federal member will also be provided to members of this Assembly?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer is no. Not all the documentation that was made available to my predecessor, the former Chief Minister, now the Territory's federal member, will be made available to members of this Assembly and or any other persons. That is because some of that documentation relates to confidential reports and investigations that were conducted on behalf of the government which I firmly believe should not become public property. That is the basis on which the information has been made available to my colleagues.

Darwin Rural Advisory Council Report Recommendations

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he tell me if the recommendations on local government contained in the Darwin Rural Advisory Council Report are to be acted upon?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to mention that this question without notice was brought to my notice some 5 minutes before we entered the Assembly this morning. I realise that the honourable member for Koolpinyah is extremely interested in this topic. The Darwin rural area encompasses probably 90% of her electorate. It is a very topical subject out there. I was a member of the Darwin Rural Advisory Council when it was first formed some 2 years ago.

The report has now been tabled and the recommendations of that report are being investigated. I might inform the honourable member for Koolpinyah that local government matters move fairly slowly. We are about to bring before this Assembly the new Local Government Act. It has been 6 years in coming. We have been working on it for some 2½ years within the Department of Community Development itself. In that time, it has been under the purview of 3 ministers. Local government matters are very complicated and complex. They must be handled with the utmost care and respect.

The whole status of local government is being looked at. In fact, the 2-day conference which we ran recently in Darwin was well attended by people from all facets of local government: community government, unincorporated bodies and the 4 incorporated municipalities. At that conference, the report of the Darwin Rural Advisory Council, under the chairmanship of John Maley, was in fact brought up and spoken about at some length. Also, the local government ministers conference, which I attended in Melbourne last Friday, discussed

issues at some length. The whole issue of local government funding is now a matter of national inquiry under the chairmanship of Professor Peter Selph. He is looking at all aspects of local government funding right throughout Australia. He will visit the Territory very shortly. There are only Queensland and the Northern Territory to go. One wonders at the methodology being employed in that. Nevertheless, we are the last 2 to be investigated in regard to local government funding.

The people in the outer Darwin rural area presently do not contribute in the form of rates towards services that they receive. This is another issue that will need to be addressed.

To address these issues, I have considered officer exchange as it provides a rather unique opportunity to allow somebody to work on this particular project because there are not too many opportunities whereby you can address the issues of whether or not to have local government. To that end, we have been successful in attracting a couple of applicants from interstate who would be interested to come to the Northern Territory to address the issues which have been raised in the Darwin Rural Advisory Council Report. I hope to have that person seconded to the Northern Territory to address the issues that the honourable member has mentioned. I hope to be able to bring to this Assembly before the end of this year the recommendations from that report and news of the implementation or otherwise of local government within the rural area.

Release of Casino Documents to Federal Member

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Giving the benefit of the doubt to the Chief Minister that additional confidential documentation was made available to the federal member by virtue of his position as federal member, and not by virtue of the old pals act, in reference to his previous answer, will he explain how he could have made the following statement in the last sittings of this Assembly: 'All relevant documentation was produced by his government for the attention of this Assembly'? Will he further explain how it is possible for any documentation relating to the casino affair to be of relevance to the federal member for the Northern Territory but is not of relevance to the members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly? Will he further explain if the documentation was supplied to the federal member, as we now discover it has been, on the basis of its being confidential?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the short answer is that the information is confidential. In my view, it should not be made available to this Assembly. It was made available to the member for the Northern Territory on the basis that he had already had access to it and that it was reasonable and important for him to be aware of the contents of the documents in the event that he could not remember them. I think it is also fair to make the point that the member for the Northern Territory in the federal House was brought under attack recently as a result of the casino issue. It is more than reasonable that he have access to the documents that he had access to while he was Chief Minister so that he can defend himself in that place.

Mr Speaker, I say it again for the benefit of the honourable member because I said it the first time. Those documents that had not already been made available in this Assembly or used in the press at some time were made available on the basis of confidentiality.

Products from Mereenie Crude Oil

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What petroleum products will be produced from the Alice Springs refinery presently under construction utilising Mereenie crude oil? In what areas of the Territory are these products proposed to be marketed?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, one of the conditions of Oilmin's licence to extract oil in central Australia is that the company build an oil refinery in Alice Springs within a certain time unless the company can demonstrate that it is clearly uneconomic for it to do so. This condition was imposed by the Northern Territory government in order that a Territory natural resource should be processed to the maximum possible extent within the Northern Territory and used in the Northern Territory. I am advised that preliminary studies have shown that the viability of such a refinery is almost assured. A detailed proposal will be submitted to me within the next 2 or 3 months, if my memory serves me correctly. At present, most of the crude oil being extracted at Alice Springs is being shipped to South Australia for refining.

Some distilling units have been installed recently which some people in Alice Springs mistakenly believe to be the refinery. They are distilling units that very crudely refine the oil that comes out of the ground. The intention is to produce 2 products. One is a form of distillate which tests have shown would be suitable for use in the Tennant Creek power-station. NTEC has been talking to a company called NT Fuels with a view to using that distillate product at the Tennant Creek power-station. Another by-product of the distilling units will be a product suitable for burning at Stokes Hill power-station. We are very pleased to learn that, even without a full-scale refinery in Alice Springs, significant use is possible in the Northern Territory of the crude oil from Mereenie.

That action is being followed up by a detailed proposal for a full oil refinery to produce petrol. I hope that, in the not-too-distant future, announcements can be made about the timing of the construction of that facility. The company has been agonising over its feasibility studies on what the potential market in the Northern Territory is likely to be for the range of products from a full refinery. I have said that it can work on the principle that this government wants to see an absolute minimisation of crude oil or crude oil products leaving the Northern Territory. In other words, we will pressure the company to provide to the Territory every product that can be distilled from the oil that could reasonably find a market in the Northern Territory. We will not allow it to establish a token refinery and send the bulk of crude oil to South Australia because it might suit other parties. I believe that the company has accepted that statement in the spirit that it was presented to it and as being directed specifically towards Territory interests.

Release of Casino Documents to Federal Member

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he advise this Assembly whether the additional casino documentation, disclosed in this Assembly this morning and supplied to the federal member, was supplied on the basis that, on receipt of that documentation, the federal member would not pursue and continue his attacks in the federal parliament on the credibility of both the Northern Territory government and the Northern

Territory's Chief Minister? Can he give an undertaking to this Assembly that at least the opposition in this Assembly, if not the Assembly itself, will be given access to this additional confidential documentation on the same terms and conditions as it was supplied to the honourable federal member?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, for the third time, I tell the honourable member that it was provided to the federal member on a confidential basis and that no other strings were attached to it. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that, in the past - and I am quite happy to do so in the future - I have often shown him, on a confidential basis, documents that we have regarded as confidential. I make the point again that some of the papers concerned are private papers relating to the federal member. Other papers are not private. If the Leader of the Opposition has a passion to see anything, he can raise it with me and we will discuss the way in which it can be used. We have done that often in the past and the Leader of the Opposition has respected the confidentiality.

Mr B. Collins: I am not talking about deals behind closed doors in Block 8. I am talking about doing it in here.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I will add one further comment to the Leader of the Opposition's proposition. During the course of the debate, the members of the opposition raised their concern about the figures that we used. On a confidential basis, the members were given a briefing on the figures that were used in the calculations regarding the casinos. They thought that was fair and reasonable and they took the figures and used them. That is great. On the same basis, if there is a particular need for the Leader of the Opposition to have a confidential briefing on these matters, he can have one.

New Marine Pleasure Craft Regulations

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for PORTS and FISHERIES

Is it true that the new marine pleasure craft regulations no longer require powerboat drivers to pass any sort of test of their skill or ability to safely control a vessel? If this is so, why is such a test no longer considered necessary?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member gave me warning of his question. The short answer is that there is no longer the requirement for powerboat drivers to undergo a licensing test. In fact, there is no longer a requirement for licences to be issued to powerboat drivers. Nor will there be a requirement for boats to be registered.

Mr Speaker, the situation that existed for some time in the Northern Territory has been that, under the Darwin Port Authority Act, which only applied to the Port of Darwin, there was a requirement for licensing and registration of vessels. The investigation of that situation showed that, firstly, it only applied to the Port of Darwin and there were no regulations whatsoever applying anywhere else in the Northern Territory so far as the operation of powerboats was concerned. Secondly, the method of testing for powerboat licences was somewhat loose. In relation to registration of vessels, there was a serious concern and a belief that people were borrowing equipment to meet the requirements of registration. There was no follow-up system in place to ensure that powerboats maintained those requirements.

It is the intention of the Port Authority and the government to redirect effort towards public awareness and policing to ensure that, at all times, powerboats meet the requirements stipulated under the regulations which are in the process of being finalised and which will be in place by 1 May which is regarded generally as the commencement of the boating season. Those regulations will provide a much wider policing. All Northern Territory police officers will be empowered to enforce the new regulations. They will also be enforced by specially-appointed boating inspectors throughout Northern Territory coastal areas. The latter group will include fishery inspectors and rangers with the Northern Territory Conservation Commission. Maximum fines for breaches of the new regulations will be set at \$500 as against a maximum of \$100 in the current harbour craft bylaws under the Darwin Port Authority Act. We are strengthening the policing of performance on the water rather than continuing to concentrate our attention on the licensing of a driver and the registration of a vessel.

It is true that the majority of states require licensing of pleasure craft operators under certain circumstances. There are exceptions. They include Western Australia and Victoria where licensing of operators is not required. Most other states do not have the problems of isolated coastal towns separated by vast tracts of uninhabited coastline. The cost of trying to administer and police licensing and registration of vessels throughout the Northern Territory would be horrendous to the Northern Territory with little or no benefit resulting. The approach of policing the performance of vessels on the water will provide for much better safety and much better control.

Mr Speaker, this matter has been discussed for some time. There has been consultation with amateur fishermen's and commercial boat operators' organisations and they have come out strongly in favour of this proposal. They recognise the wisdom of the approach being adopted by the government.

Casino Purchase

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

Is he now able to provide either an explanation or legal advice that the \$2.5m which was paid with NTDC funds by the Northern Territory government as part of the purchase price of the casino was legal payment under the terms of the Territory Development Corporation Act?

ANSWER

It so happens that a legal opinion arrived in my office about 10 minutes before I left for the Assembly this morning. I received a facsimile transmission dated 15 April from W.H. Nicholas of Selbourne Chambers, Sydney. He is a QC. I understand he is one of the leading lights in his field. I have a document here which I will not table this morning because I have not had time to read it in depth. However, I would be happy to make it available to the Leader of the Opposition on a confidential basis until our Department of Law has a chance to assess it. I will quote from it.

Mr B. Collins: If you haven't read it first, you should be careful.

Mr DONDAS: I have read sections that would answer the honourable member's question.

Mr B. Collins: Well, you go ahead then.

Mr DONDAS: It says:

In summary, therefore, it appears to me that the role of the corporation in assisting the Territory to complete settlement was: (1) to receive an appropriation of \$2.5m upon the basis and for the purpose that it be made available for the use and on behalf of the Territory in discharge of the Territory's liability under the agreement of the 8th November 1984; and (2) to advance some funds in the hand for the sum of \$770 000 for the same purposes upon the basis of conditions as recorded in the general manager's memorandum of 19th November 1984, referred to in the above.

It goes on to say:

It seems to me to be beyond either argument or doubt that the acquisition by the Territory from Federals of the casino and the hotel complexes in Darwin and Alice Springs, the making of the agreement of the 8th November 1984, the making of the casino purchase agreement of the 30th September 1984 and the consequences of each transaction are all steps in or features of the development of industry in the Territory. This has already been recognised by the Legislative Assembly in a recital to the Federal Hotels (Casino Compensation) Act of 1984 to which my instructing solicitors are particularly referred.

It also seemed to me plainly wrong to suggest that the assistance rendered by the corporation to the Territory to facilitate the discharge of its liability under the agreement of the 8th November 1984 was not something done to assist in the development of the industry in the Territory, having regard to the circumstances in and the purpose for which that liability was incurred.

I should add that, having regard to the basis upon which the sum of \$2.5m was appropriated to it, the corporation was bound to dispose of it in a way it did in any event. To have done otherwise would have been contrary to the arrangement described under the Treasurer's minute of the 12th November 1984 and in the memorandum of the General Manager Primary Industry (Administrative) of 19th November 1981.

For the reasons expressed above, therefore, my conclusion is that the corporation was carrying out its factory function and acting within its powers in providing the moneys to the Territory pursuant to the arrangement with the Department of Treasury. I can see no legitimate basis for contention that the corporation lacked the power to do so.

Burning of Central Land Council Building

Mr D.W. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Recently, accusations, both direct and inferred, were made in Alice Springs and Darwin that white people were responsible for the burning down of the Aboriginal Legal Aid and Central Land Council building. Is the honourable minister able to clarify the situation for the Assembly and the public?

ANSWER

The fire in Alice Springs could only be regarded as tragic and unfortunate. I recall that certain people alleged that certain members of the community were responsible for the fire. It was a sign of the racial tension in the

community. As I recall, youths were subsequently arrested for starting the fire. I do not have any up-to-date information about the circumstances and events. If the honourable member would like to raise it with me, I will provide him with a complete briefing. If it is his wish, I will provide for the benefit of the Assembly at a later stage in this sittings a detailed report on the fire and all the events surrounding it subsequently.

Norgaard Reports

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PORTS and FISHERIES

When will the government release the details of the recommendations of the Norgaard reports and what action has the government taken towards the implementation of those recommendations?

ANSWER

The reports are in 4 stages, 3 of which have been approved. A decision has yet to be taken on whether we will proceed to the fourth stage. Stage 1 of the Norgaard reports was a baseline study on the fishing industry and its potential in the Northern Territory. It was released in early 1984. Following that, stages 2 and 3 were commissioned by Norgaard consultants. They have carried out that investigation. Those reports have been received by the government and have been considered by Cabinet.

At the moment, those reports are subject to examination by an interdepartmental committee comprising the Northern Territory Department of Ports and Fisheries, the Department of Treasury and the Department of Industry and Small Business. It will investigate those reports in detail and prepare recommendations on the direction and level of expenditure the government may adopt for the development of Northern Territory fishing industry resources. When we are referring to fishing resources, we are not merely talking about the fishing resources immediately off the coast of the Northern Territory. There is an area referred to as the Northern Australian Fishing Zone. The studies refer to the potential sustainable recoverable fish resources from within that zone and developing strategies to encourage fishermen to land the catch and have that catch processed within the Northern Territory.

Early indications indicate potential resources for a multiplicity of species of up to 70 000 t per annum of sustainable recoverable yield from the oceans of northern Australia. The strategy study is examining how we can proceed towards attracting the development and exploitation of those resources and how to encourage that industry to develop and base itself around the Northern Territory which, of course, is ideally located in the centre of the Northern Australian Fishing Zone.

It is our intention to have those details available for consideration by government by June of this year with the hope that the matter can be considered in the context of the ensuing year's budget.

Justices of the Peace in the Assembly

Mr EDE to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Given that the office of justice of the peace includes a judicial role, and in view of the undesirability of any conflict of interests arising between judicial and legislative functions of members of this Assembly, will he ask

those current members of this Assembly who are justices of the peace to resign their commissions and accept appointment as commissioners for oaths?

ANSWER

I would like to deliberate on this question before responding to the honourable member. Lately, we have been very careful in the appointments of justices of the peace in the community because it is not a currency one wants debased in any way. Therefore, we are very careful in that regard. As to whether members of this Assembly, who are also justices of the peace, should resign their commissions, I would like to seek advice on that question before passing an opinion.

Appointment of Truancy Officers

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

The Council of Government Schools Organisations has recently criticised the lack of consultation in regard to the proposal to appoint truancy officers in both Darwin and Alice Springs. Did adequate consultation take place, and what criteria will be used to select officers for these positions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his question. I recall reading the article to which the honourable member refers. Truancy is a very real problem in the Northern Territory, and I have been spelling that out for some time now. I have had discussions with many groups that are involved with children, students, teachers and parents generally. I believe that the community itself had an awareness of the exact situation in relation to truancy, and it was a very real problem indeed. I can remember that, when I first became Minister for Education, it did not take me long to realise that there was a problem in this particular area.

I believe that the comments made by COGSO were probably as a result of a very quick reaction to the issue that had to be addressed. Consultation can only go so far. I have supported consultation right down the line and I have made a great effort in this respect. Wherever possible, I have tried to speak to groups involved in various aspects of my portfolio and I think my record stands by that. However, there comes a time when government must act responsibly, and the very serious situation that existed required the course of action that has been taken. I can only say here that, as far as truancy officers are concerned, this whole exercise will be monitored very closely.

Perhaps I could refer to the relevant sections of the act in relation to truancy because there has been some concern about the powers of truancy officers. I refer to sections 31 and 32 which are the relevant sections of the act. The most important information is contained in section 31 subsections (2) through to (5). Section 31 says:

(2) The Secretary shall issue to each authorised person an identity card in accordance with the form approved by the minister.

(3) Where an authorised person observes a child who appears to him to be a child of compulsory school age in a public place at a time when the authorised person is satisfied there is reasonable grounds for believing that the child is required to attend a school, he may, after producing the identity card referred to in subsection (2),

request of the child his name and address and the reason for his absence from school.

(4) An authorised person may, at any time between 8 am and 7 pm during the day, call at an address that has been obtained under subsection (3) or otherwise and, after producing the identity card referred to in subsection (2), require any person present at that address to furnish him with: (a) the full name of all children of compulsory school age who ordinarily reside at that address; and (b) the names of the schools, if any, at which those children are enrolled.

*(5) A person shall, so far as he is able, comply with the requirements of an authorised person made under subsection (4).
Penalty \$200.*

Mr Speaker, it is clear from the above that there is no legal requirement on a child to provide information to a truancy officer if that information is sought in a public place. Thus, the effectiveness of the truancy officer in attempting to persuade a child to leave, say, Casuarina Square or some other area and return to school will rely solely on that officer's powers of persuasion and not on powers of coercion. It is equally clear that, when approached at their homes by an authorised officer between the hours of 8 am and 7 pm, parents are legally required to provide the requested information.

Mr Speaker, notwithstanding the lack of penalty for a child who refuses to provide information to a truancy officer in a public place, I believe that the time spent by an officer in such truancy haunts as Casuarina Square should pay dividends. The rationale for that statement is that I am convinced that quite a number of truants are missing school without their parents' knowledge. Faced with the choice between providing the requested information and returning to school or having the truancy officer visit his parents later in the day, I believe that a number of truants will take the former course of action and cooperate.

Mr Speaker, 2 truancy officers will be appointed in the northern region and 1 in the southern region and their positions will be set at a level of school assistant grade 5 which is 1 level above the home liaison officer. We will be looking for people who have a great deal of experience in working with youth and an understanding of the problems which young people face in our society today. The officers will also have to be firm in their approach and liaise very closely with the home liaison officers and the schools. The home liaison officer is the contact between students, parents and the schools. Many of these people maintain very close consultation with the respective groups.

Mr Speaker, I hope that the appointment of truancy officers will assist in overcoming a very real problem. This problem will be highlighted when we are presented with a report from the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. I believe that emphasis will be placed on the connection between truancy and juvenile crime. I believe that the government had no alternative but to move in the way it has. The anti-truancy campaign began in March. It will be monitored very carefully and I can assure members that it is not the 'big stick' approach. Our approach will be to examine the issues as they arise. The truancy officer will be required to report daily to the secretary of the department and we will be following the matter from day to day.

Documents Relating to Purchase of Casinos

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer the Chief Minister to the answers given in the Assembly this morning and to a press statement issued by him on 29 January 1985. In order for the paragraph that I quote not to be taken out of context, I seek leave to have the press statement incorporated in Hansard.

Leave granted.

29 January 1985.

PRESS RELEASE BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR IAN TUXWORTH

The Chief Minister, Mr Ian Tuxworth, said today that all documents concerning the casino takeover would be tabled next month at the sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

'As the media has received the most comprehensive briefing possible, I can see no point in further discussion until then', Mr Tuxworth said.

Mr Tuxworth said that the government had every faith in the future of the Myilly Point development but stressed the original proposition had been a concept only.

When the feasibility studies we are currently conducting are finalised, we will have a much more professional idea of what the Myilly Point development will look like.

'However we are now dealing with the economic realities of the proposal and in the cold light of day many features of the concept just don't make sense to the business world.

'For instance it has been estimated that the marina which was featured in the original concept would cost as much as \$70m which makes this development impracticable.

'The concept has a 23-storey office tower which would absorb most of the existing office space in Darwin.

'The retail shopping space in the concept was based on the accommodation tower being full', Mr Tuxworth said.

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, the press statement issued by the honourable Chief Minister on 29 January 1985 said:

The Chief Minister, Mr Ian Tuxworth, said today that all documents concerning the casino takeover would be tabled next month at the sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr Speaker, accepting, as we must, that the statement made in this press statement that 'all documents would be tabled in the Legislative Assembly' and the statements made about additional material having been provided privately to the federal member cannot both be true, could he please advise this Assembly if his statements in the Assembly this morning were false or if his statement of 29 January 1985 was false?

ANSWER

All the relevant documents that relate to the casinos acquisition and takeover have been tabled.

Conference on Local Government

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When will the minister be making public the recommendations on local government, especially as they apply to the Darwin rural area, that came from the recent closed conference on local government in Darwin?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the 2-day conference held recently to discuss local government issues throughout the Territory covered a wide range of subjects, which were all interconnected. The new local government legislation is being processed at the moment. The request from the Darwin City Council to go out to the 1945 acquisition line, the new municipality of Palmerston and the Darwin Rural Advisory Council report all interconnect with one another in one way or another, mainly because of the land concerned. The Darwin Rural Advisory Council report took into consideration the Knuckeys Lagoon area which is sometimes referred to as the Berrimah rates area because, until recently, people in that area paid rates on the unimproved capital value of their land. They paid their rates to the Department of Community Development rather than the Darwin City Council. That, of course, is taxation without representation and we are anxious to right that very quickly.

The report of the Darwin Rural Advisory Council cannot be viewed in isolation. The reason for the 2-day conference was to look at the interconnection of the issues. The Darwin City Council wants to cover the 1945 acquisition area which includes the area known as the Berrimah rates area and the Knuckeys Lagoon area. The Darwin Rural Advisory Council also considered the Berrimah rates area. The purpose of the conference was to examine the interrelationship of the issues and to decide on the action to be taken.

We hope to introduce the new local government legislation soon. We hope to make a decision on the extension of the boundaries to be covered by the new legislation and the matter of an urban farm rate is also under consideration. As I said in the answer to a previous question from the honourable member for Koolpinyah, the issues raised in the Darwin Rural Advisory Council report will be examined. It provides a unique opportunity in Australia to examine recommendations on where local government should or should not be established. Those issues will be addressed by officer exchange in the near future. I hope to be able to act on the recommendations in that report before the year is out. The boundaries for the municipality of Palmerston were gazetted on 1 April. It has already made a submission that it would like extensions to those boundaries to take in the Pinelands Industrial Estate which also includes the Berrimah or Knuckey's Lagoon area. The short answer to the question is that all the issues that were raised in the 2-day conference are being dealt with by the department and in fact legislation to cover some of them will be before this Assembly in the very near future.

Magpie Geese Problem for Rice Growers

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Can he confirm that he has received submissions from rice growers at Tortilla Flats about the magpie geese problem in the area and, if so, what action is being taken by the department or the Conservation Commission to alleviate the problem?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I confirm that I have had representations from the rice growers in the Tortilla Flats area. These representations were made early this year because a large population of magpie geese was having quite a feed of rice at the time. The growers have been trying to develop some control methods to prevent the magpie geese from causing extensive damage to the crops. A number of techniques have been tried to keep them away. Guns have been used to scare them but that can be effective only if you are shooting 24 hours a day. Gas guns were introduced which discharged at fairly regular intervals day and night. That had a somewhat disturbing effect on the sleep of the farmers and the geese soon developed a familiarity with it and simply ignored the noise. It served to scare only the visitors who happened to walk past the rice farms. I have personal experience of that.

Mr Speaker, because of the inadequacy of these control methods, the Department of Primary Production has been testing an ultrasonic device to scare the birds. This operates on ultrasonic sound frequencies which are sent out above the rice fields at a frequency which is consistent with the natural hearing frequency of the animals. It has an effect of creating serious problems in the animals' muscles. It has been described as having the effect of flying into a brick wall. This device has been used on a number of quite large animals and has worked very effectively. It was originally developed in the United States as a method of controlling dogs. The Conservation Commission is investigating its potential use as a method of effective fencing in the open-range zoo being constructed at Berry Springs. There are still some difficulties with this device, partially because, when the magpie geese come in to land, they glide in and consequently do not use their muscles. The problem is being worked on at the moment. Mr Speaker, probably as the frequencies are tuned, the device will provide a real potential for effective control of the magpie geese problems and overcome some of the difficulties.

There is only one other problem with this device, which I really should mention, and that is that, farmers being a suspicious lot, they sit and watch this device. Of course, the frequencies that are being used are beyond the normal hearing range of humans and they cannot hear it operating. So, as a marketing device, the manufacturers have had to incorporate an audible sound so that users can tell when it is turned on.

Junior Police Ranger Scheme

Mr FINCH to CHIEF MINISTER

Could he advise the Assembly whether a junior police ranger scheme is to be established in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take several minutes of the Assembly's time to address this matter for the benefit of the honourable member for Wagaman because it is a very important issue and one that I believe will involve all the members of this Assembly as the days go by because we are entering into a new phase of police involvement in community affairs.

Mr B. Collins: Well make a ministerial statement.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the honourable Leader of the Opposition, I am not making a ministerial statement, but I am going to answer a question that is very important in this day and age. Just to outline the current involvement of the police at the moment, they have a fairly heavy involvement at the Casuarina Youth Centre which operates in the Casuarina High School under the direction of the Police Liaison Officer, Constable Mitchell. The programs in the high school are run after school hours 3 times a week. Constable Mitchell supervises table tennis, fencing, gymnastics, rap dancing, martial arts, basketball, boxing and weightlifting.

Another area of involvement that the police already have is with the Police and Citizens Youth Club which is run in the city. I believe that establishment is so well known that all members would be aware of it. This facility operates in the same manner as the Casuarina Youth Centre. However, there is a serious problem developing in that the numbers are dropping off and the police are of the view that the facility needs to be moved into the northern suburbs to be closer to the children.

The Blue Light discos that have become a regular feature of police involvement with youth in the Northern Territory now operate through the Police and Citizens Youth Clubs at Casuarina, Palmerston and Humpty Doo. They are run on a monthly basis and are very popular with young people. The discos are very well supervised to see that the rough element does not creep in. I think that is one of the great attractions of the discos, not only for the children but in so far as the parents are concerned.

Mr Speaker, at the Wongabilla Pony Club, the police are operating a pony club on a 5-acre site near the Angliss Meatworks on the highway. It is run by a police constable. The club currently has 42 horses and some other animals. I guess they could be donkeys or mules. Riding lessons are conducted for the 8 to 18-year-olds several times a week. Time is also set aside for the police to be involved in running programs for handicapped children and pre-school children who come to visit the animals. Zoo visits by the children have also occurred in the last 6 months and they have been supervised by the Police Community Affairs Division. Moves are also being made to change the club's constitution to enable greater community development which will enhance further interest of the community and the youth and the police. The club also runs special programs for Aboriginal children in Kormilda College in conjunction with the Duke of Edinburgh awards. Further, an Aboriginal stockmen's course will also commence soon to teach young Aboriginals skills relating to the handling of horses.

I turn, Mr Speaker, to the issue of new initiatives for police involvement in the community of the Northern Territory, particularly with the youth. The Police Commissioner has put forward to the government a proposal for consideration which is called the police ranger scheme. It is fondly known by my colleagues as the junior woodchuck scheme because we believe it is something that will be very popular with children in the Northern Territory.

The proposal is that children will be selected by joint selection processes involving schools and the police. They will look at taking in a maximum of 36 children for each of the 3 phases of the scheme which will run over 3 years. It is proposed that the scheme will commence in June 1985. The purpose of the scheme is not just to be a child-minding centre but to develop leadership qualities, good citizenship and other skills not normally taught in schools to children at the Year 8 level, which is the 13 to 14-year-olds. That is the first stage of the scheme.

Mr Speaker, when the program is in full swing, the police propose that a maximum of 100 children will be going through the program at any one time. The strategy is to involve children who have progressed through the scheme to assist with training junior members. This will also encourage those who have completed the 3 phases of the scheme to remain actively involved in community affairs. That is not necessarily in this particular area but right throughout the community.

It is also proposed by the Police Commissioner that training through the scheme will take place at various locations, including the training centre, Police and Citizens Youth Club and the Wongabilla pony club. These training activities will be coordinated by a third-class sergeant and 3 constables who will be attached to the community affairs section.

Junior rangers will have an identifiable uniform and they will be involved in drill and physical training, first aid, water safety, compass and map reading, boat handling, communications, conservation, ethnic affairs, junior fire fighting, firearm safety, introduction to water navigation, basic horsemanship and animal husbandry, public speaking and debating, youth and the law and bush survival.

Mr Speaker, it is also intended that courses that are completed by the children will be awarded with successful completion certificates at the end of the course. The dissemination of information about this program has already started in the schools for the Year 8 children.

A further extension of this program for police to become involved with the youth of the Northern Territory is to take the concept of police liaison officers in schools just one step further. Honourable members would be aware that there is already an extension of the police at the Casuarina High School where sergeants of the CIB have adopted a high school for liaison with teachers, students and truancy officers. It is proposed to further develop this contact with students. The government is examining the possibility of locating a police officer at each major high school. It is also envisaged that the police officer would not only play an active role at the high school during school hours but would liaise with parents and shopkeepers in the vicinity of the school, regulate traffic in the vicinity of the school, monitor activities of undesirables in the area, liaise with school truancy officers and maintain contact with relevant government departments which are involved with the welfare of the students. The departments I refer to there are the Departments of Health, Community Development and Education.

Mr Speaker, I do not have to point out to you or other honourable members the concern of the government and other members of the community at the increasing rate of juvenile crime and the need to look at ways in which police may get closer to the young people in the Territory. The object of it is not to snoop on children but to have a positive influence on them so that they do not become involved in juvenile criminal activities.

I have raised with members of the Assembly this morning a couple of projects that the government is looking at for the Police Force to become involved with the youth of the Northern Territory. I would be most grateful to receive feedback from members on how these programs are being received in the community and whether there are things that we can do to enhance the productivity of the programs as we go along. At this stage, in fairness to those members outside of Darwin, I must say that programs are proposed only for Darwin. However, I envisage that they will eventually reach every community in the Northern Territory. If honourable members from other areas have suggestions that they would like to make on how these programs could be introduced into their communities, I would only be too pleased to hear from them.

Legal Opinion on \$2.5m NTDC Payment for Casino Purchase

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

Mr Speaker, I will slip this question in before the next dorothy dixer followed by a ministerial statement. Yesterday, he read to the Assembly extracts from a legal opinion. It is always a very dangerous thing to do. That legal opinion said, among other things, that the amount of \$2.5m was transferred to the Northern Territory Development Corporation in early November, specifically for the purchase of the casinos. Can he confirm that that statement in that legal opinion is correct and can he also confirm that the Treasurer's minute of 12 November 1984, mentioned in the legal opinion given yesterday, was the minute that transferred the \$2.5m?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition will remember that yesterday I said that I would make the legal opinion available to him on a confidential basis. At that time, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Millner sat there and pooh-poohed my proposal. However, yesterday afternoon, my office received a phone call from the Leader of the Opposition asking whether I would make the legal opinion available. I am still happy to make available those portions of the legal opinion pertaining to the \$2.5m. Other questions were asked which had nothing to do with the \$2.5m. I am happy to give to the Leader of the Opposition, on a confidential basis, the section of the legal opinion relating to the \$2.5m. In respect of the other questions, I would ask that the Leader of the Opposition give me some time to provide that information during the course of this sittings.

Aboriginal Assistant Teachers

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he able to report on the joint working party which was established to examine outstation education as a result of the Commonwealth government's decision to cease funding of Aboriginal assistant teachers in homeland centres in June this year?

ANSWER

I thank the honourable member for his question. The issue of the establishment of the working party to examine outstation education is of concern to all members of this Assembly. I am afraid it has been somewhat of a disaster. I found out only recently that the letter that I had written to Clyde Holding to indicate the government members on that particular working party had not been received in Canberra. That was of grave concern because, as I mentioned on another occasion, the issue was to be addressed by 30 April. The working party itself has not been set up. It is a disappointment to me that this has not happened. It is of grave concern and the matter has been rectified as of today. I sent a copy of our letter and I hope that the time for the particular party to consider this issue, which is a very grave one for the Territory, will be extended. It is important that the funding of assistant teachers in outstation areas is addressed in a responsible manner. It requires input not only from the Commonwealth government but also from the Northern Territory government and members of those particular communities. It is important that we all acknowledge that we have a responsibility in assisting to make sure that teaching assistants are able to continue in those particular communities.

Mr Speaker, I might also mention that I have received a letter in relation to the withdrawal of funding for linguist and literacy workers in 4 Aboriginal communities: Oenpelli, Galiwinku, Angurugu and Numbulwar. Again, the letter came from Clyde Holding. These people are not employed by the Department of Education. What I am saying is that these literacy workers and linguists have assisted the government on many occasions. The withdrawal of funding for those positions will reduce employment in some Aboriginal communities. It goes back to the Commonwealth days, as the Leader of the Opposition would realise, but it is important that these positions are able to be maintained.

Mr Speaker, I have sent a telex to Susan Ryan in relation to this particular issue. I will just read the telex out to honourable members because it is of concern:

Re funding of linguists and literacy worker positions at Oenpelli, Numbulwar, Angurugu and Galiwinku, I have received a letter from your colleague, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, advising that his department will no longer fund linguists and literacy worker positions in the above communities after the end of this financial year. I am most concerned to receive this advice as the Territory is simply not able to take over funding of these positions. I seek your assistance in continuing Commonwealth funding for these positions.

It is important that we try wherever possible to retain employment opportunities in Aboriginal communities. The work of these particular people has assisted the department. There will be some downgrading of the service if those particular positions are not continued to be funded. As I said, the Northern Territory government is not in a position to do this. Those particular programs are not essential to our own but they do assist us on many occasions. I would hope that all members would support our approach to the Commonwealth government in trying to continue funding for those particular positions.

Legal Opinion on \$2.5m NTDC Payment for Casino Purchase

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

It refers to the unexpurgated version of the legal opinion which he read in the Assembly yesterday. That legal opinion referred to: 'The Territory's liabilities under the agreement of 8th November 1984'. I cannot find an agreement of 8 November 1984 in any of the casino papers that were tabled in this Assembly. Could he provide the Assembly with details of the agreement of 8 November 1984? What are the liabilities to the Territory which are contained in that agreement? Why was that agreement not tabled with the casino papers at the last sittings of the Legislative Assembly, and when will it be tabled?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask him to place the question on notice and I will provide him with that information during the course of this sittings.

Damage to Roads in Rural Area

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Mr Speaker, in view of the gross destruction of roads in the rural area used by the extractive mineral industry vehicles, would he examine the question of user-pays in relation to the industry vehicles using these roads?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the vehicles working in the extractive minerals industry are the very heavy vehicles that allow roads to be made. As a government, we have not considered the proposal that we should impose a levy or toll on certain road users with a view to charging them for damage to roads. The problem the honourable member has is that the trucks bringing in blue metal, gravel and sand to Darwin for the construction industry are running on unsealed roads in her electorate. Obviously, their trucks are heavily loaded and probably travelling at reasonable speed and therefore do considerable damage to those roads. However, the principle of charging the owners of vehicles that damage roads would really be the same whether it is a dirt road or a sealed road. As members know, the road trains that use the Stuart Highway do far more damage than other users of the highway but we have never contemplated imposing some sort of levy on such people. Those people are all taxpayers and the funding for roads in the Northern Territory is distributed on what the government sees as a needs basis. Perhaps the answer to the honourable member's problem is for her to encourage the relevant minister to maintain the roads in her electorate more effectively. Where roads are constantly used, she should press to have them sealed if possible. The short answer is that we have not considered a user-pays basis for road users and it is unlikely that we ever will.

Moorings at Sadgroves Creek

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PORTS and FISHERIES

Is the Darwin Port Authority proceeding with proposals to establish additional moorings at Sadgroves Creek and, if so, what consultation has taken place with the potential users, and what is the current status of those proposals?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the government has been looking for some time at developing some mooring facilities in the Sadgroves Creek region to try to regularise the current haphazard use of that area. It is the only currently available safe water anchorage for yachts in the harbour. The Port Authority has carried out some very detailed investigations and has prepared proposals that would provide for fore-and-aft mooring and what is called swing mooring depending on the tidal and current flows and wind directions in the Sadgroves Creek area. Some parts are suitable for fore-and-aft mooring which enables more concentrated mooring. Other areas are not suitable because of the winds and currents and therefore a design has been prepared to provide for swing mooring whereby a boat is tied down from the bow and it will swing around the buoy. That will provide for some 50 moorings in the area.

There was a public meeting of all interested persons and potential users of that facility on 28 February. The matter was discussed in detail. Since that time, the department has been moving to firm up the details of that proposal. We are now in a position to go to tender. However, because of the necessity to redesign that facility and because the costs are higher than originally proposed, the matter will need to be considered in the context of the budget. It is expected that we will be finalising our detailed consideration and we will refer back to a public meeting with detail of costs and proposed rental costs for those facilities. It should be made very clear, Mr Speaker, that that facility will be required to pay for itself. It is not proposed to be developed as a subsidised operation. The early estimate is that the hiring cost will be \$250 to \$500 per annum. Obviously, that is a matter of further consultation. However, there is still an indication of a strong interest from people to take moorings in the area.

An additional problem is the access to and from the Sadgroves Creek mooring area. Investigations have been conducted by both the Department of Lands and the Department of Ports and Fisheries on a proposal put forward from the public meeting for the development of a walkway and floating pontoon to enable those people who are seeking access to and from the boats in their dinghies. That walkway would need to reach the point where there is always water, and that is a long way out. The proposal includes fixing a floating pontoon at the end of the walkway. That would solve the problem whereby boat owners must either walk across the mud flats at low tide or go right down to the existing public boat ramp facilities at the other end of Frances Bay.

That matter is still under investigation. There has been a proposal brought to my attention. It would cost in excess of \$0.25m to provide that facility. Alternatives are being investigated before a final decision will be made as to whether it is the most appropriate way to spend what moneys we have available. It could be that there are greater needs elsewhere. Either way, the matter is receiving much detailed attention. We would anticipate that, within the next month or 2, we will be in a firm position to hold another public meeting of users, firm up the proposals and hopefully get the matter put forward to contract.

St John Ambulance Service at Yulara

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH

What action has he taken to reinstate the St John Ambulance service at the Yulara tourist village?

ANSWER

The position at Yulara is somewhat changed from the last time I spoke. Quite an effort was made by local people to canvass the community. The number of people in the area who are fully qualified with St John Ambulance certificates is surprising. It rather surprised me. I think the number is about 8. It certainly gives us a nucleus of people who perhaps could re-establish a St John Ambulance service there on a voluntary basis.

I understand from what I was told yesterday that a meeting was held at Yulara the day before yesterday. Details of the personnel and services which those personnel may be able to provide is being telexed to me. I will examine that telex with a great deal of interest. We will see what we can do about establishing at least a reasonable level of service on a voluntary basis in the Yulara area.

Dangerous Substances Storage and Disposal Area for Alice Springs

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Concern about a dangerous substances storage and disposal area for Alice Springs was raised with me by a constituent after a recent Four Corners television program. What substances are expected to be stored in such an area and can he assure my constituents on its safety?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the Northern Territory is taking quite seriously the matter of dangerous goods storage. At the present time, the Department of Mines and Energy proposes to construct and operate a high security dangerous goods storage facility at a site just out of Alice Springs. Negotiations are still proceeding on that particular site. The facility will be operated within the ambit of the new Dangerous Goods Regulations which provide for the control and means of disposal of hazardous wastes and establishment of disposal sites in the Northern Territory.

There is evidence of a widespread problem in the Territory arising from small but significantly hazardous quantities of material which have been discarded in deteriorated packaging or have become obsolete in storage in industrial operations, hospitals and school laboratories. In order to avoid harm to people and the environment, these wastes are being collected and held in temporary storage in several places pending the completion of the central storage facilities near Alice Springs.

I am advised that the present inventory of hazardous wastes in temporary storage under control of the department includes deteriorated pesticides, herbicide concentrates, disused laboratory chemicals, flammable solvent wastes and petroleum sludge. The facility will be developed in stages. The first stage will consist of a locked steel shed constructed with an internal concrete enclosure to contain any spilt material in storage. Incompatible chemicals will be kept separately to avoid dangerous fires, such as those which occurred recently and which were caused by incorrect storage in warehouses. Later stages will involve controlled burn-off areas for flammable wastes and deep burial pits for neutralised and detoxified wastes.

Favourable wind conditions and the absence of artesian water systems within the selected area will ensure that environmental detriment or personal hazards will be minimised by the operation of the facility on that particular

site. I hope that arrangements for that facility to be constructed can be finalised in the not too distant future. It will be the central government storage for wastes from around the Territory. Investigations to date have demonstrated that the site would be ideal.

1985 Prospects for Territory Abattoirs

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

In view of the improbability of Katherine abattoir opening for the 1985 season, what are the prospects and outlooks for other Territory abattoirs for the 1985 killing season?

ANSWER

There is much concern around the industry and within the department about the status of abattoirs in the Northern Territory this season. We have been trying to keep track of what is going on. It is rather difficult to obtain from the operators of the abattoirs any accurate information about whether they will or will not open.

The honourable member's question indicated some concern in respect of the Katherine abattoir. That probably provides a good example. Members would be aware that that abattoir was placed on the market and tenders were called for the purchase of both that abattoir and the Wyndham abattoir earlier this year. I understand there was no sale. That certainly raised questions in my mind. I contacted the senior executives at Northwest Beef and Hookers to try to ascertain what the situation was. I was advised by both that, if the sale did not proceed, they would probably open. However, rumours persist that they will not open. As recently as this morning, we have not been able to get a firm confirmation as to whether or not that abattoir is to open.

One of the main reasons for these problems has been the extreme difficulties of the abattoir industry, particularly in the Northern Territory, over the last couple of years and the possibility of difficulties this year. The abattoir industry in Australia generally is suffering very difficult times. Abattoirs generally are not making any money anywhere in the country. In fact, most are losing money. That is not an encouragement to continue operating. Problems have been compounded in the Northern Territory because of the extensive industrial relations problems that have existed in the abattoirs as a consequence of actions taken in respect of the Northern Territory meat industry award which will deal with most of the abattoirs in the Northern Territory. That particular matter went to arbitration and most of the employers' submissions were accepted. The proposal was that an award would be drafted around those lines. The trade union movement, as is often its wont, chose to ignore the decision of the commission and sought to take industrial action to break that decision by force of muscle on the ground.

Last year, many of our abattoirs suffered severe loss of production as a consequence of that industrial action. Mudginberri, a local abattoir, last year lost in excess of \$300 000 as a consequence of the industrial action of the trade union movement. The Point Stuart abattoir is unlikely to open this year, partially as a consequence of the actions last year. I understand it did not operate last year and it is unlikely to operate this year. It is a new abattoir. The person who was operating that abattoir last year is now out of the picture. There is a new operator but it does not look like it is going to open. The Mudginberri abattoir, which is operated by a local man and his family, suffered very severe problems. We do anticipate that it will open this

year. That abattoir is very important, particularly to the buffalo industry, but it is suffering severe problems as a consequence of the double dealing of the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. It reached an agreement in 1983 whereby it would get an extension of its licence for a further 10 years. That was with the Northern Land Council which represented the people who had control of that land. It also had undertakings from the Commonwealth government. As a consequence of that, the owner carried out significant necessary upgradings on that abattoir and expended a lot of money. However, in the middle of last year, rumours started floating around that the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, which gained control over the area of the abattoir, took the decision that it would not renew the licence after 1988. That meant that the abattoir operator, who had already committed funds, was then unable to obtain those funds at reasonable rates and could only attract high interest, short-term money. He was making investments that he could not realise through the production of the abattoir. I have taken that matter up both with the federal Ministers for Arts, Heritage and Environment and Primary Industry. I am still trying to get a response from those ministers on the problems that are being created by this reversal of attitude.

Mr Speaker, the Tennant Creek abattoir had a very bad year last year. It does not look like it will open. However, there is some hope on the horizon. Negotiations are currently under way for its purchase by another organisation which would intend to open and operate the abattoir. The Achilles abattoir in Tennant Creek, which is a horse meat abattoir specifically geared to process horse meat for export, did open but it is unable to kill because of picket lines by the trade union movement. I must say that that picket line includes meat inspection service people who are associated with that abattoir. Again, it has stopped the potential for providing jobs in the Northern Territory.

Victoria Valley is killing both beef and buffalo. It opened and produced well last year. There is some concern that it is likely to be subjected to industrial pressure this year. Mistake Creek is expected to open this year. It is closed at present because of rain. A number of abattoirs opened but closed as a consequence of the recent heavy rains. Whilst a number of abattoirs did open, they are closed at the moment because they cannot get cattle as a consequence of the rain.

Mr Speaker, we are going to have some difficulties with the abattoir industry. With the industrial action and other problems being experienced at the moment, it is possible that we may not have any export abattoirs opening this year.

Release of Water from Ranger Mine

Mr EDE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What is the current position regarding water levels at Ranger within the restricted release zone? Has an approach been made to him within the last week or so requesting permission for an early release of waters from RP2 or RP3? If so, what is his attitude to that approach? Will he give this Assembly a clear and unequivocal statement regarding his policy on the release of waters from the restricted release zone?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I could hardly be expected to answer comprehensively the honourable member's question now. However, I am prepared to take the matter on board and provide a more detailed answer later. I can advise that, to my

knowledge, I have not received an application in the last week relating to RP2 or RP3. It may be that the department has received one addressed to me. Anything that is addressed to my office, I normally see within 24 hours of its arriving. Therefore, not having received a request, I cannot really state my attitude on any request. But I will provide some details to the honourable member during the course of this sittings.

Undergrounding of Electricity Supply

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he advise the Assembly if the government is prepared to consider replacing the overhead electricity system in Darwin with an underground system, thereby minimising the inconvenience caused by power cuts during storms and cyclones?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, since Cyclone Gretel, I have obtained information on this very subject. I was aware that the honourable member for Jingili felt strongly that undergrounding of the existing overhead reticulation system should proceed. I would point out that the existing overhead reticulation services have been designed to withstand cyclonic conditions. The system itself stood up extremely well to Cyclone Gretel. No damage was reported to electricity poles or transformers. The widespread damage which resulted in electricity blackouts was caused solely by damage from trees, particularly shallow-rooted African mahogany trees which had been planted close to powerlines and which were easily uprooted during the cyclone. Some 98% of overhead reticulated services were affected, all of this by falling trees and tree limbs.

NTEC has in the past conducted extensive advertising campaigns urging people to trim trees which have branches close to powerlines to avoid the very situation which occurred during Cyclone Gretel. While many people did respond to these advertisements, many ignored such warnings. In fact, honourable members may recall letters to the editors of local newspapers criticising NTEC's actions and calling NTEC line crews names such as 'wanton vandals'. NTEC line crews undertaking the work of clearing limbs of trees near powerlines are often abused by householders.

Mr Speaker, the cost of converting the existing overhead reticulation to underground reticulation would be very high indeed. Estimates show that it would cost 3 times as much to provide underground reticulation as opposed to overhead reticulation. Darwin's newer suburbs are provided with underground reticulation and the cost of such reticulation is borne by the developers of these new subdivisions with these costs being passed on to the purchasers of fully-serviced blocks. However, I reiterate that the costs of converting existing overhead reticulation would be much higher.

Presently, there are about 12 000 suburban domestic consumers in Darwin serviced with overhead supply and, if these were to be converted to underground supply, the total cost would be in the order of \$36m, a cost which would have to be recovered from somewhere. In addition, there are about 2200 industrial commercial consumers in the Darwin and Winnellie areas serviced by overhead reticulation and the cost of converting these would be in the order of \$7m, giving a total conversion cost of about \$43m. Compared with this, the restoration costs following Cyclone Gretel are estimated at less than \$100 000, and that includes all the overtime costs and the use of machinery that was used

over the last weekend. Even if Cyclone Gretel had been of the same velocity as Cyclone Tracy and severe damage had been sustained to the overhead reticulation system, it would still have been more economic to reconstruct the overhead system. In fact, this could be done every 10 years - in the most pessimistic scenario - and economies would still result as the design life of both overhead and underground systems is about 30 years.

Mr Speaker, I think it is an opportune time to point out that NTEC responded very quickly to damage caused to the electricity supply as a result of Cyclone Gretel and 99% of consumers affected had power restored within 40 hours. Reaction time to such future emergencies will be considerably reduced with the introduction of a new systems control centre to be built in conjunction with the new Channel Island power-station. This new systems control centre will incorporate computerised consumer records which will facilitate speedy reaction to reports of power losses and enable breakdown crews to be quickly directed towards major damage areas. At present, much of the collation of fault reporting and operation of work schedules has to be done manually.

Finally, I would point out that NTEC will be upgrading its education program on tree planting and tree trimming in order to ensure damage to powerlines during storms is minimised. However, full cooperation is needed from consumers if this is to work effectively. Hopefully, this will be one of the lessons learnt from Cyclone Gretel.

In conclusion, the present overhead reticulation system is designed to withstand cyclonic conditions. The cost of conversion is far in excess of benefits to be derived, given the infrequency of serious cyclones. The time required to get consumers back on power will be further reduced with the introduction of improved systems in the future. I advise that it is extremely unlikely that the government will underground the existing system.

Pet Meat Operator's Licence

Mr LEO to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Mr Speaker, given the government's withdrawal of a pet meat operator's licence on the grounds that horses slaughtered for the supply of pet meat were unsuitable and indeed toxic, and in consideration of allegations that the horses from the same areas are being slaughtered for human consumption, will the minister refute these allegations or assure the Assembly that the withdrawal of a licence was done for other reasons?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this refers to an operation in the Alice Springs region which resulted in the death of a number of dogs and other pets. Mr Speaker, on investigation, it was found that those animals had suffered some liver and internal damage and it appeared that there had been some poisoning effect. On tracking back the source, it appeared that they had been fed meat from field-shot animals distributed by a particular operator in Alice Springs. Those horses had been taken from an area which had been heavily infested at that time with a weed known as indegofera. In horses, indegofera creates a disease which is commonly known as the Birdsville disease. Prior to that, it had not been known that there was a connection between indegofera and Birdsville disease and its transmission to pets through meat, due particularly to concentrations of the indegofera poison developing in the muscle tissue of those animals.

Mr Speaker, a decision was taken not to allow that operator to continue to kill for pet meat. He had exported some of that meat; in fact, some of it was in Japan. As a consequence, advice was sent through the Department of Primary Industry and to the Japanese government. Since that time, the Department of Primary Industry, in conjunction with CSIRO, has been carrying out extensive investigations into indegofera and the latest information that we have received as a result of experiments on animals is that animals which have fed on indegofera-infected meat are developing liver damage. Whilst the results are not finalised yet, all the indications are that the original hypothesis is correct. Obviously, we are keeping the federal government and pet meat operators very closely advised. The difference in operation between the pet meat operator involved and operations such as Achilles Meat is that he was field shooting the animals and bringing them in and the animals were not inspected nor checked at the time of slaughter. Pet meat operators are required to have an inspection carried out prior to slaughter and I am advised that quarantine officers said that they believe they could identify horses that were suffering from Birdsville disease and could exclude them from the slaughter. That was the difference. Slaughter of infected animals was not prevented in the field as distinct from practices in abattoirs.

Mr B. Collins: How do you establish they have been eating indegofera - by visual inspection?

Mr HATTON: Because of the presence of Birdsville disease.

Mr B. Collins: Yes, but what if it has not developed?

Mr HATTON: On the point that is being made by the Leader of the Opposition, investigations made in the last few weeks have shown that there is some evidence that horses that have indegofera poisoning are suffering from Birdsville disease prior to any other indications. There is a possibility that it could be transmitted and that is being investigated. There is a strong likelihood that we will ban the slaughter of horses that come from areas heavily infested with indegofera.

The matter is under very close examination by our Department of Primary Production, the federal Department of Primary Industry and CSIRO. Extensive testing and laboratory work is taking place. I do not want to draw anything like a common analogy but it is a new connection that scientists were not aware of prior to this outbreak in Alice Springs some 18 months ago. Gradually, we are getting together the facts and evidence. I hate to say it, Mr Speaker, but it is a bit like the research that is going on into AIDS. They are gradually finding out what it is all about.

Mr B. Collins: Is this meat being used for human consumption? You have not addressed that point. I would like to hear that, please.

Mr HATTON: We have been advised that the meat imported by Japan was for the purpose of feeding animals in zoos. However, I am not prepared to say categorically that it was not used for human consumption once it reached Japan.

Emily Hills Estate Flood Plain Area

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

What action has been carried out by his department to redeem the flood plain area in the Emily Hills estate?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will have that matter investigated and supply an answer during the course of this sittings. I do not have the information available at the moment.

Documents Relating to Casino Purchase

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Hon P.A.E. Everingham, the current federal member, made a public statement yesterday which has refuted the statements made in the Legislative Assembly by the Chief Minister at question time on Tuesday morning in relation to the casino documents. The statement, among other things, says that the documents supplied to the Hon P.A.E. Everingham relate directly to the casino issue and are not personal papers of the former Chief Minister. Can the Chief Minister explain the difference in the statements that he made in the Assembly on Tuesday morning in question time and the statement made in the last 24 hours by the former Chief Minister?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can only say to the Leader of the Opposition that, so far as I am concerned, the answers I gave on Tuesday are perfectly correct. The federal member is in possession of personal papers that are, in my view, his. He is also in possession of some confidential government reports. I have asked him to treat the confidential government reports confidentially. What he does with the papers that were his private property when he was in office in the Northern Territory is really a matter for him.

Mineral Content of Alice Springs Water

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Can he advise if any investigation is under way into the salt and other mineral content in the water in Alice Springs and, if so, can he further advise if there are plans to implement any action to reduce this mineral content?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, following the honourable member for Braitling's tabling in this Assembly of an encrusted jug element, I thought I had better get a little information prior to this sittings. I advise him that soil salinity in Alice Springs is due primarily to natural salts which have always been present in the area and partially to the importation of salts by the town water supply which is from outside Alice Springs. During the last decade, the high groundwater table has mobilised these salts. Where the water table is very shallow, salt crusting becomes evident on the surface. Honourable members who have visited Alice Springs in the last 12 months or 2 years will certainly have seen much evidence of that. If it continues, Alice Springs will be a place where we can all have a white Christmas in due course.

The high groundwater levels were initially caused by an exceptional wet year in 1974 when significant recharge to the town basin occurred. These levels have been maintained by 3 main factors: firstly, the heavy watering of urban parks and gardens with town water supply which is imported from outside the basin; secondly, the continuation of relatively wet years since 1974; and, finally, the lack of pumping from the town basin.

Under existing conditions, the Alice Springs town and farm basins are underutilised and are capable of supplying 5% to 10% of the water currently pumped from the town bore field at Roe Creek, although the town basin water is not suitable for human consumption. Increased utilisation of groundwater from

the town basin would result in lower groundwater levels. In addition to making better use of the available water resource, this should reduce the severity of the soil salinity problem.

The Water Resources Division has been investigating the problem for some time and has prepared a draft report on management of the basin. The report is expected to be finalised in May 1985 and will recommend generally increased utilisation of the basin's groundwater for watering various land under the control of the council, the golf club, the Conservation Commission and the Department of Education. Arrangements are already being made with some of these organisations with the aim of increased utilisation. New production bores have been constructed for both the golf club and the Conservation Commission and should be brought into use later this year.

Increased utilisation should lower the groundwater level but may not offer a long-term solution to the problem of increasing salinity. Ultimately, it is likely that saline water will have to be exported from the basin, possibly by pumping at Heavitree Gap and piping the water to the Brewer Plain as an extension of a scheme proposed by the Department of Transport and Works to export sewage effluent from the area where it currently is to an area much further south of Alice Springs.

Task Force on Juvenile Crime

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Will he advise progress to date on the Task Force on Juvenile Crime?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not wish to pre-empt anything which the task force may prepare for me in the summation of the results of its inquiries which is due to be completed by 31 May. The member for Jingili has displayed some interest in this area and the public at large has shown some concern about juvenile crime in the Northern Territory. I can say that I am very pleased with the progress that the Task Force on Juvenile Crime has been making over the last few weeks. We have received 32 written submissions already. It has had the 'Youth Speak' questionnaire program which I understand received a great deal of support. It has had the youth forum at Darwin High School which was well attended. A number of people have addressed the particular problems involved.

We are finding that a pattern is starting to emerge in terms of the extent of crime. That was the first issue which it had to address: just how bad was the juvenile crime in the Darwin area and who might be responsible for it.

The task force is progressing well. I believe that it will be able to meet its deadline of 31 May and present the report to me.

I would like to take the opportunity to give a brief account of the juvenile crime detention centre which I visited in Seattle to illustrate the problem because I believe the only thing that is different is the numbers. 25% of the children in the institute that I visited were in fact victims of sexual assault, either incest or rape. 40% of them moved on to federal and state penitentiaries. There were drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres for kids 10 to 16 years of age. It is a sight to see the type of facility that is being utilised over there. It really shocked me and brought me back. I just could not believe the magnitude of the problem over there.

Some of the findings of the Task Force on Juvenile Crime indicate that the situation is very similar in the Northern Territory. I believe that we will be able to address the problem because small happens to be beautiful. We are small enough to identify the problem and overcome it. We have some excellent kids in our community. Some of these problems which are being identified need to be addressed.

I also bring to the attention of members that, in the particular detention centre that I visited, 2 needs are given high priority. One is health because of the state of the kids when they arrive at the detention centre. There are 2 doctors and 5 nurses and they really do try to patch them up and put them back together because they are in such bad state when they arrive at the detention centre. The other is education because of the truancy problem which they also face over there. Kids do not go to school. They get into crime. The school stays open 11 months of the year. It has intensive training programs to try to get the kids back together.

The other thing which was interesting was the high degree of reliance on volunteers to address this particular problem and the area itself. It is 190 acres. A site was considered for the new detention centre in Darwin. A site on Boulter Road in Berrimah was considered for the institution. We are considering that in light of the findings of the Task Force on Juvenile Crime. It may be better to look at the American experience. They have large camp areas. The one that I visited was 190 acres. I believe that that needs to be addressed as well.

I am looking forward to the findings of the task force in this regard because Giles House, the only child detention centre that we have, is nearing capacity. In fact, several times during the last month it reached 2 or 3 more than it was initially designed for. So we must address this particular problem soon.

The uncontrolled child report largely addressed the concerns of runaway teenage girls in the 15 to 16 years age group. I pointed out in the Assembly before that it is a whole new world to a girl once she turns 16. She is allowed to do legally a lot more than she was when she was 15 years 11 months and 25 days. This problem also existed in America. 2500 uncontrollable children move through the various institutions on a yearly basis.

I expect to have that report within the next couple of weeks and, together with the findings of the task force, should give this government good direction to overcome the problems of juvenile crime in the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to pre-empt the findings of the task force other than to state that I am quite pleased with the response which we are receiving from all sectors of the community. There is time yet to make submissions on behalf of the public. If any members have constituents who would like to address the task force, I am sure it would be very receptive to any ideas and information that would enable the Northern Territory government to address this particular problem. It is not peculiar to the Northern Territory. It is right across Australia. If anybody has the chance to beat this problem, I believe it is us.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister introduced the police rangers program and spoke at length. I believe that this is a step in the right direction. I can assure this Assembly that the Northern Territory government is serious about it. I believe that we will be able to address the problem and come up with a satisfactory solution.

Casino Affair

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the extreme national criticism that has been generated by this whole casino saga - and apparently we are about to cop another dose on national television on Tuesday night - and in view of what now appears to be the non-stop public contradictions between the Chief Minister's statements on this matter and that of the federal member, particularly when they are uttered in the House of Representatives, and in view of the extreme damage which this is doing nationally to the case of the Northern Territory in the run-up to the federal budget, could the Chief Minister give this Assembly an undertaking that he will seek to meet at the earliest opportunity with the federal member in order to prevail upon the federal member the point that these statements are causing non-stop continuing damage and are ensuring that this casino affair continues to be on the front pages of national newspapers? Can he give an undertaking that that meeting will take place, and will he prevail upon the federal member to ensure that, particularly in statements that are made on the Territory's behalf in the federal House, the criticisms that are levelled at the Territory nationally are not vindicated?

ANSWER

I can say to the honourable member that I meet regularly with the federal member. The matter is discussed. We are both concerned at the damage that is caused by the discussion on the casino. So far as I am concerned, I will always move to that ground that will enable the Northern Territory to present its best image to the federal parliament and to all people in the southern parts of Australia. If another meeting and continuing meetings with the federal member would help do that, then I would be only too pleased to give the Leader of the Opposition the undertaking that he seeks. In the normal course of events, I will be communicating with the federal member regularly.

Tindal Air Base Effect on School Facilities in Katherine

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for EDUCATION

I ask this question on behalf of the member for Elsey. Has he received any response from Senator Susan Ryan in respect of Tindal air base and its effect upon school facilities in Katherine?

ANSWER

The short answer is no. I think that it is important to emphasise the importance of more information in relation to the Tindal development. We are in the process of spending a great deal of money on the establishment of a new high school in Katherine with a design capacity of some 600. The completion date of that high school was supposed to be July 1987. We are also looking to constructing a third primary school in Katherine. That was to be built up over a period of time with a design capacity of 360 in January 1987.

The government cannot proceed with those particular developments until it receives further information about the number of people to be situated in Katherine itself. I sent a telex to Senator Susan Ryan in March this year asking her to confirm one way or the other what the situation was at Tindal. I stressed to her the importance of having that information made available as quickly as possible. In order to get these schools up and running by the proposed dates, we needed to get started immediately. I sent a further telex to

Senator Susan Ryan on Friday last, asking her to provide further information in relation to the number of personnel who are going to be involved with the Tindal development. It is important. We need that information if we are to plan schools in these areas where there are going to be developments and rapid population increases. It is important that we know exactly what the situation is. We are looking at spending some \$15m in Katherine in relation to schools. The government is not in the business of building schools for people who are not going to eventuate. All I am asking for is some indication of the number of people who will be at Katherine in the very near future.

Goat Husbandry Program

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY PRODUCTION

What is the current situation regarding the goat husbandry program at the Coastal Plains Research Station and, in particular, the breeds bought, the numbers and the pasture utilisation?

ANSWER

The Coastal Plains Research Station is conducting a research program into goats. If I might give a bit of background, Mr Speaker, it is a small goat meat research project which has been approved by the federal Minister for Primary Industry. The project is supported by the Australian Meat Research Council which is providing funds to the amount of \$13 500 over 3 years. In addition, further funds will be sought later to extend the program. The goat research is based on potential local market for goat and an apparent export potential in South-east Asia and the Middle East for goat meat. It could also be an alternative enterprise in some of the marginal cattle areas in the Top End. Some small flocks of goats are held in the Darwin rural areas. The member for Koolpinyah told me last night that there are some 700 goats in the Darwin rural area.

However, information is now available on the productivity and management requirements for goats in the Top End. The project at the Coastal Plains Research Station will involve about 60 does. Dingo-proof fencing will be constructed and the purchase of breeding stock has commenced. The purpose of the investigation is to look at fertility, growth rates and disease problems. Management requirements will be monitored. In addition to the funds being provided by the Australian Meat Research Council, the department will be supplying some goats, labour and undertaking other activities associated with the research.

Mr Speaker, I understand the honourable member's interest in goats. She is regarded as somewhat of an unofficial authority on the breeding and raising of goats. The Department of Primary Production is moving more and more towards direct consultation on research projects with people in the industry to ensure that that research is directly relevant to the industry and is proceeding in the direction that the industry desires. I will ask the department to contact an organisation known as the Goat Breeders Association, of which I understand the honourable member is the patron, and will seek to have that organisation act in consultation with the research project at Coastal Plains Research Station to ensure that the work being done there will be of relevance to this fledgling industry in the Territory.

Groote Eylandt Aboriginal Task Force

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

When will the government advise the community on the recommendations of the Groote Eylandt Aboriginal Task Force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member was himself a member of the task force. It was a joint task force set up by the Northern Territory government and the federal government after David Biles visited Groote Eylandt on a 48-hour whistle stop tour and wrote a report which highlighted the serious problem of the high rate of imprisonment of the people from Groote Eylandt. In fact, it is something like 20 to 25 times the national average. The report was completed and handed to both myself and the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Clyde Holding. The honourable member for Arnhem was also present at that particular meeting.

As a result of that report, the government has now set up a special committee which is due to report to the government in June of this year on the findings of that report. However, I would like to indicate that this government is examining the problem and progressively implementing some of the recommendations. I draw your attention to the fact that we now have a probation and parole officer at Nhulunbuy. We have also had discussions with various groups on community service order programs for the area. Recently, I was asked to give consideration to having an officer placed on Groote Eylandt to examine the juvenile crime problem. At the recent Aboriginal Affairs Council meeting in Sydney, I brought Clyde Holding's attention to crime amongst Aboriginal youth and some of the drug problems. Petrol sniffing was also mentioned. He said at the meeting that he would be very receptive to any programs that the Northern Territory government may propose to overcome this particular problem not only on Groote Eylandt but across the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, the interdepartmental committee has been set up. It includes representatives of organisations mentioned on the report such as the police, the Departments of Correctional Service, Community Development, Youth, Sport and Recreation and a number of other departments right across the board. The committee will examine the findings of the report. We should not single out the people of Groote Eylandt even though the imprisonment rate there is 20 to 25 times that of the Australian average. I would like to make it quite clear that I believe that Groote Eylandt should not be singled out as a discrete problem. Problems such as alcohol, petrol sniffing, prostitution etc are encountered in communities right throughout the Northern Territory. The parole officer will assist the people on Groote Eylandt. Previously, they were served by the probation and parole officer from Nhulunbuy. That was not convenient given the number of people on probation and parole over there.

The report also indicates how the community itself would go about solving some of the problems. That will also have to be addressed. I look forward to hearing from the federal government on its commitment to continued financial support in overcoming the problems on Groote Eylandt. There is need for the continuation of federal support. One of the recommendations of the report is that funding be provided for a further 12 months to continue some of the ongoing concerns which the inquiry had. We have not yet heard from the federal government on how it is addressing some of the problems that were highlighted in the report. No doubt, it will be in touch with us soon.

The working party has been set up to address this problem. Recently, we needed to hire a DC3 to bring to Darwin people convicted by the court in Groote Eylandt. The Aboriginal children held at Giles House detention centre come mainly from 3 areas: Groote Eylandt, Port Keats and Papunya-Yuendumu area. The problems are found right across the Territory. I empathise with Groote Eylandt people who feel that they have been singled out. The truth is that they have a problem and we have to fix it. This report will assist in overcoming some of the problems and the special committee will be reporting back in June of this year.

Closure of Schools

Mr DALE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

On looking through past Hansards, I note that, following the closure of the Darwin Primary School in December 1983, the minister announced that he was referring the general issue of closure of schools to the Education Advisory Council. Has he received any recommendations from the EAC and, if so, when can we expect an announcement on this subject?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the closure of schools is a very emotional subject. I am sure members recall the closing of the Darwin Primary School exercise. It should be pointed out that it was inevitable that that school would be closed because of the dropping enrolment numbers. It also needs to be pointed out that, in other parts of the world, many hundreds of schools close down each year. This is particularly the case in England.

Mr Speaker, because the closure of schools is a sensitive matter, I asked the Education Advisory Council to examine the problem. I asked it to look at both the closure and the opening of schools and to recommend what the government could look at when making decisions. The recommendations have been received. I am still considering these and, if members wish to make further input in relation to the recommendations, they should let me know as soon as possible. In relation to the opening of schools, it is recommended that the department place public notices of the intention to proceed with the planning of schools and call public meetings. A task force could then be established with interested parties and the call made for the establishment of an interim school council.

As far as the closure of schools is concerned, the recommendations that came forward were that the issue should be divided into 3 categories: urban schools, rural schools and non-urban or non-rural schools. Again, it was emphasised that there needed to be the opportunity for all people involved to have an input - the school councils, the communities themselves, the students and others who had an attachment to a particular school for which consideration was being given to its closure. No one has denied the right of people to have a say in relation to a school that may have been there for a long time.

I will be firming up on these guidelines. There will also be recommendations on the cut-off points in respect of student numbers before schools are to be considered for closure. These numbers will be announced at some later stage.

It has taken a long time. It is important that people realise that only a certain amount of money is available. Where a school is running under capacity,

it is important that that facility be utilised. We are talking about millions of dollars. We just cannot continue to operate schools which do not have the enrolment numbers to justify their existence.

Mr Speaker, I acknowledge that it is a sensitive issue. The Education Advisory Council has reported to me. As soon as more information is available, I will present it to this Assembly.

Project Managers for Kings Canyon

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

When can we expect the successful project managers for Kings Canyon to be announced?

ANSWER

Cabinet has not had the opportunity to evaluate the 3 submissions provided to the government for consideration. I would be hopeful that Cabinet would consider that issue some time this month.

International Youth Year

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION and ETHNIC AFFAIRS

Can he please advise what progress is being made in the Northern Territory to celebrate International Youth Year?

ANSWER

International Youth Year has been organised in much the same manner as the Year of the Disabled, the first international year of this type. The main thing is to draw attention to the needs and aspirations of youth rather than the dollars and cents we spend. Nonetheless, on the dollars-and-cents side, so far 23 projects have been approved by the advisory committee on youth affairs in the Northern Territory, totalling about \$86 000. In addition to that, a sum of \$10 000 has been set aside for programs which young people themselves will launch. When I say that, it does not mean that the other 23 projects have been imposed upon young people by adults. The advisory committee has as its charter the complete and full consultation with young people. I notice quite a few in the gallery today. By the way, if anyone opposes the idea of school uniforms, all they have to do is see that and I think their opposition would disappear. It looks great. Of course, the advisory committee consults with young people right throughout the Northern Territory in order to identify those projects which young people themselves want. That part of the program is now up and running.

In addition to that, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation is consulting closely with the Commonwealth Office of Youth Affairs and the Commonwealth Employment Office in relation to a wide-ranging program under the Community Employment Scheme. These schemes for young people to be employed are designed to carry over for a full 12-month period, and not under the normal rules of CEP, which usually only have people in employment for a number of weeks. Of course, those programs are quite valuable in terms of work experience. But the idea of this program is to go for a full 12 months. The young people who are to be employed will have to meet the normal guideline of a 3-month unemployment period. Of course, that is understandable so people do not go swapping jobs. But it is quite a good program. In conjunction with the

Ethnic Community Council in Darwin, the YMCA is to employ 2 young people as project staff to assist in programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal and ethnic youth in Darwin. A further position is being created in Alice Springs for work with Aboriginal youth. Mr Speaker, 2 other young people will be employed as project coordinators. In the course of the year in which they are working in this area, these young people will be gaining skills in administration and project coordination and, hopefully, that will place them in good stead for gaining permanent employment after the end of the CEP program. The Office of Youth Affairs here has also agreed to employ 2 young people to work in support of International Youth Year activities throughout the Northern Territory. Not only will these people be employed for that period of time, they will gain a great deal of experience from it. It should place them in a position where any office administration system would be happy to employ them afterwards.

Mr Speaker, the last meeting of the advisory committee was in Nhulunbuy. We are trying to come to grips with significant problems for youth in Nhulunbuy. I propose to go over there and follow up that visit of the Youth Advisory Committee as soon as I can to further assess the needs. Similarly, in Tennant Creek and in areas such as your own electorate in Katherine, Sir, there is a clear need for coordination and guidance in youth affairs. In Alice Springs, as far as Aboriginal youth go, the IYY program will be a very good one but that will terminate at the end of this calendar year. As such, there will be a void and we need to address ourselves to the requirements of youth in the outlying areas from Alice Springs. Probably, we may have to provide people to undertake a full-time coordination program between government and the community in that area.

We have been working on a Palmerston centre proposal in conjunction with this being International Youth Year. I notice the Minister for Community Development smiling over there. We have spoken on a number of occasions about the provision of youth facilities in that region. We were hoping to establish it at Highway House. Unfortunately, we ran into fire regulations. The government would be breaching its own laws if it used that location for youth activities. We are hopeful of finding somewhere for activities such as those that the YWCA and the Red Cross run for youth in that area. I believe that IYY is a very appropriate year in which we should seek to find at least a short-term solution. Of course, we would be looking to purpose-built facilities for youth in the Palmerston area for the future.

Mr Speaker, International Youth Year is not only about doling out a few dollars for a few projects. It is about the government and the community coming to grips with the aspirations and desires of youth.

Shopping Facilities in Alice Springs

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

What steps is he taking to provide shopping facilities in the new east side and Sadadeen areas of Alice Springs?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in the Sadadeen subdivision, 2 areas are zoned for the development of shopping facilities. One of those lots of land is freehold title and the assessment is that the market is not there to justify at this point in time the construction of a shopping facility. In fact, that is also the view of the other landowner who has his appropriately-zoned own land. The situation at

this stage is that the government has provided the land. It is there and it is appropriately zoned. However, the market indicates that, at this particular point in time, there is no economic justification for the construction of shopping facilities. As the market develops, and it will with the potential expansion in Alice Springs and possibly out further past the Sadadeen area, those shopping facilities should come on stream. If the honourable member would like any further details, he can contact me later and I will give the names and exact circumstances about those blocks.

Rural Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs

Mr EDE to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware that his push to get teacher assistants to do their Rural Aboriginal Teacher Education programs on ABSEC moneys means that, while in the first year they get holidays with pay, in the second year they do not get holidays with pay? Is he aware of the lack of security felt by second-year RATE program students who know that, because they were pushed on to ABSEC, somebody else has taken their jobs and, if they are unable to go to Batchelor, they will have no job the following year? What is he doing about expanding the RATE program by utilising Yirara College in central Australia during holidays for short courses as an alternative to Batchelor?

ANSWER

The member for Stuart has touched on a number of issues. I might say to the member for Stuart that I have given him every opportunity, as I do to all members in the Assembly, to contact me on any issue so that he can take a definitive answer back to his constituents. The RATE program does have some problems. I am aware of the problems that are being experienced in some of those areas. I am aware of the need to have some facility in the Alice Springs area to address the training of Aboriginal teachers. These issues are being looked at by the department. I would suggest to the member for Stuart that, if he wanted answers to those questions this morning in detail, he should have given me some forewarning. I am aware of the problems that are being experienced with the RATE program.

I am aware of the suggestion to use Yirara College for training teachers during the holiday periods. The government is looking at the concerns that the honourable member has raised. I will get in touch with him at a later date to give him the answers that he requires.

20% Subsidy to Child-care Centres

Mr LEO to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Can he assure the Assembly that the government will continue to support the Northern Territory child-care centres with the 20% subsidy?

ANSWER

The issue of the 20% child-care subsidies has been raised of late. It was an initiative of this government. I might say that there is only one other government in Australia that believes in supporting child care to this degree: New South Wales. We are committed to child care in the Northern Territory. The issue of child care will increase in importance in the next few years as the population increases.

Subsidies simply tell you one thing: something is wrong. They should not go on infinitum. We must get to the root of the problem and find out why the subsidies are required. This government will be conducting a wide-ranging review on child-care issues in the very near future. It is senseless for us to go on subsidising a small group within the community to the tune of around \$0.5m. It is quite a large amount of money. Perhaps that \$0.5m should be spent to provide additional space for child-care centres. It could well be the case that we will provide for that. The waiting lists are getting longer and longer. This problem will have to be addressed very soon. Mr Speaker, within your own electorate you would be aware of several representations for child-care services in Katherine. That issue is at present being addressed by the Department of Community Development.

At this very moment, I have an officer from the Children's Service Bureau, which was another initiative of this government set up just recently, travelling throughout Australia to look at child-care services in terms of extended day-care, casual day-care and 24-hour day-care. This is a result of some discussions I had at the Northern Territory child-care conference just recently. We decided to go down and investigate what the other states were doing in these areas of child care.

As I said, the subsidy simply tells us something is wrong. The cost to the Northern Territory government to continue in that regard may not be a viable option for us in the years to come. We need to see what the problem is and look at the alternatives to overcome that particular problem.

I am in a position to say that I have had discussions with the Treasurer. The 20% subsidy will continue for the next 12 months. We will be looking at that particular issue very closely in this year's budget. A review of the whole child-care issue will be undertaken by the Northern Territory government once we have collected the information. Senator Don Grimes recently issued a press statement that he intends to make available about \$142m this year for child care. I commend the federal government for that. It is not often that I speak highly of the federal government. I do not wish to make a habit of it. It indicates the importance which is being placed on it nationally. I believe that the Northern Territory government has addressed the issue of child care and will continue to address the issue of child care.

I intend to hold a meeting with the private child-care centres in the very near future because they are not entitled to the 75% federal funding which is available to the other child-care centres. We will be addressing the problems of creating more positions and providing the maximum value of quality care for every dollar that we spend in the Northern Territory. We want it to be broad and flexible to meet those needs of our young youth in the Northern Territory.

Water Release at Ranger Mine

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What groups were informed of the water release standards for Ranger uranium mine and what was their general reaction to those standards?

ANSWER

This matter has been the subject of public discussion of late, thanks to the member for Stuart. I think the question is quite timely. It needs to be stated clearly that the standards to which the honourable member is referring are not in fact water release standards, although that is how they are referred

to. They are receiving water standards for Magela Creek. Receiving water standards are, by definition, the chemical element concentrations which the Magela Creek can contain with no adverse effect on the environment.

In the context of my recent authorisation, the quality of water to be released, combined with the flow rate of Magela Creek, will govern the rate of discharge in order that the chemical profile of the receiving water should not vary outside its natural fluctuation. It should be remembered that retention ponds 1 and 4, for which these standards were set, are outside the restricted release zone and have been allowed, under certain conditions, to outflow naturally in the past. Members who are familiar with the water management system at Ranger will appreciate that the 2 retention ponds that are outside the restricted release zone overflow from time to time.

As is usual in such cases, the standards were set after lengthy consultation between the Office of the Supervising Scientist, the Alligator Rivers Region Research Institute and the Northern Territory government. Whilst the Supervising Scientist did not oppose the standards, he felt they were overly conservative. The Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of the Northern Land Council also accepted the standards. Other organisations receiving information relating to the approval to release good quality water from RP1 and RP4 are: the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister for Resources and Energy, the Movement Against Uranium, Campaign Against Nuclear Energy, Greenpeace from South Australia, Greenpeace from New South Wales, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Environment Centre for the Northern Territory, the Sessional Committee on the Environment of course, the Department of Health in the Northern Territory, the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory and the Australian Radiation Laboratories. In addition to those people being informed of the action I took when I approved water receiving standards, press releases were issued, couched carefully to try to counteract some of the nonsense which had been perpetrated in the media in the time leading up to my decision to approve those standards.

What members must be mindful of, particularly the member for Stuart, is that some of those groups that I listed there are clearly in existence to try their very best to shut down Australia's uranium industry. It does not matter what you intend to do, what you intend to say, how many public forums you hold, how many scientists you get to swear on stacks of bibles that what has been approved is okay, those groups will always disagree because that is their very charter. I respect their right to set themselves up and to lobby. But in taking notice of what they are saying, one has to be very mindful of what their charter is. I do not believe that you will ever get some of those groups I mentioned to accept that anything that is done in the uranium province, other than a total shutdown, is acceptable. We should bear that in mind in future public debate on the issue.

Inquiry into Incest

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In this Assembly on Wednesday of last week, the honourable member for Wanguri stated that he was conducting a 'personal inquiry into the question of incest on behalf of the Northern Territory government'. Is that statement true or false and, if the statement is true, why has the government authorised such a peculiar arrangement?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand that this particular subject is being addressed by the member for Wanguri. He has made several inquiries because this matter has been brought to his attention over a period of time. He is doing that as the member for Wanguri and it is not being actioned by the Department of Community Development at this particular stage.

Honourable members may be aware that we are soon to conduct a telephone survey in the Northern Territory via a committee that was set up to investigate domestic violence. This one will be on sexual assault. It will be conducted some time in May. It is a subject that has attracted a great deal of attention in recent times. In New South Wales in particular, the figures that have just been released are shocking to say the least. Something like 13 000 people have been estimated to be victims of this particular abominable act. We will be looking forward to some of the figures and results from the telephone survey. The Northern Territory government will take cognisance of those findings in that report and we will be taking action. I know that, as a member of this Assembly, the member for Wanguri has an interest in this area and, no doubt, he will be addressing that particular question as time passes.

Extension to Plenty Highway

Mr VALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Given that the Northern Territory government plans to seal the Plenty Highway about 58 km east of the Harts Range Police Station, can he advise whether the government has reached a decision to continue that sealing program to the Queensland-Northern Territory border where it can meet up with the roadworks presently under construction by the Queensland government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, extensions of the Plenty Highway beyond the current project are included in our forward works proposals. Current planning includes proposals for sealing to the Bunday turnoff at the 192 km mark which is about 46 km beyond the Harts Range Police Station. The timing of the proposals obviously will depend on budgetary considerations and other road priorities. Extensions of the sealing beyond the Bunday turnoff to the Queensland border will be reviewed in terms of the Northern Territory government's overall priorities for road network development.

Inquiry into Incest

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr Speaker, my question refers to the answer given to my previous question. In view of the fact that I know for certain that this Assembly has certainly not

authorised the member for Wanguri to make such a personal investigation and in view of the fact that I did not ask if the matter had been 'actioned by the Department of Community Development', could the minister simply answer the specific question? Is this personal investigation into incest which the member for Wanguri is carrying out being done on behalf of the Northern Territory government and with the approval of the honourable minister as the appropriate minister?

ANSWER

The crime of incest would come under the police portfolio. The problems which occur as a result of that crime, of course, are the responsibility of the Minister for Community Development. Some of the cases which have been brought to my attention are quite dramatic indeed. The health portfolio would be involved because of the medical attention which is required by the victims. As has been indicated in the d'Abbs report, the Department of Education has been requested to carry out an educational program throughout the community. Therefore, the problem does span many portfolio areas. I simply have responsibility towards the victims of such crimes.

As far as my department is concerned, the investigation into this matter has not been instigated by the honourable member. This government is particularly concerned about the crime and some of the statistics that have been released recently. We will continue to address it on a case by case basis but will also be assessing the extent of the crime in the Northern Territory. The department will be taking full cognisance of the telephone survey which is planned for May of this year. The Department of Community Development does not have the honourable member for Wanguri as the head of any investigation but I understand he is interviewing and seeking information on a personal basis in his electorate as a government member of this Assembly. I will leave it at that.

Statements by Senator Walsh

Mr FIRMIN to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of Senator Walsh's remarks in the Senate last night? Do the senator's outrageous statements have any truth and what do his statements mean for Northern Territory public servants in the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme and Territorians generally?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would like to take a few moments of the Assembly's time this morning to discuss the remarks made by the senator and Minister for Finance in the federal parliament last night because, in my view, they are not just outrageous but they signal some very bad omens for the people of the Northern Territory if they can be taken at their face value. In the Senate yesterday, Senator Walsh was asked a question by Senator Rae which very simply asked if the minister agreed that the letter from himself to myself is a flagrant breach and a repudiation of the written agreement between his predecessor and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory signed on behalf of their respective governments in October 1984, and if the minister agreed that the letter cuts across the terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding superannuation for employees who transferred to the Northern Territory Public Service. He also asked the minister to advise how those employees with established entitlements under the Commonwealth superannuation fund will be affected by his refusal to honour the Commonwealth's obligations, and also

whether he would review his decisions. In a nutshell, Senator Walsh answered by saying: 'The answer to your last question is no'.

Mr Speaker, I would like to deal with some of the important aspects of Senator Walsh's reply to Senator Rae because they impact very greatly not just on the superannuants in the Northern Territory who are members of the Commonwealth scheme but all members of the Northern Territory community because I believe there is an attack on that agreement between the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth called the Memorandum of Understanding. The first significant point is that Senator Walsh does not believe that his action repudiates any agreement that exists between the Commonwealth government and the Northern Territory. There is a repudiation of 2 agreements, the first one being the letters between Mr Dawkins and myself of last October confirming the financial arrangements for the continuation of the Commonwealth superannuation scheme in the Northern Territory.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker!

Mr SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

Mr B. COLLINS: Mr Speaker, my point of order does not refer to the question; I am anxious to debate it myself. However, it refers to the misuse of question time. Standing order 93, Mr Speaker, specifically says that questions are out of order if they refer to the matters which are currently before the Assembly. We have a question before the Assembly on superannuation which I am anxious to debate. The final 2 sections of standing order 93 stipulate that questions cannot refer to debates in the current sittings. Not only do we have a question before the Chair on superannuation, Mr Speaker, but I already know that a supplementary statement, of which I have a copy, will be made on this subject later today. Considering that time for questions will be available only today and tomorrow, this breach of standing orders is denying us the proper use of question time.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Chief Minister is providing information as requested.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, the second part of the response by Senator Walsh is the important refusal by him to reconsider his action despite what are already legal breaches, despite the fact that he has taken the action arbitrarily without consultation with the Northern Territory and despite the fact that there does not appear to have been a great deal of consultation at the federal level about the whole matter other than between the Minister for Finance and the Prime Minister and that level of consultation has yet to be determined.

Several other parts of the senator's reply make it quite clear that he intends to terminate the membership of Territorians from the Commonwealth superannuation scheme, despite the questions of his legal ability to do that and despite the legal questions surrounding the entitlements of people who are expelled. If ever there was confirmation of a single-minded exercise in Territory bashing, certainly the senator gave credence to it yesterday in the Senate. There does not seem to be any rationale between what the senator is trying to do, in terms of balancing his budget, and the way he is attacking Territorians. If the senator had made the same moves against every member of the Commonwealth superannuation scheme in Australia, we could say that that was fair and reasonable, but to single out 12 000 Territorians is not fair and reasonable in our view.

Mr Speaker, I want to make a couple of points in relation to the senator's statement. The Northern Territory has never been funded for the superannuation

payments on the employer's behalf. It does not have any funding in its current arrangements for funding the employer contributions and it cannot support a scheme that guarantees entitlements that it is unable to meet when the time comes for payment, and that is exactly the situation we find ourselves in. The implications for Northern Territory superannuants are pretty significant. Northern Territory members of the Commonwealth superannuation scheme must consider their future position because they are members of a scheme that is insolvent to the degree that 2 Commonwealth reports have been commissioned on it in recent years. They have both shown that the scheme is insolvent and that, in fact, \$1000m of taxpayers' money in Australia has to be taken from general revenue and put into the scheme to make it viable so that the superannuants can collect their entitlements. Mr Speaker, 2 reports have been done on this. The first was a report prepared for the Minister for Finance by a Mr Knight and the second report was prepared by the Commonwealth Actuary. Mr Speaker, I have only 1 copy of these reports available, but I have ordered several more copies to be made for honourable members so that their ramifications can be taken into consideration by members of the Territory community who are also superannuants in the Commonwealth scheme.

The other very important issue is that all of these non-viable, not-totally-funded schemes in Australia are a matter of great concern to the Commonwealth government and or the state governments. In fact, recently, the New South Wales Premier, Mr Wran, moved to ensure that the superannuation scheme for his employees was viable and has started industrial action all over the state.

Mr B. COLLINS (Opposition Leader): A point of order, Mr Speaker! Standing order 59 of this Assembly clearly indicates that members will not anticipate the discussion on a matter which is before the Chair. In reference to that specific standing order, could I point out to you that there is no problem with the probability 'of the matter anticipated being brought before the Assembly within a reasonable time' because it is going to be brought on this morning.

Mr SPEAKER: The point of order is sustained. The Chief Minister will confine his remarks to the fresh material introduced in the Senate last night.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I will confine my remarks to the statement by the senator because they are very important to the Northern Territory. I do not wish to labour particularly the superannuation side of it because the senator made a vitriolic attack on the whole of the Northern Territory's financial arrangements. Senator Walsh last night said that Mr Dawkins had written to me about a matter which was non-specific and about the arrangements that would apply. I would like to make it quite plain to the Assembly that there certainly was a very specific letter in terms of an offer and an acceptance between Mr Dawkins and myself. The letter related to a report by a joint task force of Commonwealth and Northern Territory departments on the future of the superannuation scheme. While the letter itself is just an offer and an acceptance of the conditions and proposals in this report, there were 6 Commonwealth departments and 2 Northern Territory departments involved in compiling this report. It is very specific. It is very detailed and it is a matter for concern that it has been set aside.

Moving on to the issue of the Memorandum of Understanding, the senator last night referred in his comments to the previous Memorandum of Understanding. That Freudian slip really signals to the people of the Northern Territory the intentions of the senator: the previous Memorandum of Understanding. There is only one Memorandum of Understanding and that is the one that was agreed and consummated in 1978, and by which this government has been funded ever since by

the Commonwealth. It is the cornerstone of our constitutional arrangements with the Commonwealth. There have been no negotiations with the Northern Territory about whether it is to be set aside, whether it is now extinct or whether some other arrangements will apply. But there most certainly is only one Memorandum of Understanding and, so far as this government is concerned, it is still in force.

The senator went on to say that the Memorandum of Understanding has no legislative backing. In other words, it was never ratified by a parliament. It may have been fair to say in terms of the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act that the Memorandum of Understanding was not specifically referred to but, every year when the Commonwealth budget is passed in the Commonwealth parliament, the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding are ratified legally in the parliament. That has been going on since 1978. I would remind you, Mr Speaker, that in fact the Commonwealth Labor government has ratified it twice in the time that it has been there. Last night, we were told it is not an issue, it has no legislative backing and it has never been ratified by the parliament.

Senator Walsh then went on to say that this is a perfect example of the need to protect the states against the irresponsible fiscal behaviour of the Fraser government which recklessly distributed money like confetti at a wedding in the Northern Territory. I think it needs to be put on the record that our financial arrangements were negotiated at a government to government level and have been accepted by those governments over a period of years. If there is any need to change those arrangements, there is provision in the memorandum for negotiations to take place with the consent of both sides. It is quite out of the question to stand up at this stage of the Territory's constitutional development and say that all of that is nonsense and should not go ahead because we now believe money is being distributed like confetti.

The senator suggested that this was not an arrangement that could continue in perpetuity. Therein is the crux of the matter. The Commonwealth, in my view, is now starting to set aside the Memorandum of Understanding. That is the first crack in the wall that would indicate its intention. It is true to say that the memorandum does not have any permanent basis in so far as the constitution is concerned but it does have, Mr Speaker, a place in the Northern Territory's legal framework that must be maintained until it is negotiated in another way. Perhaps, if the Commonwealth wishes to do that, there is a way to do it.

The coup de grace for Territorians came in the senator's final comments where he said, and I will quote as closely as I can: 'The fiscal irresponsibility of the Fraser government as it applied to the Northern Territory has produced the most bloated and feather-bedded public service in Australia'. How is that, Mr Speaker, for a good clout behind the ears? I would like to place on record that the Northern Territory Public Service, which is 12 000 strong, has the role of providing in the community all the essential services that are provided in any other community in Australia. We have to justify our position in front of the Grants Commission every few years. There is no evidence to say that the Northern Territory Public Service is bloated. We are continually being given the support of the Grants Commission in our submissions that there is a need for additional support in respect of certain areas just to ensure that Territorians receive the same level of service as anybody else in the country receives. It is acknowledged by ourselves, it was acknowledged by the Commonwealth and it is continually being acknowledged by the Grants Commission that, for people in the Northern Territory to receive a similar level of services as those people in the states, with the dispersal

factor that we have of 150 000 people being spread out over a half a million square miles, it takes additional people and resources to achieve that.

The rate of growth in the number of children in schools is so great compared to that in any other part of Australia that we do have abnormal pressures on us to provide teachers and support staff for schools and also staff for health and community development functions. We have also made a very reasonable case in front of the Grants Commission that there is a need in the Northern Territory to have additional policemen to maintain law and order because of our special circumstances. To say, Mr Speaker, that we have 'the most bloated and feather-bedded public service in Australia' against all the findings in the history of the Northern Territory's development, is an outrageous accusation to make. It is totally without foundation and a remark that should be condemned by everyone in this Assembly as well as the whole community.

The point that I would like to raise again in addressing the senator's remarks is that the Commonwealth government, through the senator who is now carrying on like a mad axeman not just in the Northern Territory but all over Australia, has indicated its intention to reduce as much as it can any contribution of Commonwealth funding to the lowest possible level. There exists an agreement between ourselves and the Commonwealth that provides for the level of our funding. The continuing tirade of the senator would indicate to us that the Memorandum of Understanding is under threat and that any written agreement between the government of the Northern Territory and the Commonwealth government has no substance at all. We are now entering into a period of great concern and a great vacuum because we do not really know what the Commonwealth is going to do next. We cannot give anybody in the community any undertakings about anything.

So far as people who are contributors to superannuation funds in the Northern Territory are concerned, they have a very particular concern that this government is going to fight very hard to protect. Their interests are enshrined between themselves and the Commonwealth. There was an agreement between employers, employees and superannuation funds that should not be just set aside at the whim of a ministerial pen. I make the point too that all of these agreements that have been built up over the years between ourselves and the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth and the states are not just done to keep lawyers in practice and keep houses of parliament like this in business. They are done to protect communities against madmen like Senator Walsh who are on a rampage with a financial scythe to get as much money out of anybody they can as quickly as they can so they can balance the budget. Mr Speaker, there is a way to conduct intergovernmental relations and I would submit that the comments of Senator Walsh in the House last night do not contribute very much towards it.

Feral Pigs

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Mr Speaker, each year we have had problems with agriculture not just from weather but also from pests. Recently, at Douglas-Daly, I saw damage to one paddock from one attack by feral pigs. It was estimated to have caused damage of around \$30 000. What action, if any, is being taken by the Department of Primary Production or the Conservation Commission in respect of the costly problem of feral pigs in the Douglas-Daly area?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the control of feral animals is a responsibility of the Conservation Commission and it has been working with the farmers in the

Douglas-Daly area in an attempt to seek a solution to this problem. Some of the measures include the erecting of pig traps by the commission at the worst affected areas. Landholders have arranged for shooting in and around their cropping areas. Recently, the entire area was surveyed by helicopter, with the commission and landholders sharing costs. Pigs were found in small numbers throughout an area of some 150 km² and those that were seen were shot.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 6 months, a total of about 200 pigs have been destroyed by these methods. These figures could be improved if the farmers actively maintained and rebaited the traps that have been set in the area.

Although these operations have been quite successful and the farmers are keen to see the helicopter operations repeated, they do not provide any long-term solution to the problem. Feral pigs are found throughout Australia. They manage to survive even in the most intensively-managed farmlands. Currently, the best method to limit pig damage is to exclude them from crops by use of high-quality, well-maintained fencing. Although initially expensive, it does provide the cheapest and most effective solution in the longer term. The Conservation Commission, in consultation with the Department of Primary Production and with the advice of the Feral Animals Committee, is currently considering proposals for increased research on feral pigs. In addition to surveys, to provide better information on the extent of the problem, a detailed assessment including field techniques will be made of all currently available control techniques.

New Police Headquarters at Berrimah

Mr LEO to CHIEF MINISTER

What is the estimated completion date of the new police headquarters at Berrimah? What is the estimate of the additional cost caused by the almost 12-months overrun in the estimated time of construction?

ANSWER

I seek leave of the honourable member to answer that question tomorrow. If I do that, I can give him specific details. An opening date has been set and I can confirm that with the honourable member as well.

Firefighting Equipment at Hermannsburg

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

When will he action the request for firefighting equipment at Hermannsburg to replace the present inadequate garden hoses and buckets that had to be used recently to protect historic buildings there?

ANSWER

My understanding is that fire services outside the town area and in communities are the responsibility of community governments and the local communities. We do provide assistance wherever that is sought. I would need to take advice for the honourable member to be absolutely sure where the lines of responsibility are. If there is a need for improving the firefighting equipment and facilities in any community, that will be addressed as a matter of urgency. Whether it is the fire brigade or the community with the assistance of the fire brigade, I would be happy to have those lines of administration clarified too so that there is no confusion and so that the community can rest assured that it does have adequate fire protection.

Salvation Army Nursing Home

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for HEALTH

The Salvation Army has been patiently awaiting approval by the federal government to proceed with the nursing home and other facilities for aged people in Darwin. Is he aware of any progress in the allocation of nursing bed entitlements?

ANSWER

It is not coincidental that only yesterday I sent a telex to the Commonwealth minister requesting the expediting of this matter. It is now quite some time since the joint committee of the Commonwealth Department of Health, the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and the Northern Territory Department of Health met to discuss the requirement of nursing home beds in the Northern Territory. There is no doubt in our mind that there is a crying need for additional beds of that nature. Although I dare say there are probably 50 people out in the community who would know the recommendations of that committee, it would be nonetheless a little discourteous of me to disclose the matter in detail.

In addition to sending the telex, I took the opportunity when I was last in Canberra to discuss the matter very briefly with Senator Don Grimes in the hope that he may make an early decision. I understand, however, that it is no fault of the good senator that he has not made a decision. In fact, I do not believe to date that he has even received the recommendations. The new Commonwealth Department of Community Services has been recently established in Adelaide. There have been staffing problems and the problems of setting up a new regime to serve South Australia and the Northern Territory. Of course, there is the problem of our being lumped in with South Australia. Nonetheless, there are always teething troubles and a time delay between the establishment of any new department in a region and its becoming fully operational and efficient. I guess we are somewhat a victim of circumstances in that our recommendations from the committee would have gone to that department at the very worst time.

I have now taken further action. It is entirely a Commonwealth matter because significant Commonwealth money is involved in it. In addition to Northern Territory subsidies for such nursing home beds, whereby the profit margin is guaranteed by the Territory in the same manner as the states do it, that matter has been further taken up by me. I hope for an early and favourable response from the federal minister in the very near future.

Cyclist-Pedestrian Crossing of Rapid Creek.

Mr DALE to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

At what stage is government planning for a cyclist-pedestrian crossing of Rapid Creek, where will that crossing be, and what will it cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is something that has been talked about for a number of years. I believe the honourable member for Millner raised it late last year or early this year.

Mr Smith: A number of times.

Mr MANZIE: As he said, a number of times, Mr Speaker. It is something that has been looked at and a number of concepts have been looked into. There are a number of areas where a bridge over Rapid Creek could be constructed. Obviously, the government had to take care to ensure that the location of the bridge would be acceptable to all persons concerned, that there would be no environmental problems in relation to its location and that it would provide a facility for the Darwin community.

A location has been established at the mouth of Rapid Creek which will allow a footbridge-cyclists bridge to be built across the mouth of the creek. It will enable the people on the Nightcliff side of the creek to cross over the beach to the Casuarina side either by foot or by bicycle. This will also enable people who attend the Institute of Technology to move from the Nightcliff and Rapid Creek areas to the institute without travelling down Trower Road and Lakeside Drive, which is the present case.

Also, as members are fully aware, the Casuarina Beach area is a most popular recreation spot for the people of Darwin. There have been problems in the past relating especially to young people without transport to get to the Casuarina Beach area during periods of high tide and of stinger infestation during the wet season. All these difficulties will be alleviated now and, hopefully, something that people in that area of Darwin have been waiting for for a number of years will take place in the near future. Tenders will be called for in relation to the construction of the footbridge in the very near future and hopefully work will be commencing around mid-year.

Appointment of Regional Director of Department of Community Development

Mr EDE to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

In relation to the recent appointment of one of the Chief Minister's electorate office staff to the recently reclassified position of Regional Director in the Department of Community Development in Tennant Creek, would he first confirm that the staff member had been unsuccessful in an application for that position last year and that his appointment earlier this year was effected without going through the normal public service recruiting procedures of advertising, applications, interviews etc, and does the manner of the appointment conform to normal public service procedures and, if not, why was an exception made in the case of the Chief Minister's own staff member?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if any of those things were illegal or somewhat incorrect, I am quite sure that the Public Service Commissioner would have brought it to my attention. I can admit honestly that that has not happened but I will seek to have information provided by the Public Service Commissioner regarding the question that the honourable member has asked and provide him with that information at a later date.

Duplication of McMillans Road

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Would he please confirm his department's program for the duplication of McMillans Road between the roundabout on the eastern end and the Bagot Road intersection?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this project is one that has the highest priority in the Northern Territory Urban and Arterial Road Program. Honourable members will be aware of the federal government's cutbacks on urban arterial road funding which, after meeting our current contractual obligations, obviously will affect rather seriously our future planned programs. Duplication of the section between the roundabout and Mueller Road is presently under construction, as honourable members who travel the northern suburbs will be well aware. It is expected that this particular job will be completed in June.

Bagot Road to Lee Point Road was planned to commence in May 1986 with Lee Point Road to Mueller Road following as soon afterwards as practicable. The total project is estimated to cost in the region of \$7.5m. The honourable member will understand that the planned program in respect of sections 2 and 3 will have to be reconsidered in the light of commitments outstanding and also the level of available funding. Under the Australian Land Transport Program, the federal allocation to the Territory is \$1.4m in relation to urban arterial roads and the ABRD allocation is \$1.5m. If all other urban arterial road projects were to be deferred in favour of McMillans Road, it would take 3 years of federal funding to complete the work. However, as I said earlier, the project has been accorded the highest priority and all steps will be taken to ensure that that particular area of road is proceeded with. However, that will depend also on whether we have sufficient funds within our own financial resources.

Mr Speaker, a good look will be taken at this particular project during budget deliberations which will be taking place. However, due to the rapid growth of the northern suburbs and the amount of traffic, which is increasing daily on McMillans Road - and I travel that road myself at least twice a day - it is obvious to members of the community that there is a need for work to be done to widen McMillans Road. I think that one other thing that honourable members should be aware of is that the duplication of McMillans Road is one of those projects that was involved in the development of an airport terminal on the northern side of the Darwin RAAF Base. As honourable members know, that particular project has been curtailed, very abruptly, after an expenditure of some \$20m. In all these particular projects that are undertaken by the Commonwealth, a large amount of support work has to be undertaken by the Northern Territory government, and priorities and funding are also organised in relation to these projects.

All members would be aware that the dual-laning work on McMillans Road was obviously an area of high priority in relation to the development of that airport terminal. It is an example of just one area that must be looked at again in relation to traffic flows and what is going to occur in the future. Obviously, the 6-month review period that the federal government has decreed, will take place in relation to the determination of the airport terminal also has some relevance on the necessity for dual-laning McMillans Road.

Mineral Content in Alice Springs Water Supply

Mr VALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

This follows on a question I asked him last week concerning the mineral content of the Alice Springs town water supply. My question referred to the Mereenie aquifer water which is used in Alice Springs rather than that from the Mereenie Basin. Is any investigation under way into the salt and other mineral content of the water in Alice Springs? Are there any plans for further action to reduce this mineral content?

ANSWER

I apologise to the member for providing an answer to the question relating to the Alice Springs water supply which was not exactly on what he had asked. However, I now have some information which I am sure he and other Alice Springs residents will find most interesting in relation to the actual water supply of Alice Springs as distinct from the groundwater underneath Alice Springs.

The Alice Springs water supply has been drawn from the Mereenie aquifer and adjacent Amadeus Basin formations since the mid-1960s. The water has a salinity of about 700 mg per litre. This compares favourably with a desirable maximum drinking water criterion of 1500 mg per litre published by the National Health and Medical Research Council and adopted by the Northern Territory Department of Health. The salinity is made up of many constituents but, again, each is well within the official health criteria.

The water is relatively hard because it contains a fairly high proportion of calcium and magnesium salts compared with sodium salts. This is probably advantageous in public health terms in view of recent research overseas which appears to link soft high sodium water to the greater incidence of heart disease. That is bad news for Darwinites. However, it has the disadvantage that the hardness is responsible for deposits in pipes and heating appliances.

The tendency for the water to form such a deposit is termed 'temporary hardness'. The temporary hardness of Alice Springs water is about 220 mg per litre. This level does cause some inconvenience. However, it is a good deal less than the 450 mg per litre in Katherine groundwater which was used untreated for several years before being abandoned in favour of surface water.

The salinity and hardness of the Alice Springs supply has not changed materially since pumping commenced from the source; nor is it expected to change much in the future provided it is protected from long-term pollution by salts and chemicals originating from the town and farm areas. The study completed in 1983 examined the need for such protection and made several recommendations concerning land use, monitoring and the need for further studies. The findings of this study are being actively pursued.

A separate investigation at the moment is looking in detail at the potential for pollution from proposed development at White Gums directly upstream from the borefield. If significant risks are found to exist, the investigation will examine preventative and remedial measures. The natural quality of the groundwater is quite acceptable for general domestic use. It is possibly the least saline and most abundant supply in the whole of central Australia and must be cherished accordingly.

Any proposal to treat the water to improve its aesthetic quality or avoid degradation of pipes and appliances would be a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Transport and Works. I am pleased to read that. However, such treatment would clearly be enormously expensive in terms of both capital and operating costs. The fact that most people in the town have used the water for some 20 years without major complaint would have to go against any such expenditure.

I guess I am treading on pretty dangerous ground in making that final statement but I am sure honourable members will find that information relating to Alice Springs water supply most interesting.

Henry and Walker Shares in Casinos

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Is he aware of any efforts by Henry and Walker Pty Ltd in respect of the Coonawarra Unit Trust to sell some or all of its shares in the Territory Property Trust which owns the casinos? Is the government, in respect of its arrangements with the Territory Property Trust, in a position to prevent such a sale should it be desirable to do so?

ANSWER

I have always been of the opinion that the trust would go public. I have never had any understanding that Henry and Walker would or would not retain all of its shares in the trust when it did go public. I will get the information for the honourable member to see if there is anything specifically on file that refers to a commitment by Henry and Walker to do one thing or another and advise him accordingly.

Excisions from Pastoral Leases

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LANDS

I refer him to the guidelines recently promulgated for excisions on pastoral leases for Aboriginal people. Can he name the Aboriginals who will qualify under these guidelines?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I refer him to the standing orders that the Leader of the Opposition raised earlier. This matter will be debated in the Assembly and I will address those questions at that time.

Northern Territory Teachers Federation

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for EDUCATION

In the February Northern Territory Teachers Federation Bulletin, a claim was made that federation deductions from teachers' pay were ceased because some teachers refused to staff a school camp. Is this indeed true?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the issue to which the honourable member for Sadadeen refers goes back some time. The short answer to the question is no. The issue caused a great deal of concern in the community, particularly among parents with school-age children. I was concerned at the time, as indeed were many parents, that the work bans that had been imposed by the teachers in the schools in which they worked caused disruption to the education of children. The claim referred to by the honourable member is incorrect inasmuch as many other people had drawn my attention to their concern about the disruption of their children's education. The episode in Alice Springs brought the issue to a head. As a result, the federation was asked to consider the matter and I gave it plenty of opportunity. I believe that I exercised considerable forbearance in this whole matter. After my visit to Alice Springs - and I was in Alice Springs in relation to another matter - I told the federation that it should reconsider the matter and that teachers should go back to work because it was causing disruption to many students. In answer to the honourable member's question,

this did not result from the fact that a teacher would not take children on a school camp but resulted from representations made by many people in relation to fears about disruption to the education of their children.

Psychiatric Patients

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for HEALTH

What is his government doing in respect of the Spragg report? Could he indicate the facilities that presently exist in the Northern Territory for psychiatric patients?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I really do not know whether I could properly canvass all of the issues. I knew the honourable member was interested in this matter and I was expecting a couple of specific questions from him. The Spragg report has been received by the government. Clearly, professional people such as Dr Spragg would recommend the absolute optimum facilities that they would see as being desirable for the Northern Territory. Obviously, because we do not have unlimited funds, we cannot really expect to achieve all of those objectives in the near future. All of Dr Spragg's recommendations are worth while and highly desirable. Given the attitude of a certain Minister for Finance elsewhere, this government may well find itself - and I do not wish to preach doom either - in a position where it will be battling even to maintain the standards that we have already achieved. Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, there are significant advances in the psychiatric care area which can be made at a reasonable cost if those funds are available.

Mr Speaker, for some time we have been trying to recruit sufficient highly-qualified psychiatric staff. As in any other field, in order to build up a good team, one must first find a good leader. Of course, people will not come to serve in any profession, particularly a highly sensitive and skilled profession such as psychiatry, without leadership being here. To date, we have had difficulty in recruiting someone to head the unit. I understand from the Secretary of the Department of Health that we now have a fairly good prospect of attracting someone of a calibre which would attract other people to work under him or her. I hope that that will eventuate in the near future.

The other thing that we can do is to try to bring into being a halfway house system. To date, people have been treated in the appropriate wards in 1 of 2 hospitals which cater for their illness. When it is considered that their clinical state no longer requires them to be in a psychiatric ward, we have had no choice but simply to transfer them back to the footpath or to their lonely flat. A halfway house is quite essential. The problem looked quite complex initially but the Secretary of the Department of Health and one of his officers recently visited Adelaide and looked at 2 completely different models of halfway houses. I am advised that, for a recurrent expenditure of about \$115 000 to \$130 000 a year, assuming we have that, such a program, by way of a grant in aid to the Salvation Army or an equivalent organisation, can be put into place. I believe they work very well in South Australia and I dare say in other states that have these sorts of facilities.

Of course, it is not just a matter of the recurrent expenditure; it is also the capital expenditure of obtaining the place which one could describe as a hostel and the very severe planning problems that go with the establishment. Obviously, the type of residence required would be just that: a residence. It should not remind people of a hospital, a prison, a detention centre or anything

like that. In order to find a residence, one must find a residential area that fits in with the Planning Act. It is not without difficulties but it is certainly an area that the Department of Health, the government and I want to proceed with.

Mr Speaker, there is a whole range of other issues which are raised in relation to the nature of the wards we have for psychiatric services. Of course, there are as many views on how those wards should be structured both physically and in manning as there are people who purport to be experts in the field. Nonetheless, I suppose it would not be difficult to sustain the argument that a fourth or fifth floor in an air-conditioned building is hardly conducive to psychiatric care. The solutions to those sorts of things are necessarily very expensive, given the number of patients which we can reasonably expect as requiring acute care of that nature. Therefore, perhaps a halfway house housing 6 to 8 is one of the options in order to minimise the number of people who need the higher level of care in what many would regard as an unsatisfactory environment; that is, an air-conditioned room on the fourth or fifth floor of a public hospital.

Casino Arrangements

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

My question refers to the Four Corners program broadcast last night. Apart from doing an absolutely and unbelievably appalling job of representing the Territory's case on that program, the Chief Minister said in response to a question on whether arrangements existed between Henry and Walker, Kumagai Gumi and the Northern Territory government in respect of their loan raisings that such arrangements did exist and he would not make them public. In the light of the numerous denials previously by the Chief Minister and the latest on ABC TV news on 1 April last that there are any arrangements and government involvement on the loans to the Coonawarra Unit Trust to enable Henry and Walker to take up its equity in the casino deal, can he explain to this Assembly the statement made last night on national television which was given in a recent interview, and can he now give details to this Assembly of the nature and extent of the arrangements he referred to last night, which he will not make public, between the Northern Territory government, Henry and Walker, and Kumagai Gumi?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as I recall, I did not refer last night in the interview to Henry and Walker and Kumagai Gumi.

Mr B. Collins: Specifically, I took it straight off the tape this morning.

Mr TUXWORTH: The honourable member has just asked me a very long question which referred to some conversations and quotes that I made. Can I have a copy of his question?

Mr B. Collins: No problem, I will get you a copy of the transcript.

Renal Unit for Alice Springs

Mr VALE to MINISTER for HEALTH

Following his statement during the last sittings in answer to my question concerning the renal unit proposed for Alice Springs, what is the current status of that proposed unit?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I remember addressing this question at either the last sittings or the first week of this sittings. There is more information that I ought to give the Assembly on the matter. In fact, it would have been at the last sittings because the further information I can give results from a discussion I had with senior officers at the Alice Springs Community Health Centre, including the Regional Director, on the matter. It is one of those things which we can go about in 1 of 2 ways. We can provide a half-baked renal service in Alice Springs or we can wait a little longer and do it properly. The position at the moment is that all central Australian patients who are suffering from acute renal disorder are being catered for in Adelaide. Darwin has a quite adequate facility at the moment. The patients who normally require this sort of care are Aboriginal patients and it is highly desirable that they be brought back from Adelaide as quickly as possible.

The Department of Health is embarking on a program of much earlier identification of Aboriginal children, in particular, who subsequently will

suffer from this illness. This involves the purchase of better and more expensive diagnostic equipment. This morning, I met with the Secretary of the Department of Health and instructed him to approach Treasury for an appropriate certificate of inexpediency to obtain a proper dialysis machine. The machine is worth about \$60 000. If the department can detect these illnesses in the foetal stage, the appropriate surgical procedures can be undertaken soon after birth to prevent renal collapse occurring later. The idea is prevention rather than worrying about cure later.

Nonetheless, in the provision of renal services, the capital equipment is only part of the story. In order to do the job properly, we must have a specially dedicated area set aside, probably within the community health centre rather than the hospital, to facilitate the equipment's maintenance and use. Obviously, this equipment needs to be regularly cleaned. The cleaning programs are quite extensive which means the correct plumbing and water filters are needed.

Mr Speaker, it would be better if we did it right first time round. That may take a little time, given the capital cost involved. Listening to Senator Walsh last night, I wonder if we will be able to afford it anyway. Nonetheless, to give an idea of the complexity of the problem, a person with acute renal collapse requires many hours of treatment on the dialysis machine at least 3 times a week. If you have 6 patients, you will need more than 2 machines, unless you become involved in very expensive overtime or shift operations. If we had the patients on the machine Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, that would give them their three 6 to 8 hour sessions for that week. Some members would recall that the late Mr Justice Ward used to say it took him about 9 hours for a grease and oil change. It was marvellous that a man so seriously ill had that sort of sense of humour but that was typical of the man. The machines are not cheap and their maintenance is expensive and time-consuming. If we had sufficient machines to cater for 6 people, we would need to have them operating on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. That would mean we would have to do our cleaning on Sundays to be ready for Monday. The expense would become extremely high in terms of the recurrent expenditure rather than capital expenditure.

Mr Speaker, the Regional Director-South and the Secretary of the Department of Health and myself are working on the location of the unit. Then, I will have to seek Cabinet approval for the extensive funds necessary to do the work. The Community Health Centre, and that is the logical site for it in Alice Springs, is adjacent to the Aboriginal child health facility and the Mother Education Centre which is commensurate with the type of patient we most often have with renal failure. It could possibly be built above as a second floor attachment to the Community Health Centre because apparently the dental clinic was in fact designed as the first floor of a 2-floor building. Rather than just sprawl out on that side, which has not all that much open space available, we could contemplate the possibility of putting it on a second floor. I note that, in South Australia, the renal unit is on about the fifth floor of a building. Renal patients are not necessarily ill in the normal sense. In other words, climbing a single flight of stairs poses no difficulty.

So the location can be found. It is now a matter of finding the money for probably 6 of these machines, which is the minimum to do the task, along with a purpose-built area with fairly sophisticated plumbing, draining, filtering equipment and so on. I may have been a little optimistic about the target dates we hoped to be able to achieve the last time I spoke on this matter. Nonetheless, at the risk of repeating myself, I am of the belief that it is better to do the thing properly in the first place than half do it.

TIO Legal Proceedings

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

Can he confirm that the Territory Insurance Office is currently involved in legal proceedings involving large amounts of money in both Sydney and the United States and can he give the Legislative Assembly details of these proceedings?

ANSWER

I am aware that there are legal proceedings going on with parties outside of Australia. I do not have the exact information available to me. I will be happy to provide it to the member as soon as I can get it. If the member could give me a bit of notice of that sort of question, I might be able to respond to it at the time.

Senator Walsh's Comments on Four Corners Program

Mr PALMER to CHIEF MINISTER

On the Four Corners program last night, Senator Walsh said that the Commonwealth was in fact 'feeding a fiscal monster'. Does the Chief Minister and Treasurer subscribe to that view?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, several aspects of the senator's comments last night were of concern but the main one, from the point of view of all Territorians, was the misrepresentation that the Northern Territory was indeed some sort of 'fiscal monster' that was being supported by the Commonwealth government unreasonably. I would like to take a couple of moments to put into perspective exactly what it is that we are talking about. Last night, on the Four Corners program, the federal Minister for Finance went to a great deal of trouble to explain how the Northern Territory's per capita funding is so much higher than that of every other state in Australia that it is unreasonable and that the cash pipeline to the Northern Territory has to dry up.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that this needs to be considered in the totality of the Commonwealth-states financing and not simply on a per capita basis for the Northern Territory because it is very important that we see the total picture. On a per capita basis, we do have a much higher level of funding than any state. That is because our assessments are made through the Grants Commission. The assessments are not made on a per capita basis as they are with the states. They are made on the basis of the Northern Territory providing to the whole community that level of service that would be provided in any state in Australia, taking into account all the difficulties that we have in the Northern Territory that we have discussed in this Assembly 100 times - large areas, small population dispersal, lack of communication, starting 100 years behind the states and all the rest of it. We have always sought to have our case considered by the Grants Commission because we believe that body has gained expertise over 50 years in assessing the disabilities of the states and can make a reasonable recommendation to the Commonwealth on our level of funding. It has done that since self-government. All the assessments that we have had over the years have been supported by the Grants Commission although, in the last couple of years, its recommendations have been that we receive more money than it transpired we should have received. That was not a great amount of money over the 5 budgets but, certainly, it is something that has to be taken into account and we need to discuss it with the Commonwealth. To say that we are overfunded

because the Grants Commission recommended funding that is 3 or 4 times greater per capita for the Territory than for the states is outrageous.

There are other methods of funding in this country that the Northern Territory government does not know about, has no claim to and will never see. Those figures are not built into the per capita assessment that the senator referred to last night and they are very important. Mr Speaker, let me just pick up a couple to give members an idea of the level of the funding that the states receive that we do not receive. When the Grants Commission makes its assessment for New South Wales every year, it takes into account an \$800m state railway deficit. That figure is considered when the Grants Commission is making a recommendation on the level of funding for New South Wales. Do we see that in the per capita assessment? We do not. Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia have enormous amounts of money funnelled into their state economies every year by virtue of tariff protection and the system we have in this country of protecting uneconomic industries in those states. Very simply, the tariff protection that exists in this country to protect uneconomic industries in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, which amounts to billions of dollars a year, is used to maintain employment in those states. We do not get any consideration in the Northern Territory for figures like that. We do not ask for it and we do not complain about it. The states get it and it is not unreasonable, given the circumstances, that they get it. But it is unreasonable that the Northern Territory be singled out as being excessively funded because our figures are calculated in a different way.

I move on to another issue - relevant but not relevant. The Northern Territory does not have a university. We have sought one and we will establish one in the course of time. It will come. Setting aside the capital cost of running the university, the states already have their universities, whether we get one or not. They would have cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Further to that, every year in the federal budget, allocations are made directly to the states for the maintenance of their universities. Last year \$1027m was distributed to the states for the maintenance and operation of their universities. If we ask for a university, we are regarded as an unreasonable bunch of lazy people who want more Commonwealth money. Those people have their universities and they are entitled to them. They get the maintenance for their universities in a separate line of funding in the federal budget. It does not show up in the per capita comparisons that the senator made with the Northern Territory.

Mr Speaker, let me just touch on the issue of Medicare. Last year the states received \$845m in Medicare payouts. The Northern Territory received \$10m. I am not saying that we got less than we should have. I am saying that the comparison is pretty significant. Those figures are not built into the per capita comparisons that the Minister for Finance wants to make for the Northern Territory.

Let me pick up another issue for which we do not get much at all while the states are waxing pretty fat on the system. That is the matter of aged care which my colleague, the Minister for Health, is pursuing with the Commonwealth at this moment. Most of the states, over a period of time, have built up thousands and thousands of beds in their states for the provision of care to the aged. On top of that, they not only received the capital component to set it up but they receive the enormous funding levels of about \$30 or \$40 per day per bed to run those beds in each state. That is fair enough. We are not complaining. But those figures do not show up in the per capita comparisons that the senator made on the show last night. We are having extreme difficulty convincing the Commonwealth that we should have another 30 beds. When you consider that

exercise against what is going on in the states, you cannot honestly say that the Northern Territory has had a fair suck of the sausage. There are some areas where we are still very badly treated.

I picked up another issue in the papers this morning. The states get a special grant from the Commonwealth every year. Last year, to provide coal mining industry assistance, long service leave payments totalled \$19m. That is not a bad little slush fund between the Commonwealth and the states. I am not saying it should not happen. I am not saying it should stop. I am not saying that we ought to get it because we do not have any coal mines. But I am saying that payments like that were not taken into the per capita comparisons that the minister referred to last night. If the minister wants to advance that argument, then it is not unreasonable that all the payments to all the states in all shapes and forms are put together and the population divided up.

Mr Speaker, the other point that I would like to make is that the Northern Territory has a budget of just on \$1000m which is spread out over the whole community. We have a population of about 30 000 Aborigines in our community who are above-average consumers of that budget, given the totality of the population. I refer to things such as hospital bed occupancy and the level of effort that is required to teach Aborigines in remote areas. That is taken into account by the Grants Commission. We have a situation where a very small sector of the community consumes a pretty fair amount of the budget. We do not complain about that. We are not asking for anybody to go without. We are not suggesting that the money spent on Aboriginal communities should be on a per capita basis because, if we did that, they would not receive very much in the way of services. We accept the difficulty. Through the Grants Commission, we have sought to justify the level of funding needed to maintain services in those communities and those recommendations of the Grants Commission over the years have been sent to the Commonwealth and it has made the payments. In fact, in the last 2 Labor government budgets, those payments have been acknowledged.

Today, when we have a very vindictive campaign levelled at us by an individual, we find that none of that matters any longer. Mr Speaker, it has never mattered so much as it matters today. It is not a matter that can be left to lie. The campaign that has been started against the Northern Territory which, in my view, is one of total dishonesty, will be rectified. It will take considerable effort and a bit of money but the whole of the story will be told to the people of this country, and not just the part of it that serves the senator.

Pine Hill Gap Grape Project

Mr EDE to MINISTER for LANDS

I would remind him that, when this issue was raised at the last sittings, it was indicated that it had been raised too early. Has he now received or is he aware of representations from the honourable member for Sadadeen opposing the Pine Hill Gap grape project in my electorate? Is he aware of complaints on this issue made by the honourable member to public servants at a recent field day in Alice Springs? What is the nature of the honourable member's opposition to the development of grape farms, apart from his own, and can he confirm that no impediment will be placed in the way of this development?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question was addressed to me as the Minister for Lands. I will answer as the Minister for Lands and Minister for Primary Production. At

the last sittings, I stated that, at that time, I had not received any representations from the member for Sadadeen and that, if there had been any representations in respect of trying to stop that project, they would not have been taken into account. In fact, I have not received any representations.

The member asked if I was aware of complaints that the member for Sadadeen had made at a field day at the Arid Zone Research Institute recently. I have been advised by some people in Alice Springs that there were some comments made in private in respect of that program but those comments have not been related to me directly. I understand that the honourable member has some concern in respect of the Pine Hill grape project in so far as he believes - and I think it is a legitimate position for him to adopt - there needs to be proper consideration of the needs of the pioneers of the table grape industry in that region in particular. He has made representations, particularly in respect of the Dahlenburg family who originally started farming in that area and, in conjunction with the Department of Primary Production, have been pioneers in developing the viability of the table grape industry in that Ti Tree region. The Department of Primary Production is very conscious of the value of the work that has been done by the Dahlenburg family and is seeking to ensure that its position is not prejudiced and that its operations can continue.

We hope that, in the Pine Hill area, subject to the availability of water which must inevitably affect any development in the farming area, there will be more farmers going into the area and that the development of Pine Hill will be a catalyst that will provide regularity of supply into markets to enable a significant expansion of other farmers into that area and provide an opportunity for others to participate. The leases for the land have been completed and the project is under way and under construction. It has the full support of the Department of Primary Production. As for the existing farmers in that area, we are providing extension and horticultural services to support all of them. As we understand the situation, as the industry develops in that area, all farmers will be able to participate in the specific marketing proposals that we are making to promote table grapes. That is not only to other parts of Australia because we believe there is quite a significant market in South-east Asia, particularly Singapore, for that product, and the price is right.

Review of Land Transport Legislation

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During the period 1980-83, I was on a committee of review of land transport legislation. What is the current status of that review and when is the legislation likely to be tabled in the Assembly?

ANSWER

The review of the land transport legislation is a major task involving the Traffic Act and regulations, the Motor Vehicle Act and various motor vehicle regulations and commercial road transport legislation. Framework on the recommended changes to these various acts and regulations has been forwarded to the parliamentary counsel. However, at this stage, I am unable to advise a firm date on when legislation can be submitted to this Assembly. Should the member require additional information, I have a very comprehensive briefing paper on this subject. I would be only too happy to discuss the matter in full with him.

Casino Arrangements

Mr B. COLLINS to CHIEF MINISTER

I am now in a position to repeat the question to the Chief Minister which I broadcast this morning on Territory Extra that I would be asking him this morning in the Legislative Assembly. I now have the transcript and I will give a copy to the Chief Minister. The ABC program said the following:

But Henry and Walker only put up \$10 000 of their own money. All the rest was borrowed and the Territory government, it now seems likely, has underwritten the loan, however reluctant the new Chief Minister is to discuss the matter.

Ian Tuxworth: 'There are certain arrangements that we have with Henry and Walker and with Kumagai Gumi relating to their involvement and, at this stage, I am not prepared to say what they are'.

I repeat the question which I broadcast this morning on Territory Extra. Could he advise this Assembly as to what arrangements between the Northern Territory government, Henry and Walker and Kumagai Gumi there are in respect of the loan raisings that they have engaged in? Could he explain how this statement can stand in light of the numerous denials that he has given, both inside and outside this Assembly, that any such arrangements existed and could he explain what arrangements there can be between the Northern Territory government referred to here and Henry and Walker and Kumagai Gumi which were not disclosed in this Assembly as part of the casino debate and the tabled papers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can say for the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition that the government is in a state of negotiation and discussion with Henry and Walker and Kumagai Gumi and 2 other firms whose names I will not divulge now. That is what I was referring to there. When those discussions and negotiations are completed, I will say what they are. In the meantime, I am not discussing that sort of business in the media.

Northern Territory Imprisonment Rate

Mr McCARTHY to MINISTER for COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

According to a recent report of the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Territory has the highest imprisonment rate in Australia. Personally, I find this most disturbing, as I am sure all members do. Can he confirm or deny this and provide the Assembly with any further information available to him on this report?

ANSWER

The Australian Institute of Criminology released its report recently and the Northern Territory was seen in a fairly bad light. That is something that I as minister and all of us as Territorians should not be very proud of. In fact, the Northern Territory has 3 times the national average of people in prisons. The Australian average per 100 000 head of population, I understand, is approximately 65. In the Northern Territory, it is 235 per 100 000. The next closest is Western Australia with 105 people per 100 000. It is a very serious problem which must be addressed very soon. The cost of keeping people in prisons is extravagant. It costs us about \$92 a day to keep somebody in a cell.

The Apsey Report, which has been tabled at this sittings, will give you an indication.

Mr Firmin: It is cheaper at the Travelodge.

Mr COULTER: It is cheaper at the Travelodge or even at the Royal Darwin Hospital - no, not quite.

The Apsey Report also mentioned the cost involved in new prison development. I would like to add that the cost of building one cell in the Northern Territory is about \$35 000; that is, by the time you take into consideration all the infrastructure.

Apsey also projected figures for the 1990s. We have already exceeded those on several occasions this year, so we are well in advance of ourselves in this particular area. The combined capacity of the 3 prisons in the Northern Territory is 320 inmates: Darwin - 150; Alice Springs - 110; and Gunn Point Prison Farm - 60. In the first 100 days of this year, to 10 April, there were 61 days when prisoner holdings greatly exceeded 320. In our youth area, even Giles House is at capacity now. You would be aware, Mr Speaker, that I will receive the report on juvenile crime towards the end of May. I believe that this will address another issue - the issue of housing juvenile offenders. At present, some of our juvenile offenders are in prisons. The Northern Territory government set aside land in the Darwin area for the housing of juvenile offenders.

In respect of parolees and probation people, the Northern Territory had an increase of something like 31% over the period under investigation by the Australian Institute of Criminology. The next highest to us was New South Wales, that law abiding state to the south, which had an 18% jump. The increase to 3½ times the national average is not something that the Northern Territory can be proud of. We must look now at implementing programs which offer alternatives to imprisonment, where we can get involved in community service orders and people can pay their debt to society. We will be looking at organising ways and means whereby we can assure the magistrates that we are fair dinkum, that we can enforce community service orders and that we can have people working out in the community on worthwhile projects. I have sought union support for this. So far they have been very cooperative in identifying projects for people to work on within our community so that they do not cost us \$92 a day and are given the opportunity to enhance and beautify certain areas of the community. That will provide a valuable investment through their labour and reduce the cost to the community.

There is the possibility of establishing highly-productive, low-cost, hard-labour venues. I believe that has merit. That will also be investigated very thoroughly by the Department of Correctional Services to try to meet this problem but we can no longer continue to keep locking people up and spending millions of dollars of taxpayers' money on criminals who break the law each year. A recent occurrence in New South Wales demonstrates quite clearly the need to lock up people from the community in some cases but there are other ways of treating a large percentage of our criminal population.

I do not single out Aborigines but, at the moment, our prison population is about 60% Aboriginal. This must be addressed as well. The Groote Eylandt report was spoken about in this Assembly. It was delivered to myself and to the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs recently. It shows that Groote Eylandt has 20 to 25 times the national average of imprisonment. We must look at those areas as well to try to stem the tide, as it were, and hold back this

tremendous amount of unrest in the community and the cost to taxpayers in the Northern Territory. At the moment, it costs about \$11.5m to run correctional services in the Northern Territory. It is a growth industry. It is a growth industry that the Northern Territory can well do without and we will be addressing these problems in the very near future.

Senator Walsh's Comments on Four Corners Program

Mr FINCH to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

In view of the extravagant, misleading and hysterical remarks made by Senator Walsh 2 days ago in the Senate in regard to Northern Territory public servants, what has been the growth pattern of the Northern Territory Public Service and government employees generally since self-government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I place before the Assembly statistics which relate to the composition of the Northern Territory government work force since self-government. Honourable members opposite would be aware that I indicated, during the debate on the Chief Minister's statement on superannuation, that I would make some further announcements. I did not want to take up ministerial statement time so I thought I would do it very quickly in question time.

The total number of Commonwealth employees transferred was in the order of 11 000. The transfer of this number of employees did not take place immediately but was progressive over a period of time as additional functions were transferred. On 1 January 1977, 1359 Commonwealth employees were transferred to establish the nucleus of the government departments required for self-government. This figure rose to a total of 5257 on 1 January 1978 because of the transfer of the staff of the Department of the Northern Territory and the Department of Construction. By 1 January 1979, 2607 employees were transferred from the Department of Health followed by another 1175 from the education service and a further 1650 in 1981. By June 1981, a total of some 11 000 employees had been transferred. I might add that, in some cases, the establishments of the departments for the work concerned was significantly greater than the actual number of employees transferred.

During the years since self-government, our total population has increased from 110 000 in 1978 to an estimated 140 000 in 1984. Senator Walsh could hardly expect that the Territory, with a steadily increasing population, would stand still while the rest of Australia went ahead. The range and quality of services justifiably demanded by the people of the Territory could not possibly have been met by the number of personnel transferred from the Commonwealth government departments. The Territory government was called upon to provide services of a higher standard than had been provided before in widely dispersed and remote areas, a factor long recognised by the Grants Commission.

Between 1978 and 1984, the size of the Northern Territory government work force, including all transferred employees, increased by about 3000. This increase was attributable to new initiatives or developments such as the following. The increase in the school population resulted in an increase in the number of teachers by approximately 600 during the period 1981 to 1984. In that time, the school population aged 5 to 14 years rose from 26 300 to 29 200 across the Territory as a whole, an increase of 11%. Secondly, there was a deliberate decision by the government to increase the opportunities for employment of school leavers. Since 1981, over 600 positions for apprentices, base-grade entrants, trainees and scholarship holders have been created. Thirdly, there was

the establishment of the Darwin Community College and the Community College of Central Australia in order to provide a higher level of education and technical education within the Territory. Fourthly, there were such new initiatives in the Aboriginal area as the employment of police aides, health workers and teacher aides, particularly in relation to rural Aboriginal communities.

Mr Speaker, I am sure members will agree that there is ample justification for the total number of Northern Territory government employees and the remarks made by Senator Walsh show a total lack of understanding of the Territory situation and the needs of its population. If Senator Walsh has the time to visit the Territory and see at first hand what is going on in this area, he may adopt a different attitude. I am not sure whether he has ever visited the Territory.

Mr Speaker, I table this statistical summary of the numbers of personnel transferred from the Commonwealth government and the total number of Territory employees.

ANSWER TO QUESTION
Pine Hill Gap Grape Project

Mr HATTON (Primary Production)(by leave): Mr Speaker, I wish to make an explanation in respect of a particular aspect of the answer I gave to the honourable member for Stuart. I said that I had not received submissions nor would I take into account submissions from the member for Sadadeen in respect of that matter. That statement would be both inaccurate and highly arrogant if it were taken in that context, Mr Speaker. Obviously, I would take into account submissions made by honourable members and certainly by my colleague, the honourable member for Sadadeen. I should make it very clear, Mr Speaker, those comments were directed towards any submissions that might have been seen to be promoting a personal vested interest. I would like to place on the record that I have not received any submissions that, in any way, could be deemed to be reflecting a personal vested interest of the honourable member for Sadadeen. As I said, I received submissions in respect of the role of the pioneering farmers in that area and we are taking those into account.

Equal Opportunities Division

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

In light of recent concerns expressed through the media, will he assure the Assembly that the Equal Opportunities Division of the Public Service Commissioner's Office will remain in that office and that the positions currently existing in that section will be maintained and filled on a permanent basis?

ANSWER

Our Assistant Commissioner for Equal Opportunities is leaving the Northern Territory to take up a post in South Australia. I have had preliminary discussions with the Public Service Commissioner but no decisions have been made. At the moment, we have 3 assistant commissioners. It is my intention to amalgamate the Office of Equal Opportunities with one of the other assistant commissioner's responsibilities. We have an E6 position, as assistant commissioner, which is being handled at the moment by Eda Otts. We will wait for Miss Dunn to formally resign. At this stage, I have not seen any formal notification of her resignation. I understand the Public Service Commissioner will provide me with that information in the near future. When I have it, I

will be in a position to have some conclusive discussions with the Public Service Commissioner in relation to the Equal Opportunities Division. Members of the Assembly would be familiar with the position of the Public Service Commissioner's Office at the moment. Several sections have been transferred to Treasury and that has lessened the requirement for 3 assistant commissioners. The announcement that has been made by Miss Dunn that she will seek other employment will give me the opportunity of assessing more fully the role of the other assistant commissioners. There is no intention to disband the Equal Opportunities Division. We will find the most suitable home for it.

Yipirinya School

Mr D.W. COLLINS to MINISTER for LANDS

Has agreement been reached over a site for the Yipirinya school?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am pleased that the answer to that question is yes. This has been a matter of some controversy and dispute in Alice Springs for some time. I have had considerable correspondence and discussions with the council of the Yipirinya school and, during my last visit to Alice Springs, I met the full school council. At that meeting, I advised the council that the site it was seeking, Lot 5643 Telegraph Terrace, would not be available. However, I indicated that we recognised the existence of a sacred site on that lot and that, whatever was to occur in respect of that particular lot of land, as a minister, I would ensure, to the best of my powers, that that sacred site would be protected and access would be maintained to that sacred site. I made available to the school council a series of options. The council has had an opportunity to look at those sites and it has approached us in respect of a site on Lovegrove Drive near the Elder Street intersection. It has written to me accepting that site. I am now instructing the officers of the Department of Lands in Alice Springs to prepare appropriate lease covenants associated with that site. We will be proceeding as a matter of urgency and, within the next few weeks, we should be able to issue formal title over that land. The council is seeking discussions also in respect of protection and access to the site on Telegraph Terrace. I will be arranging to meet with it as soon as possible to discuss those matters in more detail. I am pleased to say the matter has been resolved amicably despite all the publicity and controversy that surrounded this subject.

Electricity Subsidy

Mr DALE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Having regard to the federal Minister for Finance's attitude that the Territory has a pipeline bringing money from Canberra and the taps again are to be turned off, what effect would a removal or non-renewal of the electricity subsidy have on Territory consumers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the electricity subsidy is one of the most significant aspects of the arrangements between the Commonwealth and ourselves which is likely to be under threat having regard to the Minister for Finance's attitude as displayed as late as last night. The operating expenditure for NTEC in the last financial year was \$119.5m and the deficit was \$60m. From those figures, it is quite obvious that chopping out the subsidy or even a non-renewal of the agreement

after the current term expires in 1987 would mean an almost exact doubling of existing tariffs. The only alternative to that would be for the Northern Territory government to subsidise NTEC directly from its general revenues. Clearly, if it did that, it would be at the direct expense of other existing government programs. The effect of an overnight doubling of NTEC's tariffs could only be imagined. It would have to be a disaster, not simply for any growth prospects the Territory might have but also for efforts to maintain a great deal of existing industry.

Studies that have been done on the generation costs for gas in the Northern Territory for Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek show that, assuming that we can have all those powerhouses converted to gas by 1987, which is the current proposal, assuming that the full Commonwealth grant of \$150m which was offered for the powerhouse is maintained and assuming a figure of \$230m - and latest figures indicate that that might be a little low - we would need a subsidy of between \$60m to \$70m in 1988 which would taper down to nil between 1995 and 1997. If tariffs increased at CPI plus 2%, then we would be off the subsidy 2 to 3 years earlier than if they simply escalated at CPI.

It should be of great concern to Territorians that the Minister for Finance seems to have overlooked facts such as that the Northern Territory inherited the electricity system which the Commonwealth built. We inherited the types of equipment, the standards of equipment and the placement of equipment, and all of those factors have deficiencies. By way of example, the 3 biggest powerhouses in the Northern Territory - in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine - have to be moved within the foreseeable future. We cannot build another powerhouse at Stokes Hill because it simply cannot be expanded. In Alice Springs, we are already looking at future expansion of the generation capacity at a new site. Gradually, we will build up a new powerhouse on another site. In Katherine, a new gas station will be placed on another site. The existing one is potentially floodable. Certainly, it cannot be reasonably expanded where it is. All of this was dropped into our lap at self-government. We accepted it on the basis that there were subsidies to enable the Northern Territory to maintain a reasonable electricity tariff for its citizens. It is quite clear that we will not have a great deal of forward growth and creation of employment for our school leavers and our kids unless we can maintain a reasonable level of industrial and commercial growth in the Northern Territory. The subsidies are absolutely vital to the Northern Territory's well-being. After seeing Four Corners last night, and with the attitude of the federal Minister for Finance, I fear for both the electricity subsidy scheme and the future grant of \$150m to help us replace the monster at Stokes Hill.

NTDC Payment for Casinos

Mr B. COLLINS to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

It refers to a question previously asked to which there has as yet been no answer. The opinion of Mr W.H. Nicholas read in the Assembly last week by the minister said: '(1) To receive an appropriation of \$2.5m upon the basis and for the purpose that it be made available for the use and on behalf of the Territory in discharge of the Territory's liability under the agreement of 8 November; and (2) to advance some funds in the hand to the sum of \$770 000'. Could he advise the Assembly if the \$2.5m referred to in that opinion was appropriated specifically to the NTDC for the purpose of purchasing the casino? Could the minister also explain why it was necessary to seek an opinion on the interpretation of Northern Territory statutes from a Sydney silk and why the resources of the Northern Territory Department of Law could not have been used for the same purpose?

ANSWER

I will answer the second part of the question first. The Northern Territory Development Corporation is a statutory authority. Consequently, it has the ability to engage legal officers within the Northern Territory. In this particular instance, the Northern Territory Development Corporation engaged Mildren, Silvester and Partners who are a local firm. In one respect, NTDC does use the Department of Law in some of its negotiations and discussions. In this case, it was thought that it would be better to give work to private enterprise. There is a constant call from the Law Society of the Northern Territory that the government is placing a great deal of work outside and its lawyers should be able to obtain some work so they can build up their expertise.

In relation to the legal opinion and the sum of \$2.5m, I would refer the Leader of the Opposition to Hansard because I have already provided that information.

Senator Walsh's Comments on Four Corners Program

Mr VALE to CHIEF MINISTER

In last night's TV program, Senator Walsh said: 'It is reckless, irresponsible and indeed bordering on lunacy that, because we have a particular part of Australia in which it is expensive to provide social infrastructure, we should embark on a policy of maximising population growth in that area. That is a formula for the fiscal destruction of Australia'. Does the Chief Minister support the senator's view?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member has just read out the senator's comments. They highlight effectively the Freudian nature of that senator. Yesterday, I commented about the senator's comments on the 'previous' Memorandum of Understanding which led one to believe the existing one does not exist any longer. Now we see the enunciation of a policy effectively to depopulate the north. I have never heard of a policy like this before, Mr Speaker. If it is in fact an official ALP policy, then it is one we ought to pursue not just as party politicians but as Territorians, north Queenslanders and north Western Australians because it has very serious ramifications for us all. I have never heard the outline that the honourable senator gave last night in any policy speech by any party in this country.

What the senator was saying, in effect, was that, because there were things to do in an expensive area such as mine uranium, cater for tourists or look after Aboriginal communities, you should actively go out of your way to ensure that you had as little migration of people into that area as possible. That is obnoxious and would upset all Australians, not just people living in the north of Australia. Mr Speaker, people like you and I and all our colleagues and our predecessors have fought over a long time to have the north developed, not to have some person in Canberra, who is administering the finances of the country, putting into place financial policies that effectively make us all go back to the southern cities.

Mr Speaker, you and I would remember the talk in our youth of the Brisbane Line. That came out of the Second World War when the government of the day had to make a conscious decision as to whether it could physically do anything north of Brisbane or whether it should just put the barricades up on the Brisbane Line and let the rest go. Fortunately for this country, reason prevailed and the

Brisbane Line disappeared. Governments have made every effort to defend, protect and develop this part of the country. The post-war commitments in this part of the world by governments of all persuasions undoubtedly have been to develop the north. They have had funny ways of doing it and, from time to time, have made an enormous mess of some of the things that they have done. Nevertheless, the will was there to see that the north of Australia became populated and did not remain as an invitation to other parts of the world to come and live here because we were not interested in it. It is pretty obvious now to everybody in this country that the great export wealth that is being earned in this country will come and has been coming for some time from north of the Brisbane Line. We are small beer in terms of the things that are happening in Western Australia and Queensland but the export income that we generate per capita is far in excess of anything else that happens in Australia. That would suggest to me that there is a very good argument for people to continue the migration north to develop the resources, to create wealth and to get the country out of the mess that it is in.

Mr Speaker, we have heard from the honourable senator that that is not on any more because it is an expensive area. I can understand the senator's feelings. Unfortunately, not many people share them so he should not be in the position he is in. He then went on to talk about the fiscal destruction of Australia by people populating the north and doing things. Let us just look around at the fiscal destruction. Let us look at the Weipas, the Goves, the Groote Eylandts, the Rangers, the offshore oil and gas, the Mereenies, the development at Ayers Rock and the iron ore in Western Australia. Let us take that out of the nation's equation for a national balance and see how good the economy of this country is. The short story is that, if it were not for the bit of development we have in the north, at great expense and mostly by private enterprise, there would not be much going for the economy at all.

Mr Speaker, I do not think that it is unreasonable for me to say to the Leader of the Opposition today that we have a very serious problem. We have 2 policies for the development of the north: one is the party's official policy and the other is Senator Walsh's policy. It needs to be delineated, defined and cleared up at the earliest possible time by people within the party as to exactly which policy this country is going to follow so that we can decide for ourselves whether we ought to pack our bags and go. But before we pack our bags and go, there will be a few changes around the place because I can assure you that there are not many Territorians or people living north of the Brisbane Line, and there are not many south of it, who would advocate that we depopulate the north and return to the days of the early 20th century.

Mr B. Collins: I am not going. I do not care what they do to us; I am still not going.

Mr TUXWORTH: Mr Speaker, I would say to the Leader of the Opposition that there was a time in the political development of this party when we all had to get on a plane and try to argue some sense into the muddle-headed wombats who were running this country. Today they might do us all a big favour if they got on a plane - the lot of them - and went to see the Prime Minister and tried to rectify the madness that is going on.

Territory Manor Receivership

Mr VALE to MINISTER for INDUSTRY and SMALL BUSINESS

Can he verify the accuracy of last night's press report which indicated the Northern Territory Development Corporation had placed without notice the property known as Territory Manor into receivership?

ANSWER

The press report yesterday was true, although one would question the amount of time given to the operator to finalise the debt with the Northern Territory Development Corporation. By way of background, the Northern Territory Development Corporation provided a concessional loan to Territory Manor Pty Ltd to construct a 26-room motel-health farm complex at Mataranka. The loan of \$704 000 was approved in July 1981. The loan fell into arrears on the first repayment date of 1 January 1983. No repayments were made in 1983. In November 1983, the NTDC restructured the loan, and provided an additional \$60 000 to finance construction overruns and some marketing assistance. Early in 1984, the NTDC tried to encourage the proprietors of Territory Manor to find equity partners. None were found. During the entire life of the account, no loan repayments had been made. A payment of \$10.17 for an accounting fee was the only consideration the NTDC had received. Arrears to 31 March 1985 total \$230 000, including arrears of \$112 000 previously capitalised when the loan was restructured in 1983. The loan balance at 31 March was \$1.02m. In short, the Northern Territory Development Corporation could not continue to support the Territory Manor without installing new management arrangements and a receiver-manager was appointed on Monday 22 April. The manor will continue to operate.

ANSWER TO QUESTION

Appointment of Chief Minister's Electorate Office Staff Member

Mr DONDAS (Deputy Chief Minister): Mr Speaker, whilst I am on my feet, I might just take a few moments to respond to a very important question asked by the member for Stuart yesterday in relation to an appointment of a former member of the Chief Minister's electorate office staff.

The position of Regional Director-Tennant Creek with the Department of Community Development was reclassified as part of the departmental review. This new position was advertised on 21 August 1984 and attracted 11 applicants of whom 5 were interviewed. The current occupant of the position was rated by a 4-person interview panel as the second of the 2 suitable applicants. On the retirement from the public service of the most suitable and successful applicant, the second-placed applicant was appointed to the position. This step was taken to ensure continuity and a smooth transition of responsibility in a key departmental position. The appointment procedure was within normal public service guidelines and did not proceed until the approval of the Public Service Commissioner had been sought and granted.

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